Dock workers’ union suspends threat of strike, talks continue

Bosss agree to shelve some concession demands

By Naomi Crair

The International Longshoremen’s Association agreed to a one-month contract extension Dec. 28, on the eve of a strike deadline that could have shut down 14 ports from Maine to Texas. ILA President Harold Daggett said the union had reached agreement with the shipping bosses on one of the key issues in the negotiations.

The master contract, covering 14,500 longshore workers on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, expired Sept. 30. Work, and negotiations with the participation of a federal mediator, had continued under a previous 90-day extension.

FBI documents reveal US rulers’ motives for spying against ‘Occupy’

By John Studer

Recently released FBI documents show the extent of its spying against “Occupy” protest activities, as well as the involvement of other police agencies and private cops in these operations, and their special concern about any support among Occupy activists for labor fights and other social struggles in the interests of working people.

After a year of stonewallng, the Continued on page 7

Both sides of the ‘gun debate’ target rights of workers

By Louis Martin

The Dec. 14 killing of 26 elementary school students and staff at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Conn., has sparked sharp debate among politicos and pundits from the left and right of bourgeois politics. But all the proposed “solutions,” from gun control to expansion of armed cops in the schools, share a common target—the rights of working people.

Calls for more gun control have been led by liberal figures like New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Sen. Dianne Feinstein from California. President Barack Obama asked Congress to reinstate an assault weapons ban that expired in 2004 and to pass legislation that would impose a background check on any person purchasing firearms from private sellers. Obama assigned Vice President Joseph Biden to lead the charge for restrictions on gun and ammunition purchases.


From the other side of the bourgeois debate, Wayne LaPierre, National Rifle share on page 9

Commentary

Expanding US military presence, alliances in Asia aimed at China

By Brian Williams

Washington is stepping up its military deployments, war games and alliances in the Asia-Pacific region, including with Tokyo where recent elections brought back into power the Liberal Democratic Party led by Shinzo Abe, who calls for taking a tougher line against China and remilitarizing Japan.

The Pentagon has begun a five-year program to deploy stealth, radar-evading warplanes to bases within striking range of China. This includes Air Force F-22s and B-2s and Marine Corps F-35s, reports Wired.com.

The U.S. Army is also ramping up exercises in the Pacific with “as many as 15,000 soldiers to train in places such as South Korea, Japan, India, New Zealand and Australia,” reported the Army Times Dec. 12. “And that’s just the beginning.”

Among exercises in the works are Balikatan, involving about 2,850 U.S. soldiers in the Philippines in April, and Gema Bhakti, to be conducted in Bangladesh and is conducting “land force talks with Vietnam,” the Times reported.

As part of long-term efforts to Continued on page 6

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Texas: SWP takes campaign for state senate to door for 4

US Army assigns brigade to expand operations in Africa 6

Cops, prisons arise to enforce capitalist order 7

Fall ‘Militant’ subscription campaign

Final results

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*New to scoreboard †Raised goal

This is how many subscribed to the Militant during the international campaign to expand circulation of the socialist newswEEKLY among workers on revolutionary working-class poli-
India: Rape, killing sparks protests for women’s rights

BY EMMA JOHNSON

The gang rape and killing of a 23-year-old student in India has sparked protests there against abuse of women on a scale not seen before. Government authorities—took off guard by the scope of public outrage, media coverage and international attention—responded with attacks and restrictions on demonstrations.

Six men raped the young woman, whose name has not been released, in a bus in New Delhi Dec. 16. Using an iron rod they beat her and a male friend, a software engineer. The assault went on for an hour before the two were dumped in a ditch. The woman, suffering massive internal injuries and brain damage, died Dec. 29.

In the days following the assault, thousands of people took to the streets, protesting in front of parliament and police headquarters. University students set up roadblocks across the city, causing massive traffic jams.

“There has been a huge reaction, almost like an eruption,” Sudha Sundararaman, general secretary of the All India Democratic Women’s Association, told the Militant in a phone interview from New Delhi. “I think the sheer brutality of the assault was one of the reasons people reacted. It was barbaric.” Her group has been one of the organizers of the demonstrations.

Organizers of the protests demanded that the court speed up the progress of some 100,000 rape cases; that the police register rape complaints promptly; that parliament hold a special session to discuss. The Militant, Jan. 14, 2013, p. 2

that the police register rape complaints promptly; and that they likely will also be charged with gang rape, abduction and destruction of evidence.

The woman had her roots in a village in the state of Uttar Pradesh, but lived in New Delhi, where she was studying to become a physical therapist. “This is one of the few options for our young women to better their situation in life,” Sundararaman said. “Her family had made big economic sacrifices to make this possible for her.”

City authorities responded with a ban on protests. Government officials pleaded on national TV for people to stay home. Demonstrations, especially in middle-class areas, continued despite the ban and peaked Dec. 23.

Police fired tear gas and water cannons, beat protesters with bamboo sticks and arrested dozens.

