

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

N.Y. event promotes campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries
—PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 4 JANUARY 29, 2007

Bipartisan support firm for escalation of Iraq war

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, January 17—In an interview on the CBS television program “60 Minutes,” U.S. president George Bush defended his administration’s decision to

U.S. naval buildup in Gulf targets Iran

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Washington’s escalation of the war in Iraq is increasingly targeting Iran.

“Iranians are providing equipment that is killing Americans” in Iraq, said U.S. president George Bush in a January 14 interview on “60 Minutes,” the CBS television program. “As I said in my speech

Smithfield workers join King Day march

4,000 at N. Carolina plant demand day off
Hundreds take off work, attend Fayetteville action



Militant /Eddie Beck

Hundreds of meat packers from the Smithfield pork slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, took off work January 15 to demand the company recognize the Martin Luther King holiday. Some marched with others in nearby Fayetteville on the occasion (above).

BY SETH DELLINGER

FAYETTEVILLE, North Carolina, January 15—Hundreds of workers didn’t show up for work and dozens left their jobs early today at Smithfield’s giant hog slaughterhouse near here in Tar Heel, North Carolina, to press their demand that the company recognize Martin Luther King Day as a holiday.

Four days earlier, forklift driver Leonard Walker delivered petitions signed by 4,000 of the 5,000 workers at Tar Heel to plant manager Larry Johnson asking for the holiday off with pay, reported the *Fayetteville Observer*.

Johnson refused to accept the petitions, claiming that workers had previously

voted to work that day when presented with the choice between either taking that day off or Easter.

Later this morning some of the Smithfield workers, who are fighting for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union to be recognized at the plant, participated in a King Day service at the First Baptist Church here. Afterwards, several hundred marched to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Park for an unveiling of a statue of King.

“We should be given Martin Luther King Day off automatically *and* we should get paid,” Eugene Rogers, a kill floor worker at Smithfield, told the

Continued on page 6

U.S. troops out of Iraq now! Build Jan. 27 march in Washington!

—Young Socialists column, p. 4

escalate Washington’s war in Iraq by dispatching an additional 21,500 troops to that country. He also challenged those in Congress who criticize the White House decision, announced in a nationally televised speech January 10, to offer an alternative. No one has come forward.

Democrats are preparing a nonbinding resolution criticizing the increase in troops while also claiming that the

Continued on page 7

the other night,” he continued, referring to his January 10 nationally televised address announcing the deployment of more troops to Iraq, “we will interrupt supplies. We will find people that if they are, in fact, in Iraq killing Americans, they’ll be brought to justice.”

A central aspect of Washington’s preparations to confront Iran is its ominous naval buildup in the Arab-

Continued on page 7

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Somalia: Islamist militias routed, as U.S. Navy boosts presence off coast

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

As Washington boosted its naval presence off the coast of Somalia, Ethiopian and Somali troops report-

edly routed combatants of the Somalia Islamic Courts Council (SICC) from their last remaining stronghold, near the border with Kenya.

Seeking to consolidate its rule, the newly established Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has imposed martial law. It has begun house-to-house searches in the capital, Mogadishu, to

Continued on page 9

‘Militant’ launches campaign to increase long-term readership

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The *Militant* is launching a five-week campaign to increase its long-term readership. The goal is to win some 500 readers to renew their subscriptions. The campaign begins January 20 and ends February 25. It will build on the accomplishments of last fall’s circulation drive, when 2,500 people subscribed, most of them for the first time, and recent successes in selling copies and subscriptions among meat packers, particularly in the Midwest, in the Black community, and elsewhere.

More than 1,000 workers have

Continued on page 4

Also Inside:

Australia protesters: ‘Justice for Aborigine killed by cops’ 2

Iran conference on Holocaust promotes Jew-hatred 3

U.S. gov’t now requires ‘tamper-proof’ IDs at ports 5

Two more coal miners killed on job in West Virginia 6

Australia protesters: Justice for Aborigine killed by cops

BY MANUELE LASALO
AND BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia—In one of the biggest protests ever to take place in Townsville’s streets, some 1,500 people marched in this north Queensland city December 20 to demand the prosecution of the cop who killed Mulrunji Doomadgee, an Aboriginal man, on Palm Island two years ago.

Chanting “How many more? No more!” the protesters expressed their anger at the decision of Queensland’s Director of Public Prosecution, Leanne Clare, not to bring criminal charges against senior sergeant Christopher Hurley for killing Mulrunji. Protests also took place around the country that day: 1,000 in Brisbane, 400 in Cairns, and 300 on Palm Island, as well as in

Melbourne and Sydney. Clare announced the decision not to prosecute Hurley at a December 14 press conference in Townsville, stating that the death “was a terrible accident.” Her assertion contradicted the finding three months ago by the deputy state coroner, Christine Clement, that the cop “caused the fatal injuries” and that the police made no attempt to assist Mulrunji as he lay dying.

Mulrunji was arrested on Palm Island on Nov. 19, 2004, and died shortly after being taken to the police station. The autopsy report found that he died from a ruptured liver and portal vein and had also suffered four broken ribs.

Palm Island is an Aboriginal community populated by around 4,000



Aborigines in Townsville, Australia, December 14 protest decision by Queensland prosecutor not to file criminal charges against cop who killed Mulrunji Doomadgee in 2004.

people, about 40 miles north of Townsville. For much of the 20th century it served as a government internment camp for Aborigines.

About 15 Aboriginal supporters of

Mulrunji were escorted from Clare’s press conference by plainclothes police before she spoke. They then joined a protest against the decision not to prosecute Hurley. Sam Savage, one of the protesters, said, “This is injustice and our people face this on a daily basis,” the *Koori Mail*, a national Aboriginal newspaper, reported.

Mulrunji’s cousin, Melisa Anderson, who took part in the December 20 Townsville protest, said the big turnout “shows how much support there is to fight for . . . Mulrunji and all the other people who have died in custody,” according to the *Townsville Bulletin*.

After the protests, Queensland’s Labor Party premier, Peter Beattie, promised an “independent review” of Clare’s decision. Initially he had said he would not interfere in the case.

Belarus resumes shipping Russian oil to Europe

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Belarus resumed transshipment of Russian oil through its territory to Europe January 11, after reaching a compromise with Moscow over an energy trade dispute. The former Soviet republic had shut off that route three days earlier after Moscow imposed an energy trade deal that would raise the price Belarus pays for gas and oil to world market levels over five years.

Details on the compromise remain to be worked out. Belarusian prime minister Sergei Sidorsky said he would travel to Moscow for talks on the issue.

Russia’s state-run gas export company, Gazprom, has more than doubled the price of gas and oil to Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine,

which are several of the countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States. These former Soviet republics also include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

The European Union and big-business dailies have taken advantage of the dispute to warn of a Russian threat to Europe’s energy security.

The government of Belarus, one of Moscow’s closest allies, previously paid \$47 per thousand cubic meters (TCM) for Russian gas, well below the \$230–\$250 paid by countries in western Europe. It paid no customs fee to Russia for oil that Belarus refined and sold on the market at substantial profit.

The new trade deal doubled the gas

price Belarus will pay to \$100 per TCM and imposed a customs fee of \$180 per metric ton on oil.

A series of tit-for-tat countermeasures followed. The Belarus government imposed a \$45 per ton transit fee on Russian oil bound for Europe. Moscow refused to pay the fee, and shut off oil to the Belarus pipeline. Belarus then diverted 79,000 tons of the oil already in its pipeline as payment for the transit fee. During the dispute the Russian government also banned sugar imports from Belarus, which normally sells half its annual production of 770,000 tons to Russia.

