

U.S. steps up offensive against Cuba, Venezuela

Charges ‘destabilization’ to prepare expanded intervention

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
 AND SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. officials have stepped up their campaign of smears and threats against Cuba and Venezuela, accusing both governments of seeking to destabilize other countries in Latin America. Washington, which has never accepted normal ties between revolutionary Cuba and the government of President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, is using this offensive to prepare intervention in the region of a different scope and character.

As part of this campaign, Washington also unilaterally suspended twice-yearly talks with Cuba on the implementation of immigration accords between the two countries.

These moves came on the eve of the Summit of the Americas in Monterrey, Mexico, a gathering of all the governments in the region except Cuba, which is excluded. Leading up to the meeting, which began January 12, tensions also mounted between Washington and the governments of Argentina and Brazil.

Speaking to reporters January 6, Roger Noriega, assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs,

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Reuters/Jorge Silva

Farmers and other supporters of Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez rally January 10 outside the Central Bank in Caracas. Chávez said that Washington’s stepped-up propaganda campaign seeks to prepare the ground for an attempt to overthrow his government, whether by a military coup or an assassin’s bullet.

White House seeks temporary visa bill to gain tighter control over immigrants

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

A proposed bill announced by U.S. president George Bush January 7 would allow undocumented immigrants who have jobs in the United States to apply for a temporary three-year work visa. They would be able to renew the permit, but would not receive special consideration for permanent resident status or citizenship.

If approved, such legislation would create a category of workers dependent on an employer to keep their legal status and subject to deportation once their visas

expired. It would give federal authorities a list of immigrant workers they could keep track of. And it would make it easier for the ruling class to carry out mass deportations in the case of a depression.

While many undocumented immigrants are expected to take a risk and apply for the temporary worker visas, hoping to obtain a measure of protection even if only for a few years, the measure is designed to defend the interests of the employers at the expense of the rights of working people, particularly immigrant workers.

The plan, one of several legislative proposals on immigration that are likely to be debated in Congress over the coming months, is a response to the needs of U.S. capitalists in the face of the unprecedented increase in the number of immigrant workers who have been drawn to this country by U.S. imperialism.

Many sections of the U.S. economy rely heavily on the superexploited labor power of immigrant workers mainly from Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia. These include agriculture, hotels and res-

taurants, garment and textile, construction, and meatpacking.

The U.S. employers do not seek to drive out undocumented workers. Rather, their goal is to reap added profits and foster divi-

sions in the working class by establishing a pariah layer with few rights and subject to superexploitation. At the same time, the huge influx of immigrants has led to

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West Coast meetings boost Headquarters Building Appeal

BY NORTON SANDLER

At a standing-room-only meeting held January 10 at the Pathfinder Bookstore in Seattle, nearly 50 people substantially raised the amount pledged to the 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal to construct a new Pathfinder bookstore, headquarters for the Socialist Workers Party, and the offices of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in the heart of New York City’s Garment District.

During the event, which featured a presentation by Socialist Workers Party National Committee member Joel Britton, those present boosted the goal for the Seattle area by more than \$5,800. Seattle supporters have set a fund-raising goal of \$15,000, more than \$11,000 of which has already been collected.

Britton is a chairperson of the 2004 Headquarters Building Appeal, along with Martín Koppel, Janice Prescott, and Arrin Hawkins.

“We are appealing to supporters to contribute \$180,000. As the project has advanced, we decided to add new double-pane glass windows to the budget. Modern windows, which will cost \$30,000 to purchase and install, will provide greater insulation for the new headquarters to make the heating and air conditioning

more efficient. The windows will greatly reduce street noise and facilitate editorial work,” Britton said. “We will also have to rearrange the electric service, an expense we did not initially anticipate.”

A special committee monitors these expenses so the crew can stick to its budget.

“This is going to be a headquarters we can be proud of,” he said. “When you step off the elevator into the lobby area, the first thing you will see is a big seven-foot display window where Pathfinder titles will be featured. This will be your walkway into the Pathfinder bookstore.”

As of January 13, \$171,500 has been pledged to the fund appeal with \$74,100 collected. “We have gotten a tremendous response to this appeal, but the next two weeks are decisive,” said Britton. “We must collect the entire amount to keep to the tight construction schedule, and that will mean collecting \$53,000 each week.”

Those attending the Seattle forum also heard a presentation from Dean Denton, who had just returned from a week on the construction crew at the new center in New York. A display with photos of the volunteers on the construction crew put-

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Utah strikers reject mine bosses’ ploy of talks without UMWA

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Striking coal miners here have unanimously rejected an attempt by CW Mining, also known as Co-Op, to negotiate a return to work under the very same conditions that existed when they were locked out by the company more than three months ago.

The coal miners are fighting to win their jobs back and to gain recognition of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as their union. The company illegally fired all 75 workers on September 22 when they protested the unjust suspension of a co-worker for union activity.

“The company is not proposing anything new. They are just throwing crumbs at us,” said Domingo Olivas, who has worked at the Co-Op mine for six years. “They are not guaranteeing medical insurance, better

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N.Y. protest demands justice for youth killed by cops

BY SALM KOLIS

NEW YORK—Protesters against police brutality gathered in the bitter cold January 10 outside the Rosario family home in the Bronx to mark the ninth anniversary of the killing of Anthony Rosario, 18, and Hilton Vega, 21, by the cops on Jan. 12, 1995. Both men were shot lying face down on the floor by two New York police detectives.

The demonstrators gathered in front of a mural depicting the two young men, which

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Socialists in UFCW campaign to win support for miners

BY ANNE PARKER
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Socialist workers and Young Socialists employed in meatpacking plants across the country met here December 20–21. They discussed the centrality of building solidarity in their union, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), with coal miners who are on strike in a fight for union recognition at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah. They also discussed the political work they carry out together with fellow workers and unionists to strengthen the UFCW itself.

The miners at Co-Op are fighting for a union, for their jobs, and for safety and dignity, in what is currently the most important labor battle in the country.

A central issue in this struggle is safety. “Miners in general are outraged by the conditions Co-Op miners face: working with defective equipment, arbitrary wage incentives and bonuses, being forced to work while injured. Many meat packers will be outraged, too,” said Róger Calero, a Socialist Workers Party leader who reported to the meeting on the campaign in solidarity with the miners.

“Other workers will be inspired with what the miners have been able to accomplish,” said Calero. “Bosses at Co-op told workers they would never be able to do anything. They said the workers would get a raise ‘when pigs fly.’ Now there is no coal coming out of this mine, at least nothing compared to before the strike.”

Socialists in some meatpacking plants have worked with others in their areas to gain union support for the striking miners. “The union backed a plant-gate collection for the miners and as a result we raised \$250 there,” said Lisa Rottach, a member of UFCW Local 271 at the Swift slaughterhouse in Omaha, Nebraska. “Later we sent a letter to the United Mine Workers of America solidarity rally on December 13 in Huntington, Utah, where it was read.”

Dean Hansen, a member of UFCW Local 342 in New York, said he and other

union members had distributed fact sheets at their packing plant. “One co-worker’s reaction was, ‘This is outrageous. Someone’s got to do something about this.’ One guy put more money in the collection can after another worker took some time to talk with him to explain the importance of the strike,” he said.

Tom Fiske, a meat packer in Minnesota, reported on work in building UFCW Local 789 in St. Paul, which has been involved in a number of union-organizing drives, from the successful fight to organize the Dakota Premium Foods plant to ongoing union drives at poultry plants and retail stores in Minneapolis.

“Local 789 has also been involved in union solidarity actions and social struggles,” Fiske noted. The local played an important role, for example, in the campaign to defend Róger Calero—a former Local 789 member and currently a *Militant* staff writer—against deportation, lent support to the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride in October, and sent a delegation to a solidarity rally organized by strikers at Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

The socialist workers at the two-day meeting noted that union-building openings exist in many UFCW local unions across the country.

“The unions are the basic mass defense



Militant/Lisa Rottach

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271 members at Swift factory in Omaha, Nebraska, take plant-gate collection for Utah miners November 26. Building solidarity in the UFCW for the miners on strike at the Co-Op mine was at the center of the discussions of the meeting of socialists who are meat packers.

organizations of the workers in this country against the offensive of the capitalists,” stated Fiske. “Building a revolutionary party goes hand in hand with fighting to advance the union, and working with others to help the union to come out of each struggle a little stronger.

“In order to defend our class against the mounting attacks of the bosses, the unions will have to be transformed along revolutionary lines in the course of massive class battles.”

“Today, participating in the life of the union—doing mass work—means working with people of many different views and contending with other political currents,” said Fiske. “In every place where we have trade union fractions, we can be more part of the life of the union as we carry out our political work as socialists.”

Anne Parker and Maurice Williams are meat packers in Atlanta and Chicago, respectively.

Benefits at center of Canada paperworker strike

BY NATALIE STAKE-DOUCET

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—“To summarize, it appears that Domtar underestimated the resolve and solidarity of our membership,” said Mike Fenton, president of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) Local 789, in a document posted on the union web site. The 300 union members at the Domtar paper mill in Delta, British Columbia, walked off

the job November 18.

This strike is the first in almost 25 years, workers on the picket line told this reporter December 7.

“The key issue is benefits here,” Vince Lukasc, a worker with 25 years in the plant and a member of the union bargaining committee, said in an interview. “The company has been refusing to follow the Norske Pattern Agreement,” he added, which ties wages and benefits to the state of the industry, and contains provisions for higher severance pay in case of closure. The CEP signed the five-year contract with Norske earlier this year, and is trying to establish it as the standard in the forestry industry. The CEP organizes some 15,000 paper and pulp workers in the West.

As soon as the workers walked out, said Lukasc, “the company put up a fence, floodlights, and video cameras. They complained to the city about our fire barrels and are threatening to sue unless we remove them. They’re basically doing whatever they can to make us uncomfortable.” Meanwhile, in the background, this reporter could hear a lively discussion among strikers about what type of heater

would best fit their picket shack.

Lukasc also said he had stopped by a woodworkers picket line a few days earlier to show support. Some 10,000 members of the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA) are on strike on the coast of British Columbia. The strike was provoked by the lumber bosses’ attempt to unilaterally impose a contract that cuts back for night shift, weekends, travel time, vacations, and other concessions.

Talks between the IWA and Forest Industrial Relations broke down December 5 after less than an hour. In an interview with *The Province*, Dave Haggard, president of the IWA, said, “We’re going to hunker down and raise money for our members so they can survive through the winter and spring and into next summer.”

During a visit to the picket line at the Interfor mill in Maple Ridge, Ray, a woodworker who asked that his last name not be used, said, “We’re in it for the long haul. Next week there’ll be a Christmas tree, and next summer, if that’s what it takes, there’ll be palm trees.” The workers there also reported receiving a \$1,000 donation from the local teachers’ union.

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Palestinians in Lebanon rally in October 2002

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World youth festival to be held in Venezuela

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

LARNACA, Cyprus—"We have reached genuine consensus," said Miguel Madeira, president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), addressing a meeting here of representatives of progressive youth organizations from around the world. "We are unanimous in accepting the offer by more than a dozen youth organizations in Venezuela to host the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students in Caracas in August 2005."

About 50 representatives of 41 youth organizations—most of them affiliates of WFDY—from 33 countries attended the January 7 consultative meeting on the world youth festival. It was preceded by a two-day meeting of WFDY's General Council, which also endorsed the proposal to organize the next international gathering of progressive youth in Venezuela.

The World Festival of Youth and Students draws together students, young workers, farmers, and other youth involved in protests against imperialist war, movements for national self-determination, and other social and political struggles. The last two festivals were held in Cuba in 1997 and in Algeria in 2001. They were marked by the political tone and character of groups and individuals engaged in popular struggles for national liberation, union organizing and other battles by workers resisting austerity drives by the bosses, fights by peasants for land, mobilizations demanding women's equality, and progressive actions by students. The youth at these gatherings—about 12,000 in Cuba and nearly 7,000 in Algeria—came together to exchange experiences and improve their understanding of how to advance their struggles.

WFDY, the main initiator of these festivals that started half a century ago, was dominated in the past by youth groups affiliated to Communist Parties that looked to Moscow for political direction and sustenance. The festival movement was interrupted for eight years as the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union collapsed at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. The international gatherings started anew on the initiative of communists in Cuba.

Each of the two dozen delegates who spoke at the January 7 meeting voiced their support for holding the next festival in the South American country.

'10,000 Cuban volunteers in Venezuela'

"Venezuela has the potential to become a center of resistance to imperialist intervention in Latin America," said Otto Rivero, first secretary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba. Holding the festival there will be a strong answer by the progressive youth of the world to U.S. imperialism's designs to pacify working people in Latin America by all means and prevent them from taking their destiny into their own hands, he added. Rivero pointed to the role of Cuban internationalists in Venezuela, especially the thousands of Cuban doctors offering their services in free neighborhood clinics in areas where workers and peasants have had little or no access to health care, as part of a program sponsored by the Venezuelan government called *Barrio Adentro* (Inside the Neighborhood). "Our 10,000 volunteer doctors and other internationalists now in that country will enthusiastically greet holding the festival in Venezuela," Rivero said.