“This is how they are responding,” Kulsom Rashid, 27, said to the New York Times Dec. 23 after being tear-gassed. “Hundreds of rapists are running scot-free, and the entire Delhi police is standing here to stop people like me.” By late afternoon, political parties had joined the crowd and clashes with police intensified.

After the woman’s death, authorities deployed thousands of cops, closed 10 subway stations and banned vehicles from the main roads in the heart of Delhi to stop further protests. Despite the corollary of the city center, more than 1,000 people gathered at two locations. Marchers also took place in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and other cities around the country.

Sundararaman said the anger has been building up over a period. “When this happened it all came together, it became too much. Earlier we organized a big protest in Haryana, a state bordering Delhi, after there were 38 rapes within three weeks in October.”

Reported crimes against women are on the rise as many leave their homes and villages to join the workforce. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, a woman is raped every 20 minutes across the nation. The reported number has increased 10 percent in the last 10 years, with a great proportion going unreported.

According to Sundararaman women are stepping forward, especially young women. “They demand their rights, they don’t accept being blamed for abuses done to them. They demand their place in public life without victimization.”

Four of the accused live in Ravi Dus Camp, one of New Delhi’s working-class slums. Area residents told Reuters they joined in speaking out against the brutal attack.

Meera, a 45-year-old neighbor of one of the accused youth, said she wanted to join the street protests, but was too scared to do so.

India: Rape, killing sparks protests for women’s rights

The Militant, Jan. 14, 2013, p. 2

Protest in New Delhi Dec. 22 against rape of woman who was attacked week before and died from injuries Dec. 29. Women “demand their place in public life without victimization,” said Sudha Sundararaman, general secretary of the All India Democratic Women’s Association.
Special offers

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning by Jack Barnes

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity."

$2 with a subscription to the Militant (usually $3)

Women in Cuba: The Making of a Revolution Within the Revolution by Ylma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer

"About the millions of working people—men and women, of all ages—who have made the socialist revolution, and how their actions transformed them as they fought to transform their world."

$10 with subscription (usually $20)

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes

Why the "revolutionary conquest of state power by a poetically conscious and organized vanguard of the working class millions strong—is necessary."

$10 with subscription (usually $20)

The Cuban Five: Who They Are, Why They Were Framed, Why They Should Be Free

Articles, interviews from the Militant

"We know that right is on our side, but to win we need a jury of millions throughout the world to make our truth known."—Genaro Hernández

$3 with subscription (usually $5)

See distributors on page 8

Expanding readership

Continued from front page

tics among working people.

Congratulations to all Militant readers and distributors whose efforts during the fall drive won more readers than similar campaigns over the last two decades!

And a warm welcome to all our new readers!

The campaign puts the communist movement on a strong footing to maintain steady weekly distribution of the paper with a focus on selling door to door in working-class neighborhoods—the bedrock of the drive.

“The center piece of the campaign was just knocking on as many doors as possible,” Edwin Fruit wrote from Seattle. “We did it in nine different neighborhoods here and in nearby Tacoma, Wash.” Readers in Seattle sold 215 subscriptions, about half of them door to door.

A striking feature of the drive was the number of readers who joined for the first time.

High school student Jesus Landeros participated in almost every Saturday sale as well as in several weekday outings in Los Angeles. “I found going door to door was the best way to get to know people and follow up with them,” he said.

He also organized for three prisoners in a local jail to begin receiving the paper, helping to more than triple our initial goal of 500 subscriptions to workers behind bars, another major achievement of the campaign.

Mekye Simms, 28, is a teaching assistant in Manchester, England. She has been reading the Militant since the summer of 2011 and decided to join the subscription campaign, including door to door.

“The majority of people we speak to are in the same boat as us, working long hours, pay freezes, and so on. I hadn’t expected this to be so widespread. Quite a few say something needs to be done,” she said, describing her experience. “This time I did it a little differently. I hadn’t expected to be invited into someone’s house to talk about the Militant. Some people have similar views to us, but others not at all.”

A couple of years ago at an immigrant rights demonstration in New York construction worker Marno Otzoy Chocojyaj bought the Militant and a subscription to the Communist League party, the SWP depends on contributions from its readers and distributors whose efforts help to finance the special book offers with a subscription. (See ad on this page.)

And dozens of subscribers, readers and other workers contributed hundreds of dollars to the Socialist Workers Party fund drive. A revolutionary workers’ party, the SWP depends on contributions like these and others to finance its work, which includes circulating the Militant.

Well received by union fighters

The subscription campaign was well received by workers involved in union battles against the bosses.

During the drive, “we sold 16 subscriptions to strikers at the Pioneer Flour Mill in San Antonio, nine of them renewals;” Amanda Ulman wrote from Houston. Members of Teamsters Local 657 have been on strike since April 2011 against an attempt by the company to jack up their health care costs.

Diana Newberry reported that 16 workers involved in a fight against American Crystal Sugar signed up, including nine renewing their subscriptions. In August 2011 the company locked out 1,300 employees at its plants in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa in a concerted effort to impose a major concessions contract.

