

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Congressional stimulus act gives billions to businesses**  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 08 FEBRUARY 25, 2008

## Socialist candidate: 'Immigration laws benefit the bosses'

BY NED MEASEL

WASHINGTON—"As president, I would veto any immigration reform bill that does not include immediate and unconditional legalization of all undocumented workers," said Róger Calero February 9. The Socialist Workers Party candidate for president began his three-day tour in the Washington, D.C., area by joining 150 immigrants and their supporters in Richmond, Virginia, to protest a raft of anti-immigrant bills being considered by the state legislature.

In discussion after discussion the Socialist Workers candidate spoke about the need for unity among workers and why working people need our own labor party based on fighting unions. Fighting against attacks on workers who are immigrants is part of a larger struggle to advance along this line, he explained.

"As president I would expose the various proposed immigration reform laws in Congress as benefiting the bosses by maintaining immigrants in second-class status to serve as a super-exploited pool of labor," Calero told a 36-year-old unemployed worker, Gomez.

"This is the kind of candidate we need," said Gomez, "a worker who is living through the same things as the  
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Militant/Seth Dellinger

Róger Calero, right, campaigns at February 9 rally in Richmond, Virginia, against anti-immigrant bills being discussed by state legislature. "As president, I would veto any immigration reform bill that does not include immediate legalization," he said.

## Report paves the way for Afghanistan troop 'surge'

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—A report by the conservative American Enterprise Institute (AEI) argues for a "surge" of U.S. forces in Afghanistan similar to what has been carried out in Iraq. It is among several reports contending that Washington and its allies are losing their war in Afghanistan.

The Pentagon is sending an additional 3,200 marines to Afghanistan. The U.S. government is also pressing NATO allies to send more troops, especially to southern Afghanistan where fighting against al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other Islamist militias has been heaviest.

The authors of the AEI report included several specialists who shaped the escalation of U.S. troops in Iraq, including retired U.S. Army Gen. John Keane. The Iraq surge followed closely the proposals in the AEI's "Iraq Planning Group." The AEI is referring to those who produced the latest report as the "Afghanistan Planning Group."

The main proposals in the report,  
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## Sugar refinery explosion kills 6 workers in Georgia

BY JACOB PERASSO

PORT WENTWORTH, Georgia, February 10—A deadly explosion ripped through a refinery here owned by Imperial Sugar the night of February 7. The blast killed at least 6 workers and sent 62 to the hospital; 2 are still missing.

Three days later, 17 of those hospitalized are in medically induced comas with severe burns. Three others remain hospitalized.

"There was fire all over the building," said Nakishya Hill, a machine operator who escaped from the third floor of the refinery. "I heard a loud boom and everything came down. When I got up, I went down and found a couple of people and we climbed out of there from the third floor to the first floor. Half of the floor was gone. The second floor was debris, the first floor was debris."

About 100 people were working in the area of the explosion when it took place. According to Imperial Sugar CEO John Sheptor, the plant had 450 employees.

Imperial Sugar acquired Savannah Foods & Industries, the producer of Dixie Crystals, in 1997. The company doubled in size, becoming the largest processor and refiner of sugar in the United  
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## Minnesota meat packers fight for new contract

Organize unity in face of boss attacks on union



Militant/Rebecca Williamson

"If we don't organize, we won't be able to defend ourselves," Dakota Premium worker Oscar Salgado, in hat, told February 9 union celebration in South St. Paul, Minnesota. At left, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 representative Rafael Espinoza translates program.

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota, February 9—"I've been getting messages from across the country to congratulate you on your victory," Don Seaquist, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, told members of the local at Dakota Premium Foods, at a victory celebration here today. "Now we move to get negotiations going."

Despite subzero weather more than 140 workers, family members, and supporters filled the union hall to celebrate the victory at Dakota and discuss the next steps in their fight. Two weeks ago a company-backed union

decertification effort was decisively defeated when workers voted almost 2-1 to stay organized in the UFCW.

Several workers spent the day preparing the meal for the party at the union hall or at their homes, while other unionists organized the music, set up the hall, and made other preparations. While everyone was in a celebratory mood, discussions pointed to the need to organize against continuing company attacks and for a new and better contract.

Seaquist opened the program at the celebration. He described the contract negotiations process the union local  
**Continued on page 9**

## Workers organize solidarity after tornadoes hit U.S. South

BY SUSAN LAMONT AND RACHELE FRUIT

LAFAYETTE, Tennessee, February 9—"There was no siren, no warning, nothing like that," said Michael Agee, standing in the rubble of what used to be his brother-in-law's furniture warehouse. Agee, who works at an aluminum plant in Carthage, Tennessee, was among the many volunteers and family members sifting through the remains of homes and small businesses in this section of town, one of the hardest hit by the tornadoes that struck Macon County February 5.

That night, a system of 67 tornadoes swept through parts of Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, and Georgia. In Macon County alone, 14 people were confirmed dead and 218 were

still missing as of today. Several hundred homes and trailers were destroyed, with hundreds more severely damaged. In the six states affected  
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# Immigrants leaving states with tough laws

BY STEVE WARSHHELL

HOUSTON—Tough anti-immigrant laws in Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Arizona have led to a growing migration of workers from these states into Houston, Dallas, and other parts of Texas.

The flight from Oklahoma began in October, a month before a new law known as House Bill 1804 took effect. The law makes it a crime to transport, harbor, hide, rent housing to, or employ undocumented immigrants. It also gives state police the powers of immigration cops, and requires local and state cops and county jails to verify people's legal status. Tulsa's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce estimates that 15,000–25,000 immigrants have left the area.

Oscar Jeovani Fernández, 36, is one of them. "I was working there in September, but they passed a law that allows the local police to act like immigration agents," he told the *Houston Chronicle*. "I came here 25 days after they passed the law—I wasn't going to let them experiment on me." Fernández, who made about \$600 a week working construction in Tulsa, said he's lucky if he can get \$150 a week as a day laborer in Houston.

On January 1, Tennessee joined Arizona in adopting legislation that levies significant sanctions against employers who "knowingly" hire undocumented workers. In both states employers caught doing so more than once can lose their business licenses.

Leticia Alvarez, an organizer for the Tennessee Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, said in an inter-

view that cops in nearby Nashville and other areas of the state are also directly linked to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) through a federal program known as 287(g). The program "allows local cops to arrest and investigate people for violation of immigration laws," she explained. "Since this program was put into effect in Nashville last year, 2,800 have been deported."

"Since then," said Eliu Maldonado, pastor of Ebenezer Christian Church of Springfield, Tennessee, "the local police, whenever they pick anyone up, they arrest them and fingerprint them, and send their names off to the ICE, no matter the offense. Once you get stopped, you get arrested, your car is towed, and you get put in jail.