A similar trade deal was signed with Moldova, at \$170 per TCM of gas, and a pact for \$235 per TCM with Georgia. Azerbaijan halted oil exports to Russia after Gazprom raised gas prices to around \$230 per TCM. Previously Moldova paid \$80 per thousand cubic meters, while Azerbaijan and Georgia paid \$110.

The terms of the deal with Belarus also required it to sell a 50 percent interest in the country’s pipeline network, built when Belarus was part of the Soviet Union.

Moscow is using its vast gas and oil reserves as leverage to gain control of

Continued on page 3

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Carl Wilcox is a port worker and member of International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1416 in Miami.

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Conference in Iran questioning Holocaust promotes Jew-hatred

BY CINDY JAQUITH

In mid-December the Iranian foreign ministry sponsored a conference in Tehran to discuss “whether the Holocaust really happened.” Sixty-seven people attended from various countries, including some of the most prominent anti-Semites in Europe and the well-known U.S. white supremacist and former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke. The event took place a year after Iranian president Mahmoud Ahma-

AS I SEE IT

dinejad declared that the Holocaust is a “myth.”

The term Holocaust refers to the period in the 1930s and 1940s when Adolf Hitler’s Nazi party took power in Germany. As part of inflicting a crushing defeat on the working-class movement, the fascists demagogically charged that Jews were responsible for the acute capitalist economic crisis, and the regime unleashed a deadly drive against them, first in Germany and then in other European countries conquered by the German army. Jews were driven into concentration camps to be killed, compelled to do forced labor, or subjected to grotesque experi-

ments. Trade unionists, communists, opposition political figures, gays, and the disabled were also killed or imprisoned.

The conference in Iran featured various apologists for the Nazis dressed up as “scholars” engaged in academic study of what took place under the fascist reign of terror in Europe.

French professor Robert Faurisson said the Holocaust “never existed.” Frederick Töben of Australia insisted that “claims . . . about the mass gasings and burnings [are] a physical impossibility.” He brought with him a model of the infamous Auschwitz concentration camp, which he said was too small to have killed the 1 million Jews estimated to have died there. Georges Thiel of France called the Holocaust “an enormous lie.” American rightist Bradley Smith of the Committee for the Open Debate of the Holocaust said, “Gas chambers never existed.”

Photos and posters were also displayed, including some of piles of dead bodies with captions saying the victims had died of typhus, not gassing in concentration camps.

“The Holocaust is the device used as the pillar of Zionist imperialism, Zionist aggression, Zionist terror and Zionist murder,” Duke told the Associated Press. He elaborated on this view in an interview during the conference with Wolf Blitzer of CNN.

Duke told Blitzer, whom he labeled “a Jewish extremist,” that U.S. foreign policy is controlled by Israel. “We have a war in Iraq because Israel wanted that war, not for American interests,” the rightist said. He attributed Washington’s course toward war in Iraq to certain U.S. government officials and other figures with Jewish names “like Wolfowitz, Feith, Wurmser, Kristol, Abrams—we can go on and on. It sounds like a Jewish wedding. They have set American policy and they have hurt American interests in the Middle East. Just as I have said for years, as Walt and Mearsheimer of Harvard have said, it’s a fact. And we are dying right now in Iraq because we’re there for Israel’s interests.”

Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer published a paper last year, “The Israel



Nazi troops round up Jewish families in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland in 1943. Apologists for Hitler murder machine at Holocaust conference in Iran sought to obscure the real source of war, exploitation, and oppression—capitalism—and instead to blame it on the Jews.

Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy,” contending that a Jewish lobby determines Washington’s foreign policy, a line also espoused by some liberals and middle-class leftists.

This argument by Duke and others is 100 percent reactionary. The central figures in the U.S. administration who have driven the imperialist war in Iraq—President George Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney, former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and others—are not Jewish, nor are they “dupes” of some Jewish conspiracy. They are carrying out a war that the U.S. capitalist ruling class needs in order to more effectively compete with its imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan.

The state of Israel was established by the U.S. and British governments after World War II to better crack down on workers and farmers in that region and protect imperialist plunder of their oil resources.

Duke tried to prettify the Jew-haters’ gathering as a “free speech” event, noting that in many countries in Europe, reactionary legislation makes it illegal to deny that the Holocaust happened.

Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadi-najad struck a similar note. He told the conference, “For 60 years talking about the Holocaust was a crime in the West but now there is a serious debate about the Holocaust in the media and also in political and popular meetings.”

But this event was not about scholarly debate or academic freedom. It was an assembly of apologists for the Hitler murder machine. It was designed, as all such anti-Semitic campaigns are, to obscure the real source of war, exploitation, and op-

pression—capitalism—and blame it instead on the Jews.

The Iranian regime did not call this conference because of an upsurge in anti-Semitism among the Iranian people. In fact, a protest by students in Tehran shortly after the conference included the demand “Forget about the Holocaust—Do something for us!” This was a reference to the fact that unemployment among Iranian youth graduating from college remains very high. The government has sought to divert attention from such facts by blaming Israel and Jews worldwide for the conditions Iranians face. The regime also hopes to increase its standing in the Middle East as the most militant opponent of Israel.

Imperialist governments from Washington to Berlin are having a field day by pointing to the “Holocaust conference” as one more reason to deny the Iranian people the right to develop nuclear power and to further the claim that Iran is a major terrorist threat. The reactionary event gave a handle to defenders of Israel to falsely label all its opponents as anti-Semitic. It helped defenders of imperialism divert attention from the real source of anti-Semitism: crisis-ridden capitalism.

Ahmadi-najad told the conference, “The Zionist regime will disappear soon, the same way the Soviet Union disappeared.” Then, “humanity will achieve freedom.” But linking the progressive struggle of the Palestinian people for their homeland to the likes of David Duke and the Nazis only strengthens the Israeli government and its false assertion that it is protecting world Jewry from annihilation.

Moreover, class exploitation and national oppression will not disappear if there is no Israel. As long as capitalist classes are in power, including in Iran and other countries in the Middle East, workers and farmers there are condemned to poverty and oppression. The road to end these conditions starts with working people relying on their own collective action, independently of all capitalist parties and governments.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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The Cuban Revolution: Its Place in the International Working-Class Struggle. Speaker: Ernest Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago. Fri., Feb. 2. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: \$5. 3557 S. Archer Ave. Tel. (773) 890-1190.

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New International no. 12 Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun

by Jack Barnes



Today’s sharpening inter-imperialist conflicts are fueled both by the opening stages of a world depression—what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions

and class battles—and by the most far-reaching shift in Washington’s military policy and organization since the U.S. buildup toward World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, and draw satisfaction from being “in their face” as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

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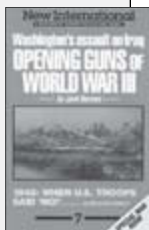
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Belarus resumes shipping Russian oil

Continued from page 2

pipeline networks in Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus through which its gas and oil is shipped to Europe.

A year ago the Kremlin cut oil and gas supplies to Ukraine until the government in Kiev agreed to pay a sharp price increase to \$95 per TCM. The price was subsequently raised again, to \$130.

Russia has the world’s largest natural gas reserves and is thought to be third in oil assets. Last year its average oil production of 9.2 million barrels a day was more than that of any other country, including Saudi Arabia, according to *Investor’s Business Daily*.

The European Union receives 25 percent of its gas and 30 percent of its oil from Russia. Half of that is shipped through Belarus.

Moscow is using that leverage to buy into pipeline networks across Europe. It purchased a 50 percent minus one share in Wingas, a joint venture with BASF that has 1,243 miles of pipelines in Germany and the largest underground gas storage site in Europe. Russia is building a pipeline under the Baltic Sea to ship directly to Germany.

In December, Royal Dutch Shell “was all but forced to cede control” to Gazprom of its exploration and production on Sakhalin Island, off Russia’s east coast, noted the *Wall Street Journal*.