Over the last two years, Washington has intensified its efforts to oust the government of Venezuela's president Hugo Chávez. Since his election in 1998, Chávez has drawn the wrath of the U.S. government and its backers in the Venezuelan ruling class for taking measures that cut into the prerogatives of big capital. These include an agrarian reform law and a bill strengthening state control over the country's oil, gas, and other mineral resources that are part of the country's national patrimony. Washington's hostility has also been fueled by Venezuela's closer economic and political ties with Cuba, including collaboration on Venezuela's nationwide literacy campaign and the medical program.

With Washington's support, the Venezuelan capitalist class has unsuccessfully tried to topple Chávez's government twice in the last two years—through a short-lived military coup in April 2002 and an employers' lockout a year ago. Each time, mass mobilizations by working people caused divisions



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Miguel Madeira, president of World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and leader of Communist Youth of Portugal, addresses January 7 consultative meeting in Larnaca, Cyprus, on 16th World Festival of Youth and Students. On panel (from left) are: Miriam Morales, WFDY general secretary and leader of Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba; Wail Battrekhi of General Union of Palestinian Students; Nidal Ammar from Syria, representing the General Union of Arab Students; Udaya Raj Pandey of Democratic Youth Federation of Nepal; Miguel Madeira; Kenia Serrano, head of international relations of UJC of Cuba; David Velásquez of Communist Youth of Venezuela; Wikénfred Oliver of the Youth of Fifth Republic of Venezuela; and Richard Bvukumbwe of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front.

in the military and pushed back the designs of the coup plotters. A third major confrontation is now brewing as the pro-imperialist opposition in the country is pushing for a referendum to recall the president.

"We thank you for your support and are happy of your decision to accept our offer," Wikénfred Oliver of the Youth of the Fifth Republic (JVR) told participants in the January 7 meeting. He represented, along with David Velásquez of the Communist Youth of Venezuela, the youth organizations in that country that offered to host the 16th world youth festival there. The JVR is affiliated with the Fifth Republic Movement, Chávez's party. "The Venezuelan people have dealt blows to the opposition of the wealthy who have carried out coup attempts and more recently acts of sabotage," Oliver said. "Your actions to organize and build a youth festival in my country will help us in the struggle to confront imperialism."

With support from Venezuela's government, the prospective hosts said they have the facilities and resources to accommodate up to 20,000 youth.

"The festival is an act of solidarity, and international solidarity can have an impact on the struggle of the Venezuelan people against U.S. intervention," said Mafhoud Salama, representing UJSARIO, the youth group of the Polisario Front, which is leading the national liberation struggle in Western Sahara. "We are at a critical point in the political situation in the world where movements of national liberation and all those trying to defend the interests of workers and peasants face an imperialist military offensive of a new kind," Salama added.

"The anti-imperialist struggle of the Venezuelan people makes it important to host the festival there, and the parallels with Africa give us a good opportunity to build it in our own countries," added Katabazi Emmy of the East Africa Youth Council, which is based in Uganda. "Cuban internationalist volunteers have served in many countries in Africa over the last decades, and are serving today in Venezuela."

Organizing the festival in Venezuela won't only be an act that can help push back U.S. designs for military intervention in Latin America, said Olympia Newton of the Young Socialists in the U.S. "It's tied to the need to oppose the U.S.-led 'war on terrorism' worldwide—from Iraq to Afghanistan, Libya, Iran, Syria, and north Korea."

Shane McEvoy of the Young Communist League USA said that "the progressive movement in the U.S. knows of the pressures and attacks of our government in Venezuela, and will want to work to build a festival there." He also stressed that "stopping Bush is the most important thing we can do for the Venezuelan people right now. It is the most important thing we can do for peace."

The first International Preparatory Meeting for the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students will be held in early summer 2004, Madeira informed participants. That gathering will issue the formal call for the festival. "But no one should wait until then," Madeira said. "Work can start now to spread the word

and get many local, national, regional, and international youth organizations to begin building it." National preparatory committees will begin to be formed in many countries by WFDY affiliates and other groups interested in building the festival.

Discussion on Iraq war

During the WFDY General Council meeting, delegates discussed the U.S.-led war and occupation of Iraq and decided on a series of actions aimed at resisting imperialism's drive to war and economic depression.

A wide range of opinions were expressed after the federation's leadership presented a draft political resolution. The document stat-

ed, among other points: "WFDY demands the immediate end of the occupation of Iraq and respects the independent right of the Iraqi people to decide their own future as an independent and sovereign country. WFDY believes that the Iraqi people have full rights to fight against the foreign occupation. The action and role of the UN was completely passed over by the U.S. and its allies."

A number of delegates praised the "Iraqi resistance." The most outspoken were those from Syria, which had the largest delegation at the meeting after Cyprus. Ahmed Dabbas of the Democratic Socialist Youth Union of Syria urged WFDY to "salute and support

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Utah miners: no to boss ploy

Continued from front page

working conditions, or better pay. A key issue in the strike is the dangerous working conditions and lack of adequate training for the miners."

On October 29 a delegation of miners went to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) Field Office in Price, Utah, to demand an investigation of the unsafe conditions in the mine. Since that time, MSHA investigators have visited the Co-Op mine and conducted interviews with the miners, who described the bosses' practice of intimidating and threatening workers who complained about hazardous conditions or injuries on the job.

"With this offer the company is showing its weakness now," said Olivas. "They need us."

At the end of December the bosses at CW Mining contacted the UMWA through a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) official in Salt Lake City to probe negotiating a return to work, strikers report. The company is demanding that the negotiations be done under the existing "contract" with the company-controlled union, the International Association of United Workers Union. The miners said the company-controlled union is made up of officers who are all bosses and relatives of the Kingston family, the owners of the mine, and that it never represented the interests of the workers.

A ruling by the NLRB on charges against the company for having a company-run union, and for illegally firing the miners for union activity, is still pending, even though the government agency has had in its hands affidavits from the workers for three months, explained the miners.

"The miners showed their unity and solidarity by refusing to negotiate with the company by themselves," said Roy Fernandez, a UMWA international

representative. "The UMWA will continue to help the miners through donations and support as long as the miners want us to be there to help them."

"This offer is a joke," said Jesús Salazar, a miner and a leader of the fight. "We have to go forward, fight for our rights until the company gives in and accepts our just demands. Our goal remains to be represented by the UMWA," he said.

In the meantime, the Co-Op miners here continue to win solidarity from unionists and others across the country and abroad.

"At the National Union of Mineworkers Yorkshire Area Council meeting which took place on 15 December 2003 it was unanimously agreed that a donation be made to your cause," read a letter of support from unionists in United Kingdom sent to the miners. "I take great pleasure in enclosing a bankers draft for \$1,760.20 USD and send our support and fraternal greetings in your struggles." At the trailer where the miners organize the pickets, strikers also displayed a poster they had just received signed by dozens of workers from a meatpacking plant in Omaha, Nebraska, that read "UFCW Local 271, *Solidaridad de Omaha*."

After unanimously rejecting the company's offer, the Co-Op miners enthusiastically sent off a four-member delegation to California for a two-week speaking tour to gain more support in other states and raise funds for their fight for union recognition.

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Mirta Vidal, lifelong socialist

BY JOHN STUDER

NEW YORK—Mirta Vidal, a long-time member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died January 3 in New York City after a lengthy illness. She was 55.

Vidal, who was born in Argentina and came to the United States as a youth, joined the Socialist Workers Party in the late 1960s. She was part of a generation that was deeply affected by the rising tide of revolutionary struggles throughout the Americas in the wake of the 1959 Cuban victory, the depth and tenacity of the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people, and the mass proletarian movement for Black rights in the United States that gave impetus to struggles by Chicanos and other oppressed nationalities, as well as to the movement for women's emancipation exploding onto the political scene at that time. She was among the small vanguard of youth that joined the communist movement as a result of their experiences in these movements.

In the early 1970s Vidal helped lead the work of the United States Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA), a broadly based group that defended imprisoned revolutionaries, trade union militants, church activists, political refugees, and other victims of repression by U.S.-backed regimes throughout Latin America. In 1977 she was the founding editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, the *Militant's* Spanish-language sister magazine.

Over the past decade, as a supporter of the communist movement, Vidal did extensive work to help transcribe and translate material for a number of books published by Pathfinder Press.

In the spring of 1968, Vidal visited France and was deeply affected by the power of the working class that she witnessed during the mass revolt of workers and youth that erupted in May and June, threatening to bring down the government of President Charles DeGaulle.

When she returned to New York and became active in the anti-Vietnam War movement on campus in Queens, she met members of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party and was attracted to their revolutionary working-class political perspective and activities. She joined the YSA and threw herself into building it. She joined the SWP shortly afterward.

Rise of Chicano struggle

Vidal became the Third World Task Force director of the New York Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam and in 1971 was elected national secretary of the YSA. She served as national director of the Chicano and Latino work of the YSA at a time when the Chicano liberation movement was growing quickly in the Southwest.

During that time, Vidal also served on the staff of the *Militant*, writing on politi-

cal developments in the United States and Latin America. She wrote a regular column on the Chicano struggle called "La Raza en acción."

In 1971 Pathfinder published *Chicano Liberation and Revolutionary Youth*, a pamphlet by Vidal based on a report she gave to the 1970 YSA national convention. A series she wrote for the *Militant* covering the first national Chicana feminist conference served as the basis for another Pathfinder pamphlet, *Chicanas Speak Out: New Voice of La Raza*. This pamphlet is still used in a number of university classrooms.

Also in 1971 the *Militant* ran a series of articles by Vidal from Crystal City, Texas, covering the emergence of the Raza Unida Party in that town, including its first election campaign. Raza Unida was a Chicano political party independent of both Democrats and Republicans that spread to several Southwestern states.

In the fall of 1973 Vidal joined SWP leader Ed Shaw on a trip to Argentina to cover the presidential campaign of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers Party), with which the SWP in the United States had fraternal ties. At that time, in the wake of massive struggles throughout the Southern Cone and the recent military coup in Chile, a prerevolutionary situation existed in Argentina. The Argentine rulers had decided to call elections for that year and brought back former Argentine leader Juan Perón from exile to run for president. Taking advantage of this opening, the PST ran former Socialist Party leader Juan Carlos Coral for president and won a wide hearing for its revolutionary perspectives among working people.

In early 1974, Vidal was a fraternal delegate from the SWP to the Third World Congress of the Fourth International after Reunification (10th World Congress). Deep-going differences within the world movement the SWP was part of—over communist party-building strategy in Latin America especially—were sharply debated at that Congress.

In a message to a 1995 memorial meeting celebrating the life of Shaw, Vidal wrote that she was tempted during the trip to Argentina, her native country, to remain there. She said her experiences on the trip and discussions with Shaw helped her decide that she could make a bigger difference and would receive better training and education in communist politics and party-building as a member of the SWP if she returned to the United States—a decision for which she said she had "always been grateful."

Work in USLA Justice Committee

After returning from Argentina, Vidal joined the USLA Justice Committee staff, where she served for the next few years, including as its national coordinator.



Mirta Vidal speaking in Chicago, October 1975, as a leader of the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners. Vidal was a member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party for more than three decades.

The U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners was established in 1966 by individuals representing a broad range of political views, including leaders of the SWP. Its campaigns spanned a period when brutally repressive U.S.-backed regimes in Latin America and the Caribbean imprisoned or murdered tens of thousands of people. These regimes targeted labor militants, leaders of peasant struggles, communists, socialists, and other revolutionaries, as well as nuns, priests, and lay people who were supporters of popular struggles.

From Mexico to Chile, the Americas were marked by sharp class struggle and revolutionary upsurges, ruling-class terror campaigns, failed experiments by left-wing guerrilla fronts that lacked a mass popular base, and rightist coups.

In this context, John Gerassi, author of *The Great Fear in Latin America*, Paul Sweezy, editor of *Monthly Review*, Father Felix McGowan, Catarino Garza, then SWP candidate for lieutenant governor of New York, and Joseph Hansen, editor of the *Militant*, spoke at a public meeting in New York on Sept. 30, 1966, to protest the prosecution's demand for the death sentence in the trial of Hugo Blanco in Peru and other acts of repression in Latin America. At this meeting, they founded USLA and agreed to serve as its first executive board members.

Blanco, a communist and peasant leader, had been jailed for his work organizing a mass movement of peasants to seize land from the wealthy landowners in Peru's La Convención Valley in 1961–62.

The day before the New York meeting, as if to punctuate the founding of the group, the national headquarters of the SWP at 873 Broadway in Manhattan was firebombed by a group of counterrevolutionary Cuban exiles.

USLA took up cases of political prisoners of all political tendencies in country after country in Latin America. This nonpartisan, united-front approach enabled the group to involve the widest range of supporters in its campaigns.

The fight to save Blanco's life, gain his freedom, obtain legal status for him in several successive countries of exile, and win his right to travel—including to the United States—unfolded through the entire life of USLA.

