

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

California makes workers pay for bailout of utilities

— PAGE 3

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Mass actions in France defend retirement age

300,000 protest bosses' moves against retirement fund

BY NAT LONDON AND DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS—Hundreds of thousands of angry workers across France sent the bosses confederation, the Movement of French Enterprises (MEDEF), a powerful message in defense of the retirement age. Work stoppages and rallies aimed their fire at the employers' move to stop all payments into the supplementary retirement fund, which pays pensions for workers aged 60 to 65, thus holding millions of retired workers hostage.

The bosses' confederation is demanding the unions agree to raise the number of work years necessary for retirement for workers in the private sector from 40 to 45 years, thus raising the retirement age for most workers from the current 60 years to age 65.

The answer to the bosses came January 25, as 300,000 workers hit the streets of Paris, Marseilles, Toulouse, and some 75 other cities. Work stoppages brought the public transportation systems to a halt in Lille, Lyon, Nantes, Rennes, Strasbourg, and Toulouse. Striking workers forced Air France to cancel all short and medium range flights for most of the day. Several Renault auto plants ground to a halt.

Significantly, the actions brought together workers from both the public and private sectors. Large numbers of white-collar workers demonstrated for the first time and the big business media commented on the similarities with the opening stages of the strikes that shook France at the end of 1995. In that conflict, the efforts by the bosses and their government to raise the retirement age of public workers and seriously undermine the public health care system went down to



Contingent of workers from the Val-de-Marne march at January 25 action. Banner calls for retirement at age 60 with full pension after 37-and-a-half years of work.

defeat.

On the eve of the January 25 actions, MEDEF head Ernest-Antoine Seillière, who is particularly hated by working people and is known as the "boss of bosses," sarcastically encouraged "those in the demonstrations who are young, employed workers in the private sector to hold a little flag in their hand," implying they would be largely out-

numbered by unjustifiably worried retirees and state employees.

But following the actions, MEDEF was put on the defensive and forced to retreat somewhat. Seillière said in a radio interview that he was "especially struck by the impressive character of the contingents, their seriousness, calmness, and dignity." He

Continued on Page 6

Bush's proposals on charities, taxes, and education target working people

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

With bipartisan support being extended to his presidency in its early weeks, George Bush has presented a series of proposals that build on those put forward by the Clinton administration and further deepen the attack on the social wage. These include turning federal money over to religious groups to provide social services, an "education plan," and tax measures that give huge breaks to the wealthiest individuals.

Hailing private charity as the way to help those most in need, Bush signed two executive orders January 29 aimed at what the *New York Times* described as "throw[ing] open the doors of government to religious and community groups as part of a broad effort to refashion the way government delivers social services." The president established a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, as well as centers in the Department of Justice, Education, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development, to further work with religious and other private charity organizations.

In order to direct to private charities tax dollars that would normally come into the federal treasury, Bush outlined a series of tax deductions for contributions to charitable groups. He also announced new fed-

eral grants to support organizations—particularly religious ones—that work with the prison system. "When we see social needs in America," stated Bush, "my administration will look first to faith-based programs and community groups, which have proven their power to save and change lives."

This move is part of a long-running bipartisan effort to undercut government entitlements, including Social Security. Bush proposes that individuals be allowed to retain a portion of their Social Security taxes to invest in stocks and bonds. His plan would slash \$1 trillion from Social Security and put that amount into individual private accounts.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan urged Congress at the end of January to consider steps to privatize part of the Social Security system, saying that setting up private Social Security accounts was not only inevitable but essential. Congressman Robert Matsui from California, alarmed by Greenspan's initiative, said in response to his testimony and huge tax cut proposals, "What he's done...is created a situation where we'll have benefit cuts in Social Security."

Senator Judd Gregg, a Republican from New Hampshire, and John B. Breaux, Democratic Senator from Louisiana, proposed January 30 to establish a bipartisan commission to "recommend ways to over-

haul the Social Security system," according to the *Times*. Both support setting up private investment accounts within the Social Security system.

Separation of church and state

The idea of giving federal funds to religious groups has run into some opposition on constitutional grounds. Joseph Conn, a spokesman for Americans United for Separation of Church and State, responded, "This is going to be an all-out battle. A lot of people see this as one of the biggest violations of church-state separation that we've seen in American history."

The American Civil Liberties Union issued a sharply-worded rejection of the plan, calling it a "faith-based prescription for discrimination." Together with the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the ACLU pointed out that "because religious organizations are exempt from many civil rights laws, they are allowed to discriminate on the basis of their religious beliefs and teachings about race, religion, sexual orientation, gender and pregnancy status." The statement notes, "Under the Bush initiative, there are no restrictions on how religious organizations incorporate their beliefs in the delivery of social services."

The administration's proposals are based

Continued on Page 14

Thousands in Ecuador protest gov't austerity

BY HILDA CUZCO

Working people, youth, and the indigenous organizations in Ecuador have organized daily street protests, road blockades, and occupations across Ecuador over the past month to demand an end to the latest round of government austerity measures behind pushed through at the urging of the International Monetary Fund.

The regime of president Gustavo Noboa has answered with force as thousands of indigenous people marched in Quito, the capital city. On January 29, the government arrested Antonio Vargas, president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nations of Ecuador (CONAIE), the largest indigenous movement in the country, along with other leaders of prominent organizations, on charges of "subversion."

Students and other youth have led many of the actions, often standing up to police and military assaults. Nationally coordinated actions drew thousands into the streets January 21-22. These were called by the Popular Front (FP) and the Coordinating Committee of Social Movements (CMS), coalitions made up of trade unions, student groups, and peasant organizations. Another national mobilization is scheduled for February 7.

The Ecuadoran government has instituted measures that have resulted in up to 100 percent increases in the price of gas, cooking fuel, and transportation fees. Prices for basic food items, such as milk and meat, have risen dramatically. Inflation stands at 91

Continued on Page 12

Havana book fair opens doors February 2

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—Many in this capital city, from students to factory workers to soldiers and librarians, have been making plans to attend the 10th Havana International Book Fair, which opens here February 2. A major cultural event that draws publishers from throughout the world, the fair's attendance registered a record 200,000 people last year.

Book fair organizers report that 62 Cuban publishers, as well as 54 publishers from 27 other countries, will have booths at the fair. A sizable participation is expected from Mexico, Argentina, France, the United Kingdom, and especially Spain—the guest of honor this year. The fair is being accompanied by a range of other cultural events throughout Havana, including theater and dance performances, art exhibits, concerts, and film showings.

For the first time the Havana Book Fair, previously biannual, is being held as a yearly event. Registering Cuba's continued economic recovery including in publishing, the fair will feature a greater number and selection of books and periodicals than previous years. A total of 1,400 different titles and

Continued on Page 7

Ruling ends limits on spying by Chicago police 'red squad'

BY CAPPY KIDD

CHICAGO—A ruling by the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on January 11 substantially reversed the provisions of a 1981 federal consent decree that had placed limited restrictions on the actions of the Chicago police department's "red squad."

As reported in the *Chicago Tribune*, "Lawyers for the city and the Police Department hailed the decision, saying it will allow officers to provide surveillance of hate groups, photograph and videotape public demonstrations, and share information with police across the country in monitoring suspected terrorists." Under the decree, the city claimed that its efforts to investigate gangs, terrorism, and demonstrations had been hampered by the requirements that it first have a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.

Echoing the decades-old justification for the red squads, "a three-judge panel...said the onerous decree 'renders the police helpless to do anything to protect the public' against terrorism," the article stated.

Lawyers for the city and police department claim that the consent decree is being modified, not eliminated. According to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, "Chicago police still won't be permitted to gather intelligence for purposes of harassing, intimidating, or prohibiting activities protected by the First Amendment. And the Police Department will still be subject to annual court-monitored audits." However, current restrictions on maintaining intelligence files will be lifted and the police will be allowed to create comprehensive databases on groups they deem to be "terrorist and hate groups."

A review of the record, however, reveals that the red squads have had nothing to do with protecting working people in Chicago. The red squad carried out a decades-long campaign of harassment, intimidation, and disruption aimed at individuals and organizations engaged in legal political activity. The key targets of the red squad have been the labor movement, Black and Puerto Rican organizations, the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, organizations of the

"New Left," and groups engaged in antiwar, civil rights, antipolice brutality, and women's rights activities.

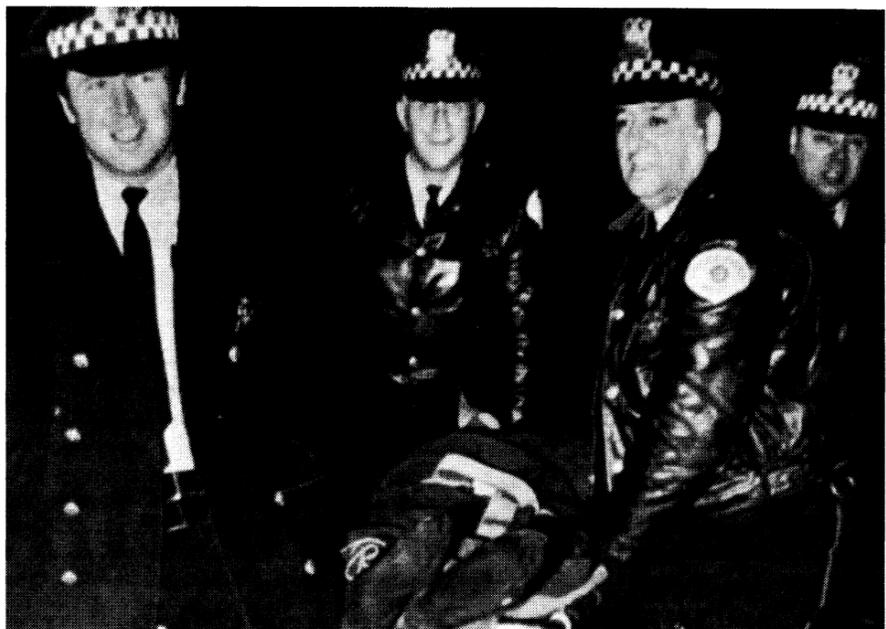
In the book *Protectors of Privilege, Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America*, Frank Donner writes of the 1960s and early 1970s that "Chicago's red squad for at least a decade engaged in a campaign of guerrilla warfare against substantial sectors of the city's population.... Its operational techniques were flamboyantly illegal and in many instances criminal."

