

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Excerpt: 'From the Escambray to the Congo,' by Víctor Dreke

— PAGES 8-9

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Workers in Argentina protest peso devaluation

Move a body blow to livelihoods of workers and farmers

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND CHRISTIAN CATALÁN

NEUQUÉN, Argentina—Several hundred unionists and other workers marched in this southwestern city January 7 to oppose the measures announced by the new administration of President Eduardo Duhalde in response to the country's economic collapse. The devaluation of the

Firsthand coverage from reporters in Argentina

nation's currency, the peso, which has already led to price increases for basic necessities, will be a body blow to the living standards of workers and farmers throughout Argentina.

"Businesses already marked up the prices of bread, meat, cooking oil, salt, and other essential items by 20 or 30 percent even before the official devaluation," said José Romero, a worker from the nearby Zanón ceramic tile factory who was part of a 30-person contingent from that plant. "The devaluation will mean a big cut in our wages."

The nearly 380 workers at Zanón, members of the Ceramics Workers Union, have been occupying the factory for the past two months to resist the employer's plans for mass layoffs. They are running the production lines themselves and selling the product in order to pay workers' wages while they press their demand that the state take



Militant/Romina Green

Hundreds of trade unionists and other workers took part in a January 7 march organized by the Argentine Workers Federation to oppose devaluation of the peso and other measures by President Eduardo Duhalde in response to the country's economic collapse.

over the plant.

"In the hospitals here we're now facing shortages of medicines and other pharmaceutical products," explained another marcher, Norma Mendoza, a member of the

health workers union, which is affiliated to the Association of State Workers (ATE). She said suppliers of pharmaceutical goods were holding back imported goods to sell at

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What's behind India-Pakistan conflict?

BY PATRICK O'NEILL
AND GREG McCARTAN

India and Pakistan remain on the brink of war as New Delhi keeps up the pressure on the Pakistani government to round up leaders of Kashmiri and other organizations and clamp down on their activities. The crisis, now in its third week, was precipitated when a group of people, claimed by New Delhi to have received Pakistan's backing, launched a suicidal armed attack on the Indian parliament in mid-December.

The U.S. administration has pressed Pakistani military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf to crack down on the organizations targeted by the Indian government. At the same time Washington has urged India to ease off its threats of military attack while the Pakistani regime takes steps to fulfill its new "anti-terrorist" task.

The seeds of the present conflict between India and Pakistan were sown in 1947, when the departing British imperialists created Pakistan as a spearhead against the Indian revolution. Armed and backed by Washing-

ton for decades, Pakistan has remained a bulwark for imperialism against the battle by working people on the Indian subcontinent to address the unfulfilled tasks of national unification.

The Indian national struggle against British colonialism dates back to the mid-19th century. The sepoy rebellion, or "Indian mutiny," in 1847, was called by Karl Marx at the time the "first general center of resis-

tance which the Indian people ever possessed." As the movement gained strength over the following 100 years, workers and peasants from various regional, national, and religious backgrounds began to join together in a massive liberation struggle. Shortly after the end of World War II, the labor movement played a leading role in pro-independence strikes and other actions in virtually

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Supporters of worker fired for political views plan Florida, West Coast tour

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

MIAMI—Supporters of Michael Italie's struggle to be reinstated to his job as a sewing machine operator at Goodwill Industries here are organizing an ambitious January tour schedule for the socialist worker in Florida, Georgia, California, and Washington State to broaden backing for his fight

against the political firing.

Over the past week additional letters have been received by the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights from workers, unionists, and others who have learned about the case.

"Both my wife and I have worked for Goodwill Industries before. Many people think that Goodwill provides work and a paycheck that would otherwise be unattainable. They describe themselves as a non-profit agency, run secondhand stores and sheltered workshops.

"I brought up a safety question to my foreman while working on an evaluation period. The foreman immediately subjected me to verbal assault. I left the plant.

"I told the hospital staff that my eyesight was more important than any job and did not return. They seemed to understand since

Continued on Page 5

U.S. widens Central Asia military deployments

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

U.S. imperialism is tightening its grip on Afghanistan, quickly increasing its troop deployment to 4,000, according to the Pentagon, and constructing for the long-term military bases in a number of Central Asian countries.

Forces are deployed at a military base and prison camp at the Kandahar airport in southern Afghanistan; at the Bagram airfield, just north of Kabul, the capital city; at the northeastern city of Mazar-i-Sharif; and in Jalalabad and Tora Bora in the southeast.

At the Kandahar airport base the marines who set up a temporary encampment are being replaced more permanently by 1,000 troops from the Army's 101st airborne division, with the number of troops likely to double in the coming weeks.

At the same time Washington is building up its military bases throughout the Central Asia region. Washington is constructing an air base in Kyrgyzstan, a neighboring former Soviet republic, to accommodate 3,000 troops and a full range of warplanes and support aircraft. This airbase, located on 37 acres near the Manas International Airport, outside of the country's capital city of Bishkek, is projected to begin unrestricted air operations by the end of February.

Some 1,000 troops from the 10th Mountain Division, as well as several hundred Special Operations forces are stationed at

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Despite large 'no' vote, U.S. miners approve new contract

BY TONY LANE
AND FRANK FORRESTAL

BENTLEYVILLE, Pennsylvania—A new national contract for union coal miners was voted up December 21 by a 60-40 margin, according to union sources.

The contract between the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) was agreed upon a year ahead of the expiration of the current agreement, signed in 1998, and will last five years until the end of 2006. At the UMWA convention in 2000, union officials said they intended to seek an early contract ratification.

The union reported that the strongest support for the contract came from southern West Virginia and the Midwest. Union officials have not released official tallies of the December 21 vote, but from discussions with miners in this region not one union mine voted in favor of the new pact. These include workers at large underground mines in Pennsylvania such as 84, Dilworth, Emerald, Cumberland, and Maple Creek, as well as McElroy and Blacksville No. 2 in northern West Virginia.

UMWA-organized mines in Alabama also voted against the agreement, including all three Jim Walters mines, among them No. 5, where a mine explosion killed 12 UMWA

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- ❖ Read the introduction and first chapter of the Spanish-language edition in the January issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Joblessness on rise as Ford lays off 20,000

BY JACK WILLEY

As hopeful articles in the financial pages of the big business press declare the recession is nearing its end, Ford Motor Company is preparing to lay off as many as 20,000 employees in face of massive overcapacity and sinking profits.

Last year Ford sold 3.8 million vehicles in North America. The company, which can produce 5.7 million automobiles, used only 67 percent of its potential manufacturing capacity.

Ford, which plans to announce its fourth-quarter 2001 earnings on January 17, is expected to post its first full-year loss since 1992. The *New York Times* reported the auto producer will mark a \$900 million fourth-quarter loss — about five times greater than expected.

In spite of near-record auto sales last year for both Ford and General Motors, steep discounting affected both auto giants' bottom line. The manufacturers offered rebates, zero-interest loans, and cheap leases to bring in customers and maintain high sales, even as the economic downturn was beginning to pick up steam. As the recession continues, GM and Ford face a double problem of sinking profits from sales and growing loan defaults as people cannot keep up auto payments.

"We are in a deteriorating economic environment and we are dealing, as all others in the industry are, with a very, very high level of bankruptcies of our customers," said Greg Smith, president and chief operating officer of Ford Motor Credit. Last month Smith replaced Donald Winkler, who was ousted after Ford announced it would need to pump several hundred million dollars into Ford Motor Credit, which makes the loans and leases.

Part-time work, joblessness rise

In addition to the layoffs and plant closings projected at Ford, joblessness is on the rise across the country as workers bear the brunt of the economic downturn. Official unemployment climbed to 5.8 percent in December as 133,000 manufacturing jobs alone were shed in the month. With less than 50 percent of workers without jobs eligible for unemployment compensation, the real jobless figure is much higher.

Millions more workers have been forced to accept short hours or temporary work as

the grip of the recession takes hold. The *Wall Street Journal* reported January 3 that since the recession began in March, 1.2 million workers lost their jobs and an additional million have had to work part-time. The number of workers who want to work full-time but have had their hours cut has climbed 34 percent to 4.2 million from 3.2 million in March, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Underemployment—regardless of how few hours somebody works each week—is not counted in the government's official joblessness figures, which only include those who have no work but are looking.

The Bureau reported that the average

workweek for nonsupervisory personnel fell to 34.1 hours in November, from 34.3 hours last year. For the last three months in 2001 the average workweek was 34.06 hours, the shortest of any recession since hours were tracked starting in 1964.

The *Journal* reported many companies, hoping the recession will soon be over, are cutting back hours of work rather than carrying out layoffs in order to try to convince workers to stick around. The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union leaders have said nearly 7,000 unionized hotel workers have faced a drastic reduction of work hours.

Behlen Manufacturing, a metal-fabricat-

ing firm in Columbus, Nebraska, reduced weekly hours of 400 factory workers and cut salaried employees' pay by 10 percent. IBM cut the hours of 20,000 workers and eliminated overtime in the company's microelectronics division. The company boasted that it only had to layoff 1,000 employees as a result.

Some 80,000 people lost their jobs in the last three months in New York City alone. The Fiscal Policy Institute, a research group in New York, found at least 76,000 additional garment workers, taxi and limousine drivers, and graphic artists have been forced into partial employment from full-time jobs since September.

Palestinian woman fights political firing

BY BERNIE SENTER

SANTA CLARA, California—Alia Atawneh has filed a lawsuit against Macy's because she was fired from her job as a sales clerk in the men's department at the San Jose store. A 28-year-old Palestinian woman, Atawneh says she lost her job because of her ethnicity and political beliefs.

Atawneh told the *Militant* that a customer approached her and said, "Did you hear about Osama bin Laden killing 7,000 people?" and she told the man she didn't want to talk about the subject. The man accused her of being from the same country as bin Laden and told her she "should be out of here now. And you are happy about what happened. You have no right to be working in this country because Americans are being killed on their own soil and you people are behind it."

Atawneh says she "told him he had no right to talk to me like that. He said he wanted to talk to my manager which he did in private."

The manager later told Atawneh that if anything like this happened again, to call him or store security. "I didn't talk about this subject to anyone," she said.

A few days later, Atawneh was called into the human resources office and questioned about the incident. "Jennifer [from human resources] then told me, 'I want to know your opinion' about the terrorist attacks. I told her they horrified me and angered me the same way they horrified and angered every decent person in the world."

"But I was surprised and hurt that Jennifer would ask me such a question," Atawneh says in her legal complaint. "I am proud to be a new American, and have never done anything or said anything that would give anyone reason to doubt my loyalty. I don't think Jennifer asked other employees similar questions, and do not believe she would have asked me except for the fact that I am Palestinian and Muslim, and except for the customer's obvious bias against people who appear to be Middle Eastern."

Atawneh has been in the United States for four years and lives with her Palestinian husband, a U.S. citizen. She grew up in Kuwait and left after the Gulf War when her father, a teacher, could no longer find work.

On October 9 Macy's fired Atawneh, allegedly because she told co-workers "America deserved it" on September 12, the day after the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks. She denied ever saying such a thing. "I was talking with two associates. We were talking about the bombing, like everyone else was. One of the women knew I was Palestinian and asked me what I thought of the television reports of Palestinian children celebrating and dancing after the incident. I told them, 'These people are from my country. They have always lived in war. They have very hard lives and everything they hear leads them to believe that all of their problems are the result of the United States support of Israel. Maybe that's why they are celebrating.'" She thought her opinions were similar to those expressed by media commentators at the time.

"I just explained the feelings of these people," she says. "I didn't say America deserved that. We loved to be in America. We came here because there is no war."

In the meeting where she was fired,



Militant/Bernie Senter

Alia Atawneh was fired by Macy's after she was asked by supervisors her opinion on the September 11 attacks. "I feel they took my rights," Atawneh said to the *Militant*. "I want my rights."

Macy's officials told her that co-workers and her manager expressed fear working with her. "I told them, 'This is really ridiculous. I'm a pregnant woman. You are treating me like I'm a terrorist. What does it mean you are afraid of me?' Then they just said, 'We have decided to discharge you.'"

"I feel they took my rights," Atawneh said. "This is not fair. It's not human. I didn't say those things. I want my rights. I am a human. It really hurt me that they fired me like that. I have no problem being a good employee."

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THE MILITANT

Political explosion in Argentina

Thousands of toilers in Argentina have hit the streets to protest the devastating effects of the capitalist collapse. As mass actions erupt all over the country, the 'Militant' brings you on-the-scene coverage of workers and youth who are resisting austerity measures imposed by the capitalist rulers there.



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World youth leaders assess Algiers festival, plan event in Cuba

BY JACK WILLEY

ATHENS, Greece—Representatives from some 40 anti-imperialist youth organizations around the world came together here December 18–20 for a General Council meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY). Among the most important points on the agenda were an evaluation of the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Algiers last August, and the location for WFDY's next General Assembly—the general membership meeting of the federation.

Iraklis Tsavdaridis, who represents the Communist Youth of Greece in WFDY's presidency, opened discussion on the Algiers meeting with a draft resolution on the festival. "Holding the festival in Algeria was of great political importance for the progressive youth and students' movement around the world," he said.

Tran Dac Loi, of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union of Vietnam, pointed to the political success of the festival as a clearly anti-imperialist gathering, marked by the large presence of youth from Africa and the Middle East. Loi had served as the chairperson for the international organizing committee of the Algiers event.

"In face of a boycott campaign by social democratic forces around the world, the first-ever world youth festival to take place in Africa strengthened the movement against imperialism," he said. Loi was referring to unsuccessful efforts to derail the Algiers gathering by youth groups affiliated to social democratic parties, including those that govern imperialist countries like France, Germany, and Britain.

A delegate from the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, Juan Carlos Marsán, spoke about the conditions that the Palestinian and Western Saharan peoples face and the important role their struggles for national liberation played in the deliberations of festival participants. "The 15th world festival was a success for all progressive and revolutionary forces around the world," he stated.

Marsán said the festival was a counter to what is known as "neoliberalism," the drive by various governments of semicolonial countries, under the fiction that the capitalist market could bring "development," to sell off state-owned enterprises, cut the social wage, and drop protectionist barriers to a barrage

of goods from imperialist powers, among other such measures. The festival's anti-imperialist character was important, he added, especially in light of the war in Afghanistan and plans by the U.S. government to expand its predatory assault to other countries.

More frequent festivals

The Cuban delegate thanked the National Union of Algerian Youth and other Algerian hosts for their efforts in holding the festival, in spite of the many internal difficulties and external pressures. He urged delegates to consider organizing the anti-imperialist gatherings every two to three years instead of at the traditional four-yearly intervals, in order to discuss current issues in a timely manner and to more effectively respond to the accelerated assaults by imperialism. Holding meetings more regularly would also give some continuity to the festivals, he said.

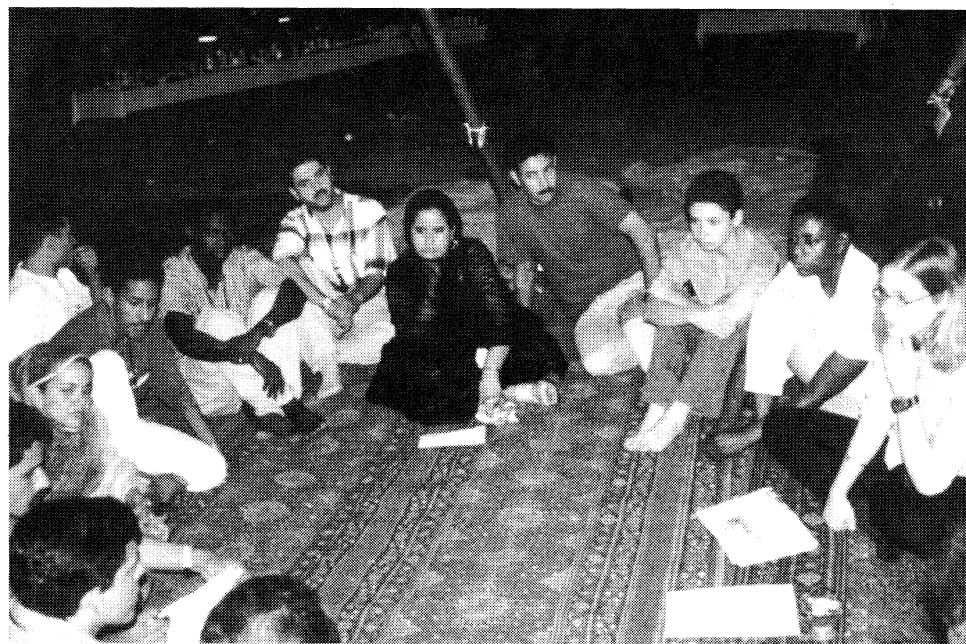
A representative from WFDY affiliates in Latin America reported that a regional meeting in Havana several weeks before the Athens gathering had discussed this idea and had recommended that the world youth organization adopt such a course.

Anne Harte, representing the Young Socialists in the United Kingdom, said that the revolutionary heritage of the years-long war that ended with Algeria's independence from the colonial rule of France, and the formation in 1963 of a workers and farmers government there, marked the festival and reinforced its anti-imperialist character.