In September 1973, a U.S.-backed right-wing military coup overthrew the Socialist Party-led government of Salvador Allende in Chile. In one of its biggest campaigns, USLA joined in the worldwide effort to aid all those, both Chilean and foreign-born, targeted by the military dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Vidal was centrally involved in this cam-

paign, which was able to help many political refugees get out of Chile and obtain political exile status in other countries.

One of the members of the board of USLA was Dore Ashton, art critic for the *New York Times* and professor of art history at Cooper Union. Vidal and others worked with Ashton and a broad range of artists who donated their works to organize a benefit art exhibit at a Christopher Street gallery in Greenwich Village. Sale of the art works raised \$30,000 for coup victims and their families.

Vidal then worked with couriers who carried out the risky job of getting the funds into Chile and delivering them to those whose lives were at stake.

USLA issued a special issue of its *Reporter*, running 10,000 copies, and USLA leaders traveled to Mexico to interview some of the first refugees they helped to get out of Chile. They reported back to a public meeting of 1,300 in New York. From these interviews, USLA prepared a book, *Chile's Days of Terror*, as part of the defense campaign.

In December 1973, in the midst of this campaign, the USLA national office on Fifth Avenue in New York City was hit by a powerful bomb, which exploded while activists were working.

USLA ran many national tours to publicize its defense campaigns, organizing meetings for John Gerassi on the Blanco and other defense campaigns in Latin America in 1967; for former CIA operative Victor Marchetti, who spoke about the U.S. political police role in Latin America; and for Harald Edelstam, Swedish ambassador to Chile at the time of the coup, who helped many, including Blanco, to escape.

In 1975 USLA sponsored a two-month U.S. speaking tour for Argentine revolutionary leader Juan Carlos Coral as part of a campaign against increasing government repression and rightist attacks in Argentina that targeted working-class and student organizations. Seven PST members had been assassinated by the Argentine Anti-communist Alliance (AAA), party offices had been firebombed, and party leaders had been jailed. Coral's name appeared on lists released by the AAA of those targeted for murder.

Coral spoke to some 6,000 people at meetings across the United States, and reached many more in radio and newspaper interviews.

On the first week of his tour, Coral's meeting at the University of Chicago was attacked by a group of 50 right-wing Cuban thugs, some armed with clubs. A defense guard organized for the meeting prevented the attackers from reaching the stage; one of

Continued on Page 5

From Pathfinder: revolutionary struggles in Latin America

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In the 1960s and '70s, revolutionists in the Americas and throughout the world debated how to apply the lessons of the Cuban Revolution. A living analysis by a participant. **\$26.95**

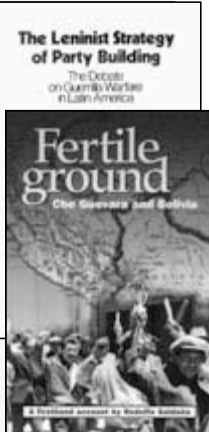
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Saldaña was one of the Bolivians who joined ranks in 1966–67 with Ernesto Che Guevara to forge a revolutionary movement of workers, peasants, and young people in Bolivia and open the road to socialist revolution in South America. He describes the unresolved battles of the tin miners, peasants, and indigenous peoples of his country that created "fertile ground" for Guevara's revolutionary course. Price: **\$9.95**

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or from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.



HQ building appeal

Continued from front page

ting up the walls was one of the highlights of the program.

As the *Militant* goes to press, most of the walls have been framed throughout the new premises, and much of the sheetrock is up. Over the next week the volunteer crew will paint the ceilings and walls, lay tile in the entryway and kitchen area, and begin the carpeting of the bookstore. The plumbing for the bookstore area has also been started. When finished, there will be a complete kitchen as well as ample counter space to prepare meals during the day and for dinners prior to weekly Militant Labor Forums.

A cabinetmaker is donating his labor to make the kitchen cabinets. He will also fabricate bookshelves for the bookstore. These pieces of furniture will be driven to New York and assembled by the volunteer crew.

The construction crew includes about a dozen volunteers who have taken time off from their jobs around the country to put in a month or more of work on the project. Other volunteers are coming in for a week or a weekend. The crew's efforts have been bolstered by a few construction workers from Queens and Brooklyn coming in after work and on weekends. A worker involved in the fight of day laborers in Freehold, New Jersey, has joined the crew on his days off. Skilled workers are helping train volunteers with less experience on how to do the job right.

The crew members are participating in dinners and classes organized by the New York Headquarters branch. On January 10, a dinner and a class on *Problems of Women's Liberation* by Evelyn Reed were attended by more than 20 people.

"We have learned many lessons from the project a year ago to construct temporary offices for the SWP national office and for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*," said Paul Mailhot, who is one of the organizers of the project. "We're trying to have as skilled a crew as possible help lead volunteers with less experience in this work. Because of this, we are on schedule with the construction. The collection of the appeal by the end of the month is necessary for us to continue to work at this pace without any unforeseen delays."

The collection at the Seattle forum was part of a several-days-long effort of intense fund-raising in that area. A number of meetings organized with potential con-

tributors, with both Britton and Dave Prince from New York participating in many of them, boosted the effort already underway in that city. As a result of these discussions, five Seattle contributors have pledged amounts ranging between \$1,000 and \$2,500.

Britton noted the importance of these meetings with ample time allowed. "I make a point of showing the souvenir program from the big public meeting held in New York on December 14 that launched the fund, highlighting the photo signature in it that was assembled for *Rebelión Teamster* that will make this book more accessible to workers today," Britton said. The meetings also review the many steps over recent years that have been taken to get into the position where the political center being constructed in New York is now possible, he added.

"As SWP leaders organize to meet with supporters of the communist movement to win contributions to the appeal, it is important to involve younger leaders of our movement in these efforts," Britton said, "because they provide an opportunity to get an education in the party's rich continuity in class-struggle and party-building experiences."

Fund chairperson Arrin Hawkins stressed in an interview the importance of reaching out to young people and co-workers for contributions. For many this will be the first time they have ever been involved in a discussion like this or made a contribution. "This will be their headquarters for a long time to come," she added. A brief talk on the Appeal by Hawkins at a January 11 fund-raising dinner in New York yielded contributions totaling more than \$1,000. The Saturday night event also included presentations by Olympia Newton and Argiris Malapanis on meetings of the World Federation of Democratic Youth they recently attended in Cyprus. (See article on page 3.)

Janice Prescott, a fund chairperson from New York, told the *Militant* that she had "a number of individual discussions with party supporters around the country and in New York, both about the project overall and about financial contributions." Prescott is a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party who is active in the Pathfinder Printing Project. "As a result of these discussions, several supporters



Militant/Róger Calero

Above, Willie Cotton from Atlanta finishes walls of new, expanded New York Pathfinder bookstore, distribution center, and Militant Labor Forum hall, which includes a kitchen area. Below left, after a day's work, crew members sit down to a dinner prepared by local volunteer cooks and hosts. Below right, crew volunteers Pete Musser from Pittsburgh and Diana Newberry from Los Angeles work in the space that will become the new offices of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

have said they are considering increasing the pledges they made initially.

"They see this both as a vote of confidence in the party and as a recognition of the important role that party supporters are playing in the building of the communist movement," she added. "In response to discussions about this being a combined headquarters for the local and national party, the *Militant*, the forums, and the bookstore, several people remembered favorably the headquarters the party had in the 1960s at 873 Broadway in New York," said Prescott.

She posted a note on the Appeal on the database used by supporters of the Pathfinder Printing Project. "I gave an

updated report on the work the construction volunteers were doing and the meals that New York volunteers are preparing for the crew members," Prescott said. "I asked for recipes to feed a crowd of around 12 people. So far I've got a recipe for black beans and sausage with a side of collard greens, chicken tajine, several soups and stews, and a series of simple stir fries."

Cecelia Jones in Seattle contributed to this article

Mirta Vidal, lifelong socialist

Continued from Page 4

the guards, Andrew Pulley, required seven stitches to close wounds received defending the meeting.

Broad, well-organized defense guards were organized for all of Coral's meetings throughout the tour, successfully deterring further attacks.

USLA also campaigned in defense of Puerto Rican nationalist political prisoners and helped initiate the defense for Héctor Marroquín, a young member of the SWP who was threatened with deportation by Washington after he fled Mexico to escape torture and death threats. In 1977, USLA helped win a visa for Hugo Blanco to speak in the United States and organized a tour for him. Blanco spoke to some 10,000 people across the country.

In a 1975 interview with *Intercontinental Press*, Blanco, drawing on his diverse and sometimes unhappy experience with defense committees in many different countries, commented on the nonpartisan, nonfactional character of USLA—in the long tradition of the revolutionary workers movement that "an injury to one is an injury to all"—and how important that was to winning the broad backing it gained.

"Groups like USLA have the advantage of not including political points—like support for socialism—that narrow their base, and they also use the method of mass mobilizations," Blanco said. "I agree with USLA's approach."

First editor of 'Perspectiva Mundial'

In 1977, after leaving the USLA staff, Vidal became the first editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, where, tutored by *Intercontinental*

Press editor and SWP leader Joe Hansen, she helped to establish the high standards for translation and reporting that have marked the magazine since its inception.

Through her political experience as an SWP cadre—from the earliest days of the anti-Vietnam War, Chicano, and feminist movements, through her work on the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, to her involvement in the international work of the party—Vidal developed her abilities as an organizer and learned the importance of accurate translation, the bedrock for learning and sharing political experiences and views among equals.

Translated for Pathfinder books

After the increasing challenges she faced with chronic health problems led Vidal to drop her membership in the SWP in the 1980s, she began to work as a court interpreter in New York, where she soon won the respect and admiration of her co-workers for the same qualities and abilities that had marked her contributions to the SWP.

She fought to establish working conditions and standards for interpreters that would allow them to provide accurate translations—and not summaries—to those facing the court, a basic right. Vidal was active in and served as president of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators.

Vidal campaigned for team translating, to allow translators to avoid fatigue that diminishes their ability to translate, and for standardized training and testing of translators.

Insofar as her health permitted, Vidal continued to support and participate in

the party's political campaigns until her death. In particular, she lent her talents to translate for *Perspectiva Mundial* and *Nueva Internacional*.

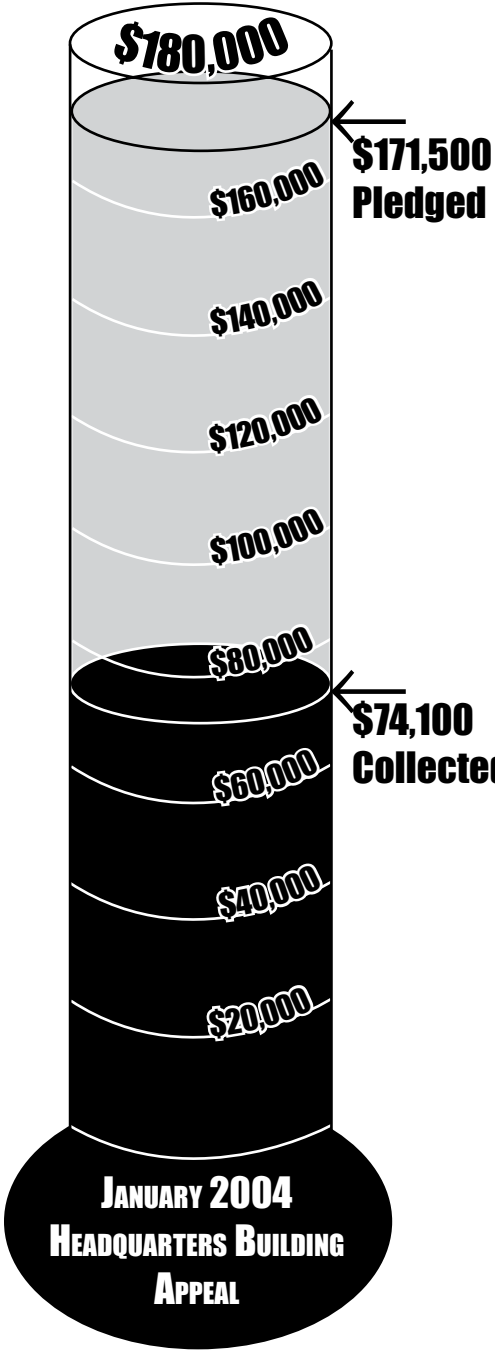
In recent years she transcribed, translated, and edited translations of major sections of several Pathfinder books. These include:

- *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia* by Rodolfo Saldaña.
- *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba* by Tomás Diez Acosta.
- *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke.

Vidal acted as interpreter for several visiting leaders of Latin American struggles, including leaders of Cuban youth organizations and of Brazil's Movement of Landless Rural Workers. In 1995, during a visit to New York by Cuban president Fidel Castro, she translated for him at a meeting in the Bronx of opponents of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

In recent years she also continued to contribute to campaigns in defense of political rights and the rights of immigrants. Last year Vidal helped the Róger Calero Defense Committee produce materials in Spanish for its successful campaign to prevent the deportation of Calero.