“Three key issues are at stake,” said the *Financial Times* in a January 10 editorial on the trade dispute between Russia and Belarus—“energy security, the fate of Belarus, . . . and the response to Russia’s domineering behavior in the former Soviet Union.”

Young Socialists build January 27 antiwar march

BY ROSS HOGAN

NEW YORK, January 16—Over the past week, members of the Young Socialists have been taking part in actions to oppose the biggest escalation of the imperialist war in Iraq since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of the country. The Young

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

Socialists have participated in demonstrations from New York to Chicago and Los Angeles, demanding “Troops out now!” and “Not one penny, Not one person, for Washington’s wars.”

Buses are being organized from nearly 30 states around the country for the January 27 march in Washington to demand “Bring the troops home now!” (See front-page ad.)

In New York State alone 30 buses are being organized, from New York City to Albany and Syracuse. Twenty-two

buses are coming from Pennsylvania, 21 from New Jersey, and 11 from Massachusetts.

More information on transportation can be found by contacting the Young Socialists at youngsocialists@mac.com; or YS, 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018, Tel: (212) 629-6649; local *Militant* distributors (see directory on page 8); or United for Peace and Justice at www.unitedforpeace.org, Tel: (212) 868-5545.

Representatives of some of the more than 60 organizations sponsoring and building the January 27 march in Washington held a meeting here tonight at the offices of United for Peace and Justice in Manhattan. March organizers reported that the demonstration is building well across the country. In New York, a number of unions have signed on recently, including Service Employees International Union Local 1199 and the United Federation of Teachers.

Fill the buses!



Trial opens in L.A. for cops who killed unarmed youth

BY WENDY LYONS

LOS ANGELES, January 8—“Suicide by Cop”—that’s the defense the Downey police presented in a jury trial that opened here today for killing Gonzalo Martínez by submachine gun.

The trial is taking place because the victim’s parents, Norma and Norberto Martínez, sued the city of Downey, a suburb of Los Angeles, and two cops for the wrongful death of their son.

On Feb. 15, 2002, police officers chased and shot 26-year-old Gonzalo Martínez, in an attempt to pull him over for alleged drunk driving. Martínez was cornered and surrounded by eight cop cars. The young man was unarmed. After sitting in his car for a period of time wounded, Martínez stepped out and was gunned down by the police. Cops claim they thought he was reaching for a gun. A retired schoolteacher who saw the incident from her window testified that the victim made no such motion.

Martínez’s parents have fought for nearly five years for justice, organizing many protests. They have also reached out to other victims of police brutality and encouraged them to stand up. And they have made their case known in Argentina, their country of origin, where it has received significant media coverage.

Kris Mohandie, who calls himself a forensic psychologist and is frequently used by police as an “expert witness,” testified on the cops’ behalf that in his opinion Martínez wanted the police to kill him. Mohandie is the author of the article “Clinical and Forensic Indicators of ‘Suicide by Cop,’” published in 2000 in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*. He testified at the trial that in a recent “study” he did of 707 shootings by cops, one-third of the victims forced the police to kill them.

“This suit is not about winning money,” said Norma Martínez, it’s about putting the cops on notice that they can’t get away with murder.”

Free the Cuban Five! Defend the Cuban Revolution!

BY BEN O’SHAUGHNESSY

NEW YORK, January 15—The Young Socialists joined about 120 people, including many youth, in a “Three Kings Party for the Cuban 5” held here January 13 (see article on page 6). In recent months we have helped organize and participate in other actions calling for the release of the five Cuban revolutionaries, including the Sept. 23, 2006, national demonstration in Washington, and local picket lines and movie showings.

The five men—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, and René González—are five Cuban revolutionaries serving draconian sentences in federal prisons across the United States after being framed-up by the FBI and convicted on charges that were not backed up by evidence. They were on an internationalist mission to defend the Cuban people by providing information on counterrevolutionary organizations that have a record of murderous attacks on Cuba carried out from U.S. soil. These Cuban-American groups operate with impunity from their safe havens in this country.

In 1998, FBI agents arrested the five men and railroaded them to prison on charges of conspiracy “to commit espionage” for the government of Cuba and conspiracy “to act as an unregistered foreign agent.” Gerardo Hernández was also charged with conspiracy “to commit murder.” The five were convicted in a federal court in Miami in 2001 and were given sentences ranging from 15 years in prison to a double life term.

The case of the Cuban Five is one of many examples of Washington’s 45-year ceaseless economic and political war against Cuba.

Cuba’s socialist revolution remains an example for the oppressed and ex-



National Committee to Free the Cuban Five
Sept. 23, 2006, march in Washington demanding freedom for the Cuban Five. International campaign is now under way between January 10 and April 30 to expand support for their case.

ploited around the world. The Cuban people and their revolutionary leadership continue to defend, respond to, and promote the interests of toiling humanity worldwide. For this reason the U.S. rulers have never forgiven Cuba’s working people for overthrowing the Batista dictatorship, taking state power, and opening the door to the socialist revolution in the Americas.

The Union of Young Communists, Federation of University Students, and other Cuban youth organizations have issued a call for “youth and student organizations, associations, and all young people of the world in general to act” to build greater solidarity between January 10 and April 30 with the Cuban Five and demand their immediate release. The campaign will conclude with an International Youth Solidarity meeting set to take place in Havana April 29–30. The Young Socialists have enthusiastically endorsed this call and seek to collaborate with other youth groups as part of this stepped-up campaign to demand “Free the Cuban Five!”

‘Militant’ sub renewal drive

Continued from front page

bought copies of the *Militant* or subscribed just in Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois over the last month. Most have been meat packers seeing the paper at entrances of plants where they work. These include several of the six Swift factories that immigration agents raided December 12 across the United States, arresting nearly 1,300 workers. The response to the *Militant* is largely due to the paper’s consistent news coverage of the impact on working people of these raids, and its editorial support for workers’ demands to free those arrested, end deportations, and legalize all the undocumented.

Hundreds more have picked up the paper at actions against police killings, at political events in defense of the Cuban Revolution, and as a result of work to build the January 27 march on Washington demanding “Bring the troops home now!”

Most of the subscriptions sold during the fall circulation effort are expiring now. The renewal drive offers a chance to get back in touch with these people at house meetings or elsewhere, get to know them, talk to them about politics, learn from their experiences, and encourage them to get involved in political activities along with *Militant* dis-

tributors. This includes building the January 27 rallies and other mobilizations to protest the U.S.-led war in Iraq, actions to fight police brutality, and activities to demand U.S. hands off Venezuela, which can also point to the example of the Cuban Revolution for the world’s toilers.

As an aid to these efforts, those who renew or buy a new long-term subscription can also purchase several books and pamphlets at a substantial discount during the five-week campaign: *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* for \$1; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, or *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*, for \$5 each; and issues 12 and 13 of *New International* for \$25 together (see ad on this page).

At the January 27 antiwar actions any new subscriber can also take advantage of these specials. In addition, *New International* no. 12, featuring “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun,” will be on special that day only for \$10 along with any subscription.

Join the effort! Renew your sub and encourage coworkers, fellow students, friends, and relatives to sign up too. To order a bundle at 70 cents per copy or join sales teams, please contact the *Militant* directly or distributors near you (see directory on page 8).

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— ON THE PICKET LINE —

New Zealand: Meat workers fight company speedup plans

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Meat workers at the Affco beef processing plant in Feilding returned to work under their existing contract January 11 after pushing back a company attempt to impose speedup. Affco had been delaying the recall of the workers after a seasonal layoff that usually ends before Christmas.

At a January 7 Meat Workers Union meeting, workers rejected a company demand to increase the kill from 250 to 275 beef per day with no increase in staffing or hours. Affco was projecting an eventual increase to 300. The workers did agree to open negotiations with the company on increasing the daily kill.