"One of our church members was stopped just because he looked Hispanic," said Maldonado. "Now he is in jail in Louisiana looking at deportation. They are really abusing their powers." An estimated 1,000 immigrants have left Springfield, a town of 17,000, after

Continued on page 5

## Connecticut immigration law draws protest



A few thousand people demonstrated February 6 outside the city hall in Danbury, Connecticut, in defense of immigrant workers. The rally took place as the city council discussed a measure allowing the town's police to enforce federal immigration law.

The council approved the anti-immigrant measure 19–2 later that night. City officials claim cops will only investigate cases where an immigrant is suspected of committing a crime. Activists for immigrant rights say 21 workers were arrested last year while city and immigration cops were allegedly looking for a fugitive.

—CINDY JAQUITH

## Palestine rights backer marks 5 years in jail

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—Sami Al-Arian, a Palestinian rights supporter imprisoned on frame-up "terrorism" charges, will mark five years in prison February 20.

Al-Arian, a former University of South Florida professor, was indicted in 2003 on charges of "racketeering, conspiracy to maim and murder,"

and of providing material support to the Palestinian group Islamic Jihad. In December 2005 the government's case collapsed when a federal jury in Tampa, Florida, acquitted him of the terrorism charges and deadlocked on other counts. Even so, he was returned to prison while prosecutors decided whether to retry him on the deadlocked charges.

Under an agreement with the government, Al-Arian pled guilty to "conspiracy to provide services" to Islamic Jihad. On May 1, 2006, he was given the maximum sentence of 57 months, and was to be turned over to immigration authorities for deportation after serving his time. Al-Arian was scheduled to be released April 13, 2007.

Continuing the campaign of harassment, however, Al-Arian was then subpoenaed to appear before a grand jury investigating Muslim charities. When he refused to testify, he was held in contempt. The time Al-Arian

spent in jail in contempt status was not credited to his sentence under the agreement, effectively lengthening his punishment. On Dec. 13, 2007, a federal judge lifted the contempt status.

"Unable to convict Dr. Al-Arian before a jury, prosecutors have sought to mete out their own brand of justice through the grand jury system," wrote Jonathan Turley, Al-Arian's attorney in the contempt case, on his blog December 13. "It is a tactic used in other cases where . . . the government creates the perfect Catch-22 for unconvicted citizens: choose between a perjury trap . . . and a contempt charge for refusing to enter the perjury trap."

"The jury spoke clearly—not guilty, not guilty—and it is overdue that their decision be respected," said Reverend Warren Clark, according to the Tampa Bay Coalition for Justice and Peace.

For more information on Al-Arian's defense campaign, see [www.freesamialarian.com](http://www.freesamialarian.com).

## THE MILITANT

*Fight for safety on the job!*

*The employers' drive for profits is killing and maiming workers in the mines, refineries, mills, and plants. Read the 'Militant' to follow how workers are organizing to defend themselves and strengthen solidarity in the workplace.*



Militant/Brian Taylor

Coal miners protest unsafe mine conditions in 2006 in Alabama.

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# Power shortages hit S. Africa economy

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The South African rand fell against the 16 most-traded currencies in February amid concern that power shortages will curtail growth in Africa's largest economy. In January electrical outages shut down the country's vital mining industry for four days.

Power shortages in China, South Africa, and Argentina in January highlight the lack of energy sources and electrical capacity in nations saddled with legacies of imperialist domination. The lack of sufficient electricity is blocking these countries' ability to advance industrial development and meet the needs of millions.

In a February 8 televised State of the Nation address to parliament, South African president Thabo Mbeki said the situation "has precipitated the inevitable realization that the era of very cheap and abundant electricity has come to an end."

Since 1994, when the African National Congress came to power, South Africa has doubled the percentage of its population connected to the electrical grid. It now stands at more than 70 percent. But the country faces a challenge in building new power plants and bringing them on line fast enough to meet growing electrical needs.

Plants commissioned in 2003 and 2004 have yet to be built. An effort by the government to privatize the state-run Eskom power utility failed, as did its attempt to induce private investors to build additional power plants.

The electrical shortages affect key sectors of South Africa's economy. Nico Vermeulen, executive director of the National Automobile Association of SA, said car production in the country is vulnerable to the short-

ages. The head of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation said 13 car dealers have closed in the last three months due to the electricity crisis.

South African gold and platinum production is also expected to fall. As a result, the price of gold rose just over \$900 an ounce and platinum went up to \$1,819 an ounce in February. AngloGold Ashanti announced it expects a reduction in gold production by 400,000 ounces in 2008—and that is only if Eskom meets a sustainable power supply of 90 percent for the rest of the year.

Platinum is used in catalytic converters that are required by environmental laws in cars, trucks, and diesel engines to be sold in North America, Europe, Japan, and many other countries. South African mines supply nearly 80 percent of the world's platinum.

The electrical shortages have also impacted South African financial markets. JPMorgan Chase & Co. encouraged investors to cut their holdings in South African equities, reported Bloomberg February 7. The financial news agency said that for-

eign investor demand for South African stocks and bonds has fallen by \$2.6 billion.

"Investors are selling everything South African because of the worsening growth outlook, the current-account deficit and power shortages," said Victor Mphaphuli, a portfolio manager at Stanlib Asset Management in Johannesburg.

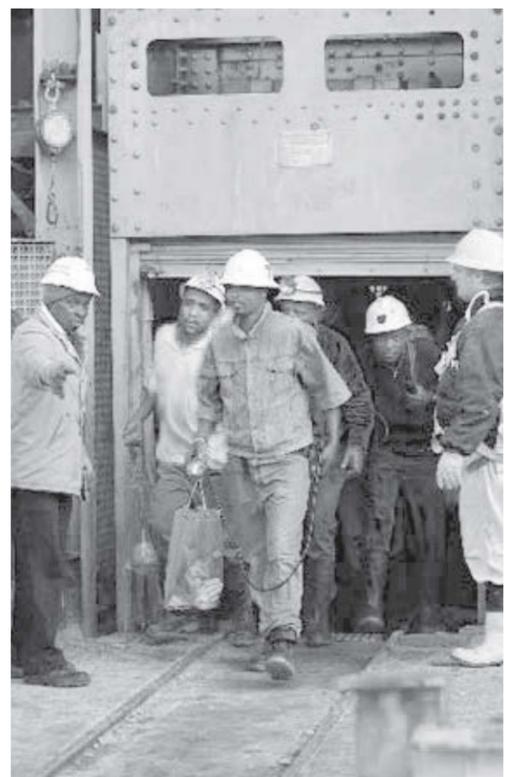
## Power shortages in China

Severe snow storms in January blocked the delivery of coal to power plants in China and left the country's coal-fired plants with as little as three days' worth of coal. Coal-fired power plants account for 80 percent of China's electricity.

President Hu Jintao met with coal miners inside one of the country's largest state-owned coal mines. He exhorted miners in state-owned mines to produce more coal and produce it faster.

Vacations for miners in Datong, one of China's largest coal regions, have been canceled. Miners at state-

owned mines are working overtime. The regular quota at one of Datong Coal Group's mines is 150,000 tons of coal per month. Government officials have asked workers to quadruple that figure to



A power shortage in South Africa idled some of the world's largest gold and platinum mines in January, curbing growth in Africa's largest economy.