The lawsuit launched in 1974 by the Committee to End Repression revealed that red squad members had routinely "engaged in burglaries, thefts of property and money, blackmail, warrantless wiretaps, pretext raids, illegal arrests, [and] provocations."

In carrying out their assaults, the red squad regularly coordinated its actions with state and federal agencies, military intelligence, and right-wing goon squads. As reported in *Workers' Rights vs. the Secret Police*, by Larry Seigle, "This campaign included numerous terrorist attacks carried out by the Legion of Justice goons, with active cooperation from the Chicago cops and political police. The 113th Military Intelligence Group, based in Evanston, Illinois, provided the legion with mace, tear gas, electronic surveillance equipment, and money. Chicago cops provided protection for the raids and burglaries. In return, the legionnaires turned over to the cops and the army the files, records, and books they seized in the raids."

The SWP headquarters in Chicago was invaded by legion members armed with clubs and mace, injuring several socialists. In December 1969, some 30 cops stormed into the headquarters, many with guns drawn. Men wearing ski masks attacked Young Socialist Alliance members at an apartment headquarters in DeKalb, Illinois.

In a pre-dawn raid on Dec. 4, 1969, Chicago police killed Black Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark as they slept in their beds. Depositions in a civil suit revealed that the chief of Panther security and



Police in Chicago carry the body of Black Panther leader Fred Hampton, who they killed in cold blood along with Mark Clark while they were sleeping, Dec. 4, 1969.

Hampton's personal bodyguard, William O'Neal, was an FBI infiltrator and had provided a detailed floor plan of the apartment that got to the state's attorney's office shortly before the raid.

The scope of the red squads' disruption campaign was immense. In 1960 the Chicago police department boasted that its security unit had accumulated information on some 117,000 "local" individuals, 141,000 out of town subjects, and 14,000 organizations. The red squads deployed a small army of 500 police officers augmented by 600 civilian informants, often paid for their services, and 250 occasional civilian informants.

Their targets extended to such mainstream groups as the Parent-Teacher Association, the World Council of Churches, the American Jewish Congress, and the League of Women Voters.

The increasing exposure of the decades of criminal activity of the Chicago red squads led to widespread public criticism of the tactics of the police. In 1981, the city agreed to the consent decree stating that the police would not conduct investigations of individuals or organizations unless they had a "reasonable suspicion" that they were engaged in criminal activity.

Richard Gutman, an attorney for the Alliance to End Repression, which was the lead plaintiff in the 1974 red squad lawsuit, fears a return to the police tactics of the red squad. "For all practical purposes," he said, the recent decision "eliminates any restrictions on political spying and it would permit the city to recreate the red squad. So far as I'm concerned, the consent decree is dead."

Congressman Bobby Rush, a Democrat from Illinois and a victim of police spying during his days as deputy defense minister for the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, told the *Sun-Times*, "I'm quite uncomfortable with it. Unless there are some guarantees against abuse by the police agencies, we might have a return to the time of the '60s when police were in fact spying on American citizens. Certainly Dr. King was spied on. I was spied on.... They were using illegal tactics and unconstitutional methods to spy on us and damage our character."

Lisa Potash, former Socialist Workers

Party candidate for Congress in the predominantly Chicago-based 5th Congressional District, said, "Lifting the consent decree is a blow to democratic rights. The majority of working people in the Chicago area are not willing to tolerate the kind of police abuses that came to light in the red squad trial."

She pointed out that the functioning of the Chicago police red squad was not an aberration. "Secret police activity flows from the need of the employing class to defend its rule from the vast majority of the working class," she said. "In times of greater instability, the rulers rely on stepped-up repression to help in driving down the living standards of workers, attacking trade unions, reversing gains made by minorities and women, and preparing for foreign wars."

Supreme court to hear immigration bill cases

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The Supreme Court has agreed to review two cases challenging aspects of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act passed by Congress and signed by William Clinton in 1996. One case is from the Clinton administration and the other the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The Clinton administration challenged a provision that prohibits individuals ordered deported by the INS from appealing their deportation in federal courts.

At the same time, however, the Clinton administration opposed a challenge by the ACLU to provisions under which legal residents who were convicted of misdemeanors or felonies prior to 1996 can be deported. The ACLU holds that the law, which applies to immigrants who have permanent residency visas, cannot be applied retroactively. These individuals are ineligible for relief from automatic deportation, no matter what their personal circumstances.

Among other provisions, the law provides for doubling the size of the border police force.

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Working people to pay for utilities bailout

California enacts long-term rate hikes to cover power companies' \$12 billion debt

BY BOB KELLER

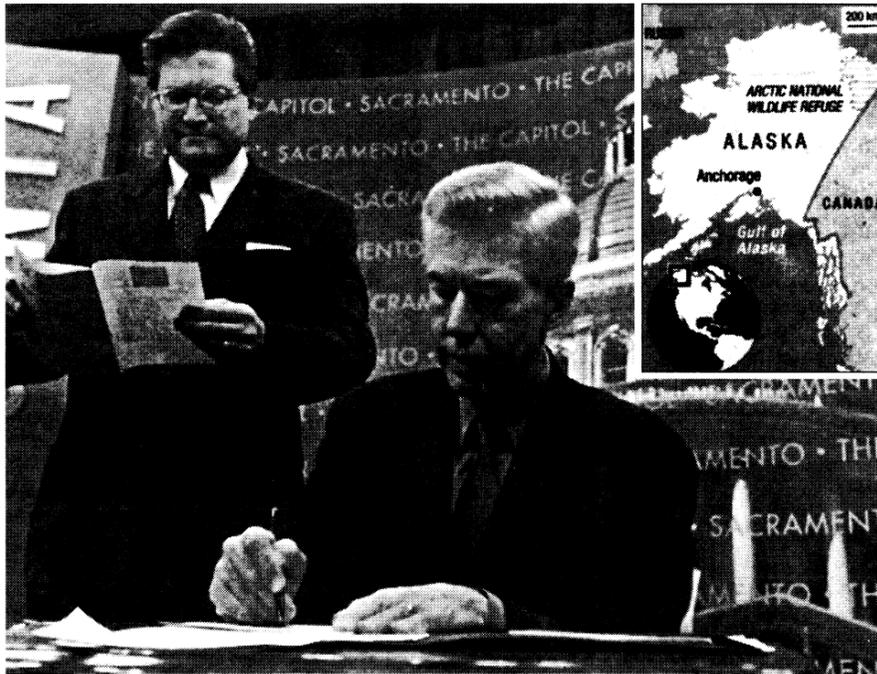
SAN FRANCISCO—The California state government adopted plans this week to make working people pay for a massive bailout of the electric utilities and long-term lucrative purchases of electricity from energy monopolies. The legislation, put together by the country's largest banks and investment firms who have hundreds of billions of dollars at stake, was submitted to the State Assembly January 25.

The measure includes an indefinite extension of a 90-day emergency rate increase that lifted residential rates by 9 percent and adds another penny to every utility bill. This will make it possible for Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and Southern California Edison (SoCal) to recoup \$12 billion they owe to various companies they buy wholesale energy from. The companies are on the verge of bankruptcy, caught in a price squeeze between the rising cost of natural gas and other energy sources they purchase and what they can charge customers.

The state will also issue bonds totaling billions of dollars to enter into long-term contracts to purchase power. Seeing a good deal, a total of 39 companies put in bids to sell the state electricity at an average of \$69 a megawatt hour, well above the \$55 cap California Gov. Gray Davis said he was seeking. The state will resell the power to PG&E and SoCal at prices that guarantee the companies a solid profit.

President George Bush used the crisis to push ahead, with bipartisan support, a 10-year, \$7.1 billion "energy policy." The measures will benefit corporations involved in oil and gas exploration by offering them tax incentives, relaxation of environmental restrictions, and opening of wildlife areas for exploitation, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Bush said he was considering issuing waivers on air pollution restrictions to "allow older plants to come on stream." Vice president Richard Cheney, formerly chief executive officer of the oil services Halliburton Company, is to head up a task force to push forward these plans.

The Alaska wildlife refuge is home to the Gwich'in people, the most northerly Native



Above: Gov. Gray Davis of California signs a \$400 million rescue plan as part of bailout of electric companies. Inset: Map of Alaska shows the protected wildlife area the U.S. government plans to open up for oil and gas drilling.

American population. Their way of life is completely dependent on the Porcupine caribou. Exploration and drilling, spokespeople for the native population say, would cut the number of caribou on which they rely for food, clothing, and tools. "It still takes an act of Congress to open up the Arctic," Donna Carroll, of the Gwich'in steering committee, told the press. "We believe that the majority of the people want the refuge preserved," she said. The Canadian government has also expressed its opposition to development of the area, which shares a border between the two countries.