As part of this, Affco would also have to guarantee a minimum 40-week season for the first shift.

Tony, a worker attending the union meeting, told the *Militant*, “The ink had barely dried on our contract and the company came back to us demanding concessions. If we let them get away with it, they will use it against workers at the other Affco plants too, and it won’t stop here. They will be back next season asking for more. We are people, not machines, but they don’t care if we break down.”

—Annalucia Vermunt

Garment workers in Saipan strike to protest pending plant closure

Garment workers in Saipan, Northern Mariana Island, a U.S. colony in the Pacific, conducted a hunger strike and

then a sit-down strike in mid-December to protest plans to close Concorde Garment Manufacturing in February. Most of the workers, newly recruited from China, “were refusing to work unless they are reimbursed recruitment fees and tax rebates are settled,” reported the online garment and textile industry publication fibre2fashion.com. Concorde, the largest garment plant in Saipan, will be the 12th factory to close there since January 2005, when quotas on textile shipments to the United States were ended.

—Brian Williams

Postal workers in Portugal conduct nationwide strike

Postal workers in Portugal conducted a nationwide strike December 27, followed by a two-day walkout in sorting and dis-

tribution centers. The strikers demanded better working conditions and an end to a government plan to subcontract out jobs, potentially resulting in layoffs of hundreds of workers, according to the Sindicato Nacional dos Trabalhadores dos Correios e Telecomunicações, which represents many of the workers. The Portuguese postal company, CTT, employs 13,000 people. More than 50 percent of postal workers in the north and 40 percent in the south joined the walkout, reported the *Portugal Resident*. “When some workers gathered in a picket line to try and stop trucks from private mail handling companies from leaving the warehouses,” reported the *International Herald Tribune*, the police intervened against the unionists.

—Brian Williams

U.S. gov’t to require ‘tamper-proof’ IDs for port workers

BY RÓGER CALERO

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced January 3 that it will require more than 750,000 port and maritime workers to undergo extensive criminal background and immigration checks in order to obtain a “tamper-proof” identification card. Part of the government’s “war on terrorism,” the new requirement will affect thousands of undocumented immigrants as well as workers with a criminal record who served out sentences or paid fines.

Starting in March, workers at several ports will be required to apply for the cards. Within 18 months all port workers will be required to have them. The program will be implemented by the Transportation Security Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard, divisions of the DHS.

The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card would give unescorted access to truck drivers, longshore workers, and seamen to “secure” port areas and vessels.

Applicants will have to prove they have legal work documents and have not committed any of the crimes included on a long list under new rules drafted by the DHS.

Among the disqualifying convictions are those for spying, sedition or treason, as well as murder, improper transport of hazardous materials, or illegal possession or purchase of explosives. Workers will have to seek a waiver to obtain the identification card if they have been convicted of a crime in a long list that includes illegal possession of firearms, bribery, robbery, and extortion. Those who were previously ordered into a mental health center for drug or alcohol addiction treatment must prove they completed a rehabilitation program before receiving the ID card.

“The government is stopping people with felonies from going to work, after they have fixed their lives,” Carl Wilcox, a member of International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1416 at the Miami port, told the *Militant*. “Why take a man away from his job, holding against him something from the past?” Wilcox, a dock worker for six years, said the port bosses are going to take advantage of this measure “to get new workers and pay them less. It’s just another way to take our money.”

The AFL-CIO objected to the financial burden imposed by the application for the TWIC, saying it “repeats the security and criminal background checks already performed by the U.S. Coast Guard.” The union officials said, however, that they

agreed with creating a biometric ID card for “transportation security.”

Seamen, longshore workers, and port truck drivers are already among the most regulated workforces. They must clear security and criminal background checks before they are issued licenses or documents to enter restricted areas and transport hazardous materials.

“It’s a hoax because it is conducted under false pretenses as a means of harassing workers,” ILA Local 1416 member Jimmy Florence told the *Militant*. “All day we are checked for ID and birth date, with each entry and exit from any building or area. They’re constantly checking. This is by the Metro Dade police officers,” he said.

The new measure will threaten the jobs of thousands of port drivers. Of the 110,000 truck drivers who pass through the country’s port terminals, a large proportion are Latino immigrants, many of them undocumented.

“A cut in the work force could be devastating, as a nationwide work-stoppage earlier this year demonstrated,” the *Wall Street Journal* noted October 17. “As few as 10 percent of all truckers at Los Angeles–Long Beach picked up containers on May 1, when pro-immigration groups called a ‘Day Without Immigrants.’ Freeways normally jammed with immigrant-

driven rigs were virtually free of trucks.” Many port drivers in Houston, Miami, and New York–New Jersey will also be heavily affected.

The TWIC card is a component of the Maritime Transportation Security Act, passed by Congress in 2002 with solid bipartisan support. Homeland Security began introducing the new ID cards in November 2004 at 26 sites, including East and West Coast ports.

The new card will cost up to \$159 and be valid for five years. It will hold an electronic photo and an integrated chip storing the holder’s fingerprints and other personal information.

The federal government plans to impose such an ID card much more broadly. “Ultimately, as many as 6 million transportation workers in rail yards, airports and seaports will have to buy the card to gain access to secure areas,” the *Portland Press Herald* reported January 4.

In addition, government agencies



A U.S. Customs cop inspects containers with mobile gamma ray scanner at the port of Long Beach, California. Capitalist politicians have been pushing for more “antiterrorist” measures.

plan to bring some 8 million federal employees and contractors under a new, standardized identification card system by 2008.

Capitalist politicians have been pushing for even further “antiterrorist” measures in the transportation industry. Democratic senators Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton have been demanding more stringent “port security” measures, accusing the Bush administration of not doing enough.

Ruth Robinett and Deborah Liatos in Miami contributed to this article.

— 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO —



January 29, 1982

WASHINGTON—Braving record-breaking sub-zero temperatures and heavy snowfall, nearly 10,000 people turned out here January 15 to protest growing attacks against Blacks and in support of legislation making Martin Luther King’s birthday a national holiday.

Rev. Ben Chavis, co-coordinator of the National Black Independent Political Party (NBIPP), opened the rally with the following invocation:

“As we stand on the grounds of the Capitol of the United States of America, we know—we know, Oh God, what it’s like to be Black in America. We know what it’s like to be poor in America. We know what it’s like to be hungry in America. And we come here today, Oh God, praying for thy spirit and thy strength to give us the courage to fight back the racism of Ronald Reagan. To fight back and to make Martin Luther King’s birthday a national holiday.”



January 28, 1957

For the second year in a row, President Eisenhower has proposed the largest peacetime budget in history. Forty-five billion dollars, or roughly two-thirds of the entire budget for the fiscal year beginning next July, will be spent in the United States and abroad to prepare for nuclear war. Another ten percent, or \$7.4 billion will go directly into the coffers of big corporations, banks and insurance companies as “interest” on the national debt.

It’s the duty of the American Labor movement to oppose the atomic war budget with all its strength. In the first place the budget provides only a pittance for social welfare. Secondly, the budget proposes to utilize the wealth produced by American workers and farmers to deliver atomic death and destruction to the insurgent colonial peoples who are rightfully fighting for their freedom.



January 30, 1932

We are sure that *Unser Kampf* [“Our Struggle” in Yiddish] will delight our comrades: for the first time comrade Trotsky’s article on the situation in Germany will be printed in the Jewish language. Greetings from our French comrades, who hope to spread *Unser Kampf* among hundreds of Jewish speaking workers in France. Letters from our comrades relating to the struggles in their localities and in the particular industries from all over the country.

