

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE INSIDE

Our politics start with the world

by Jack Barnes

—PAGES 6–8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 5

FEB. 7, 2005

Pentagon uses secret unit for battlefield spying in Iraq

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In a January 24 briefing at the Pentagon, senior officials of the U.S. Department of Defense acknowledged the existence of a secret battlefield spying unit—the Strategic Support Branch—that has been operating in Iraq and Afghanistan for some time. The military's strategic support teams work directly with Special Operations Forces in clandestine missions, supplanting a role played previously to a large degree by the CIA. Their role is to gather "human intelligence," that is, information from spies and infiltration of enemy forces. Pentagon officials said an agent of the Strategic Support Teams in Iraq played a central role in the capture of Saddam Hussein last year.

Defense department officials said these units have been in operation in their current form since October and emphasized the program was developed in cooperation with the CIA.

According to the *Washington Post*, these battlefield spying units have been operating for two years in Iraq and Afghanistan, as an increasingly essential component of Washington's "war on terror." Information about the existence of the secret units was "leaked" by Pentagon officials and first disclosed in the January 23 *Post*. The Pentagon confirmed much of what the *Post* and other dailies reported a day later.

At the same time, the *New York Times*
Continued on Page 9

West Coast unions back Utah miners fighting for reinstatement

BY KATHERINE BENNETT

PRICE, Utah—"The Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Council Executive Board has authorized a contribution to your organizing effort with the miners from C.W. Mining. Having been involved in many organizing efforts we understand the struggle and hardships the workers and their families are facing. We hope that the enclosed check for \$1,000 will help to see them through the difficult times that they are experiencing. Keep up the campaign."

This is what a recent letter said, extending solidarity to the coal miners at the Kingston-owned mine in Huntington, Utah, who are fighting to win representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). It was one of a number of similar letters received recently at the UMWA hall here. During the third week of January, workers said they received \$1,342 for the Co-Op Miners Fund, bringing total contributions to more than \$10,000 since the turn of the year. The fund was set up to help the miners survive after C.W. Mining fired most of them in December. The company claims it dismissed more than 30 foreign-born workers for lacking proper work documents. The miners say this is the same documentation the bosses had for years, since they started employment at the Co-Op mine, but they were targeted recently and fired for their efforts to win UMWA representation.

Other contributions sent to the Co-Op Miners Fund include a \$60 money order from UMWA Local 1248 in Pennsylvania.

A UMWA supporter in Bountiful, Utah, sent a donation along with a note that said, "This is for the Co-Op Miners. Please tell

Continued on Page 4

Venezuela: thousands march to protest U.S. intervention

Gov't says Washington behind provocation from Colombia

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Tens of thousands of people marched through the streets of Caracas, Venezuela's capital, on January 23 to condemn the U.S.-backed government of neighboring Colombia for organizing the kidnapping of a Colombian guerrilla leader on Venezuelan soil. They accused Washington of complicity in the provocative action.

"Uribe's regime violated our sovereignty," Alejandra Aveledo told the *Militant* in a January 26 telephone interview. "But the provocation was made in the USA. The U.S. government supported Uribe's actions and has been sending more and more military advisors and aid to Bogotá." Aveledo, an anthropology student at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas who took part in the march, was referring to Colombia's president, Alvaro Uribe.

U.S. officials openly backed the Colombian government in the dispute and pressed other South American governments to demand that Venezuela cut its alleged ties to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), an antigovernment guerrilla group.

The latest moves by the U.S. government and its Colombian ally to crank up pressure against Caracas take place as peasants in Venezuela step up their fight for land. Small farmers have been encouraged by a January 10 government decree aimed at accelerating land distribution in that country. Many domestic capitalists and their backers in Washington have reacted with hostility at the deepening struggle in the countryside, worried that the growing confidence of working people in Venezuela will threaten their profit prerogatives there and throughout the region.

Colombian defense minister Jorge Uribe

announced January 12 that security agents of his government had paid some Venezuelan policemen to act as "bounty hunters" and seize Rodrigo Granda, a leader of the FARC, in Caracas. Granda, identified by the FARC as a member of its International Commission, was snatched off a downtown Caracas street December 13.

Officials in Caracas condemned the kidnapping as a flagrant violation of their nation's sovereignty. They said Colombian security forces had bribed Venezuelan soldiers to grab Granda and hand him over to them. Five Venezuelan National Guardsmen were arrested for their role in the abduction.

Venezuela recalled its ambassador from Colombia, suspended diplomatic and commercial relations with Bogotá, and demanded an apology.

On January 23, tens of thousands of protesters marched 10 miles from Petare, a large working-class neighborhood in eastern Caracas, to the Miraflores presidential



AP/Fernando Llano

Thousands march in Caracas, Venezuela, January 23 to protest provocation staged by Colombian regime that the Venezuelan government says was orchestrated in Washington.

palace. They chanted, "Colombia, stay out of Venezuela" and "Bush: Venezuela is not Iraq." Demonstrators told the press they were directing their fire not against their "Colombian brothers" but against the ac-

Continued on Page 5

Palestinian police deployed at border of Gaza and Israel

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Thousands of police officers from the Palestinian Authority (PA) were deployed in towns across the northern border of the Gaza Strip January 21 by the government of newly elected PA president Mahmoud Abbas. The forces, which number about 3,000, are patrolling the area to prevent Hamas and other armed Palestinian groups from launching homemade rockets into neighboring Israeli towns.

"In the coming days the deployment will be extended to central and southern Gaza—including the Philadelphia route, on the Gazan-Egyptian border, which has been a major flash point," the Israeli daily *Haaretz* reported January 23.

In the days following the deployment, Palestinian groups have observed a de-facto truce as they engage in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority toward signing a cease-fire agreement with Tel Aviv. "Everybody feels the responsibility and the importance of putting an end to the situation that we are all living right now," Abbas said on Palestinian television January 23. "We can say that there has been significant progress in the talks. Our differences have diminished, and therefore we are bound to

Continued on Page 10

Peasants in Paraguay fight for land, end of repression

BY IGNACIO GONZÁLEZ

ASUNCIÓN, Paraguay—Peasant struggles for land here have intensified over the past several months. The final months of 2004 were marked by demonstrations, road blockades, and takeovers of idle lands in rural areas throughout this South American nation. The peasants have been demanding an agrarian reform—land, credit, and technical aid.

The government of President Nicanor Duarte responded with increasingly brutal repression against the farm protesters. In August 2003 Duarte had taken office promising to do something about poverty and hunger and demagogically criticized "neoliberal" economic policies demanded by international finance capital.

Paraguay is a largely agricultural country with a population of nearly 6 million. Its main exports are soybeans, beef, and cotton. Land ownership, however, is dominated by a tiny handful. Only 2 percent of the population owns 72 percent of all arable land, while 85 percent of the rural population works on just 6 percent of the arable land. Hundreds of thousands of peasants have been thrown off their land over the past decade, particularly as capitalist farmers have rapidly expanded soybean production for export, forcing small farmers—lacking aid from the government—to sell their plots. About one-third of Paraguayans live below the official poverty line, and in the country-

side the proportion is higher.

Political space opens in 1989

With the end of the 35-year-long reign of terror under the U.S.-backed Stroessner dictatorship in 1989, the peasant movement, along with labor and student organizations, won greater space for struggle and began to gain strength. Two major peasant organizations were formed, the National Peasant Federation (FNC) and

Continued on Page 3

Also Inside:

U.S. gov't: military option still on table against Iran 2

Cuba condemns abuse of prisoners at U.S. base in Guantánamo 2

4,000 march in San Francisco to defend right to choose 4

In second inaugural, Bush invokes 'freedom' to mask class divisions, pledges to continue policies of first term 11

U.S. gov’t: military option is still on table against Iran

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. government has placed sanctions on several Chinese companies it accuses of aiding Iran in the development of long-range ballistic missiles. The penalties are another step in Washington’s campaign to isolate Tehran and block its efforts to develop nuclear energy.

Washington insists Iran’s nuclear program is aimed at producing atomic weapons. President George Bush and Vice President Richard Cheney have made it clear in recent statements that the U.S. government is leaving all options open, including the military, in relation to Tehran.

The government of Iran has explained it is seeking to develop nuclear power to provide the energy needed to advance the country’s industrial and technological development. Tehran has also taken more visible measures to enhance its defense capabilities.

In October, the Iranian government announced it has increased the range of its Shahab-3 missile to 1,200 miles, which makes it capable of reaching Israel, U.S. bases in the Arab-Persian Gulf, and parts of Europe.

The recent U.S. sanctions, imposed under the Iran Nonproliferation Act of 2000, prevent the Chinese companies from doing business with the U.S. government and from obtaining export licenses to purchase controlled technologies from U.S. companies. One firm in Taiwan and another in north Korea have also been sanctioned.

“The U.S. side arbitrarily imposed sanctions on Chinese companies by citing its domestic laws without authentic evidence,” said China’s foreign ministry spokesperson, Kong Quan, in response to Washington’s punitive measures. “This is what we cannot accept.” He added that the Chinese government strongly opposes any proliferation of “weapons of mass destruction.”

Iran’s oil minister, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, recently announced that China is replacing Japan as the number one importer of oil and natural gas from Iran. Trade agreements between Tehran and Beijing now equal \$200 billion.

Meanwhile, the White House denied it has a plan to conduct air strikes against Iranian nuclear sites and that U.S. com-

mandos have been sent into that country to do reconnaissance, as Seymour Hersh charged in an article in the January 24–31 issue of the *New Yorker* magazine.

Interviewed on CNN, White House communications director Dan Bartlett said Hersh’s article was “riddled with inaccuracies.” Asked about Hersh’s allegations, President George Bush told NBC News, “I hope we can solve [the conflict with Iran] diplomatically, but I will never take any option off the table.”

Cheney, interviewed January 20 on radio by Don Imus, said, “You look around the world at potential trouble spots, Iran is right at the top of the list.” He said there are two reasons for this stance. “They have a fairly robust new nuclear program,” he said, and “Iran is a noted sponsor of terror.” Asked by Imus if the Israeli government should take out Iran’s nuclear sites, the vice president replied, “One of the concerns people have is that Israel might do it without being asked, that if, in fact, the Israelis became convinced the Iranians had a significant nuclear capability, given the fact that Iran has a stated policy that their objective is the destruction of the state of Israel, that the Israelis might well decide to act first and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterward.”

“We don’t want a war in the Middle East if we can avoid it,” Cheney added. “Certainly, in the case of the Iranian situation, I think everybody would best suited by, and/or best treated or dealt with, if we could deal with it diplomatically.”

Condoleezza Rice, U.S. secretary of state designate, told the Senate at her confirmation hearings that Iran’s nuclear capacities were not the only reason for Washington’s hostility toward Tehran. “It’s really hard to find common ground with a government that thinks Israel should be extinguished,” she said. “It’s difficult to find common ground with a government that is supporting Hezbollah and terrorist organizations that are determined to undermine the Middle East peace that we seek.”

Hersh’s article is based primarily on interviews with unnamed U.S. intelligence officials, a number of whom have been ousted in the current revamping of the U.S. military and CIA. The interviews



Monitoring room of Bushehr nuclear power plant, 600 miles south of Tehran. Last August, Iranian officials said the plant’s reactor would be operational in 2006. Washington claims such projects are secretly aimed at production of nuclear weapons.

offer little hard evidence.

Hersh’s basic tenet is the liberal argument, laced with anti-Semitism, that a neoconservative “cabal” has hijacked control of covert operations from CIA and congressional control and turned it over to the Defense Department. Bush’s re-election, Hersh wrote, “has reaffirmed the position of the neoconservatives in the Pentagon’s civilian leadership who advocated the invasion [of Iraq], including Paul Wolfowitz, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Douglas Feith, the Undersecretary for Policy.”

Both officials mentioned—Wolfowitz and Feith—have Jewish names and have been favored targets of Hersh and other liberal reporters.

Cuba condemns Guantánamo prisoner abuse

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Cuba’s ministry of foreign affairs issued a statement January 19 condemning the treatment of prisoners held indefinitely by Washington at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Nearly 800 so-called enemy combatants have been detained there since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the assault on Iraq two years later. U.S. forces currently imprison about 550 at Guantánamo.

According to Cuba’s National News Agency, the statement explains that Cuba delivered a diplomatic note to the authorities at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana January 19 denouncing the arbitrary arrest, incarceration, and “torture and humiliating treatment” that the prisoners have been subjected to at Camp Delta in Guantánamo.

“The arbitrary detention of these foreign prisoners without the mediation of a legal trial, as well as the torture and degrading treatment to which they are subjected, constitute a gross violation of human rights,” the statement says. “Cuba has the total moral right afforded by an irreproachable history in this context and the right conferred on it to exercise sovereignty over all parts of Cuban territory to denounce these abuses and violations that the U.S. government is daily committing on the

The military actions against Iran that Washington is allegedly planning could be a disaster, said Hersh, increasing popular support there for the current regime in Tehran, rather than undermining it.

“If any country tries to invade our country, we are strong enough to defend ourselves,” said Iran’s president, Mohammed Khatami, in response to these threats. He was speaking January 20 to reporters in Kampala, Uganda’s capital, during a seven-nation tour of Africa.

“I do not think the Americans would do such a crazy thing as carrying out military attacks against Iran,” Khatami added. “We believe the possibility of America attacking Iran is very low, as it is involved in other places.”

detainees on the Guantánamo Naval Base and to demand the end of these practices that violate international law.”

Part of Guantánamo Bay has been occupied by U.S. naval forces since the 1902 Platt Amendment to the Cuban constitution, which gave Washington an indefinite lease to this section of Cuba’s eastern province. Since workers and farmers overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista in 1959, the territory has been held by Washington despite the opposition of the Cuban people and their government.

The foreign ministry statement, which called for the immediate end to the abuse, was also broadcast on Cuban television.

The National News Agency said the Cuban foreign ministry had issued a statement Jan. 11, 2002, after Washington announced the setting up of the prison camp, saying that Havana “would not pose any obstacle to such an action, taking note with satisfaction U.S. public statements that such prisoners would be treated appropriately and humanely.”

Cuba’s foreign ministry said reports have since surfaced on widespread abuses against prisoners at Camp Delta. Media reports in December, for example, cited International Committee of the Red Cross reports that the treatment of prisoners at the U.S. naval base was “tantamount to torture.”

THE MILITANT

No to U.S. intervention in Venezuela!