Several delegates also raised criticisms of aspects of the Algeria event, within the framework of supporting the evaluation presented initially by Tsavdaridis. Nikos Seretakis, from the Communist Youth of Greece, said the event needed to reflect more on youth actions such as the "anti-globalization" protests that took place in Seattle and Genoa.

Aristos Damianou, from the United Democratic Youth Organization in Cyprus, said he thought representatives of youth organizations that have ties with governments in northern Africa and the Middle East played too heavy a role in the event.

Hirochi Yonezawa, from the Democratic Youth League of Japan, said that his organization could not attend the festival because of "technical problems," that is, because of what they had heard about the lack of secu-



Militant/Jack Willey

Participants from the United States meet with leaders of the Ujsario, the youth organization of the Polisario Front, during the World Festival of Youth and Students in Algiers last August. The first anti-imperialist festival to be held in Africa was marked by the resistance of youth from Africa and the Middle East, especially the national liberation struggles in Western Sahara and Palestine.

rity in Algiers. Antigovernment protests had been held in Algeria in the months leading up to the festival, based in the majority Berber region of Kabylia. Many of these protests for language and cultural rights of the Berber people had been exploited and encouraged by the government of France in an effort to undermine the Algerian government.

Jack Willey, representing the Young Socialists in the United States, said that security fears raised before the festival had proved false. Not a single incident of a delegate having their safety endangered while in Algiers had been reported. Willey also pointed to the internationalism of the Cuban Revolution manifest at the festival. The Cuban government made it possible for over 200 youth from several countries in the semicolonial world, who would not have otherwise participated, to attend the Algiers meeting.

Willey said the openness of the sessions and free exchange of cultural and political information throughout the festival was a political strength of the gathering. He agreed with the proposal to hold festivals more frequently to respond to the accelerated militarization drive by the U.S. and other imperialist powers.

A number of other delegates at the three-day meeting also spoke in favor of the recommendation for more frequent youth festivals.

General Assembly to be held in Havana

After weighing different proposals, the WFDY General Council decided to hold the federation's next General Assembly in Havana in the winter of 2003. The assembly is a meeting of all WFDY member organizations and elects the organization's General Council and officers. Assemblies have taken place every four years in the past. The previous one was held in Cyprus in 1999.

The organization's Latin American region

proposed holding the next assembly in Havana. Mauricio Rodriguez, from the Communist Youth of Colombia, which coordinates the region, said that WFDY-initiated meetings held in Cuba have tended to be larger and more representative, and the federation does not run into the problems that can arise in countries with capitalist governments. Delegates from the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League of the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea, for example, were unable to attend the Athens meeting after being denied visas by the Greek government.

Two organizations from Nepal proposed hosting WFDY's upcoming General Assembly in Kathmandu, the country's capital.

During discussion under that point, Juan Carlos Marsán pointed to the politically explosive situation building throughout Latin America and the centrality of the Cuban Revolution as an example for youth struggling against imperialism. Marsán's point was confirmed a few days after the Athens meeting, when protests against the grinding effects of the spiraling economic crisis that has shaken Argentina exploded across the country.

To take advantage of repeated offers from WFDY's affiliates in Nepal to host a meeting there, delegates in Athens agreed that a future General Council meeting of the federation will be held in that Central Asian country.

During the General Council meeting an international symposium on imperialism and terrorism took place, where delegates discussed the world political situation since the September 11 suicide attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States (see "Youth condemn imperialism," *Militant* issue no. 1, 2002). The meeting also issued statements in solidarity with the Palestinian and Western Saharan struggles for national self-determination.

Writer Leggett, jailed for 23 weeks for not revealing sources, is released

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—Jailed writer Vanessa Leggett was freed from the Harris County Jail January 4 after more than 23 weeks of imprisonment. Leggett was convicted on charges of civil contempt July 20 for refusing to betray confidential sources to federal investigators.

At a press conference following her release from prison, Leggett defended her actions after being incarcerated for more than five months and defiantly said that she would be willing to return to prison if necessary. "If that's what it takes, that's what it takes," she said. "This is not so much about me. It's about the public's right to a free and independent press."

Leggett was released because the grand jury before which she was ordered to testify completed its term. Jailing for civil contempt, which is meant to force desired behavior rather than punish, must come to an end when there is no longer a way for the witness to comply with the subpoena.

Leggett's attorney, Michael DeGuerin, said that prosecutors promised in court to continue their efforts to force her to comply with their demands. "I'm saddened by the government's position that they will try to incarcerate her again," said the lawyer. U.S. Assistant District Attorney Terry Clark would not say whether the government plans to take the investigation to a new grand jury.

Leggett is writing a book on the 1997 murder of Doris Angleton, the wife of a

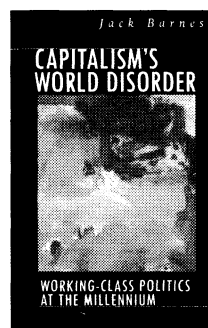
wealthy Houston bookie. Initially she had cooperated with FBI agents who questioned her, but later she explained that she regretted that decision. According to the January 5 *Houston Chronicle*, FBI agents offered to hire Leggett as a paid, confidential informant. Leggett refused and was eventually arrested and jailed.

Throughout her imprisonment, federal prosecutors insisted Leggett was not protected by the constitutional guarantees of freedom of speech as she was a freelance reporter not a professional journalist, and that her book was not yet sold to a publisher.

This question has been widely discussed in the Houston media. The question came up again at the press conference when one of the supporters of Leggett who greeted her at the Harris County Jail was U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, member of the House Judiciary Committee. Jackson Lee used the occasion of Leggett's press conference to discuss her proposed legislation ostensibly designed to "shield" reporters from jail. Jackson Lee said the proposed law would use "intent to publish" as a yardstick. If a freelance writer could show "intent to publish" then they would be shielded from facing jail as Leggett has.

In covering the statement, *Chronicle* writer Alan Bernstein was careful to note that not even all reporters agree with this proposal as many fear it would lead to government licensing of journalists and lead to conscious exclusion of some.

FROM PATHFINDER



Capitalism's World Disorder

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

Jack Barnes

The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are the inevitable forces unleashed by capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store for us can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. Also available in French and Spanish. \$23.95

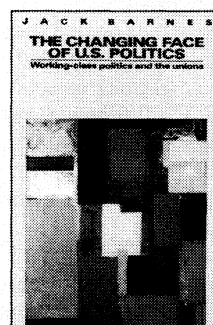
The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

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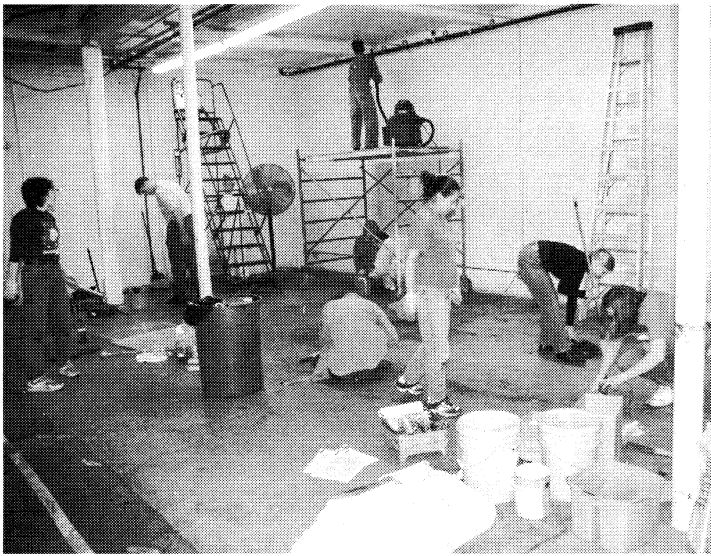
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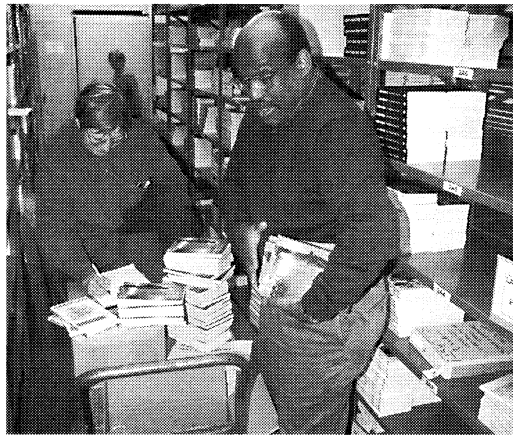
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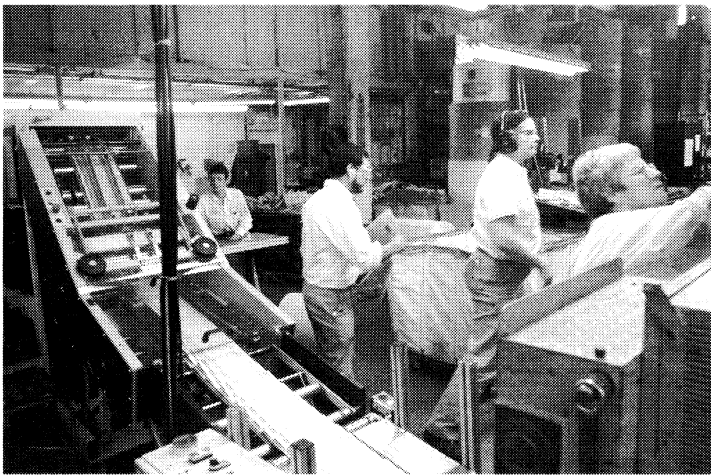
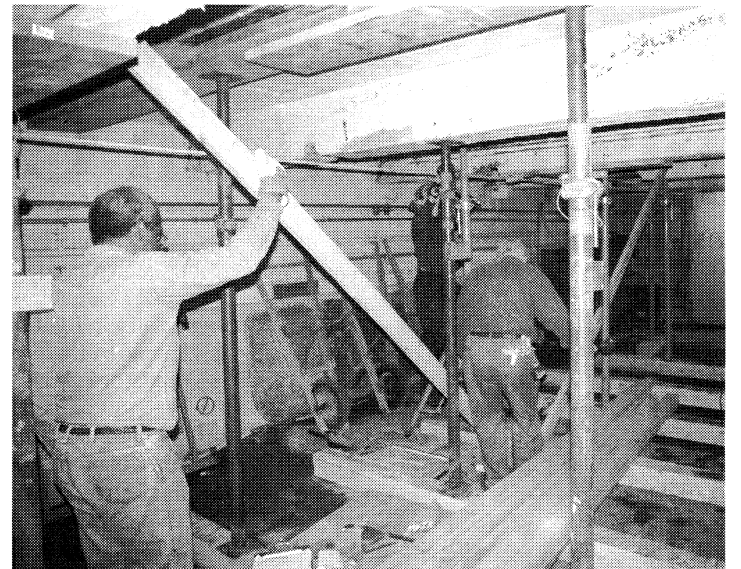
Volunteer crews help transform printshop



Photographers: Róger Calero and Greg McCartan



Left, volunteers clean and paint former sheetfed press area for paper storage. Right, team in basement, led by former and current coal miners, shores up floor to support paper rolls. Above, crew counts Pathfinder stock.

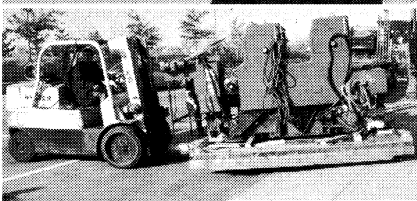


Above, conveyer belt takes copies of a newspaper from the web press to the new automatic stacking machine.

Around 70 people took part in a January 5-6 Red Weekend at the Pathfinder building on New York's west side, the third in a series of such mobilizations that are playing a key part in the reorganization of Pathfinder's printshop. The crews built on the work over the previous month of volunteers from Canada and across the United States, who had helped to consolidate the print shop from three floors into one, and had prepared the relocation of the publisher's two sheetfed presses to a new press room. They also got a chance to see the new stacker on the web press in action.



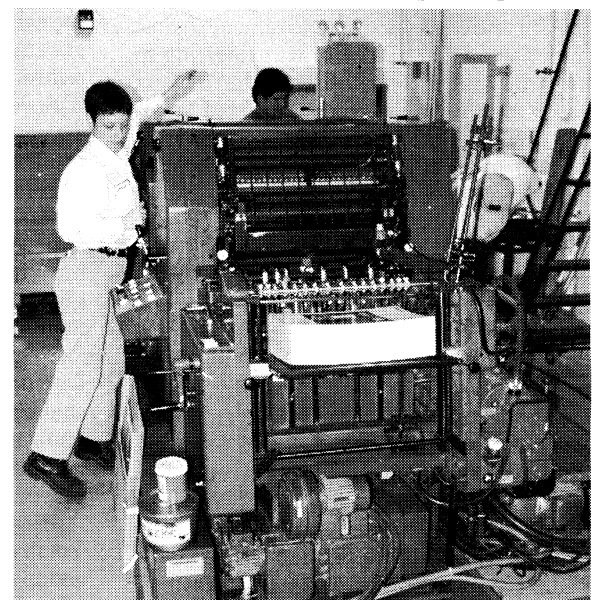
Stacking machine delivers bundles, ready to be put on pallet.



Left, professional movers relocate sheetfed press—quite a sight on West Street in Manhattan! Above, starting installation in new press room.



Volunteers hang lights above sheetfed press in new location.



Up and running in less than a day. Sheetfed press operator Angel Lariscy produces Pathfinder title *Sexism and Science*, by Evelyn Reed.

\$600,000 sought for fund

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Volunteer crews have made rapid progress over the last month in reorganizing Pathfinder's printshop. Their labor is helping to transform the printshop into one that can efficiently print Pathfinder titles to the high standards expected by readers around the world, as well as the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and that can simultaneously compete for the commercial printing contracts that are necessary to its financial survival in the highly competitive New York market.

Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes described this ongoing effort as a "turning point in the work of the international communist movement," when he chaired a December 23 public meeting held to celebrate the volunteers' accomplishments (see "World events make production of revolutionary books more important" in January 14 issue.)

Explaining that the printshop transformation entails substantial up-front expenditures, Barnes announced a goal of raising \$600,000 for the Capital Fund. The fund is a long-standing institution of the communist movement, built around larger donations that are invested in major capital resources.

Barnes said the money will cover both present and anticipated expenditures involved in the reorganization, such as those of moving the sheetfed presses—a task which necessitated hours of costly professional assistance, as well as the labor of volunteers and press operators.

Throughout this special effort, he emphasized, the communist movement will not stint on necessary improvements to the presses, computers, and other equipment, at the same time as it scales back areas of its printing operation.

Improvements to web press

In recent months, for example, the productivity of the web press has been boosted substantially by the fitting of automatic tensioners to each of the units that make up the web press.

These electronic controllers, which keep paper at an even tension throughout a run and synchronize the speed of the units, have improved quality and made the machines easier to operate.

A stacking machine has also been added to the press, replacing the labor-intensive work of stacking the freshly printed publications by hand—a tough job known in the trade as "flying." Press operators discovered they can now run the press faster, because the stacker can keep up with high press speeds.

As of January 9, the fund, which was launched on December 15, has grown to \$347,500. Twenty-four people have made contributions from a variety of sources, including personal inheritances and other windfalls, and a work bonus on the railroad.

The Capital Fund accepts contributions of \$1,000 or more. To find out more or to make a contribution, write to the Capital Fund Committee, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Reprint project scores victory

The following note from Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteer Bobbi Sack was sent to the project's steering committee January 5. The reprint project is made up of some 150 volunteers from around the world who are turning every Pathfinder book and pamphlet into a digital file ready for printing in Pathfinder's printshop. The shop utilizes computer-to-plate technology, and the newly digital books can be quickly made ready for press at any time.

In addition, the volunteers format the books with improved typography, making them easier to read.

Many of the photographs and graphics in the books are improved by scanning original material. Sack heads up the graphics team.

Last year the reprint volunteers also took on the job of formatting the new Pathfinder books, most of which they have completed under short deadlines by organizing round-the-clock work from time zone to time zone.

The latest title is *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, by Victor Dreke. The book will be available February 1 from Pathfinder.

Although the volunteer graphics team has helped in the preparation of various internal graphics on new books over the past year, the forthcoming title marks the first time they have directly participated

in preparing the photographs for a new book.



BY BOBBI SACK

Graphics team completes work on *From the Escambray to the Congo* on schedule!

The team turned in 56 ready-to-print photo scans to Pathfinder at 1:00 p.m. today for the new book, *From the Escambray to the Congo*. Right on schedule.

On January 1 we were asked to take on the preparation of the scans.

The book will have a 24-page photo signature and 8 pages of internal graphics, making 56 photos in all. This work involved sizing, adjusting the tones, removing patterns, and cleaning dirt. We did this on a four-day turnaround, a huge accomplishment!

I spoke by phone with [Pathfinder editorial director] Steve Clark soon after the scans were uploaded, and he relayed to me that Eva Braiman, who designed the page layout, commented on the high quality of the work on the scans.