Some 75 members of Vidal's family, friends, colleagues, and comrades attended a memorial meeting for her in Brooklyn on January 9. Among those who spoke was SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters, who talked about many of the political highlights of Vidal's life recounted above.



July 26 Movement appealed to soldiers and youth in Cuba to join revolutionary struggle

Published below is a selection from *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58*, by Armando Hart, a new book by Pathfinder Press that will be released in late January in both English and Spanish editions. This firsthand account of the struggle to overthrow the Batista dictatorship led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, headed by Fidel Castro, is now accessible for the first time ever to English-speaking readers. It recounts the events from the perspective of revolutionary cadres organizing in the cities.

Armando Hart was a central organizer of the urban underground and is one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

This week's feature—one of a series published in the *Militant*—appears in chapter 8, containing documents from the revolutionary struggle. Titled "Revolutionary proclamation of Santiago de Cuba and the Sierra Maestra" and dated November 1956, it presents the July 26 Movement's program for the government to be formed after the overthrow of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, which had taken power in a coup on March 10, 1952.

On July 26, 1953, a group of 160 revolutionaries led by Castro launched simultaneous armed attacks on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks in Bayamo, both in eastern Cuba, aiming to spark a popular revolt. The attacks marked the beginning of a growing popular struggle against the regime.

Released from prison as a result of a broad amnesty campaign, Castro and other surviving veterans of the Moncada attack founded the July 26 Movement. In July 1955 Castro and other leaders left for Mexico, where they organized an expedition of 82 combatants that returned aboard the yacht *Granma*, landing in southeastern Cuba on Dec. 2, 1956. The proclamation below was to be released following the *Granma* landing and the Santiago de Cuba uprising of November 1956. It ends with an instruction to July 26 cadres to circulate it widely.

A base for the new Rebel Army was established in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba. The revolutionary war culminated in a popular insurrection leading to the overthrow of the dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959. Workers and farmers took political power and opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas. Copyright ©2004 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Material in brackets is added by the *Militant*.



The July 26 revolutionary movement, in fulfillment of its promise of Freedom or Death, is initiating the revolutionary struggle against the corrupt and criminal dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and all



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs
Protesters march in Havana on April 6, 1952, to oppose the coup one month earlier by Fulgencio Batista, who imposed a U.S.-backed dictatorship. At the head is Raúl Castro, who became a leader of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army. The July 26 Movement's revolutionary proclamation at the end of 1956 called on Cubans to "shake off the yoke" of the tyranny and appealed to soldiers to join the rebel forces.

the causes that produced it.

Invoking the most glorious battles of the peoples for their freedom, . . . *we are exercising, as a duty to our generation and to Cuba's history, the right of resistance to tyranny that is granted us by Article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic. . . . Below are the general lines of the governmental program [of the July 26 Movement]: . . .*

The revolution and the armed forces

Batista and a group of military leaders who have enriched themselves have put the armed forces in conflict with the nation, depriving the country of freedom and democratic life. To shake off this yoke, the blood of young Cuban revolutionaries and soldiers has had to be spilled. The shiny boots that from Camp Columbia command the soldiers to oppress the people while they receive millions from smuggling, illicit gambling, drugs, and dirty business dealings have not gone to the mountains of Turquino and Guantánamo to be with the soldiers. The revolution will embrace all officers, noncommissioned officers, and members of the armed forces in general who have not been complicit with the mur-

ders and mistreatment of citizens and who have maintained their honesty.

The revolutionary youth aspires to an army of the republic made up of soldiers who are brothers of the people, guardians of their liberties and rights. It will be possible to belong with pride to that army of the democratic government because it will not be a scourge to its people. On the contrary, it will be an instrument of national progress, defense of the homeland, co-executor of the government's plans to distribute lands, test soil and subsoil, harmonize water resources, draw up maps, carry out a census of agricultural resources and cattle, give technical and financial assistance to farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs, and wage campaigns for literacy, hygiene, popular culture, and reforestation.

The soldier will teach how to drill artesian wells, drive and repair tractors, vaccinate cattle and fowls, and artificially inseminate cattle.

That soldier, an agent of economic and cultural progress, will not be confused by unfulfilled, demagogic promises of wage increases. By his own merits he will earn substantial per diem expenses paid for by the farmers and entrepreneurs who benefited, by the corresponding ministries, by autonomous development banks, or by the budget of the army itself.

The revolutionary youth aspires to a navy that does not protect smugglers and does not promote the Via-Cuba Canal treason. Rather, it aspires to a navy whose members—respected and admired in the spirit of the *mambí* naval leaders, General Emilio Núñez, Pérez Carbó, and Castillo Duany—help foster the merchant marine, establish centers of nautical training, build dams, construct shipyards, protect the natural riches of the coastal zones, prepare nautical charts, encourage systematic scientific research of the Cuban seas, look for marine species to catch and put to industrial use, and proudly carry the Cuban flag to fish for cod and other species in the open seas, waving the banner of the solitary star across the seven seas.

The revolutionary youth aspires to a national police that guarantees democratic coexistence, has true training schools,

scientifically researches criminality, protects the citizen, helps instruct him in his civic duties, and saves lives through systematically studying and solving traffic problems. Such a police, steadfast and respected, would not allow its chief to connive with illicit gambling, drugs, and pimping. Thus, Cuba would not again have to bear the shame of the international press exposés that the chief of the national police received \$50,000 a week from organized gambling alone.

The revolutionary youth confront the nation's basic problems

We will leave analysis of our ideology and position on each concrete question for the document that the July 26 Movement will address to the country, making a calm study of each of the vital issues in front of us. Here we put forward only in general terms some of our programs.

Ours is a country with an export economy, open and subject to the uncontrollable ups and downs of the world market. The supposed economic security of six million Cubans rests on the sugar industry, which is not capable of expanding to the same degree as the rate of growth of the population and cannot offer steady, productive employment to the unemployed and underemployed and to the thousands of Cubans who each year join the ranks of potential producers. The possibilities of economic expansion through industrialization and high-productivity farming are hindered by our economic relations with the United States of America. We need to end the frightful unemployment and underemployment figures and create new industries to employ more than 40,000 young people annually. We need to change Cuba's economic structure, establishing industries to replace imports and produce for export. We need to change the nature of current U.S. imports and become less dependent on a single market. To achieve all this we must overthrow Batista and mobilize all the nation's economic sectors, so that under the auspices of a revolutionary democratic government we can move toward rational planning of our economy and establish a program of economic development under effective state intervention that supports, finances, protects, subsidizes, or complements private initiative.

In face of economic crises, sectors opposed to Cuba's economic development—sugar speculators, greedy importers, absentee corporations, and land-grabbers—have put in place overseers to wield the knife and the noose. From 1929 to 1933 Machado was kept in power at all costs. In 1935 and the following years Batista was placed in power, and this tropical Attila was utilized again in 1952. Batista is the assassin of workers and peasants, of merchants, industrialists, and small entrepreneurs in crisis, of professionals, of housewives, of unemployed youth.

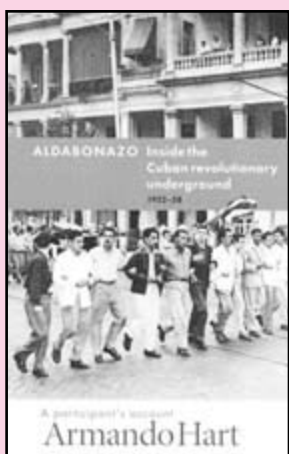
To stay in power serving his masters, Batista has dangerously reduced reserves in dollars, gold, and foreign currency. He has given away the resources of the subsoil to foreign industry. He has attacked social conquests and facilitates private foreign investment in an indiscriminate way, compromising the economic and political future of generations to come. Thus, added to his political crimes against Cuban democracy is treason to the nation's economy.

We believe that true democracy can be attained only with citizens who are free, equal, educated, and have dignified and productive jobs. The revolution's educational policy will be based on the following main lines:

a) *Turning the Ministry of Education into a technical body*, taking up the old ideal of the 1940 constituent assembly of keeping this ministry free of corrup-

Continued on Page 7

Coming in January from Pathfinder



Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58

by Armando Hart

In this firsthand account by one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, we meet many of the men and women who in the 1950s led the urban underground in the fight against the brutal U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Together with their comrades-in-arms of the Rebel Army, they not only brought down the tyranny, their revolutionary actions and example worldwide changed the history of the 20th century—and the century to come. \$25.00

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White House seeks temporary visa bill

Continued from front page

a burgeoning underground economy and has made it more difficult for the employer class and the government to keep track of and control all these working people. Estimates of the number of undocumented workers in the United States today range from 8 million to 12 million—three to four times higher than 1986, when a major immigration bill was enacted under the Reagan administration.

The aim of the bill proposed by the White House and its supporters in Congress is to regularize the status of a substantial section of the working class that is undocumented by turning them into temporary workers, while giving authorities tighter control over them.

The main provisions of the proposed bill are:

- Undocumented workers in the United States with jobs, and workers living abroad with job offers in the United States, would be eligible for a three-year visa that could be renewed for one more term. They would have to pay an as-yet-unspecified application fee and be sponsored by an employer.

- Sponsoring employers would supposedly have to show that no “Americans” want the job.

- Immigrants would be issued a “temporary worker card.” They would be able to legally travel between the United States and their home country, although not necessarily to other countries.

- The White House claims the temporary workers would have most of the same legal protections as U.S. citizens.

- The plan calls for an unspecified increase in the number of green cards—permanent residency permits—issued. Currently some 675,000 green cards are issued annually.

- The temporary workers would have to return permanently to their country of

origin once the permits expire.

- The U.S. government would supposedly provide “incentives,” including special savings accounts and retirement benefits, to encourage workers to return to their country of origin.

- Those “who do not remain employed, who do not follow the rules of the program, or who break the law will not be eligible for continued participation and will be required to return to their home,” Bush said in his January 7 announcement.

Employers, he added, “must report to the government the temporary workers they hire and who leave their employer so that we can keep track of people in the program and better enforce our immigration laws.”

Homeland security offensive

The proposed legislation is intended to reinforce the “homeland security” offensive that the U.S. government is carrying out to restrict workers rights in the name of “fighting terrorism.” In his January 7 announcement, Bush argued in favor of the proposed legislation by saying, “Illegal entry across our border makes more difficult the urgent task of securing the homeland. The system is not working.”

In a related move, the U.S. government has begun fingerprinting visitors to the United States from all but 27—mostly European—countries. Homeland Security Secretary Thomas Ridge said the new regulation was “part of an effort to make sure our borders are open to visitors but closed to terrorists.”

The proposal is also part of the U.S. rulers’ preparations for depression conditions, in which immigrant workers will be further scapegoated for growing unemployment. The proposed immigration bill would subject workers to deportation if they lose their jobs. Employer groups have “welcomed the plan as a way to cre-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride arrives in Immokalee, Florida, September 27. Bill proposed by White House would create a layer of immigrant workers with temporary work permits, subject to tighter government control and to deportation at end of term.

ate a stable workforce and alleviate labor shortages for low-wage and dangerous jobs,” especially “in agriculture and the hotel, health, restaurant and construction industries,” the *Washington Post* reported January 8.

“The economy can’t expand unless we have workers to fill available jobs,” Randal Johnson, a vice president at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, told the *Post*.

“We’re unable to fill the jobs we’re creating,” said Lee Culpepper of the National Restaurant Association. Joseph McNerney, head of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, told *USA Today* that hotel industry owners will draw on immigrant workers to fill an estimated 700,000 additional jobs by the end of the decade.

With its proposed bill the White House is outflanking Democratic politicians, who have not offered any fundamentally different immigration legislation. It is offering a concrete law allegedly benefiting immigrants, while continuing to act under the banner of “homeland security,” which politicians from both big-business parties have rallied behind.

Immigrant rights organizations have criticized some of the most glaringly reactionary aspects of the proposed legislation, but many accept its framework and look for ways to improve it.

Margie McHugh, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition, called the White House plan “significantly less than what was on the table before September 11.”

Would strengthen hand of bosses

Labor organizations have criticized the fact that the measure would tie workers to their employers and undercut their ability to defend their rights under the threat of being deported.

In a January 8 statement, the New Jersey-based Farm Worker Support Committee, CATA, said the bill was designed “to ensure an underclass of cheap labor for employers.” While it “may provide a certain measure of relief to undocumented workers in no longer being pursued as criminals,” the legislation would leave workers “at the whim of the employers with few protections if their visas were canceled.”

“You tell me, will these ‘willing workers’ have the right to speak up or organize on the job when they need to be sponsored by willing employers? I doubt it,” said May Chen, international vice president of the garment and textile workers’ union, UNITE.

Given the prospect of several-year delays in being granted permanent residency, some groups point to the prospect of immigrants being deported when their temporary visas expire, even while waiting to be granted more permanent status.

For their part, right-wing politicians and commentators who oppose any relaxation of immigration restrictions loudly criticized the proposal. New Jersey *Star Ledger* columnist Paul Mulshine fumed that this is “an amnesty on the installment plan.”