What’s behind the recent conflict between Colombia and Venezuela? How is Washington involved? How does the peasants’ fight for land propel government land reform and fuel imperialist hatred toward Caracas? The ‘Militant’ brings you the facts.

Don’t miss a single issue!



Venezuelan National Guard troops enter El Charcote ranch in Cojedes, Venezuela, with inspectors to determine whether to turn over British-owned land to peasants occupying it.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 WEST 37TH ST., 10TH FL. NEW YORK, NY 10018.

The Militant

Vol. 69/No. 5

Closing news date: January 26, 2005

Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
Business Manager: MICHAEL ITALIE
Washington Bureau Chief: SAM MANUEL
Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Arrin Hawkins, Michael Italie, Martín Koppel, Sam Manuel, Doug Nelson, and Paul Pederson.
Published weekly except for one week in January, June, July, and September.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899; Fax (212) 244-4947.
E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The Militant **website** is: www.themilitant.com
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$35 to above address.
Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above

address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80.
Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: Send \$65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.
Canada: Send Canadian \$50 for one-year subscription to Militant, 6955 Boul. St. Michel suite 202, Montreal, QC. Postal Code: H2A 2Z3.
United Kingdom: £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green, London, E2 6DG, England.
Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: £70 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address. **France:** Send 115 euros for one-year subscription to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.
Iceland: Send 3,500 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík.
Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 400 Swedish kronor for one year. Domargränd 16, S-129 47 Hågersten, Stockholm, Sweden.
New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$55 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$50 to P.O. Box 164, Campsie, Haymarket, NSW 2194, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$55 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant’s* views. These are expressed in editorials.

Paraguay struggle for land

Continued from front page

the National Coordinating Board of Peasant Organizations (MCNOC), which have been leading the recent protest actions.

In 2002, large protests by peasants and workers pushed back several very unpopular economic measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund as well as a U.S.-promoted “antiterrorism” bill. As land occupations have increased, landlords have hired private thugs and special police units to attack peasants.

Trying to undercut the growing popular discontent, Duarte—whose Colorado Party has dominated Paraguayan politics since 1947—began his administration with statements expressing concern about poverty. Among other things, he promised to allocate \$10 million to purchase 62,000 acres of land.

Government aids finance capital

While criticizing “abuses” by businessmen, the measures taken by the Duarte government have been designed to meet the demands of international and domestic capital, such as a “tax reform” law that low-

The Front in Defense of Public Property and the National Patrimony, a coalition that includes the FNC, was also revived. These organizations mapped out parallel plans for stepped-up mass actions whose main demands were in support of the peasants. By mid-September, landless rural workers had occupied eight private estates and large landholders were demanding that the government evict them.

On September 18 the FNLSV gave the government 60 days to respond to the peasants’ demands or face a nationwide protest action.

Capitalists press for a crackdown

At the same time, capitalists stepped up their pressure on Duarte to crack down more forcefully on the protesters. Some even accused him of inciting the occupations with his promises of land. “When President Duarte assumed power, he did so as an enthusiastic populist,” a high-ranking Paraguayan diplomat at the United Nations said in a telephone interview with the liberal U.S. lobbying group Council on Hemispheric Affairs. “However, many took



Landless peasants occupy land in Paraguay during a wave of protests in November

ordering a “tough hand” to crack down on “land invaders.” The government called on the courts to act “vigorously” to prosecute those taking part in the land occupations. It immediately deployed army troops, whose presence in the countryside until then had mostly been used to intimidate protesters, to intervene actively in the evictions alongside the police.

The next day, government forces carried out a coordinated series of evictions. In San Pedro province, 200 agents of the “Specialized Police” assaulted 500 *sin tierras* (landless peasants) occupying the 17,000-acre Cuapé estate, which grows soybeans. The confrontation had begun when local residents protested the indiscriminate use of toxic agrochemicals. Cops attacked them with tear gas, burned their makeshift homes, and arrested 31, many in the homes of neighbors where they took refuge after fleeing the estate. One farmer, Aureliano Espínola, 55, died during the police assault. The authorities said he died of a heart attack; witnesses said he had been viciously beaten.

Luis Aguayo, a leader of the MCNOC, condemned the “criminal action” by the police and held Duarte and the landlords’ Rural Association of Paraguay (ARP) responsible for what he called the murder of Espínola.

‘National civic strike’

During the week of November 16–23, the FNLSV organized a series of mobilizations as part of a “national civic strike” to demand the release of all the imprisoned peasants, the withdrawal of the military to their barracks, and land for the peasants. The participating organizations carried out land occupations, rallies in Asunción, several roadblocks, and marches along the main highways around the country. In the town of San Jan Nepomuceno in Caazapá province in the south, 200 peasants organized by the FNC stormed a police station November 28 in order to rescue a leader who had been arrested the day before. The police responded with a siege of the May Eleventh land settlement, to which most of the peasant protesters belonged, and arrested 48 people.

“We cannot allow someone to be jailed for demanding seed and insecticide in order to farm,” said FNC general secretary Odilón Espínola, pointing out that the peasant

leader had been arrested for his participation in a protest in September demanding farm supplies.

Two days later the government ordered the arrest of Espínola himself, accusing him of coercion, disturbing the peace, inciting criminal actions, and invasion of property. Security forces sharply stepped up their crackdown, arresting 312 people and wounding more than 20 during various evictions. Riot police attacked a solidarity march by peasants in Caaguazú; 46 were arrested and a dozen wounded by rubber bullets. This brought the total number of detained to 715. In many towns the jails were overflowing with peasant militants.

The government’s stance was summarized by Duarte in a meeting he had with big landowners. Referring to the peasants occupying estates, he said, “We are going to bring them in by the ear, and those who have small ears we will bring in by the hair.”

Call for new protests in March

Nonetheless, the rural mobilizations continued through much of December, together with talks between government officials and representatives of the protest organizations. The government finally lifted its arrest order against Espínola and freed most of the imprisoned peasants. On December 22 a court ordered the release of 344 landless rural toilers who had been evicted from an estate in San Pedro province. The peasants, however, were barred from setting foot within a 200-yard radius of the estate.

The government again sought to defuse the protests by reiterating its promise of distributing land to peasants. Officials insisted that the process will require “calm and a lot of patience” because there is not enough money in the budget to buy property to be distributed and that the courts must decide on disputed ownership issues. At the same time, the officials warned that the government will continue to crack down on “illegal” protests.

Peasant organizations have announced that if they do not see substantial progress, they will resume their mass protests in March.

Militant staff writer *Martin Koppel* contributed to this article.



Riot police in Paraguay evict and arrest peasants after November land occupation.

ered taxes on corporate profits and shifted more of the tax burden onto workers and peasants.

The main peasant organizations have been demanding that 150,000 hectares (370,000 acres) be distributed among 300,000 landless families. After months of waiting for concrete measures by the government, peasant protests began to grow. Occupations of idle lands, held by absentee owners or landlords with fraudulent titles, picked up in the first three months of 2004. In response to these occupations, organized separately by the FNC and MCNOC each with smaller groups, the government carried out mass arrests of protesters and established army camps near the occupied lands to intimidate the farmers.

At the same time, the government continued to promise to turn over some lands, and began talks with the two peasant organizations that stretched out from May to August. But government officials offered few real concessions.

Rural struggle sharpens

In July the peasant movement began to coordinate further actions along with unions, student groups, and organizations of urban homeless workers. This led to the establishment on July 3 of the National Front of Struggle for Sovereignty and Life (FNLSV), which includes the MCNOC.

his speeches too seriously to the point that they invaded lands legitimately owned by others. Since then, the president has had to tone down his populist rhetoric.”

On September 21, groups of peasants occupied 18 farms and set up roadblocks throughout the country. “We need this land to expand our settlement. This is a *latifundio* [large landholding] and the owner isn’t growing any crops or raising any animals here. We are without land and we will insist on getting some,” one of the farmers told the press, referring to a nearly 1,000-acre area his community had occupied. The police responded with mass evictions. In the province of San Pedro, 150 miles north of the capital city of Asunción, they arrested 118 peasants in three different districts. Peasant actions increased between September and November. On November 1, more than 7,000 peasants affiliated with the FNLSV occupied 35 properties in San Pedro, Caazapá, Caaguazú, Alto Paraná, Misiones, and other provinces.

Mass arrests

Duarte declared November 4 that he was



Students from the National University in Asunción, Paraguay, demonstrate November 17 in front of government offices demanding the release of jailed peasants, a thoroughgoing land reform, and lower tuition for public university students.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

This is a book about the class struggle in the United States, where the revolutionary capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. And just as wrongly. It is about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. \$13



WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

Order Now!

2004 Bound Volume of the ‘Militant’ \$60 per volume

2004 Bound Volume of ‘Perspectiva Mundial’ \$30 per volume

2004 index of ‘Militant’ articles by subject and author \$3 per copy

Send your check or money order to: ‘The Militant’ at 306 W. 37th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018 Or call: (212) 244-4899

San Francisco: 4,000 march to defend a woman’s right to choose

**BY SETH DELLINGER
AND LAURA ANDERSON**

SAN FRANCISCO—On the 32nd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision that decriminalized abortion, 4,000 pro-choice demonstrators mobilized to protest against the Walk for Life West Coast, a march organized by anti-choice forces. The San Francisco Area Pro-Choice Coalition got wind of the rightist mobilization in late November and responded quickly, organizing teach-ins, sign-making, clinic escort training, and other events to build their action.

Among the defenders of a woman’s right to choose were many high school students and other youth. Several protesters interviewed by the *Militant* were attending their first ever protest.

“The laws are crazy,” said Reequanza McBride, 17. “Men shouldn’t be able to decide for women what we can do with our bodies.” McBride was one of nearly two dozen members of Youth Together, an organization of students from six different high schools throughout the Bay Area.

Leslie Lopez, 18, a student at Laney Community College in Oakland, and a member of TOJIL (Together Organizing for Justice and Indigenous Liberation), said that her organization had been actively building the demonstration for several weeks. The two groups marched together carrying graffiti-style handwritten signs and leading their own original chants through a hand-held megaphone.

Two protests of similar size

The pro-choice protesters lined the sidewalk of the Embarcadero on the march route of the anti-abortion advocates, who walked, mostly in silence, behind a banner reading “abortion hurts women.” Pro-choice marchers chanted “Pro-life, that’s a lie! You don’t care if women die!” and “Ho ho, hey hey! Abortion rights are here to stay!”

Many of the younger pro-choice demonstrators continued to follow the “right to life” march from the sidewalk several more blocks until police prevented them from continuing.

The anti-abortion protesters drew a somewhat larger crowd than the counter-protest. The main slogan of their march was, “Women deserve better than abortion.”

The *San Francisco Chronicle* noted that many of the pro-choice activists regarded the anti-abortion marchers as “invaders of the city.” Dian Harrison, president of the Golden Gate chapter of Planned Parenthood, said, “We couldn’t believe they had the nerve to come to San Francisco.”

Workers win union certification at 2nd Wal-Mart store in Quebec

BY JOE YATES

MONTREAL—Workers at a second Wal-Mart in Quebec have won union certification with the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). A majority of the 200 workers at the Wal-Mart in St. Hyacinthe, 60 kilometers (38 miles) east of Montreal, signed union cards.

Wal-Mart is the largest private sector employer in the world, with 1.4 million workers. In Canada, Wal-Mart has about 230 stores and employs more than 60,000 people. Wal-Mart workers fighting for a union say they receive low wages, often work short hours, and are subject to intimidation.

Company spokesperson Andrew Pelletier told the New York-based Bloomberg news service that the company is considering an appeal to the Quebec Labour Relations Board, charging the decision was “undemocratic” because it was not made by secret ballot. “This concerns us because we believe that the only way to ensure associates can express their views without coercion or intimidation is by allowing a secret ballot,” he said. Wal-Mart management refers to workers in their stores as “associates.”

According to Quebec labor law, a ma-

Walk for Life organizers Dolores Meehan and Eva Muntean told the press they had deliberately chosen San Francisco, known for the predominance of liberal attitudes, as the site of their “first annual” action.

The city governments of San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland each passed unanimous resolutions backing the pro-choice action.

Some women’s groups and many liberal Democratic Party politicians, however, tried to avoid confrontation or strike an outright conciliatory tone toward opponents of a woman’s right to choose abortion.

San Francisco NOW pulls out

The San Francisco chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) withdrew its support for the pro-choice march days before the action.

“We, along with California NOW, ask that NOW members NOT participate in counter demonstrating,” said chapter co-president Sarah Weston in a January 18 statement. “Engaging the anti-choice community in this way detracts from our positive message and gives the agenda-setting power to the anti-choice community.”

San Francisco NOW members joined the pro-choice rally earlier in the day and left before the march began.

In the week following San Francisco NOW’s decision to pull back from confronting anti-abortion forces, Senator Hillary Clinton, a prominent Democrat in New York, gave a speech declaring her shared “moral values” with opponents of a woman’s right to choose.

On January 24, Clinton told the annual conference of Family Planning Advocates of New York State in Albany, the state’s capital, that they should seek “common ground” with opponents of choice in reducing the number of abortions. “We can all recognize that abortion in many ways represents a sad,



Militant/Robby Kopec
Pro-choice protesters countered anti-abortion march in San Francisco January 22.

even tragic choice to many, many women,” she said. “The best way to reduce the number of abortions is to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in the first place.”

While reiterating her support for *Roe v. Wade*, Clinton also advocated abstinence to reduce the number of abortions. “Research shows that the primary reason teenage girls abstain from early sexual activity is because of their religious and moral values,” she said.

A number of people in the audience disagreed with some of Clinton’s remarks, according to the *New York Times*. “I understood what Senator Clinton meant when she said abortion could be a sad and tragic choice,” said Martha Stahl, director for public relations and marketing for Northern Adirondack Planned Parenthood. “But we see women express relief more than anything else that they have the freedom to choose.”

Actions in Washington, D.C.

Smaller antichoice marches and counter protests took place in many U.S. cities on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Anti-abortion forces held a protest of tens of thousands in Washington, D.C., three days later that Bush addressed via a phone hookup to Camp David.

On January 22 more than 100 supporters of women’s right to choose rallied in Washington in front of the Supreme Court. The

“We Won’t Go Back” rally was organized by NOW.

Chanting and marching in a circle with signs waving in the bitter cold of a snow storm that had just passed, the spirited crowd of mostly young women paid little attention to the same number of opponents of women’s rights, most of whom were standing, or kneeling, with their face toward the Supreme Court building.

