

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

U.S. rulers, allies turn
attention back to China

—PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 7, 2011

Rally in Chicago opposes grand jury witch hunt

BY JOHN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Chants of “FBI is out of line! Organizing is not a crime!” drowned out rush hour traffic here January 25 as more than 400 demonstrators rallied outside the Dirksen Federal Courthouse to protest the ongoing federal government harassment of 23 antiwar and Palestine solidarity activists in the Midwest.

Nine of the 23 had been summoned to appear before a federal grand jury earlier that day. Like their 14 counterparts who had previously received grand jury subpoenas, they refused to testify.

Maureen Murphy, cochair of the Chicago Committee Against Political Repression and an activist with

Continued on page 4



Chicago protest against government harassment of opponents of U.S. wars was joined by high school students demanding freedom for Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López. Militant/Laura Anderson

Immigrants fight firings at restaurants in Minnesota

BY TOM FISKE

MINNEAPOLIS—Several dozen workers, unionists, and others protested the firings of hundreds of immigrant workers at Chipotle restaurants in Minnesota January 20. A number of fired workers were part of the demonstration, which took place outside a Chipotle restaurant here.

Chipotle began firing workers December 9, telling them that the docu-

mentation they had presented to the company was insufficient to show their eligibility to work and that this would be their last day. The company said it had been the subject of an audit by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), furnished a list of workers whose papers needed to be checked, and had no alternative but to fire the workers.

Neither ICE nor Chipotle would say how many workers were fired, but ac-

Continued on page 5



January 20 protest at Chipotle restaurant in Minneapolis. Rafael Morataya/SEIU

Workers in Tunisia demand rights, jobs

Say officials tied to dictator must go



Kyodo via AP images

Working people from across the country demonstrate January 24 in Tunis, demanding jobs, democratic rights, and resignation of ministers tied to dictator who fled.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Working people and youth in Tunisia, having forced the dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to flee, are staying in the streets. Daily protests are taking place in Tunis, the capital, demanding the resignation of all ministers tied to Ben Ali’s party. Protesters are also demanding jobs, democratic rights, and justice for those killed by the regime.

After Ben Ali left the country, his longtime ally Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi put together a “na-

tional unity” government and promised to hold elections. Former head of the parliament Foued Mebazaa is acting as interim president. Many posts in the government are still held by members or former members of Ben Ali’s Constitutional Democratic Rally party (RCD).

A “liberation caravan” of 1,000 demonstrators from small towns and rural areas, many of them farmers or farm workers, arrived in Tunis Janu-

Continued on page 9

‘Subscribers are eager to talk about issues facing workers’

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Supporters of the *Militant* around the world are responding to the appeal to reach out broadly and take advantage of the opportunities to win long-term readers to the socialist press. They have stepped up their efforts to con-

tact every recent subscriber and have a discussion with them about renewing. The international renewal campaign has been set at 400. The deadline to complete the drive is February 15.

“Socialists in San Francisco are finding that a good number of subscribers are eager to get together to discuss the challenges facing working people today,” writes Betsey Stone. “A coworker participated with us at

Continued on page 4

U.S. gov’t program seeks to lure Cuban doctors to defect

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Washington’s effort to lure doctors away from Cuba to politically undermine the revolution there has received some recent coverage in the big-business press. The January 15 *Wall Street Journal* features a story on the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, run by the U.S. immigration agency, that offers refugee status in the United States to any Cuban doctor working for the Cuban government in a medical mission abroad.

Begun in 2006, the program is one of many—like the enticements of offered athletes and artists—designed

to win defections from the Cuban Revolution.

Under the parole program doctors and some other Cuban health-care personnel on assignments abroad are eligible to apply for asylum through any U.S. embassy in the world. If their application is accepted, a visa is granted. Permanent residence status is guaranteed once they are on U.S. soil.

The program is part of Washington’s bag of tools to promote a “democratic counterrevolution” in Cuba by tightening its embargo to maximize

Continued on page 3

Also Inside:

Maryland: Clinic picket defends abortion rights	2
A year after earthquake deep crisis wracks Haiti	3
Washington State actions protest immigration raid	5
Gov’t plans to seal coal mine in New Zealand	6

Maryland: Clinic picket defends abortion rights

BY SUSAN LAMONT

GERMANTOWN, Maryland—Two dozen supporters of abortion rights organized a picket line near the Germantown Reproductive Health Services January 23 in response to a protest by some 400 abortion opponents, many brought by the Catholic Church.

The Germantown clinic has become a special target of abortion opponents since Dr. LeRoy Carhart began performing late-term abortions there in early December. Carhart is an abortion provider in the greater Omaha, Nebraska, area. He worked for 11 years with Dr. George Tiller, who was murdered in Wichita, Kansas, in May 2009 by antiabortion rightist Scott Roeder.

The picket line in defense of women's right to choose abortion was organized by young women from the staff of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Participants also came from the Feminist Majority Foundation, the Germantown clinic staff, the Socialist Workers Party, and the World Can't Wait.

The Maryland County Sheriff's Department had dozens of police on hand, claiming that they were there to "prevent confrontations." The office park where the clinic is located was cordoned off and a line of police stood across the sidewalk to prevent abortion rights picketers from getting near the so-called "pro-life" protesters. This was despite assurances from the police to NOW staffer Ashley Braun that there would be no restrictions on the pro-choice picket line as long as everyone kept moving and there were no confrontations with the "pro-life" demonstrators.

When Braun asked a police officer

what laws the picketers would be breaking by continuing to walk back and forth on the sidewalk, she was told, "Do you want to be arrested for disobeying a lawful order of a police officer?" The abortion rights picketers finally agreed to move across the street, drawing honks and waves of support from motorists.

Nestor Gonzalez, 22, a worker from the nearby Dunkin' Donuts restaurant, joined the abortion rights picket on his way home from work. "Every week I have been seeing a man with his kids picketing on the corner against the clinic," he said. "When I saw you out here today, I couldn't go by. I had to stop. This is a question for women to decide for themselves."

January 22 was the 38th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Thousands of antiabortion protesters gathered in Washington, D.C., January 24, as they do each year, to demand that abortion be outlawed. Supporters of women's right to choose organized a vigil at the Supreme Court January 21 and a presence at the January 24 demonstration.

South Carolina protest targets Confederate flag

BY ANGEL LARISCY

One thousand people carrying signs that read, "Don't stop until the flag drops," and "It's not about heritage," marched to the state Capitol in Columbia, South Carolina, on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 17.

Until 2000 the Confederate flag was on display on top of the Capitol building—the only state in the nation to do so. Following protests, including

Actions in California back right to choose



Militant/Lea Sherman

SAN FRANCISCO—Some 100 supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion participated in a counterprotest January 22 on the 38th anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion. Thousands of opponents of women's rights hold a march and rally every year here to call for repealing this ruling.

On January 24 the American Association of University Women and Planned Parenthood held a forum and march in Los Altos. More than 75 people heard Dr. Sara Kennedy of Physicians for Reproductive Choice explain why maintaining the option to abortion is a central part of women's health care.

Kristina Casto, 23, of Watsonville and Ella Achen, 24, from Gilroy were participating for the first time in an abortion rights action. Achen said they wanted "to do something actively given antichoice legislation."