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Two more miners killed in W. Virginia

BY RYAN SCOTT

PITTSBURGH, January 15—James Thomas, 48, of North Tazwell, Virginia, and Pete Poindexter, 33, of Rock, West Virginia, were killed on the job last week at a McDowell County coal mine in Cucumber, West Virginia. The two workers died after a roof collapsed shortly before 11:00 a.m. January 13, according to the *Charleston Gazette*.

At the time, the two miners were working more than one mile deep in the mine. Their deaths bring the toll in U.S. coal mines to three in the first two weeks of 2007. Last year, 47 coal miners were killed on the job, the most

fatalities since 1995.

The company said the workers who died at the Cucumber Mine were part of a crew doing “retreat mining.” In this technique rooms are mined out and pillars of coal remain. Once workers reach the end of the coal seam, the miners begin to mine backing out towards the surface. The object is to go after the remaining pillars of coal, which is highly dangerous. As the crew does so, the mine roof loses its support from the pillars and collapses. Many miners call the practice “robbing the mine.”

Retreat mining or “pillar recovery” has long been a deadly practice that has cost many lives. Between 1989 and 1996, a quarter of all U.S. roof and rib fatalities took place during retreat mining. At least 13 of the 63 roof-fall deaths nationwide from 1996 to 2005 occurred during pillar recovery, according to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA).

During 2004 and 2005, when four miners were killed in Kentucky while “retreating,” state governor Ernest Fletcher ordered a hazardous study of the technique. Although the study showed the dangers involved, neither

the state nor federal governments took any action.

In a 2001 report, former West Virginia governor Robert Wise was encouraged to closely examine, and possibly ban or tightly restrict, the practice. But Wise took no action. Throughout central and northern Appalachia “retreat mining” remains common.

Tony Oppegard of Lexington, Kentucky, a former MSHA attorney, said the practice is “the most dangerous type of mining there is.” He added, “I think it’s highly unlikely that the state will consider outlawing retreat mining, it’s too pervasive.”

The Cucumber Mine is operated by Brooks Run Mining LLC, a subsidiary of Alpha Natural Resources, which owns 66 mines, mostly in Appalachia. Some 82 percent of the coal the com-



Relatives of coal miners await news about loved ones after January 13 fatal roof collapse at mine in Cucumber, West Virginia.

Thirteen miners a day killed on job in China

BY JACOB PERASSO

Thirteen miners were killed and nine injured in a January 12 gas explosion at the Niuxinhui Coal Mine in Shanxi province, China. Thirty miners were working underground at the time of the blast. Three unnamed government officials in northern China were blamed for the accident and fired for lax supervision, according to the *Brunei Times*.

In a separate incident, a Chinese reporter, Lan Chengzhang, working for China Trade News, was reportedly attacked and beaten by unknown assailants while conducting interviews January 9 at a coal mine in Shanxi. He died from his wounds the next day.

Shanxi is a center of the country’s coal mining industry.

Last year 4,746 miners—an average of 13 a day—were killed on the job across the country. This represents a 20 percent decline in the toll among China’s coal mines compared to 2005.

Smithfield workers join King Day march

Continued from front page
Militant at the King Day service.

The bosses said workers who did not come in would not be paid and might face other disciplinary action. However, they later dropped their threat to discipline those who missed work that day.

Smithfield spokesman Dennis Pittman told the *Fayetteville Observer* that 300 workers were absent. About the same number skipped work for last year’s King Day, he said. The union said that 500 workers stayed off the job.

At the King Day service, Frances Rogers told the *Militant* that she walked out after her first break. “Maybe I’ll get a half a point, but I shouldn’t get any points be-

cause this is a national holiday,” she said. Rogers reported that about 20 of the 50 workers in her department, where meat is removed from the hogs’ heads, did not come in, slowing down production.

“Not enough people took a stand. But it is a step forward,” Rogers told the *Observer*.

“We’re trying to get a union, and I’m for it 100 percent,” said Johnny Davis, a kill floor worker with eight years in the plant. Davis spoke to the overflow crowd of 500, mostly African Americans, who packed the pews of the church. The Smithfield bosses “try to scare us a lot,” he said, “but we’re not scared.”

About 1,000 workers, mostly im-

migrants from Latin America, walked out of the plant last November after the company fired several dozen workers it claimed were working with false immigration papers. The walkout ended when the company announced it would not penalize those who joined it, reinstate employees who had been fired, and give workers more time to clarify their immigration status.

Last year the company reported seven nonfatal injuries, a rate twice the national average, among its 91 workers. One of these was a roof bolter, with one year mining experience, who now has permanent disabilities, according to MSHA. During the last half of 2006, MSHA cited the mine with 32 safety violations, including six related to roof-control problems.

While many of those who took the day off or left work early today were Black, a number of Latino workers joined in.

Rafael Hernández, 48, a cut floor worker with more than nine years at the Tar Heel plant, said the demand for recognition of the King holiday was an opportunity to build more unity among workers in the plant. “I came to support my African American coworkers on their day,” Hernández said. “This is important because Martin Luther King fought for workers’ rights.”

One of the signs carried at the march following the church service read, “Workers united, never divided.”

The fight for a federal holiday honoring the civil rights leader was won and first observed 18 years after Martin Luther King was gunned down while in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968 to support a sanitation workers strike. Throughout that time marches and commemorations were organized in Black communities across the country to press for the holiday. These actions were also part of the broader fight for Black rights, and other struggles by workers for unions and better working conditions—a tradition that continues to this day.

The campaign for the holiday was galvanized by Stevie Wonder’s 1980 song *Happy Birthday*, a tribute to King. The following year Wonder led a march on Washington of 100,000 and delivered petitions signed by 6 million people demanding the holiday. President Ronald Reagan, who had opposed the holiday, signed it into law on Nov. 2, 1983, after Congress approved the King Day bill.

Janice Lynn and Glova Scott contributed to this article.

New York event: ‘Free the Cuban Five!’

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK, January 13—“Cuba has the right and the duty to protect itself,” which is what the Cuban Five were doing when they were arrested and framed-up by the FBI, said Rodrigo Malmierca, Cuba’s ambassador to the United Nations, at a meeting here tonight. Some 120 people attended the “Three

Kings Party for the Cuban 5,” held at the main auditorium of Service Employees International Union Local 1199.

The event was part of a stepped-up campaign to educate and win support for the release of the Cuban revolutionaries, known as the Cuban Five (for the names of the five and details on their case see YS column on page 4).

“Nothing and nobody will make the five give up,” said Malmierca.

A new 12-minute Cuban documentary *Five Men, One Story* premiered here tonight. It pointed to the Aug. 9, 2006, decision of the 12-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals that reversed an earlier ruling of a three-

judge panel of the same court and upheld the convictions of the five. The three-judge panel had thrown out their convictions and ordered a new trial, on the basis that holding the trial in Miami prejudiced the jury.

“Neither mistreatment, the frenzied manner in which they were tried, nor the separation from their loved ones has diminished the very high morale of our heroes,” Malmierca said.

During the program people from the audience read poems and statements from the Cuban Five and their relatives. These expressed the determination of the five to continue fighting for their release and in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Sponsoring organizations included Casa de las Américas, Cuba Solidarity New York, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, New York City Jericho, New York Committee to Free the Cuban Five, Party for Socialism and Liberation, Popular Education Project to Free the Cuban 5, ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, Socialist Workers Party, Venceremos Brigade, Workers World Party, and Young Socialists.

From donations collected at the door, organizers made \$100 contributions toward the commissary expense account of each of the five imprisoned revolutionaries.

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Washington targets Iran

Continued from front page

Persian Gulf. The January 14 *New York Times* devoted the back page of its Sunday “Week in Review” section to outline this point. An article by John Kifner, titled “Gunboat Diplomacy: The Watch on the Gulf,” accompanied a large map of the Arab-Persian Gulf area, showing in detail the deployment of the U.S. Fifth Fleet and other warships in the area.