Four volunteers participated in this project in addition to myself: Arthur Hughes, Barb Graham, Hilding Eklund, and Robert Dees. All responded to my request within a few hours and returned their scans rapidly.

It's only January 5 and we already have a victory to celebrate.

Fired worker to tour Florida, West Coast

Continued from front page

most of them were union members themselves.

"The employers would like to have a no talking plant. The September 11 events have breathed new life into an unjust system. Your fight puts the lie to the 'United we stand propaganda.' Your fight is our fight and fight of poor and working people the world over. Enclosed find \$10 in cash."

This note was sent by Kim O'Brien in Willimantic, Connecticut, to Italie, who was fired October 22 for his political views by Goodwill Industries, a "nonprofit" company that supplies the U.S. government with flags and military uniforms. At the time, Italie was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami. Several days earlier, Italie had spoken out against the U.S. war against Afghanistan and defended the Cuban Revolution at a candidates' debate aired on a local television station. Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana later told the *Miami Herald* that he dismissed the socialist candidate because "we cannot have anyone who is attempting to subvert the United States government" working at the plant.

"When Kim O'Brien says that 'the employers would like to have a no talking plant' he gets at the heart of what my fight is all about," Italie told the *Militant*. "Goodwill is different from other employers only in the depths of its hypocrisy in claiming to care about the well-being of working people. The aim of their abuse, arrogance, and firings is to shut us up: to prevent us from speaking out against miserable working conditions and their wars of plunder. I'm fighting to give other workers more space on the job to discuss and organize on the issues that most deeply affect our lives."

Other new letters of support include David Campbell, secretary-treasurer of Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Local 8-675 in Carson, California; and the Rev. Earl Koopercamp, rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Manhattan, New York. In order to take advantage of this support, the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights is organizing a national tour of Italie to publicize and raise funds for the fight.

The first leg of the national tour in the new year will start in the Tampa, Florida, area January 12. John Benson, a meat packer in Plant City, said one of the first stops is to meet with farmers in Brooksville. A house meeting will include farmers who have filed a class action suit against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for discriminating against Black farmers in granting loans. On January 13 Italie will participate in an event in Sarasota at New College that will address the conditions that farm workers in the area face. Italie is also scheduled to speak at the University of Southern Florida in Tampa.

From January 18-21 the AFL-CIO Civil Rights conference will take place in Miami, which will culminate in the Martin Luther King Day parade on January 21. Italie and his supporters will reach out for support from unionists at the conference and those joining the parade.

The packed schedule will also include participation at the January 19 Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) Awards Banquet in St. Petersburg, Florida. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, the central leader of the Battle of Birmingham in 1963, which was a turning point for the movement against Jim

Steelworkers in Birmingham strike over medical benefits



Militant/Jeanne Fitzmaurice

Workers at Sloss Industries in Birmingham entered their second month on strike January 6. Some 250 members of United Steelworkers of America Local 12014 walked out in December, after rejecting a proposed new contract that would end medical insurance for future retirees, and impose other cuts. "Retirees really need that coverage," said one striker, "because everybody gets sick after working in here." The company, which produces coke used in steel production and other coal by-products, has hired a small number of scabs and is trying to keep the plant running with them and supervisory personnel. Sloss is owned by Walter Industries, which also owns the Jim Walter mines in Alabama.

Crow segregation. Shuttlesworth is a supporter of the fight for reinstatement of Michael Italie (see interview in January 14 issue of the *Militant*).

From January 23-24 Italie will be in Charlotte, North Carolina, to join together in speaking out against political firings with Ahmad Daniels. Daniels, the former director of the Mecklenburg County Office of

Minority Affairs, was fired from his job for a letter he wrote to a local newspaper on his political views about the U.S. assault on Afghanistan. This is not the first time Daniels has come up against governmental harassment for defense of Black rights during wartime. He has a long history, from successfully fighting in 1967 to get an honorable discharge from the Marine Corps instead of fighting in Vietnam to participating in the United Nations-sponsored conference on racism held in South Africa this past year.

On January 26 Italie has been invited to join fighters in Valdosta, Georgia, at an event sponsored by the Peoples Tribunal. The Peoples Tribunal is a civil rights organization that fights police brutality and racist discrimination and is based among workers and poor farmers in rural Georgia.

Italie will be in San Francisco January 27-30, and then will head to Seattle. To schedule speaking engagements for Michael Italie in your area, please send the proposed dates and events planned to the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights, P.O. Box 510127, Miami, FL, 33151. Phone: 305-724-5965 or E-mail: DefendFreeSpeech@yahoo.com

In order to produce literature, pay for phone calls, and plan travel, the committee is urgently in need of funds. Financial contributions, large and small, can be sent to the address above. Please make checks out to the Free Speech Defense Fund.

Court strikes down Bush's antiunion executive order

BY RÓGER CALERO

A federal judge on January 2 struck down an antiunion executive order issued by President George Bush soon after taking office last year. The order requires government contractors to post notices informing employees of their "right" to not join unions or pay certain union fees.

The lawsuit challenging the executive order was filed last year by the United Auto Workers of America (UAW) and by affiliates of the Office and Professional Employees International Union. The UAW argued that the order was "likely to be viewed by workers as an attempt by employers to discourage participation in unions," said the union's newsletter the day of the ruling.

The court ruled that the "notice required by the Order only notifies employees of their NLRA [National Labor Relations Act] rights against unions, and not of their NLRA rights against employers, including their right to participate in union activity without employer interference."

The White House had argued that the executive order would help productivity. A labor department spokesperson called the court decision "disappointing" and said an appeal is planned.

U.S. coal miners approve new contract

Continued from front page

miners last September.

The main signatories to the contract are three of the country's biggest coal operators: Peabody Energy, the largest, Arch Coal, and Consol Energy. The contract sets the standard for most of the union's 26,000 working miners, many of whose contracts have "me-too" clauses with the national contract. A further 75,000 laid-off and retired miners will also be affected by the contract.

The main features of the new pact are wage increases of \$1.50 over the life of the contract; a new "30-and-out" pension provision, which goes into full effect in 2003; and small increases in benefits and allowances. The contract gives coal companies more room to purge laid-off miners from recall lists, also known as "panels."

A worker at the Cumberland mine owned by RAG American Coal near here remarked, "There's not enough of a pay raise. We're underpaid for what we do. They [international union officials] did real good on the pensions, but the pay.... Gee whiz, let the young guys make a living." In the nine years from the beginning of the 1998 contract to the end of the new agreement, miners will have received a total of only \$2.50 an hour in wage increases. Meanwhile, the price of coal has risen to record levels.

Many workers interviewed at the Maple Creek mine opposed the agreement because of its five-year length and because the old contract had not expired. The touted "30-and-out" pension will result in a substantial pay cut for workers who retire, and will leave them without health coverage until age 55.

UMWA president Cecil Roberts called the agreement a "tremendous victory for UMWA members nationwide" and a "win-win" for both the union and the coal bosses. "Signatory operators know that they will enjoy labor stability for the next five years," Roberts said.

The UMWA president also said the negotiations were not easy because "the economic situation of our country, especially in the wake of the September 11 tragedy, cast a shadow over everything we did at the bargaining table."

The UMWA officialdom has looked at other campaigns in a similar manner. Writing in the *UMWA Journal* about the union campaign against independent coal operator Robert Murray, UMWA secretary-treasurer Carlo Tarley said that "the UMWA

scaled back its campaign in wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks."

Articles in *Coal Outlook*, an industry magazine, said the contract was not a memorable agreement as far as breaking new ground. "Everything is related to retirement and some wage increases.... It looks like a severance package overall," noted one article. Another pointed out the new contract gives operators the ability to more quickly purge large panel lists of laid-off miners. It also remarked that the agreement does not appear to offer provisions designed to increase UMWA organizing efforts—a chief goal in recent BCOA contracts.

Of the large coal operators who signed the agreement, Consol Energy had the most at stake as almost half of its more than 7,000-person workforce is in the union. An industry magazine said Consol was "the most vulnerable major producer if there was a coal strike in 2002 or 2003." It has large operations in the Pittsburgh seam in northern West Virginia and southwestern Pennsylvania, including two large nonunion mines, Bailey and Enlow Fork, which combined for a record 20 million tons produced in 2000. The union mines Consol operates in the area, including the expanding McElroy mine in the West Virginia panhandle, produce over 30 million tons.

Strengthening union in coalfields

For more than a decade, the major coal operators have expanded their nonunion operations in order to drive down production costs and further weaken the UMWA. Today about one-third of coal miners are in the UMWA—26,000 out of 77,000 miners across the country.

The UMWA has sought to force the bosses to hire union members when a new mine—union or nonunion—is opened up. This provision was won in the 1988 national contract and became the major issue in the BCOA strike in 1993. Through a seven-month selective strike of 18,000 coal miners—one-third of the active union miners at the time—unionists stood firm on this crucial issue.

However, coal giants like Peabody Energy, Arch Coal, Massey, and independent coal operator Murray, have continued their drive to rid their operations of the union. Peabody Energy has shifted nearly all of its

Illinois Basin production from union mines to nonunion Black Beauty Coal operations. It has expanded in the almost exclusively nonunion Powder River Basin in the West. Arch Coal has shut down its union mines in the Illinois Basin and expanded nonunion operations in the Powder River Basin. Peabody's workforce is 37 percent union; Arch Coal's is 14 percent.

Massey Energy, which has substantial operations in southern West Virginia, is only four percent unionized. Murray, who began with two union mines in Ohio and Pennsylvania, is continuing to expand his nonunion operations, opening the nonunion Century mine right next door to the union Powhatan No. 6 mine in Ohio.

In the past year, the UMWA has begun activities aimed at regaining some of this lost ground. Rallies were held in front of Massey Energy operations in southern West Virginia and in front of Peabody's Black Beauty operations in Indiana. Union members at Murray-owned Maple Creek and Powhatan No. 6 mines have been part of a campaign that has included a joint rally and union-sanctioned "memorial days" that shut down the two mines.

Reflecting the challenge that miners face to reverse the decline in union representation, the UMWA lost four important union-organizing efforts in 2001 at Coastal Coal in northern West Virginia, Cumberland Resources in Virginia, and Arch's Samples surface mine and Peabody's Kanawha Eagle operation in southern West Virginia. The union is contesting the election at Kanawha Eagle.

Several examples of successful organizing drives came out of the last major battles the union waged, which took place around the union contract in 1993. At the time of the signing of the 1998 contract, union president Roberts referred to the 1993 national strike as "a very good demonstration of how things should not be done." However, as union miners exercised their power in 1993, 1,200 miners joined the UMWA in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. Workers at Marrowbone, Wolf Creek, Pontiki, and Cyprus Mountain led these drives and used each victory to spur the fight at the next mine.

Tony Lane and Frank Forrestal are members of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248 at Maple Creek mine.

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U.S. rulers send more troops to Central Asia

Continued from front page

Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan.

In Pakistan, Washington has taken over control of three air bases located in Jacobabad, Dalbindin, and Pasni. The Pakistani government has also agreed that U.S. troops can now expand its military operations across the border into Pakistan under the guise of pursuing "terrorist" suspects.

The Pentagon has also agreed to station two aircraft carriers and thousands of marines aboard ships in the north Arabian Sea through March, with the likelihood that their deployment will be renewed every three months.

In another sign of the expansion of U.S. military presence in the region, each branch of the U.S. military has adopted the policy of rotating troops through the region every 90 days to six months. To fund these war moves, the Pentagon is seeking a \$20 billion boost in the 2003 budget, over the current \$329 billion spent annually on military operations.

U.S. bombing to continue

The new government of the country, approved at an imperialist-sponsored conference in Germany last month, has been given no say over U.S. military operations in the country. Despite objections by the government to continued bombing, the U.S. envoy to Kabul, Zalmay Khalilzad, reiterated the Pentagon's policy that the bombing will continue and that the U.S. rulers alone will decide if and when it will stop. Afghan troops are confined to barracks and can leave only with the approval of the interim government and after notifying a British general on the scene.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, U.S. deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz displayed the attitude of a official of a conquering power toward the regime. The new Afghan leader Hamid Karzai has "proven to be an impressive man," he said. "Whether he is up to the formidable job he has is a different question."

Large numbers of Washington's troops in Afghanistan are involved in guarding and interrogating thousands of Taliban prisoners. The POWs are held in abysmal conditions throughout the country. "The U.S. Central Command says American forces are just beginning the process of sorting out which of the [7,000 prisoners] they want to take into U.S. custody for interrogation," reported the *Wall Street Journal*.

Washington says it has more than 300 prisoners under its direct control, and is preparing a high-security detention facility at the U.S. navy base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that could hold as many as 2,000 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters. The Pentagon is sending some 1,500 troops to build prisons at the Guantanamo base, and has raised the possibility that additional detain-



Map by Mike Shur

ees could be held within the United States. Two sites mentioned in the media are the Charleston Naval Weapons Station in South Carolina and the maximum security prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

To assist Washington in maintaining order, a 4,500-strong UN-sanctioned occupation force, headed by British forces, is taking up posts around Kabul. This force reports to Thomas Franks, the U.S. general responsible for military operations in Afghanistan.

The British government has pledged 1,500 troops. Canada's rulers have announced that they are sending up to 900 soldiers, in addition to the estimated 40-50 members of Canada's Joint Task force now operating alongside U.S. forces in the Kandahar region. Seventy German and 30 Dutch soldiers are also on their way to Afghanistan.

A small contingent of French troops has already arrived in Kabul. According to a French defense ministry spokesman, some 2,450 naval and air force personnel will also be involved in the deployment of the aircraft carrier *Charles de Gaulle* in the Indian Ocean.

After first balking at the proposal, Afghanistan's interim government endorsed the agreement delegating broad powers of operation to the occupation force. The pact grants it full freedom of movement in the country's territory and airspace. The troops will be stationed at five bases in and around Kabul, including the airport. They have immunity from arrest or prosecution by Afghanistan. The commander of the force will act as the final arbiter on interpretations of the agreement.

Much of Washington's current air bombardment is focused on eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border. U.S. aircraft bombed parts of Paktia province throughout the night January 6 and into the next morning. This followed on the heels of a massive bombardment of a target just three miles from Pakistan in Khost province. These January 3-4 attacks involved four B-1B bombers and other planes, which dropped more than 100 satellite-guided 2,000-pound bombs on the area. This complex, which Washington claims had been an al Qaeda training camp, was the spot hit by U.S. cruise missiles in 1998, allegedly in retaliation for the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya.

Several miles from this bombardment an army special forces soldier was killed in an ambush by a 14-year-old boy, according to CNN.

The U.S. rulers continue to use the drive to find and capture al Qaeda and Taliban leaders as the pretext for their extensive military deployment in Afghanistan. Some within U.S. ruling circles are calling for taking this drive into Pakistan itself. Sen. Robert Graham, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, has said, according to the *Financial Times*, that "Mullah Mohammad Omar, the Taliban leader, and Osama bin Laden had 'probably' crossed into Pakistan and should be pursued there."

Deployments off Somalia's coast

Washington is also stepping up its plans for possible military action against Somalia, a nation in East Africa. U.S. naval vessels are positioned to track, and in some cases board, vessels along Somalia's 1,800-

mile coastline, all under the guise of pursuing al Qaeda suspects. Among the targets of this naval interdiction, the *Journal* reports, are the "many small vessels [that] operate in the Gulf of Aden between Yemen and Somalia, many of them traders carrying goods back and forth."

U.S. reconnaissance flights have been substantially increased over Somalia, and are being supplemented by British and French aircraft surveillance. "No U.S. military operations are likely for at least a month," a *Journal* article reports an unnamed Bush administration as saying.

Discussing which country to target next, Wolfowitz said in the *New York Times* interview that one "of the most difficult things in the next few months is going to be establishing which of our allies of convenience in the early stages of this war can become real allies over the longer term, and which ones are going to be major troublemakers, and which ones are going to just switch sides."

In its biggest naval deployment since World War II, the German government has joined this effort, dispatching six ships to East African waters off the coast of Somalia. This includes two frigates and four support ships carrying 750 marines. The ships are due to reach the Horn of Africa near the end of January.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government has detained about 240 Saudi nationals on suspicion of having fled Afghanistan, reported Agence France-Press. The Pakistani interior minister, Lieut. Gen. Moinuddin Haider, has vowed to turn over to Washington anyone the government suspects of belonging to al Qaeda.

The former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef, who after the collapse of the Taliban regime had sought political asylum in Pakistan, was instead turned over to U.S. forces. He is now incarcerated and is being interrogated aboard the USS *Bataan*, an amphibious assault ship in the Arabian Sea.

Some 140 former Taliban fighters are also imprisoned in Kohat, Pakistan, south of the border city of Peshawar. They, too, are undergoing interrogation by U.S. officials. A local political leader in Kohat, Javed Ibrahim Paracha, condemned the mistreatment of these prisoners, who were handcuffed, shackled, and stripped to their shorts in freezing cold weather before being put on U.S. military planes in the middle of the night.