—LEA SHERMAN

one of 50,000 people in January 2000, the flag was moved to the Confederate Soldier Monument elsewhere on statehouse grounds. That year South Carolina became the last state to make Martin Luther King Jr. Day a statewide holiday. Congress had passed federal legislation to do so in 1983.

This year's protest was organized by the NAACP. The organization also built a protest in Charleston against a "Secession Ball" that celebrated South Carolina being the first state to secede from the United States after the election of Abraham Lincoln, leading to the formation of the Confederacy and the beginning of the Civil War.

Many of the marchers in Columbia said the protest was also against the announced state education cuts, a proposal for a state identification card, and the effort to tighten immigration laws.

YWCA executive director Christine Jackson urged people to participate in the protest rally. "It's an affront to me," Jackson said of the Confederate flag.

The issue of southern states flying the Confederate flag has also come up elsewhere. Associated Press reported some 300 supporters of the flag marched on the Georgia state Capitol January 18 to demand lawmakers hold a statewide vote on bringing back the old state flag, which incorporated the symbol of the Confederacy.

In 2001, after significant protests, the Georgia legislature replaced its state flag with a new one.

Racism, Revolution, Reaction 1861–1877

The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction

by Peter Camejo

The challenges—ranging from literacy drives to land reform—confronted by the popular revolutionary governments of Radical Reconstruction that arose in the United States following the Civil War, and the counterrevolution that subsequently overthrew them. \$21.

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Militant/Naomi Craine

Ana Rodriguez testifies against anti-immigrant bill in Palm City, Florida, January 7.

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A year after earthquake, deep crisis wracks Haiti

BY NAOMI CRAINE

More than a year after an earthquake destroyed much of the Haitian capital, nearly a million people continue to live in camps, with little more than tarps to protect them from the elements. A spreading cholera epidemic has claimed more than 3,500 lives. The results of the November 28 presidential election remain in dispute.

In the days following the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake the U.S. military put the arrival of troops and military equipment ahead of food and medical supplies. The international rescue teams that did arrive focused on those trapped in tourist hotels, United Nations headquarters, and other such buildings, avoiding working-class areas.

Thousands of Haitian workers organized to dig out relatives and neighbors with their bare hands, distribute what food and water they had, and maintain security in their areas. The Cuban government, which already had hundreds of doctors working in Haiti, rushed more medical workers there who saved countless lives. Estimates of those killed range up to 300,000.

Little of aid has materialized

In the year since, little has materialized of the billions of dollars in reconstruction funds pledged by Washington and other imperialist governments. The mountains of rubble in Port-au-Prince, the capital, have barely been touched. “Armies of shovel-wielding workers have helped clear about 5 percent of the debris under cash-for-work programs,” the *Miami Herald* reported in a series titled “Haiti: A Year Later.”

Of the billions of dollars raised in donations to “aid” organizations, much is still sitting in their bank accounts, and a large percentage of what has been spent has been on salaries of foreign aid workers. The Red Cross, which raised \$479 million, has so far completed less than 3,000 “transitional shelters” in Haiti. World Vision, which describes itself

as a “Christian humanitarian organization,” reports on its website that \$24 million—almost a quarter of the money it raised—has been spent on management.

Trying to explain away the Haitian government’s failure to resolve the housing crisis, Prime Minister Jean-Max Belleville claimed that life was not so bad in the tent camps. People there “have some basic services that they didn’t find where they were living before, and they are not paying rent,” he said. Belleville complained that some are resisting being moved to new locations.

The *Herald* described conditions at an “emergency relocation” camp in Tabarre Issa. It was built at a remote site more than an hour by bus from jobs in Port-au-Prince. Melian Remis, one of the new residents, said she shares a one-room house there with seven relatives. “It’s so small we cannot do anything inside,” she said. “At night, we sleep like fish, packed in together.”

Unemployment, already very high before the earthquake, has skyrocketed to as much as 90 percent in the formal sector. Marie Siane, who works cleaning the latrines in the tent camp where she lives, said, “I know a lot of money came into Haiti, but let’s face it: I live in a house made of blankets.”

This is the context in which presidential elections took place November 28. Nineteen candidates contended in a vote to replace President René Préval, whose term is set to end February 7.

More than a week after the vote, the government announced that Mirlande Manigat of the Assembly of Progress

Miami caravan says free Cuban Five



Militant/Naomi Craine

MIAMI—More than 40 people drove through southwest Miami January 22 in a caravan calling for the release of the Cuban Five and the jailing of Luis Posada Carriles. The Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, René González, and Fernando González—are Cuban revolutionaries unjustly imprisoned by Washington for their activities in monitoring right-wing groups that carry out violent attacks on Cuba.

Posada Carriles is a CIA-trained counterrevolutionary who has a long record of attacks on Cuba, including bombings of hotels in Havana and involvement in blowing up a Cuban airliner in 1976. Posada is currently on trial in El Paso, Texas, but on charges of perjury and immigration fraud only.

The caravan was organized by Alianza Martiana, and received both friendly and hostile responses as it passed through a largely Cuban American section of the city.

—NAOMI CRAINE

sive National Democrats received the highest vote, followed by Jude Célestin of Préval’s Unity Party, setting the stage for a runoff between the two. Musician Michel Martelly, who reportedly came in a close third, contested these results, and some of his supporters protested in the streets.

In mid-January a commission of the Organization of American States (OAS) issued a report placing Martelly ahead

of Célestin. Washington and other imperialist governments are now pressing Préval to organize a runoff between Manigat and Martelly.

Susan Rice, U.S. ambassador to the UN, threatened that release of more aid to Haiti is contingent on its government accepting the OAS report. “Sustained support from the international community, including the United States, requires a credible process,” she said.

U.S. gov’t seeks to get Cuban doctors to defect

Continued from front page

the economic hardships of the Cuban people and financing opposition political groups, in hopes of fostering hostility to the government. These operations especially target middle-class layers, who are more vulnerable to seeking individual solutions to the challenge of living in Cuba as the world capitalist economic crisis deepens.

Haitian acquitted in Miami ‘terrorism’ case is deported

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MIAMI—On January 20 the Department of Homeland Security deported Lygleson Lemorin, a permanent U.S. resident, to Haiti. Lemorin, a 35-year-old construction worker, was acquitted of all charges in the frame-up “terrorism” trial of the Liberty City Seven in 2007. Nevertheless, days after the trial he was thrown in an immigration jail under the USA Patriot Act, which allows authorities to deport permanent U.S. residents accused of terrorism even if they are found not guilty.

Lemorin was among a group of the first 27 Haitians to be deported since the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake devastated the country. The government says it is moving to deport about 350 Haitian nationals who have criminal convictions.

The case against Lemorin and six other Black construction workers, who became known as the Liberty City

As of Dec. 16, 2010, there were 1,574 Cuban doctors who gained U.S. visas through the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program, according to Freedom of Information Act documents obtained by the *Journal*. The paper acknowledged that “only a small percentage of Cuban doctors sent overseas have actually defected.” More than 37,000 Cuban health-care workers served in missions

abroad in 77 countries in 2010 alone. Washington’s operation is aimed at weakening these missions, which have earned respect around the world.