The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) supervises all of Washington’s military operations in the region, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“CentCom, as it is known, has always been run by a four-star general from the Army or Marines. So why name a sailor—Adm. William J. Fallon—as CentCom’s new commander, as President Bush did earlier this month?” Kifner asked. “One word: Iran,” he answered. “Admiral Fallon’s appointment comes amid a series of indications that the Bush administration is increasingly focused on putting pressure on Iran and, perhaps, veering toward open confrontation.”

The USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* aircraft carrier and related attack vessels entered the Gulf December 11. A second carrier, the USS *John C. Stennis*, and its escort ships have been rerouted to join the *Eisenhower*. U.S. carrier battle groups normally transport about 15,000 troops, including a Marine landing force of 2,200. The carriers can carry 85 aircraft each. Admiral Fallon, Kifner pointed out, is a career bomber pilot in the U.S. Navy.

In his January 10 speech, Bush charged the governments of Iran and Syria with fomenting sectarian violence in Iraq and warned that Washington will “seek out and destroy the networks providing advanced weaponry and training to our enemies in Iraq.”

Any such networks “are outside Iraq,” said ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan in a January 12 column. “Otherwise, they would have been neutralized by air strikes already.

“So where are they? Answer: inside Syria and Iran. And Bush says we are going to ‘seek out and destroy’ these networks.” This suggests, he said, that “Bush has in mind a different kind of escalation—widening the war by attacking the source of instability in the region: Tehran.”

Washington accuses Iran of manufacturing many of the most sophisticated roadside bombs employed in Iraq against U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians. The U.S. government also charges that several thousand Shiite militia members have been trained in Iran by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards and the Ministry of Intelligence and Security.

Interviewed on the NBC-TV “Today Show,” U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice refused to rule out U.S. military intervention in Iran or Syria. “The President is saying that we are going to make certain that we disrupt activities that are endangering and killing our troops and that are destabilizing Iraq,” she said.

“If that includes attacks inside Iran and Syria is that on the table?” asked host Matt Lauer.

“Matt, obviously the President is not going to take options off the table and I’m not going to speculate,” Rice replied.

“The U.S. and its allies have also sought to seal off Iran’s ability to penetrate Iraq and ship arms there, with British forces stepping up patrols along the Iran-Iraq border and U.S. warships and aircraft

carriers increasing patrols in the Persian Gulf,” said an article in the January 12 *Wall Street Journal*. It added that U.S. forces have “intensified information-sharing with dissident Iranian groups such as Mujahedin-e Khalq,” and that the current measures aimed at Tehran have been in the works for six months.

The article said in its conclusion, “Under one possible scenario, U.S. forces could cross into Iran or Syria in pursuit of suspected insurgents or their allies, or use alleged Iranian activities inside Iraq as a pretext for a wider assault on Iran.”

The same day, U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates denied this is a plan. Targeting Iranian activities within Iraq, he said, “refers strictly to operations inside the territory of Iraq, not crossing the border.”

On January 12 Rice told the media that Bush issued a presidential order several months ago authorizing U.S. forces in Iraq to attack Iranians suspected of involvement in the fighting. The night of Bush’s nationwide address on Iraq, U.S. troops raided an Iranian office in Erbil, in Iraqi Kurdistan, and arrested five Iranians and confiscated files and computers. In December, GIs detained several Iranians at the office of a Shiite cleric in Baghdad.

Bipartisan support firm for U.S. war in Iraq

Continued from front page

constitution does not allow them to stop the “commander in chief”—including through cutting the funds for the war. As the headline of an article in the January 11 *Financial Times* aptly put it, however, “Congress is helpless only out of choice.”

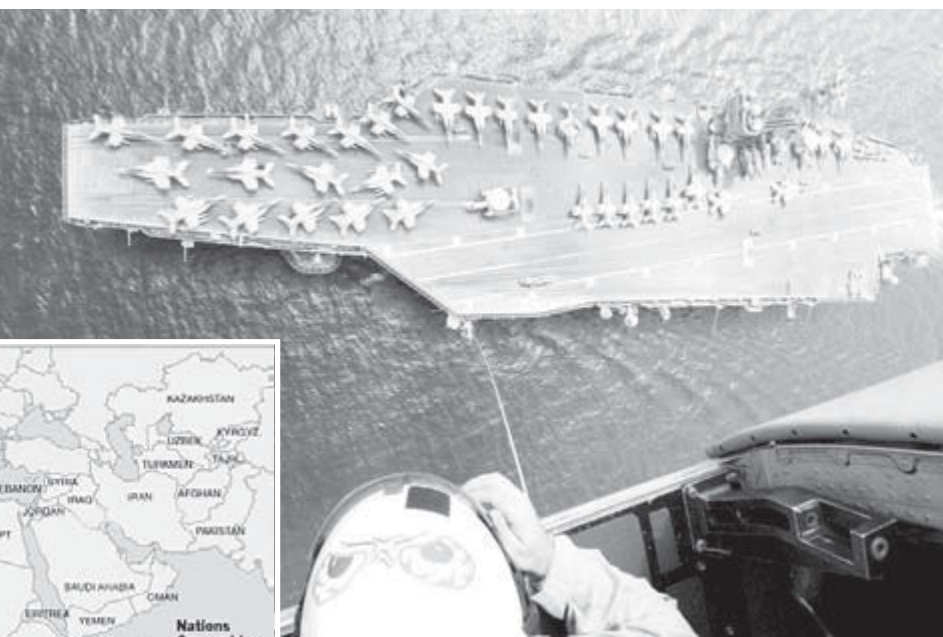
Statements by many critics of the Bush administration have made it clear that, whatever complaints they express, bipartisan support for Washington’s war aims in Iraq and the region remains strong.

“America cannot simply wash its hands of Iraq and go home,” said the *New York Times* in a January 14 editorial. “For starters, Iraq is in imminent danger of violently breaking apart. . . . Iran has already become more formidable and dangerous.”

The bulk of the additional troops will be deployed in Baghdad, and 4,000 of them will be sent to nearby Anbar province. They will be targeting anyone who gets in the way of establishing a stable government that would be friendly to U.S. interests in the region. This includes going after Shiite militias, such as the Mahdi Army led by Muqtada al-Sadr, whose forces operate in and outside the Iraqi government and have been responsible for indiscriminate killings of Sunnis, a record similar to that of Sunni-led death squads. The government headed by Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki has a strong base among al-Sadr’s supporters.

This sectarian fighting among bourgeois factions vying for a bigger share of power claimed the lives of more than 34,000 Iraqis and wounded another 36,000 last year, according to a United Nations report released January 16. These figures are three times higher than those Baghdad released earlier.

During the January 14 “60 Minutes” interview, Bush told host Scott Pelley that critics of his plan have “an extra respon-



Above: USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* aircraft carrier (seen from a helicopter), and its battle group entered Arab-Persian Gulf December 11. A second carrier battle group is to join the *Eisenhower*. Left: countries whose names are shown on the map are under the jurisdiction of U.S. Central Command.

The *Times* of London, meanwhile, reported January 7 that Tel Aviv is currently training two squadrons to strike Iran’s nuclear sites using nuclear “bunker-buster” bombs. “Air force squadrons based at Hatzerim in the Negev Desert and Tel Nof, south of Tel Aviv, have trained to use Israel’s tactical nuclear weapons on the mission,” the *Times* said. “The preparations have been overseen by Major General Eliezer Shkedi, commander of the Israeli air force.”

The Iranian sites to be targeted, according to the *Times*, are those in Arak, Natanz, and near Isfahan.