Columnist Steven Sailer argued that the intention of the Bush plan “is to use the global ‘reserve army of the unemployed’ to grind American working-class citizens’ pay down to the minimum wage.”

Some commentators have described the new immigration proposal as another “guest worker” program. Such programs have been arrangements between the U.S. and Mexican governments to guarantee a stable, cheap workforce to U.S. agribusiness. They have similarities to the latest proposal in that they sharply limit the rights and mobility of workers, but the White House proposal is much broader because it is aimed at all undocumented workers.

In 1986 the Immigration Reform and Control Act was passed under the Reagan administration. In another measure to stabilize the workforce by regularizing the status of a layer of undocumented workers, it granted amnesty to nearly 3 million undocumented workers.

At the same time, the 1986 law instituted sanctions against employers hiring undocumented workers. These sanctions, of course, have been used to strengthen the hand of bosses, who can hire undocumented workers and then threaten to call the immigration police if workers seek to organize a union or otherwise defend their rights.

July 26 Movement appealed to soldiers

Continued from Page 6

tion. The ministry’s mission will not be confined solely to scholastic purposes. Its wider tasks comprise national education as an entire process to be carried out jointly by all state bodies and directed not just to children and youth, but to adults and citizens in general.

The minister should be assisted by permanent technical commissions with a long-term policy. These will study in a rational and overall way the financial and economic implications of educational plans, keeping in mind educational statistics. Literacy campaigns will be carried out, together with basic education for

adults who already know how to read and write. These will be complemented by a policy of creating or subsidizing libraries, museums, laboratories for scientific research (either their own or in collaboration with those at universities and other centers of higher education and research), theaters, art films, choruses, dance, symphony orchestras, and popular printshops. These are to be organized or created not just in the city of Havana but throughout the republic. To achieve these ends the most modern educational methods for the masses will be used, among them films, radio, press, and television.

b) *Decentralizing the national bu-*

reaucratic apparatus, giving provincial and regional authorities more power of decision making within established general policy. This will eliminate a colonial scourge that is endemic to the structure of the Cuban state.

c) *Restructuring our educational system*, after a review of our school curricula, and establishing an organic relationship between primary, secondary, vocational, and university education. It should be guided by knowledge of the nation’s realities and adapted to the new demands of progress as well as the needs and interests of those whom educational policy is directed toward.

It goes without saying that classrooms will not be for sale at the Ministry of Education of the revolutionary government, since the organization of classroom study will be based on technical capacity and human dignity.

The nation can expect from the revolutionary youth a democratic government of honest and capable men, full of love for Cuba. The most authoritative specialists and the healthiest intellectuals in the country have already rendered their collaboration to the July 26 Movement for a calm and profound study of national issues.

Cuba possesses natural and human resources, capital, technology, and institutions that are necessary to transform us into a prosperous, democratic, and civilized nation that will shine in the constellation of peoples as a cultured and free republic, for which dictatorships and empires are anathema. We will head toward that great destiny through the revolutionary effort initiated November 30. . . .

Council of the Cuban Revolution

Don’t hold on to this, circulate it



The Nov. 30, 1956, uprising in Santiago de Cuba, timed to coincide with the *Granma* landing by rebel force, was followed by a brutal police crackdown. Above, demonstration in Santiago on Jan. 2, 1957, sparked by the cop murder of William Soler, 15. He and a companion were picked up by cops as they were painting anti-Batista slogans on city walls. They were tortured and killed, with their bodies dumped on the streets. Banner in back says, “Stop the murder of our children—Cuban mothers.”

Roosevelt's war party jailed SWP leaders

Printed below is a selection from *The Socialist Workers Party in World War II*, a collection of writings and speeches of SWP leader James P. Cannon from 1940–43, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. This excerpt is from "Why We Have Been Indicted," a statement published in the July 26, 1941, *Militant* answering the federal grand jury indictment 11 days earlier of 29 members of the SWP and Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544-CIO. Copyright ©1975 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

Franklin Doublecross Roosevelt has systematically lied to the American people. He has broken promise after promise. At this moment the army training camps are seething with resentment against Roosevelt's lat-



Wartime protest meeting against jailing of 18 SWP and Teamsters Local 544 leaders

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

est broken promise: his solemn covenant with the draftees that conscription would be limited to a period of one year. And why is he seeking an indefinite extension of the term of conscription? In order to break his solemn promise of last November that no American soldiers would fight on foreign soil.

Couple with these broken promises Roosevelt's strikebreaking use of troops, his terroristic use of the FBI and other governmental agencies of repression against CIO unions and the Socialist Workers Party,

and you have a clear picture of Roosevelt's foul scheme. By a combination of force and fraud he proposes to dragoon the American masses into a war which they do not want and for which they would never vote.

Roosevelt's typical combination of force and fraud is evident in the indictments drawn up by his Department of "Justice" against the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party. The basic motivation for those indictments was stated by Acting Attorney General Francis Biddle on June 28, when he sought to justify the FBI's Gestapo raids on the St. Paul and Minneapolis headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party. Biddle then cited and quoted from the antiwar sections of the Declaration of Principles adopted by the 1938 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

But some strategist in Roosevelt's war party has since realized how unpopular would be a persecution of our antiwar party for our antiwar views. Hence, Biddle's assistants have now drawn up an indictment against us which makes no reference whatsoever to the antiwar sections of our 1938 Declaration of Principles—in fact, the word "war" appears nowhere in the indictment!

Carefully though they worked in preparing this indictment, Roosevelt's agents were not quite able to erase the telltale

indications of the real motivation for this persecution. They give their game away in charge No. 4 of the indictment, which accuses us of urging, counseling, and persuading the workers and farmers "that the Government of the United States was imperialistic..."

Yes, we have explained and shall continue to explain to the workers and farmers that the Roosevelt government is imperialistic in its every move.

Imperialism is the motive force behind all Roosevelt's war plans. Like Hitler, he would be master of the entire world. Hitler seeks that mastery as political agent for Germany's bankers; Roosevelt seeks that mastery as political agent for America's Sixty Families, the DuPonts and Morgans and Rockefellers.

By his typical combination of force and fraud Roosevelt is intriguing to secure as cannon fodder and beasts of burden the masses of South and Central America. Next comes Dakar—that is, the Negro masses of Africa. By bribery and pressure upon Chiang Kai-shek, Roosevelt seeks to transform China's war of liberation into a war to serve American imperialism.

But before Roosevelt can hope to carry out this gigantic scheme of carnage and world conquest, he must first subjugate the American workers and farmers to his

will. This is the aim of all his lies and deceit and broken promises. This is the aim of his acts of violence against the labor movement.

With a brazenness unprecedented in American history, Roosevelt has intervened on the side of Daniel J. Tobin to try to destroy the Motor Transport and Allied Workers Union, Local 544-CIO, sixteen of whose members have been indicted along with the Socialist Workers Party members. Thus Roosevelt pays his debt to one of his most servile agents.

But something more is involved. Tobin is a leader of the Fight for Freedom, Inc., which is yelling for immediate shooting war. The leaders of Local 544-CIO are resolute opponents of war. In indicting the Local 544-CIO leadership, Roosevelt's war party is striking a blow against the antiwar forces in the trade union movement.

As he plunges toward total war, Roosevelt would like first to destroy all leadership and potential leadership of the antiwar forces. Roosevelt and his war party understand very well that an honest workers' party like ours, with firm principles and cadres steeled and tempered in the class struggle, can tomorrow become the accepted spokesman for the great masses in the struggle to put an end to the war. The Roosevelt war party would destroy us before that tomorrow comes....

We are no pacifists. We shall not turn the other cheek to Roosevelt's attack on our party. On the contrary, we shall see to it that every worker and farmer in this country hears our true views and learns how Roosevelt has engineered this vile frame-up against us. This case will be tried by the government in a courtroom in Minneapolis and we shall defend ourselves there. Far more important, however, we shall defend ourselves before our true judges—the workers and farmers of this country. It is their verdict, above all, that concerns us.

And we are confident of their verdict, once we break through the fraud and deceit with which the Roosevelt war party seeks to conceal the true issue. The Socialist Workers Party is the antiwar party. The workers and farmers have no interest in this war. They want no part of it. The antiwar party and the tens of millions opposed to the war will join hands in the course of our battle to free the twenty-nine defendants from Roosevelt's Gestapo.

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January

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OF THE MONTH

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Tyson: Justice for all—In a previous issue, the *Militant* reported on a rally of striking Tyson meat packers in Jefferson, Wisconsin.



Harry Ring

sin. They're fighting a company drive to slash wages and benefits. Meanwhile, it was announced that

company top dog John Tyson enjoyed a wage and benefits bundle of \$20.09 million last year, nearly double his previous year's theft.

Capitalism at its finest—"Hospitals narrow their scope—more facilities limit care to lucrative specialties such as cardiology and orthopedics. Some see potential conflicts."—News headline.

Brush baby's teeth—An independent study found that in a 40-mile radius of nuclear power plants there is as much as 53 percent more strontium 90 than in neighboring

areas. The cancer-causing toxin is inhaled and absorbed in bones. Researchers checked accumulation in baby teeth.

He seems in fine fettle—The Prez told the world he enjoyed beef on New Year's Day and intends to keep cow meat on his menu. He also confided that in the coming year there would be less fighting and more jobs.

Makes sense, no?—"Best gains are behind us: '03's robust [?] growth might not be sustainable."—New Year's economic

appraisal.—*USA Today*.

Buckaroo city—In Charleston, West Virginia, an extra \$1 a week tax will be imposed on everyone working in the town. It will be used to repair city streets and hire more cops.

Try it for breakfast—"To ease fear about jobs, put imagination to work."—James Flanigan, *Los Angeles Times* business specialist.

Female, male—she's Black—The Vermont labor relations board upheld the firing of a University of

Vermont cop. He had held a Black woman at gunpoint while he and other cops were hunting for a suspected robber who was described as a Black man.

Tardy terror warning—"More than a million people flying on Christmas holidays with budget airlines may be putting their lives in the hands of an exhausted pilot. A study into the stress and fatigue suffered by budget airline pilots showed they frequently lose concentration because of punishing schedules set by their companies."—*The Times*, London.

U.S. steps up attacks on Cuba, Venezuela

Continued from front page

accused Cuba of "actions to destabilize Latin America [that] are increasingly provocative to the inter-American community." He said, "Those that continue in destabilizing democratically elected governments, interfering in the internal affairs of other governments, are playing with fire."

At a press conference two days later, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell defended Noriega's comments. "I've been in senior national security positions on and off over the last 17 years. And through that whole period of time, Cuba has been trying to do everything it could to destabilize parts of the region," he stated. Powell said that all 35 Latin American countries are democracies "except one, and that's Cuba, which continues to oppress its people."

Replying to the U.S. smears, Dagoberto Rodríguez, chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, said January 8, "If there's been a force for destabilization in the continent, and of interference in the continent, I think that almost everyone in Latin America would agree that it is a country situated a little more to the north of Cuba," referring to Washington.

According to the Associated Press, unnamed U.S. officials told reporters that "Cuba and Venezuela are working together to oppose pro-American, democratic governments in the region with money, political indoctrination and training, such as in Ecuador and Uruguay. Venezuelan resources may have helped in the October ouster of Bolivia's elected, pro-American president, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada."

AP also reported that "U.S. officials said Castro has provided training, advice, and logistical support for leftist groups in the region, a sign of re-engagement after relative inactivity in the 1990s."

The news agency cited anonymous U.S. officials claiming that "Chávez has supported Colombia's FARC and ELN rebels and allowed use of western Venezuela as a springboard for attacks inside Colombia," referring to the two main Colombian anti-government guerrilla groups there.

Venezuela rejects charges

Venezuelan officials angrily denied the charges, accusing Washington of using slander to undermine the Chávez government. "What proof do they have of these statements?" asked Venezuelan vice president José Vicente Rangel.

After U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice declared on January 9 that the Venezuelan government should allow an anti-Chávez recall referendum to take place, the Venezuelan president said U.S. officials should not "stick their noses" in his country's affairs.

On the eve of a regional summit in Monterrey, Mexico, Chávez said statements such as Rice's were "preparing the ground" for an attempt to overthrow his government, either by a military coup or an assassin's bullet.

A January 5 AP report quoted U.S. State Department spokesperson Adam Ereli as saying, "Cuba has a long history of attempting to undermine elected governments in the region. For that reason the close ties between the government of Venezuela and the government of Cuba raise concerns among Venezuela's democratic neighbors."

The Chávez government has drawn the hostility of Washington for taking measures that cut into the profits of finance capital, including a land reform law and a bill extending new rights to exploited independent fishermen. Washington is also hostile to Venezuela's diplomatic and economic

relations with Cuba.

In a January editorial, the Cuban daily *Granma* replied to Washington's charges of "destabilization" by Havana. "What is meant by destabilization? Sending thousands of doctors to cooperate with governments in tending to the poorest and neediest people?" it asked. "Is destabilization the sending of 15,000 doctors from Cuba to 64 countries in the world where thousands of people are treated and tens of thousands of lives are saved?"