The British capitalist daily the *Independent* noted, “They are heroes of the Haitian earthquake disaster . . . which President Barack Obama pledged a monumental United States humanitarian mission to alleviate. . . . Except these heroes are from the US’ arch-enemy, Cuba, whose doctors and nurses have put US efforts to shame.”

Author Nina Lakhani writes that there are 1,200 Cuban medical personnel in Haiti. They are deployed in 40 clinics across the island, and have treated 30,000 cholera patients since October. That’s 40 percent of all those struck by the disease. Not a single Haitian worker or peasant has had to pay anything for their treatment by Cuban doctors.

Cuban medical missions also shame U.S. “aid” programs in semicolonial countries by showing that disease, hunger, rodents, and other ills of capitalism are not inevitable. They can be ended. An example is the successful collaboration by the governments of Cuba and Equatorial Guinea to eradicate the rat population on the island of Annobón, something city planners in advanced capitalist countries have not achieved.

The Cuban infant mortality rate dropped to 4.5 per every 1,000 live births in 2010, the lowest in its history. In the United States the most recent figure available is for 2007. Overall infant mortality stood at 6.75, and for African Americans, 13.35.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

The Meaning of Worker, Youth Revolt in Tunisia. Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

The Fight for Legalization of Immigrant Workers Today. Speaker: Tony Lane, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 4, 8 p.m. 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Tel.: (612) 729-1205.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Revolt in Tunisia. Speaker: representative, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. (#7 or #9 bus to Orcas, walk two blocks north). Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND

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Tunisia: Uprising by Workers and Youth Forces Tyrant to Flee. Speaker: Janet Roth, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 4, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

Iowa: Ex-prisoners with felonies lose voting rights

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

DES MOINES, Iowa—On January 14 Republican Terry Branstad, on his first day as governor of Iowa, signed an executive order denying the right to vote to people convicted of felonies. Under the order those with felony convictions cannot vote until all fines, surcharges, penalties, court costs, correctional fees, victim compensation costs, public agency restitution, and probation fees are paid.

In 2005 then-governor Thomas Vilsack had issued an executive order restoring the right to vote to prisoners after they served their sentences.

Since the mid-1990s, more financial burdens have been heaped on working people convicted of felonies. Fines, penalties, court costs, and surcharges were increased during the terms of the two previous Democratic Party governors: Vilsack, now U.S. secretary of agriculture; and Chester Culver.

Some sheriffs and municipal jails charge as much as \$65 a day for inmates’ prison stays. Defendants can also be charged for attorney fees and expenses of court-appointed lawyers. Most have to pay a \$300 probation fee and charges for electronic monitoring. While these measures undermine the rights of all working people, Blacks are disproportionately hit. Making up about one-quarter of Iowa’s prison population, they represent 2.8 percent of the state’s overall population.

In Iowa, Blacks are imprisoned

13.6 times more than whites, the largest disparity in the country and more than *double* the national average.

Branstad’s aide said the order “simply reinstates the process that was previously in place under the Iowa Code and Constitution.” Branstad was governor of Iowa for 16 years in the 1980s and ’90s.

The new law affects those who are imprisoned since Branstad took office, and will not affect an estimated 100,000 people whose voting rights were restored under the previous executive order.

At a news conference held by the Iowa-Nebraska State Conference of the NAACP the new law was compared to a “poll tax”—a tax during Jim Crow segregation used to prevent Blacks from exercising their right to vote if they couldn’t afford to pay. The poll tax was ruled unconstitutional in 1964.

Supporters of Troy Davis march in Atlanta



Militant/Fredy Huinil

ATLANTA—Contingent of some 50 supporters of Troy Davis at January 17, Martin Luther King Day Parade here. Davis, who is Black, is on death row in Georgia, framed up on charges of killing a white cop in 1989. An international campaign is being waged to demand his freedom, resulting in the postponement of his execution three times.

—LISA POTASH

Chicago rally opposes grand jury witch hunt

Continued from front page

the Palestine Solidarity Group, read a statement on behalf of the nine who refused to testify. “We will not take part in this fishing expedition. . . . We will not allow our solidarity to be construed as material support for terrorism. . . . We cannot allow the FBI and grand jury to intimidate us.”

Close to half the participants in the spirited two-hour picket were high school and college students from Chi-

cago and surrounding cities.

Among them were more than 40 students from Pedro Albizu Campos High School carrying Puerto Rican flags and a large portrait of Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera. “We’re out here petitioning to bring Oscar López Rivera home,” Bleusette Morris, one of the students, told the *Militant*. “He’s been unjustly locked up for 30 years.”

Michael Johnson, an African Ameri-

can student at Columbia College and member of Art Activists Columbia, helped organize a January 14 student protest against the grand jury subpoenas. “I’m here to stand in solidarity with freedom of speech, the right to association, and the right to stand up for rights no matter the borders,” he told the *Militant*. “Our group also calls for a moratorium on deportations because we believe that immigrant rights are human rights and no so-called national security concern should ever violate that.”

Among those joining the action were Mark Clements, a leader of the Jail Jon Burge Coalition, and others active in the fight against the death penalty. Burge, a Chicago police lieutenant involved in torture of suspects, was recently sentenced to four and half years in prison. Clements, a victim of cop torture, spent 28 years in prison before winning release.

Also speaking was Jesse Sharkey, vice president of the Chicago Teachers Union, which adopted a resolution in support of the political activists. Plans are under way for regional conferences in February to discuss how to widen the reach of the campaign against FBI and grand jury intimidation.

‘Subscribers are eager to talk about issues’

Continued from front page

a hotel workers’ picket line and renewed his subscription during a discussion afterward.”

In addition to current readers renewing their subscriptions, supporters of the paper should work to sign up new readers for six months. These subscriptions count toward local quo-

tas and the international goal.

Bernie Senter reports, “We got a new six-month subscription after meeting a leader of the Miami taxi drivers.” The drivers have been protesting increased charges by fleet owners and the county government.

House visits are essential to win renewals. In Minneapolis, Natalie Morrison says she met with a member of the painters union who three months ago subscribed and bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes.

“I asked what she thinks of the *Militant* and if she would like to renew,” writes Morrison. “She was happy to have found a paper that has an international perspective and tells the truth about what African Americans have accomplished in the struggles for rights.”

She renewed for six months and set up a time this week to continue the discussion. She also bought several Pathfinder books.

In San Francisco, supporters of the paper are taking advantage of the \$14 special offer on the new Pathfinder title *Soldier of the Cuban Revolution* by brigadier general Luis Alfonso Zayas to get it into the hands of as many people as they can who are renewing.

Frank Forrestal reports he met with a prounion worker at Delta Air Lines. “He likes the paper, reads it at work, and co-workers have asked how they can get it,” says Forrestal. The worker renewed for one year and took subscription blanks to sign up a few of his coworkers.

In Canada, members of the Communist League have picked up five renewals, one to a student at Marianopolis College in Montreal who helped organize a

meeting for Cuban general Armando Choy on his campus in the spring. “This week we have five appointments to get renewals,” writes Joe Young.