Washington and Tel Aviv charge that Iran’s nuclear program is aimed at making atomic bombs, not for peaceful purposes. On December 23 the United Nations Security Council imposed sanctions on Iran for failing to cease uranium enrichment, which is necessary to produce fuel for nuclear reactors slated to generate energy. Enriched at higher levels, uranium can also be used for nuclear arms. Tehran insists its program is aimed at providing needed energy for development.

In 1981, the Israeli Air Force bombed and destroyed the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq.

sibility to show us a plan that will work.” He said he would fight any attempt to cut funding for the increase in troops.

Carl Levin, a Democrat and chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he is working with a bipartisan group to pass a nonbinding resolution “simply saying that we do not agree that more troops are the answer.”

John Murtha, also a Democrat and chair of the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, said he would use hearings on a \$100 billion supplemental request for the war from the White House to show that sending more troops could deplete the military’s strategic reserve in case of conflicts with Iran or Syria.

Bush’s national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, said January 14 on ABC’s “This Week” television program that funds for the extra troops are already in the 2007 budget.

Meanwhile, articles in big-business dailies have highlighted the absence of any serious alternative in ruling-class circles to the Bush administration’s escalation of the war.

After expressing disappointment at the president’s plan, an editorial in the January 11 *New York Times* concluded, “We have argued that the United States has a moral obligation to stay in Iraq as long as there is a chance to mitigate the damage that a quick withdrawal might cause.”

In its January 14 issue the *Times* editors took for granted that more troops are going to be sent to Iraq. After much criticism of Bush, what was their advice to Democrats? “Congress should continue asking hard questions,” they said. “And it must insist on real answers before acting on any new requests for money to support Mr. Bush’s plans to send more troops to Baghdad. Congress has the authority to attach conditions to that money, imposing benchmarks and

timetables on Mr. Bush.”

In a January 11 *Financial Times* commentary, Jacob Weisberg, editor of *Slate.com*, said that Congress can pass a law barring the president from sending more troops, limit military tours of duty, and set deadlines for withdrawal, in addition to cutting the funding. “When they say they are incapable of stopping Mr. Bush’s plan, what congressional Democrats really mean is that they are afraid to oppose it,” he said.

In the CBS interview Bush said Iraqi premier Maliki has assured him that all militias, including al-Sadr’s, must put down their arms or be dealt with by Iraqi and U.S. forces. Washington now maintains its troops will have a “green light” to enter any neighborhood and will not be hampered by previous restrictions placed on them by the Iraqi government.

Last August Maliki sharply criticized a U.S. military assault in Sadr City, a Baghdad suburb and a stronghold of Muqtada al-Sadr’s forces.

Maliki’s administration depends on al-Sadr’s support within the Shiite electoral bloc, the United Iraqi Alliance, against their common rival, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which has the strongest ties with Tehran.

In the CBS interview and subsequent comments to the press, Bush expressed his disapproval at the taunting of Saddam Hussein by al-Sadr’s supporters, who shouted “Muqtada! Muqtada!” as Hussein stood on the gallows. “It looked like it was kind of a revenge killing,” Bush said January 16, hinting that this could be used to go after al-Sadr’s militia.

Reaction to the January 15 gruesome hanging of Saddam Hussein’s half-brother, Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, in which he was decapitated by the rope, brought new outrage among Sunnis against the Shiite-dominated regime in Baghdad.

1918–19: German workers fight for revolutionary gov't

Below is an except from an appeal broadcast by the Soviet government two days after the opening of the 1918–19 German revolution. It is from The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power, one of Pathfinder's books of the month for January. Part of a multivolume series on the Communist International, this book shows the important role of the German revolution—both its rise and defeat—in the International's formation. On Nov. 9, 1918, workers and soldiers

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

toppled the German empire and forced an abrupt end to the world war. The victory, following the Russian Revolution a year earlier, spurred other revolutionary struggles and hastened the formation of Communist parties across the continent. Copyright © 1986 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

To all German workers', soldiers', and sailors' councils:

We have heard by radio from Kiel that Germany's workers, soldiers, and sailors have taken power. The Russian Soviet government congratulates you with all our heart and joins you in mourning



Revolutionary workers in Germany win support of soldiers at barracks in Berlin on Nov. 9, 1918. Sign carried above reads: "Brothers, don't shoot!"

those who have fallen in the glorious struggle for the workers' liberation. Unfortunately they will not be the last victims. We also learned from these broadcasts that Prince Max von Baden still heads the government, and [Friedrich] Ebert, who supported Wilhelm and the capitalists for four years, is to become Reich chancellor.

Workers, soldiers, and sailors of Germany: so long as you tolerate a government consisting of princes, capitalists, and [Philipp] Scheidemanns, then you do not really have power. The Scheidemanns together with the Erzbergers will sell you out to capital.¹ In the armistice agreement they will arrange with the English and French capitalists for you to surrender your weapons. Soldiers and sailors, do not give up your arms, or the united capitalists will rout you. It is

essential that you genuinely take power everywhere, arms in hand, and build a workers', soldiers', and sailors' government headed by [Karl] Liebknecht. Do not allow them to foist a national assembly upon you. You know what the Reichstag got you.

Only the workers', soldiers', and sailors' councils and a workers' government will inspire the trust of the workers and sailors of other countries. Such a government will propose an honorable peace to the English and French workers. We are firmly convinced that they will follow your and our examples and settle accounts with their capitalists and generals. Then an honorable people's peace will be signed.

It is essential to link the fight for peace and freedom with the fight for bread. In Russia there is enough bread for you and

us in the Ukraine, in the Kuban, and on the Don. That is why the English government is trying to get quickly through the Black Sea to south Russia, where it will help Generals Denikin, Krasnov, and Skoropadsky snatch the workers' bread. Our Red Army is fighting heroically against the bands of workers' enemies, who are also supported by your generals and the Scheidemann government. If you want bread, then it is essential to act quickly, before the British steal it away. The German workers', soldiers', and sailors' councils must immediately give the German soldiers in the Ukraine the order, by radio and by sending delegations. Krasnov's forces are very weak. While the Red Army attacks these bands from the north, together we can crush them in a few weeks, and then there will be bread for you.

Workers', soldiers', and sailors' councils: the Scheidemann government chased the Russian Soviet government's envoy out of Berlin for fear that he would be able to establish the link between German and Russian soldiers. We cannot send delegates to you immediately, until you have reined in Generals Hoffmann and Beseler, because the German generals in Lithuania and Poland block our way. Contact us by radio, call the Moscow and Tsarskoe Selo radio stations and let us know what is happening in Berlin. We are doing everything possible to send bread to you as quickly as we can.

Long live international solidarity of workers and soldiers! Long live the alliance between the free Russian workers and the German soldiers and sailors!

Long live the German Soviet republic!

The Russian workers', peasants', and soldiers' Soviet government

¹The German Social Democratic Party leadership had collaborated with Matthias Erzberger, a leader of the Catholic Center Party and a prominent critic of the kaiser's government, in the latter stages of the war.

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8

The Militant January 29, 2007

‘Workers united, never divided’

The Martin Luther King Day action by meat packers at the giant Smithfield plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, has strengthened the fight for a union there and is an example for other workers. It was a fitting way to mark this holiday. For millions King Day is both a commemoration of the mass mobilizations by working people who are Black that brought down Jim Crow segregation in the South and an opportunity to highlight the struggles against racist discrimination and brutality today. Winning King’s birthday as a federal holiday was itself the result of a struggle, the high point of which was a 100,000-strong march on Washington in 1981.