600,000 tons for February, reported the *New York Times*.

Last year, the number of mining deaths in China was 3,786, the highest for any country in the world. But that was a fifth less than the previous year. The government closed thousands of small mines in 2006 in an effort to reduce fatalities and consolidate the industry into larger, more efficient operations.

Operators of several small mines that were closed due to safety problems have been trying to recruit workers and reopen. Government officials in Beijing insisted that the drive to produce more coal would not lead to a retreat in mine safety priorities, according to the *Times*.

COUNTRY	WITH POWER	WITHOUT POWER
Botswana	39%	1.1 million
Brazil	97%	5.7 million
China	99%	13.2 million
Gabon	48%	.8 million
Ghana	49%	11.7 million
India	56%	497.1 million
Indonesia	54%	107.9 million
South Africa	70%	13.2 million
Vietnam	84%	13.6 million

Distribution of electricity in some countries oppressed by imperialism

# Workers offer solidarity after tornadoes

Continued from front page

affected, nearly 60 people died, making these the deadliest tornadoes in more than 20 years. The death toll may still grow as officials and volunteers sift through the destruction.

"They asked people to volunteer, so I'm here," said Alberto González, 37, getting out of a pickup. "Today I help this man, because tomorrow it could be me." González, his brother Pablo, and his friend Fernando Martínez, all three lumber workers, were on hand to help clear the damage.

Among those impacted by the tornadoes that struck this rural county near the Kentucky border were several thousand immigrant workers, mainly from Mexico. Many work on tobacco farms in the area, at a sewing plant, or at a plastics factory in town.

Antonio Soto, 38, is helping to organize relief efforts at the Iglesia de Dios (Church of God). Volunteers are compiling a list of *desaparecidos* (the disappeared) in the Hispanic community and collecting funds to help the families of those killed—so far three—to send their bodies home to Mexico.

"This costs at least \$6,000 for each person," said Josué González, pastor of the church, where clothes and other aid is being collected. González said that the police, Red Cross, and other authorities have so far been of no help to the immigrant community in locating those missing.

"The roads in the worst areas have



Militant/Rachele Fruit

Lumber workers, from left, Fernando Martínez, Pablo González, and Alberto González, were among many working people who volunteered to repair damages after a tornado ripped through Lafayette, Tennessee, February 5.

been blocked off by the police, and we have only just gotten permission to help in the search for bodies," he said.

"But it's too late," Maria Hernández, from the Hispanic Association in nearby Red Boiling Springs, pointed out. "They won't begin the search until Monday at the earliest, and the storm came through last Tuesday night." Some of the missing may be in hospitals in other parts of Tennessee,

unable to contact their families, Josué González said.

President George Bush visited the area February 8, promising aid to those who need help rebuilding. But, in a *Militant* interview the next day, an employee of the Federal Emergency Management Agency described the hoops someone has to go through to qualify for federal aid, most of which is in the form of loans. The most repeated word was "eligibility."

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**Capitalist Tax Reform: Attacks on Working People.** Speaker: Bernie Senter, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 22. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Av, upstairs. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**Crisis in Kenya: Legacy of Imperialist Domination.** Fri., Feb. 22. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Blvd. Tel (515) 255-1707.

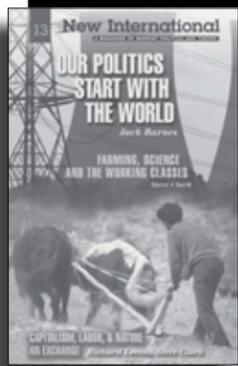
### New International no. 13

## Our Politics Start with the World

By Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semi-colonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced, reproduced, and accentuated by the workings of capitalism.

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# Number of packinghouse workers diagnosed with neurological disease grows

BY HELEN MEYERS

Fifteen workers at three meatpacking plants in the Midwest have been diagnosed with a rare neurological disease. All worked on or near “head tables” where pig brain tissue was removed using compressed air.

Twelve of the sick packers worked at Quality Pork Processors (QPP) in Austin, Minnesota; one at the Hormel plant in Austin; and two at Indiana Packers in Delphi, Indiana. The Austin Hormel plant adjoins QPP, and the affected Hormel worker worked in the rendering room directly below the QPP head table. Other workers in the Hormel rendering room are now being examined for symptoms.

The head table workers at QPP cut meat from the pig heads at a rate of 1,100 pigs an hour. They sliced off the cheek and snout meat, then inserted a nozzle into the head and used compressed air to remove the brain tissue.

State and federal health officials say that the air compression system sprays droplets of pig brain into the air. The workers could have inhaled small particles of brain matter, sparking an immune system reaction causing the body to attack its own nerve tissue. The affected workers show inflammation in the nerve roots in the lower half of their spinal cords. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has named the condition “progressive inflammatory neuropathy.”

According to the CDC, the three plants in the United States that used the air compression system to extract pig brains have all stopped using the procedure.

Although two workers at Indiana Packers have been diagnosed with the neurological disease, the Indiana Department of Health refused to identify the name or location of the facility, or to discuss the condition of the workers, citing privacy concerns.

Joe Chorpening, president of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 700, which organizes workers in the plant, released a statement January 18. “One can assume that Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels

and his state government doesn’t care about regular working people,” the statement said, based on the government’s effort to “hide information that might protect workers from neurological illness.”

Susan Kruse, who used to work at QPP, fell ill in November 2006. She went to her own doctor assuming the illness was not work-related. She, like others, had symptoms of fatigue, numbness, and tingling in the arms and legs. When Kruse’s doctor told her she could no longer work, she was forced to go on disability. She still has “heard nothing from the company,” she told the *Militant*.

Minnesota health officials have announced an expanding investigation of the QPP plant, to include thousands of former meat packers going back a decade to when the air compressor system was first installed.

Health officials have maintained that food processed in the plant remains safe to eat.

Meanwhile, at the JBS-Swift packing plant in Greeley, Colorado, Richard Rogers fell 20 feet February 1 while working alone in a storage room. He died after being unconscious for almost five days.

Rogers had worked at the plant for 16 years. His wife Hope told the *Greeley Tribune* that she is angry “because he was by himself when he fell, and he might have been conscious for a while.

“I didn’t find out about the fall until four hours later, when the hospital called me at home,” she added.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating.

## Pathfinder issues new ‘Cuba and Coming American Revolution’

BY DOUG NELSON

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes is a “book about the prospects for revolution in the United States, where the political capacities of workers and farmers are



today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. It is about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made.”

The above description is from the website of the book’s publisher, Pathfinder Press, which recently issued a new edition of the book with an attractive new cover.

The book tells the story of the Cuban Revolution’s political impact on a generation of young people in the United States in the early 1960s, the place of the revolution in building the communist movement in the United States, and its weight in the U.S. class struggle today.