The anti-abortion protesters had covered their mouths with red tape with the word “Life” written on it. A couple of those whose mouths were not taped shouted at the defenders of women’s rights, but were answered by chants of “Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate!” and “Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide!”

Speakers at the short rally included NOW president Kim Gandy, and a representative of Code Pink, another pro-choice group, as well as a couple of young women’s rights activists.

Earlier in the day, opponents of the right to choose abortion protested at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Washington, D.C., where they were met by clinic defenders who escorted clients inside the clinic.

Lea Sherman in Washington, D.C., contributed to this article.

Co-Op miners invited to speak at film showing

Continued from front page

them that we’re proud of them.”

Religious organizations are organizing fundraising too. Co-Op miners said that the San Rafael Mission Catholic Church in Price told them the church has received enough contributions for their struggle to help the miners pay rent and utilities for the entire month of February. A number of Co-Op miners have found other jobs since being fired December 9, one week before a union representation election took place at the mine. About 20, however, remain unemployed and are being sustained by contributions from the labor movement, churches, and other backers of their struggle.

Co-Op miners said that they are organizing a solidarity fundraiser along with UMWA retirees and their spouses. It will be held March 5 at the UMWA hall here and will include food, a raffle, speakers, and a dance. “We’re inviting people to come to our fundraising event on March 5 to support the unemployed miners,” said José Contreras, a Co-Op miner. “When we go to the film exhibition we are going to ask people to come to Price, Utah, as well for the fundraiser. We need to raise money to help all the families.”

‘Harlan County USA

Contreras was referring to the Sundance Film Festival, an annual event held this year in Park City, Utah. According to a press announcement released by the UMWA January 25, the Co-Op miners have been invited to speak about their 16-month-long union-organizing struggle after the showing of a new print of the award-winning documentary *Harlan County USA*. UMWA organizer Bob Guilfoyle will accompany the miners. The event will be held January 28 at the annual Utah Sundance Film Festival at the Egyptian Theater on Main Street in Park City.

Barbara Kopple filmed the documentary in 1973–74, during the 13-month-long strike at the Brookside coal mine in Harlan County, Kentucky. Kopple, who was 26 at the time and lived in Harlan County, will also attend the showing and be part of a round-table discussion after the screening, moderated by film reviewer Roger Ebert. A party celebrating the documentary showing will be held in the evening, featuring music by Appalachian singer Hazel Dickens.

The Brookside mine had an accident rate three times the national average, low wages, and minimal medical and retirement benefits. The miners belonged to a company union, the Southern Labor Union, which had members throughout eastern Kentucky. Contracts were different from mine to mine with wages ranging from \$17

to \$32 a day, compared to the \$45 per day on average that UMWA-organized miners were paid.

In June 1973, the Brookside miners voted to be represented by the UMWA, rejecting the Southern Labor Union by a margin of 113-55. The Eastover Mining Company, owned by the Duke Power Company, refused to accept the terms of the national UMWA contract at the time, which included the right to strike, decent pensions, higher wages, and the right of the miners to have an elected safety committee.

The miners struck on June 30, 1973. *Harlan County USA* documents the entire battle. It describes the important role that the Brookside Women’s Club—made up of wives, daughters, aunts, and friends of the miners—played in the showdown. The Brookside miners won the battle against Duke Power on Aug. 29, 1974, at a time when the UMWA had organized a nationwide walkout protesting unsafe working conditions.

“The Co-Op miners’ fight for fair wages, benefits, and protections is not unlike the Brookside miners’ bitter struggle in 1973 to convince Eastover Mining Company to sign a contract after they organized,” said UMWA International President Cecil Roberts, according to the January 25 press release.

Pressure on NLRB to reinstate workers

“On December 16, 2004, the Co-Op miners—many of whom are Latinos who say they worked in often unsafe conditions and were paid between \$5–7 per hour—conducted a vote for union representation,” the press release said. “The results of the vote have been impounded while the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in Washington, D.C., decides whether or not to uphold an earlier decision by the Denver NLRB to bar Kingston family members from participating in the election...”

“Just prior to the vote, a majority of the Latino miners were fired due to what C.W. Mining called their ‘undocumented status,’” it continued. “The UMWA has filed unfair

Continued on Page 5

Venezuela, Colombia

Continued from front page
tions of the government in Bogotá and its U.S. mentors.

Large contingents of Colombians, along with immigrants from many other Latin American countries, took part in the march, said Aveledo.

“Most people came from Caracas, because the march was organized on one week’s notice,” said Wikénferd Oliver, a leader of the Youth of the Fifth Republic Movement (JVR), in another phone interview. The JVR is affiliated with Venezuela’s governing party. “Smaller rallies took place in other states,” he added, “like Anzoátegui and Mérida. In Táchira, which is on the border with Colombia, hundreds of people marched against the provocation.”

‘Provocation came from Washington’

President Hugo Chávez told the cheering crowd in Caracas that the kidnapping operation was a violation of Venezuela’s sovereignty. “This provocation came from Washington,” he said. “It is the latest attempt by the imperialists...to ruin our relations with Colombia.”

The same day, capitalist forces opposed to the Chávez government staged a small counterdemonstration in the ritzy Chacao district. Aveledo said hundreds took part in the right-wing action. They blamed the Venezuelan government for the dispute with its neighbor, echoing the charge that it has given refuge to Colombian rebel groups, and accused Chávez of threatening “democracy.” The theme of the march was the anniversary of the 1958 overthrow of the Pérez Jiménez military dictatorship, a banner the pro-imperialist opposition has unsuccessfully tried to hijack.

Uribe, Washington’s closest ally in the region, responded defiantly to Venezuela’s protests. He accused the Chávez government of harboring FARC guerrillas and asserted his government’s right to pursue “narcoterrorists.”

Officials in Bogotá said they gave Venezuelan authorities the names of 10 “major Colombian terrorists” allegedly operating inside Venezuela. Caracas replied that it was willing to arrest and extradite FARC leaders if the Colombian government turned over relevant information.

“When we get that information, which up to now we have not received from Colombia, we will process it and if we find any of these men in Venezuela, we will arrest them...and hand them over to Colombia,” Venezuelan interior minister Jesse Chacón told reporters.

Venezuelan officials said January 18 that they would accept an offer by the Brazilian government of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to play a role in resolving the conflict between the two governments.

Washington publicly backed the Colombian regime’s stance in the dispute. “We support 100 percent the declarations from the presidential palace” in Bogotá, stated William Wood, U.S. ambassador to Colombia.

U.S. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli denied the Venezuelan accusations of a U.S. role in the capture of Granda. Asked by the press about U.S. involvement, he admitted only that Washington helped “provide information” to the Uribe regime.

Ereli condemned “the Venezuelan government’s apparent tolerance of terrorist groups using its territory” and demanded that it take action against FARC members residing in that country.

U.S. calls for pressure on Caracas

In a note sent to other governments in South America January 23, the U.S. State Department called on them “to pressure the government of Venezuela to end relations with the FARC and with any other organization deemed to be of a terrorist nature by the United States.”

The 18,000-member FARC, which Washington has placed on its so-called terrorist list, has been waging a 40-year-long guerrilla war against the Colombian government.

Under the banner of fighting “narcoterrorism,” the U.S. rulers have channeled more than \$3 billion to the Colombian military since 2000 and sent U.S. military personnel to train Colombian army battalions. Washington has stepped up its military intervention both in Colombia and in the broader region in anticipation of sharper resistance by working people to imperialist domination and the economic depression that is devastating millions in South America.

While increasing its military presence in South America, Washington has condemned the Venezuelan government for an alleged “arms buildup.” In November U.S. officials made bellicose statements opposing plans announced by Caracas to purchase helicopters, rifles, and other arms from Russia for its armed forces.

At U.S. Senate confirmation hearings January 18, newly appointed U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice declared that Venezuela’s government was a “negative force in the region.” She accused it of meddling in its neighbors’ affairs and objected to Venezuela’s close ties with the government of Cuba.

The following day, Venezuela’s foreign ministry rejected Rice’s charges. It replied that Washington, not Venezuela, is interfering in the affairs of other nations.

“Chávez is the last one who should be complaining about trampled sovereignty,” said an editorial in the January 23 *Miami Herald*. “Today, more than ever, any country

for a union election, so they could choose UMW representation.

The strike lasted nearly 10 months. As the strikers remained steadfast, and received widespread support from the labor movement and churches and other organizations in the United States and internationally, the NLRB ruled last June that the miners were fired illegally for union activity. C.W. Mining agreed to reinstate the strikers, who returned to the job July 12. The NLRB also mandated a union election be held and issued a back-pay settlement for damages workers suffered as a result of the company lockout.

Between July and December, workers said they faced relentless harassment by the bosses on the job, aimed at intimidating the miners away from support for the UMW and picking off leaders of their fight. Several workers were fired prior to the mass dismissals in early December for alleged work-rule violations.

On November 2, the labor board ruled that the Co-Op bosses must pay back wages to 47 miners amounting to some \$400,000. The NLRB also ruled that members of the Kingston family, which owns the mine, would be excluded from voting in the union representation election, siding with the argument of UMW attorneys that the close association of these individuals with the company owners represented a conflict of interest. C.W. Mining appealed this ruling to the national NLRB.

When the union representation election



AFP-Getty Images/Luis Acosta

Colombian police escort Rodrigo Granda, a leader of Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), in Bogotá, December 15. Granda was whisked across border after Colombian government bribed Venezuelan police to capture him in Caracas.

that knowingly offers a safe haven for terrorists or turns a blind eye to their presence is inviting trouble.”

The U.S. rulers and their counterparts throughout South America are concerned above all about the ongoing struggles by workers and farmers in Venezuela for jobs, land, and better living conditions and their growing confidence and expectations. The Chávez administration has angered Washington and decisive sections of the Venezuelan capitalist class by adopting a number of measures around which workers and farmers have mobilized to defend their class interests. These include an agrarian reform law, legislation to protect small fishermen from superexploitation by large capitalist operations, bills strengthening state control of oil, and programs to expand literacy and access to medical care.

On three occasions working people have successfully mobilized to defeat U.S.-backed efforts by capitalist forces to destabilize and overthrow the elected government: a short-lived military coup in April 2002, a bosses’ lockout in December of that year, and a presidential recall referendum last August.

Capitalists worried about land seizures

A growing source of concern for the propertied classes is the stepped-up struggles by Venezuelan peasants for land. On January 8 the governor of Cojedes state, southwest of Caracas, sent 200 National Guard troops to El Charcote cattle ranch, part of which has been occupied and farmed by hundreds of peasants who are demanding the government turn over the land to them. The troops accompanied government inspectors, who over the coming months are to determine how much, if any, of the 32,000-acre ranch will be given to the peasants and how much will be kept by its owner, the Vestey Group, a British food conglomerate.

took place, about 100 Kingston family members the bosses claimed were legitimate employees were allowed to vote. But their ballots were segregated and sealed, pending a national NLRB decision on whether these votes can be counted. The company also challenged most of the votes of about 40 miners, whom it had fired a week before the December 17 union vote. On the ballot, workers had a choice between the UMW, IAUWU, or no union. The outcome won’t be announced until the NLRB rules on these challenges.

Miners said they have not heard back from the labor board yet and continue to urge supporters of their struggle to send letters to the NLRB asking that the dismissed workers be reinstated and that the votes of the Kingston family members be thrown out on the basis of the previous ruling by the Denver NLRB. Such letters should be sent to the National NLRB, Robert J. Battista, Chairman, 1099 14th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20570-0001; and NLRB Region 27, Director, B. Allan Benson, 600 17th St., 7th floor—North Tower, Denver, CO 80202-5433; Tel: (303) 844-3551; Fax: (303) 844-6249.

Copies of letters to NLRB, along with other messages of solidarity and financial contributions, should also be sent to UMW District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, UT 84501. Checks should be made out to “Co-Op Miners Fund.” For more information call the union at (435) 637-2037, or send a fax to (435) 637-9456.

Two days later, the national government issued a decree designed to speed up distribution of idle lands or unproductive farms to peasants, hundreds of thousands of whom are landless. The decree established a commission to review titles of thousands of private farms in order to determine whether they were obtained legally and whether they are productive or idle.

Under the land reform law adopted in 2001, about 115,000 peasant families have obtained title to more than 9 million acres, government officials report. In 1998, according to that year’s census, 5 percent of the country’s farmers owned 75 percent of the arable land.

While government officials in Washington and London have so far refrained from commenting on the sharpening peasant struggles and the land reform measures, the U.S. and British financial press have been less disguised about their alarm.

The *Financial Times*, a British daily, ran a January 13 editorial, titled “Chávez slips into demagoguery again.” The editorial complained that the Venezuelan land reform policy “threatens to undermine property rights” and “is likely to weaken the farm sector.”

In a January 18 article, the *Wall Street Journal* suddenly discovered its heartfelt concern for poor peasants. The government’s land program, Jose de Cordoba wrote, “may further batter Venezuela’s economy and hurt the landless peasants Mr. Chavez says he wants to help.” Echoing an oft-repeated argument by large landowners, he said that land distribution would lead to “inefficient small plots.”

The *Journal* correspondent opined that “while Mr. Chavez has yet to duplicate the pure statist model employed by his mentor, Cuban President Fidel Castro, the land campaign is an important move along that road.”

In a January 22 *Miami Herald* article titled “Chávez eyes idle lands, raising fears,” the reporter remarked that “land reform is dangerous territory, and history has not been kind to those who have walked Chávez’s path: Both Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954, and Salvador Allende in 1973 were ousted by U.S.-backed coups after confiscating idle lands. And the Bush administration has not hidden its disapproval of the Chávez government lately.”

The capitalist press dismisses the need for land reform in Venezuela by arguing that small farmers are increasingly irrelevant there. The *Financial Times* editors said agrarian reform “is especially pointless in Venezuela, where nine out of 10 people live in urban areas.”

De Cordoba of the *Journal* insisted that “there are few rural peasants left in the country.” Cojedes, scene of the confrontation at El Charcote, “is a backwater state with barely 300,000 inhabitants,” he sniffed.

The reality, however, is that while peasants are 13 percent of Venezuela’s population, their economic and social weight is decisive. They produce 70 percent of the country’s vegetables and other major crops.

Venezuela currently imports more than 60 percent of its food. At the same time, a sizable portion of its arable land remains idle and hundreds of thousands of peasants who want to farm have no land.