The quotas adopted by local areas fall short of the 400 international goal, but several cities are considering higher quotas, which will be recorded in next week’s chart.

Readers who have not yet been contacted can mail renewals directly to the paper, and everyone is encouraged to sign up others to subscribe. For more information, contact a distributor in your area listed on page 8.

Soldier of the Cuban Revolution

From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces

LUIS ALFONSO ZAYAS

SOLDIER OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

From the Cane Fields of Oriente to General of the Revolutionary Armed Forces

New!

Special: \$14

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Luis Alfonso Zayas, today a general in the Cubana Revolutionary Armed Forces, recounts his experiences over five decades in the Cuban Revolution. From a teenage combatant in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship, to serving three times as a leader of the Cuban volunteer forces that helped Angola defeat repeated invasions by the army of white-supremacist South Africa, Zayas tells how he and millions of ordinary men and women in Cuba changed the course of history and, in the process, transformed themselves as well.

PathfinderPress.com

Washington State actions protest immigration raid

BY CLAY DENNISON

ELLENSBURG, Washington—"At 6:45 a.m. we heard someone knock really hard on the door. They were shouting, 'We're the police.' My mom opened the door and they arrested her. When the police entered the house they shouted, 'Everyone come out with your hands up.'"

Ricardo Gonzalez, a junior in high school, was describing what happened early January 20, when immigration, local, and county cops raided numerous places in this town of 17,000. Police put the number arrested at 30, though many immigrant workers say it is higher.

"They handcuffed my father and put him next to an open door. For a time they wouldn't let him put a shirt on. An officer pointed a gun with a scope on it at me. They handcuffed me and they did the same to my brothers who are 15 and 19 years old. I asked to see their search warrant. They didn't show it to me until 15 minutes later. Then they showed me the arrest warrant for my mom. They were laughing while they were removing my mother from the house."

According to news reports, 14 people were charged with false documents or falsely claiming U.S. citizenship. Another 16 were taken into custody on alleged administrative immigration violations. Thirteen of the 14 facing criminal charges are women.

A helicopter shone a spotlight from the air as police cars drove through the housing area.

"I woke up at about 7:00 a.m.," Octavio Garcia-Ruiz, a student at Central Washington University and a resident of the mobile home park, told the *Militant*. "You feel kind of helpless when you hear helicopters going around. I didn't go to school that day because I was worried about everyone else. You don't know who they are targeting."

"This is a working-class community. They didn't target criminals," he continued. "The statement from ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] to the local papers gives the impression that this was over a very serious crime. They said it was part of an 'ongoing criminal investigation.'"

"People are scared to go to work or go to the store. You don't see Mexicans in

here now," explained Gloria Medina, a hospital worker.

Gonzalez reported that his father has been calling from the immigration detention center in Tacoma. "We put money in his account at the immigration jail so he can call," Gonzalez explained. "It costs \$4 a minute. We talked to my mother, too. She is in the county jail in Yakima." Garcia-Ruiz said his aunt is locked up in Yakima.

While *Militant* reporters were speaking with witnesses to the police action, word came that a picket line against the raids had gone up in front of the post office. Larry Lowther, a retired professor, explained that pickets would be held there—the only federal building in Ellensburg—every Thursday afternoon. He said committees had been set up at a planning meeting the previous afternoon to organize material aid for families of those arrested, to cover legal questions, and to look into how the raids were carried out. A meeting to discuss the raids on January 21 drew 200.

Job Pozos-Avila, regional director of the United Farm Workers union, announced a protest in front of the Federal



Militant/Clay Dennison

Protest outside courthouse in Yakima, Washington, January 25 condemns immigration raid that arrested at least 30 workers earlier in week in Ellensburg.

Courthouse in Yakima January 25 as hearings began for many of the arrested. "If we don't do anything, [ICE] will feel like they can continue doing this and get away with it," he said.

Some 75 people participated in the action chanting, "Stop the raids," and "Our parents are not criminals." More than

30 came from Ellensburg High School. Many of the students had relatives who had been picked up in the raids.

A few passersby joined in. "I heard about this on the radio," explained Ana Jeronimo, an agricultural worker. "I think it's unfair." Renewed picketing was announced for the next day.

Minnesota restaurant workers fight firings

Continued from front page

cording to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, "it was a substantial number of the 1,200 employees at its 50 restaurants in Minnesota."

"Seven of us met in a restaurant after the first firings," Alejandro Palacios, one of the fired workers, told the *Militant*. "We began discussing what we could do and formulated our demands on the company.

"Many of us did not get our full back pay. Many of the workers did not get paid for accrued vacation time. None of us got a portion of the substantial holiday bonus we were scheduled to receive a couple of weeks later," Palacios noted.

"Many of us had more than five years working at Chipotle. We were not given any time to prove our eligibility to work, although in some similar cases

workers have been given three months to get their papers in order."

The main demands of the fired workers include full payment of the money due them and time to show their work eligibility. "We decided to begin calling our coworkers and friends," Palacios said. "The firings kept continuing through the holidays and afterward. Our meetings grew."

The company refused to talk to representatives of the fired workers directly. "The company said we were not 'a legal entity.' We were 'legal' when we made burritos for Chipotle but we are not 'legal' when we want the money that is due us," Palacios said. "So we asked the Service Employees International Union Local 26 to represent us with the company. They agreed." No agreement has been reached between Chipotle and repre-

sentatives of the workers.

The January 20 demonstration was sponsored by Local 26 and the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Coalition. "We continue to meet every week and are going to continue to fight," said Palacios.

Chipotle is a Denver-based chain of more than 1,000 restaurants in the United States specializing in Mexican food. It presents itself as a socially conscious company that uses organic ingredients and naturally raised beef, serving "food with integrity."

Over the last year, ICE has searched records at more than 2,200 companies, up from more than 1,400 in 2009. The same day as the demonstration ICE announced it was opening an "employment compliance inspection center" in Crystal City, Virginia, to expedite audits around the country.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?



by Mary-Alice Waters

Revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable. In growing solidarity and the emergence of a fighting vanguard of working people, the outlines of these coming class battles can be seen. \$7

PathfinderPress.com



February 7, 1986

ST. PAUL, Minn.—More than 2,500 farmers and their supporters rallied at the State Capitol here to demand a special session of the legislature to take immediate action to help working farmers. The January 21 rally culminated the Tractorcade and March for Justice in Rural America.

The rally marked the one-year anniversary of last year's farm protest of 10,000 here. Speakers and participants agreed that the crisis facing family farmers has worsened in the past year.

The demonstration focused on demands for a one-year moratorium on foreclosures and repossessions to cover farms, homes, small businesses, and banks; minimum price legislation for farm products; and a debt restructuring program, including emergency survival programs.



February 6, 1961

In his State of the Union message to Congress, Kennedy repeated promises to Latin America that have been made by every tenant of the White House since the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Free and prosperous" countries, "economic and social progress," a "new hemisphere attack on illiteracy and inadequate educational opportunities."

The real feelings of the capitalists who stand behind the White House were in those parts of Kennedy's message where he smeared the [Cuban] revolutionary government as tyrannical.