Civilian death toll

While the capitalist media has covered in detail the death of the U.S. special forces soldier in combat in eastern Afghanistan, very little is said about the thousands of Afghan civilians killed as a result of the U.S. assault. Nearly 3,800 Afghans died over the course of just two months, from October 7 through December 7, as a result of the U.S. bombing, according to a study by University of New Hampshire professor Marc Herold. The figures do not include deaths that occurred in remote areas of Afghanistan, and omit those killed indirectly, when air strikes cut off their access to hospitals, foods, or electricity. The study also did not include those bomb victims who survived the immediate attack but died later of their injuries.

Millions of other Afghan civilians have been displaced from their homes as a result of the U.S. assault. Many have been forced into refugee camps where the conditions are no better than those they left. One such camp, located 30 miles west of the Afghan city of Herat, contains 350,000 displaced people, of whom 100 die each day of exposure and starvation, the London *Guardian* reported. The paper described the story of Izzah Burza, 38, and her family at the camp. "We traveled more than 125 miles to this camp," she said. "When I arrived I had four children, now I have two. We've had nothing to eat for a week."

Winery workers battle lockout in California

BY BILL KALMAN

ST. HELENA, California—"Thank you for supporting us," Patty Martin told a rally of 70 people here January 5 for workers locked out by the Charles Krug Winery. "While workers like you support us, the winery bosses never could thank us for the wine we made for them."

Martin is one of eight women who work at the winery, which is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 186-D. The rally, in the heart of Napa wine country, marked the six-month anniversary of the lockout of the plant's 45 production workers. The company's attack on the union came after workers, many originally from Mexico, unanimously rejected a concession contract that included lower wages, elimination of job classifications, and erosion of seniority rights: Wage reductions were to average \$2.64 an hour. The union also charges that the company allowed medical coverage for the workforce to lapse last March.

Of the 280 wineries in the Napa wine region, which is about 70 miles north of San Francisco, Krug is the last with a union. Krug produces wine under the Charles Krug and C.K. Mondavi labels and the winery is owned by the Peter Mondavi family.

California accounts for more than 90 percent of U.S. wine production and vineyard acreage, and California wine sales have in-

creased for the seventh consecutive year. Wine is the number one finished agricultural product in the state in retail value, worth about \$33 billion. If California were a nation, it would be the fourth leading wine producer in the world behind Italy, France, and Spain.

There has been support organized for the locked-out workers in the area, especially on the college campuses. Students at Napa Valley College organized a salsa dance to benefit the workers, and students from the University of California-Davis School of Law sponsored a teach-in on campus. One of the student organizers of that teach-in was on hand at the rally passing out hot chocolate and donuts.

Speakers at the rally spoke in both English and Spanish. Alfredo Martin, explained that "strikers are not allowed on Krug property to buy the expensive wine we made for them. Well, now that wine will taste rotten from now on."

Three vineyard workers came from the Hess Winery in Napa to express their support. Victor Torres told the *Militant* that the field workers at Hess voted for the UFCW to represent them by a vote of 63-2. That was in 1999. To date, they are still working with no contract because Hess management does not recognize the union.

Les Crane, a UFCW local vice-president who works at the Frazia Winery down in

the Central Valley, explained to the *Militant* that "it's important that winery workers in other regions support the Krug workers." The UFCW represents some 1,700 winery and distillery workers throughout the state. Before the union-busting campaigns of the Napa wine barons, some 500 workers in the region's wine industry were organized.

This past August, the National Labor Relations Board rejected the local's charges that the lockout is illegal.

It was important that the workers "rejected the bosses' divisions," James Potter said. Potter, who works a more skilled operator job in the wine cellar, would actually have gained a little under the boss' contract offer. But that contract would have taken money away from the "tail end" jobs, including company moves to use more temporary workers who would not have union protection. "We can't accept this," Potter said. They got the money. All workers deserve an across-the-board raise."

After the rally supporters of the Krug workers marched through the downtown tourist area chanting, "Union-busting is disgusting!"

The winery workers will be voting on another contract offer by the company this week.

Bill Kalman is a member of UFCW Local 120 in San Lorenzo, California.

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'We wanted to prevent the rich from r

Revolutionary combatant Víctor Dreke details struggle against counterrev.

Reprinted below is the first installment from the chapter "'Lucha Contra Bandidos' in the Escambray" from the new Pathfinder book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, an interview with Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke.

Dreke fought in the Cuban revolutionary war, led by the Rebel Army, that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. In the early 1960s, he was a commander of the volunteer battalions that fought the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba. In 1965 he was second in command of the column of Cuban internationalist volunteers, headed by Ernesto Che Guevara, that joined with national liberation fighters in the Congo. He subsequently carried out numerous internationalist missions in Africa.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, and Luis Madrid, a Pathfinder editor, conducted the first session of the interview with Dreke in Havana on Oct. 26, 1999. Pathfinder editor Michael Taber and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martin Koppel joined Waters in a second interview session on Dec. 2, 2001.

This book is scheduled to be released February 1, with simultaneous editions in English and Spanish. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

The *Militant* will be reprinting the rest of the chapter in upcoming issues.



Above: Granma; Inset: Mil Fotos Cuba
Above, militia members in the Escambray learning to read and write, 1961. Inset, Conrado Benítez, 19-year-old literacy volunteer murdered by counterrevolutionary bands, January 1961. "Entire battalions of peasant militias from the Escambray were formed. So what the enemy thought would be a den of thieves...turned into a bulwark of the revolution," says Dreke.

They also pointed out how the fight to defeat the bandits helped mobilize the power of Cuba's workers and farmers during those years, thus strengthening the Cuban Revolution for the challenges to come.

Waters: Outside Cuba, the fight against the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray in the first half of the 1960s is a little-known chapter of the revolution. Yet it's one of the decisive battles that molded the revolution. Knowing something about that struggle also helps explain why for more than forty years Washington has underestimated the strength of the revolution. And why, in spite of their concerted military, economic, and political efforts, the U.S. rulers have been unable to crush it.

Who were the bandits? Where did they come from?

Dreke: When we were talking about the war of liberation, I mentioned a number of individuals who had participated in the revolutionary struggle who were in fact adventurers. There were others who were simply opportunist self-seekers, individuals out to grab power, who believed when the revolution triumphed they would trade places with the thieves who had been in control. They would trade places with the brothel owners and become the new owners of the brothels, prostitutes and all.

Early on in the struggle, these people tried to fan the political differences and take advantage of them. As you know, in Cuba there were various revolutionary organizations in the struggle, and some of those people tried to use the divisions flowing from that fact.

Take Evelio Duque, for instance. At the time of the revolutionary war, Duque had been in contact with the Revolutionary Directorate. Even though he was of peasant origin, he had nothing in common with our peasants—our *guajiros*—who in general are good people, noble and friendly people. He was the opposite.

After the revolution's victory, Duque was one of those who tried to recruit to the counterrevolution other *compañeros* he knew who had fought in the struggle. He tried to divide the different organizations that had fought side by side—organizations that had accepted the leadership of Fidel [Castro] and Che [Guevara] and whose unity contributed to the revolution's triumph. That's what Evelio Duque tried to do.

There was Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, who had also been in the struggle and had betrayed the revolution from the beginning. His first betrayal was leading the split that resulted in the expulsion of the Second National Front of the Escambray. We talked about that earlier. And he continued betraying.

There was William Morgan, the American, who was also part of the Second Front. He was another one who took up arms against the revolution.

There was Plinio Prieto, who was from the Authentic Organization, the group of Aureliano Sánchez Arango and Prio Socarrás. They didn't want to hear anything about revolution.

There was Sinesio Walsh, who was from the July 26 Movement but didn't have anything to do with its principles.

In other words, these are people who belonged to a revolutionary organization, if the July 26 or Revolutionary Directorate armbands and other symbols they had worn were taken at face value. But deep down they didn't answer to either of those two revolutionary organizations, nor to the Popular Socialist Party. They were traitors in waiting, adventurers who wanted to grab power, to be able to keep committing abuses and keep stealing.

Waters: Why did the Escambray mountains become a center for these counterrevolutionary forces? What was going on in the Escambray?

Dreke: In Cuba at the triumph of the revolution there were a half million illiterates, and there were another half million who were only semiliterate. That was the

nating illiteracy in Cuba by the end of the year. The particularly brutal murder of nineteen-year-old literacy volunteer Conrado Benítez and peasant Eliodoro Rodríguez Linares in January 1961 gave fresh impetus to the massive militia mobilization that was the heart of the first *limpia*, as Cubans called the clean-up operation to eliminate *los bandidos*.

Leaders of the counterrevolutionary bands included men who had at one time taken part in the anti-Batista struggle, as well as others who had either supported Batista or had played no role during the revolutionary war. In the pages that follow, Dreke describes a number of these individuals.

The bandits were armed, supplied, and directed by Washington, which accelerated its aggressive course. In the preparations for what became the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, the U.S. administrations of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy planned for these groups to play an important support role in the aggression. But the Rebel Army and Revolutionary National Militia took decisive action in late 1960 and early 1961 to eliminate that threat.

On April 17, 1961, an expeditionary force of 1,500 Cuban mercenaries—organized, financed, and deployed by Washington—invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The counterrevolution-

aries aimed to spark an antigovernment uprising while holding a beachhead on Cuban territory long enough to install a provisional government already formed in the United States that would appeal for Washington's support and for direct military intervention. In less than seventy-two hours of intense combat, however, the mercenaries were defeated by Cuba's militias, Revolutionary Armed Forces, Revolutionary Air Force, and Revolutionary National Police. On April 19 the remaining invaders were captured at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the name Cubans use to designate the battle.

Víctor Dreke led the two companies from the 117th Battalion that headed to Playa Girón coming in from the village of Yaguaramas to the east. He was wounded in combat.

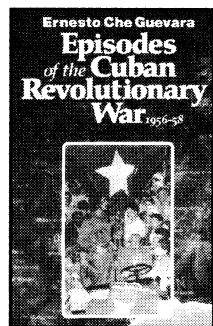
Another blow to the bandits in the Escambray and their sponsors and armorers in Washington came in October 1963, with the second agrarian reform. This revolutionary measure confiscated landholdings in excess of 165 acres from the remaining 10,000 capitalist farmers, bringing property relations on the land in line with those already established through the expropriation of capitalist industry in the latter half of 1960.

By the end of 1964, as Dreke describes, the fight against the bandits—*la lucha contra bandidos*—had largely been won. In a mop-up operation, the last groups of bandits were eliminated in 1965.

This history of the revolutionary struggle in the Escambray was brought to life in 1999 for new generations of young people in Cuba.

That year eight organizations, representing the majority of the population, joined together to file suit in the Provincial People's Court of the City of Havana to demand that Washington be compelled to pay damages for the human consequences of its forty-year ongoing effort to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. The court hearings in *The People of Cuba v. the U.S. Government* included scores of witnesses giving firsthand testimony detailing U.S. crimes against the Cuban people—thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in physical destruction. The court ruled on November 2, 1999, handing down damages against Washington of \$181 billion for the human cost of these crimes.

Witnesses gave testimony in court that in the Escambray, between 1960 and 1965, the bandits were responsible for the deaths of 549 Cubans.



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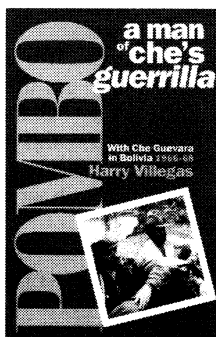
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Returning to power'

Revolutionary bandits in Cuba

concrete situation. If one were to go to Pinar del Rio or to the Escambray the situation was terrible. There was no electricity, no running water—what little water there was came from wells. There were no stores. There were few radios, since you couldn't even receive radio signals throughout much of these mountainous areas. All this made the enemy's job easier.

From the time of the revolutionary war, nearly all these individuals I've talked about—who would eventually become counterrevolutionaries—were concentrated in the Escambray. They worked on some peasants and managed to recruit a few. At the same time, they also committed abuses in the areas where they functioned. They murdered peasants, they raped peasant women. They burned down schools and homes. So the peasants were terrorized; they were deathly afraid of the counterrevolutionaries. Some peasants joined them consciously, of course, but others joined out of fear. This is how the counterrevolutionary movement was built.

One of their first actions was the attempt

Waters: In several of Fidel's speeches during 1962 he spoke of problems in the application and implementation of the Agrarian Reform in Matanzas and the Escambray. He pointed out that this political situation was responsible for the fact that the bandits gained some influence among layers of the peasants.

Dreke: Yes, that's true. At the beginning no authentic agrarian reform was carried out in the Escambray. Why was this? Because those in charge of the agrarian reform in Trinidad and Sancti Spiritus weren't in fact revolutionaries.

One of those in charge of the agrarian reform there, for example, was the counterrevolutionary Evelio Duque who I just mentioned. Duque headed up INRA in Sancti Spiritus, and he removed the compañeros who were revolutionaries from the agrarian reform and its leadership. He removed people like Commander Julio Castillo, a revolutionary who was highly regarded in Sancti Spiritus. Then Duque recruited others who, like himself, weren't revolutionaries.



Bohemia
Commander Raúl Menéndez Tomassevich interrogating a captured bandit. The counterrevolutionaries were armed and directed by Washington, which accelerated its aggressive course in preparation for the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. The bandits carried out sabotage actions, burning fields and attacking centers of production.

to take Trinidad and destroy the revolution. I'm referring to the attempted landing organized by Dominican President Trujillo.¹

There were others who didn't commit murders—such as Luis Vargas, to give you a concrete example. Vargas had always been a bandit who devoted himself full time to robbery. He stole here; he stole there; he rustled cattle; he had five or ten wives. Luis Vargas had always been in armed rebellion in the Escambray, until finally we put an end to the notorious Luis Vargas.

In some other parts of Las Villas province, in the Sagua-Corralillos eastern region, there were persons such as Benito Campos and his son Martí, the "Campitos." These people and others like them had been characterized by the same immorality and the same unwillingness to do battle with the dictator's army. These were people who simply wanted to become the new millionaires.

¹ In August 1959, a plane bearing armed counterrevolutionaries organized by the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic was captured after landing at the airport of Trinidad in south-central Cuba. The plane was the same one used by Fulgencio Batista to flee Cuba seven months earlier.

The counterrevolutionaries belonged to the Anti-Communist Legion of the Caribbean, which included individuals from various countries, among them a large number of Cubans, several of whom had been officers in Batista's army. In the fighting two of the counterrevolutionaries were killed and a number were taken prisoner; two Cuban defenders of the revolution were also killed and nine wounded.

² See Guevara's "Military Order number 1" in Las Villas, printed in *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, pp. 380–81.



Granma
Rally in Camaguey, Cuba, 1961, as peasants received deeds to land in wake of first Agrarian Reform Law of 1959. The revolution initiated a deep-going agrarian reform, confiscating the large landed estates of foreign and Cuban owners, and distributing land titles to hundreds of thousands of peasants.

reform there was William Morgan, who devised a plan called Rana Toro [bullfrog]. Rana Toro was a scheme to bring in weapons and hide them in Charco Azul, in order to prepare an uprising by the bandits. This same William Morgan, who had murdered peasants and raped women during the war in the zone where the Second National Front of the Escambray operated, was preparing the conditions for an uprising.

Another one of these individuals was the notorious Jesús Carreras, who had also been a leader of the Second Front.

In fairness, it's important to state that while the Second Front was dominated by a group of criminals and traitors, some young revolutionaries also found their way into its ranks. They were victims of those people, and they're here with the revolution today. The revolution hasn't tossed them off, because not everybody in the Second Front was the same. To say otherwise would be illogical and untrue. There were exceptions. There were also peasants who took up arms and later put them back down and left the bandits, after realizing they had made a mistake.

But the leadership of the Second Front did have characteristics that made them act this way. And later they united with others who were traitors, embezzlers, and rapists. All those of that ilk got together. Some came from the Directorate, others from the July 26 Movement, some from other places, and they all joined together with the worst elements of the Second Front.

It's also true that at first the necessary attention wasn't paid to the Escambray. The most qualified persons were not utilized there, and we didn't stay on top of things. We should have designated those in charge of major responsibilities. That's my personal opinion.

Already in 1959 there were bandits there. I was in a position to know, since, along with other *compañeros*, I participated in

various operations in the Escambray.

The enemies of the revolution had already studied the situation, and they realized the Escambray would be the best spot for them. There were problems within the revolutionary ranks, and our work there was the weakest.

Some bandits had posts initially.

Osvaldo Ramírez, the murderer and traitor, was squadron chief of the Caracusey garrison in Trinidad. And the first thing he did was to run the peasants off their farms and take away their land. You must know what that meant. Captain San Luis, who was squadron chief in Trinidad and later became a combatant in Che's unit in Bolivia, had to go there and kick him out. That's why Osvaldo was dismissed. But it was an error to let Osvaldo take the position there as squadron chief in the first place.

Sinesio Walsh—the same person I talked of earlier—was named squadron chief in Cruces.

Benito Campos—"Campito"—was chief in the Corralillo zone, where he committed atrocities.

The conscious revolutionaries at that time were not yet Marxists or Leninists—and I'm not just speaking about myself—but at least we wanted a revolution. We wanted to prevent the bourgeoisie from returning to power. We wanted the poor to be in charge. We wanted racial equality. That's what we were then. But the fact is we gave the Escambray to the bandits as a gift during the first stage. That has to be said.