As a "stage three" power alert was in effect for the 14th consecutive day, the Bush administration increased the pressure on the California state government when it announced an executive order requiring utilities in neighboring states to sell California

excess power would not be renewed February 7. The *New York Times* reported that top officials of Credit Suisse First Boston, Citigroup, and Goldman Sachs, among others were in extensive discussion with California legislators to finalize the bailout in order to prevent the two utilities from going bankrupt and insure the \$12 billion owed by them is paid.

A representative for State Assembly speaker Robert Hertzberg said he "felt all along that it is critical that we find a long-term solution that works in the financial world, so we sought counsel from people within the business." The Utility Reform Network issued a statement calling the deal a "complete bailout of the utility companies. Not surprisingly, the bill gives the financial markets exactly what they have been lobbying for—assurances that California con-

Sikhs denied bail in Air India bombing trial

BY STEVE PENNER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—While admitting the "potential frailties" of the case against two Sikh religious leaders charged with the bombing of an Air India plane in 1985, Judge Patrick Dohm turned down the men's application for bail in his January 10 decision. Since the trial is not expected to be completed before the end of 2002 or later, the men are likely to spend two years in prison without having been convicted of any crime.

The judge also admitted that the accused, Ripudaman Singh Malik and Ajai Singh Bagri, meet bail requirements. He also noted that their defense lawyers had argued during the closed bail hearings that the prosecution's case is weak and its witnesses unreliable. Bagri's lawyer has already appealed his denial of bail. Bagri, 51, is a mill worker and Malik, 53, is a wealthy businessman. Canadian authorities used their arrest last year to launch a renewed campaign against "Sikh terrorism."

Over the years the Indian government has waged brutal attacks on Sikhs in the Punjab,

relying on anti-Sikh chauvinism to perpetuate divisions among working people along religious and national lines. Hundreds have been killed and thousands more arrested by the Indian police and army in the name of combating political forces who advocate a separate Sikh state in the Punjab. Like hundreds of thousands of other working people in Asia and the Indian subcontinent, a large number of Sikhs have immigrated here over the past several decades.

While the judge clamped a publication ban on the "evidence" presented at the hearing, press reports have said that it is based largely on wiretaps, police informers, and reports from India's political police. Judge Dohm admitted that while the prosecution will call a large number of witnesses during the trial, "my impression...is that very few of those witnesses implicate the two directly." The judge pointed out that the centerpiece of the case comprises comments that the defendants allegedly made to four or five people. The prosecution may have difficulty having its "evidence" accepted during the trial, he said.

Nevertheless, the judge argued that bail should be denied because of "the gravity of the nature of the offense" with which the men are charged, regardless of the "curves and bumps" of the case against them. He asserted that Sikh terrorists had blown up the Air India plane in order to protest the attack by the Indian army on the sacred Golden Temple at Amritsar, which resulted in a massacre of hundreds of Sikhs. However, no Sikh group has ever claimed responsibility for or been implicated in the destruction of the plane, the majority of whose passengers were themselves Sikhs.

During the 15-year investigation of the explosion of the Air India plane off the coast of Ireland that left 329 people dead, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) have jailed a number of Sikhs for alleged terrorist actions. Almost all the charges were eventually dropped or thrown out of court for lack of evidence and/or illegal "investigation techniques" by the cops.

In the campaign against alleged "Sikh terrorism," thousands of Sikhs have been spied upon, wiretapped, interrogated, or held in jail or immigration detention centers without ever being convicted of any crime.

Members of the Toronto Sikh community have formed the United Defense Council (UDC) to raise funds for the enormous legal costs involved in the case. "These two men are just ordinary people like the rest of us and we want to be sure there's ample defense for them," said Amarjit Singh Mann, a member of the UDC.

However, some leaders in the Sikh community have welcomed the arrests, hoping it will bring closure to the 15-year-long Air India investigation. RCMP investigators have also announced that they are pleased with the judge's ruling. They say they still plan to arrest more people.

Steve Penner is a meat packer in Langley, British Columbia.

Russian workers protest lack of heat

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Braving the coldest winter in 50 years, hundreds of workers in Russia's far eastern Siberian region of Primorye took to the streets in late January protesting power shortages. Some picketed the main highway in Vladivostok, the region's capital, and others tried to block the trans-Siberian Railway, Russia's main transportation link.

Like its predecessor, the regime of Russian president Vladimir Putin is being engulfed by an economic and social crisis. With temperatures reaching 50 below zero, anger among working people is rising over the lack of electricity. One apartment building in Primorye has been without heat for five years.

Bitter cold has hammered the country

over the past several months as more than 100 people died of hypothermia in Moscow since October 10. Hundreds of people have also died from the cold in Russia's far east region. In Vladivostok, three people froze to death and nine were killed by fires caused by faulty heating systems since January 21. At least 20 people died of cold in nearby Khabarovsk.

With day-long blackouts, many people live in darkness most of the time. Icicles have formed in some homes—more than 16,000 people in Primorye live with little or no heat, according to official estimates. "I have to lay my daughter on the kitchen floor with the oven door open to keep her warm at night," said a supermarket worker in Vladivostok.

sumers will pick up the entire tab for the state's failed deregulation experiment."

Government officials are also encouraging conservation, pushing to get working people to accept the idea that they would pay more and do with less. For example, the California Independent System Operator (Cal-ISO), the agency in charge of the state's electricity grid, urged people to huddle together to watch the Super Bowl game on television. Cal-ISO warned of the possibility of an increase in electrical demand when millions of people turn on TV sets to watch the football game. "I'm not trying to be facetious," said Cal-ISO's chief operating officer of the suggestion.

According to an *Associated Press* report, "Forecasters predict natural gas prices will remain high for the next 18 months to two years, until new sources come on line. That could mean little if any relief until late 2002." Some energy experts predict the real crunch is six months away, when air-conditioning usage can eat up over 10,000 megawatts more than is currently consumed. In addition, large power companies, such as the Bonneville Power Authority, are announcing large rate increases. Long a source of cheap electricity from hydroelectric dams in the Pacific Northwest, Bonneville Power said it plans a 60 percent price increase over the coming years.

Falling stock prices at the two utility companies are taking a toll on workers' pensions. At PG&E, most workers have invested in the company's 401(k) retirement plan. Some workers have reported losing between \$80,000 and \$100,000 as the amount of money in the plan declines along with the value of the stock.

Energy monopolies record profits

At the same time, three of the main suppliers of natural gas to California—Enron Corp., Dynegy Inc., and Duke Energy—have reported big profits for the last quarter of 2000. Enron reported a 34 percent increase, from \$259 million a year ago to \$347 million. The world's biggest energy trader, Enron saw its total revenues triple, from \$11 billion to \$41 billion. Dynegy also reported windfall profits for the same time period.

And the surge in prices for natural gas and oil also resulted in big profits to the oil industry as well. Texaco Inc., Chevron Corp., and ExxonMobil Corp. all reported gains exceeding Wall Street's expectations. Net income at ExxonMobil more than doubled in the last quarter, from \$2.28 billion to \$5.22 billion. Texaco reported fourth quarter profits of \$545 million, up from \$318 million a year ago. And San Francisco-based Chevron reported that its last quarter profits had also increased, from \$809 million last year to \$1.49 billion, an 88 percent increase. "Another strong operating performance in the fourth-quarter capped the most profitable year in our company's history," bragged Chevron CEO David O'Reilly.

Capitalists in all sectors of the energy industry are profiting handsomely from the social disaster of the energy crisis, which affects working people the most. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that at least part of the \$10 billion windfall raked in by PG&E and Edison in the early stages of deregulation was paid out to shareholders, bondholders, and their respective parent corporations. PG&E Corp. and Edison International, the "parents" of the two utilities, have shielded their assets from their utility's red ink, a practice known as "ring-fencing." As long as the money transfers were not hidden from federal regulators, this practice is not illegal. In the third-quarter of 2000, PG&E Corp.'s earnings jumped from \$185 million a year earlier to \$225 million.

Bob Keller works in a meat-processing plant in the Bay area.

COAL MINERS ON STRIKE

Articles on: the 111-day 1977-78 strike, the 1981 strike and the contract rejection vote, the United Mine Workers of America and the fight against nuclear power, the fight for health benefits and compensation to black lung victims, and more. \$5

See list of distributors on page 12

Mideast talks are off as Israeli ballot looms

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Negotiators for the Palestinian leadership and the Israeli government of Ehud Barak came away empty-handed on January 27 at the conclusion of talks in Egypt. The following day, after a speech in Davos, Switzerland, by Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat denouncing "four months [of] a savage and barbaric war" by Israel, Barak said he would suspend talks until after the prime ministerial election scheduled for February 6.

"Nothing [was] achieved on the refugee issue," said the leader of the Palestinian negotiating team, Ahmed Qureia, assessing the week of intensive negotiations. "If they will not recognize the right of return there would be no progress," he said, referring to Israeli government negotiators.

The formation of the state of Israel involved the expulsion of nearly a million Palestinians from land now encompassed by the Israeli state and occupied by Israeli citizens. Today, the official refugee population living in the Middle East, comprising those original refugees and their descendants, numbers more than 3 million, according to the Palestinian National Authority. Tel Aviv staunchly opposes their demand to return to their homes and land.