The editorial pointed to Cuba's internationalist collaboration with Venezuela in "programs of health care, education, culture, sports, social work, and other activities... that benefit the Venezuelan population, and where our country has some experience that it has placed at the service of Third World countries."

Flashpoint: Colombia-Venezuela border

Washington's propaganda offensive has gone hand in hand with an increased U.S. military presence in the region. It has backed the Colombian regime's border skirmishes with Venezuela and its allegations that Caracas is letting its territory be used by FARC and ELN guerrillas. Last year the Pentagon dispatched 150 U.S. troops to Colombia, and U.S. Special Forces are training Colombian army battalions. Under Plan Colombia, the U.S. government is sending billions in military aid to regimes in the area.

In a January 6 press briefing, Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported the presence of 1,500 U.S. troops in Central and South America that he said were "conducting counterdrug operations and other training." Asked about the involvement of "terrorist" groups in drug and weapons trafficking and U.S. government efforts to crack down on them, Myers responded, "It's true in South America. It's true in the Middle East.... It's part of a larger effort we've had ongoing for some time—what we call maritime intercept operations, where we look for things like drugs moving... weapons moving, or any terrorist personnel themselves moving."

In his January 6 news conference, Noriega also criticized the Argentine government of President Néstor Kirchner for not having met with U.S.-backed opponents of the Cuban Revolution during Kirchner's recent trip to the island. Last year the new Peronist government in Argentina restored full diplomatic ties with Cuba. Argentine officials reacted angrily to Noriega's comments.

Another source of tension between Washington and Latin American governments is a recent U.S. move to begin fingerprinting and photographing visitors who arrive in the United States. The Brazilian government retaliated by subjecting Americans arriving in Brazil to the same treatment. Among working people in Brazil the move has boosted the popularity of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, leader of the Workers Party.

U.S. suspension of migration accords

Meanwhile, Washington unilaterally suspended talks on immigration accords between the two countries. In a January 5 statement, the Cuban foreign ministry said the U.S. move was aimed at "torpedoing the progress of the migration accords... and achievement of normal migration relations."

The talks are held every six months to discuss implementation of 1994 and 1995 immigration agreements between Havana and Washington. The accords obligate

Washington to provide as many as 20,000 visas to Cubans seeking to immigrate to the United States. U.S. officials said they would continue to abide by the provisions of the agreement.

U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters January 7 that U.S. representatives decided not to attend the next scheduled round of talks because the Cubans were unwilling to "seriously address" key issues on the U.S.-proposed agenda. Among the questions Washington claims Havana has not been willing to discuss are alleged delays in issuing exit permits to Cubans approved for visas by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana; cooperation in organizing a new lottery system for Cuban applicants for U.S. visas; and access to a deeper Cuban port so that large U.S. Coast Guard cutters can return those attempting to immigrate to the United States outside established channels.

The foreign ministry denounced the Cuban Adjustment Act and Washington's "wet foot, dry foot" policy as the "greatest violation" of the migration accords and as "the real encouragement" to those who migrate

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



January 26, 1979

Deserted by his imperialist supporters and despised by the Iranian people, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi fled into exile January 16. The tyrant ended his dark and bloody reign without even waiting for his rubber-stamp parliament to confirm his choice of Shahpur Bakhtiar as Iran's new prime minister.

As news of the Shah's departure spread, *New York Times* correspondent Nicholas Gage reported, "hundreds of thousands of people poured out of their homes shouting 'Shah raft!—The Shah is gone.' The cacophony of celebration continued all afternoon and well into the evening."

As a result of the revolution unfolding in Iran, the imperialist grip on the country has been greatly weakened. Washington has been forced to begin dismantling its top-secret equipment at bases along the Iranian-Soviet border, and the representatives of U.S. corporations that dominate Iran's economy have been sent streaming out of the country.

Meanwhile, the mobilization of the masses has won the release of hundreds of political prisoners, has put an end to newspaper censorship, and placed the regime's torturers and hangmen on the defensive.

Nor is the shah's fall simply a victory for the Iranian people. Their gain is a victory for the oppressed and exploited throughout the world.

The anti-imperialist sentiment of the Iranian people has forced Bakhtiar to promise that no more oil will be sold to Israel and South Africa.

And the prospect of a continuing revolution in Iran has shaken pro-imperialist regimes in the Middle East and weakened Washington's position in the entire region.

Meanwhile, the Iranian masses are continuing to push forward, demanding all the democratic rights that have been denied them for so long, and insisting on the establishment of a society that will ensure justice for the oppressed and exploited.



January 25, 1954

The Washington State Legislature's Interim Committee recently conducted a public hearing over television on a riot last summer in the Washington State Reformatory at Monroe.

The riot broke out August 20, 1953, at the close of "Yard Out," the recreational period. The youths refused to return to their cells and began to throw rocks and any missile at hand. Windows were broken and fires set to several buildings.

The Monroe riot began over the disciplining of a Negro inmate, but was a protest in general against racial discrimination in the institution. The slogan was "Break Taylor out of Deadlock."

Ernest Taylor, a Negro youth, was beaten over the head by a Captain Smith as the latter was forcing the protesting boy into "Deadlock"—a solitary-confinement type of punishment.

All that day [Taylor's fellow prisoners] gathered in little groups, very agitated over the treatment given Taylor. Finally, the accumulated resentment burst out.

When the riot flared, the reformatory officials called the State Highway Patrol, Snohomish County deputies, the Snohomish County sheriff and a number of Everett police as well as 15 or 20 King County police officers.

As the demonstrating youthful inmates gathered in the center of the baseball diamond, they were caught in a cross fire from the north and south towers lasting about three minutes.

It was there that 21-year-old Walter T. Lyshall was killed and three others injured.

The riot involved about 200 of the younger inmates of Monroe, who demonstrated against one of the greatest injustices of the American capitalist system in or out of prisons—namely, Jim Crow. These young men felt the abomination of racial discrimination so keenly they could not restrain themselves from acting.

Build youth festival in Venezuela!

Build the 2005 world youth festival planned for Venezuela! Get the word out to young workers resisting the bosses’ offensive, student organizations, farmers fighting for land, and any other youth group or individual who shows interest in this gathering. Invite representatives of youth organizations to become part of national preparatory committees to build the international youth meeting (see article on page 3). Get the truth out about Cuba and Venezuela to thousands of youth and working people in the process.

Carrying out this kind of work is one of the most effective ways to oppose the efforts by Washington to overthrow the Venezuelan government. It is also an integral part of defending the Cuban Revolution.

U.S. imperialism is stepping up its offensive against the people of Cuba and their socialist revolution, as the latest statements by Roger Noriega and Colin Powell show. These moves build on the decades-long hostility and punitive measures by the U.S. rulers against Cuba. Washington’s aggression began in 1959, after the Cuban people threw off the shackles of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and opened the road to the socialist revolution in the Americas.

At the same time, the imperialists in the United States, the European Union, and elsewhere are preparing to intervene anywhere in the Americas—beginning in Venezuela—where working people resist attempts by the local propertied classes and their imperialist masters abroad to turn back the clock.

What’s the crime that workers and peasants in Venezuela have committed in the eyes of the wealthy? They have fiercely resisted, and twice defeated, attempts by Washington and its backers among local capitalists and landlords to overthrow the bourgeois nationalist government of Hugo Chávez, which was elected with massive support of working people. The toilers in Venezuela have used increasing political space since Chávez’s election, and have taken advantage of measures the government has passed that, if implemented, would strengthen their ability to fight for land, jobs, housing, and other social gains. Through these struggles millions of working people have become more self-confident and developed higher expectations. The road these workers and other exploited producers are following can more and more clearly point to the historic line of march of the working class: carrying out a popular revolution, conquering political power, overthrowing capitalism, and joining the worldwide fight for socialism—in other words, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The U.S. government refuses to accept normal ties between Venezuela and Cuba, because the Cuban people have already traveled down this road. Thousands of Cuban internationalists—doctors offering free and quality medical care, literacy instructors aiding Venezuelan youth to eliminate illiteracy in their country, and oth-

ers—are helping working people in Venezuela to begin taking their destiny into their own hands by making a difference in their daily lives through their own actions. This is at the heart of the smears by Washington that Cuba and Venezuela are “destabilizing” the continent by aiding anti-government groups throughout Latin America.

The source of instability on the continent, however, is capitalism and the imperialist system of domination. Washington has miserably failed in its promise that bourgeois democracy and “free trade” would bring prosperity and stability to the majority in Latin America and the Caribbean. The collapse of the Mexican peso in the mid-1990s, the economic freefall in Argentina two years ago, and the growing impoverishment of millions from Patagonia to the Rio Bravo are only a few examples of the nightmare the profit system offers to all those who work for a living. That is what’s behind the recent rebellion in Bolivia and the nationalist reactions by the governments of Brazil and Argentina to new steps by Uncle Sam that attack their sovereignty.

This recent, stepped-up U.S. offensive against Venezuela is of a different scope and character than the pressures Washington has so far brought to bear against the Chávez government. The preparations for expanded intervention against the South American nation, combined with the aggression against Cuba, will be more and more couched as part of Washington’s “global war on terrorism.” That’s the meaning of the insinuations by Gen. Richard Myers, the head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, of involvement in drug and weapons trafficking by unnamed governments in Latin America and charges that Caracas is aiding guerrilla groups in Colombia.

At the center of this U.S.-led strategic offensive is the transformation of the U.S. military and its repositioning around the world. An equally essential part of this new imperialist strategy—the foremost advocate of which has become the U.S. Department of Defense—is the attempt to impose, by whatever means, what the superwealthy U.S. rulers describe as democracy.

As U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleeza Rice outlined, Washington will use the degree of adherence by the Venezuelan government to the demand by the pro-imperialist opposition for a recall referendum as its main club against the Chávez regime in the coming months. The imperialist rulers will seek to use illusions in bourgeois democracy to try to win support for their efforts to oust the Venezuelan government.

Support to the struggle by working people in Venezuela to resist any U.S.-backed attempts to topple the Chávez government, and opposition to Washington’s latest offensive against Cuba, must be unconditional. Building the 16th World Festival of Youth and Students set for Venezuela in August 2005 will be an important contribution toward accomplishing this goal.

N. Y. protest against cop brutality

Continued from front page

is painted on the side of the Rosario home. On the front of the building are the names of more than 50 young people killed by the city police. The vigil was organized by Parents Against Police Brutality.

Many of the 25 people who took part in the action are involved in fights of their own against police brutality. They included members of the Acosta family, who were beaten and arrested by cops while attending a family barbeque in front of their house in the Sunset Park area of Brooklyn last July 4; Juanita Young, whose son Malcolm Ferguson, 23, was shot in the back of the head and killed by police officer Louis Rivera of the police Street Crime Unit in March 2000; and Iris Vega, Hilton Vega’s mother.

Margarita Rosario, Anthony’s mother and a founder of Parents Against Police Brutality, said, “We are families that are determined to stick together to continue the fight because the execution of young people hasn’t stopped. If we don’t continue this, the young people who have died have no voice. We want to prevent this from happening again and stop the cops from functioning as criminals in blue.”



Militant/Dan Fein

Protesters gathered in the Bronx January 7 to mark anniversary of killings by cops of Anthony Rosario and Hilton Vega.

The family currently has a civil lawsuit filed against the police department and the city. “I told my lawyers I don’t want a settlement. I want a trial,” said Margarita Rosario. “The point is to expose the cops. A civil ruling won’t put the cops in jail, but it will disgrace them.”

The two detectives who shot Vega and Rosario were never convicted, despite evidence by the Civilian Complaint Review Board indicating that they were shot while lying face down on the floor. Rosario was shot 14 times in the back and on the side of his body, and Vega was shot eight times in the back and the head.

The same week as the Bronx protest, the family of Amadou Diallo, an immigrant from Guinea who was fatally shot outside his Bronx apartment by four cops of the elite Street Crime Unit, agreed to a \$3 million settlement of its civil lawsuit against New York. The suit was scheduled to be heard on March 1.

Just after midnight on Feb. 4, 1999, four cops shot Diallo 41 times as he stood in the doorway of his apartment in the Soundview section of the Bronx.

In 2000 the four cops were acquitted in a state trial. The trial had been moved to Albany, New York, after a court ruling that the political atmosphere in the city—that is, the widespread protests against this killing—prevented the four cops from getting a fair trial. It was, in fact, months of sustained protests in New York, drawing thousands of working people, that led to the indictment of the cops and the abolition of the Street Crime Unit.

After the acquittal, thousands marched in New York in a series of protests against police brutality and the freeing of the killer cops.

Under the terms of the January 5 settlement, neither the city nor the NYPD admit any wrongdoing in the case.

Diallo’s mother, Kadiatou Diallo, said she felt satisfied that after a years-long fight the city had acknowledged the shooting was a mistake. “An apology was given today on the record,” she said.

The city will pay the \$3 million in a lump sum, and the state Surrogate’s Court will decide how that is divided between the family and its lawyers.