Clayton Bronson, an American Crystal worker in Drayton, N.D., sold one of the subscriptions. He joined the campaign at the end of November.

The Militant calls on its readers and distributors to take advantage of the momentum of the last five weeks of the campaign and what it confirms about the interest among working people to pursue a socialist, worker-controlled and worker-owned economy. A good place to start would be in neighborhoods with a concentration of new subscribers.

This effort will be complemented and reinforced by local Socialist Workers Party and Communist League election campaigns. Already under way are campaigns in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles and Omaha, Neb.

Distributors can ask new readers who value the paper to join in expanding its readership and introduce others to books published by Pathfinder Press.

The Militant will continue to promote the special book offers with a subscription, including to recent subscribers who would like to take advantage of them.

As circulation director, I urge you to continue sending your reports, quotes and experiences. This column will keep providing weekly coverage of the international effort to continue expanding the Militant’s readership.

If you want to join, you can order a bundle or subscription blanks at the-militant@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

Miltiand Jacob Perasso

Meta Felt, left, signed up for subscription as Maura DeLuca, SWP candidate for mayor of Omaha, Neb., campaigned door to door Dec. 11. Felt bought the four books on special offer.

an acquaintance. Militant readers sold 65 percent of their subscriptions door to door in Minneapolis and the surrounding region.

During the campaign, Militant readers and distributors sold hundreds of copies of four books on revolutionary working-class politics that were and still are offered a weeklong door-to-door subscription. (See ad on this page.)

And dozens of subscribers, readers and other workers contributed hundreds of dollars to the Socialist Workers Party fund drive. A revolutionary workers’ party, the SWP depends on contributions like these and others to finance its work, which includes circulating the Militant.

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Texas: SWP takes campaign for state senate door to door

BY STEVE WARSHELL
HOUSTON—Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party in Houston have begun campaigning door-to-door for Jacqueline Henderson, the party’s candidate in the special election called for the 6th Texas Senatorial District on the East Side of Houston. Henderson is a factory worker in the electronics industry.

The election was set by Texas Gov. Rick Perry after the incumbent, Mario Gallegos, died shortly before being elected in November.

Henderson is running against a field of four Democrats, two Republicans, and a Green Party candidate. The entire campaign will last five weeks, barring a run-off election if no candidate wins a majority of the vote on January 26.

Door-to-door campaigners have met up with scores of workers who have bought the Militant newspaper.

“Supporters also took the campaign to the streets,” said Christy Mendoza, a member of the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance at University of Texas-Pan American in the Rio Grande Valley.

“It is refreshing to see a candidate who is part of the struggles of working people and who stands alongside, fighting discrimination, low wages, and the oppression of the ‘new international’ class,” Mendoza and other members of the RSA are planning to campaign with Henderson in Houston.

Supporters took the campaign to workers at the port of Houston Dec. 29 and spoke with members of the International Longshoremen’s Association—ILA. Activists canvassed longshore workers and stevedoring bosses.

The day before, their fight for a new contract had been extended another 35 days.

“I’m concerned about the strike because we’re all in debt and, with the economy the way it is, there’s nowhere else to work,” longshoreman Felix Ramirez told the Militant. “This is not a lockout,” the bosses said in a public statement. “The companies informed the union that ILWU members are welcome to come to work under the new terms and conditions of employment.”

In announcing the contract extension, which will expire Feb. 6, Daggett said that agreement had been reached with the shipping bosses on the royalty payment in principle and that negotiations were continuing on the remaining issues, including wages and payments to the health fund.

Ken Reney, a member of ILA Local 1416 in the 13 years in Miami, told the Militant outside the ILA hiring hall here Dec. 29 that he was in favor of going on strike if an agreement wasn’t reached, because “something’s got to be done.” He said, “They don’t stop pushing. When the economy’s down, those companies don’t lose.”

In the weeks leading up to the strike deadline, a barrage of articles in the big-business press painted the longshore workers as greedy, corrupt, and whose actions could lead to ruin-

Continued from front page

Northwest longshore workers in contract fight

Three major grain handling companies on the West Coast declared an “impasse” in contract negotiations and unilaterally imposed their “last, best and final” contract offer on 3,000 members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union at four terminals in Oregon and Washington Dec. 27.

The photo above shows tugboats staffed by nonunion crews ready to dock grain ships if a strike occurs. Inset, a new entrance to terminal set up in Port of Portland, Ore., in preparation to bring in replacement workers.

“There is no lockout,” the bosses said in a public statement. “The companies informed the union that ILWU members are welcome to come to work under the new terms and conditions of employment.”

Union members had rejected the contract by a 94 percent vote several days earlier. The previous contract expired Sept. 30. The union contends the contract contains some 750 concessions, Farm Futures magazine reported, including issues of union control over jobs and work rules.

The companies—Marubeni Corp., Matsu & Co. and Louis Dreyfus Commodities—load grain at shipping terminals in Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, Wash.