Among the other issues in dispute are the status of Jerusalem and the Israeli demand, opposed by the Palestinians, to post troops in the occupied territories in the event of an "emergency" and to deploy military forces for several years in the Jordan Valley.

Much of the talks focused on the amount

of territory to be administered by the PNA, and disputes over how much of the territory occupied by Israeli settlements will be officially incorporated into Israel.

Faced with polls in which Barak badly trails Likud party leader Ariel Sharon, the outgoing prime minister sought to conclude some kind of agreement with the Palestinians that he can claim credit for on election day or, failing that, to hold out the promise of an agreement. He also faces pressure to step aside and give the Labor candidacy to former prime minister Shimon Peres, seen by many as more able to conclude a settlement with the Palestinians. Peres consistently matches Sharon in recent polls.

Barak promised in his 1999 campaign to secure an agreement with the Palestinians. His failure to do so has weakened his electoral support. Moreover, the escalation of Israeli military brutality since late September has alienated Palestinian citizens inside Israel, among others. Labor's support from the sector of public opinion known as the "left" in Israel has tended to splinter, with some prominent liberals urging a vote for Barak, and others casting their lot with the belligerent Sharon.

Yasir Arafat has added his voice to those supporting Barak, appealing in particular to Israelis who are Palestinian. He claimed on January 23 that a victory for Sharon would be a "real disaster" and predicted that the Likud leader would deal with the Palestinians "in a crude military way."

Faced with the brutal reality of Barak's crackdown of the last four months, however,



Israeli soldier beside front loader removing olive tree. As of January 11, the military had uprooted 25,000 olive and fruit trees and bulldozed more than 1,000 acres of land.

Palestinian Israelis seem unlikely to turn out for the Labor candidate in the same numbers as in 1999.

A polarizing figure

Sharon has run a low-key campaign. In the event of victory he will face a divided and fractious Knesset, or parliament, in which his party forms a minority. In spite of this likely weakness, he remains a polarizing figure in Israeli politics, closely identified with Zionist military policy—from the brutal expulsion of the Palestinian people that laid the ground for Israel's formation, to the 1982 war against the Palestine Liberation Organization forces in Lebanon. That invasion culminated in a massacre of around 800 Palestinians living in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, carried out by

rightist Lebanese forces under the protection of Israeli troops. Sharon was forced to resign as minister of defense as the facts about Tel Aviv's role in organizing this massacre became public.

Speaking less guardedly than at official election events, Sharon told the *New Yorker* magazine in an interview published in its January 29 issue that Palestinian leader Arafat "is a murderer and a liar...a bitter enemy." Referring euphemistically to the Israeli government's repeated attempts to organize Arafat's assassination, Sharon said that "all the governments of Israel for many years, Labor, Likud, all of them, made an effort...to remove him from our society."

Sharon also spoke bluntly of the prospects for so-called peace negotiations. "The best Israel could hope for," he said, "is an agreement of non-belligerency." The *New York Times* described Sharon's aim as a "long-term interim arrangement...deferring decisions on the explosive issues of Jerusalem and the Palestinian refugees. *Times* reporter Deborah Sontag wrote January 20 that "Mr. Bush's team may support Mr. Sharon's goal," noting that Republicans have criticized Clinton for "prematurely pressuring the parties to secure a final peace deal."

Some of the Palestinian dissatisfaction with the course of events came to the surface in a sharply worded document signed by the Palestinian negotiating team and released January 22. Major excerpts were published in the *Times* the next day. "It seems prudent, at the close of the Clinton administration," stated the memo, "to assess U.S. involvement."

"Over the last seven years in particular," it continued, "the U.S. has become increasingly identified with Israeli ideological assumptions.... The result has been that while Israel's security, including the security of its occupation forces, have been the focus of each agreement, the quality of life of Palestinians has continued to decline. The dichotomy between the comfort of Israelis, including those occupying Palestinian land in settlements with green lawns and swimming pools, and the poverty and misery of Palestinians, has only further inflamed an already volatile situation."

The Clinton proposal that formed the basis for the most recent set of tripartite talks in fact registered a pro-Tel Aviv shift in the official U.S. stance on at least three counts: it de facto recognized both the settlements in the occupied territories, formerly termed illegal, and—for the first time—Israel's annexation of Jerusalem in 1967; and it accepted Israel's blanket refusal of the right of refugees to return.

Two days after the memo's release, a statement from Arafat's office said that it "does not represent the official position of the Palestinian National Authority." Arafat affirmed "his gratitude and esteem" for former President Clinton and his administration.

The poverty cited in the statement has sharply increased under the ongoing Israeli military occupation of Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza.

As of January 11, the Israeli military had uprooted 25,000 olive and fruit trees and put bulldozers through 1,100 acres of land. Food prices have skyrocketed at the same time as tens of thousands have lost access to work in the occupied territories, in the settlements, and inside Israel itself.

The death toll has mounted since September 28 to 375 people as of January 27. Of the 331 Palestinians killed, 13 were Israeli citizens; 43 other Israelis and one German doctor have also died in the unrest.

Cranberry growers discuss cost-price squeeze

BY TED LEONARD

PLYMOUTH, Massachusetts—Nearly 300 cranberry growers attended a "Cranberry Outlook Seminar" here January 4 to discuss what to do about the continued drop in prices paid for their crop, which is pushing many among their ranks out of business.

The seminar was co-sponsored by the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association (CCCGA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cranberry Marketing Committee (CMC). There are about 500 cranberry growers in Massachusetts and most belong to the CCCGA.

For the second season in a row the price that growers are receiving for their berries is falling significantly below the cost of production. The price paid by companies for a 100-pound barrel fell from \$65 in 1996 to \$17.50 in 1999 and to \$8-\$10 in 2000. The average cost to produce a barrel of cranberries is \$35, growers report.

Growers who sell their berries to Ocean Spray Corporation (OSC), which controls

70 percent of the industry, do not know yet what price they will receive for their 2000 crop. That price is not determined until OSC has sold the berries.

One grower explained to this reporter that he could get his costs down to \$25 a barrel and tighten his belt to survive. Another grower explained how growers are selling their equipment at extremely low prices and getting off-farm jobs to make ends meet. According to a recent column in the *Boston Globe*, "More than one-quarter of its [Massachusetts] 450 growers are thought to be on the verge of giving up."

Since the mid-1990s the growers' production of the berry significantly exceeded what processors would buy. In 1999 6.3 million barrels were produced while sales stood at 5.2 million barrels. Industry estimates put the current surplus at 4.2 million barrels.

The U.S. government announced it will buy \$30 million of cranberries or about 1 million barrels in 2001. This has not been welcomed by all growers since only the two

largest handlers of cranberries, OSC and Northland Industries, are capable of filling the government purchase. Growers who operate independently of the two will not benefit from the sale.

The berries purchased by the government will be used for school lunches, homeless shelters, and home lunch programs. Jeff LaFleur, executive director of CCCGA, told growers that America's Second Harvest, which distributes the government's purchases, has told federal officials they "can use everything you can get to us."

The meeting was organized for the handlers, the corporations that buy the berries from the growers, to put forward their view of the crisis facing the industry. Spokespeople from the six largest handlers, who control 99 percent of purchases from growers in North America, spoke on the panel.

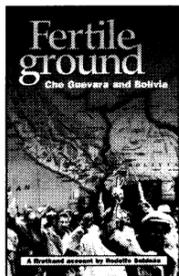
There was some debate among the handlers on how much and how fast the surplus of cranberries should be reduced. In 2000 the CMC issued an order to reduce the cranberry inventory by 15 percent by cutting the allotment of berries a grower could sell by that amount. The focus of the discussion among the handlers was what should the marketing order be in 2001.

The 2000 federal order wound up hurting farmers who harvested early and helped those who waited. A poor crop in Wisconsin, where cranberry production has surpassed that in Massachusetts, meant some farmers here were able to sell more berries than expected. David Farrimond, director of the CMC, told the *Patriot Ledger*, a local newspaper, "Small growers who dumped a few hundred barrels early on are angry because they could have sold the berries."

Doanne Andresen, a grower in Duxbury, Massachusetts, is circulating a petition among growers to deliver to the CMC at its February 5 meeting. The petition explains, "The Cranberry Marketing Order to set-aside the crop will not be successful in returning profitability to the grower without setting a minimum price for our crop. I will not support any Cranberry Marketing Order for this year unless handlers also write a voluntary agreement to honor the grower's demand for a minimum price of \$40 per barrel."

Ted Leonard is a meat packer in Boston.

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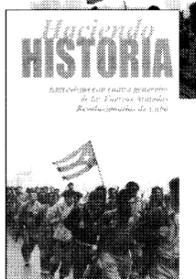
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Debate grows on divorce, changes in family

BY MAGGIE TROWE

A debate around the issue of divorce is growing, with reactionary voices calling for tougher divorce laws and scapegoating "unmarried women" and "broken families" for social problems in capitalist society today.

The debate appears in articles and polemics in the pages of magazines as diverse as the right-wing *Commentary* and *Conservative Chronicle*; *The Nation*, a liberal weekly, and *Time*, a national newsweekly; as well as several recently published books. It is also reflected in moves in a number of states to change laws governing marriage and divorce.

"What Divorce Does to Kids" was the cover story of the Sept. 25, 2000, issue of *Time*. The articles featured a debate on several new books, particularly *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce* by Judith Wallerstein. For three decades Wallerstein, a therapist who taught at the University of California, Berkeley, until her retirement, has mounted an anti-divorce campaign by interviewing children of divorced parents and writing what *Time* calls "seldom happy" and "tragic" stories about their lives. In this book, her third, Wallerstein advocates married couples with children remaining married at all costs, something she says will be beneficial to the children.