WFDY meeting

Continued from Page 3

the Iraqi resistance to occupation and stand for the unity of Iraq against American plans to divide the country.” This echoed the Syrian government’s position, which is adamantly opposed to any federal structure, let alone self-determination, for the Kurdish people in the region. The oppression of Kurds in Syria by the ruling class there lurks behind this stance.

Aristos Damianou of the National Democratic Youth Organization (EDON) of Cyprus proposed amending the resolution to call for an immediate transfer of the administration of Iraq to the United Nations.

Newton of the Young Socialists in the United States presented a different perspective. She argued that WFDY should not only oppose the occupation of Iraq by the Anglo-American imperialists, or the UN for that matter, but call for the unconditional withdrawal of all imperialist troops and other occupying forces from Iraq, as well as Afghanistan, the Balkans, Korea, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The rivalry between the major imperialist powers was also a topic of discussion. “With all the contradictions and interimperialist conflicts, the European Union (EU) has had a clear position in line with its imperialist interests and following U.S. policies,” stated the political resolution.

Most delegates said they agreed with this statement. A number of organizations represented at the meeting, however, have in practice sided with the bourgeoisie in their countries against other imperialist powers. EDON, for example, and AKEL, the Communist Party of Cyprus, with which it is politically affiliated, recently changed their position and now back entry of Cyprus into the EU. The theses adopted by EDON at its January 2-4 congress, which were distributed to delegates at the WFDY meetings, said that “there are separate positive elements in the EU, which should be made use of for the benefit of working people.” AKEL won the plurality of votes, 35 percent, in recent parliamentary elections in Cyprus and is now part of a coalition government with capitalist parties.

Anna Van Dorn of the Young Socialists of New Zealand described how Wellington came to be part of the U.S.-led “coalition of the willing” that is occupying Iraq. “Washington has used this coalition, based in ‘new Europe,’ to deal further blows to its rivals in ‘old Europe,’ especially those in France and Germany, who are not following Washington’s lead quickly enough,” she said. “There is no united European Union. The only reason French and German imperialism didn’t back the U.S.-led assault on Iraq was because its timing and the degree of U.S. domination threatened their investments there and long-term strategic interests in the region. The imperialist assaults on Iraq and Afghanistan have everything to do with sharpening interimperialist competition and we must oppose the entire imperialist system and its wars.”

The WFDY General Council also approved two solidarity statements. One backed the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in its effort to defend itself from attacks by Washington, Tokyo, and other imperialist powers, and supported Pyongyang’s right to develop nuclear weapons for self-defense. The second statement extended solidarity to coal miners in Utah fighting to organize a union, and to striking grocery workers in California.

The WFDY plan of action for 2004 includes a solidarity trip to Palestine March 5-12 and protest demonstrations and an “anti-NATO summit” planned in Istanbul, Turkey, in June to coincide with the next NATO summit there. At this gathering Washington plans to accelerate the transformation of the armed forces making up the U.S.-led NATO into a military alliance counter to the “France-dominated” European Union.

U.S. attacks

Continued from Page 9

inside Cuba and alleged obstacles that prevent them from monitoring the situation of those returned to Cuba and of those arrested on the island last year for collaborating with Washington’s efforts to overthrow the Cuban government.

Last March Havana imposed travel restrictions on U.S. diplomats on the island in response to actions by Washington that restricted the movement of Cuban diplomats to the geographic limits of Washington, D.C., and New York, where Cuba has diplomatic missions.

In April Cuban courts convicted 75 individuals charged with receiving funds and collaborating with U.S. diplomatic personnel in Washington’s longstanding efforts to undermine the Cuban Revolution.

The Cuban foreign ministry added that Washington’s complaints were an attempt to divert attention from its own violations of the migration accords, including “the dramatic reduction of visas for Cuban citizens wishing to visit relatives in the United States; the failure to return to Cuba some of the illegal immigrants interdicted at sea [by the U.S. Coast Guard]; the encouragement to illegal migration and to the commission of violent acts to migrate, from radio stations based in the United States; as well as the lack of decisive action against alien smugglers.”

In another attack, the U.S. government expelled Roberto Socorro, a diplomat at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, from the United States. According to the January 4 *Washington Post*, an unnamed U.S. official claimed Socorro had been expelled for “drug trafficking” and “association with criminal elements.” The Cuban government demanded the U.S. State Department retract this false allegation.

\$240,000 Pathfinder sales goal surpassed

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Promoters of Pathfinder's titles on revolutionary politics scored a success in the international campaign to increase sales of these books and pamphlets, surpassing their goal of selling \$240,000 worth of literature in the second half of 2003.

The books were purchased by working people and youth on street corners in workers districts, on the job, in Pathfinder bookstores, at political actions, to other bookstores and libraries, and through orders for university class readings.

Substantially higher sales in December pushed this campaign to increase sales by 10 percent compared to the first half of 2003. The six-month campaign was led jointly by Socialist Workers Party branches in the United States and Communist Leagues in other countries, whose members help organize Pathfinder bookstores in their areas and distribute Pathfinder books and pamphlets in their workplaces along with supporters of the communist movement worldwide.

Barbara Bowman in Miami reported that 41 titles were sold in December at the Pathfinder bookstore there—nearly half of those at the Militant Labor Forums, which are held weekly at the bookstore. In addition to discussion on topics of interest to working people, the forum in Miami had a special display of recommended books featured each week and an announcement of the weekly progress on the sales campaign.

Two young men who regularly attend the Miami forums took a consignment of books with them on a visit to Mississippi over the holidays, Bowman reported. They sold \$100 in Pathfinder titles. One of them said the trip was very effective because many people in Mississippi don't have access to books like this. "They want to spread the word, give people they know time to save up some money, and do another trip in a month or two," Bowman said.

Houston Latino Book Fair

"Taking advantage of special openings at conferences and book fairs was key to our success in the last three months," reported

Jacque Henderson from Houston. These sales increased the number of people who come into the local Pathfinder store looking for further titles, she noted. Pathfinder supporters in Houston surpassed their sales goal in October, November, and December.

In October, 59 books were sold at Houston's annual Latino Book Fair. On one of his days off, one young worker helped set up a table displaying Pathfinder titles at the University of Houston. He has now been regularly attending the Friday night Militant Labor Forum in Houston and participating in classes on Pathfinder titles.

Henderson also reported that a bus driver with a route that takes him between Mexico, Houston, and the eastern United States has been stopping by the bookstore for a couple of years now to pick up titles when he is in town. In December he brought another driver with him to the store. Both walked out with several titles and said they would be back next time.

In New Zealand a special effort in December registered the highest sales of the six-month campaign in that country. In the last three months of the year, supporters of Pathfinder, led by members of the Communist League in Auckland and Christchurch, sold an average of nearly 150 percent of their goal.

The Pathfinder bookstore in Detroit held an open house over the holidays, reported Osborne Hart. It made its sales goal each of the last six months. Publicity for the event was distributed early and featured an appeal to Pathfinder Readers Club members to prepay for advance copies of new titles being released this month. These are *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58* by Armando Hart, a leader of the Cuban Revolution; *Leur Trotsky et le nôtre*, the French-language edition of *Their Trotsky and Ours* by Jack Barnes; and *Rebelión Teamster*, the Spanish-language edition of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs.

The open house netted seven advance payments for *Aldabonazo*.

The \$240,000 goal was surpassed by nearly \$3,000. "There was a \$7,000 leap



Militant/Linda Joyce

Pathfinder booth at fair in Madrid in September. Promoters of Pathfinder books increased the revolutionary publisher's sales by 10 percent in last half of 2003.

in sales in December in comparison to the previous five months," said Maceo Dixon from Atlanta.

"Classroom adoptions—titles that have been assigned as reading by professors teaching university courses—were a big part of the December sales," said Dixon. These included 162 copies of *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, the writings and speeches of the German communist leader Rosa Luxemburg. They were ordered by a New Jersey bookstore located near Rutgers University campus in New Brunswick. A campus bookstore in East Lansing, Michigan, ordered 124 copies of *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*.

Over the six-month campaign, orders for the *Communist Manifesto*, the founding programmatic document of the modern communist movement, written by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels, led all titles with 727 copies sold. In December several classroom orders of the *Manifesto* came in, said Dixon, who volunteers to pack and ship orders from the Pathfinder distribution center in Atlanta. Volunteers also filled an order from a Boston college for 70 copies of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Frederick Engels.

"These orders are the result of cumulative work," said Gale Shangold from New York. "They often are the result of visits and discussions with buyers, not just in the last

six month but even a year or two ago," she said. Dixon and Shangold are members of the steering committee that organizes the work of supporters of the communist movement to print and distribute titles by Pathfinder Press.

She gave an example of an independent bookstore in Harlem, New York. Over a year ago sales volunteers began to work with the buyer at this store to convince them to order on line, Shangold said. In December they sent in an order for more than \$900 in Pathfinder titles.

Volunteer sales representatives in each city have paid special attention to promoting Pathfinder's Spanish-language titles. "With the growing immigration from Latin America there is increasing interest in the titles we carry in Spanish, many of which cannot be gotten anywhere else," Shangold said. She reported that during a visit to a new Spanish-language bookstore that is just opening in the Bronx the buyer knew about Pathfinder's titles because a customer had asked for *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, the Spanish translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes.

A national distributor of Spanish-language books with offices in New York placed orders totaling several thousand dollars over the course of the campaign, she added.

— FROM OUR READERS BEHIND BARS —

Below the *Militant* is running excerpts from letters sent by four prisoners at the Hudson County Corrections Center in Kearny, New Jersey—a jail used by the immigration police.

One of the four prisoners, Farouk Abdel-Muhti, is an outspoken advocate for the Palestinian struggle for self-determination who was arrested in April 2002 and has been held without charges ever since.

Facing deportation from the United States, where he has lived since the 1970s, Abdel-Muhti has been shuttled among several prisons in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as the authorities seek without success to isolate him and break his spirit. The Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti is appealing for public support to press the government to drop its deportation proceedings and free him. Letters to demand his release should be sent to David Venturella, Office of Detention and Removal, Department of Homeland Security: fax (202) 353-9435; telephone (202) 514-8663; e-mail: david.venturella@dhs.gov, with copies to the defense committee at freefarouk@yahoo.com. The defense committee can be contacted at P.O. Box 20587, Tompkins Sq. Station, New York, NY 10009; tel: (212) 674-9499; e-mail: freefarouk@yahoo.com.



With the working class

I congratulate you for the 75 years of your newsweekly educating the people in the United States for justice and equality. At the same

time I wish all of you a happy New Year and success in the coming year.

I am from Cambodia and have been incarcerated by the INS for one year and 10 months. With me sitting in jail my family suffers from lack of financial support. My country doesn't accept me and the INS doesn't want to release me. The people in my country are always with the working class, like in Vietnam, and we have learned that the world is for all of us and not just for some people. I read the *Militant* and support your views.

Today the policies of the administration of George Bush are terrorizing me and my family and children's rights. I need you and all of the people who read the *Militant* to be steadfast with me and all the INS victims. I need your support for my freedom and my rights.

Seoun Sory

'Militant' covers world

Congratulations on your 75th anniversary of service. I am a new reader of your publication. I found it to be very informative and broad in the issues and places it covers.

Unlike other papers that only cover issues of U.S. interest, the *Militant* covers the world, giving voice to the voiceless and hope to the despaired. Continue your endeavor to enlighten and encourage the working class in all nations to stand up and be counted.

Until every working man earns a living wage—the struggle will and must continue.

Edward Morgan

Facing deportation

I am Colombian, of Palestinian origin. My ancestors worked the land, cultivating olives and figs, in a community to the south of Jerusalem.

Today I am detained in the United States and am awaiting deportation.

I am writing to greet the weekly *Militant* for the unconditional solidarity it expresses for all immigrants in the United States and especially for we who have been detained, that you continue protesting and rejecting the assaults against us victims of the U.S. authorities. I join Farouk Abdel-Muhti in his constant defense of the freedom of expression, for his selfless struggle in the fight against the violation of human and civil rights, and in support of dignity and respect for all human beings without distinction of race or ethnic origin.

I identify with a class position and join in the struggle of workers and immigrants, because I am also a worker like my father and an immigrant in the process of being deported.

I invite all immigrants that are in this country, and all that read this article, to join in this cause and strongly back us as we defend human rights around the world.

Abdul Hamid Wady

Palestinian struggle

Brothers and sisters, the New Year promises many social triumphs, and above all in the defense of human rights that are outrageously violated by the rulers

of the United States and Israel, of which I am one more victim.

I want to present concrete information about the critical situation that confronts the suffering and martyred Palestinian people, who have been mistreated, murdered, and massacred by the diabolical, racist, and rightist Israeli administration, aided by the bloodthirsty and imperialist government of the United States.

In the last three years, for defending their human and civil rights, for defending their land and dignity, the Palestinian people continue to be victims of the racist machinations of the occupation on the part of the right-wing Israeli administration.

The number of martyrs has reached 3,295, from different sectors of our people, of whom 553 are elementary school students.