Carmen Guzmán, one of the peasants occupying El Charcote, told the *Miami Herald* reporter her view of the matter: “If they’re not using the land, they should let us have it.”

Miners fired for union organizing press for reinstatement

Continued from Page 4

labor practice charges against the employer on behalf of the displaced workers.”

How struggle unfolded

The struggle erupted on Sept. 22, 2003, when C.W. Mining fired 75 Co-Op miners, after they protested the dismissal of one of their fellow workers and company harassment against other workers who have been part of the union-organizing effort. Most of the workers hail from Mexico and were paid between \$5.50 and \$7 an hour and did not have medical insurance or retirement benefits. Hourly wages for underground coal miners average at least \$18 in the United States.

The Co-Op mine is one of 10 underground mines in the coalfields of central and eastern Utah, only two of which are organized by the UMW.

The International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU), which miners say is a company union, has existed at the Co-Op mine for a while. The NLRB recognized the IAUWU more than 20 years ago. Miners have charged that the IAUWU has never represented them in their grievances and its officers have sided with the bosses in labor disputes on the job.

The UMW filed charges with the NLRB against the initial dismissals of the miners in September 2003. The workers turned the company lockout into a strike and set up picket lines. The Co-Op miners also filed a petition with the NLRB

Our politics start with the world

Introduction to 'New International' no. 13 and excerpt of report by Jack Barnes

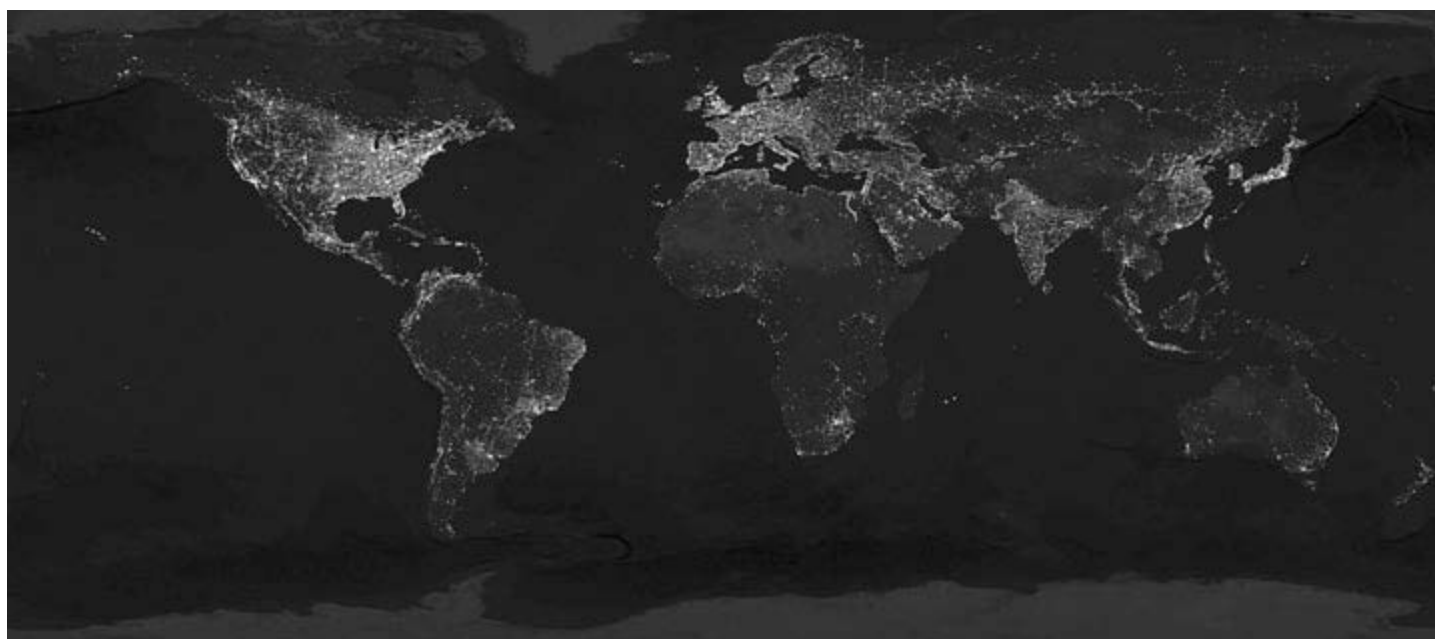
The following is the introduction of issue no. 13 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. We publish it along with an excerpt from "Our Politics Start with the World" by Jack Barnes, the featured article in this issue. This report is based on an opening talk and closing summary that Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, presented at an international socialist conference in Oberlin, Ohio, June 14–17, 2001.

New International no. 13 will be published in February together with a companion volume, no. 12. Both will be published at the same time in Spanish as issues 6 and 7 of *Nueva Internacional*.

The introduction and excerpt that follow are copyright © New International 2005. Reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

Take a look at Earth at Night on our back cover. The shimmering clusters, faint patches, and dark expanses underscore the brutal class fact that a majority of the world's working people—largely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—subsist without electricity or modern sources of energy, even for cooking and heat.

This composite of hundreds of satellite photographs is a stark measure of the huge inequalities, not only between imperialist and semicolonial countries but also among classes within almost every country, in social and cultural development and in the foundations for any sustained economic advance. These disparities, produced and accentuated every day simply by the workings of world capitalism, will widen further as competition for markets intensifies among the U.S. ruling families and their imperialist rivals in Europe and the Pacific.



Corbis/Charles O'Rear

The Earth at Night: composite image from many satellite photos. The shimmering clusters, faint patches, and dark expanses reflect the brutal class reality that a majority of the world's working people—largely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—subsist without electricity or other modern sources of energy, even for cooking and heat.

Electrification "is an elementary precondition if modern industry and cultural life are to develop," Jack Barnes emphasizes in our lead article, "and communists fight for it to be extended to all—all—the world's six billion people. This fight is a prime example of how proletarian politics, our politics, start with the world."

In order for class-conscious workers to build a world communist movement of disciplined proletarian parties, he notes, their week-by-week activity needs to be guided by a program, a strategy, to close—and then keep closed—these enormous eco-

nomic and social disparities. Our job "is to make a revolution in the country where we find ourselves, where we live and work," Barnes explains. To accomplish that, "it's above all necessary for us to understand, and understand thoroughly, politics and the class struggle within those national boundaries."

Working class has no homeland

"But we can do so only by starting with the fact that those national peculiarities and their changes are a product of the workings of a world market," he says. "We need to recognize that we are part of an interna-

tional class that itself has no homeland—the working class—and to act always as though we are part of an international alliance with exploited and oppressed toilers throughout the world.

"That's not a slogan. That's not a moral imperative. It's not a proposed act of will. It is a recognition of the *class reality* of economic, social, and political life in the imperialist epoch." It is, Barnes says, an irreplaceable part of the activity of politically organized revolutionary workers, "the only force on earth that can carry out successful revolutionary struggles along the line of march of the proletariat toward political power."

"Our Politics Start with the World" was presented by Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, to open a discussion at an international socialist conference held June 14–17, 2001, in Oberlin, Ohio. Among the nearly 400 participants were members, supporters, and friends of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, the Communist Leagues in Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, as well as dozens of Young Socialists and other workers, farmers, and young people from North America and elsewhere around the world. The following year "Our Politics Start with the World," edited for publication, was debated and adopted by delegates to the 2002 SWP national convention.

Capitalism's long hot winter has begun

"Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," the political report and summary by Barnes adopted by that same convention, together with "Their Transformation and Ours," SWP National Committee draft theses prepared by Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New International*, are the featured articles in issue number 12 of this magazine. These companion issues, *New International* numbers 12 and 13, complement each other. "Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun," too, starts with the world. It centers on the accelerated contradictions—economic, social, political, and military—that have pushed the international imperialist order into the opening stages of a global financial crisis and depression, as well as a new militarization drive and expanding wars. This long, hot winter that world capitalism has now entered, Barnes notes, is one that "slowly but surely and explosively" will breed "a scope and depth of resistance not previously seen by revolutionary-minded militants throughout today's world."

The contents of these two issues of *New International*, published at the same time, are a contribution to the political preparations for that stepped-up and increasingly worldwide resistance by the toilers and their allies.

Two New Issues

New International no. 13 NOW AVAILABLE! \$13

Electrification is an elementary precondition if modern industry and cultural life are to develop, and class-conscious workers fight for it to be extended to all the world's six billion people. This fight is a prime example of how proletarian politics, our politics, start with the world," says Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within almost every country, are produced, reproduced, and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. For vanguard workers to build parties able to lead a successful revolutionary struggle for power in our own countries, says Barnes, our activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.

"We are part of an international class that has no homeland. That's not a slogan or a moral imperative. It is a recognition of the class reality of economic, social, and political life in the imperialist epoch."

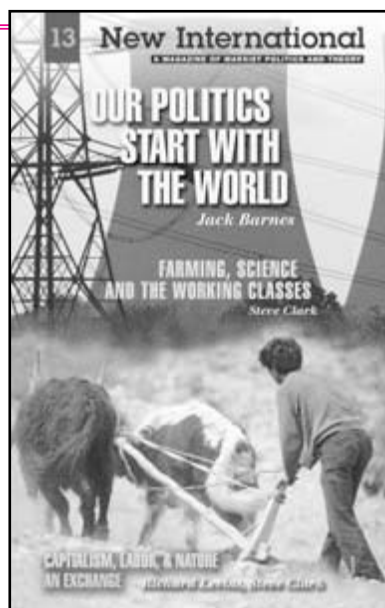
OUR POLITICS START WITH THE WORLD

by Jack Barnes

Also in *NI* no. 13

Farming, Science, and the Working Classes by Steve Clark

Capitalism, Labor, and Nature: An Exchange Richard Levins, Steve Clark



New International no. 12



The underlying contradictions of world capitalism pushing toward depression and war did not begin with 9/11 and its consequences. They were accelerated by those events, but all have their roots in the downward turn in the curve of capitalist development a quarter century ago and then the collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the opening of the 1990s.

One of capitalism's infrequent, long winters has begun, Barnes explains. "Now, with the acceleration of imperialism's drive toward war, it's going to be a long, hot winter. More importantly, slowly but surely and explosively, it will breed a scope and depth of resistance not previously seen by revolutionary-minded militants in today's world."

CAPITALISM'S LONG HOT WINTER HAS BEGUN

by Jack Barnes

Also in *NI* no. 12

Their Transformation and Ours

Socialist Workers Party National Committee Statement

Crisis, Boom, and Revolution

1921 Reports by V.I. Lenin & Leon Trotsky

ORDER FROM:

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM



The wealth that makes possible human civilization and progress is, in its entirety, the product of social labor's transformation of nature, a labor that simultaneously transforms itself.

"Human labor is social labor," Barnes emphasizes in the closing remarks to the 2001 socialist conference printed here. "Its product is not the result of the work of an individual, nor even the work of many individuals summed together." The output of the labor of a farmer, a seamstress, a butcher, or a miner, he says, "is determined by the class relations under which they toil. It is social labor that bequeaths generation after generation the culture, the blueprints, to transform material reality in new and more productive ways and to make possible the creation of a better world." But, he added, as Marx taught us, so long as capitalism reigns, these improvements in the forces of production will simultaneously tend both to increase the intensification of labor and to produce more horrendous forces of destruction.

These questions of Marxist politics and theory, on which much of the discussion at the 2001 international socialist gathering focused, were the topic of one of seven classes organized for conference participants. The class was presented by Steve Clark, a member of the SWP National Committee. A few weeks later Clark used the presentation, enriched by the discussion at the conference, as the basis for preparing a four-part series in the *Militant*, a New York newsweekly published in the interests of working people worldwide. The series has been edited for publication here as a single article entitled, "Farming, Science, and the Working Classes."



"Capitalism, Labor, and the Transformation of Nature," an exchange between Richard Levins and Steve Clark, is the final item in this issue. Following publication of the articles by Clark in the *Militant*, Levins, professor of population sciences and a researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health, wrote a response.

Levins is active in the July 26 Coalition, a Boston-area Cuba solidarity organization, and works with the Institute of Ecology and Systematics of the Cuban Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment. Levins's article is published here for the first time, followed by Clark's reply and final comments by each author.

December 2004

BY JACK BARNES

In December 1920, the third year of the workers and peasants republic in Russia, V.I. Lenin made a statement that has often been repeated but less often understood. Speaking to the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, Lenin said: "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country."¹

Since that day, any organization claim-

ing to be communist has had to come to grips with that assertion. What connection does it have to the tasks of a revolutionary government fighting to consolidate workers and farmers power? What kind of clarity in thought and deed does it demand from a proletarian nucleus *well before the final revolutionary struggles through which the toilers come to power?* What do working people think of when they hear the name of the party, a communist party? What is it fighting for? Where is it heading?

Lenin's statement begins not with electrification but with *Soviet power*: the elected councils of workers, peasants, and soldiers whose meetings and decisions constituted the working-class power on which the new revolutionary government was based. But he doesn't stop there. To many at the time, and even more so eight decades later, it must have seemed that "Communism is soviet power *plus* electrification" was an overreaching simplification. "That's Lenin, you know. As always, pushing a point a little too far." But Lenin, as always, was starting from a world view—from the concrete place of the workers and peasants of Russia as determined by the workings of the world imperialist system, its laws of motion. Not vice versa. Not the world as seen from Moscow or Petrograd. Not Russia somehow "fit into" the world.

Strengthen worker-peasant alliance

Lenin, again as always, was also starting from the practical need to strengthen the alliance of workers and peasants, the two classes upon whose allied shoulders the dictatorship of the proletariat rested. The destiny of Soviet power was now inseparably intertwined with the advance of the struggle for national liberation and socialism throughout the world. What concrete steps were necessary to narrow the political gap between those two exploited classes, urban and rural? To narrow the gap in their conditions of life, their possibilities of education and culture, their political experience? How was it possible to narrow the gap in self-confidence, proletarian class consciousness, and political clarity? The differences in ability to politically understand, sacrifice for, and advance the proletarian dictatorship in Russia and extension of Soviet power to the world?

Lenin placed great store in the competent and disciplined use of technologies inherited from capitalism, as well as the skills of scientists and engineers willing to place their knowledge and training at the service of the Soviet republic. But what Lenin was raising was not a technical challenge, first and foremost. Nor was it primarily a military question, even though the strength of the worker-peasant alliance had just been put to the test of fire by the devastating human and material consequences of the civil war launched by Russia's capitalists and landlords, supported by the allied invasion of fourteen imperialist powers, including the United States. By late 1920, when Lenin presented the electrification plan, workers and peasants in Soviet Russia—and peasants made up more than 80 percent of the ranks of the Red Army—had defeated the counterrevolutionary forces.