The Nation ran a review last December of Wallerstein's new book by Andrew Cherlin, a sociology professor at Johns Hopkins University. While arguing with Wallerstein's method and some of her conclusions, Cherlin states, "The facts are not in dispute.... Without doubt, going through a divorce is a traumatic experience for parents and children alike."

Another recently published work that weighs in against divorce is *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially*. The book is co-authored by Maggie Gallagher, a nationally syndicated columnist. In 1996 Gallagher published *The Abolition of Marriage: How We Destroy Lasting Love*.

Gallagher's column in the January 10 *Conservative Chronicle* is a diatribe against new "reality TV" programs, which portray the lives of families with divorced or unmarried parents. The new shows are "divorce propaganda," Gallagher writes, "dedicated to the proposition that nothing stands between a human being and her happiness except that dull, depressing thing called a spouse."

The Surrendered Wife by Laura Doyle, who describes herself as "a feminist and former shrew," was reviewed in *Time* in January, and is on Amazon.com's nonfiction bestseller list. Doyle says, "My mission is to teach women about the power of surrender. It's my own world peace crusade." Doyle recommends that married women always express agreement with their husbands, hand over the finances to them, and request an allowance.

Commentary magazine has joined in the culture war fray on the subject of divorce. Charles Murray, co-author of *The Bell Curve*—a book that advanced the reactionary notion that wealthy people are rich because they're intelligent and the poor are poor because they are not—reviewed Francis Fukuyama's book *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*. The Great Disrup-

tion is "the sudden downward slide on a wide variety of social indicators that began in the mid-1960s and in some ways is still with us," writes Murray. These problems include "the soaring divorce rate" and "illegitimacy ratios." Fukuyama coined the term "The end of history" in 1989 following the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The Heritage Foundation, a right-wing think tank, published a 40-page report in its on-line journal *Backgrounders* entitled, "The Effects of Divorce on America." Authors Patrick Fagan and Robert Rector write, "American society may have erased the stigma that once accompanied divorce, but it can no longer ignore its massive effects." The two charge that "divorce is hurting American society and devastating the lives of children," affecting "family life, educational attainment, job stability, income potential, physical and emotional health, drug use, and crime." They claim there is "mounting evidence" that "children whose parents have divorced are increasingly the victims of abuse and neglect" and "have higher rates of suicide." Fagan and Rector propose several steps to reimpose the stigma of divorce, such as the creation of a "campaign to inform Americans of the health and other risks associated with divorce and the long-term benefits of marriage."

Change in family structure

Behind this debate is the response of the capitalist rulers and the social layers that look to them to the consequences of historic changes in the family structure over the last half century. The number of children born to women who are not married is now at 31 percent in the United States and the percentage of households headed by married couples dropped from 80 percent in 1900 to a little more than 50 percent today. There has been a sharp jump in the rate of divorce since 1960.

Between 1950 and 1998, the percentage of working-age women who hold jobs outside the home nearly doubled, rising from 33.9 percent to 59.8 percent. The number of women incorporated into industrial production increased dramatically in the second half of the 20th century with a notable increase in the number of women who began to fight their way into jobs from which they had traditionally been excluded. And today, 11.5 percent of women are union members.

The proportion of women in the workforce, which began rising in the 1940s, slowed in the 1980s and remained static in the 1990s, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports. But in 1994, it appears to have begun to rise again. Women who have children living with them accounted for most of the recent rise, with the proportion of working women who have children under one year of age rising from 49.5 percent in 1990 to over 55 percent in 1996.

The bipartisan attack on the social wage of the past eight years has made it harder for many women to support themselves and their children. The "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act," signed into law by former president William Clinton with support of Republicans and Democrats in Congress, eliminated federally guaranteed Aid for Families with Dependent Children and cut off food stamps and Medicaid for many working people. With an economic downturn underway, women covered by this aspect of Social Security have no social safety net available.

Taking note of these trends, a report from the "Kentucky State Plan" says, "The families of our nation and state are changing" and "becoming somewhat amorphous." The authors, Michal Smith-Mello and Peter Schirmer, write that women working leads to a "diminishing economic incentive to marry. A growing number of them are choosing to have children on their own or not at all. As domestic roles shift to accommodate increasing demands on women," there are more conflicts between spouses over "who will shop for the ingredients, bake it, clean the kitchen in the aftermath and care for the children while the work is being done." The report says these changes have brought about "difficult economic circumstances" that are "taking a toll on families, particularly those headed by single parents and young couples. Purchasing power has declined, and costly plans for the future or the unforeseen, including health care and retirement, are often put on a back burner."

The ideological offensive against divorce

Steelworkers picket Co-Steel in Canada



Members of United Steelworkers of America Local 6571 on the picket line January 20 in Whitby, Ontario, Canada. Co-Steel Lasco bosses locked out the 460 workers on December 18. The union contract expired last August. "They want us to return to working conditions we had 15 years ago, but it isn't going to happen," said striker John Brine. The workers have rejected concession demands that include contracting out of union jobs, work scheduling, and seniority rights. The bosses claim the concessions are needed for the plant, which produces structural steel from scrap, to compete in the world market. Co-Steel Lasco also has three plants in the United States, described by the strikers as nonunion. The company has threatened to close the plant or to operate it with management or scabs.

aims to reinforce the family as a crucial economic institution under capitalism. For example, a rightist group, Dads Against the Divorce Industry, describes itself as "an organization devoted to reinstating the societal role and valuation of Marriage and the nuclear American Family, with particular emphasis on Fatherhood." The lead article on the organization's web site is called, "The Evolved Patriarchal American Family and Fatherhood."

William Buckley Jr.'s recent article in the right-wing *National Review* magazine, entitled "Unmarried Women Behind the Crisis," puts in sharp relief the ruling class' anxiety about the changes in the family structure. In explaining why 63 percent of "unmarried women" voted for Gore, Buckley concludes that these women, "find themselves, in the absence of a husband, relying on—somebody else to help with the usual social anxieties," such as health care, Social Security, and education.

"The impression given by modern Democrats," Buckley says, "is that it is they who hold out a hand to aid the disadvantaged at every level. Somebody there at the hospital at the time of birth, somebody at the schoolhouse to teach the kids, somebody to give them drugs as required, somebody to look after her in her old age. What's his name? Not Daddy. It's Uncle Sam."

Unions cover 13.5 percent of U.S. workforce

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

According to figures recently released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the percentage of U.S. workers belonging to unions fell last year to 13.5 percent, the lowest level in six decades. Union membership was at 20 percent of the workforce in 1983. The figures compare with a peak of 35 percent in the 1950s. The total number of union members is now 16.3 million, a decline of 200,000 from 1999 figures.

Among workers employed in the private sector, union membership fell to 9 percent, down from 9.4 percent in 1999. Membership among government workers rose to 37.5 percent, up from 37.3 percent. About 9.1 million of the nation's union members work in the private sector, while 7.1 million are government workers.

Last year, according to the AFL-CIO, unions organized 400,000 new members, compared with less than 100,000 in 1995. However, a larger number of union jobs have been lost as a result of retirements and layoffs by employers as the economy has slowed down.

Some 194,000 jobs were eliminated in the manufacturing sector in 2000, while the apparel-making and auto sectors each cut 45,000 positions.

AFL-CIO officials say that total union

The ruling class attack on divorce in the 1990s included proposals to make divorce more difficult. Most states have had divorce laws since the 1960s, known as "no-fault" laws, that permit divorce on grounds such as "irretrievable breakdown of marriage relationship," "irreconcilable differences," or after a period of separation. These laws removed the requirement that one spouse prove misconduct on the part of the other.

In two states, Arizona and Louisiana, there are now statutes that provide an option for "covenant marriages" for those who choose it. To obtain a divorce under Louisiana covenant marriage law, a spouse must prove actions such as adultery or physical or sexual abuse or live apart for a year and a half if there are children, or one year if there are none.

If the economy continues to slow down, the changing structure of the family and the antiwoman ideological campaign to place growing economic and social responsibilities onto families of working people will be a point of class conflict. The strong presence of women in the workforce and the large number of women who support a family lays the basis on the one hand for a deepening fight by the labor movement to defend the social wage, and on the other for an intensification of the bipartisan attack of the last decade.

membership is still up 150,000 from three years ago. But for unions to add members on a net basis, they would need to sign up 500,000 to 1 million new members each year.

The highest unionization rate among nongovernment employees is in transportation and public utilities, at 24 percent. Manufacturing stands at 14.8 percent and construction at 18.3 percent.

About 1.7 million workers were represented at their workplace by a union, but were not union members. Of those between the ages of 16 and 24 who are employed, only 5 percent are in a union.

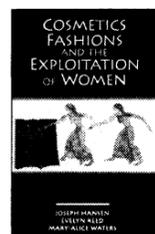
Blacks continue to have the highest rate of unionization at 17.1 percent. Nearly one-fifth of Black men are union members. Overall, 15.2 percent of men are union members, and 11.5 percent of women.

More than half of the 16.3 million union members in the United States live in seven states. Union membership rates are over 20 percent in five states—New York, Hawaii, Alaska, Michigan, and New Jersey.

Two states have membership rates below 5 percent—North Carolina and South Carolina. The three states with the greatest number of union members are California, with 2.3 million, New York, with 2 million, and Illinois, with 1 million.