A month before the Cuban people dealt Washington its first military defeat in the Americas in April 1961 at the Bay of Pigs, Fidel Castro said, “There will be a victorious revolution

## World youth federation meets in Portugal



WFDY

LISBON, Portugal—Representatives of 45 anti-imperialist youth organizations in 35 countries gathered here February 1–3 for a general council meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. Of the 69 delegates, the largest number came from youth organizations affiliated to Communist Parties in Europe, with smaller participation from youth groups in the Americas, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. The meeting adopted a political statement and a plan of action for 2008, and accepted an offer from the Belarusian Republican Youth Union to host the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students in Minsk in the summer of 2009.

—OLYMPIA NEWTON

## Sweden: iron miner working 2,300 feet below ground killed

BY DAG TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—A 21-year-old worker was killed February 2 in a large cave-in at the LKAB iron mine in Kiruna, northern Sweden. The young man was working 700 meters (1 meter=3.3 feet) below ground, driving a truck hauling waste rock when falling rocks crushed the truck.

The cave-in was caused by a strong earthquake. That can happen because of tensions in the rock due to the excavation of iron ore. This one was so

strong that it could be felt in the center of town. Rocks also fell on a machine driven by another miner, but he was not hurt.

“The company has failed completely with its safety work,” said Harry Rantakyro, president of the Mineworkers Local 12 of the Metall union, in a phone interview. “It is not listening to miners with many years of experience.” Rantakyro criticized the company for pressing too hard for production, which means that reinforcement work in the mine becomes insufficient. There is too little time to secure the galleries, or sections, after finishing excavation of one gallery, before blasting begins in the next, he said.

Last year between 130 and 150 accidents with falling rocks were reported in the Kiruna mine.

Rantakyro said that the production speed has to be reevaluated, and new methods employed. “Nothing can be holy, even if it hurts profits,” he said. A few days after the fatal accident, another cave-in occurred. A truck was hit by falling rocks, but no one was hurt.

Company president Martin Ivert announced that a commission of inquiry would look into possible changes in excavation methods.

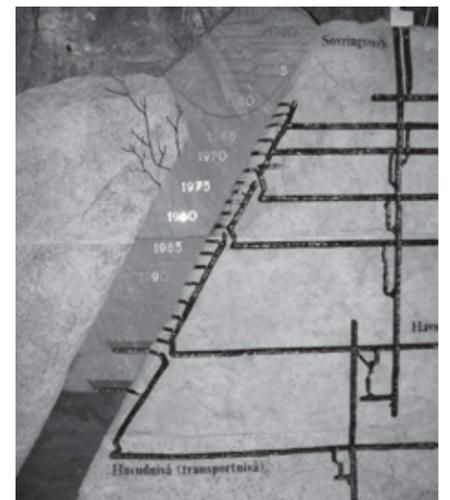
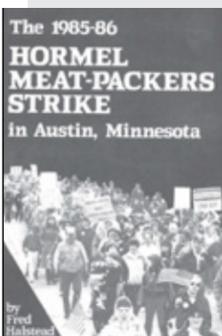


Diagram shows depths being mined at LKAB mine in Kiruna, Sweden.

For further reading...



The 1985–86 Hormel Meat-Packers Strike in Austin, Minnesota

By Fred Halstead

The hard-fought strike against Hormel opened a round of battles by packinghouse workers that—together with strikes by paper workers, cannery workers, and western coal miners—marked a break in the rout of the U.S. unions that began with the 1981–82 recession. \$5.

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or from distributors listed on page 8

### Using the new edition

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* was originally published in 2001. Last November it was re-done with additional photos and a new foreword by the publisher’s president, Mary-Alice Waters. In early February, the book came out with a new cover.

The impetus for the new edition  
Continued on page 7

## ON THE PICKET LINE

### California campus workers rally for higher wages

SANTA CRUZ, California—Several hundred workers, students, and others demonstrated at the University of California, Santa Cruz, January 31 to demand higher wages for campus workers. After a spirited rally in front of the campus bookstore the protesters marched to the chancellor's office.

Workers told the *Militant* that with rising prices for rent and food, they are having a hard time paying their bills. Custodians, for example, start at \$10.90 an hour. After seven years they make only \$11.97.

The workers, including food service workers, janitors, shuttle bus drivers, and others, are members of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299. Their contract expired the day of the demonstration.

—Betsey Stone

### Vietnam factory workers strike for more time off

Nearly 10,000 workers struck a toy factory in Danang, Vietnam, January 30, demanding higher bonuses and more time off for the Tet lunar New Year holiday, Agence France-Presse

reported. The plant is owned by Hong Kong-based Keyhinge Industrial Co.

"Many of us live very far away," a worker told the *Lao Dong* (Labor) newspaper. "With this low bonus and short holiday, we can't even manage to go home for Tet."

The *Tien Phong* Vietnamese daily reported that a strike began the same day at a shipbuilding plant in southern Khanh Hoa province. The plant is operated by Hyundai-Vinashin, a Korean and Vietnamese joint venture. Workers at a seafood plant in Hau Giang province also reportedly walked out that day.

Agence France-Presse reported that the minimum wage for laborers was raised in January, but "workers have complained the wage rise has not kept pace with spiraling food, fuel, and other consumer prices." The government reports prices were up 14 percent in January, compared to a year ago.

—Paul Pederson

### After strike, Ford workers in Russia agree to wage deal

Workers at a Ford auto plant near St. Petersburg, Russia, have approved a contract with wage increases of 16 to 21 percent. The auto workers struck



Melissa Black

Members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 3299 at the University of California Santa Cruz rally for higher wages January 31.

for four weeks in November and December.

The deal includes a pledge "not to repeat strike action in the immediate future," according to a union leader interviewed by Reuters.

The plant produced 75,000 of Ford's

Focus models last year. Management plans to invest \$100 million to boost capacity to as much as 125,000 Focuses in 2009 and open production on another model.

—Paul Pederson

# Miners in Poland win raise, end strike

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—Miners at the Budryk mine in Silesia, southern Poland, have ended a 46-day strike after winning a 10 percent wage rise. The settlement comes amidst the fastest economic growth in Poland in a decade.

The settlement includes establishing a commission to standardize wages in all of Poland's mines. In early January, 63,000 miners at 16 mines owned by Kompania Weglowa won a 14 percent raise after threatening to strike.

The Budryk miners were demanding a 20 percent raise. Their strike involved an underground protest and mass picketing. Fifty miners' wives and relatives went to Warsaw January 16 to press Economy Minister Waldemar Pawlak to agree to the miners' demands.

Poland is Europe's biggest coal producer, and relies on coal to generate 90 percent of its electricity.

Unemployment in Poland has fall-

en from 20 percent in 2004 to 11 percent today. Half that decline is due to emigration. "The labor market is tight," complained Dariusz Filar, a member of the Polish central bank's monetary policy committee.

While the official inflation rate stands at 2.2 percent and is rising, wages rose an average of 11 percent last year.

Wage raises for public workers haven't kept pace with those in the private sector. While on the campaign trail last year, Donald Tusk of the Civic Platform party promised, "In the Polish economic miracle, there will be a place for a radical in-

crease in public sector wages."