The fourth member of the Pacific Northwest Grain Handlers Association—Temco, a joint venture of Cargill and CHS Inc.—reportedly decided not to unilaterally implement the contract demands and is continuing to negotiate with the ILA. The four companies move half of all U.S. wheat exports and more than a quarter of all U.S. grain exports through these terminals, much to the expanding Asian market.

—JOHN STUDE
Israel: Nurses win pay hike, cellphone workers fight for union.

A 17-day strike by 28,000 nurses at hospitals and clinics in Israel ended Dec. 20 after the Finance Ministry agreed to a monthly 1,400 shekel increase ($375) in the base wage, spread over the next four and a half years.

“This means that the percentage in-
crease is higher for junior nurses than
for those with more seniority,” Uri Fleischmann, director general of the Israel Nurses Union, told the Militant in a phone interview from Tel Aviv.

The government also agreed to ex-
pand nursing schools and grant more scholarships to nursing students.

Making sure that nurses at the bot-
tom of the pay scale got as big a wage increase as those at the top should at-
tract more workers to take up nursing and help alleviate a shortage of nurses, Fleischmann said, one of the main goals of the strike.

There are 58,360 nurses in Israel, a rate of about 4.76 nurses per 1,000 peo-
pel. In the U.S. there are 10.8 per 1,000.

While most nurses in Israel are Jewish, nursing is one of the main occupa-
tions of Palestinian women who work.

There were banners in both Hebrew and Arabic at many strike support rallies.

“We don’t really care whether work-
ers are Jewish, Christian, or Muslim,” Fleischmann said. “We are very happy
that all the nurses joined in a unified struggle and happy with their accom-
plishment.”

Meanwhile, 800 workers at privately owned Pelephone Communications Ltd., one of the top three cellphone compa-

nies in Israel, went on strike Dec. 10 after the company refused to recognize or negotiate with the Histadrut union federation.

“Under Israeli law, after you get the
signature of one-third of the workers
the company is supposed to recognize or negotiate with the Histadrut union federation.

“We have 1,533 signatures out of 4,000

workers. In the U.S. it would be 1,058. Pay, the CEO has started a war against the work-
ers.” Among those who joined the union are technicians who fix cellphones, soft-
ware engineers, warehouse workers and
customer service representatives.

The average wage at the company is about 5,500 to 6,500 shekels a month, Salha said. “Child care is 2-5,000 shekels. How can you live on that?” Job security is also a key issue, he said, in the face of possible mergers with other companies.

“One hundred percent of the Arab workers at the call center in Umm al-
Fahm joined the strike,” he noted. “Now
the company is saying they might shut down the center because it’s a security risk. How can it be a security risk?”

“We want to get recognized as a union. That is a basic human right,” Salah said. “It’s only a matter of time.”

Workers at other cellphone compa-

nies have been contacting the strikers, saying they would help getting a union where they work.

Pelephone did not return calls re-
questing comment.

—Seb Galitsky

Rally backs Miami Teamsters on strike against Blue.Linx

MIAMI—“Hey, hey, ho, ho, Donald Stover’s got to go!” chanted striking members of Teamsters Local 769 and their supporters at a Dec. 19 rally here outside Blue.Linx, a distributor of con-
struction materials and building prod-
ucts. Stover is the warehouse manager.

About 60 people walked the picket line at a rally called by the South Florida AFL-CIO.

The strikers include three drivers and six warehouse workers. They walked off the job after their union rep was thrown off company property Nov. 30 while the union and company were in contract negotiations. Two other workers have crossed the picket line. Blue.Linx has also been trying to hire back temps and has brought in full-time workers from their nonunion North Carolina facility.

“We all have families and all have mortgages. But being on strike is about fighting for what you believe in. It’s about fighting for what your rights are,” shop steward Henry Ka told the Militant.

Jose Albo, a Teamster who works for Avis Budget rental car company near the airport, attended and comes by the picket line regularly. “I come to support my brothers and sisters. You never know when you’re going to need some help.”

—Tom Baumann

Teammsters in Washington state

strike United Natural Foods

SEATTLE—Nearly 100 members of Teamsters Local 117 and their sup-
porters rallied outside Whole Foods here Dec. 19, asking customers to show solidarity with 163 warehouse work-
ers and drivers on strike at the United Natural Foods Inc. facility in Auburn by not purchasing products delivered by the organic food distributor.

The union first struck Dec. 10-12 over UNFI’s refusal to negotiate a new con-
tract. The previous pact expired Feb. 29, 2012, and had been extended through the end of August.

The workers agreed to go back to work on a good faith basis after the three-day strike. But when union members report-
ed for their shift, bosses insisted the union that 72 workers on night shift had been terminated. On Dec. 13, everyone then walked off the job, refusing to work until the fired workers were reinstated.

“We won’t go back until the 72 work-
ers are given their jobs back,” Brenda West, an organizer for Local 117, told the Militant.

According to the International Labor Rights Forum in Washington, D.C., UNFI has “engaged in serious viola-
tions of workers’ rights of association at its Moreno Valley [Calif.] and Auburn facilities.” A report by the group ac-
cuses managers of threatening violence against and firing of workers involved in a unionization effort at the California fa-
cility where the Teamsters lost an elec-
tion last May.