When the first clean-up operation began in 1960, when the army arrived, when Fidel arrived, the peasants responded, and entire battalions of peasant militias from the Escambray were formed. The peasants asked for weapons and they defended the Escambray. So what the enemy thought was going to be a den of thieves was, by determined revolutionary combat, turned into a bulwark of the revolution.

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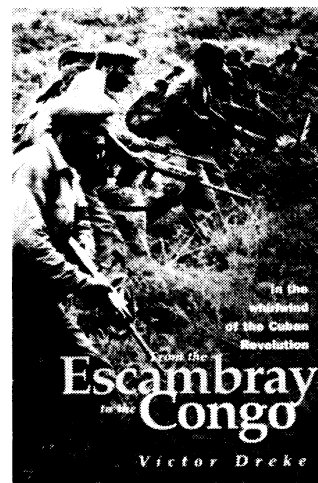
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Workers in Argentina protest devaluation

Continued from front page
higher prices.

On the January 5-6 weekend, the Argentine congress approved an "emergency law" giving special economic powers to Duhalde, who two days after taking office devalued the peso, ending a 10-year-old policy of pegging the peso to the U.S. dollar. The official exchange rate is now 1.4 peso to the dollar, a 28.6 percent devaluation.

There will be two parallel exchange rates. The official rate will apply to business and trade, while individuals will have to pay a floating exchange rate. Economy Minister Jorge Remes Lenicov said the government would maintain this dual rate for several months, before allowing the peso to float freely on the market, meaning further devastating devaluations are in store for working people.

Feigning concern for workers, the government also issued a measure banning mass

layoffs "without cause" for 90 days. At the march, workers scoffed at the announcement, since many were already involved in a battle against mass layoffs. More importantly, they pointed out, the government has not reversed a 13 percent cut in retirement pensions and wages of public employees.

Lenicov also announced that restrictions on bank withdrawals, now limited to \$1,000 a month, would be eased to \$1,500. The restrictions have a direct effect on those with bank accounts, but they have also made it more difficult for working people to cash paychecks and have led merchants to raise prices.

Capitalist parties all back devaluation

The devaluation and related measures were backed by all the parties in the government—Duhalde's Justicialist (Peronist) Party, the Radical Party, and another capitalist party called Frepaso. The Peronists

control both houses of congress; the Radicals and Frepaso formed Fernando de la Rúa's coalition government, which collapsed on December 20.

The reshuffled coalition government under Duhalde has shown more staying power, in part due to support from two of Argentina's three union federations. The two wings of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), which are politically tied to the Peronists, have come out in support of Duhalde's economic measures. Truckers union president Hugo Moyano, head of what is known here as the "dissident CGT," praised Duhalde for his "courage" and claimed the government had promised to repeal a series of "labor reform" laws that attack workers' social wage and union rights.

A third labor organization, the smaller Argentine Workers Federation (CTA), was critical of the government's moves. "Devaluation will simply continue the process of

concentration of wealth in the hands of a few in Argentina," said CTA organizational secretary Edgardo Depetri in an interview.

While none of the three union federations call for canceling Argentina's \$132 billion foreign debt, Depetri stated in an interview that "we have paid that debt many times over in interest payments." The CTA's main campaign today is to advocate establishing unemployment insurance of \$380 a month for all heads of households who are jobless, plus \$60 a month for each dependent child. Unemployment insurance does not exist for most workers in Argentina.

CAME, an organization of businessmen and small merchants, called on "consumers, merchants, small businessmen, professionals, and Argentine families" to join a *cacerolazo*—a pot-banging protest—in Buenos Aires on January 7 in support of the government's economic measures. They later canceled the action, presumably because of lack of support.

Economy Minister Lenicov said the government would draft a new budget, saying only that it would be "austere." He reported that the government had an \$11 billion budget deficit for 2001, nearly double its original forecast.

U.S. and other imperialist creditors have been demanding that the Argentine government slash social spending, weaken union rights, and take other measures that will squeeze even more out of working people. The economy minister said he would travel to Washington later in January for talks with U.S. officials on the debt crisis.

Washington's demand

A top economic advisor for U.S. president George Bush, Lawrence Lindsey, declared January 6 on Fox News Sunday that Washington would "aid" the Argentine government only after "political reforms are carried out and Argentina becomes viable in the long term." Blaming the South American nation for the capitalist economic meltdown there, Lindsey declared, "Argentina's main problems have to do with how they have handled things. If you're a provincial government in Argentina, you can spend money and let the federal government pay the bill." One of the imperialists' demands is to cut back spending in the depressed provinces, which are marked by skyrocketing unemployment, low wages, and ruinous conditions for small farmers.

Duhalde took office in the wake of the resignation of four other presidents in less than two weeks, following an explosion of mass protests around the country that forced de la Rúa to resign. De la Rúa presided over two years of deepening depression conditions, with unemployment jumping to at least 18 percent and underemployment even higher. The regime slashed wages and pensions, increased taxes, and implemented laws allowing bosses to extend working hours and undermine unions. More recently, it imposed the limits on bank withdrawals. Even with these savage measures, however, the government was unable to keep up with the growing interest payments on billions in foreign debt to imperialist creditors.

During the de la Rúa administration, the unions carried out seven general strikes to protest these economic measures. The crisis boiled over in mid-December. Unemployed workers demanding jobs blocked highways across the country December 12. The next day a general strike paralyzed the country. Over the next week, large crowds of impoverished working people began to storm supermarkets demanding food.

The mobilizations, which for years had been strongest in the provinces, finally erupted in Buenos Aires as well. On December 19 thousands poured into the streets of the capital and demonstrated in front of the presidential residence as well as holding *cacerolazos* in neighborhoods throughout the city. It was a mixture of working people revolting against unprecedented levels of unemployment, cuts in social programs, unpaid wages, and police brutality, as well as middle-class layers spurred into action by the partial freeze on bank deposits, the growing burden of personal debt, and the fear of being thrown into the ranks of the working class by the crisis.

After de la Rúa sacrificed his hated finance minister, Domingo Cavallo, while at the same time decreeing a state of siege, tens of thousands filled the Plaza de Mayo angrily demanding the president's resignation. Deadly assaults by riot police, which left

Unemployed workers describe resistance to crisis

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND CHRISTIAN CATALÁN

BUENOSAIRES, Argentina—While the official unemployment rate in Argentina hovers around 18 percent, it is much higher in depressed regions such as parts of Buenos Aires province, hit by plant closings and mass layoffs. In La Matanza district, an extensive area north of Buenos Aires with a population of 1.8 million, joblessness and underemployment is 67 percent, said Roberto Valle, an unemployed auto worker and activist in the Movement of Unemployed Workers (MTD). Valle himself has been laid off from the Chrysler, General Motors, Ford, and IKA (now Renault) auto assembly plants in Greater Buenos Aires.

The MTD, based in the town of Laferrere in La Matanza, is one of many different unemployed organizations, often with similar names, that have sprung up throughout the country, especially since 1997, when unemployed workers, known as *piqueteros*, set up road blockades throughout the country. Established in 1992, the MTD here has mostly developed in the past five years.

"Before, we were all facing similar problems," Valle said. "They were cutting off our electricity and gas because we couldn't pay the bills. We got together and realized that the reason we all couldn't pay was that we were unemployed. Instead of it being an individual effort, we organized ourselves to deal with this problem."

A group of unemployed workers met with *Militant* reporters January 3 at the MTD center in La Matanza. They included a laid-off metal worker, a plastics plant worker, a painter, a construction worker, a cook, an a domestic worker who was previously a cotton farmer in Chaco province to the north.

"Young people are the most affected by the unemployment. My son is 22 years old and he's never been able to find more than an odd job," said Celso Ortiz, 44, a painter who is originally from Paraguay.

"We've organized mass pickets to block Highway 3 to demand jobs," said MTD activist Elvio Pereyra, 28, who previously worked in a ship engine repair shop. The most recent big action was last May. "We had 7,000 people blocking the highway, with tents on the road for several days," he said.

The MTD organizes a training center for



Members of Metalworkers Union, occupying EMFER rail car repair shop located in industrial belt just outside of Buenos Aires, explain their fight against layoffs.

jobless workers. They have a workshop to learn sewing skills and another workshop to train bakers.

MTD members took *Militant* reporters around the area. One place was the *trueque*, an open-air market where working people buy needed goods or services by barter instead of money—clothing, prepared foods, services such as plumbing and auto repair, and other essentials that people could not otherwise acquire. Prices for most basic items are fixed, and barter transactions are done with special coupons serving as exchange units. A coordinator of the market report that the volume of people using the *trueque* has tripled in the past year, a sign of the deepening of the social crisis.

Visitors to Laferrere notice that many intersections of the town's unpaved streets are marked by soot. This is from bonfires and barricades that were set up by local residents the night of December 20, when the battle between demonstrators and cops in downtown Buenos Aires was taking place. "The police spread the false rumor that people from a nearby *villa miseria* [shantytown]—called were coming to loot private homes here," Pereyra said. "People came out armed to protect themselves, but no looters ever showed up."

"The result was that people here were so focused on defending their homes from an imaginary danger that they were kept from going to Buenos Aires to join the rebellion. We think that was the idea."

Cop violence, polarization

Residents of Laferrere reported regular instances of police brutality. One youth, Néstor Guerrero, 22, was killed on the street by the cops on December 9. Néstor's two sisters Nancy, 21, and Rocío, 12 said police harassment and brutalization of working-class youth is rampant. "It's another case of 'loose trigger,'" Nancy Guerrero said, using the common term for killings by police that often go unpunished. Néstor was a particular target since he was a member of the Communist Party youth, as are both his sisters, his father, and several of his uncles. The family is originally from Paraguay. In Laferrere there is a sizable community of Paraguayan immigrants, who are often hassled by the authorities and scapegoated for the social crisis.

While police violence has been going on for a long time, protests against it have become more noticeable, MTD members noted. The day after Néstor Guerrero's killing, 1,500 local residents blocked Highway 3 to demand justice.

Another sign of the class polarization in Buenos Aires province is the role of ultrarightists such as Aldo Rico, a former paratrooper who took part in a failed 1990 attack on a military garrison. Today Rico is the mayor of the town of San Miguel, a largely middle-class community.

"There are a lot of cops in San Miguel, and Rico mobilizes people around the issue of defending 'private property,'" said Christian Ramirez, 22, an MTD activist. "Rico promotes neighborhood watch committees and, if young people like me—from Laferrere—walk into that town, people from those committees will tell the cops, who detain us as 'suspicious.'"

Meanwhile, demonstrations against police violence have continued in Buenos Aires. Some 7,000 people marched in the working-class area of Floresta January 5 demanding justice for three youths who were killed by a retired cop working as a security guard after one of the three made a comment against the police violence in the Plaza de Mayo the previous week.

Help fund *Militant*/PM reporting trips to Argentina and Cuba

A team of workers correspondents that includes *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel is in Argentina to bring readers of the *Militant* and *PM* firsthand coverage on developments there, including the revolt that has erupted against soaring unemployment and brutal cutbacks in living standards imposed by the capitalist government, social polarization the crisis engenders, and discussion among working people on how to confront the capitalist collapse.

Another reporting team is schedule to leave in early February for the Havana International Book Fair and related events.

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30 dead nationwide, not only did not cow protesters, but sparked deeper outrage. De la Rúa resigned December 20 and left the presidential house by helicopter.

Workers occupy rail car repair shop

Today, while Duhalde is making progress for now in putting together a new government that seeks to restore stability for capitalists at home and abroad, struggles by workers and farmers continue to bubble across Argentina. The fall of the de la Rúa government has given many increased confidence in their own potential strength.

One such fight is by workers at EMFER, a rail car repair shop in San Martín, a town in the industrial belt surrounding Buenos Aires. The plant, previously state-owned, is a subsidiary of Trenes de Buenos Aires (TBA), a train line that was sold off in 1993 as part of the privatization of Argentine railways under the Menem administration. In recent weeks, 173 of the 320 workers in the plant were laid off, and the rest face the threat of the plant's closure. In response, 150 workers, members of the Metalworkers Union (UOM), have been occupying the plant since December 12.

"We've blocked the General Paz highway, the Miguelete rail station, and the sales of tickets at the Central Station of TBA," said Dario Carballo at the plant gate. "We rotate every two or three days, so there are always at least 40 workers in the plant 24 hours a day."

"We've won a lot of support from other workers, in spite of the cops who are out there trying to maintain an intimidating police presence," said Alejandra Gorosito, 31. As she was being interviewed, two members of the Food Workers Union at the nearby Pepsi-Cola plant were visiting to show their support. They commented that solidarity with this fight was important because they and workers at many other factories face the threat of layoffs and shutdowns as well.

Workers explained that this fight is being led through a revitalization of their *comisión interna* (internal commission), an elected factory committee that exists in many factories in Argentina parallel to the normal union structure, which is often tied up in bureaucratic red tape.

Rafael Artigues, 34, a delegate to the internal commission, said, "Industrial workers haven't yet been part of the big mobilizations against the government through their unions, but many people have been affected by everything that's happened—from the last seven years of protests by unemployed workers to the recent outpourings that forced de la Rúa to quit."

Duhalde regime

Duhalde was chosen by Congress as president at a time when capitalist politicians of all parties are increasingly discredited in the eyes of working people and other layers devastated by the crisis. Duhalde is a leader of a wing of the Justicialist Party that uses more traditional Peronist demagoguery about representing the workers and "the poor," in contrast with the wing represented by Saúl Menem, who as president closely aligned his government with U.S. imperialism and presided over a sharp acceleration of attacks on workers' jobs and social wage.

His wife Hilda "Chiche" Duhalde, who today is in charge of the government's social programs, cultivates an Eva Perón image of charitable concern for the downtrodden. Through the Peronist apparatus, she has promoted a network of neighborhood block leaders, women known as the *manzaneras* (*manzana* means block) who hand out food, jobs, and political favors, and who spy on political activists.

Duhalde has put together a bipartisan cabinet including Radical Party figures and prominent big-business figures such as the head of the Industrial Union. He has pointed to a foreign policy that will seek closer ties with European imperialist powers and to play them off against Washington in order to gain some breathing space—a stance that a Duhalde supporter called "polygamy" in contrast to a Menem aide's infamous comment in the 1990s of seeking "carnal relations" with Washington.

Other measures announced by the government include instructing banks to convert loans of less than \$100,000 into pesos at a one-to-one ratio to lessen the impact of the devaluation on middle-class layers. Deposits made in dollars will be still kept in dollars. Almost half the banks in the coun-

try are foreign owned, many by Spanish companies. The move would make banks turn assets into pesos while keeping their liabilities in dollars, something bank officials are saying will cost them between \$10 billion and \$20 billion. "We are being asked to bear the full brunt of the devaluation," claimed one Spanish bank official. Spanish companies have invested some \$40 billion in Argentina over the past decade.

Spain's prime minister urged Duhalde to rapidly come up with a "practical and credible economic plan" in order to "win the support of the international community." Romano Prodi, currently president of the European Commission, demanded Argentina "honor its international commitments" to resume payments on the foreign debt.

Another measure imposes a 25 percent export tax on oil, heavily affecting the Spanish company Repsol-YPF, which gets 45 percent of its operating income from Argentina's oil and gas fields. A company spokesperson called the measure "plunder." The French government sent an official letter asking Duhalde to do "everything in your power to look after our companies who have invested much in Argentina."

Duhalde refused to meet with a delegation of Spanish bankers and declared he would "not cede" to the pressure, and repeated his condemnation of his predecessors

Peronist party in Argentina has weaker political hold on working people today

BY ROMINA GREEN
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

SAN MARTÍN, Argentina—"I've been a Peronist all my life," said Juan Riveros, a member of the Metalworkers Union, standing at the entrance of the EMFER railcar repair plant in this town in the industrial belt surrounding Buenos Aires. "My two sons, who are in their 20s, argue with me. They reject both the Peronists and the Radicals."

"I'm still a Peronist," Riveros added, "but now I've started to agree with my kids. All these parties in the government today are rotten, and we have to do something to change things."

Such remarks are not uncommon today among many working people in Argentina. They are even more prevalent among workers involved in union and other social struggles, such as Rivero, a painter, who together with 150 other workers is occupying the EMFER plant here to oppose the company's mass layoffs and threat of closing the facility.

Riveros's comments are a sign of a change that has been taking place in this South American nation, especially over the past decade—the weakening political hold of the Peronist party on workers. This change is a result of the part the Peronists have played in carrying out the employers' brutal offensive against the social gains and living standards of working people, and of the working-class resistance to those assaults.

Peron's rise to power

For several decades since World War II, when Juan Domingo Perón rose to power, the political party that he founded, the Justicialist Party, has enjoyed the allegiance of the big majority of working people in Argentina. A capitalist party that uses nationalist rhetoric and that historically has presented itself as a champion of the workers and the downtrodden, the Peronist party has been the main obstacle to workers and farmers charting a political course independent from the Argentine employer class.

During World War II the ruling class of Argentina, a semicolonial country, was able to take advantage of the conflict between the rival imperialist powers to gain economic and political advantages. It sold meat—the country's main export product—on the world market and brought in high profits, giving the Argentine rulers considerable margin to make concessions to workers.