Now prime minister, Tusk is trying to cut spending in order to comply with budget deficit requirements for adopting the euro as currency. Teachers, railroad workers, nurses, and other public workers have all placed demands on the new government. Customs workers organized a work-to-rule campaign, taking vacation days and calling in sick en masse, to press demands for pay raises. On January 30 the government sought an agreement to settle the action, which had gridlocked the country's border. Lorries were backed up in long lines trying to cross the European Union's eastern border.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 25, 1983

On March 1 a trial will begin in United States District Court in Los Angeles. The immediate defendant is the Socialist Workers Party. But the target is every single organization and individual working to advance the cause of the oppressed and exploited.

A suit has been brought against the Socialist Workers Party by a former member, Alan Gelfand. Gelfand was expelled from the party in 1979 for going into court against the SWP.

Gelfand is asking the court to restore his membership in the SWP; to declare that his expulsion from the party was a breach of contract subject to court regulation; and to order that the members of the SWP responsible for his expulsion be removed by the courts from the leadership positions to which they were elected by the membership of the SWP.

District Court Judge Mariana Pfalzer, who is presiding over this case, has repeatedly refused to throw out this suit.



February 24, 1958

Governor Faubus and the white supremacists of Little Rock have scored an important victory. Minnie Jean Brown, one of the nine Negro students in Central High School, has been expelled. The racists are jubilantly crowing their new slogan—which has already been displayed on placards within the school—"One down and eight to go!"

In Central High a small core of racist students began a twofold campaign. By threats and violence they intimidated the small group of white students who had displayed friendliness to the nine Negro students. Simultaneously they began an increasingly vicious campaign of harassment and violence against the Negro students.

Minnie Jean Brown, 16, was particularly singled out for such treatment. In several instances she flared back at her tormentors. For this she was twice suspended.



February 24, 1933

Berlin, February 11—While the Fascist hordes are at the helm of government in Germany they have not yet conquered. Throughout the Reich there is an ominous calm, a lull before the storm, but interrupted surreptitiously by the barking of guns in clashes between workers and Fascists. But these are only vanguard skirmishes before the battle.

The situation as a whole leaves a painful impression as if the German working masses do not yet really know what is at stake. The advent of the Hitler government found them stunned, bewildered, and unprepared, left in the lurch by the deliberate treason of the Socialist party bureaucrats and the criminal failures of the Communist party Stalinist leadership.

Yet all is not lost. The issue is not yet decided. The German workers have previously proven their gigantic fighting capacity and they will still have a decisive word to say.

## Immigrant laws

Continued from page 2

a series of ICE raids in December.

The exodus has also caused concern among bosses who depend on undocumented immigrants for their profits.

"Thirty percent of our Hispanic labor force left Tulsa," Greg Simmons, owner of Simmons Homes, Tulsa's largest home builder, told the *Chronicle*. "It was a huge hit, and it was almost overnight."

In Tennessee, business owners and managers attended a January 20 public information session in Nashville on the new law.

"It's trade show time in our industry and I would say this is the topic of conversation," Andy Hall told the *Tennessean*. He is a greenhouse manager at a nursery. "Folks are worried," he said.

# Calero tours D.C. area

Continued from front page rest of us.”

Calero pointed to the recent victory of meatpacking workers at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota, who defeated an attempt by the boss to get their union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, decertified. Pointing to how immigrant and native-born workers came together to defend the union there, Calero said the victory was an example for the entire labor movement.

## Candidates' qualifications

That evening, Calero addressed a Militant Labor Forum in Washington. Commenting on the notion that the election of Hillary Clinton would be of historical importance because she is a woman, Calero said, “That historical moment is behind us if you consider the number of women heads of state there have been around the world.” Electing a woman in and of itself hasn’t “improved the conditions confronting women,” he said. What matters above all is the *class* they represent, and Clinton represents the ruling class.

Part of the discussion following Calero’s talk took up a similar idea that a victory by Barack Obama would represent progress because he is African American. Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers 2008 national campaign chairperson and candidate for Washington City Council-at-large, explained the class differentiation among Blacks in the U.S. today. He noted that Obama has tried to distance himself from struggles in the Black community, such as the fight for justice for the Jena Six that erupted last fall, or protests in his home state of Illinois demanding justice for youth slain by cops.

Manuel said that, like Clinton and John McCain, Obama is backed by prominent ruling class families, major big-business media, and sections of the capitalist class. Unlike when African Americans first began being elected to public office in the 1960s and ‘70s, there is now a long experience with capitalist politicians who are Black who have demonstrated their trustworthiness to the ruling class.

“What would mark progress for the working class,” said Calero, “would be electing a candidate of our own.” Calero noted that he is more qualified to hold the office of the presidency

than Clinton, Obama, or McCain, because of his experience as a rank-and-file worker fighting for unionization, against deportation, and to end the imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The leading capitalist candidates, on the other hand, address these questions from the point of view of how best to advance the interests of a tiny minority of wealthy families in the United States.

The following day Calero and his supporters campaigned among night shift workers as they came out of the A.M. Briggs meatpacking plant in Washington. Several workers stopped to talk. Dwaine Hinson, who has worked in the plant for six years, explained that their union contract is coming up for renewal. “We have to have a meeting with just the workers to discuss what we need,” he said. This didn’t happen last time. “We were just handed a contract and told to vote for it. We can’t let that happen again.”

## Socialist candidate: No to hospital closing!



Militant/Angel Lariscy

TRENTON, New Jersey, February 7—Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president Róger Calero addressed a rally here today against the closing of St. James Hospital in Newark. “We should demand the hospital management open the books,” he said, in reference to the claim that the hospital is losing \$6 million per month. “A committee of workers should be appointed to run the hospitals in the interests of the vast majority.” Calero also pointed to the need for government-guaranteed universal health care from cradle to grave. His comments received enthusiastic applause.

—ANGEL LARISCY

# On campaign trail, Kennedy discusses struggles for unionization, legalization

BY DAVID ROSENFELD

SEATTLE, February 9—“When socialist candidates are elected, we will use our offices to fight for the interests of the working class,” Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president told a meeting of 40 people at the Militant Labor Forum Hall here today.

“We would subpoena the owners of the Imperial Sugar refinery and launch an investigation into the explosion at the refinery that blew up near Savannah, Georgia,” she said. At least six workers were killed in the blast. “We would demand that they open their books, that we see their safety records, that we see how the bosses put profits over safety of the workers.”

On the same weekend that Democrats Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama and Republican John McCain campaigned in the Seattle area, Kennedy took her working-class message to warehouse workers, immigrant rights supporters, and others.

Chris Hoepfner, the socialist candidate for governor of Washington, joined Kennedy in speaking to workers coming off the day shift at the

Unionbay garment warehouse where he works. The workers there do not have a union. After learning that Kennedy was a longtime fighter to strengthen and organize unions, one worker asked, “How do you go about getting a union?”