The task now before the communist lead-



Granma

Working people in Cuba have created urban gardens across the island, like this one in Havana, to provide fresh produce to the population. Everything described as progress or culture is the product of the transformation of nature through social labor. The main lesson the Cuban Revolution teaches is what can be accomplished when workers and farmers organize a victorious struggle for power and use those achievements to advance the world struggle for socialism.

ership of the revolution, Lenin said, was to lead these two classes in such a way that tens of millions, in both city and countryside, could see their conditions of life converging. Along that road the ground would be laid for the working class to become a larger and larger percentage of the toilers of city and countryside,² as well as for workers and peasants to more and more converge in political goals—to increasingly see the world, and their relationship with toilers' struggles in other countries, through a common pair of proletarian glasses.

Only as this gap was narrowed could the working class learn how to organize to move beyond workers control of industry toward the management of production. Only as these divisions grew smaller could peasants see beyond the guarantees they had won to use the land they tilled and to obtain cheap credit, and move toward a broader perspective of the industrialization of the entire country that would progressively overcome the chasm between urban and rural life. The proletariat would consequently grow in size—in absolute numbers, as well as relative to the peasantry—and in political confidence.

The alliance of the working class with the peasantry, and thus its class rule, would be strengthened and stabilized. With added confidence, the power of its example would increase. With added confidence, its offer of help to toilers worldwide would be extended and accepted more frequently, and carried out with greater success.

'Supply peasants industrial products'

The use of equipment and machinery powered by electricity and internal combustion had to be widely extended to the countryside, Lenin said: "[W]e must prove to the peasants that in place of the old separation of industry from agriculture, this very deep contradiction on which capitalism thrived and which sowed dissension between the industrial and agricultural workers, we set ourselves the task of returning to the peasant the loan we received from him [during the civil war] in the form of grain. . . .

"We must repay this loan by organizing industry and supplying the peasants with the products of industry," Lenin underscored. "We must show the peasants that the organization of industry on the basis of modern, advanced technology, on electrification which will provide a link between town and country, will put an end to the division between town and country, will make it possible to raise the level of culture in the countryside and to overcome, even in the most remote corners of the land, backwardness, ignorance, poverty, disease, and barbarism."³

Lenin pointed out that without such a course, conditions in the young workers and peasants republic, especially in the countryside, would create and continually recreate layers of independent commodity producers who would face periodic crises and become increasingly differentiated economically. Easily convinced they were being betrayed by the proletariat, such layers would turn back to the bourgeoisie for

leadership. That had become the greatest counterrevolutionary danger confronting the working class.⁴

Program of economic development

Politically, the peasantry always follows one of the two major urban classes, either the capitalists or the working class. That fact is demonstrated by the entire history of the modern class struggle. So maintaining Soviet power depended on what might superficially seem to be a technical matter, a large-scale engineering project. But as Lenin emphasized, electrification of the country had to be understood and organized for what it was in history: a profoundly *political* question, the answer to which would determine, in life, whether the alliance of workers and peasants would rise or fall. Recognizing this task and aiding its realization was not simply a challenge for the toilers of Russia and their Bolshevik vanguard; it was a worldwide responsibility of communists, class-conscious workers, and revolutionary-minded farmers.

The communist party, Lenin said in his December 1920 report to the congress of soviets, has a political program that "is an enumeration of our objectives, an explanation of the relations between classes" in the young Soviet republic. But this party program "must not remain solely a program of the Party," he said. "It must become a program of our economic development, or otherwise it will be valueless even as a program of the Party. It must be supplemented with a second Party program, a plan of work aimed at restoring our entire economy and raising it to the level of up-to-date technical development. Without a plan of electrification, we cannot undertake any real constructive work. . . .

"Of course, it will be a plan adopted as a first approximation. This Party program will not be as invariable as our real Party program is, which can be modified by Party congresses alone. No, day by day this program will be improved, elaborated, perfected and modified,"⁵ Lenin emphasized. It will be a task of workers and peasants in every workshop and in every rural area.

'Unnatural light'

Lenin told the congress a story about visiting one of the first villages in Russia to be electrified. A peasant came forward to speak, welcoming the "unnatural light" that the new Bolshevik-led government had made possible. It was to be expected that rural toilers would initially look upon electricity as "unnatural," Lenin remarked. But what class-conscious *revolutionists* consider unnatural, he added, "is that the peasants and workers should have lived for hundreds of years in such backwardness, poverty and oppression under the yoke of the landowners and the capitalists."⁶

Everything that marks progress in the human condition is "unnatural" in that materialist sense—not just electricity but agriculture, livestock, handicrafts, and industrial products of every kind. None of these are directly appropriated from nature

Continued on Page 8

Footnotes appear at end of article on page 8



Russian peasants study a map that demonstrates the electrification of Moscow, 1926. "Electrification is an elementary precondition if modern industry and cultural life are to develop," Jack Barnes says.

Our politics start with the world

Continued from Page 7

by individuals; all are the end result of human beings working together in a mesh of social relations. Every aspect of what we call civilization and culture is the product of the transformation of nature by social labor. (And we forget at our peril that we are at the same time *part* of nature, *part* of what is being transformed.)

What is unnatural has been the stunting of this potential for human development by social relations of exploitation, relations maintained through force of habit, supplemented by terror organized by the propertied classes. With the workers' and peasants' conquest of power, *their* government could finally organize to carry out what had been possible technically for several decades—that is, for toilers of both city and countryside to have electric light after the sun goes down. To have the option to extend the use of the day. To be able to decide whether to stop a meeting because it's getting dark. To have the possibility to study and work comfortably after sundown. For children to do their schoolwork or to read to each other in the evening. Simply to pump water to village after village, saving countless hours of backbreaking work for every family, and especially for women and girls.

The Bolsheviks' course was aimed at accomplishing something broader than the economic and social development of Soviet Russia. Lenin presented these perspectives on strengthening the worker-

peasant base of Soviet power for discussion, debate, and adoption by the Third Congress of the Communist International, the world party of revolution founded in 1919 at the initiative of the Bolsheviks.⁷ Without proletarian victories spreading to other countries, the socialist revolution in Russia would be hemmed in by the imperialist powers and defeated. This revolutionary perspective had to be fought for by an expanding worldwide alliance of workers and peasants, led by the communist workers movement.

Bridging gap among world's toilers

The Bolsheviks understood that such a goal—workers of the world, unite!—was possible only if the conditions of the toilers on an international scale were converging. Only if this *cultural* gap was closing. Only if more and more working people across the globe were taking an active part in social and political life, and could thus recognize toilers engaged in such social activity elsewhere as their brothers and sisters. Understanding and then acting on this reality is the foundation of a citizen of the world.

The effort to electrify the entire country, Lenin said in the December 1920 congress debate, would go hand in hand with the “endeavor to stamp out illiteracy—but that is not enough. . . . Besides literacy we need cultured, enlightened and educated working people; the majority of the peasants must be made fully aware of the tasks awaiting us.”⁸

At the opening of the twenty-first century, these questions, and others like them, remain at the center of building proletarian parties and a world communist movement. They remain central to the possibilities for concrete political collaboration and joint activity by working people in the battle for national liberation and socialism. This perspective is advanced by the growing size and social weight of the working class throughout Asia, Latin America, and expanding areas of Africa, as well as by every step to improve the economic and social conditions of urban and rural toilers—from electrification to literacy, from sanitation and potable water to access to modern medicine.

Our politics—proletarian politics—start with the world. That's not simply an accurate observation. Nor a snappy theme for



Corbis/Chris Hellier

Peasant plows vineyard in Capadocia, central Turkey, with horse-drawn plow. The goal of uniting working people around the world is possible only if conditions of the toilers internationally, and in city and countryside, are converging, says Barnes.

a socialist conference. For all the reasons we've been discussing, it is a political necessity, the only place the working class *can* start and not end up in a swamp. In any one country, we are *not* more powerful than our own ruling class, much less the sometimes combined forces of several imperialist powers defending their world domination. A proletarian revolution has never triumphed and survived without international working-class solidarity powerful enough to affect the course of history.

It is the *proletarian* internationalism of communist politics above all that sets us apart from all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces.

The intensifying rivalry of the imperialist rulers constantly drives them to every nook and cranny of the globe in the hunt for markets for their commodities and capital, as well as for sources of cheap labor and raw materials. In face of uprisings by the toilers and conflicts among themselves, they carve out international alliances and negotiate treaties to strengthen their respective positions, economically, politically, and militarily. But the world is not where they begin.

Capitalist politics start with *their* borders, *their* currencies, *their* armed forces, *their* states—with bourgeois nationalism

and patriotism in defense of their profits, prerogatives, and class rule.

NOTES

1. V.I. Lenin, “The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets” in Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), vol. 31, p. 516. Hereafter *LCW*.

2. In 1917 the population of the young Soviet republic was 140 million. Some 80 percent were peasants, and 10 percent were in the working class, including 2 million factory workers.

3. Lenin, “Report on the Work of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee,” *LCW*, vol. 30, p. 335.

4. Lenin, “The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets,” *LCW*, vol. 31, p. 516.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 515.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 517.

7. See “The Material Basis of Socialism and the Plan for the Electrification of Russia” in the “Theses for a Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.” drafted by Lenin, as well as his “Report on the Tactics of the R.C.P.” in *New International* no. 12 and in *LCW*, vol. 32, pp. 459, 492–94.

8. Lenin, “The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets,” *LCW*, vol. 31, p. 518.

—IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP—

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 3029A Bessemer Road. Zip: 35208. Tel: (205) 780-0021. E-mail: bhmswp@yahoo.com

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 4229 S. Central Ave. Zip: 90011. Tel: (323) 233-9372. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net
San Francisco: 3926 Mission St. Zip: 94112. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

COLORADO: Craig: 11 West Victory Way, Suite 205. Zip: 81625. Mailing address: P.O. Box 1539. Zip: 81626. Tel: (970) 824-6380. E-mail: swpcraig@yahoo.com

FLORIDA: Miami: 8365 NE 2nd Ave. #206 Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 756-4436. E-mail: miamiswp@bellsouth.net; **Tampa:** 1441 E. Fletcher, Suite 421. Zip: 33612. Tel: (813) 910-8507. E-mail: TOC1004@aol.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 2791 Lakewood Ave. Zip: 30315. Mailing address: P.O. Box 162515. Zip 30321. Tel: (404) 768-1709. E-mail: swpatlanta@aol.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 3557 S. Archer Ave. Zip: 60609. Tel: (773) 890-1190. E-mail: Chicagoswp@sbcglobal.net

IOWA: Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 255-1707. E-mail: swpdesmoines@cs.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 12 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Mailing address: P.O. Box 261. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: bostonswp@cs.com

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 4208 W. Vernor St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 44739. Zip: 48244-0739. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

E-mail: Detroitswp@netzero.net

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 113 Bernard St., West St. Paul. Zip: 55118. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: tcswp@qwest.net

NEBRASKA: Omaha: P.O. Box 7005. Zip: 68107. E-mail: omahaoc@netscape.net

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 168 Bloomfield Avenue, 2nd Floor. Zip: 07104. Tel: (973) 481-0077. E-mail: swpnewark@yahoo.com

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@yahoo.com

OHIO: Cleveland: 11018 Lorain Ave. Zip: 44111. Tel: (216) 688-1190. E-mail: swpcleveland@yahoo.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Hazleton: 69 North Wyoming St. Zip: 18201. Tel: (570) 454-8320. Email: swpnepa@verizon.net **Philadelphia:** 5237 N. 5th St. Zip: 19120. Tel: (215) 324-7020. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com
Pittsburgh: 5907 Penn Ave. Suite 225. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 365-1090. E-mail: PittsburghSWP@netscape.com

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St. Suite C-51A. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: swphouston@ev1.net

UTAH: Price: 11 W. Main St. Rm. 103. Zip: 84501 Tel: (435) 613-1091. utahswp@yahoo.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3717 B Georgia Ave. NW, Ground floor. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 722-1315. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Avenue South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: swpseattle@yahoo.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@bigpond.com

CANADA

ONTARIO: Toronto: 2238 Dundas St. West, Suite 201, M6r 3A9 Tel: (416) 535-9140. E-mail: cltoronto@bellnet.ca

QUEBEC: Montreal: 6955 Boul St-Michel, Suite 202. Postal code: H2A 2Z3. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: lc_montreal@sympatico.ca

FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Skolavordustig 6B. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 1202. E-mail: kb-reykjavik@simnet.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885. E-mail: clauack@paradise.net.nz

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: clchch@paradise.net.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Bjulvägen 33, kv, S-122 41 Enskede. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: kfstockholm@telia.com

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-3855. E-mail: cllondon@onetel.com

SCOTLAND: Edinburgh: First Floor, 3 Grosvenor St., Haymarket. Postal Code: EH12 5ED. Tel: 0131-226-2756. E-mail: cl.edinburgh@btinternet.com

February

BOOKS
OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER
READERS CLUB
SPECIALS

25%
DISCOUNT

Problems of Women's Liberation
by Evelyn Reed
Explores the social and economic roots of women's oppression from prehistoric society to modern capitalism and points the road forward to emancipation \$12.95
Special price: \$9.50

Two Study Guides on Lenin's Writings
An Education for Socialists publication containing guides to the study of Lenin's political strategy for the Russian Revolution \$3.00
Special price: \$2.00

La segunda declaración de La Habana
In 1962 the workers and farmers who carried out a socialist revolution in Cuba refused to back down in face of escalating military, economic, and political attack by the U.S. government. Instead, they pointed to the example of the Cuban Revolution as the way forward for the oppressed and exploited throughout Latin America. Their ringing indictment of imperialist rule, read by Fidel Castro at a rally of a million people in Havana, remains a manifesto of revolutionary struggle for working people everywhere.
\$4.50
Special price: \$3.50

Habla Malcolm X
by Malcolm X
\$17.95
Special price: \$13.50

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT
WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM
OFFER GOOD UNTIL FEBRUARY 28

Pentagon spying

Continued from front page

reported that a domestic counterpart of the Strategic Support Branch—code-named “Power Geyser”—took the lead for security during the January 20 inauguration of President George Bush for a second term in office (see article on page 11). These “revelations” point to the increasing role, in the United States and abroad, that the Pentagon is playing in Washington’s spying operations.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military has disclosed it has assigned as many as 10,000 “advisers” to join Iraqi military units as part of a plan to boost morale and accelerate the training of the fledgling Iraqi armed forces, according to the *Washington Post* and other press accounts. U.S. military officials say the performance of Iraqi troops in securing voting sites in the January 30 elections in Iraq will be an important measure of their progress as a fighting force.