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Mass actions in France defend retirement age

Continued from front page

backpedaled on the bosses' proposal that a full pension only be granted after 45 years of work. "Perhaps we were in fact wrong to announce the whole program," he said, stating they would be willing to initially accept a lower figure. He claimed he was "shocked that there are currently hundreds of thousands of French who have already worked for 40 years, who are under 60, and who don't have the right to retire." Seillière stated he was willing to meet the unions again, as they requested, as long as they presented new proposals.

The MEDEF's top gun was obliged to take into account that 78 percent of the population supported the demonstrations, according to polls taken January 25 and 26, and hesitation in the ranks of the bosses themselves. Two other employers' confederations, representing small companies and independent entrepreneurs, openly questioned the wisdom of Seillière's confrontational strategy, while reaffirming their common goal of pushing back the retirement age.

"We are for dialogue, not for destroying everything," declared Jacques Freidel, president of the General Confederation of Small and Medium Enterprises (CGPME). "We want to arrive at an agreement and therefore not fan the flames or head towards an impasse." But the MEDEF leader remained insistent that raising the retirement age was inevitable.

Massive support by workers

Workers at the Renault auto parts plant in the Paris suburb of Choisy-le-roi did not wait for the official 2:00 p.m. starting time for the plant walkout, which was called by three unions. By 11:30 in the morning, workers were already heading for the plant gate. More than 85 percent of the morning shift left work, and around 75 workers went to Paris for the demonstration that afternoon.

More than 400 construction workers, almost the entire workforce of the Sicra construction company, came to the demonstration. The workers, most of them immigrants from Africa and North Africa, had decided to go on a 24-hour strike "when we heard they wanted to sabotage our retirement," one said. There were delegations from the Peugeot assembly plant in Poissy, the Citroën plant in Aulnay-sous-bois, and the Renault plant in Flins. The Alstom heavy electrical equipment workers were there as were contingents of rail workers, Air France workers, and teachers.

Marc Kinzel, a maritime worker in the port of Marseille said in a phone interview that the action in Marseille was the largest since 1995. Local papers said as many as 50,000 workers took part. Kinzel was part of a contingent of almost 1,500 longshoremen, shipyard workers, and sailors who demonstrated alongside large contingents of public transport workers and workers from SOLLAC, one of the largest steel mills in France.



Workers from Renault parts plant at Choisy-le-roi rally in Paris January 25 to defend retirement age. The demonstrations stopped production at several Renault auto plants.

"One thing that strikes me," said Bernard, an auto worker at Peugeot's Poissy assembly plant, "is that the MEDEF attacked the retirement age of the private sector workers only, hoping that the public sector workers would not come to their defense. That's what they did in 1993 and it worked for them then." Looking around at the different contingents in the demonstration, Bernard—who is one year away from retirement—said, "It looks like they have not succeeded this time. There's more of a sense of unity between public and private sector workers today."

"The unusually strong participation of private sector workers," wrote the daily *Le Monde* in a front-page article, "has undercut the main argument of the MEDEF, based on the opposed interests of public and private sector workers." Meanwhile, unions representing public sector workers have called for a day of strikes and demonstrations for January 30. Their wage negotiations with the government have been at a standstill.

Bosses' assault

The bosses and the government have repeatedly played on differences between workers in the public and private sectors to advance their assault on the social wage, democratic rights, and conditions on the job. Workers in the private sector were pushed into retreat during the 1980s under sharp attacks by the bosses. Coal mines and naval shipyards were closed, dockworkers laid off, and auto plants and steel mills downsized.

Fascist groups became active publicly, encouraging divisions between immigrant and native-born workers. In 1995, the government's Vigipirate plan, supposedly instituted against "Islamic terrorism," deepened these divisions, with police and ma-

chine gun-toting soldiers regularly stopping and searching immigrant workers in the streets.

In 1993, a newly elected conservative government tried to use the retreat of the private sector workers as a stepping-stone for attacks that went beyond simple downsizing. They began to attack the social wage and the rights of the 5.5 million public sector workers in major industries, such as the railroad, gas and electric, telephone and postal, armaments and military naval shipyards, as well as teachers, hospital, and airport workers.

The social wage is particularly important in France. A Renault worker, for example, receives in take home pay only 40 percent of the total labor costs paid by his employer. The rest goes to national funds covering health care, unemployment and retirement, family aid, and public housing construction.

In 1993 the government and the bosses were able to raise the number of years necessary for full retirement in the private sector without a response from workers and their unions. However, subsequent efforts by the conservative government to privatize Air France, create a subminimum youth wage, to freeze wages and raise the retirement age for public sector workers, and to gut the public health care system went down to defeat in the face of determined workers' resistance. The high point of these struggles was in the December 1995 strikes led by railroad workers against the drive by the government of Alain Juppé, leader of the conservative Rally for the Republic (RPR) to raise the retirement age. The massive movement in 1995 drew in few workers employed in private industry or immigrant workers.

Bosses continued to deal blows to the 14.5 million private sector workers during the

1990s, aided by the pressure of high levels of unemployment. Public sector workers, who cannot be fired except for rare disciplinary cases, were less vulnerable to this pressure.

From 1996 to 1999, the number of temporary workers more than doubled, rising to 500,000. In addition, the number of workers on limited work contracts, ranging from a few weeks to 18 months, tripled between 1982 and 1999, reaching 892,000.

The weight of temporary workers is particularly heavy in industry, where they are twice as numerous percentage-wise as they are in the entire workforce. In auto, for example, they represent 8.7 percent of total employment and often half of assembly line workers.

Workers in private industry were dealt another blow by recent legislation that purports to lower the workweek to 35 hours. This has not yet been applied to public sector workers. Implementation of these laws has been negotiated company by company, leaving workers in many enterprises with a poor relationship of forces and more vulnerable than others. Although the law has led to a slight reduction in the workweek, its main aim was to give employers the ability to impose "work flexibility" in shifts and hours.

Interimperialist competition

Despite these successful blows, the employers' organization estimates that overall, "for 10 years France has lost ground in relation to its European competitors," Seillière said January 24. To try to make up for lost ground, MEDEF has stepped forward to take the political lead in pushing for concessions by the unions. The Juppé government lost the 1997 legislative elections to a coalition led by the Socialist Party alongside the French Communist Party and the Greens. The Rally for the Republic has not recovered from its defeat. The right-wing parties are in disarray as well.

The MEDEF launched a campaign a year ago of "social refoundation," seeking to lower the social wage including raising the age of retirement. "In one word, we are standing still," Seillière told a Senate commission on the eve of the workers actions. "Our structural handicaps are weighing us down. French competitiveness requires strong moves forward."

The police announced January 25 that they were reactivating the Vigipirate plan following a bombing attributed to a Corsican nationalist group.

Nat London is a member of the CGT at the Renault auto plant in Choisy-le-roi. Derek Jeffers is an auto assembly worker and member of the CGT at the Peugeot auto plant in Poissy.

Chrysler will cut 26,000 jobs by 2002

BY HILDA CUZCO

DaimlerChrysler, the third-largest U.S. automaker, announced January 29 that it plans to eliminate 26,000 jobs over the next two years. The company will close six plants and slow down production at seven other assembly plants.

The company reported losses of \$512 million in the third-quarter last year, and \$1.25 billion in the fourth-quarter due to slowing sales. "The markets are deteriorating, and our company's performance even more so. Competition is brutal," said Dieter Zetsche, Chrysler's new CEO at a news conference in Detroit.

Officials of the Canadian Auto Workers union said they will work with the company to slow production at the Windsor, Ontario, plant rather than cutting jobs. The union also said that they will not negotiate concessions or open any three-year contracts signed in 1999.

The workforce affected will include 19,000 hourly workers and 6,800 salaried employees. The six plants to be closed by the end of 2002 include three plants in Mexico, others in Argentina and Brazil, and an engine plant in Detroit.

The 26,000 job cuts has added to the wave of thousands of other job losses announced by U.S. corporations. CNN Financial News reported that nearly 68,000 layoffs have been announced by several companies in the last six days alone. In December 133,713 jobs were eliminated.

40,000 stop work at GM plants in Europe

BY CAROL BALL

LONDON—Forty thousand workers stopped work at General Motors (GM) plants in Europe January 25 as part of a union-organized "Day of Action" to protest the company's plans to lay off 5,000 auto workers across the continent. In the following days mass meetings were organized by the unions, including the Transport and General Workers' (TGWU), the main shop floor union at GM's Vauxhall plants in England, prior to a ballot to take industrial action. Union officials told the press they are urging support for strike plans.

Most of the 2,000 workers at the GM Vauxhall plant in Luton, England, which is slated to be closed, stayed away from work without pay for the January 25 action, as did an estimated 70 percent of workers at the IBC van plant next door, also owned by GM. The previous Saturday 10,000 marched through the streets of Luton to protest the closure.

Speaking at the demonstration, Vauxhall worker Ian Stanbridge said, "Which plant is going to be next? If you transfer to IBC how long will you have there? We must show our support." Several hundred Vauxhall employees will have the option of transferring jobs to IBC rather than being made redundant (unemployed). Stanbridge's views were echoed by Anita

Gavin, who is married to a Vauxhall worker. "We thought they had jobs for life," she said. "Then we heard on the radio that they hadn't. Before we start thinking about redundancy or transferring to IBC, we should concentrate our efforts on saving jobs."

At Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port factory near Liverpool, England, workers on all shifts walked out at lunchtime, halting production. When the company announced the closing of the Luton plant in December, workers closed the Ellesmere Port plant for three shifts in solidarity. "The majority think we've got to stand together with the Luton workers or risk being picked off," said a worker in Ellesmere Port's body shop who joined the Luton demonstration with a number of workmates. "Management had promised us the Epsilon, but then they promised it to Luton too, and it hasn't done them any good. Management's promises aren't worth anything," said another worker who supported a "yes" vote in the ballot for industrial action.

Some 16,000 GM workers in Germany, including at GM's Eisenach facility in the former East Germany, stopped work for an hour to take part in demonstrations. Seven thousand downed tools in Antwerp, Belgium, as did 1,000 in Azambuja, Portugal, and 5,000 in Zaragoza, Spain. The statement issued by the European Workers Council

urging participation in the action said, "In the interest of all other European sites we must resist GM's plans in common, because any plant in Europe could be similarly targeted in the future." A sign on the hat of one worker at a demonstration of 5,000 in Germany read: "Today Luton, tomorrow Russelsheim."

The big business media focused its news January 25 on Nissan Motor's announcement that it will continue to build the Micra small car at its factory in Sunderland, England. Speculation had been rife that, despite Sunderland being the most efficient car plant in Europe, production would be shifted to France, resulting in 1,300 workers being fired.

The company's decision to keep the plant open and expand production was conditional on costs being reduced by 30 percent, components being sourced from the Eurozone, and receipt of a £40 million grant from the British government.

Several parts plants in the Sunderland area that supply Nissan are likely to be closed. "To make a profit, executives such as Nissan's Mr. Ghosn and Ford's Nick Scheele believe costs must fall sharply," the *Financial Times* bluntly wrote in a warning to the union. "Only then will UK car plants begin to generate the sort of profits that deliver shareholder returns to their parent companies."

Moscow bolsters military ties with neighboring republics

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Over the past few months Russian president Vladimir Putin has taken measures to increase Russia's leverage over neighboring countries, particularly Georgia and Ukraine, which were once republics of the former Soviet Union. Articles in the big-business media have expressed alarm about these moves and their impact on U.S. and European political and economic interests.

Russia's state-owned gas companies shut off natural gas supplies to Georgia for several days in January. Georgia has had chronic energy shortages since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and is wholly dependent on Russia for gas.

The government of Georgia, headed by President Eduard Shevardnadze, is in negotiations with Moscow on the timing of the departure of Russian troops. Two of Russia's four bases there are scheduled to be closed by July, but Moscow is pressing for a 15-year extension on closing any of them. Georgia is situated between Russia and Turkey, a NATO member, and has access to the Black Sea.

Last year Russia imposed a travel visa requirement on Georgians. Russian officials also accused Georgia of supporting rebels fighting Russian military occupation of the republic of Chechnya, Georgia's neighbor. Russia has an estimated 80,000 troops in Chechnya, and has carried out a 16-month war against Chechen separatist guerrillas. This follows a Russian offensive in 1994-96 that devastated the country. In recent weeks Putin has announced plans to withdraw some troops from the country.

In relations with Ukraine, the largest post-Soviet state after Russia, Moscow is seeking to convert Ukraine's \$2.2 billion gas debt into shares in Ukrainian state enterprises, particularly the gas pipeline system used to trans-

port Russian gas to European customers.

In a January agreement, Ukraine signed a military pact with Russia that reportedly includes Russia in planning any foreign military exercises in Ukraine. The two countries also agreed to form a joint naval unit and increase production of weapons.

In recent years the U.S. and Western European rulers have made efforts to draw Ukraine into collaboration with their military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The *Financial Times* sees the Russia-Ukraine accord as "drastically increasing the integration of their respective militaries, and putting Ukraine's previously close cooperation with NATO into question."

In other developments, Russia halted plans to remove troops from Moldova last year, speeded up unity talks with Belarus, and created what the *Financial Times* termed a "Eurasian NATO" with several central Asian states.

The Russian government has repeatedly voiced its opposition to major, long-term policy moves by Washington, including the expansion of NATO eastward toward the Russian border and its drive to set up a system capable of shooting down missiles. This planned move not only violates the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty signed between Moscow and Washington but threatens to give U.S. imperialism a first-strike nuclear capability. The ruling layers in Russia are also pressing to ensure that they, rather than imperialist interests, control the resources of the region.

For example, Washington is critical of Russian agreements with Kazakhstan, where a petroleum pipeline from the republic's Tengiz oilfield to Russia's port on the Black Sea is near completion. A January 26 *Wall Street Journal* article entitled "Gunboat Diplomacy in the Caspian" reported that Moscow "now stands to reap a multibillion dol-



Russian soldiers guard military airfield near Chechen capital of Grozny in January. President Putin has announced plans to withdraw some of 80,000 troops in Chechnya.

lar bonanza in annual transit income and—even more importantly—to gain potential leverage on producer and consumer countries." The article complained that the pipeline's successful completion was a result of the efforts of Chevron and ExxonMobil, which participated in a consortium that "rescued the oilfield and the pipeline from Russian failures and turned them into impressive successes of Western technology," only to be used for the benefit of Russia.

The U.S. oil interests are watching developments in Kazakhstan with concern, the article explained, since "preliminary estimates" indicate that the offshore oil field Kashagan "may well be the richest offshore oilfield discovered anywhere in the world in recent years, potentially matching the North Sea's oil reserves and boosting the overall commercial prospects of the Caspian oil basin."

The article concludes that the "only sensible solution" would be a pipeline through Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean coast. But Russia's success in building influence in the region stands in the way of this plan, as does its show of military strength during Putin's January 9-10 visit to Baku, Azerbaijan, when Russia's Caspian flotilla carried out exercises with live ammunition and then laid anchor in front of Baku.

In a meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russian deputy foreign minister Yevgeny Gusev said that Russia has been telling its "western partners" that it opposes the use of the OSCE for interference in the internal affairs of countries "to the east of Vienna." Gusev said, "This time we are sending a clear signal: we won't allow this to happen."

The *Financial Times* noted that under the Clinton administration, "the U.S. pursued a policy of containing Russian and Iranian influence in the Caspian region, principally by supporting alternative energy routes through Azerbaijan and Georgia to Turkey." Any moves that challenge this process are viewed as a threat by the U.S. rulers. The *New York Times* reported January 7 that "an executive with a major Western energy company in the region said the Russian gambits underlined the necessity of ensuring that Caspian Sea oil and gas flow to the West through pipelines that bypass Russia."

A scare around Russian nuclear weapons was raised in early January by the *Washington Post*, which published an article alleging that Russian ships were transporting short-range nuclear-tipped missiles to the Russian naval base in the Kaliningrad enclave between Lithuania and Poland. Russian naval officials denied the charge. Poland, along with Hungary and the Czech Republic, were admitted to NATO in 1999.

Spain: immigrants assert dignity, protest new law

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Thousands of immigrant workers and supporters of their rights participated in hunger strikes and marches on January 22 in Barcelona, Valencia, and other cities in Spain. Some carried signs saying, "For the government, we are invisible." They demanded the right to work and live legally in the country, and protested a new law stating that all immigrants without work permits will face deportation. The measure also denies them access to health care and housing.

The previous day, more than 300 immigrant workers began a hunger strike in Santa Maria Pi church in Barcelona. They are originally from Pakistan, Russia, Ecuador, India, Morocco, and other countries. Norma Falconi, spokesperson for the group Documents for All, told the press that the hunger strikers would persevere until their demands are addressed.

President José María Aznar of Spain, speaking at the closing session of a national gathering of his People's Party, denounced "illegal immigration," and declared that his government would not decree periodic amnesties for immigrants without papers, as some have proposed.

On the same day as the protests, police arrested 53 immigrants who were trying to land on the coast of Spain in a makeshift boat. Authorities reported that five others were missing, and that one had been found dead.

The capitalist rulers and rightist groups in Spain have responded to the country's high level of joblessness, which stands officially at around 15 percent, by scapegoating immigrant workers. Estimates put the number of immigrants working in Spain without permits at 150,000.

New Philippines gov't prepares austerity moves

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In the early days of her government, Philippines president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has identified herself with a pro-business economic program of "austerity" and expressed the desire for closer relations with Washington.

Arroyo was sworn in as president after Joseph Estrada stepped down January 20 in the face of growing opposition to his rule. The opposition included members of Estrada's own cabinet, major business figures, the hierarchy of the Catholic church, and the high command of the armed forces. Hundreds of thousands of people poured into the streets of the capital Manila in the last day's of Estrada's rule, demanding his resignation.

The new president and her government have tried to scapegoat Estrada and his conspicuous accumulation of personal wealth for the country's long-standing economic problems. Fidel Ramos, who served as the country's president from 1992 to 1998, and who played a key role in the opposition, claimed in a January 23 interview that "lately we are known as a bunch of gamblers, womanizers, drunkards.... And we've become suddenly poor all over again."

Ramos also rejected Estrada's claims that he was winning the war against insurgent groups in the south of the country. Estrada had pursued negotiations with the major independence group on the island of Mindanao and conducted a military offensive on Jolo against the Abu Sayyaf group, which has been accused of kidnapping foreign citizens for ransom.

Austerity budgets

According to the Associated Press, Arroyo's pick for finance secretary has said that "a balanced budget is unlikely until 2006 at the earliest, with austerity budgets providing little room to address the needs of the poor." He warned that the "budget deficit may balloon to \$4 billion this year if the government fails to curb expenses and improve revenue collection." Last year's

deficit of \$2.72 billion was more than double the government's stated target.