The report also says that at its Auburn facility UNFI began hiring nonunion contract workers in May through Roadlink, a temporary agen-
cy.

UNFI is now using temporary work-
ers as scab labor and its other facilities to maintain shipments normally sup-
plied through the Auburn warehouse.

“Drivers have crossed the picket

telines, Dottie Dunthorn, one of 45 drivers at the Auburn plant, told the Militant.

On the picket line Dec. 27 in Auburn, Gary Watkins said the strike has helped forge solidarity among workers, who come from the U.S., Philippines, Ukraine, Panama, Vietnam and Pacific Islands. “The company has increased from 12 to 20 the number of orders per hour that are required of workers. And if you are a smoker, you have to pay an additional $650 a year for insurance,” he said.

Strikers received 700 pounds of food donated by Occupy Seattle, ac-
cording to Michelle Woodrow, a Local 117 staff person. Workers for City of

Pacific, also members of Teamsters Local 117, brought firewood for the burn barrels to the picket line Dec. 27.

The company has not returned phone calls requesting comment.

—Edwin Fruit

—Militant


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Socialist Appeal

The Socialist Workers Party could not have been founded at a more cru-
cial moment. The American working class is facing to face with a heavy em-
ployers' onslaught upon its standard of living, already badly undermined by years of crisis and depression. The only solution that the wisest of the capital-

ist statesmen, Roosevelt, has been able to offer to the problem of hunger is to
cut down the production of food. Now, with a new depression leading towards a sharper crisis, the capitalists, whose
rule Roosevelt has been bent on pre-
serving, are proceeding to throw new hundreds of thousands of out of work and to cut wages of those they continue to employ.

The most powerful capitalistic nation of the earth has proved incapable of feed-
ing, clothing and housing the masses of the population. The existing social sys-
tem is bankrupt and awaits only the rev-
olutionary action of the working class.

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ON THE PICKET LINE

The Militant January 14, 2013 5
US Army assigns brigade to expand operations in Africa
UN authorizes military action in northern Mali

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Pentagon has assigned an Army brigade to send groups of soldiers into as many as 35 African countries in 2013 to train allied militaries and “give the U.S. a ready and trained force to dispatch to Africa if crises requiring the U.S. military emerge,” reported Associated Press. The first-of-its-kind brigade assignment is part of a renewed effort by Washington to strengthen its influence throughout the continent that began with the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command in 2007.

Among the countries mentioned by AP are Libya, Sudan, Algeria, Niger, Kenya, and Uganda. “Already the U.S. military has plans for nearly 100 different exercises, training programs, and other activities across the widely diverse continent,” the news agency noted. The brigade has some surveillance and armed aerial drones at its disposal.

While the stated focus is on training, the U.S. forces could conduct military operations upon approval from the secretary of defense.

Teams from the Army’s 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division deployed to each country could range from a few to a company of about 200, or in certain cases a battalion of about 800, notes AP. Army brigades are made up of roughly 3,500 troops.

Since 2007, Washington has been conducting surveillance over wide swaths of Africa from about a dozen air bases set up on the continent, an unnamed former senior U.S. commander told the Washington Post last June. Most have been operating out of secluded hangars at African military bases or civilian airports. A key hub is based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, for the U.S. Joint Special Operations Air Detachment operations out of the city’s airport. In East Africa, U.S. armed drones conduct strikes targeting Islamist groups. Shabab in Somalia—from North Korea and large parts of China. In a provocative move, the Japanese government in September bought islands from their private owners.

After a small Chinese propeller plane flew near the island Dec. 13, the Japanese military dispatched eight F-15 fighter planes to the area. They arrived after the plane had already left the islands’ territorial airspace.

The Chinese plane “wasn’t a military aircraft,” reported the Wall Street Journal. “Warmed by a Japanese patrol ship not to enter Japan’s airspace, it replied, ‘This is Chinese airspace,’ Japan’s coast guard said.”

U.S.-Japan military ties

In August the U.S. and Japanese governments signed an agreement to deploy drones to monitor Chinese activity in the East China Sea. The following month Tokyo and Washington agreed to deploy a second major advanced missile defense radar on Japanese territory.

With the Exercise Tomodachi planned to be placed in the Philippines, it will be possible to track ballistic missiles launched from North Korea and large parts of China. In November, Washington and Tokyo conducted a 12-day joint military exercise involving some 37,000 Japanese and 10,000 U.S. military personnel, according to Japan’s Defense Ministry.

These actions build upon a new U.S.-Japan defense-cooperation agreement signed in April that “calls for strengthening ‘interoperability’ between U.S. and Japanese forces, and building permanent training facilities on Guam and in the nearby Northern Mariana Islands,” reported the Journal. “Such facilities will mark the first permanent post for the Japanese military within U.S. territory since World War II.”