A deadly campaign of suicide bombings and other attacks led by forces loyal to the former Baathist party regime of Saddam Hussein has taken a high toll but has failed to derail the U.S.-orchestrated elections. This campaign has increasingly targeted Shiite civilians. In a statement posted on the Internet, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian who leads a group now named al-Qaeda in Iraq, declared “all-out war” to stop the elections, which he described as a “wicked plot to install Shiites to power.”

‘Intelligence reform’

“It is accurate and should not be surprising that the Department of Defense is attempting to improve its longstanding human intelligence capability,” said Pentagon spokesman Lawrence Di Rita in a January 23 statement. “A principal conclusion of the 9/11 commission report is that the U.S. human intelligence capability must be improved across the board.”

At the end of last year, the White House beat back an attempt to dilute the Pentagon’s authority over spying operations, forcing last-minute changes in the “intelligence reform bill,” which was approved in December. The legislation was based largely on the recommendations of the 9/11 bipartisan commission. Its initial draft proposed to wrest overall control of intelligence from the Secretary of Defense and give it to the newly created post of Director of National Intelligence.

The *Washington Post* reported that two senior members of the House Intelligence Committee said they knew no details about the secret Pentagon unit. Sen. John McCain, a Republican and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he was also not aware of the unit, while adding that its existence did not violate the law, according to Reuters.

The chairmen of both the Senate and House Armed Services committees said January 24 that they supported the recently disclosed Pentagon spying programs.

“In my opinion, these intelligence programs are vital to our national security interests, and I am satisfied that they are being coordinated with the appropriate agencies of the federal government,” said John Warner, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, in a statement he released after meeting with Stephen Cambone, undersecretary of defense for intelligence. His counterpart in the House, Duncan Hunter, who led in making the last-minute changes in the recent intelligence bill, agreed.

Some Democrats, such as Senator Diane Feinstein, a Democrat from California, have proposed hearings be held on the matter. It is clear, however, that this turn of events is another victory for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Bush administration.

How Strategic Support Branch works

According to Pentagon officials and various press accounts, the Strategic Support Teams are composed of 5 to 10 individual agents—including linguists, interrogators, and officers focused on espionage, infiltration, and recruiting spies abroad. Increasing reliance on information from human spying, rather than electronic eavesdropping, is one of the goals of the transformation of the U.S. military being led by the Department of Defense. These changes include reorganizing the military into smaller and more agile brigades that can move anywhere in the world within days, integrating more the commands of the Army with the Navy, Air

Force, and Marine Corps, and elevating Special Operations Forces to a primary role in combat missions.

The Pentagon’s spying teams work as an integrated component of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM) based in Tampa, Florida, and its various clandestine components, reported the *New York Times*. Proposals are also circulating at the Pentagon to establish an espionage school of its own, duplicating the CIA’s course at Camp Perry, Virginia, for intelligence operations commands in every overseas region, reported the *Post*.

In an early planning memo Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the focus of the teams would include “emerging target countries such as Somalia, Yemen, Indonesia, Philippines, and Georgia,” according to the *Post*.

Pentagon officials said at the January 24 briefing that confusion about congressional approval of the Strategic Support Teams arose because funding for their operations was authorized as part of the 2005 budget under a different name—HUMINT Augmentation Teams—which was changed later. The spying units come under the jurisdiction of the Defense Intelligence Agency of the Pentagon, which controls about 80 percent of the \$40 billion budget for Washington’s spying operations.

According to the January 23 *Post*, “the Defense Department has decided that it will coordinate its human intelligence missions with the CIA but will not, as in the past, await consent. It also reserves the right to bypass the agency’s Langley headquarters, consulting CIA officers in the field instead. The Pentagon will deem a mission ‘coordinated’ after giving 72 hours’ notice to the CIA.”

The *Post* also said that Pentagon personnel are undertaking spying missions that blur the line between “clandestine” and “covert” actions. The first refers to operations intended to be undetected. “Covert” refers to missions for which the U.S. government denies responsibility officially—such as assassinations of leaders of opponent groups abroad—but which must be authorized by a special presidential “finding.”

At the January 24 briefing, Pentagon officials denied that the Strategic Support Teams are undertaking “covert” action, insisting the units are functioning strictly undercover.

Asked whether these spying teams might undertake more covert missions, Assistant Secretary of Defense Thomas O’Connell said, “That remains to be determined... depends upon the situation,” according to the *Post*.

One scenario in which Pentagon agents might play such a role, O’Connell told the *Post*, is this: “A hostile country close to our borders suddenly changes leadership... We would want to make sure the successor is not hostile.”

Given their geography and current relations with Washington, Cuba and Venezuela are two countries that could fit this scenario.

Power Geyser and the CIA

“Somewhere in the shadows of the White House and the Capitol this week, a small group of super-secret commandos stood ready with state-of-the-art weaponry to swing into action to protect the presidency,” reported the January 23 *New York Times*. They are the domestic counterpart to the defense department’s Special Support Branch unit. The unit is coordinated through SOCOM and the Northern Command.

The latter was established during the Clinton administration, which for the first time authorized a military command that covers the United States. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, passed in response to perceived misuse of federal troops who were policing the former Confederate states, restricted military forces from performing domestic policing tasks.

The military’s commandos at the January 20 presidential inauguration were part of 13,000 troops, police officers, and federal



Getty Images/Joe Raedle

Iraqi and U.S. troops on joint patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, January 21. The Pentagon is assigning 10,000 U.S. “advisers” to join Iraqi military units to bolster their training and effectiveness.

agents organized to secure the event.

These commandos operate under a secret counterterrorism program code-named Power Geyser, said the *Times*. The existence of the unit was first mentioned publicly the third week of January on a website for the book *Code Names: Deciphering U.S. Military Plans, Programs, and Operation in the 9/11 World*. William Arkin, the book’s author, is a former intelligence officer for the Army. Arkin described the operation on his website as “special-mission units in extra-legal missions to combat terrorism in the United States.”

Defense department and White House officials confirmed the operation’s existence and purpose but disputed characterizing it as “extra-legal.” The unit operates under “special authority” from the president or the defense secretary, they said.

Arkin, who says the White House and Pentagon are trying to keep too much information undisclosed, said he wrote the book to counter this secrecy.

Arkin follows in the footsteps of CIA agent Michael Scheuer, who published a book last year called *Imperial Hubris: How the West is Losing the War on Terrorism*. The book was published under anonymous authorship, while Scheuer, a 22-year CIA veteran, was still on the job. *Imperial Hubris* attacked the Bush administration and was used to buttress the Kerry campaign. Scheuer retired in November, after the presidential election.

Since then, under new director Porter Goss, appointed by the Bush administration, the CIA has forced many “analysts” like Scheuer out of the agency and is revising policies to make it harder for employees to publish such books.

The tension between the Pentagon and the CIA is not surprising. It reflects the growing factionalism in the ruling class that has accompanied the debate over the military’s transformation. The CIA was founded in 1946 under the Democratic administration of Harry Truman and has been dominated for decades by liberals. This is now changing, as the Republicans are becoming the majority party in the United States.

U.S. officers ‘embedded’ in Iraqi army

While using the Strategic Support Teams in Iraq with some success, the U.S. occupation forces are also taking steps to speed the shaping of the Iraqi military as a combat force.

U.S. Maj. Frank Shelton is the senior adviser to the 6th Brigade, 23rd Battalion, of the Iraqi Intervention Force. He is one of an estimated 10,000 advisers assigned to fight along with Iraqi troops in a plan to boost morale and accelerate the training of Iraqi soldiers, according to the January 23 *Washington Post*.

Shelton sleeps five feet from Iraqi Lt. Col. Adell Abbas, commander of the 23rd Battalion. He seldom leaves Abbas’s side, the *Post* reported. The U.S. officer has reportedly also learned a few words in Arabic and has grown a mustache, common among Iraqi troops.

The battalion operates in Mosul, which has been one of the centers of fierce attacks by Baathist forces and their allies on U.S. and Iraqi troops. Two such U.S. advisers have died fighting with Iraqi troops, according to the *New York Times*.

The plan is part of a strategic shift by the military to accelerate the training of Iraqi troops and to have them take over the brunt of fighting the Baathist “insurgency.” U.S. commanders have said, for example, that Iraqi troops will take on the most dangerous assignment of securing polling sites for the election. U.S. troops would provide perimeter security so as not to give the appearance of interfering with the vote for an Iraqi national assembly. They would be called in only for emergencies.

Another goal of the plan is to win the confidence of Iraqis. “Sir, Colonel Adell and I are brothers,” Shelton told an Iraqi police chief who was doubtful Iraqi troops could provide protection in Mosul. The Iraqi battalion commander served 19 years under the Hussein regime, the *Post* said. He is a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war and fought against both U.S.-led invasions. He dispersed his troops on the outskirts of Baghdad as the city fell to U.S. forces on April 4, 2003.

A cousin who had been named a lieutenant general in the battalion helped to get Abbas into the U.S.-trained Iraqi army. According to the *Post*, Abbas said he was loyal to the old Iraqi army, not the Hussein regime, and was thrilled to return to military service. “I don’t know any other job. If the new Iraqi army does not stand, Iraq will be finished,” Abbas told the *Post*.

According to press accounts, Washington’s goal is to use the U.S. advisers planted inside the Iraqi military to rapidly transfer most patrols to the Iraqi armed forces after the January 30 elections. At the moment, U.S. and other troops of the “coalition of the willing” carry out about 12,000 patrols a week in Iraq, compared with only about 1,200 joint patrols involving Iraqi forces, according to the *Post*.

“As Iraqis take on more security responsibilities,” said an article in the January 23 *New York Times*, U.S. generals say that their troops will be freed “to be quick reaction forces to back up the Iraqis or to help tighten Iraq’s borders, especially with Syria and Saudi Arabia, where foreign fighters and couriers carrying cash for the insurgency often cross with impunity.”

Baathist forces isolated

As it has become clear days before the vote that the January 30 elections will go ahead as planned, Baathist forces have increasingly targeted Shiites, who make up 60 percent of Iraq’s population. Attacks have included the bombing of a mosque January 21 in Baghdad that killed 14 and wounded 40 Shiites, and a similar assault the same day on a Shiite wedding south of the Iraqi capital that left 21 people dead.

The former regime of Saddam Hussein had its main base of support among Iraq’s Sunni Arab minority, and brutally oppressed Shiites and Kurds. Pro-Baathist forces are trying to convince Iraqis that if the leading Shiite electoral coalition wins, it may establish an “Islamic republic” like that of neighboring Iran.

“We have declared an all-out war on this evil principle of democracy and those who seek to follow this evil ideology,” said al-Zarqawi in a recent statement posted on the Internet.

The U.S. military and the Iraqi government say al-Zarqawi is the central leader of

Continued on Page 10

Defend a woman’s right to choose!

This past week’s events—from the pro-choice march of 4,000 in San Francisco to Sen. Hillary Clinton’s advocacy of finding “common ground” with right-wing opponents of women’s rights to “reduce the number of abortions”—drive home an important fact. A woman’s right to choose abortion can be defended only through mobilizations in the streets by large numbers of supporters of women’s rights—not by supporting politicians from either of the twin parties of the ruling billionaires, the Democrats and Republicans.

Gains for women’s rights, including the decriminalization of abortion, codified in the 1973 Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, were not the result of enlightened justices, congresspeople, or presidents. They were won through the mass struggles that marked the rise of the women’s liberation movement, itself a by-product of the civil rights movement and the movement against the U.S. war in Vietnam. The basis for these gains was the massive influx of women into the workforce in the decades after World War II, which gave women increased economic independence and confidence to fight for their rights.

The right to choose means the right of a woman to control her own body, an elementary precondition for ending the second-class status that women face in class society. Defending the right to choose, as well as all women’s rights, strengthens the ability of working people, men and women, to fight against exploitation and all forms of oppression that are perpetuated by the capitalist system of private profit for a few.

That is why the 1973 ruling in favor of the right to choose has been under sustained attack by successive Democratic and Republican administrations. At the same time, because of the deep-going social impact of the mass struggles by Blacks and women that led to the decriminalization of abortion, the U.S. rulers cannot simply take away those gains through the stroke of a pen. In fact, the composition of the U.S. Supreme Court has never been decisive to safeguarding this or any other right. Some of the most far-reaching rulings codifying gains for Black, women’s, and gay rights were signed by conservative appointees of Richard Nixon or other Republican presidents.

For the same reason, the main attacks on a woman’s right to choose have not centered on a direct attempt to overturn

Roe v. Wade, and that is unlikely to take place under the Bush administration. The biggest blows have been the on-going erosion of access to abortion under Democratic and Republican administrations alike. Working-class women are most affected.

It was Democratic president James Carter who in 1977 signed into the law the Hyde Amendment, which cut off Medicaid funding for abortions. The Clinton administration approved an extension of the Hyde Amendment to bar Medicare funding for abortions. Clinton delivered a further blow—especially to working-class women raising children on their own—with the 1996 “end welfare as we know it” law, which eliminated Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

As a result of these and other restrictions, under the Clinton presidency the number of U.S. counties with an abortion provider declined from 16 percent to 14 percent. And the ban on the medical procedure misnamed “partial-birth abortion” was a bipartisan measure. During the 2004 election, both Republican candidate George Bush and Democrat John Kerry supported restrictions on abortion such as parental notification.

Today, Hillary Clinton and other liberal Democrats are increasingly open in advocating restrictions on abortion—all in the name of positioning the Democrats to win future elections. Senator Clinton’s call for championing “religious and moral values,” “teenage celibacy,” “reducing the number of abortions to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies,” and seeking alliances with anti-abortion forces are all rationalizations for scapegoating working-class women and for further attacks on a woman’s right to choose. Supporting that line—subordinating the fight for women’s rights to backing Democratic “friends of women”—is what led the San Francisco chapter of the National Organization for Women to pull out of the January 22 pro-choice march.