The unforgivable crime of the Cuban people in the eyes of Kennedy and the millionaire circles he belongs to was that they finally rebelled against capitalist property rights.



February 8, 1936

NEW YORK, Feb. 2—A packed hall of over 700 people in Irving Plaza reared an enthusiastic "Aye" to a resolution protesting Stalin's anti-Bolshevik repressions and calling for a committee to investigate the Daily Worker frame-up against the NEW MILITANT and Leon Trotsky.

With overwhelming approval the audience endorsed sending a cablegram of solidarity and confidence in its name to comrade Leon Trotsky in view of the slanderous charges made against him in the Stalinist scandal sheet.

The speakers at this meeting, comrades Cannon and Muste, called to protest Stalin's terror in the Soviet Union, lashed out against the murderous treatment accorded to Bolshevik-Leninists and the attempt to cover it up in the U.S. by a miserable frame-up.

Gov't plans to seal coal mine in New Zealand

BY PATRICK BROWN
AND BASKARAN APPU

GREYMOUTH, New Zealand—Police and company decisions to halt efforts to recover the bodies of 29 miners killed in the Pike River coal mine last year and to seal the mine, on top of continuing revelations of unsafe conditions prior to the blast, have added to the anger of relatives and union members here.

Police Commissioner Howard Broad told the media January 13 that “the recovery phase of this operation will come to a conclusion.” He passed responsibility for the mine over to receivers Price-WaterhouseCoopers, who said the mine would be “temporarily” sealed.

The police announcement was a focal point of discussion on the tragedy during our January 15–16 visit here. The lack of consultation with families proved a particularly sore point.

“I’d like to see my brother in a coffin,” Daniel Duggan told the *Militant* January 15. His brother Christopher Duggan was among those killed at the Pike River mine, where Daniel also worked as a surface controller.

Trevor Bolderson, who is a miner at the nearby Spring Creek Mine and site convenor there for the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union (EPMU), spoke to the *Militant* January 15.

Whatever the rights or wrongs of the just-announced decision to seal the mine, said Bolderson, “The wrong people are in charge; you don’t have police conduct a search and rescue mission in a coal mine.”

Pike River bosses implemented a flawed plan for the mine. “It’s a one way in, one way out mine,” with a 1.5 mile underground road, said Bolderson, and “the only other exit was

through a 150-meter [500-foot] ventilation shaft fitted with a ladder. You saw the flames coming out of that shaft in one of the explosions.”

After slow initial recruitment to the EPMU at the mine, which opened in November 2008, some 75 percent of Pike River workers had joined the union by November 2010, Bolderson said. Despite that progress the union presence at Pike River was weak.

Many workers were new both to the union and the industry, the unionist said, and were thrown straight into the extraction area with minimal training.

In mid-December EPMU president Andrew Little stated that the upcoming Royal Commission of Inquiry must take up revelations that came out in a TV3 “60 Minutes” program. Miner Brent Forrester and others interviewed “revealed unknown information including a previous gas evacuation” and ignitions underground, according to the television station.

Paul Maunder, a writer and union partisan living in Blackball, added an “ironical footnote” to the story in a January 16 interview with *Militant* re-

King of Tonga resists democratic reform vote

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Working people in Tonga registered their support for democratic reforms in elections November 25, when candidates of the newly formed Democratic Party of the Friendly Islands (DPFI) won 71 percent of the vote and a majority of elected seats. The government formed in the aftermath of the election, however, has remained largely dominated by the country’s nobility.

This was the first vote held under



Reuters/Tim Wimborne

New Zealand cops block Pike River Mine entrance Nov. 20, 2010. Relatives and unionists challenge safety record and decision to seal mine where 29 miners were killed.

porters. “When I went to the Pike River site as a volunteer ambulance member on the evening of the disaster,” he told us, “a company poster in the mine’s smoke room congratulated the workers on achieving a record production day that very week.”

Valma McGowan, whose husband Robert was killed in the Black Reef mine in 2006, told the *Militant* that she and the EPMU have consistently called for the reinstatement of safety inspectors, which were removed from the mines under legislation in 1992.

Following the Pike River disaster McGowan wrote to Prime Minister John Key, reminding him that in October 2009 and May 2010 she had written to the government urging that it “please look at the other mines in the area, they are an accident waiting to happen.”

The prime minister has “blood on [his] hands,” she said. “You come to Greymouth for the memorial service and stood there making a speech which meant nothing! You were the people that had the power to act, to prevent this and chose to do nothing!”

Massey Energy refuted on mine explosion responsibility

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Refuting claims by Massey Energy Co. that an unforeseeable influx of natural gas caused the explosion last April at its Upper Big Branch Mine in West Virginia, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced January 19 that the company was responsible for the combination of methane gas buildup and shoddy equipment that ignited coal dust inside the mine.

The massive explosion killed 29 miners. It was the worst U.S. mining disaster in 40 years. MSHA investigators found worn and broken equipment that could cause sparks and coal-cutting machines with faulty water sprayers. The sprayers are needed to minimize combustible dust and put out small methane gas fires. A safety inspection 20 minutes before the blast did not mention either of these problems.

MSHA based its investigation on Massey’s own inspection logs, which recorded excessive coal dust on eight of the mine’s conveyor belts, and tests the government agency conducted that the company tried to obstruct. Massey continues to argue it was not at fault.

In a press interview Gene Jones, whose brother Dean, 50, was killed in the mine explosion, said, “It’s like production before safety to me. It’s like they didn’t have the time to do anything but get the coal out of the mines. . . . You wonder where MSHA or anybody was at on the inspections.”

Judy Jones Peterson, Dean Jones’s sister, insists the fault lies with the company. “It was a completely preventable accident,” she said.

“Parts or all of Massey Energy’s Upper Big Branch Mine were ordered closed more than 60 times in 2009 and 2010,” reported the *Charleston Gazette*, and the mine was repeatedly cited before the blast “for allowing potentially explosive coal dust to accumulate.”

As of January 26, Massey has been already cited twice by MSHA this year for safety problems at mines in West Virginia and Kentucky. One was for a failed stop mechanism on a bulldozer at the Rum Creek Preparation Plant in Logan County, West Virginia; the other, for poor roof and wall supports at the Voyager No. 7 mine in Martin County, Kentucky.

a new electoral system in this Pacific Island nation of some 122,000 people. It is a product of decades of protest for political reforms to break control of the government by the monarchy and nobility—protests that have gained momentum in Tonga in recent years.

In 2005 a six-week strike by government employees culminated in a 10,000-strong march for democratic rights, and in 2006, a street rebellion against delays in reforms left much of central Nuku’alofa, the capital, in flames. In 2008, the new king, George Tupou V, announced he would surrender many of the powers of the monarchy and change the voting system.

This election saw the previous 33-seat parliament, with only nine members elected by the people, replaced by a 26-seat assembly with 17 members popularly elected. Nine continue to be chosen by the country’s nobles. Previously, 15 additional MPs were chosen by the king, as was the prime minister and cabinet. The prime minister is now elected by parliament and appoints the cabinet.

Representatives of the DPFI won 12 of the 17 seats available in the November elections, with the rest going to independent candidates.