The Argentine capitalist class was divided over whether to enter the war on the side of Washington and its allies or whether to remain neutral. The crisis was resolved by a military coup d'état led by some colonels, including Juan Domingo Perón. Appointed Minister of Labor, Perón came down hard against the unions dominated by the Communist Party—which backed entry in the



Militant/Romina Green

Militant reporters interview relatives of youth killed by cops in La Matanza district of Buenos Aires province. With relatives are also members of Movement of Unemployed.

economic program, which was backed by the imperialist-run International Monetary Fund.

The Peronists have in the past used such demagoguery, painting one or another imperialist power as the problem in order to divert the anger and mobilizations of working people from the government somewhere else. And Duhalde quickly began backpedaling under the pressure, stating that funds from the export taxes would be used to compensate the banks or that new loans of up to \$20

billion would be sought from the IMF or World Bank and turned over the foreign-owned financial institutions.

The devaluation and other economic measures, however, already show that the Duhalde government will continue the basic course of the Menem and de la Rúa regimes of seeking to resolve the economic crisis at the expense of working people—a course that is generating continued resistance by workers and farmers.

war on the side of Washington—and in favor of unions that supported neutrality in the war. The trade union bureaucracy became subordinated to Perón and the CP lost most of its previous weight in the trade union movement. Meanwhile, the working class took advantage of the openings to fight for its demands.

At the end of the imperialist war, sections in the ruling class decided to remove Perón, a bad miscalculation. On Oct. 17, 1945, the union officialdom called a mass demonstration. The huge mobilization ended only when Perón was brought to the balcony and the military promised elections, which Perón's party won by an overwhelming margin.

Perón portrayed himself, together with his wife Eva Perón, as champions of the *descamisados* (shirtless), the workers. At the same time he claimed to speak for the "Argentine nation"—workers and bosses alike—seeking to subordinate working people to the domestic capitalists. Perón used nationalist rhetoric and sometimes found himself in conflict with U.S. imperialism, which was seeking to displace British imperialism as the dominant oppressor power in that country. When Washington found itself at odds with Perón, its spokespeople labeled him a dictator or a "fascist"—not because they were concerned about democratic rights but because they were worried about the heightened expectations of working people.

Nationalizations

Perón's government nationalized the railroads, oil industry, and other industries and services. During his presidency, the working class pressed for and made substantial gains in wages and social conquests. Women won the right to vote. And workers organized on a massive scale—90 percent of the workforce became unionized. Argentina became the most industrially developed country in South America with a large middle class.

While these developments marked the rise of one of the most powerfully organized working-class structures in the world, a conservative bureaucracy, linked to the state under Perón became deeply entrenched. The contradiction between the militancy of the rank-and-file and a labor bureaucracy serving as an agency of the ruling class has been a central feature of the Argentine labor movement ever since. Deep illusions were instilled among the working masses with regard to the capacity of the bourgeois nationalist regime to meet their needs.

In 1955, with the exhaustion of the economic expansion, Perón's usefulness to the bourgeoisie ended and he was overthrown in a military coup. The dictatorship, however was not able to crush the working class, which continued its resistance. And the

Peronists carried out an intense guerrilla war against the regime.

In the late 1960s, a working-class upsurge began, leading to a prerevolutionary situation in Argentina for several years—coinciding with mass upsurges in other South American countries. A high point was the 1969 working-class uprising in Córdoba, which became known as the *cordobazo*. Vanguard layers of the working class began to break through illusions in Perón as they gained experience in struggle. Several political currents launched guerrilla organizations, including groups rooted in Peronism such as the Montoneros.

In response to this upsurge, the Argentine rulers decided to call elections for 1973 and brought Perón back from exile as their best hope to demobilize working people. Perón's hand-picked candidate, Héctor Cámpora, was elected president in March of that year. Cámpora stepped down in July, paving the way for new elections in which Perón became president until his death in 1974, when his wife, Isabel Perón, took his place.

In the 1970s, however, the Peronist government could not give the kind of concessions workers had wrested during the post-war boom. Instead, the regime sought to chip away at the gains of working people, and used selective repression to go after the labor movement. When this government proved unable to push back the working-class upsurge, the ruling class, backed by Washington, launched a military coup in 1976 that unleashed a brutal reign of terror for six years.

The next Peronist government was the one led in the 1990s by Saúl Menem. His government sought close ties to U.S. imperialism and carried out sharp attacks on workers' jobs, social gains, and union rights. The sell-off of virtually all state-owned property led to layoffs of hundreds of thousands of oil, railroad, telephone, and other workers. The government pushed through a "labor reform" law that gave bosses more power to lengthen work hours, extend probation, fire workers, and other attacks on the unions. This decade of brutal attacks on the living standards and rights of working people have led to growing hatred for Peronist politicians as well as the Radicals, the other major capitalist party.

Duhalde built up a political apparatus when he was governor of Buenos Aires province, giving out jobs, food, and other social welfare programs to impoverished neighborhoods through his local political bosses in exchange for political support. But under his administration, workers were ravaged by the capitalist economic crisis, with unprecedented unemployment levels in working-class neighborhoods, which has tarnished his image among many working people.

What's behind India-Pakistan conflict?

Continued from front page

all the major cities. When a mutiny in the Indian navy spread through Bombay, Madras, and Karachi, for example, trade unions in textile mills, the railways, and other industries, organized a massive solidarity strike.

While the British overlords were forced to accelerate the granting of independence in face of this powerful movement, they succeeded, through the division or "partition" of the subcontinent, in dealing a blow to the revolutionary struggle for a united, and secular, Indian republic. The goal was accomplished through collaboration with the Muslim League, originally an alliance of landlords and British civil servants, which at its founding in 1906 had adopted a goal of fostering "a sense of loyalty to the British government." As the postwar struggle grew, the bourgeois leadership of the Indian Congress party, fearing the widening mobilizations of the masses, agreed to the division.

Partition, accompanied by mass migrations and religious riots that took hundreds of thousands of lives, was followed closely by the first of two wars fought over Kashmir. While the people of the province were majority Muslim, they were ruled by a Hindu Maharajah, who, backed by New Delhi, resisted popular demands for a referendum, and opted to incorporate the territory into India. The fighting ended with Pakistan in control of one-third of the country, and India occupying the rest. India, which agreed to hold a referendum, later refused to allow the population to vote on the question.

Partition a blow to Indian masses

Partition did not only divide the Indian subcontinent; it also helped divert the struggle against imperialism and leave working people more vulnerable to demagogic appeals by their national rulers.

Pakistan was founded as an explicitly Muslim state and until 1971 was made up of two parts, 1,000 miles apart. In addition to supplying arms to this regime, Washington included Pakistan in a 1954 military pact with Turkey, the 1954 SEATO alliance in Southeast Asia, and CENTO (the Central Treaty Organization) in 1955, which also included the regime of the Shah of Iran, a close ally of Islamabad until the Iranian revolution in 1979.

As the Pakistani rulers failed to crush a rising revolutionary struggle by the Bengali people in East Pakistan, Washington backed Islamabad in its 1971 war with India, which had given support to the independence struggle there. India's intervention helped to secure the defeat of the bloody Pakistan assault, which took tens of thousands of lives. In a victory for working people throughout the region, the new nation of Bangladesh was formed.

As in the current imperialist military offensive in Central Asia, Islamabad helped Washington arm and supply forces fighting to topple the Soviet backed government in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

In contrast to Pakistan, the Indian state is officially secular. While the majority of its people practice the Hindu religion, it incorporates 140 million Muslims, more than any other country except Indonesia, and people of other faiths. While bourgeois politicians and rightist forces have fanned communal, caste, and religious divisions to their own ends, the country's political institutions bear the mark of the independence struggle.

Although accommodating to imperialism, India's rulers have not kowtowed to Washington. Through the Cold War years they concluded trade and military deals with the Soviet Union, much to U.S. imperialism's displeasure. They also played a prominent role in the Nonaligned Movement. At the same time, the United States has consistently been India's number one trading partner, and has encouraged New Delhi to pressure and threaten the workers state of China. With the collapse of the Soviet regime at the end of 1980s, the Indian government has been forced to seek new alliances, including closer military ties with Washington.

Biggest military mobilization ever

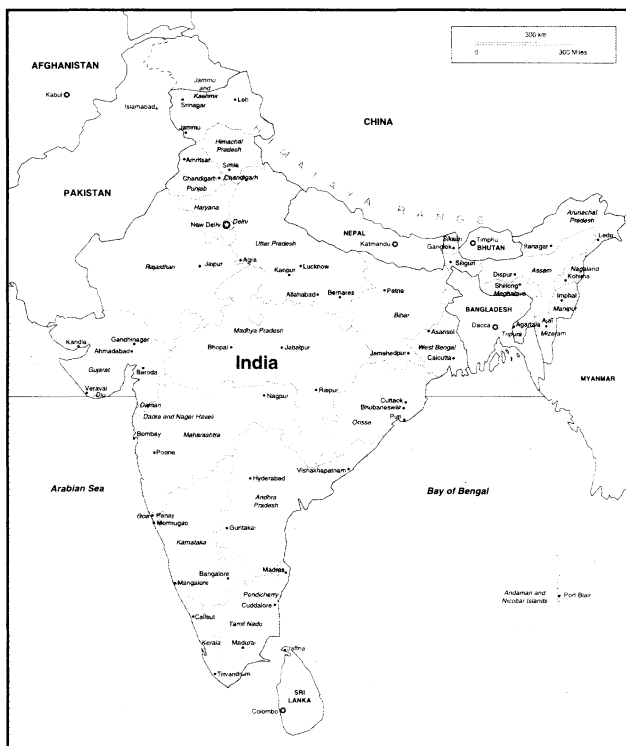
The current military mobilization is the largest in the two countries' 54-year history. For the first time since they went to war in 1971, the Indian armed forces have begun to move their Eastern Command, based near the country's borders with Burma and

Bangladesh, to the opposite border with Pakistan. New Delhi plans military exercises, code-named Operation Chivalry, in mid-January, along almost the entire 1,800-mile India-Pakistan divide.

For its part, the Pakistan military has emptied the country's largest air base at Sargodha, west of Lahore, of troops and equipment. Some 50,000 troops are being transported from the border with Afghanistan to the India-Pakistan border. The move severely weakens the 60,000-strong force deployed at Washington's urging to intercept al Qaeda and Taliban forces fleeing U.S. bombing raids in Afghanistan.

The two armies are stepping up the militarization of the border, evacuating farmers and other residents as they lay mines, dig trenches, and disrupt the system of irrigation canals.

The army, navy, and air force of India, a country of more than 1 billion people, comprise more than 1.2 million recruits—twice as many as Pakistan, which is home to 145 million people. India can deploy almost 5,300 armored vehicles, including tanks, compared with Pakistan's 3,450. New Delhi can also call on 869 combat aircraft, more than double the Pakistani force, and almost



4,500 artillery weapons, compared with Pakistan's 1,750. Both countries have nuclear weapons.

The two powers' military standoff in-

volves daily exchanges of artillery and rifle fire at the border's most volatile section in Kashmir. Civilian casualties already amount to several dozen people dead and hundreds wounded. Tens of thousands of people have fled the area.

As the buildup proceeds, New Delhi has to date brushed aside calls for government-to-government negotiations, and has stepped up pressure on Islamabad to meet demands for a crackdown on Kashmiri leaders and other figures who have previously received Pakistani support. If Islamabad "should fail" in this task, said Indian defense minister George Fernandes on January 2, "then we are left with only the option that the United States exercised to deal with terrorism," he said, alluding to Washington's assault on Afghanistan.

As of January 7, the Pakistan government had arrested several hundred figures in the organizations targeted by New Delhi. More than 100 members of the Kashmiri groups that face Indian accusations of involvement in the December 13 attack have been rounded up. Domestic opponents have also been swept up in the net.

Controversy is simmering over the Indian

Continued on Page 14

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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Celebrate 43 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Nan Bailey, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 4229 S. Central Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 389-7181.

San Francisco

The Working Class and the Fight for Women's Rights. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 3926 Mission. Donation: \$5 program, \$5 dinner. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

COLORADO

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Argentina: Massive Protests by Workers and Students Force Four Presidents to Resign. Speaker: Jack Parker. Sat., Jan. 19, 7:00 p.m. 6 West Victory Way. Tel: (970) 826-0289.

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The Fight for Women's Rights Today. Speaker: Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan.

18, 7:30 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland, 2nd Floor. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

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Defend Abortion Rights for Women: Celebrate the Anniversary of the Roe. v. Wade Decision. Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party, garment worker. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 3720 6th Ave. Tel: (515) 288-2970.

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The Civil Rights Movement: Its Lessons for the Fight Against War and Racism Today. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 4208 W. Vernor. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

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What's Behind the India-Pakistan Conflict? Speaker: Maurice Williams, Militant staff writer. Fri., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd

Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

What's Behind the India-Pakistan Conflict? Speaker: Greg McCartan, editor, the Militant. Fri., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

Free Cuban Patriots Imprisoned in U.S. Jails. Speaker: Elvidio Mejia, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue, 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. (212) 695-7358.

A Working-Class Response to Growing Unemployment, Part-Time Work, and the Debt Crisis in Semicolonial Countries. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

How to Advance the Fight for Women's Rights Today. Speaker: Bev Bernardo, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

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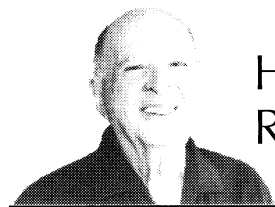
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Supply and demand—With September 11 travelers scrambling for housing, a New York-area Days Inn jacked up some room rates from



Harry Ring

\$139 to \$399. Perhaps shaken by protests, the state attorney general hastily ordered refunds and a fine. A Days Inn manager said they only

ripped off a few customers and assured it was not a matter of "greed."

P.S.—An unconfirmed source advises that Days Inn refunds included free Old Glory pins.

Wonder why?—An *L.A. Times* article warns that public perceptions of "terrorists" are often untrue.

Vitamin enriched?—John Foster, former government nuke specialist and current chair of a self-styled "independent" panel on nuclear safety, says that what's needed is a generous stockpile of "robust" A-bombs.

America the Beautiful—The director of California's medical association says the number of specialists refusing to come to hospital emergency units to attend those in critical condition is reaching the point of crisis.

Read it and retch—"I'm getting called at 3 o'clock in the morning and the only people I'm getting called for are people who aren't going to pay? Why would I do that?"—Dr. Steven Ross, Director, California Orthopedic Association.

Genius of capitalist planning—City fathers in Laguna Hills, Cali-

fornia, are buying a building for a \$6.2-million city hall. The building has triple the space they need so they plan to rent the superfluous two-thirds to private enterprises. The city anticipates closing the deal by the end of the month, but won't be able to move in for at least two years.

They love relics—Jason Henske, a photographer for the Brattleboro, Vermont, *Reformer*, was jailed for taking a photo from the front of the state's nuclear power plant for a feature on the history of the plant's security. Henske was told he would be charged under a state treason law enacted soon after U.S. entry into

WW I. The law covers individuals taking pictures of sites supervised by public boards. Henske and his paper protested. He was released and his digital camera returned. The statute remains on the books.

How it's done—The above "treason" item was forwarded by a Delaware reader who received it from a pen pal and supporter of the Irish Republican movement. The Irish activist suggested, rightly, that it might be useful for this column. But there's an easier way. Send it directly to: Great Society c/o Pathfinder Books, 4229 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA. 90011.

Framed-up Cubans receive maximum sentences

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

MIAMI—On December 27, U.S. District Judge Joan Lenard handed Antonio Guerrero the maximum sentence of life in prison. Guerrero had been convicted in June on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage" for the government of Cuba. He was the last of the Miami Five—Cuban revolutionaries who were found guilty of similar charges concocted by the FBI—to be sentenced here.

To justify the harsh sentence, Lenard claimed the acts of Guerrero were "the most palpable and transparent" among the five defendants, adding, "His illegal actions were for the sole purpose of obtaining national security information."

Guerrero, who was born in Miami, worked for a period as a janitor at Key West's Boca Chica Naval Air Station. The prosecution claimed he used his job to try to pass U.S. military secrets to Havana. Government attorneys, however, failed to produce a shred of evidence of any such information ever being sent to Cuba by Guerrero or any of the other four defendants.

"If you want to find out how the Navy fights, go rent a video of Top Gun," said defense attorney William Norris in an earlier interview. "You'll learn a lot more than Tony Guerrero could see" by watching aircraft at the Key West air base where he worked as a janitor for five years. Norris was ridiculing a prosecution contention that Antonio Guerrero was endangering secret U.S. battle doctrine by watching aircraft land and take off on training exercises.

Guerrero denounced the verdict. "If I were asked to do something like this again, I would do it with honor," he said, speaking in the courtroom after his sentence was read out. In good spirits, he blew a kiss to his mother, Mirta Rodríguez, 69, who was in the courtroom, before being led back to jail.

Jack Blumenfeld, Guerrero's attorney, said he was not surprised by the sentence. "I shall be filing a notice of appeal in the next day or so," he told the press December 27.