Kennedy related her experiences in the fight to organize a union at the Co-Op mine in Utah. She described how workers began to



Militant/David Rosenfeld

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president of the United States, campaigns February 7 at garment warehouse in Seattle. After learning about Kennedy’s experience in the labor movement, a worker there asked her how to organize a union.

defend each other in face of unsafe working conditions and low wages. She related how they organized a sustained fight, including a 10-month strike, and how they reached out and won solidarity from the labor movement in the region.

“We all know that we’re exploited and underpaid,” the vice presidential candidate said. “What most workers don’t know is that we can change things if we fight together, both on the job and in the political arena. We can run industry.”

Workers can also “elect socialist candidates,” she said. “Imagine what a socialist caucus in Congress could

do to respond to attacks on workers.”

Kennedy received a warm response from 20 participants at a vigil in front of the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, protesting immigration raids and deportations. Immigrants from Oregon, Idaho, and Washington, are jailed there under deportation orders.

“We have to do more protests like this,” Lucy Rollins, a student from Evergreen College, told Kennedy. “We’re organizing a conference at Evergreen on May 15–18 in defense of immigrant rights, can you come?” Kennedy said her campaign would definitely be there.

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## Tour dates for Socialist Workers candidates

### Róger Calero

Houston Feb. 14–16  
Philadelphia Feb. 17–19  
Atlanta Feb. 20–22  
Carrollton, GA Feb. 23–25  
Newark, NJ Feb. 27–29  
Boston March 1–3  
New York March 6–8

### Alyson Kennedy

Los Angeles Feb. 14–16  
New Mexico Feb. 18–21  
Utah Feb. 23–26  
Des Moines, IA Feb. 28–March 1  
Pittsburgh March 2–4  
New York March 6–8  
Email: info@socialistworkers08.com

## Georgia socialist campaigns for job safety



Militant/Loretta Van Pelt

GARDEN CITY, Georgia, February 9—"Time and again the bosses speed up production for profit and cut corners on safety," said Jacob Perasso (left), the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in Georgia's 4th Congressional District, while campaigning here today. A February 7 blast at a sugar refinery a few miles from here killed at least six workers. "We don't have to lose our lives on the job," said Perasso. "We need to organize unions to defend ourselves, and strengthen unions where we have them. To win real and lasting safety on the job workers must take control over the speed of production, job conditions, and organization of work. The Socialist Workers candidates demand that all records of the Imperial Sugar Company be made public immediately."

—LORETTA VAN PELT

## Congressional stimulus act gives billions to big business

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The Economic Stimulus Act adopted by Congress February 7 provides billions in tax breaks for big business, but little—if anything—for most workers.

Nancy Pelosi, Democratic speaker of the House, called the bill "a great deal for the American people." President George Bush announced he would sign it, saying it "will help to stimulate consumer spending and accelerate needed business investment."

The law is part of the government's "solution" to the deepening economic crisis in the United States. But it will have little impact on those hardest hit by rising inflation and unemployment.

Under the measure people whose income was at least \$3,000 last year—through earnings, Social Security benefits, or disabled veterans' payments—will get a tax-rebate check. Those with higher incomes will get as much as \$600, with the rebate phasing out for individuals earning more than \$75,000. Those eligible for rebates will get an additional \$300 for each child in the household.

Many workers will be excluded altogether, such as those whose unemployment payments have run out without their being able to find work. Undocumented workers are explicitly denied the rebate, despite the fact that many pay taxes.

The bill cuts business investment taxes by \$44 billion for one year. It increases the size of home loans that can be backed or bought by government and semi-government housing and lending institutions, a measure aimed at appeasing the middle class.

Democrats initially said they would fight to get an extension of unemployment compensation into the bill. They quickly dropped that idea, along with a measure to increase funding for home heating aid.

Neither Democrats nor Republicans even considered raising the federal minimum wage, which stands at a miserly \$5.85 an hour. By summer 2009, it will

have risen to just \$7.25.

The number of "severely poor" individuals in the United States increased by 26 percent from 2000 to 2005, according to an analysis of the latest census by McClatchy Newspapers. The study found that almost 16 million people live in "deep or severe poverty," defined as a family of four with less than \$9,093 annual income, or an individual living on less than \$5,080 a year.

## 'Cuba and the Coming American Revolution'

Continued from page 4

came from Venezuelan publishing house Monte Avila, which published its own edition of the book last fall. The two publishers released the new editions jointly at the November 2007 Venezuela International Book Fair in Caracas.

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* directly addressed the theme of the fair itself: "The United States: A possible revolution." The theme was discussed in a five-day running forum at the fair. Waters took part in the debate as part of a diverse panel of speakers.

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* was the best-selling book at the Pathfinder stand there, with 150 copies sold. Many more were sold by Monte Avila.

The book will next be promoted at a panel presentation during the February 13–24 Havana International Book Fair in Cuba, and the publisher expects to find interest in the updated and improved version there.

The new edition is dedicated to Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González, "who today, even if against their will, serve with honor on the front lines of the class struggle in the United States."

The Cuban Five, as they are known, have been locked up in U.S. prisons since 1998 on frame-up conspiracy

## Sugar refinery explosion

Continued from front page

States, according to its website. Imperial Sugar made more than \$235 million in gross profits during 2006 and 2007.

'Antiquated' construction

The plant first opened in 1917. Fire officials said original tongue-and-groove woodwork and other materials dating back 90 years helped fuel the blaze.

The water pressure was weak when firefighters arrived. Capt. Matt Stanley, spokesman for Savannah Fire and Emergency Services, said he thought the refinery's "antiquated" water system was to blame.

Parts of the refinery were still burning three days after the explosion. Search and rescue crews had not yet searched the areas of the refinery that were still on fire and where the buildings were considered highly unstable.

"As far as we know it was a sugar dust explosion," Sheptor said the day after the explosion. He said the blast occurred in a storage silo where refined sugar is stored until it is packaged.

Sugar dust is combustible. Static electricity, sparks from metal tools, or a cigarette can ignite explosions. According to a 2003 study by the United States Chemical Safety Board, there are no federal standards for controlling the risk of dust explosions in many industries, although rules exist for grain-handling facilities.

More than 300 dust explosions killed more than 120 workers in grain silos, sugar plants, and food-processing plants in the last three decades. Such accidents can be prevented by cleaning up fine dust as it accumulates.

In an effort to obscure the company's responsibility for the blast, Savannah-Chatham County police chief Michael

Berkow said at a February 9 press briefing, "we are transitioning from a fire fighting, rescue and recovery operation to a criminal investigation." Sheptor spoke at the briefing but made no comment about the cause of the explosion.

"We are going to interview workers who were there that night," said Alan Shuman from the Georgia Fire Marshal's Office. "When we have an operation this big, we want to rule out anything that could be foul play or anything unnatural that could have occurred." Shuman said that "there is no indication of any criminal activity."