Following the election, however, the nine noble members of parliament blocked efforts by DPFI leader ‘Akilisi Pohiva to form a government. Siale’ataonga Tu’ivakano, a noble, was elected prime minister.

On January 13, Pohiva, a 30-year campaigner for democratic rights, quit the cabinet and resigned from the government. Only two members of his party were appointed to the 13-member cabinet while two unelected individuals were selected. Pohiva also said he could not sign a cabinet agreement agreeing not to vote against the government.

Tonga’s economy is being battered by the world recession. Remittances from Tongans working overseas—a key source of income for the country—fell 11.6 percent in 12 months through June 2010 and income from tourism declined 14.6 percent. According to the World Bank, 40 percent of Tongans live below the poverty level.

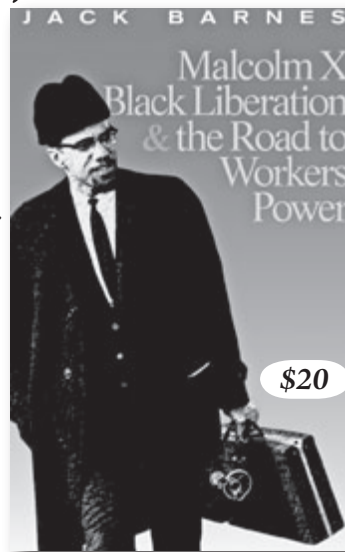
Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

by Jack Barnes

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U.S. rulers, allies turn attention back to China

BY DOUG NELSON

Washington is renewing its strategic military focus on China as its most formidable economic and military rival for the foreseeable future. Beijing has been steadily building up its military capabilities and taking bolder steps to assert control over waters surrounding its eastern and southern coasts.

The U.S. rulers' focus on China—a prominent feature of the William Clinton and George W. Bush administrations prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—marked U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates's mid-January trip to China, Japan, and South Korea. The trip was accompanied by a slew of articles and editorials on recent advances in Chinese military technology.

Gates met with Chinese president Hu Jintao and top Chinese military officials during his three-day visit to Beijing. Hours before his meeting with Hu, the Chinese air force staged the first test flight of its prototype stealth fighter jet.

The talks represented the first such meeting since Beijing suspended military-to-military dialogue about a year ago, in response to Washington's \$6.4 billion weapons sale to the government of Taiwan. "United States arms sales to Taiwan seriously damaged China's core interests and we do not want to see that happen again," said Chinese general Liang Guanglie at a joint press conference with Gates in Beijing January 10.

The following day Gates told the media in Beijing that he did not think any re-evaluation of U.S. policy toward Taiwan was "going to happen anytime soon."

During the January 10 press conference both Gates and Guanglie described military dialogues as useful in lessening chances for "misunderstanding or miscalculation" by either side. But the Chinese government gave no answer to Gates's proposal to continue the talks on a regular basis.

Among points of contention displayed during Gates's trip was control of the seas surrounding China, where both the U.S. and Chinese militaries have stepped up activity in the last year.

Beijing conducted a series of high-profile naval maneuvers in the South

China Sea and East China Sea last April. These included a mock attack on Taiwanese air bases, and assertive drills through international waters in proximity to Japan's southern Okinawa island chain and Taiwan.

Washington's most recent provocations took place in December when the U.S. Navy carried out a series of live-fire exercises with the South Korean military in waters surrounding the Korean Peninsula. While officially aimed at North Korea, most of the maneuvers were conducted in the Yellow Sea, flouting Beijing's objections and sending a message to the Chinese government.

During his trip Gates made a number of references to Washington's concerns over North Korea and the degree of Beijing's cooperation with Pyongyang. In Beijing Gates said, "With the North Koreans' continued development of nuclear weapons, and their development of intercontinental ballistic missiles, North Korea is becoming a direct threat to the United States."

Beijing lays claim to a great swath of the Yellow, East China, and South China Seas. These waters encompass Taiwan as well as several other island chains used by the Chinese navy—islands whose Chinese claims are disputed by the governments of Japan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

New challenge to U.S. Navy

Over the course of Gates's trip to China and Japan he made clear that Washington has no intention of compromising its long-asserted "right" to deploy naval forces anywhere in the world. With the expanding capabilities of the Chinese armed forces, the U.S. military is facing a challenge to its domination of the world's seas for the first time since the end of World War II. During a press conference with his counterpart in Japan, Gates stated, "The United States will sustain its military presence in Northeast Asia and look to enhance it in Southeast Asia and will firmly defend the principle of freedom of navigation."

The U.S. military budget is estimated to be roughly 10 times that of China, with a larger and more advanced arsenal. The



Chinese Dong Feng-21D, the world's first antiship ballistic missile, on mobile launchers.

Chinese navy is growing and improving at a fast pace, but is still no match for the strength of U.S. naval forces.

Despite the naval and air power disparity, Beijing is already able to threaten U.S. ships in its claimed waters. The Chinese military has what the Defense Department describes as "the most active land-based ballistic- and cruise-missile program in the world." In 2007 Beijing blew up an old weather satellite with a ballistic missile, demonstrating its ability to knock out communications systems vital to modern warfare.

Recently Beijing deployed the world's first antiship ballistic missile, dubbed the "carrier killer." Considered by the U.S. military to be in the "initial operational" stage, its specific design makes it very difficult for a U.S. carrier to defend itself against an accurate strike.

Also of particular concern to Washington is China's advancing communi-

cations and cyber-warfare technology, providing greater access to marine intelligence and possibilities for disrupting U.S. military communication systems.

The U.S. rulers' refocus on China coincides with Washington's escalating war in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The U.S. presence established there has opened the door to greater influence along China's western border. As an integral part of the war effort and long-range objectives to contain China's economic and military power, Washington is strengthening its alliance with the rival governments of Pakistan and India.

In relation to China, Washington's strategic course in the Indian subcontinent is part of a larger picture that includes partnerships with Beijing's rivals to the south, in Vietnam and Taiwan, to the east, with Tokyo and Seoul, and the south Pacific with the governments of Australia and New Zealand.

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

by Jack Barnes



Today's sharpening interimperialist conflicts are fueled by the opening stages of what will be decades of economic, financial, and social convulsions and class battles. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point and draw satisfaction

from being "in their face" as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it.

Also includes:

- "Their Transformation and Ours" Socialist Workers Party Draft Resolution
- "Crisis, Boom, and Revolution" 1921 Reports by V.I. Lenin & Leon Trotsky

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Germany plans for more 'boots on foreign soil'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After more than 50 years, the German government is ending compulsory military service. Like the armed forces in the United States and other imperialist countries, the German army is being transformed into a smaller, more efficient professional fighting force.

In early January the last batch of some 12,000 draftees were called up for their obligatory six-month stint in the military. From now on those joining Germany's army will be volunteers, with conscription ending entirely July 1.

The government's plan is to reduce the size of the armed forces from about 240,000 soldiers, mostly stationed within the country, to a professional army of 185,000 that's more adept at conducting special operations abroad. The German defense ministry projects 7,000 to 15,000 volunteers will sign up each year, compared with what has been about

28,500 draftees. Volunteers will commit to a longer period of time in the military, ranging from 12 to 23 months.