Mobilizations like the one in San Francisco and the April 25, 2004, pro-choice march of a million in Washington, D.C., to counter the opponents of women’s equality are crucial in giving confidence to supporters of women’s rights and sending a message to the U.S. rulers that we won’t go back to the days of illegal back-alley abortions.

have only made gains through hard-fought battles. The broad trends toward secularism, for women’s rights, and in opposition to capital punishment and torture are evident not only in the Middle East but the rest of the semicolonial world. But these are by-products of the anticolonial revolutions of the last century and subsequent struggles by workers, peasants, students, and the middle classes in these countries, not of imperialist benevolence. Washington will demagogically talk about democracy and women’s rights for that part of the world only so long as that serves its imperialist interests.

The White House has reasons to boast for enhancing the freedom of the wealthy to advance U.S. imperialism’s interests in the Middle East. The U.S.-orchestrated elections in Iraq are about to happen and all evidence indicates that the outcome is likely to be seen by a majority of Iraqis as a victory for “democracy” and thus a victory for Washington and its allies. The Baathist-organized “insurgency” is more and more isolated as it is led by beheaders of hostages, killers of children and people attending weddings, and suicide bombers who target Shiites at mosques—in the tradition of the Saddam Hussein tyranny.

This state of affairs, however, is not the result of the incapacity of the Iraqi people to fight. Working people in Iraq were dealt major blows in the past because of the betrayals of Stalinism that allowed the Baathist regime to consolidate a party-police state and rule with a reign of terror. No wonder Shiites, Kurds, and other Iraqis don’t want to go back to that.

The toilers of Iraq do have some political space today that they can use to forge their own revolutionary leadership that can guide them down the road to get rid of the Yankee occupiers and the local exploiters too. And that freedom won’t come from Uncle Sam. It will be conquered in struggle. Class-conscious workers in the United States and other imperialist countries can help this process. We should demand that U.S. and all other foreign troops get out of Iraq now!

Freedom for whom?

In his second inaugural address, George W. Bush used the words “freedom” or “liberty” dozens of times and attempted to claim the moral high ground, presenting Washington as the enemy of tyranny and defender of the oppressed around the world. But freedom for whom?

“America” today is a class-divided society. Bondholders, oilmen, and other capitalist families that rule the United States are indeed free to maximize profits through speeding up production lines, lowering real wages, lengthening the workday and workweek, and cutting back remaining social programs like Social Security. At the same time, workers, farmers, and other exploited producers are free to be wage slaves to the boss or debt slaves to the bank. Civil liberties or democratic rights that do exist are the product of bloody battles by working people—like the civil rights movement—not the benevolence of the capitalist class in all its incarnations, Republican or Democrat.

The ruling class feels free indeed to extend around the globe the class exploitation and national oppression that prevails at home. This is what Washington’s campaign of “nuclear nonproliferation” is all about. Freedom to be the only power to have ever used the atomic bomb, to be seeking first-strike nuclear capacity through “missile defense,” and to produce part of its energy through the nuclear process; and freedom to prevent semicolonial countries from developing access to sources of energy they need—including nuclear power—consigning billions of toilers to long hours of darkness and agricultural and industrial underdevelopment.

Washington’s “free trade” offensive in Latin America and the rest of the world smacks also of the same kind of liberty. Freedom of finance capital to penetrate the economies of the colonial world and buy up its banks, land, and natural resources; and freedom to keep these nations as debt slaves to the good Yankee neighbor.

Just like in the United States, the toiling masses elsewhere

al-Zarqawi saying death is the fitting punishment for any Muslim “apostates” who join in the elections. The statement charged that the election is a “wicked plot to install Shiites in power” and “spread their wicked sect among the people.”

To counter such pro-Baathist propaganda, leaders of the United Iraqi Alliance, an electoral coalition comprising the largest Shiite-led parties, have said that the prime minister of the new government after January 30 will not be a cleric. According to the *Tribune*, there is a less formal agreement that clerics will also be excluded from heading government ministries. “There will be no turbans in the government. Everyone agrees on that,” said Adnan Ali, a leader of the Dawa Party, one of the largest Shiite groups.

Pentagon reveals secret spy operations abroad

Continued from Page 9

Baathist-financed attacks on U.S. and Iraqi troops, Iraqi civilians, as well as numerous other bombings, kidnappings, and beheadings of hostages.

On January 25, a spokesman for Iraq’s interior ministry announced the capture of two of al-Zarqawi’s top aides. One of them, Sami Muhammad Ali Said al-Jaaf, who is accused of having organized numerous car bombings, was reportedly captured January 15. Hassam Hamad Abdullah Muhsin al-Dulaimi, allegedly the “propaganda chief” of al-Qaeda in Iraq, was arrested January 14. Al-Dulaimi said that al-Jaaf had been assigned to organize attacks on polling stations during the elections, according to the Iraqi interior ministry.

The January 25 *International Herald Tribune* quoted

Palestinian police

Continued from front page

reach an agreement very soon.”

“We might give a chance for calm,” Mahmoud Zahar, a leading figure in Hamas, told the press, “but there is a price for that.” Hamas has demanded the release of its members locked up in Israeli jails, and an end to Israeli aggression in the occupied territories. The Associated Press reported that the government of Egypt has offered to host negotiations between Hamas leaders and the Palestinian Authority.

The Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, which has ties to Fatah, the leading organization in the Palestinian Authority, has also gone along with the cease-fire talks. Abu Mohammed, Al Aqsa’s spokesman on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said at a January 22 news conference in Gaza that the group would accept a truce “if it is mutual and if Israel also commits to it.”

Israeli offensive takes toll

Over the past two years, Tel Aviv has decimated the leadership and ranks of many Palestinian organizations—particularly Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which have been in the forefront of the suicide bombing campaign—through systematic assassinations and sweeping arrests including use of “administrative detention.” The latter has meant arrests without charges of Palestinians suspected of involvement in armed resistance to the Israeli occupation. About 7,500 Palestinian political prisoners are currently held in Israeli prisons. Over the past year, Tel Aviv has also carried out large-scale assaults and house-to-house sweeps of Palestinian towns and refugee camps—particularly in the Gaza Strip—aimed at capturing or killing Palestinian fighters and expanding the Israeli Army’s control over the border regions.

This offensive has taken an increasing toll on the Palestinian side. Throughout the four years of the intifada, or uprising, which began in 2000, slightly more than three Palestinians were killed for every Israeli. Last year, however, that rate rose to nearly seven to one. During the recent Palestinian presidential election campaign, Abbas ran on a platform of ending the armed resistance by Palestinians and opening negotiations with the Israeli regime for a “peaceful” settlement of the conflict. No candidate from any of the opponent Palestinian groups mounted a serious challenge to his candidacy, and he was elected with 62 percent of the vote.

The Israeli government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has stated willingness to make secondary concessions to the Palestinian Authority in exchange for securing the long-term viability of the state of Israel and its largest settlements on the West Bank. Concessions include Tel Aviv’s determination to withdraw its 7,500 settlers from Gaza along with the occupation army that has been required to secure their positions. Other moves such as allowing Palestinians more freedom of movement in the occupied territories, ending the targeted assassinations of Palestinian leaders, releasing some of the political prisoners, and giving greater nominal control to the Palestinian Authority over local administration are under discussion.

Tel Aviv’s West Bank land grab

While preparing the Gaza pullout, the Israeli regime remains determined to legitimize its carve-up of Palestinian territory on the West Bank and in Jerusalem through the construction of a steel and concrete wall stretching about 400 miles. Tel Aviv is using the barrier to de facto annex to Israel large portions of the West Bank. About a third of the wall has already been constructed.

The Israeli government invoked the Absentee Property Law last year to claim thousands of acres of land in Jerusalem whose owners are now prevented from farming by the construction of the “security fence.” The land grab could amount to half of all East Jerusalem property, *Haaretz* reported January 21.

“With the recent construction of the fence in the Jerusalem region, Palestinian landholders from Bethlehem and Beit Jala requested permission to continue working their fields, which are within Jerusalem’s municipal jurisdiction,” the Israeli daily said. “The state’s response stated that the lands ‘no longer belong to them, but have been handed over to the Custodian for Absentee Property.’ At stake are thousands of dunam [1 acre=4 dunam] of agricultural land on which Palestinians grew olives and grapes throughout the years.”

Tel Aviv also resumed construction of a particularly controversial section of the barrier deep inside Palestinian territory around the Israeli settlement Ariel in the northern West Bank near Nablus. Residents of the adjacent Palestinian town of Salfit had petitioned an Israeli court against the wall, which cuts across their land. The move came as the Palestinian Authority was negotiating a cease-fire with Hamas and other Palestinian groups, provoking a frustrated response from PA officials.

“How are we going to convince our people and factions that we are trying to end the Israeli occupation while Israel is imposing facts on the ground?” asked Palestinian Authority cabinet minister Saeb Erekat.

In inaugural, Bush invokes ‘freedom,’ pledges to continue imperialist policies

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In a brief inaugural address here January 20, U.S. president George Bush invoked more than 20 times the word “freedom”—a term often used by capitalist politicians to prettify their course of defending Washington’s imperialist interests worldwide—and pledged to continue the policies of his first term. Bush tried to cast U.S. imperialism as a benevolent force around the world whose aim is to “end tyranny” and speak “for the oppressed.”

“America’s influence is not unlimited,” Bush said, “but fortunately for the oppressed, America’s influence is considerable and we will use it confidently in freedom’s cause.” Reiterating Washington’s aggressive approach toward regimes the White House has said are part of an “axis of evil,” such as Iran and north Korea, he said, “We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation, the moral choice between oppression...and freedom.”

“When citizens marched in peaceful outrage under the banner ‘Freedom Now,’ they were acting on an ancient hope that is meant to be fulfilled,” Bush said, speaking three days after the holiday marking the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr. “Our country must abandon all the habits of racism because we cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time.” The remarks gave lip service to the civil rights movement. They also reflected the deep changes throughout the United States that occurred as a result of the fight by Blacks to end Jim Crow segregation in the South.

The inaugural ceremony was opened by former Senate majority leader Trent Lott, in his capacity as chair of the Joint Inaugural Committee. Lott, a Republican senator from Mississippi, unceremoniously stepped down as majority leader in December 2003 following widespread condemnation of racist remarks he made at a 100th birthday gala for the late Senator Strom Thurmond. In

1948, Thurmond was the presidential candidate of the States Rights Democratic Party, also known as the Dixiecrats, whose main program was defense of Jim Crow segregation in the South. In his tribute to Thurmond, Lott said he was “proud” a majority in his state voted for Thurmond in 1948 and that the country would have been “better off” if Thurmond had been elected president.

Bush defended the U.S. assault in Afghanistan and the ongoing war in Iraq. “Our country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfill and would be dishonorable to abandon,” he said. “Because we have acted...tens of millions have achieved their freedom.”

Bush mentioned briefly one of the domestic goals of his administration: Social Security “reform,” that is, creating private pension and health insurance accounts for current and future workers, which individuals would be encouraged to invest in the stock market, and reducing existing retirement benefits now guaranteed by the



Getty Images

Bush with master of ceremonies Senator Trent Lott at January 20 inauguration for second term in Washington.

government. This scheme, which the administration has dubbed “ownership society,” was a central theme of Bush’s 2004 election campaign. “We will widen the ownership of...retirement savings and health insurance, preparing our people for the challenge of life in a free society,” he said. The fact that Bush said this only in passing, and without referring to Social Security explicitly, indicates that the ruling class is far away from pushing through such proposals.

As Bush spoke, thousands of supporters waited along Pennsylvania Avenue where his motorcade would lead the inaugural parade. Hotels in the city were flush with corporate executives and their entourages, who shelled out a combined \$18 million to help finance the inauguration. Some carried signs that read: “Four more years,” “George Bush = Freedom,” and “W is a moral leader.” A sign carried by an opponent of women’s right to choose abortion read: “Free Afghanistan, Iraq, and the unborn.”

Thousands also participated in counter inaugural protests in the city. Organizers of a local group opposed to the Iraq war said more than 500 joined such a rally and march. They were not allowed to march to the White House.

Several thousand participated in a protest organized by the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER) coalition. They carried signs declaring Bush a “war criminal” and calling for his impeachment. The featured speaker was former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, who also recently joined the legal defense team for Saddam Hussein.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Transformation of U.S. Military Strategy: Washington Prepares 21st Century Wars Speaker: Frank Forrestal, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 4. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Program: 7:30 p.m. 4229 S. Central Ave. Donation requested. Tel: (323) 233-9372.

IOWA

Des Moines

The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and the Fight Against Racism Today Speakers: Kevin Dwire, Socialist Workers Party. Video showing from “Eyes on the Prize.” Fri., Feb. 4. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Program 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515)255-1707.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

What America’s Ruling Families Have Not Accomplished; Why They Can’t Push U.S. Labor Off Center Stage Speaker: Steve Clark, Socialist Workers Party National Committee, Sat., Feb. 5. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Program: 8:00 p.m. Suggested donation: Dinner \$7, Program \$8. 138 Bloomfield Ave. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Struggle for Land in Venezuela; Help Get Young People to Caracas This Summer for World Youth Festival Speakers: William Camacarro, Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle; Argiris Malapanis, *Militant* editor; Arrin Hawkins, member, steering committee of National Preparatory Committee on Youth Festival. Slideshow on seizure of El Charcote ranch. Fri., Jan. 28. Dinner 7 p.m. Program 8 p.m. Donation: Dinner \$5. Program \$5. 307 W. 36th St., 10th Fl. north (near 8th Ave.). Tel: (212) 629-6649.

TEXAS

Houston

Political Developments in Venezuela Today: Peasant Struggles Propel Land Reform Forward Speaker: Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 4. Program 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4800 W. 34th St. Suite C51A. Tel: (713) 869-6550.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

“Free Trade” or “Protectionism”—the Stakes for Working People Fri., Feb. 4. Program: 7 p.m. Donation: \$3. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu (upstairs, above laundromat) Tel: (09) 276-8885.

CALENDAR

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Educational Weekend on ‘Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism’ by V.I. Lenin Sponsored by New Jersey Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. Class I. Economic characteristics of imperialist stage of capitalism, Sat., Feb. 5, 2:30 p.m. Class II. Imperialism as a world system, Sun., Feb. 6, 10 a.m. Class III. Imperialism and revolutionary politics, 1:30 p.m.. 138 Bloomfield Ave. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Mission Against Terror New York premiere of documentary film from Cuba on the Cuban Five. Bernie Dwyer, the film’s producer, will be available for the discussion. Thurs., Feb. 3, 7 p.m. New School University, Swayduck Aud., 65 Fifth Ave., Ground Fl. Tel: (212) 633-6646.