All five defendants have stated they were simply investigating activities of right-wing Cuban-American groups in Florida with a record of terrorist activities against Cuba, carried out with knowledge and complicity from Washington. They have announced they will fight their convictions through appeals.

The Cuban government, which has waged an international campaign in defense of the Miami Five, called a special session of the country's National Assembly December 29. With a unanimous vote, the Assembly bestowed Cuba's highest honor on the five patriots, "Heroes of the Republic of Cuba," because they completed "with exemplary dedication, dignity, and steadfastness the sacred mission of defending the nation and protecting it from terrorism."

Cuban president Fidel Castro reportedly told the National Assembly that 2002 would be dedicated as the "Year of the Heroic Prisoners of the Empire" because of the importance of the fight to free the Miami Five.

Frame-up convictions

In 1998 the FBI announced with much

fanfare and media hype that it had discovered a "Cuban spy network" in Florida. Those arrested were charged with trying to "infiltrate" the U.S. Southern Command, passing U.S. "military secrets" to Havana, and "infiltrating" and "disrupting" right-wing Cuban-American groups in Miami that seek to overthrow the revolutionary government of Cuba. A charge of "conspiracy to commit murder" was tacked on later against one of the five.

On June 8 a jury in a federal courtroom here handed down guilty verdicts against the five men on all 23 charges of "spying" for the government of Cuba. Gerardo Hernández was found guilty of the unprecedented charge of "conspiracy to commit murder" for allegedly providing Cuban authorities with flight plans of the four Brothers to the Rescue pilots whose planes were shot down in 1996 by the Cuban air force. A number of defense witnesses offered ample evidence that these rightists repeatedly violated Cuban airspace and refused to heed warnings to head back before they were downed near Havana.

In mid-December, Hernández received two consecutive life terms plus 80 months in jail for these trumped-up charges. Days later, Ramón Labañino was sentenced to one life term; René González received consecutive 10-year and five-year sentences; and Fernando González got 19 years in jail.

These convictions and sentences are an attack directed not only at revolutionary Cuba but at workers' rights in the United States. FBI agents broke into their homes

repeatedly over the three years prior to the arrests, violating the Fourth Amendment protection against arbitrary search and seizure. The prosecution's "evidence" consisted of information the FBI claimed to have collected in these raids, and from short-wave radio transmissions government agents asserted they intercepted between Havana and the defendants. The judge refused a defense motion to move the trial out of Miami, even after several potential jurors, especially Cuban-Americans, disqualified themselves for fear of reprisals if they voted "not guilty." No evidence of any military secrets being stolen from the United States and turned over to Cuba was ever presented by the prosecution.

As with Washington's attacks on workers' rights under the guise of fighting terrorism since September 11, the U.S. rulers used the "spy scare" case against the Miami Five as a means to justify broader powers for the FBI, including sanctioning break-ins and electronic eavesdropping, frame-up trials on scanty evidence, and harsh prison conditions, such as extended solitary confinement solely based on the character of the charges against the defendants.

This past October the FBI also arrested and jailed Ana Belen Montes, a senior analyst for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, for allegedly providing classified information to the Cuban government. As with those arrested in Florida, FBI break-ins into Montes's apartment and electronic eavesdropping are also featured in government actions against her.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



January 21, 1977

INDIANAPOLIS—"The only way politicians will listen to us is if we are bigger, louder, and better organized than the right wing."

Enthusiastic and determined cheers greeted this statement by Carol Coates, a leader of the Louisville National Organization for Women, at an indoor rally here January 9. Despite subzero temperatures and eight inches of snow, 600 Equal Rights Amendment supporters attended the rally sponsored by NOW. Two hundred people marched from the state capitol to the rally.

Buses and carloads of ERA advocates rolled in for the action to make Indiana the thirty-fifth state to ratify the ERA. They came from many cities in Indiana and surrounding states.

The week before the demonstration, 1,200 people packed subcommittee hearings at the state capitol. Two-thirds of the crowd were on the side of the United Auto Workers, NOW, and others testifying for ratification.

The anti-ERA speakers list read like a Who's Who of America's right wing: Stop ERA, Indiana Farm Bureau, American Legion, and a host of Bible thumpers.

All week Stop ERA head Phyllis Schlafly coordinated anti-ERA rallies, picket lines, and vigils. She denounced the January 9 NOW action as the work of "lesbians" and the "Socialist Workers Party."

Despite the right-wing's attempts to scare people away from the pro-ERA demonstration by such red-baiting and lesbian-baiting, the rally exemplified the broad unity behind women's rights.



January 21, 1952

Defense guards to protect lives and homes against bombings are being formed by both whites and Negroes as more cases of dynamiting and other violence spread throughout the South. As the *Militant* warned, the failure of federal and state authorities to punish lynch-violence and police murder of helpless Negroes has encouraged new outrages of a similar character. As the Socialist Workers Party urged, defense guards are being set up to safeguard the intended victims of the terrorists.

On January 10, two dynamite charges were exploded near Oxford, N.C. under a new house belonging to Sanford Holding, 65 year old Negro farmer, wrecking two rooms and cracking the foundation. The sheriff blamed it all on "novices" but neither he nor the State Bureau of Investigation has discovered the "novices" yet.

Meanwhile, Sanford Holding is taking no further chances. Determined to rebuild the home and move into it despite the terrorist attack, he has recruited an armed guard and posted it around his house. The sheriff said there was "no evidence of racial differences" but Holding knows better, and his defense guard is composed of Negroes. (The property had been bought from whites, and Holding could be sure that Negroes were not opposed to his occupying it.)

This and other incidents, as Negroes all over the South know, are part of a pattern of terror designed to intimidate the Negro people and prevent them from fighting for their rights.

New York bus workers press for contract in one-day strike

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—Some 1,500 drivers and mechanics at three private bus lines in Queens, New York, conducted a one-day wildcat strike January 7 to draw attention to the fact they have been working for more than a year without a contract or a raise.

The workers, members of Local 100 of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), are employed by Jamaica Buses, Triboro Coach, and Queens Surface Corporation. About 120,000 bus riders were affected, having to

switch to taxis, subways, and New York City Transit buses during the morning rush hour commute.

"This had to be done to get people to recognize that we want a contract," stated Mario, a bus driver for 21 years, to the *New York Times*. "We don't ask for the world. We just ask to make a living."

The walkout, which began at 5:00 a.m., ended at noon, after union officials rushed to the scene to plead with the workers to return to their jobs. "We had a very difficult time getting people back to work," stated Roger Toussaint, president of TWU Local 100. "People's frustration is really riding high." At union meetings at each of the three lines, Toussaint expressed his hope that the new city council would provide money to help settle the dispute with the bus lines, which are subsidized by the city government.

The workers walked out over three issues: wages, pensions, and job security. The unionists originally sought a pay raise that would give them parity with workers employed by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, who earn 12 percent more than they do. The union is now demanding pay raises of 5 percent a year for two years. The bus companies are offering about 4 percent a year.

Unionists are also demanding that the new contract protect them from layoffs, which company executives have rejected.

Some drivers took issue with the decision to so rapidly return to work. "My take is, we should've stayed out until we got what we wanted," stated a Queens Surface driver who asked not to be identified. "Why not? We already lost a day's pay."

Interest in Pathfinder

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offs, grabbed a copy of *Perspectiva Mundial*. She wanted to know, "Are there are fights by workers over there [in the United States and Canada] like there are in Argentina?"

José Bascur, who just graduated from high school and was starting classes at the University of Comahue in Neuquén, was excited to meet socialists from North America. The Pathfinder book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* caught his attention. He and his friend Natalia, both members of the youth group of the United Left, had come to show their support for the unemployed workers' protest. He said he was attracted to Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara but had heard that his revolutionary strategy was "more of a strategy based on military action than a political strategy." He got a copy of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* to see if it addressed his question about the leadership of the Cuban revolution.

The battle against imperialism

U.S. imperialism is expanding its military presence in Central Asia, taking over bases in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan and stationing two aircraft carriers and thousands of marines in the Arabian Sea in the last four months. Washington seized on the September 11 terrorist attacks to strengthen its position in the region and try to take back some of what it lost with the overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah of Iran in 1979 and its failure to overthrow Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War and its aftermath.

Driven more and more to use brute military force—as it has in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and elsewhere—to try to hold together its domination over a disintegrating capitalist world order, the U.S. rulers offer nothing but war, national oppression, and economic catastrophe for working people in both the semicolonial and imperialist world.

Exploiting what may be the greatest opportunity it has gained through its assault on Afghanistan, Washington is pushing to deepen its ties with and influence over India, a major military and economic power in the region. A potential counterweight to the Chinese workers state next door, India carries growing strategic economic and military importance for the U.S. rulers.

Regardless of the specific issues behind the current war moves, the underlying sources of the conflict in the Indian subcontinent go back to the creation of Pakistan as a spearhead against the Indian revolution by the departing British imperialists in 1947. London succeeded in dividing workers and peasants, breaking away two large chunks of territory from India as the revolutionary mobilizations against colonial rule were growing on the subcontinent. Tens of millions were placed under the theocratic state of Pakistan. Successive Pakistani governments have been armed by Britain, then later the United States, and have carried out their masters' bidding ever since. Pakistan's military leader, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has continued this subservient course by aiding the U.S. war in Afghanistan, turning over three military bases to U.S. forces, and giving them permission to carry out military operations in the country under the guise of fighting "terrorism."

As the world social crisis continues to deepen, unresolved national struggles and battles against imperialist domination will increasingly come to the fore. The face-off on the Indian subcontinent helps lay bare the need to confront the unfinished tasks of the mighty revolutionary struggles that led to India's independence from British imperialism in 1947. But the partition of India and the formation of a pro-imperialist outpost helped block the

formation of a modern, centralized nation-state. Democratic tasks remaining before the people of India include the struggle for unification of the Indian subcontinent and smashing of all fetters of colonial and pre-capitalist social organization.

The Indian bourgeoisie has seized on the recent terror attacks in New Delhi to pressure the Pakistani government to round up people called "terrorists" by Indian ministers.

While pressing India to hold off a military assault, the U.S. rulers are also taking advantage of the situation to demand that Musharraf deal blows to organizations considered a problem for imperialist domination in the region.

New Delhi and Islamabad have both used the conflict over Kashmir to prepare for war. Each welcomes the chance to whip up chauvinist and communal hatreds among their peoples to divert attention from their failure to cope with internal social and economic problems. The Pakistani regime cynically claims to support the Kashmiri peoples' aspirations, while the Indian government carries out systematic abuses against the people in that region.

The *Militant* supports the call, first made in 1948, for the predominantly Muslim population of Kashmir to hold a long-denied referendum to decide whether they prefer to join Pakistan instead of being forcibly united with India. The Indian rulers have consistently refused to hold such a referendum.

Workers and farmers in the United States, on the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere, should demand the withdrawal of all U.S. and other imperialist forces from Afghanistan and the surrounding countries. U.S. imperialism and its armed forces are the number one enemy of working people in the region. Uniting toilers across the subcontinent to battle the growing imperialist military presence and domination is the only road to throw off foreign domination and press forward the national unification struggle.

The *Militant* urges our readers to use the paper's coverage of this accelerating conflict to discuss the truth about imperialism's brutal record and the historic struggles of working people for unity. Supporters of the *Militant* who live in one of the many cities where immigrants from India, Pakistan, and other countries of the subcontinent have joined the ranks of the working class have a special opportunity and responsibility to offer the paper for sale, to discuss the perspectives outlined in its articles, and to exchange views and facts on the situation. We welcome reports on the results of such efforts and will publish them in upcoming issues of the paper.

What's behind India-Pakistan conflict?

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government's demand that Islamabad hand over 20 individuals accused of terrorism who have allegedly found refuge inside Pakistan. The list includes Kashmiri figures, and leaders of Sikh organizations.

So far, Pakistani officials have refused to comply with India's demand for extradition, saying that evidence provided on the crimes of these "terrorists" is inadequate.

"I don't believe the situation is defused yet," said U.S. president George Bush January 7, "but I do believe there is a way to do so, and we are working hard to convince both the Indians and the Pakis there's a way to deal with their problems without going to war."

After a discussion with Indian leader Atal Behari Vajpayee—one of the "daily calls" made by White House officials to both sides, according to administration spokespeople—Bush said that while he "understood" the prime minister's anger, he should "give us all a chance to work with President Musharraf to bring the terrorists to justice.... The fact that the Pakistani president is after terrorists is a good sign."

British prime minister Anthony Blair said on January 3 in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka that "what we want is, on the Pakistan side, action against terrorism, and on the Indian side, to try to de-escalate the tension as much as possible."

During a visit by Musharraf to Beijing, which has long-standing military and political ties with Pakistan, Chinese prime minister Zhu Rongji expressed similar concern about the volatile situation, advising the two governments to "keep maximum restraint and safeguard peace and stability in the South Asia region."

In expressing frustration with the U.S. stance on January 2, Defense Minister Fernandes drew the same parallel between the U.S. assault on Afghanistan and India's battle with Pakistani-based Kashmiri rebels that New Delhi has repeatedly used in its war propaganda. "I do not know how many people have been bombed in Afghanistan, and still the bombing continues, [but] when it happens to us, we are supposedly not giving chances to others," he said.

While pushing to extend its ties with India, Washington also aims to safeguard its alliance with Pakistan. Musharraf's government has provided vital assistance to the U.S. war effort in Central Asia, since Pakistan shares an important border with Afghanistan. Along with the use of ground bases, the general has handed U.S. warplanes control of one-third of Pakistan's airspace.

At the same time, the White House, following the policy of the Clinton administration, has continued to develop ties with the Indian government. In a sign of deepening military collaboration, joint military exercises, described as "unprecedented" by the *Wall Street Journal*, were planned in December, until the attack on the Indian parliament led to a postponement of the maneuvers.

Interest in Pathfinder, socialist press by workers in Argentina

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL, ROMINA GREEN, AND CHRISTIAN CATALÁN

NEUQUÉN, Argentina—"I didn't know these things happen in the United States," remarked Juan Pablo Kunz, a 23-year-old meatpacker, at the entrance to the Centenario Slaughterhouse here. He and 22 other workers had begun a strike that day, protesting the fact that the company had not paid them for the past month.

The slaughterhouse worker was reading with interest an article in the Spanish-language socialist monthly, *Perspectiva Mundial*, on the fight by Miami garment worker Michael Italie to get his job back after being fired for speaking out against the U.S. war on Afghanistan, in support of the Cuban Revolution, and in favor of unions.

Kunz's response was common among workers and students in Argentina who met socialist workers from the United States and Canada on a reporting trip there.

"What's been happening in the United States since the attack on the World Trade Center?" asked Julio Araneda, 36, a worker at the Zanón tile factory in this city. He and his co-workers had invited the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* reporters to visit the plant, which the nearly 400 workers have been occupying since early October to oppose the company's mass layoff plans. He was glad to find in *Perspectiva Mundial* an account of Washington's war on working people in the United States. The ceramics workers were particularly interested in how the U.S. government's so-called antiterrorist campaign is aimed at curtailing the rights of workers and farmers. Araneda ended up buying a copy of the Spanish-language edition of the Pathfinder book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Unions*, by Jack Barnes.

Alejandra Gorosita, 31, standing at the entrance to the EMFER railcar repair plant outside Buenos Aires, where workers are also occupying the facility to oppose mass lay-

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Cancel Argentina's foreign debt!

Working people should join in solidarity with workers and farmers in Argentina who continue to protest government policies aimed at making them bear the brunt of the economic crisis wracking the country. The devaluation of the peso, rising prices, layoffs, and potential budget cuts that affect millions of toilers are devastating the living standards of working people throughout the country.

What are the concerns of Washington and the imperialist governments of Europe? That Argentina "fulfill its international obligations"—that is, resume payments on the \$132 billion debt owed to imperialist banks and super-wealthy bondholders as quickly as possible. Paris put it bluntly: "Do everything in your power to look after our companies!"

With the governmental shuffle in Buenos Aires in the face of mass protests that forced former president Fernando de la Rúa from office, Washington hopes the worst is behind it, and that the new coalition regime can carry through the peso devaluation, stem street actions by working people, and start the debt payments going again.

The catastrophe in Argentina is not the result of "mistaken policies" by the capitalist rulers of the South American country, as spokespeople for Washington, Madrid, and Paris try to tell the world. In subordinating the country to the needs of imperialism, the Argentine rulers have brought on an economic nightmare for workers, farmers, and layers of the middle class. But the debt crisis is the natural consequence of how capitalism works in the imperialist epoch.

The foreign debt is not a relationship between equals. Through their control of capital, world markets, and technology, as well as their military superiority, Washington and a handful of other imperialist powers set the rules and impose their exploitative terms on a large majority of oppressed semicolonial countries. Unequal terms of trade mean that prices for agricultural goods and natural resources—the main sources of revenue for Third World nations—tend to decline relative to the prices for the industrial equipment they purchase, forcing them deeper into debt.

Argentina, like nations throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa, is being bled dry by massive payments to the banks and bondholders in the United States and other imperialist countries. Working people there have been forced to pay tens of billions in interest payments, yet the foreign debt continues to grow. The foreign debt setup is simply a form of pillage through which the capitalist fami-

lies in the imperialist countries suck massive amounts of wealth out of the semicolonial world and into their own pockets.