Workers cope with disaster

"It's just shocking to me to really see it, to walk in and see them like that—how bad they were, their faces, hands, arms, their whole bodies," said Hallie Capers, whose nephews John and Jamie Butler were both badly burned in the explosion. Dr. Jeff Mullins said the victims in critical condition "could be in the hospital for six-plus months."

"It was like walking into hell," Joyce Baker, a Red Cross first aid instructor, said. "We had approximately 13 men who were coming out and they were burned, third-degree burns on their upper bodies. And they were trying to sit down and the only thing that they wanted was to know where the friends were."

Douglas Milton, who works in the packaging area where the blast was centered, said he's been unable to reach several co-workers who were in the plant the night of the explosion. "Some guys on my floor, I haven't heard anything about them," said Milton, 37, who's been at the refinery for seven years. "I've been calling a lot of their cell phone numbers but I'm not getting any answers."

charges. They had been tracking the activities of counterrevolutionary organizations in the United States that have a history of carrying out acts of murder and sabotage against the Cuban people. *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* helps shed light on their incarceration as but one more way Washington seeks to punish the Cuban people for making and defending their socialist revolution.

In the words of Labañino printed in the book's introduction, the book gives a unique insight on "the direct influence of the Cuban Revolution, its example and impact, on the people of the U.S., and on the education of the revolutionary left movement and the movement in solidarity with our country." It gives evidence once again, Labañino adds "that our people are fraternal and invincible."

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# 'Rule by working class only safeguard for democracy'

Below is an excerpt from Pragmatism Versus Marxism, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. The author, George Novack, offers a Marxist appraisal of pragmatism as popularized by philosopher John Dewey. Novack joined the communist movement in 1933 and was a leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1992. Copyright © Pathfinder Press 1975. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

Dewey's conception of democracy crowns his pluralistic theory of society and his public service notion of the state. It is the crux of his entire philosophy.

In accord with his view that economic conditions and class relations do not determine the essence of political phenomena, he does not approach democracy as a historically produced and materially conditioned mode of government. He is the champion of a pure democracy "which never was on land or sea."

"The keynote of democracy," he wrote, is "... all those who are affected by social institutions must have a share in producing and managing them" (*John Dewey's Philosophy*, pp. 400-401).

Dewey is here painting the portrait of an ideal democracy, not the features of



Black students George Nelson and Leslie Hamm (center) leave Stratford Junior High School in Arlington, Virginia, Sept. 5, 1957, after being turned away by authorities. American democracy, Novack explains, has coexisted with chattel slavery, wage slavery, and imperialism.

any real one. None of the political democracies from ancient Greece to modern America meets these specifications. Each has been based upon relations of exploitation, exalted the rich over the poor, and restricted the participation of its people in the control of public affairs.

The Greek city-state republics were rooted in slavery, denied political rights to foreigners, slaves, and women, and were dominated by aristocrats. The democracies of the bourgeois era have been established on the inequalities of private property and the exploitation of wage labor by the capitalists. Their major policies have been formulated and executed by representatives of the wealthy classes. Many categories of citizens, including workers, women, Blacks, and young people, have been disenfranchised by various means. Even where all could vote, the power apparently vested in the electorate was actually exercised by the strongest and solidest section of the ruling class. American democracy has coexisted with chattel slavery, wage slavery, and imperialism.

Dewey believed that, while all this

might have been true of other countries and perhaps even the American past, such perversions of democracy no longer needed persist in the United States. Here all the conditions had ripened for the creation of an unrestricted and classless democracy. Only tradition, lack of scientific method, and inadequate education stood in the way.

However, something much more substantial than ignorance thwarts the expansion of democracy for the American people. That is the social, economic, political, and military supremacy of the monopoly capitalists. This "power elite," as the liberal sociologists call it, has no permanent attachment to democracy. It will tolerate the forms of democracy so long as these can be manipulated to its advantage and as long as the workers do not seriously challenge its rulership. But the leaders of this elite will not hesitate to discard such forms and turn to a "strong state" of a military, Bonapartist, or fascist character when the present system runs into a blind alley and they fear the loss of their privileged position.

The dollar democracy of the United States has been based upon the revolu-

tionary achievements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and upon an expanding, progressive capitalist economy which enabled the ruling classes to obtain the support, or at least the tolerance, of the middle and working classes. Jefferson believed that democracy could not be secure unless it rested upon an extensive class of small landed proprietors. He coupled the decentralization of political power with the wide dispersal of property ownership.

Today both ownership and power have become highly centralized. How is democracy to be saved and strengthened under such circumstances? Dewey relied upon "men and women of good will, drawn from every calling" who will unite to establish a classless society and a purified democracy. No single class will lead the way.

But a better democracy can be built only on the basis of a new and higher economic foundation. And this can be brought into being only by taking the means of production out of monopolist hands by nationalizing them. The organized working class is the only force in American society with the capacities to carry through such an assignment.

The creation of the "classless democracy" envisaged by Dewey is a historical impossibility and a theoretical absurdity. All the political democracies known to history have been based upon and backed by some class or combination of classes. And when the classless communist society of the future is attained, there will be no place for any form of state, democratic or dictatorial.

Meanwhile, the most pressing problem of political life today is not to effect a transition from class rule to a classless democracy, but to go from the decaying and narrowing democracy of the bourgeois order to a workers' democracy based on a nationalized and planned economy. The main agency for accomplishing this changeover is the independent organization and revolutionary action of the working class. A motley coalition of good-hearted and liberal-minded individuals drawn from all classes cannot do the job. The socialist rule of the working class can provide the only durable safeguard for democracy.

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# No worker has to die on the job!

From the sugar refinery explosion in Georgia, to 15 meat packers diagnosed with neurological disease, to the death of an iron miner in Sweden, working people are increasingly being killed and maimed as a result of the employers' "productivity drive." The bosses' speed-up, job combinations, and corner-cutting on safety bring to the fore labor's fight for health and safety on the job.

Death and maiming at work are preventable—if the health and safety of workers is the priority.

The February 7 blast at the Imperial Sugar refinery, which has claimed six lives thus far, is a good example. Sugar dust is combustible. It can be controlled in a refinery just like coal dust can be controlled in a mine.

Yet in the last 30 years more than 300 explosions of food dust have killed 120 workers. No federal regulations penalize employers who let the dust pile up, except in grain-handling facilities.

Fire officials say materials in the Imperial refinery that were nearly a century old contributed to the ferocity of the fire that swept the building. The refinery's outdated water system meant water pressure was weak when firefighters arrived. In factory after factory, bosses refuse to organize elementary maintenance and repairs of facilities and equipment. That would cut across the time we spend producing wealth to line *their* pockets.

Karl Marx, one of the founders of the modern

communist movement, wrote in 1867 that the factories are the site of "systematic robbery of what is necessary for the life of the worker while he is at work, i.e. space, light, air, and protection against the dangerous or the unhealthy concomitants of the production process." He warned that the factory owners will never pay heed to the safety of the workers unless forced to do so by trade union struggles and by independent, working-class political action. That statement remains true today.