LETTERS

Toronto meat strike

I appreciated the *Militant* coverage of the strike last November by workers at Quality Meat Packers in Toronto. I translated one article into French and passed it around to my co-workers. We too are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers.

We were struck by the workers’ efforts to build their unity: the refusal of workers in the cutting room to work beyond the compulsory 9.5 hours; the leaflet drafted by veterans of a previous strike, and translated into Mandarin, which made an appeal for unity to workers hired since that strike; the boycott of a company barbeque; the picket shack which displayed the word “strike” in 19 different languages.

I was therefore surprised when the Union Talk article in the January 25 *Militant* “Lessons of Quality Meat Packers strike in Toronto” didn’t refer in some way to these initiatives. This omission, in an otherwise good article, makes it more difficult to understand those workers who “believe the strike helped us get into a better position to fight when the new contract expires in three years.” It doesn’t help workers seeking a way forward to keep their eyes on the actions of the union members rather than looking to changing unions or to blaming other workers.

The article posed the need for a fighting strategy for the union but didn’t state clearly enough how our fights today contribute to

building that future stronger union. However, it seems to me that the resistance of the QMP workers and their “firmness and discipline,” as well as their modest on-the-job actions and efforts to build unity, *did* point to what’s needed.

The outcome of the strike was similar to that of most strikes these days. The workers weren’t strong enough and were defeated in their attempt to win their demands. But didn’t some of the experiences of this strike help build up that strength and unity for future fights?

Al Cappe
Montreal, Quebec

Peak of ‘Islamism’

The “Reply to a reader” column by Martín Koppel and Maurice Williams in the January 11 issue of the *Militant* (“Why ‘Islamism’ peaked in 1979”) was right on the money.

Absolute clarity on questions like the political degeneration of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the role of Stalinism in the Middle East, and the isolation and desperation of various bourgeois nationalist militias and groupings engaging in individual acts of terror, is welcome and essential. This is of a piece with explaining the real nature of the “insurgency” in Iraq and the need to fight anti-Semitism in the Arab world.

Koppel and Williams point out that “so-called Islamist currents

are not anti-imperialist,” and that “in Afghanistan and Pakistan, bourgeois groups waving the banner of Islam were part of the reactionary forces that waged war against the unpopular invasion of Afghanistan by Moscow.” It seems to me that Islamism got a new lease on life in the 1970s not just due to the exhaustion of secular bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism in the region, but also because of direct intervention of U.S. imperialism, anxious to counter the threat of the Iranian revolution. These currents became “increasingly incapable of offering leadership in anti-imperialist struggles” because of the success of Washington in co-opting them as part of the anti-Soviet guerilla war in Afghanistan. U.S. president James Carter’s administration began meeting with, organizing, and funding mujahedeen forces in that country and in the region some six months before the Soviet invasion.

In a book published last year, titled *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War and the Roots of Terror*, author Mahmood Mamdani details how the CIA collaborated with Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence to set up both madrassas (ideological schools) and military training camps for anti-Soviet Islamic recruits. Mamdani cites the case of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian theologian (who included among his students Osama bin Laden) who “traveled the globe under CIA patronage” drumming

up support among Muslims for a “holy war” against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Azzam was also one of the founders of Hamas, which for a brief period was used by Israel to counter the influence of the secular PLO.

Mamdani quotes a former Israeli military officer who states that in 1986 Tel Aviv “extend(ed) some financial aid to Islamic groups via mosques and religious schools in order to help create a force that would stand against the leftist forces which support the PLO.” Hamas gained a mass following later only after the continued leadership failures of the PLO.

Bill Kalman
Albany, California

Tsunami and charity

The fact that we have so many co-workers, schoolmates, and neighbors with roots in Southeast Asia has given immediacy to the TV images, and added real seriousness to exchanges in my factory workplace on how to respond to charity appeals for tsunami victims.

The *Militant* points out that many employees of charitable organizations live well. Contributions are funneled into their wages and benefits at the expense of the donors’ intended recipients. Many of my co-workers are uneasy about precisely this.

There is another aspect of charity work worth mentioning: even the money that actually reaches the villages, health clinics, and

water wells of tsunami victims, compounds the problem.

Charities use pathetic photos of human suffering to make workers feel sorry for our “poor” brethren elsewhere, and tell us that giving a few dollars is all we can hope to do to make the pain a bit more bearable.

That’s not international solidarity.

Raising charity money has the effect of demobilizing us. Instead of organizing to force imperialist governments to cancel the debt of the five most-affected countries, which stands at \$300 billion, as the *Militant* points out, we organize telethons to raise a few billion. Or let others organize telethons to which we are to contribute.

It’s different when you give money to a strike fund: you’re giving support to fellow workers who are fighting, taking hold of their lives, and you swell their ranks.

That’s what I like about the *Militant*—it keeps you abreast of fellow fighters on the go, and gives you an opportunity to hook up with them.

Katy LeRougetel
Toronto, Ontario

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Meat packers win strike in Denmark

BY CARIN TILLMAN
AND ANDREAS BENGTTSSON

ESBJERG, Denmark—On December 8, about 150 workers at the Danish Crown slaughterhouse in Saeby went on strike to protest a contract signed the previous day between the management of the Tulip sausage factory in Ringsted, which is owned by the same company, and the local branch of the food workers union. That accord included a 15 percent wage cut. The union local at the sausage factory backed it in exchange for a “job guarantee” for the 300 Tulip workers for a little over a year. The company pushed for the deal after threatening to shut down the sausage plant. The December 8 walkout was followed by strikes at 14 slaughterhouses owned by Danish Crown throughout Denmark. More than 3,000 workers took part.

After a week into the strike, which also drew in the workers at the Tulip factory, the bosses gave in and voided the wage cut, and then announced they would shut down the sausage plant. The company began laying off workers in early January.

“It’s unacceptable to lower wages under the threat of closing a plant,” one young worker, who did not give his name, told the *Militant* in an interview outside the Danish Crown slaughterhouse in Ringsted, which is part of the same complex as the Tulip sausage factory there. “It is like revolver politics. They would have moved on to cut the wages of all of us if we had not acted.”

“All workers here are pleased we did this,” added Bjarne, a meat cutter at the same plant. “If we had not walked out, they would have lowered the wages of all workers. A 15 percent cut means a lot lower wages, a big difference. You just can’t live on pay like that.” Many workers interviewed outside the Danish Crown slaughterhouses in Ringsted, Esbjerg, and Grindsted during visits between January 17 and January 20 expressed similar views.

Danish Crown produces 6 percent of all exports from Denmark, and 55 percent of all agricultural exports.

As soon as details of the contract at the Ringsted sausage factory became known on December 8, the walkout started at Saeby. A day later, workers at the slaughterhouse in Grindsted voted 74-39 to go on strike and everyone walked out. At the slaughterhouse in Aalborg the vote was 65-7 in favor of a strike.

Union shop stewards at the plants owned by Danish Crown met December 10. Union officers said the agreement the local union had signed at the Tulip plant was not in line with the national contract, and they gave the company a deadline of December 13 to negotiate a new pact.

By the morning before the deadline, the bosses and the local union signed an agreement. Food workers union national vice president Jens Peter Bostrup said the accord was in line with the national contract. This new agreement, however, would have also meant a wage cut 14-15 percent on average.

“We met in the cafeteria on Monday



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Workers leaving the Danish Crown meat plant in Ringsted, Denmark, January 17.

[December 13], took a vote, and decided to walk out,” said Bjarne Nielsen, a worker on the kill floor in Esbjerg. “We met again on Tuesday morning and voted to continue the strike.”

Strike spreads

On December 13, workers in Skaerbaek, Blans, Odense, and Rødding voted to go on strike as well. Over the next two days the strike spread among workers at Danish Crown plants across the country. By the morning of December 15, workers at the Tulip sausage factory in Ringsted walked out too. With that action, about 3,400 workers in 14 plants were on strike.

“It was the first time in our experience that all 14 Danish Crown slaughterhouses in Denmark struck at the same time: on Jutland, here, in Odense, all over,” said a worker outside the Ringsted slaughterhouse.

“It was quite a show of solidarity,” said another worker in Esbjerg, who is originally from Sweden. “The strike was effective because it was nationwide.”

After workers at the Tulip plant voted to reject the contract and joined the strike, the company backed off and cancelled the wage cut. On December 16, workers at all

the struck plants returned to work.

“Yes, we won the strike,” said several workers at the slaughterhouse in Grindsted, as they rushed in to work the morning of January 20 in the middle of a heavy snow that fell on Jutland that day.

Peter Millsen, a worker in Esbjerg who is being trained as a butcher, said, “It was necessary to strike. We won what we wanted and stopped them from lowering our wages. I feel bad about the workers at Tulip who will now lose their jobs, but they would have lost them anyway.”

The day the strikers returned to work, the bosses at Tulip announced they would close the sausage factory in Ringsted and move production to a plant it owns in Germany. Having given the legally required 21-day warning, on January 7 the company started laying off workers.

“We had to do this!” said Kriste, another worker at the Danish Crown slaughterhouse in Ringsted. “All of us agree, including the workers at Tulip. The workers at Tulip will be offered further training and a chance to get jobs at Danish Crown. That’s part of the agreement. After all, lower wages would only have saved their jobs for 16 more months. They agree with us too that

you can’t stop development. After all, the company has this factory in Germany.”

Workers at Tulip were more ambivalent. “I have no idea what to do now,” Carina Madsen, who had operated a sausage sprayer at the Tulip plant, told a union newspaper. “I hope I will get a chance for further education or training.” She and her husband had just bought a new house and the unemployment pay will make it hard to get by, she said. “In the beginning we were so confused and worried we agreed to the wage cut. But it was not the way forward,” she said, pointing out that the majority of Tulip workers came to the same conclusion.

Discussions on what’s ahead

Many workers interviewed said they expected attacks from the employers to intensify as the bosses try to pit workers in one country against those in another to increase their profits. A number of workers said that labor solidarity across borders is needed to resist the offensive by the bosses.

“We must have similar wages all over the European Union if we shall have an EU,” said Kriste, in Ringsted. “Polish and German workers’ wages must go up.... You need to be able to live on your wages wherever you work.”

“We need the unions more and more but it seems they are getting weaker when we need them the most,” said Bjarne Nielsen, in Esbjerg. “What can you do when companies move out of the country to Poland, for example, because the wages are lower? Globalization must not only be for the employers but for us workers, too!”

“Danish Crown is not like the former owner, they don’t care about the workers,” said a butcher in Esbjerg. “They will try to lower our wages again. That’s just to be expected.”

Nielsen pointed out, however, that Danish Crown workers can be proud of what they accomplished. “And we will do it again, and again, and again,” he said.

On January 19, Danish Crown announced its decision to shut down its slaughterhouse in Hjørring in the north of Jutland. The next day, the 440 workers there walked out to protest the closure. Workers said they expected to be back on the job the following week.

For first time, Cuba is free of tetanus

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

Cuba’s health officials announced this month that no new cases of tetanus were reported in 2004 and another six illnesses remain eradicated. This signifies yet another advance in Cuba’s comprehensive health-care system and evidence of the effectiveness of the national vaccination program initiated in the early days of the revolution to improve the health and well-being of the Cuban people.

Cuba’s systematic immunization campaigns against 13 diseases on the island have contributed greatly to the decline, and, in many cases, eradication, of various communicable and infectious diseases. These include tetanus, measles, polio, and diphtheria.

Cuba’s National News Agency reported January 18 that 410 people died from tetanus in the country in 1962. The figure dropped to 81 in 1970, reached a record low of 3 deaths in 2003, and was zero last year.

“Before the 1959 revolution, there were 500 deaths reported annually from measles, tetanus, and whooping cough; 300 cases of paralysis by polio; and tens of thousands of cases of diseases that could have been prevented by vaccines,” Dr. Miguel Galindo, director of the National Vaccination Program in Cuba, wrote in a 1999 report.

In 1959, workers and farmers in

Cuba overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and established a workers and farmers government—opening the road to socialism in the Americas. The revolutionary government established the Ministry of Public Health in 1960, which initiated campaigns to vaccinate all Cuban school-age children and prevent the spread of preventable diseases.

Galindo emphasized that Cuba’s vaccination program encompassed the entire Cuban population, beginning vaccinations at the primary care level and drawing in the aid of the country’s mass organizations—from trade unions, to student associations, and women’s rights groups.

“Decisive is the word that best describes the participation of community organizations—such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) and the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP),” Galindo said. “Over 80,000 members of these organizations have actively worked on the national vaccination drives.” As with all other health-care services in Cuba, these immunizations are free and provided in every region of the country.

The development of Cuba’s biotechnology industry has also helped. According to a January 18 article in *Trabajadores*, the newspaper of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country’s biotechnology industry today produces 7 out of 10 vaccines used throughout the island. Cuban laboratories first developed a men-

ingitis B vaccine in 1999, and in July 2004 they produced a vaccine that stimulates the immune system against lung cancer cells. MEDICC review, a health and medical online newsletter, reports that Cuba’s Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center is developing a plant-generated antibody to more cheaply generate vaccines and replace the use of laboratory animals. Work is also underway to produce synthetic vaccines that protect against infant meningitis and pneumonia, saving the country “\$2–3 million a year in imports,” according to *Granma Internacional*, a weekly published in Havana.

Tetanus is commonly referred to as lock-jaw because as the tetanus toxins spread throughout the body they cause muscle spasms and stiffness in the neck and jaw. Tetanus is an acute, often fatal disease of the nervous and respiratory system, with a 50 percent mortality rate worldwide.

Despite the existence of a vaccine for the disease since 1924, there are 1 million cases reported annually, mostly in semicolonial countries where these vaccinations are costly and rare. The disease is contracted when individuals with puncture wounds or cuts are exposed to toxins bred in unsanitary conditions. According to the World Health Organization, tetanus commonly occurs during childbirth under non-sterile conditions. The *Jakarta News* said that an outbreak of tetanus has occurred in Indonesia’s Aceh province, the area most devastated by the recent tsunami that killed hundreds of thousands of people.

To Speak the Truth

Why Washington’s
‘Cold War’
against Cuba
Doesn’t End

In historic speeches
before UN bodies,
Che Guevara and Fidel
Castro address the
workers of the world,
explaining why the U.S.
government so hates
the example set by
the socialist revolution
in Cuba and why
Washington’s effort to
destroy it will fail. \$16.95

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