The decision to end conscription comes as the number of those drafted over the past decade has declined, and the length of conscription reduced. Potential recruits rejected for health reasons have skyrocketed, with almost 43 percent turned away in 2009, according to *Spiegel* online. The German government will still collect names of citizens of military age in case the draft is restarted.

"The young recruits are of little use to the modern German military, which focuses on NATO and United Nations operations overseas," wrote *Spiegel*.

Germany's military was reorganized after its defeat in World War II. Compulsory conscription was written into the country's constitution. The reconstructed imperialist army was

organized on the premise that there would be "no German boots on foreign soil." But all this has changed with German troops increasingly intervening abroad—particularly in the NATO-led operation in the Balkans in the 1990s and in Afghanistan today.

"We can't say, as we did before, that nobody wants German boots on their territory," Hellmut Koenigshaus, defense commissioner of the German parliament, told BBC. Just supplying money as was done in the past is not enough, he argued.

Operating under U.S. and UN command, the German government currently has the third-largest military force in Afghanistan. Its nearly 4,900 troops are stationed primarily in the northern part of the country. Government ministers on January 12 endorsed Chancellor Angela Merkel's call for extending the mission for at least the next year.

Lessons from defense of first workers state in history

Below is an excerpt from In Defense of Marxism: The Social and Political Contradictions of the Soviet Union on the Eve of World War II by Leon Trotsky. The Spanish-language edition is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. In August 1939 the governments of the Soviet Union and Germany, led by Joseph Stalin and Adolph Hitler respectively, signed a "non-aggression" pact. This precipitated a far-ranging debate within the Socialist Workers Party with a minority arguing the Soviet Union was no longer a workers state that should be defended from imperialist attack. Trotsky answered this argument in a September 1939 article titled "The USSR in war." At the heart of this debate was the question of what kind of party needed to be built in the United States and around the world: a revolutionary party that was truly part of the working class and its struggles, not a

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

petty-bourgeois radical party calling itself working-class that would buckle under the pressure of bourgeois public opinion. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY LEON TROTSKY

Is it possible after the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact to consider the USSR a workers state? The future of the



Leon Trotsky at his study at villa Izzet Pasha, Turkey, early 1931. "What do we defend in the USSR?" wrote Trotsky. "Not that in which it resembles the capitalist countries but precisely that in which it differs from them. . . . In the USSR the overthrow of the bureaucracy is indispensable for the preservation of state property."

Soviet state has again and again aroused discussion in our midst. Small wonder; we have before us the first experiment in the workers state in history. Never before and nowhere else has this phenomenon been available for analysis. In the question of the social character of the USSR, mistakes commonly flow, as we have previously stated, from replacing the historical fact with the programmatic norm. Concrete fact departs from the norm. This does not signify, however, that it has overthrown the norm; on the contrary, it has reaffirmed it, from the negative side. The degeneration of the first workers state, ascertained and explained by us, has only the more graphically shown what the workers state should be, what it could and would be under certain historical conditions. The contradiction between the concrete fact and the norm constrains us not to reject the norm but, on the contrary, to fight for it by means of the revolutionary road. The program of the approaching revolution in the USSR is determined on the one hand by our appraisal of the USSR as an objective historical *fact*, and on the other hand, by a *norm* of the workers state. We do not say: "Everything is lost, we must begin all over again." We clearly indicate those elements of the workers state which at the given stage can be salvaged, preserved, and further developed.

Those who seek nowadays to prove that the Soviet-German pact changes our appraisal of the Soviet state take their stand, in essence, on the position of

the Comintern¹—to put it more correctly, on yesterday's position of the Comintern. According to this logic, the historical mission of the workers state is the struggle for imperialist democracy. The "betrayal" of the democracies in favor of fascism divests the USSR of its being considered a workers state. In point of fact, the signing of the treaty with Hitler supplies only an extra gauge with which to measure the degree of degeneration of the Soviet bureaucracy, and its contempt for the international working class, including the Comintern, but it does not provide any basis whatsoever for a reevaluation of the sociological appraisal of the USSR. . . .

What do we defend in the USSR? Not that in which it resembles the capitalist countries but precisely that in which it differs from them. In Germany also we advocate an uprising against the ruling bureaucracy, but only in order immediately to overthrow capitalist property. In the USSR the overthrow of the bureaucracy is indispensable for the preservation of state property. Only in this

sense do we stand for the defense of the USSR.

There is not one among us who doubts that the Soviet workers should defend the state property, not only against the parasitism of the bureaucracy, but also against the tendencies toward private ownership, for example, on the part of the kolkhoz aristocracy. But after all, foreign policy is the continuation of policy at home. If in domestic policy we correlate defense of the conquests of the October revolution with irreconcilable struggle against the bureaucracy, then we must do the same thing in foreign policy as well. . . .

Mistakes on the question of defense of the USSR most frequently flow from an incorrect understanding of the methods of "defense." Defense of the USSR does not at all mean rapprochement with the Kremlin bureaucracy, the acceptance of its politics, or a conciliation with the politics of her allies. In this question, as in all others, we remain completely on the ground of the international class struggle. . . .

We are not a government party; we are the party of irreconcilable opposition, not only in capitalist countries but also in the USSR. Our tasks, among them the "defense of the USSR," we realize not through the medium of bourgeois governments and not even through the government of the USSR, but exclusively through the education of the masses through agitation, through explaining to the workers what they should defend and what they should overthrow. Such a "defense" cannot give immediate miraculous results. But we do not even pretend to be miracle workers. As things stand, we are a revolutionary minority. Our work must be directed so that the workers on whom we have influence should correctly appraise events, not permit themselves to be caught unawares, and prepare the general sentiment of their own class for the revolutionary solution of the tasks confronting us.

The defense of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defense of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic one. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic goal and in no case can be in contradiction to the latter.

February

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No to grand jury witch hunt!

Constitutional protections fought for and won by working people are the target of the federal grand jury currently convened in Chicago to hear a case involving 23 political activists. The FBI says the 23 are part of an “ongoing Joint Terrorism Task Force investigation into activities concerning the material support of terrorism.” Those served subpoenas correctly accuse the government of a fishing expedition aimed at curtailing opposition to Washington’s wars and domestic policies.

This case is being vigorously pursued under the watch of President Barack Obama. Leading the prosecution is Patrick Fitzgerald, a Democratic politician and darling of liberals for his successful conviction of Lewis “Scooter” Libby, a top aide of former vice president Richard Cheney. Fitzpatrick’s record includes helping to convict Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a Muslim cleric, on frame-up charges of trying to bomb the World Trade Center; and in sending to jail Lynne Stewart, who is serving 10 years for distributing a press release by her client Abdel-Rahman.

The same day as the January 25 grand jury ses-

sion in Chicago, Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, a native of Tanzania, was sentenced to life in prison for conspiring to damage U.S. property. The jury had acquitted him of 284 other counts of murder and conspiracy in the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; much of the government’s evidence was gathered through torture. The capitalist rulers have chosen to try some detainees like Ghailani in federal courts rather than under military tribunals to set precedents for undermining the rights of the accused. Ghailani, for example, was prohibited by the judge from introducing evidence about his treatment over several years at the Guantánamo prison camp and in a secret CIA prison.