Leading up to this year’s celebration of King Day, about 4,000 of the 5,000 workers at the Tar Heel hog slaughterhouse signed a petition asking for the holiday as a paid day off. With typical arrogance, the company dismissed the request and threatened to penalize those who took time off. Nonetheless, some 500 meat packers took the day off or left work early January 15. Many attended a King Day march and memorial service in nearby Fayetteville, where several Smithfield workers spoke. The company later dropped its threat to discipline those who missed work.

This action builds on the November 16–17 walkout by 1,000 Smithfield workers, mostly Latin American immigrants, to protest the firing of dozens of employees accused of having false Social Security documents.

That protest forced the bosses to agree not to penalize the strikers and to reinstate the fired workers, giving them more time to resolve the issue of their papers.

The Martin Luther King Day initiative was an effective way for Black and immigrant workers—the majority of the workforce—to forge stronger solidarity in action and undercut company attempts to divide them by nationality and language. It was a boost to the years-long fight to organize a union in face of brutal job conditions and abusive treatment—in a plant that processes 32,000 hogs a day to squeeze out maximum profits for the wealthy owners at the expense of workers’ lives and limbs.

The walkout and the ongoing struggle at Smithfield register the increased self-confidence of immigrant workers, which was demonstrated in the mobilizations of 2 million last April and May to demand the legalization of all undocumented workers. It was also seen in the protests against the December 12 immigration police raids at Swift packinghouses in six U.S. states.

These actions have strengthened the entire working class. And they underscore the fact that the only way to prevent bosses from pitting the U.S.- and foreign-born against each other is to organize all workers into unions, and to use union power in defense of all working people under attack by the employers and the government.

As the sign held by one of the marchers in Fayetteville aptly put it, “Workers united, never divided.”

ACLU sues Rhode Island cops for ‘racial profiling’

BY JOHN HAWKINS

BOSTON—The Rhode Island chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a federal suit January 8 against the state police, challenging the legality of the July 11 arrest of 14 Guatemalan immigrants and the turning of them over to immigration authorities.

The lawsuit, filed by ACLU attorney V. Edward Formisano on behalf of 11 of the individuals, argues that the actions by the police violated the state’s Racial Profiling Prevention Act, as well as the constitutional rights of those arrested to be free from discrimination and from unreasonable search and seizure.

The 14 were traveling in a van on interstate highway I-95 when the driver, Carlos Tamup, changed lanes without signaling.

Rhode Island state trooper Thomas Chabot stopped the van, confirming that Tamup’s license and registration were valid, and that the driver had no criminal record. Then the cop opened the van’s doors and, using Tamup as a translator, asked everyone for identification. When some did not produce any ID, Chabot asked for citizenship documents, which no one was able to produce.

The trooper informed everyone he would escort them to the Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Providence. According to the complaint, Chabot told Tamup that if anyone attempted to escape en route to Providence he would be shot.

“Since the license and registration papers of the

van’s driver were valid, and there was never any suggestion of criminal activity, the questioning and detention of the passengers was clearly based on one element: their ethnic appearance. This is the essence of racial profiling,” said Rhode Island ACLU executive director Steven Brown, according to a January 8 ACLU news release. “That State Police officials have unequivocally supported these actions demonstrates the need for legislation to restrict these problematic law enforcement practices.”

Commenting on the significance of the suit, Brown said, “It’s unusual for undocumented workers to come forward and file complaints against the police as these people have done. It’s a testimony to their courage and determination, especially since they . . . all face potential deportation proceedings.”

Four days earlier the state ACLU issued its fourth report in two years on racial profiling in the state. “The report documents that Blacks and Latinos are not only disproportionately stopped by the police but that they are twice as likely to be searched,” Brown told the *Militant*, even though members of oppressed nationalities are less likely to be found with contraband.

Other high-profile incidences of such conduct include the backyard arrests in Charlestown of seven Mexicans after they failed to provide adequate identification to inquiring police officers; and the searching by cops of the majority Latino members of the Central Falls high school soccer team after Coventry football players accused them of stealing items from the locker room.

contribute regularly.

Josefina Otero
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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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.

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Enclosed is a check. It should pay for nine six-month subs or four one-year subs and one six-month sub for prisoners. Thanks for having this fund. I will try to

LETTERS

Protest in Denmark

On December 16, 1,500 people demonstrating in support of the Youth House, a cultural center for youth in Copenhagen, were surrounded by police. A total of 273 were arrested.

District Attorney Asger Thylstrup concluded that the charges against them do not hold water.

Virtually all demonstrations held in benefit of the Youth House since its conception in 1982 have been suppressed by police. During four protests in late 2006, 641 arrests were made.

Tobias Eriksson and Juana Donoso
Malmö, Sweden

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War in Somalia

Continued from front page

disarm the population.

In the last week of December, thousands of Ethiopian army troops, backing the “transitional” government based in the southwestern town of Baidoa, routed the Islamist forces that for six months had controlled Mogadishu and much of Somalia’s south. That government, based on various clan leaders, was set up in 2004 by Washington and European imperialist powers to fill the vacuum of central authority prevailing in Somalia since 1991. However, it was too weak to take over Mogadishu until the Ethiopian invasion.

Bombings by U.S. Special Forces

As the SICC militias were besieged in the south, U.S. Special Forces gunships launched bombing attacks against them beginning on January 8.

After five days of fighting in the southern town of Ras Kamboni, Somali and Ethiopian troops, backed by MiG fighters, captured the last SICC stronghold, chasing its forces into nearby forests, according to Somalia’s new defense minister, Col. Barre “Hirale” Aden Shire. Some SICC militiamen reportedly remain in hiding in the capital.

Washington said its bombing was aimed at several al-Qaeda leaders in Somalia. An unnamed senior U.S. official told the Associated Press that none were killed in the air strike.

The U.S. Navy has moved additional forces off the Somali coast, aiding the ground operations as well as “monitoring maritime traffic and intercepting and interrogating crews on suspicious ships,” AP reported. With the arrival of the USS *Ramage* guided missile destroyer, there are now five U.S. warships, including the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* aircraft carrier.

The British charity Oxfam reported January 12 that air attacks on fleeing Islamic forces had killed 70 nomadic herdsman near the town of Afmadow. “Bombs have hit vital water sources as well as large groups of nomads and their animals who had gathered round large fires at night to ward off mosquitoes,” Oxfam said.

The fighting has left nearly 200,000 Somali refugees cut off from relief supplies near the border with Kenya.

Martial law declared

Meanwhile, the “transitional” parliament voted January 13 to give the government of President Abdullahi Yusuf the authority to declare martial law for a three-month period. Two days later the national security agency shut down Somalia’s main broadcasters, three radio stations and al-Jazeera TV, accusing them of “instigating violence.” The day before, clan leaders signed an agreement with the TFG to lay down their arms and integrate their militias into the national army. Somalia’s clan-based militias reportedly total 20,000 fighters.

Government and Ethiopian soldiers have begun house-to-house weapons searches in parts of Mogadishu to enforce the disarmament order. In a country with little government authority up to now, many residents carry weapons.

Given the weakness of the government and the unpopularity of the Ethiopian troops among many Somalis, Washington and its allies in Europe are pushing to establish a “peacekeeping” force of 8,000 troops from other African countries. BBC reported January 15 that an African Union delegation was meeting in Mogadishu to discuss the matter. So far only the Ugandan government has offered troops.

U.S. and Somali officials said a small team of U.S. Special Forces entered southern Somalia as part of Washington’s military operations in the area. Reuters news agency called it “the first known case of U.S. military boots on the ground in Somalia” since U.S. troops ended their 1993–94 invasion of that country.

The Ethiopian troops that intervened in Somalia have been trained, equipped, and supplied with intelligence by U.S. forces at Washington’s base in neighboring Djibouti, where the 1,500-strong Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa was set up as part of the U.S.-led “global war on terror.” The Special Forces gunships that bombed southern Somalia flew out of the Djibouti base.