It is only by organizing unions and using union power that workers can begin to combat the consequences of capitalism's drive for profits on our lives and limbs. The unions need to fight for control of line speed, job conditions, organization of work, and protection of the surrounding environment. They should demand the bosses open up their books so workers can see their "business secrets" for what they are: efforts to maximize their profits at the expense of the health and safety of the working class.

This fight cannot be limited to the workplace. It must also take place in the political arena. The working class needs its own political party, a labor party based on the unions, that will take on the Democrats, Republicans, and any other parties of the employers. That will be a step toward building the kind of revolutionary movement that can replace the capitalist rulers with a government of workers and farmers.

## Minnesota union victory celebration

Continued from front page

was headed into with the company, and how workers in the plant would be involved. "You have a voice at work," he said. "That's the point of the union."

Oscar Salgado, a worker in the boning department, said that what was "important is that we all participate, including in the union meetings. . . . This way the company will feel the heat.

"If not," Salgado continued, "we'll have the same as the last contract. If we don't organize we won't be able to defend ourselves."

### Fight for unity

"Yesterday they gave a warning to a Black worker," said Enrique Flores, who was part of a fight beginning in 2000 to win the union at Dakota. "There's discrimination against Black workers on the kill, but we'll fight against this. Now we have to unite, all of us. Now we have unity. If they call you to the office always take a coworker with you."

The February 7 issue of the *Workers' Voice*, a newsletter produced by workers in the plant, said, "In the past week five of our coworkers were fired. These firings and other harassment have one aim and one only—to cut across our renewed confidence and strength that we, the union members at Dakota, have gained with our victory. We are looking into these firings and our union representatives are helping to fight these attacks."

"We've shown we can overcome the divisions the company is pushing. We've shown we can beat back the firings," said boning department worker Rebecca Williamson. "We'll keep watching out for each other on the job."

Williamson, who thanked the relatives and community members present for their support, said that

the victory at Dakota "is important not only for us but for other meat packers and other workers. We should also support our fellow union members in the groceries that are in a contract fight. We'll step up the fight for what we want and we won't be intimidated."

"It does look like we have a union and unity," said Obdulia Flores, a kill floor worker involved in the sit-down strike in 2000 that opened the battle for the union in the plant. "It's hard work in there. By working together we'll get it done."

In closing remarks Seaquist invited the unionists to attend Wednesday meetings at the union hall and said, "Seven years ago we did it. Now we have to show the company—regardless of the color of our skin, or the side of the plant we work on, or whatever—we stand together."

### 'Militant' helps spread word on Dakota victory

Twenty-three workers at the Rochelle Foods, Inc. meatpacking plant in western Illinois picked up the *Militant* on their way into work February 9. Many were eager to learn about the union victory at Dakota Premium.

"We need to do that too," one worker said, referring to the successful effort to defend the union at Dakota. While many workers at Rochelle Foods belong to the union, those who perform sanitation duties work for a separate company and do not.

Over the next several weeks, *Militant* distributors in Chicago plan to field similar teams to Joslin, Monmouth, and Beardstown, Illinois—all sites of large meatpacking operations.

—JOHN HAWKINS

# Afghanistan

Continued from front page

which is to be published in March, are summarized in the February 1 *Army Times*.

They include deployment of an extra U.S. brigade into Kandahar and a marine battalion into Helmand this year, and two more brigade combat teams into southern Afghanistan next year.

The report calls for a more rapid expansion of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the broader use of Commander's Emergency Response Program money to build ANA forward operating bases in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

There are 43,250 NATO troops in Afghanistan, of which 15,000 are U.S. troops, according to NATO's International Security Assistance Force web site. There are about another 11,000 additional U.S. troops under U.S. command. NATO troops in Afghanistan expanded by 8,000 over the last year.

U.S. Gen. Daniel McNeill, head of NATO troops in Afghanistan, says he needs at least 7,000 more troops. The British government, which has 7,800 troops in Afghanistan, plans to send an additional 600 in May.

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates has been critical of the reluctance of NATO members to deploy larger numbers of troops and to deploy them in areas where there are likely to be higher casualties.

"I worry a great deal about the alliance evolving into a two-tiered alliance, in which you have some allies willing to fight and die to protect people's security and others who are not," Gates told a February 6 meeting of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He said he had written to all NATO defense ministers asking for larger commitments.

German defense minister Franz Josef Jung rejected Gates' request to send German soldiers and helicopters to southern Afghanistan where the heaviest fighting has taken place. Jung said the German government would instead deploy a couple hundred soldiers to replace Norwegian troops in northern Afghanistan, where casualties have been lighter.

Canada's prime minister Stephen Harper said Ottawa would withdraw its troops next year unless NATO sends additional troops to Afghanistan's southern region of Kandahar, where 78 Canadian troops have been killed.

### Strategy for Pakistan

The AEI report also proposes to overhaul the U.S. strategic approach to Pakistan. "Part of the problem is we've never had a really consistent, clear, long-term strategic idea for Afghanistan, let alone Pashtunistan or Pakistan," said an unnamed source cited in the *Army Times*. Pashtunistan is the name sometimes given to the region straddling the Afghanistan-Pakistan border inhabited by the Pashtun ethnic group.

The report says that al-Qaeda and its allies have established a major safe haven in Pakistan's Pashtun tribal area, and concludes that an integrated strategy aimed at the entire region, not just Afghanistan, is necessary for Washington to make progress.

The report proposes that Washington threaten Islamabad with unilateral U.S. strikes into Pakistani territory unless the Pakistani government takes initiative to clear al-Qaeda strongholds. It proposes that U.S. military aid to Pakistan be contingent on the Pakistani government reasserting its control in regional tribal areas, which traditionally have been somewhat autonomous.

National intelligence director Michael McConnell and CIA director Gen. Michael Hayden visited Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf in January to press him to allow the CIA wider latitude to conduct operations against al-Qaeda. According to the *New York Times*, Musharraf declined to allow expanded U.S. combat presence in Pakistan but discussed increasing the number and scope of armed Predator drone operations.

A missile fired, almost certainly by a Predator drone, on a village in the Pakistani region of northern Waziristan killed senior al-Qaeda leader Abu Laith al-Libi late January, according to the *Financial Times*.

### Correction

The article "Ottawa re-arrests man facing deportation under 'antiterror' law" in the February 18 issue of the *Militant* omitted the fact that Mohamed Harkat was arrested in Ottawa, Ontario.

## LETTERS

### Matrilineal society

The *Militant* recently ran an excerpt from [Frederick] Engels' explanation of the overthrow of matriarchal society and the origins of the oppression of women. *Militant* readers might be interested in a fascinating firsthand, autobiographical account by a woman who grew up in a matrilineal society—in the Himalayas—where

the mother right still prevailed:

*Leaving Mother Lake: A Girlhood at the End of the World* by Yang Erche Namu and Christine Mathieu.

Robert Dees  
Palo Alto, California

### Nice website

What a wonderful website! Congratulations on a job well

done!

Dave Rowlands  
by e-mail

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.