At the same time, the presence of 26,000 U.S. troops in Okinawa remains unpopular among many working people in Japan. The Pentagon imposed a curfew for all U.S. soldiers in Japan after sailors were arrested and charged by Japanese authorities with raping and robbing an Okinawan woman outside the Kadena Air Base in October.

In the Dec. 16 parliamentary elections, the Liberal Democratic Party beat the ruling Democratic Party of Japan. While its popular vote was only 30 percent, the LDP won 294 out of 480 seats, up from 118 in the 2009 vote.

The Liberal Democrats ruled Japan for nearly half a century until being defeated by the Democratic Party of Japan in the last election.

LDP leader Abe was named prime minister Dec. 26, a post he resigned from six years ago after serving a one-year stint. Abe campaigned for a more nationalist foreign policy, increasing military spending and vowing to rewrite Japan’s constitution, which was imposed on the country under U.S. occupation after World War II and limits Tokyo’s use of its armed forces abroad.

Japan’s Self Defense Forces, however, are among the world’s largest armed forces, with annual military spending ranking sixth in the world last year—in Asia second only to China—according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Washington is also increasing its military presence in the Philippines, with more U.S. troops and increased stopovers by U.S. warships for training and exercises, reports Agence France-Presse. A rotating force of 600 U.S. special forces has been stationed in the southern Philippines since 2002.

Philippine Foreign Minister Albert del Rosario has also called for use of Japanese armed forces in the Pacific region, despite the fact that the country was occupied by Tokyo during World War II.

In addition to Tokyo, the government of the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam are involved in territorial disputes with Beijing in the South China Sea.

China claims sovereignty over all land inside the South China Sea, including more than 40 islands. In June Beijing set up a new national pre-facility headquartered in the Paracel Islands, which Hanoi also lays claim to. The following month China’s Central Military Commission announced it would deploy a garrison of soldiers to guard the islands in the area.

In another development, the Barack Obama administration is planning to sell four Global Hawk surveillance drones to Seoul, the first sale of this aircraft in the Asia-Pacific region, reports al Jazeera.

This proposal comes less than two weeks after the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea launched a satellite into orbit Dec. 12, which the White House condemned as “a highly provocative act.”

Washington deepens military ties with Tokyo

WASHINGTON—The Pentagon has assigned an Army brigade to send groups of soldiers to as many as 35 African countries in 2013 to train allied militaries and "give the U.S. a ready and trained force to dispatch to Africa if crises requiring the U.S. military emerge," reported Associated Press. The first-of-its-kind brigade assignment is part of a renewed effort by Washington to strengthen its influence throughout the continent that began with the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command in 2007.

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FBI spying on Occupy

Continued from front page

The FBI turned over dozens of heavily redacted documents to the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, a civil liberties law firm, concerning spying and monitoring of Occupy activities.

On Dec. 21 the government released approximately 50 pages of internal FBI documents related to the Occupy movement. The documents were requested under the Freedom of Information Act by the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund. The release came after the FBI had repeatedly refused to turn over documents to the group.

The FBI’s actions are at the center of a lawsuit brought by the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund against the FBI. The lawsuit was filed in federal court in New York City on Dec. 21.

In 2011, the FBI was caught red-handed monitoring Occupy activists across the country. In August 2011, the month Occupy protesters began to take the streets in major cities, the FBI confirmed that it was engaging in surveillance of the movement. The FBI’s actions were revealed in a court filing in a lawsuit brought by the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund against the FBI.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court in New York City on Dec. 21. The Partnership for Civil Justice Fund, a civil liberties law firm, brought the lawsuit on behalf of a group of Occupy activists.

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How 1959 Cuban Revolution ended US domination of island

Below are excerpts from Fidel Castro’s September 1960 address to the U.N. General Assembly, included in To Speak the Truth: Why Washington’s “Cold War” Against Cuba Doesn’t End, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for January.

To speak the truth: Why Washington’s “Cold War” Against Cuba Doesn’t End

The Militant is reprinting the excerpts on the occasion of the 54th anniversary of the Jan. 1, 1959, Cuban Revolution that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship and brought the working class to power, opening the socialist revolution in the Americas. Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

By Fidel Castro

The military group that tyrannized our country was based on the most reactionary sectors of the nation and, above all, on the foreign interests that dominated our economy.

Fulgencio Batista’s government based on force was the type most suited to the U.S. monopolies in Cuba, but it was obviously not the type most suited to the Cuban people. Therefore, the Cuban people, at a great cost in lives, threw that government out. What “miracles” did the revolution find when it came to power in Cuba?