In an odious and criminal manner, they have ruthlessly used bulldozers to plow under 60,467 dunums [15,000 acres] of cultivated land, demolishing thousands of homes, closing transportation centers, leaving people cut off.

The Israelis have constructed a wall dividing the Palestinian people in a vulgar and racist way. They have held millions of dollars that belong to Palestinians in Israeli banks, while they continue to raze our land, leaving thousands of Palestinians homeless, eliminating their source of employment, destroying

their crops and food, their rights, and cutting off their source of potable water. They seek to push people into the West Bank and divide it into three parts, while isolating the city of Jerusalem from the rest of the Palestinian nation.

The peaceful and native people of Palestine seek justice and the right to sovereignty, self-determination, and independence in their territory, occupied since June 4, 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right to return of the refugees of 1948 to their homes and property in the historic land of Palestine.

Farouk Abdel-Muhti

Donate to the Prisoners Fund

The 'Militant' receives many requests from readers behind bars. The Prisoners Fund makes it possible to send them subscriptions at a reduced rate. A prisoner can buy a six-month subscription for \$6 and a one-year subscription for \$12.

The Spanish-language monthly magazine 'Perspectiva Mundial' offers prisoners a six-month subscription for \$3 and a one-year subscription for \$6.

To help cover the cost of these special offers, please send a check or money order, earmarked "Prisoners Fund," to the Militant, 152 W. 36 St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

Israeli troops step up West Bank raids

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In recent weeks Israeli soldiers have conducted a series of nightly sweeps through West Bank cities and villages, killing at least 17 Palestinians and detaining and interrogating dozens more in the space of three weeks. Against the backdrop of continuing military assaults, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon has insisted that Palestinians submit to a so-called peace agreement, including a Palestinian statelet in the West Bank that would be hemmed in by Israeli forces and bounded by a massive wall.

While the regime in Tel Aviv wields a big military advantage, it continues to confront stubborn opposition from Palestinians. It also faces growing war weariness among working people in Israel, reinforced by the accumulating effects of three years of economic recession.

"Since mid-December, the Israeli occupation forces have stepped up their aggression through the northern West Bank, focusing heavily on the city of Nablus and its adjacent Balata refugee camp," stated the Palestine Media Center (PMC), which is supervised by the Palestinian National Authority (PA). Nablus is home to 60,000 people. The January 8 report added that Israeli soldiers "have killed 14 Palestinians in the city over the past three weeks."

Israeli troops reentered Nablus January 7, the day after a curfew imposed in late December was lifted, and fatally shot two Palestinians who they claimed had fired on them. "I don't find any justification for killing them," Nablus governor Mahmoud el-Aloul told Reuters. "It is just more military pressure in order to make the Palestinians lower their political demands."

The same night troops also killed a 22-year-old man in Tulkarm, to the northwest. According to the Palestine Media Center they held 24 Palestinians overnight throughout the West Bank.

Sharon declares ultimatum

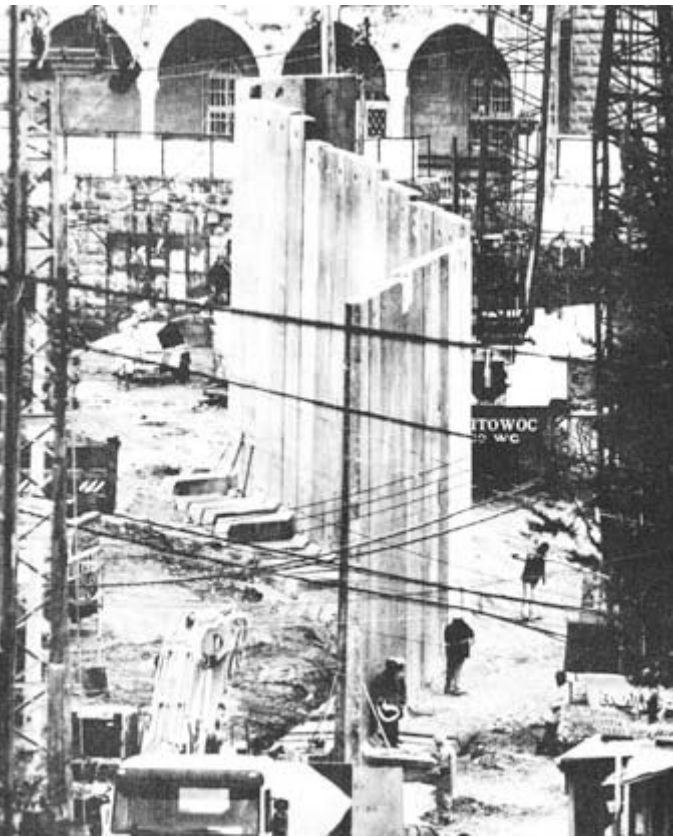
Speaking January 5 at a convention of his Likud Party, Sharon reiterated threats that if the Palestinian leadership did not effectively clamp down on suicide bombings and other attacks organized by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the Israeli government

would begin to "disengage" from parts of the occupied territories. "The test will be in deeds, not words," he said. "If it turns out that there is no partner on the Palestinian side, we will cut ourselves off from them both politically and physically."

Sharon asserted that "if we receive security, we will give—give a lot. If the terrorist infrastructures will be dismantled from the root, if the incitement stops, then the government of Israel under our leadership, under Likud leadership, will be prepared to do its part to make possible the establishment of an independent Palestinian state."

Sharon's speech did not receive unanimous acclamation from the Likud delegates. Despite his ultimatums toward the Palestinians and continuing refusal to negotiate with their elected leaders, a number of convention delegates loudly booed him for his statement that Tel Aviv might have to "relinquish some Jewish settlements" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The steps proposed by Sharon were among those stipulated in the "road map for peace" promoted by the White House since the spring of last year and provisionally accepted by Tel Aviv. The London-based *Economist* noted that back when the "road map" was proposed, Sharon's government had promised to enact this part of the agreement "immediately." Promises notwithstanding, the big-business weekly reported, "nothing happened bar some desultory attempts by the army to



Work crews construct 25-foot-high wall between East Jerusalem and Abu Dis in the West Bank, replacing six-foot barrier that people would climb over to go to school and work. "Israel's continued policy of building the wall means that talk about a Palestinian state makes no sense," said Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qurei.

evacuate a few tiny outposts, most of them reoccupied since."

Sharon and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz have reportedly listed six outposts for short-term removal. "But nothing has happened on the ground," reported the *Economist*.

Wall around the West Bank

Amid the rhetoric about "peace negotiations" and debate about whether or not to "disengage," Tel Aviv has pressed ahead with the construction of a 400-mile concrete and steel wall that surrounds and penetrates the West Bank. On December 31 Israeli soldiers fired tear gas and rubber bullets at hundreds of demonstrators in Budrus who surrounded an olive grove to block the paths of demolition and construction crews. Seventeen people were detained that day and the next.

As planned, the barrier will surround Budrus, cutting its residents off from their groves and livelihoods. In total some 70,000 Palestinians in at least three towns will be roped into Israel as the wall loops around strategic and productive areas, including Israeli settlements, incorporating about 80 percent of Israeli West Bank settlers into Israel. "The fence also would contain several unconnected sections around settlements, including Ariel, a community of 18,000 Israelis some 15 miles inside the West Bank," the Associated Press reported.

Palestinian prime minister Ahmed Qurei pointed out January 8 that "Israel's continued policy of building the wall means that talk about a Palestinian state makes no sense."

"If this Israeli policy continues," he stated, "we are going to come back to the option of a single, bi-national state"—a position that would involve the rejection of a separate impoverished Palestinian statelet in the occupied territories.

Israeli officials were "furious" at the rhetorical suggestion, reported Agence-France Presse. One anonymous high-ranking official told AFP, "This is nothing less than a threat to put an end to the state of Israel as a Jewish state, and we categorically reject it. Instead of threatening us, Mr. Qurei would be best advised to come back to the negotiations table and start implementing the road map."

U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell rejected Qurei's statement as well, pinning the blame for the conflict on so-called Palestinian "terrorism." Washington is "committed to a two-state solution," he said at a January

8 news conference—"a state for the Palestinian people called Palestine; and a Jewish state, the state of Israel, which exists."

Powell added, "what we need right now is for the prime minister of the Palestinian Authority to get control of security forces and to use those forces and use the other tools available to him to put down terror and to put down violence." Qurei and others, he said, "have got to wrest authority away" from longtime Palestinian leader and PA president Yasir Arafat.

Economic crisis, political dissent

With the sealed-off West Bank and Gaza Strip no longer readily serving as mass sources of cheap Palestinian labor, the Israeli capitalists have stepped up attempts to lure workers from overseas. By the end of 2003, reported the December 24 British *Guardian*, about 260,000 immigrants were working in Israel, "having replaced Palestinian labourers during three years of fighting." They have come from countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere.

The budget just passed by the Israeli parliament includes a range of cuts to spending on government services, including Social Security, reported the *Financial Times*. Among other measures, the government has raised the retirement age by two years. The UK paper noted that such measures "are also Washington's conditions for \$9 billion in loan guarantees granted this year, which have helped Israel to raise finance through international bond issues at lower interest rates."

Meanwhile, the number of Israeli troops who refuse to take part in the repression in the West Bank and Gaza, while still small, has continued to grow. Late in 2003 three officers and 10 soldiers from the elite Sayeret Matkal commando unit wrote to Sharon to say, "We have long ago crossed the line between fighters fighting a just cause and oppressing another people."

They had decided to go public with their criticisms, said the Israeli troops, "out of deep fear for the future of the state of Israel as a democratic, Zionist and Jewish country and out of concern for its moral and ethical image.... We will no longer butcher our humanity by taking part in an occupying army's missions."

Cincinnati city workers keep abortion coverage

BY VAL LIBBY

CINCINNATI—Some 2,500 city workers here won back their medical coverage for abortion procedures December 5 when an arbitrator ruled that a city council ban on this section of the health plan violated the union contract. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Ohio Council 8 had filed a grievance against the exclusion after it came into effect in 2001 in a measure approved in a 6-2 council vote.

City attorneys had argued that because the contract did not specify which medical procedures are covered in the plan, the government could make exclusions at any time. AFSCME represents about 900 clerical and technical employees, as well as sanitation and water treatment workers, registered nurses, and others. About 1,000 AFSCME members are women.

In addition to restoring abortion as a covered procedure under the medical plan, arbitrator James Mancini ordered the city to reimburse any union member who had had an abortion since the ban was put in place. Bob Turner, AFSCME executive director, said in a January 8 phone interview said he was unaware of any AFSCME member who had yet applied for reimbursement, but that the union was "putting out a mass mailing to make sure members are aware of their rights."

City Solicitor Rita McNeil told the *Cincinnati Enquirer* that she does not intend to appeal the arbitrator's decision unless told to do so by the city council.

W. Coast grocery strikers maintain pickets, announce King Day rally

BY JAMES VINCENT

LONG BEACH, California—"We're fighting for all working people," said Philip Alvarez, a produce worker with 10 years at Ralphs. "We are fighting to maintain our health benefits, a pension, seniority, a decent livable wage—but the companies want to take all that away."

Some 70,000 grocery workers, organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), are on strike at more than 850 stores in Southern California that belong to a few grocery chains.

Now entering their fourth month on strike, UFCW grocery workers here are hanging tough. "We've had our strike pay cut and most have had their health benefits eliminated," said Becky Jones, a cashier with 26 years at Ralphs.

Jones and 20 other strikers were walking the picket line in front of Albertsons January 9. Se and others noted that most shoppers continue to honor their picket lines.

The grocery strike began October 11 after Vons, a division of Safeway, refused to budge in the talks. The following day Ralphs and Albertsons, which bargain jointly with the union, locked out their workers. By a 97 percent margin the union's membership rejected the companies' offer, which called for \$1 billion worth of health-care cuts, a wage freeze for the first two years of a three-year contract, and a substantially lower pay and benefit scale for new hires.

On December 19 negotiations ended after the grocery bosses rejected a proposal from the union that included cuts that would

reduce health-care costs for the chain by \$350 million.

In what it called a "good faith effort" to resolve the strike, the union also pulled its pickets at warehouses owned by the three grocery chains. Some 8,000 Teamsters had been honoring the UFCW picket lines since November 24.

On January 2 the union filed suit against Ralphs for hiring 50 to 100 union workers under false names and Social Security numbers. UFCW officials told the *Los Angeles Times* that if Ralphs hires back workers the lockout could be ruled a selective layoff, making other workers eligible for unemployment benefits. The union has also filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board.

While the strikers face increased financial hardship, the supermarket bosses are taking big hits to their bottom line. Safeway took an estimated \$496 million loss in sales in the fourth quarter. Merrill Lynch reportedly said it "expects the chains to 'shrug off' the continued short-term earnings damage from the strike and for their stocks to 'bounce' on an agreement," according to the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

UFCW Local 770, the largest of the striking locals, announced several union activities for January. They include a rally on January 17 at the Inglewood Forum, a Martin Luther King birthday rally on January 19, an event on January 20 sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers, and a benefit showing of the film *Salt of the Earth* for January 22.