The current grand jury investigation in Chicago is deeply connected to attacks on rights such as freedom of speech and assembly and the right to a fair trial. The U.S. government keeps pushing to narrow these rights in order to defend the profit system, anticipating that workers will increasingly fight to defend themselves against the conditions being wrought by crisis-ridden capitalism.

Prosecutor has long frame-up history

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—The grand jury investigation against a number of antiwar activists, which began in Chicago January 25, is being directed by Patrick Fitzgerald, the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. Fitzgerald has a long history prosecuting the government’s “war on terror.”

“As the first head of New York’s terrorism prosecution unit, Fitzgerald either personally prosecuted or supervised some of the landmark terrorism cases predating the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001,” the *Chicago Tribune* reported.

One of these cases was the 1996 conviction of Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman, a Muslim cleric, on frame-up charges of conspiracy to bomb the World Trade Center three years earlier. The *Tribune* reported that Fitzgerald utilized a “U.S. Civil War-era statute prohibiting planning crimes against the nation” in prosecuting Abdel-Rahman. The Muslim cleric was sentenced to life in prison on charges of “seditious conspiracy.”

Fitzgerald helped convict Abdel-Rahman’s defense attorney Lynne Stewart, who is now in prison serving a 10-year sentence on frame-up charges of “conspiracy to provide material aid to terrorist activity.” Much of the “evidence” was based on government wiretaps of more than two years of conversations between Stewart and Abdel-Rahman and videotapes of their meetings in prison.

Abdel-Rahman faced harsh restrictions in jail prohibiting him from speaking to the media, as well as strict limitations on his access to mail, telephones, and visitors. Stewart was convicted on the

basis of releasing a press statement on behalf of Abdel-Rahman in 2000.

Following the court decision, Stewart said the verdict against her “sends a warning to lawyers” to not represent defendants accused by the U.S. government of “terrorism.”

Fitzgerald, a Democratic politician, is also known for prosecuting Lewis “Scooter” Libby, a top aide of Republican vice president Richard Cheney. The stated purpose of the investigation was to determine if White House officials had violated the Intelligence Identities Protection Act when they revealed to several reporters that Valerie Plame, the wife of a diplomat who was critical of the Bush administration’s Iraq policy, was a CIA agent.

Libby was charged with “obstruction of justice,” making false statements to agents of the FBI, and perjury while testifying before a grand jury. He was convicted of the charges and given a 30-month sentence. President George Bush commuted Libby’s prison term in 2007.

Fitzgerald was praised by the *New York Times* for striking a blow for justice and the rule of law by taking on the “untouchables.”

A 2005 *Militant* editorial, “New hero of liberals: frame-up expert,” took a sharply different stance, saying: “There is no reason to rejoice about Fitzgerald’s conduct in the Libby case. To the contrary, working people have every reason to fear that such practices would be used against the labor movement or others advocating a change of government. Special prosecutors and grand juries should be abolished altogether.”

LETTERS

U.S. Civil War

In addition to the resistance struggles around the world, I really appreciated the excerpt from George Novack’s *America’s Revolutionary Heritage* and Marx’s congratulatory letter to Lincoln on his re-election in the January 31 issue. The U.S. Civil War is often misrepresented by high school and university educators and it was very eye-opening learning about the conflict as a class struggle. The article led me to order Novack’s book from Pathfinder. Please continue the historical coverage of the Civil War and the equally important period of Reconstruction (and its failure).

Kyle Edwards
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Alternative

Thanks for an alternative to the machine.
Aaron Taylor
Spokane, Washington

Need coverage from prisoners

I have been receiving your paper for about five months now. I haven’t read first-hand accounts

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY, 10018.

of the struggles prisoners are engaged in. I do see that you champion our struggles in here.

A prisoner
Michigan

In reply—The *Militant* welcomes contributions from our readers behind bars, both on the fight for dignity in prison and on other political struggles.—Editor

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.

Protests in Tunisia

Continued from front page

ary 23 chanting, “Down with the regime, down with the former party, down with the interim president and with the prime minister.”

The caravan started out January 22 in Menzel Bouzayane, located in the same southern province as Sidi Bouzid, where the protests that swept Ben Ali from power began. Participants walked 30 miles before heading by bus, car, truck, and motorcycle to make the rest of the trip to Tunis, some 200 miles away.

Sanitation workers have joined demonstrations and teachers have gone on strike, demanding the resignation of ministers who had been part of the RCD. Workers walked out of the state-run shipping company and demanded the resignation of the company chairman, who they accused of embezzlement. “They stole the nation’s money,” Sofiyan Abu Sami, one of the striking shipping workers told the press. “Our company is like a little example of what was wrong with Tunisia.”

Bookstores are openly selling books that had been banned by the Ben Ali regime. According to *El País*, a daily in Spain, all along Habib Bourguiba Avenue, the main thoroughfare in Tunis, “anyone can stand on a bench, like a London Speaker’s corner, and give a speech. They are frequently applauded.”

Under pressure from the continuing protests, the government has released hundreds of political prisoners, ended bans on many opposition parties, and promised to call rapid elections, though without setting a date. But as many as 1,500 people, mostly on trumped up charges of terrorism, are still in jail. A majority-women crowd demonstrated outside the Justice Ministry in Tunis January 24 demanding their relatives be freed. “The antiterror laws are oppressive and unjust,” Asma Ksouri told Reuters.

The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT), the only legal union in Tunisia under Ben Ali, at first opposed the demonstrations that began in December when street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire after cops confiscated his fruits and vegetables and slapped him in front of passersby. But as the movement grew, protesting high food prices, unemployment, and government repression, the UGTT joined the protests and is now backing calls to remove RCD supporters from the government.

Many of the “opposition” parties, including Ettajdid, the former Communist Party, had collaborated with Ben Ali since he overthrew the previous ruler, Habib Bourguiba, in 1987. Other opposition parties are little known in Tunisia, in large part due to censorship and repression during the previous decades.

‘Not a Facebook revolution’

Many media reports give the impression that the overthrow of Ben Ali was the result of cell phones, Twitter, and Internet blogs. But Ziad Mhirs, one of the bloggers who helped publicize photos of the protests and government repression told Al Jazeera, “It’s not a Facebook revolution. Definitely not. People went to the streets, people died, people demonstrated.”

As protests continue, Interior Minister Ahmed Friaa appealed to demonstrators to go home. “We are entering a new phase,” he said, “Give this government time.”

But having won more freedoms, working people are not in a mood to back down. Ignoring a government-decreed curfew, caravan participants are camped out in front of government offices in Tunis: They have vowed to remain until Ghannouchi, Mebazaa, and others identified with Ben Ali resign. Residents of the capital have brought them food and water. “The aim of this caravan is to make the government fall,” school teacher Rabia Slimane said.

Washington is also worried about getting in place a stable regime that will replace Ben Ali, a longtime close U.S. ally. After meeting with Tunisian foreign minister Kamel Morjane in Tunis, U.S. assistant secretary of State Jeffrey Feltman said, “We’re prepared to provide any support that would be needed or requested.”