First of all, the revolution found that 600,000 Cubans, able and ready to work, were unemployed—as many, proportionally, as were jobless in the United States during the Great Depression that shook this country, and which almost produced a catastrophe here. This is what we confronted in my country—permanent unemployment. Three million out of a population of a little more than six million had no electricity, possessing none of its advantages and comforts. Three and a half million … lived in huts, in shacks, and in slums, without the most minimal sanitary facilities. In the cities, rents took almost one-third of family income. Electricity rates and rents were among the highest in the world. Some 37.5 percent of our population were illiterate; 70 percent of the rural children lacked teachers. … Public services, the electricity and telephone companies, all belonged to U.S. monopolies. A major portion of banking, importing, and oil refining; the majority of sugar production; the best land, and the most important industries in all fields in Cuba belonged to U.S. companies. …

What was there for the revolutionary government? To betray the people? As far as the president of the United States is concerned, of course, what we have done is a betrayal of our people. And he surely would not have considered it a betrayal if, rather than being true to its people, the revolutionary government had instead been true to the monopolies that were exploiting Cuba.

The revolutionary government began to take its first steps. The first was a 50 percent reduction in rents paid by families. … [T]he people rushed into the streets rejoicing, as they would in any country—even here in New York—if rents were reduced by 50 percent for all families. … Then another law was passed, a law cancelling the concessions that had been granted by the Batista dictatorship to the telephone company—company, which was a U.S. monopoly. … The third measure was the reduction of electricity rates, which had been among the highest in the world. This led to the second conflict with the U.S. monopolies. …

Then came another law, an essential law, an inevitable law—inevitable for the Cuban people and inevitable, sooner or later, for all of the peoples of the world, at least those who have not done so. This was the Agrarian Reform Law.

In our country it was indispensable. More than 200,000 peasant families lived in the countryside without land with which to plant essential food-stuffs. Without agrarian reform our country could not have taken the first step toward development. And we took that step. Was it a radical agrarian reform? Was it radical? Yes, it was a radical agrarian reform. Was it very radical? No, it was not a very radical agrarian reform. We knew that an agrarian reform adjusted to the needs of our development, to the possibilities of agricultural development. …

The landlords and indemnities came up. Notes from the U.S. State Department began to rain down on Cuba. They never asked us about our problems, not even to express sympathy or because of their responsibility in creating the problems. … Every conversation we had with the representatives of the U.S. government centered around the telephone company, the electricity company, and the problem of the land owned by U.S. companies. The question they asked was how we were going to pay. …

They demanded three things: prompt, adequate, and effective compensation. Did they understand that language? “Prompt, adequate, and effective compensation.” That means, “Pay this instant, in dollars, and at interest.”

We were not 150 percent communists at that time. [Laughter] We just appeared slightly pink. We were not conforming laws; we simply proposed to pay for it in twenty years, and in the only way we could—by bonds that would mature in twenty years, at 4.5 percent interest and annually. How could we have paid for this land in dollars? How could we have paid on the spot, and how could we have paid whatever they asked? It was absurd.

It is obvious that under those circumstances, we had to choose between either carrying through an agrarian reform or not doing so. If we chose not doing so then our country’s dreadful economic situation would continue indefinitely. And if we did carry out the agrarian reform, then we faced incurring the enmity of the government of the powerful neighbor to the north. We chose to carry out the agrarian reform.

Solidarity with longshore workers coast to coast

Longview workers across the country face attacks on long-held and hard-won gains in wages and union control over hiring and working conditions. Whatever the outcome of current disputes—from port workers organized by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union at grain terminals in the Northwest to International Longshoremen’s Association-organized workers from Texas to Maine—their assaults on the docks has just begun. These attacks are part of a larger offensive by the bosses to wipe out their profit margins on the backs of working people during a worldwide historic crisis of capitalism.

Along with their anti-union assault, the bosses are pressing a propaganda offensive designed to weaken solidarity. Part of this anti-labor campaign involves highlighting (and often exaggerating) the relatively higher wages of certain sections of the working class under assault. The purpose is to foster resentment and divisions within the working class that the bosses are concerned if they cause the union problems, they will be wearing cement shoes in the river; “International Shipping News wrote in September.

What the capitalists are concerned about is engaging a battle they might not win and the “bad” example that would provide. That’s what happened last year in Longview, Wash., where EGT Development opened a new grain terminal and refused to use union labor.

The simmering disputes on the docks over the last couple years have brought two things to the fore. First, the fact that the government is the state power of the employing class comes through clearly—from threats to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act; to restrictions on pickets; to the role of federal “mediators,” cops and court violence. Second is the class nature of the labor movement employed in the Longview fight. Second is the potential power of organized working-class resistance to shut down production, win broad support and push the bosses back.

Solidarity with the dockworkers! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Both sides of ‘gun debate’ target rights of working people

Continued from front page

Association executive director, opposed the call for government restrictions on guns in a Dec. 21 press conference and instead demanded the government post armed cops in every public school across the country and maintain an “active national database of the mentally ill.”

“The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun,” he said, “is a good guy with a gun.”

LaPierre blamed the Connecticut rampage on the media, Hollywood and the “gun enemakers,” which he referred to as a “corrupting shadow industry that sells and sows violence against its own people,” according to The Los Angeles Times.

Joe Arpaio, sheriff of Maricopa County in Arizona, announced plans to deploy armed volunteer “police” around Phoenix-area schools.