As Spanish bankers cry "plunder" over some tentative measures floated by the Duhalde government in order to hold off protests, the real plunder of Argentina by the imperialists has been going on for decades.

The change in the presidency and the continuation of a coalition government of the bourgeois parties in Buenos Aires demonstrate the pressing need for the construction of a revolutionary leadership of the working class in Argentina. Workers and farmers can resolve the deepening crisis in their favor only by revolutionary means. Until a communist party is built that educates and organizes workers and our allies to not just get rid of a string of presidents, but to lead the struggle to overthrow the capitalist government and replace it with one of our own, the capitalists and their parties will continually come out on top.

Such a revolutionary outcome is indeed the nightmare U.S. imperialism works overtime to keep at bay. This is why Washington remains implacably hostile to the Cuban Revolution, which has set an example for all working people in the Americas—from Canada, to Argentina, to Chile—for more than four decades. Cuba's example points to the only road open to workers and farmers in face of the growing economic catastrophe, wars, oppression, racism, and brutality offered by capitalism.

Millions of toilers who are following the social crisis and explosion of street actions in Argentina can more clearly see what capitalism has to offer working people the world over and the capacities of the toilers to fight back. These developments help open many people up to learning the truth about Cuba and to searching for revolutionary books such as those published by Pathfinder Press, along with the series of *New Internationals* and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The capitalist rulers of Argentina are no match for the militancy, combativity, and power of the Argentine working class if it is organized and led in a fight for power.

The most important solidarity that working people in the United States can offer is to join with fellow fighters internationally to demand the unconditional cancellation of Argentina's foreign debt, and the entire Third World debt. Such a fight can strengthen the possibilities for collaboration by workers across national borders on related fronts, from the fight to demand jobs for all, to the defense of immigrant workers.

'Motive force of history is struggle between classes'

Printed below is an excerpt from *FBI on Trial: The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. The item quoted is from the chapter titled "Excerpts from Trial Testimony." The suit, which was filed in 1973, came to trial in 1981. On April 2 of that year, Farrell Dobbs, former national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, testified at the opening of the trial. Dobbs was a central leader of the Teamster organizing drive in the Midwest in the 1930s. He and 17 other leaders of the SWP and Teamsters union were prosecuted and imprisoned during World War II

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

by the U.S. government under provisions of the thought-control Smith Act, which makes advocacy of communist ideas illegal.

Margaret Winter, chief counsel for the plaintiffs at the trial, conducted the direct examination. Edward Williams, an assistant U.S. attorney, headed the government's defense. Federal District Judge Thomas Griesa presided over the trial. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



Winter: Is the SWP based on any particular political doctrines?

Dobbs: Yes, yes. We are based on the fundamental doctrines of Marxism—referred to as scientific socialism.

Winter: Can you briefly describe what those doctrines are?

Dobbs: That is a large question but I'll try very hard to do it very briefly. Just the bare-bones fundamentals is what I'll try very briefly to outline.

The Marxist outlook is based on recognition of the fact that throughout class society, from the days of slavery in olden times through the stage of feudal society to the contemporary capitalist system, that the

motive force of history has been a struggle between the exploiting classes on one side and the exploited classes on the other—between the oppressors on one side and the oppressed on the other.

In capitalist society, this struggle in the scientific socialistic view has its roots in the capitalist system of property relations. Capitalists hold the social means of production as private property that they seek to use to advance their own private interests at the expense of the general social welfare.

Commodities produced under the capitalist system are produced through the employment of wage labor by the capitalists. The value of the commodities produced represents the socially necessary labor that is congealed in the produced commodity.

A contest arises over the division between the capitalists on the one side and the workers on the other over this value. The capitalists—I am not speaking of individuals, but in general terms as a class—try to hold down the workers' share of the value produced to only that which is necessary for the subsistence of the working class and for its procreation. To the extent the capitalist succeeds he is able to appropriate more of the value for the amassing of capital through which he can expand his holdings and then amass more capital. It becomes an endless spiral.

The working class, on the other hand, is not content merely to subsist and to procreate. The working class aspires to advance toward an ever-improved state of life. This gives rise to an unending clash between the capitalist and the working class in contemporary society in this country. I'll just say in passing you have an example in the fact that the coal miners are on strike today.

The Marxist view is that the contradictions that lead to this condition are inherent in the capitalist form of property relations. The needs and the interests of the working class cannot therefore be solved under the capitalist system. It is necessary to abolish private property in the social means of production.

That doesn't mean somebody has two shirts, you take the second one. I am talking about the social means of production—its mines, mills, factories, railroads and so on—to have them owned and operated by the people as a collectivity. Perhaps I could sum it up by quoting as best I can from

memory a passage at the conclusion of the *Communist Manifesto* in which it speaks of a social structure developing that is an association of producers in which the well-being of each is the condition for the well-being of all.

Winter: What does the SWP mean when it uses the word "revolution"?

Dobbs: We use the term "revolution" in the sense that—

Edward Williams: Objection, your Honor. I would ask that the witness respond to the question of what he means, rather than the SWP.

Griesa: That was the question.

Williams: The question, your Honor, was what does the SWP mean?

Griesa: Well, the objection is overruled.

Dobbs: In speaking of revolution, the term is used in the context that it is used generally in political science, whether it is socialist political science or capitalist political science. A revolution in political terminology relates only to a fundamental transformation in basic processes.

For example, within the historic era of capitalism, a tremendous leap took place in the forms of production through what was called the Industrial Revolution that began in England back in the eighteenth century. Basically, machine production was introduced after the invention of the engine, and it permitted an increasingly accelerating transformation from production by hand and with manual tools and so on to the machine form of production. That opened up whole new vistas for both qualitative and quanti-

tative advancement in industrial output. That is why it was called a revolution.

When we speak of a revolution in the political sense, that is what we mean. A qualitative transformation from one basic form of social structure, capitalism, to a different basic form of social structure that we call socialism.

Winter: Does the SWP have any view on whether that revolution you have just referred to can be brought about by terrorism?

Dobbs: Yes.

Winter: And what is that view?

Dobbs: It is the view of the Socialist Workers Party that terrorism is the antithesis of what is required to bring about a fundamental social transformation.

Terrorism implies that self-appointed individuals can substitute themselves for the great mass of the people—and by acts of terror bring about a change while the mass stands around as onlookers, as though they were merely interested onlookers—watching something like a Super Bowl game. A concept of that nature is directly contradictory to what is needed—that is the cumulative process of the education and organization of the working class as a class, to act as a class in its own behalf. That is the only way that a social transformation can be brought about.

In addition to that, acts of terrorism serve as a pretext for the ruling class to impose restrictions on the democratic rights of the working people in building their own organizations and in carrying out their policies.

LETTERS



U.S. a 'death trap'?

After reading the article in the December 17 issue, "In Los Angeles, socialist worker wins support in free speech fight," I was confused by Michael Italie's statement, "By its actions U.S. imperialism is turning this country into a death trap for working people who live here." I certainly agree with the premise upon which the statement was based, but I don't quite understand what Italie meant by it. An article explaining this in further detail would be very helpful and appreciated.

Matt Skiba
Wilmington, North Carolina

Enron collapse

There are a number of important lessons that the collapse of Enron illustrates and should be taken to heart by workers. Although the capitalist press and numerous Democratic and Republican politicians, including President George Bush, have expressed shock and dismay over the losses suffered by the Enron workers, they have done nothing except wring their hands and cry crocodile tears. There is a reason for their lack of action. This is the way capitalism works.

The defrauding of Enron workers out of their 401(k) pensions is another lesson. Enron did not pay a single penny for the

stock it "gave" to its workers. The use of corporate stock is the cheapest way a company can "fund" its pension plans. It costs them nothing. What should now be clear is that "stock" is not capital. It is fictitious capital. It is only "worth" what the market value is at the time it is sold. For the executives, who knew the truth about Enron's financial condition and who were allowed to sell when the price was high, it was a bonanza. For workers who were not privy to those corporate secrets and could not sell their stock until it was worthless it is a disaster.

Robin Maisel
Los Angeles, California



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.

January BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying

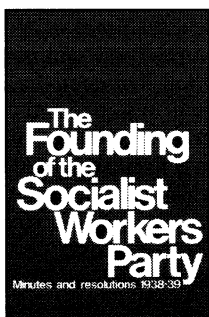
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Turkey signs deal to drill for oil in northern Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The state-owned Turkish Petroleum Corporation announced last month that it had signed a contract with the North Iraqi state oil company to build 20 drilling sites. The oil exploration will be done in the northeastern swath of Iraq where the Kurdistan Democratic Party is based.

Since the end of its war against Iraq in 1991, Washington has enforced a self-declared "no-fly" zone over the area where the oil sites will be built, with regular patrols and strikes by warplanes.

The move by the Turkish government marks another step in its collaboration with Kurdish forces in northern Iraq. "So long as Baghdad does not have full control over the totality of Iraq, Turkey will make sure nothing goes on in north Iraq that it does not like," said Soli Ozel, an international relations professor at Bilgi University in Istanbul.

Ankara waged a brutal 15-year war against Kurdish forces fighting for independence in southeast Turkey, which has left more than 30,000 people dead. The Turkish regime has relied on two Kurdish factions in northern Iraq for assistance in repressing Kurdish guerrillas led by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in western Turkey. Although a cease-fire was declared in 1999, the Turkish military periodically launches attacks on Kurds in northern Iraq under the pretext that guerrillas remain based there. In early January, 800 Turkish troops entered northern Iraq supposedly to drive out remaining Kurdish independence fighters.

The new oil drilling pact was approved

by the Iraqi state oil company and comes as the Turkish ruling class has sent conflicting signals to Washington over a new military assault on Iraq.

In mid-December the *New York Times* reported the Turkish government would give the go-ahead for Washington to use Turkish military bases if the Bush "administration were committed to toppling" Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. The article took note of the fact that then defense minister Sabahattin Cakmakoglu stated a month earlier that Ankara had "several times said that we don't wish an operation in Iraq, but new conditions would bring new evaluations to our agenda."

After getting wind in its sails from the success in its war in Afghanistan and an expanding military presence in the region, some officials in the Bush administration and other bourgeois pundits have been pressing for a renewed drive to oust the regime of Saddam Hussein. An article in the December 17 *New York Times* noted that the "current military success" of Washington's war against Afghanistan, and the demonstration of a "new model of warfare there," have "created a new opportunity to act in Iraq."

In an opinion piece headlined "Next Stop, Iraq," published in the November 15 *Wall Street Journal*, former British foreign secretary David Owen called for the U.S. government to "establish a military base with an airfield in Northern Iraq" to bolster efforts to "pursue a counter-terrorist strategy."

But the Turkish rulers remain skittish about a massive U.S. military assault against Iraq, fearing a repeat of the Kurdish revolt that erupted following Washington's 1990-91 as-

Laundry workers in N.Y. fight for a union



Militant/Bill Estrada

Unionists on strike at Flex-O-Tex Laundry in the south Bronx, New York, on the picket line in front of the plant December 27. The workers, who walked out December 5, are demanding that the company negotiate and sign a contract with the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. In addition to seeking union recognition, the strikers are demanding a contract that includes medical insurance, paid sick days, and a substantial wage increase over the current pay rate of minimum wage or slightly above it that most workers receive. The workers have kept up spirited picket lines throughout this fight, and have been winning support from the community. A union rally is scheduled to occur in front of the plant January 10.

sault on the Iraqi people. A war on Iraq would provoke "much greater adversity" for Turkey, asserted Chief of General Staff Huseyin Kivrikoglu, according to a December 26 Reuters dispatch. "An independent Kurdish state would be on the agenda," he added.

Some 20 million to 30 million Kurds are divided among southeastern Turkey, northeastern Syria, northern Iraq, northwestern Iran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. In the aftermath of the Iraq war, the Kurdish people took

advantage of the weakening of the Saddam Hussein regime to press forward their struggle, holding many villages and towns, before Baghdad used helicopter gunships and heavy armor to crush the rebellion.

Recently, a delegation of nine U.S. senators embarked on a week-long tour of several countries in Central Asia that included a meeting to bolster Turkish support. "We are appreciative...of the sensitivity regarding Kurds, that's why any action taken by the United States vis-a-vis Saddam Hussein would be after a period of consultation and hopefully cooperation particularly with the Turkish government," said Sen. John McCain.

Despite plans floated in the U.S. big-business media for launching a war against Iraq, such military action has apparently been put on the back burner for now. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Deputy Defense Minister Paul Wolfowitz, one of the staunchest advocates for attacking Iraq, "suggested that the Pentagon could opt to put off the bigger and politically more difficult targets in the war on terrorism like Iraq."

Meanwhile, the Turkish parliament approved a measure extending the use of a Turkish air base by U.S. and British warplanes to enforce no-fly zones over northern Iraq for another six months starting from December 31.

With euro debut, signs of disunited Europe

BY RÓGER CALERO

Despite the fanfare by capitalist governments in Europe over the roll out of the euro as a common currency January 1, the fact that the continent remains divided between nation-states and their respective capitalist classes that pursue their respective interests was brought to the fore by the resignation of Italy's foreign minister Renato Ruggiero.

Ruggiero, seen as favoring policies to further the integration of Italy in the European Union (EU), quit his office January 5 after a week of disagreements within the government over EU policy.

According to press reports, before he was forced to resign, Ruggiero had expressed in newspaper interviews that he was "filled with sadness" by his fellow ministers' lack of commitment to the new single currency and to the European integration.

Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, a rightist who leads a coalition government, said that he found Ruggiero's doubts about Italy's pro-European commitment "intolerable" and his continued presence in the government "unsustainable."

Umberto Bossi, head of the Northern League Party, a fascist-oriented outfit and member of Berlusconi's governing coalition, expressed his approval of the resignation saying that with Ruggiero, Italy "risked appearing weak in Europe every single day."

The Berlusconi government has taken a number of positions that have strained relations with the major EU powers, Germany and France especially. It has frozen Italian participation in a joint project to build a military aircraft and blocked the functioning of a new EU food agency.

Earlier, fearful that a proposed Europe-wide arrest warrant could be used against it, the Berlusconi government attempted to significantly cut back the number of crimes for which a person could be extradited to

another EU country. Italian Justice minister Roberto Castelli, from the anti-immigrant Northern League, demagogically opposed the inclusion of racism and xenophobia in the list of crimes under the so-called "anti-terrorism" legislation by asking, "Who decides on a European level who is a racist and who isn't?"

French and German officials have expressed concern over the meaning of Ruggiero's resignation, with one calling it "bad news for everyone who loves a European Italy." The French finance minister said Italy "is one of the pillars of Europe and one can therefore be quite concerned" about the developments.

Berlusconi has taken over the post of for-

eign minister until a successor is found, and has sought to minimize the backlash from the other European powers by affirming his "clear and unequivocal" commitment to Europe.

"Europe is for me a goal and a necessity," he is quoted as saying in the December 7 *Financial Times*.

But Berlusconi insisted on drawing a distinction "between the continuity of our pro-European stance and the right to defend our interests." Deputy prime minister Gianfranco Fini supported this position by saying, "We remain totally committed to Europe, but we also reserve our right to defend our interests, just as the French and the Germans and the British do."

Locked-out broadcast workers approve pact

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—The 1,600 technical and design workers locked out of their jobs for three weeks by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), began to return to work December 31 after voting 75 percent in favor of a tentative agreement reached with the company.

The workers, members of the Communications Energy and Paper Workers Union (CEP), set up picket lines in cities and towns across the country to press their fight for a wage increase and against concessions demanded by the CBC, which it said would save the corporation \$6 million.

The CBC, a Crown Corporation funded by the federal government, is the largest English-language radio and television network in the country. The camera operators, sound and lighting technicians, and all other behind-the-scenes broadcast personnel were locked out by the CBC bosses who sought to im-

pose a contract on them after negotiations broke down on the eve of a strike deadline.

Workers will receive a 5.5 percent wage increase over the length of the new two-year contract. The workers turned back several demands for concessions, such as on industry standard overtime rates.

One of the most contentious issues has not been fully resolved. The CBC bosses wanted to eliminate all references in the contract that require them to give workers a certain number of hours off between shifts and to compensate union members for missed meal breaks because of the work schedule.

"CBC moved a long way from their original positions but we still must hold the managers accountable for getting our members meal breaks and time between shifts," said CEP spokesperson Mike Sullivan. "We haven't seen the end of the issue, but hopefully over the next 18 months we can work out systems that ensure that meals and sleep

breaks are not the huge problem they have been."

The determination of the workers had an immediate impact on the company, forcing the CBC to cancel much of its regional programming. In ratification meetings held across the country before the vote, union members expressed concern that if the lock-out continued many viewers would turn away from the CBC forever, resulting in the elimination of regional CBC programming. "The very fabric of CBC journalism in regional centers was threatened, if this continued much longer," said Peter Murdoch, one of CEP's vice-presidents.

In the back-to-work protocol the CBC agreed to take back all locked-out permanent employees and to take no action against any employee in relation to activities during the lockout.

John Steele is a member of UFCW Local 175.