Bloomberg, who the Times dubbed the “chloroform” for gun control, confirmed what he called the city’s “proactive” policing methods. “We send our police officers to problem places where there are problem people,” he said on NBC’s “Meet the Press” program Dec. 16, riding New York’s “stop and frisk” policy that overwhelmingly targets young Black and Latino men.

Some conservatives joined in liberal calls for more restrictions on guns sales.

“The best we can do is to try to detain them, disarm them and discourage ‘entertainment’ that can intensify already murderous impulses,” conservative commentator George Will wrote in the Dec. 20 Washington Post. He called for targeting what he described as a “small cadre of unstable, deeply deranged, dangerously isolated young men.”

“I propose a ‘Gun Control Impingement Act’,” he said. “Gun control impingement upon the Second Amendment; involuntary commitment impingement upon the liberty clause of the Fifth Amendment; curbing ‘entertainment’ violence impinges upon First Amendment free speech.

“That’s a lot of impingement, a lot of amendments,” he says. “But there’s no free lunch. Increasing public safety almost always means restricting liberties.”

— LETTERS

Prisoners part of class struggle

I wanted to express my gratitude for the subscription that you have provided to me and those in my immediate surroundings.

With the exception of the hunger strikes in California’s jails has been very educational and needed. It’s of tremendous, essential significance that the convict masses come together and form a united front against the system.

Our struggle is a part of the class struggle and transcend these razor-topped walls.

A prisoner

California

Paper “like gold” in solitary

Your paper highlights many issues that the free society currently faces, and I enjoy staying informed. Reading material in solitary confinement is like gold. Thank you. Keep me on your mailing list.

A prisoner

California

The shooter in Connecticut, 20-year-old Adam Lanza, was clearly mentally ill. He killed his mother, then shot and killed 20 children and six school staff before killing himself.

Media reports that Lanza suffered from autism or Asperger’s syndrome were described as mentally unstable by some who knew him. This has led to a sharp debate over reactionary calls for special registries of the mentally ill or increasing their forcible institutionalization.

Funds for mental health programs slashed

Meanwhile, funding for mental health programs are being slashed across the country. For example, North Carolina cut their mental health budget by 93.9 percent from 2009-2012, the National Alliance on Mental Illness reported. Illinois cut 31.7 percent, Washington, D.C., cut 23.9 percent and California cut 21.2 percent. Capitalism both fosters antisocial and violent behavior and places a low priority on treating those with mental disorders. Mental health care is first and foremost a commodity—and often not very profitable.

Capitalist rulers that fear the deepening economic and social crises of their system will force bigger battles with working people ahead. They seize on every opportunity to cut away at political rights, seeking to make it harder for workers to fight back.

In the current debate, most representatives of the purported rulers stress the need to strengthen the armed bodies of the capitalist state and their related institutions—the cops, courts and “registries” of dangerous people.

And many want to restrict workers’ access to guns, seeking a monopoly on arms in the hands of their cops and military for the monopoly on arms in the hands of the employing class.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution—like the rest of the Bill of Rights won in struggle by working people—is a relic of the past enacted in a different period when popular militias existed and before the invention of automatic weapons.

But working people are not safer with a monopoly of firepower in the hands of cops and other armed bodies whose jobs is to protect property and prerogatives of the capitalist exploiters. Defending all workers’ rights against stepped-up encroachments by the bosses and their government become more, not less important today, as the employing class mounts assaults on our wages and working conditions.

The Second Amendment is among the constitution- al protections that working people fight for as part of the mass proletarian fight for Black rights in the 1960s.

Groups like the Deacons for Defense and Justice and Robert Williams’ NAACP chapter in Monroe, N.C., maintained their right to bear arms and used them to stay the hand of racists and rightist militia outfits or with vigilante “justice” and so-called Stand Your Ground laws that promote and criminalize within the working class can be exacerbated by the myriad social pressures that mount under the grinding effects of the capitalist crisis.

At the same time, the working-class struggle has not been in continuous retreat. As working people organize and solidarity with the working masses that have in the past. It’s this solidarity and the transformation of working people and their view of themselves that develops in the course of struggle against capitalist exploitation that is the most powerful weapon against anti-social behavior of all kinds.

“Public safety” necessitates scraping that right as a relic of the past and solidifying, just as they always have in the past. It’s this solidarity and the transformation of working people and their view of themselves that develops in the course of struggle against capitalist exploitation that is the most powerful weapon against anti-social behavior of all kinds.

Corrections

In the Dec. 31, 2012, issue of On The Picket Line item titled “Longshore Workers on East and Gulf Coasts Prepare Strike” should have abbreviated the United Steelworkers of America as USW, not USMA. Also, the item “Int’l Meeting to Free Cuban 5 Held in Holguín, Cuba,” should have said flaws (not five) were attached to the Cuban Union of Postal Workers. In the article “Right-to-Work Laws Can’t Stop Fight Ahead to Build Union,” Morgan Stanley bank analyst Adam Jonas commented to Reuters about “Moving to right-to-work in Michigan,” not “right-to-rule.”