In a January 24 conversation, Arroyo invited U.S. president George Bush to Manila this year to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the U.S.-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty. Bush reportedly described this as a "very good idea," and reiterated Washington's support for the new government.

The fact that ruling layers in the Philip-

ippines resorted to mass protests to oust Estrada has been met with some caution from capitalist politicians in Southeast Asia, however. In a January 22 comment, Lee Kuan Yew, the autocratic former prime minister of Singapore, expressed unease at the mobilizations. "I would have preferred that Estrada could be removed in a constitutional way in the Senate," he said, adding, "I don't think it was a plus for the democratic system."

Havana book fair opens February 2

Continued from front page

500,000 books will be on sale in pesos to the Cuban public, fair organizers said in a press conference. While last year one bookshop was set up for sales in pesos, this time there will be four shops, plus six stands selling high-demand titles printed in large runs. Books at the exhibition stands are generally sold in dollars.

Throughout the nine-day fair, which ends February 10, scores of book launches, lectures, and poetry readings will be held. A number of panel discussions and other events will pay tribute to the poetry, essays, and other works of Roberto Fernández Retamar, one of Cuba's best-known writers, according to Iroel Sánchez, president of the Cuban Book Institute.

Among the features at the book fair will be a pavilion for children's literature and a special hall, called "The Interactive Island," for the growing number of Cuban publishers producing literature in digital form.

Among the exhibitors is Pathfinder Press, which has been part of every Havana book fair since 1986. An international team of volunteers from Canada, France, Iceland, Iran, Sweden, and the United Kingdom will be staffing the Pathfinder booth.

Pathfinder is presenting several new titles at the international fair. *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, an interview with Bolivian revolutionary Rodolfo Saldaña, will be launched at a special event together

with Cuban publisher Editora Política, which is simultaneously coming out with a Spanish-language edition. Saldaña, who joined with Ernesto Che Guevara in the 1966-67 revolutionary front that Guevara led in Bolivia, recounts the tumultuous events in the class struggle of Bolivia and the rest of South America that created favorable conditions for building a revolutionary movement there.

Another new Pathfinder title is *Haciendo historia*, a Spanish-language edition of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. Also being presented are editions in both English and Spanish of *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, by Mary-Alice Waters, and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, by Jack Barnes.

The 10th Havana International Book Fair is being held at the historic San Carlos de la Cabaña fortress, as it was last year. The imposing 18th century Spanish fort, which overlooks Havana Bay, served as Che Guevara's Rebel Army command post after the January 1959 victory of the Cuban revolution. At La Cabaña, Guevara promoted cultural events among the soldiers stationed there, including ballet performances, plays, poetry readings, and concerts, as part of pointing the way forward for working people to broaden their cultural horizons as they fight to build a new society.

LA meeting celebrates life, contributi

Participating in social and labor struggles, 35-year cadre of communist movement he

BY NAN BAILEY
AND WENDY LYONS

LOS ANGELES—“Judy was a cadre of the Socialist Workers Party who gave the better part of herself for almost 35 years to build a communist movement in the United States. By definition it is an internationalist movement, a movement that is not just the party itself but a Young Socialist organization, or a Young Socialist Alliance in an earlier period, and hundreds of organized supporters of the party.”

These remarks by Mary-Alice Waters, speaking on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party’s Political Committee, were made to a meeting to celebrate the life of Judy White held here January 21. The event was attended by more than 100 people and held at the National Union of Letter Carriers Local 24 hall. White, 62, died January 2 in Los Angeles.

“The reason that meetings like this are so powerful—paying tribute to someone like Judy who gave so much of her life to building the party—is that they allow you to see not just the contributions of an individual, but to see a slice of history that particular person happened to live through, to represent, to be part of,” said Waters.

“The power of the program of Marxism is not primarily the ideas,” she continued, “but the fact that it is the summation of the conditions for the liberation of the working-class. And it’s strength is not just that of individuals, but the collective strength of how those same individuals work together to make that program a reality.”

“Ideas of Marxism are carried by human beings, there is no other way,” Waters said. “And it’s those individuals by their conduct and their example, even more than their intellectual clarity or ability to speak or write, is what wins others to want to join our movement. This is where Judy’s contribution was one that all of her friends and colleagues recognized so well. She helped others to see the need for a collective effort to build a movement, a proletarian party, that would be strong enough, cohesive enough, disciplined enough to be able to face off against the most powerful and ruthless ruling class that has ever walked the face of this earth.”

In doing this, said Waters, “Judy helped to recruit dozens and dozens of others to the movement and helped them to begin to understand the same things that she had come to understand from her life experiences and contributions to building the SWP.”

Those in attendance at the meeting included SWP members and supporters, young socialists, friends, and others who had collaborated with White over the past four decades. Participants came from several California cities in addition to Los Angeles. Others came from Vancouver, British Columbia; Seattle; Tucson, Arizona;

Grand Junction, Colorado; and New York City. Several attractive displays chronicled White’s political life and the tumultuous events her party was involved in. Supporters of the SWP in Los Angeles prepared a large spread of food that was enjoyed before and after the meeting.

The celebration of White’s life was chaired by John Benson, a packinghouse worker from Fresno and a member of the steering committee of the party’s fraction in the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Also speaking was Wendy Lyons, who addressed the crowd on behalf of the Los Angeles branch of the SWP. Lyons first worked with White in New York in the mid-1960s when they were both leaders of the Young Socialist Alliance and beginning to take on SWP leadership responsibilities.

Two mighty developments

“Judy was part of a generation that was influenced by two mighty developments in the class struggle: the Cuban revolution and the civil rights movement,” said Lyons. She described how White first visited Cuba in 1955 with her father, and then again in 1960 on a trip she made with a lifelong friend.

“Judy had a burning hatred for injustice, fueled not only by what she saw in the United States, but also by the oppression generated by the U.S. government abroad that she had witnessed firsthand in pre-revolutionary Cuba and also in Mexico. Judy saw in the Cuban revolution a road forward. Workers and farmers of Cuba had marched onto the stage of history and showed it was possible to change the world,” said Lyons. “Judy decided that we needed such a revolution here in the United States and joined the Young Socialist Alliance in 1961. She was part of the YSA’s efforts to defend the Cuban revolution against U.S. government attacks.”

Lyons described how the YSA threw itself into the rising movement that finally defeated Jim Crow—the brutal system of legal and de jure segregation of African-Americans in states across the South, backed up by racist terror and lynchings. “Beginning in the early 1960s,” she said, “every week brought news of new actions in the South—bus boycotts, freedom rides, sit-ins, and fights against racist frame-ups. In Boston where Judy lived at that time, and elsewhere in the North, there were also growing actions in solidarity with the fight against Jim Crow.”

“Judy participated in the picket lines at Woolworths in Boston, in defense cases, and demonstrations. And as the Black struggle developed a more and more revolutionary wing around Malcolm X, Judy, together with her comrades in the YSA and SWP, worked to defend it and link up with it.”

“The YSA Judy joined was a cadre organization that saw ourselves as fellow fighters with Cuban revolutionaries and with Black workers, farmers, and youth who were day by day

We were proud of our connection with the SWP,” she said, a party with a program and history that at the time included in its membership those who been part of the fight against the Stalinization of the world communist movement and individuals who led workers in successful victories in the Minneapolis Teamster strikes and the over-the-road Teamster organizing campaign in the Upper Midwest during the great labor battles of the 1930s.

“The YSA was a serious, disciplined organization,” Lyons emphasized. “We studied the continuity of Marxism together with the SWP and did our best to act on it.”



Judy White speaks during her 1966 campaign as Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York. Socialist campaign took place as movement to withdraw U.S. forces from Vietnam gained strength. Following election, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller signed “anti-Judy White law” barring “ineligible” people from being nominated for public office in New York.

Though we were a small organization then, we strengthened ourselves during those years as we developed a strong cadre. This enabled us to play a leadership role in the movement against the Vietnam war as it expanded. The YSA grew rapidly in the late 1960s and early 1970s,” said Lyons, “and became the main source for renewal of the party.”

Movement against the war in Vietnam

Judy White was right in the thick of this, Lyons explained. She was a founder of the Greater Boston Coordinating Committee Against the War that organized the first days of protest against the war in Vietnam in 1965. Based on this work, Boston became the headquarters of the “Bring the Troops Home Now” newsletter, which grew out of a great debate over the correct course for the developing protest movement against the war. The YSA, SWP, and other forces wanted to build an uncompromising movement against the war with the clear demand on the U.S. government to bring the troops home now. They sought a movement that would reach out and appeal to the GIs. This was in sharp opposition to others who lumped the GIs together with the military brass and the imperialist government it serves, making no distinction between the officer corps and the tens of thousands of workers and farmers in uniform who had been drafted into the military.

White moved to New York in 1966 as part of linking up the “Bring the Troops Home Now” wing of the anti-Vietnam war movement with the growing strength of the movement in New York. That same year White was nominated as the SWP’s candidate for governor of New York.

This fact was noted by Ana Ramirez, addressing the crowd on behalf of the Los

Angeles chapter of the Young Socialists. “My comrades and I in the YS chapter were going through the *Militant* to help prepare the displays that you see here,” said Ramirez. “One of the things that excited us was Judy running for governor of New York in 1966. She was only 28, old enough at the time if she was a male to be drafted and sent to war. But New York State officials said she wasn’t old enough to be governor.”

“The ruling class in New York State saw the effectiveness of our campaign among youth and antiwar activists,” Ramirez noted. “They were appalled when we demanded the addresses of all GIs who were registered to vote so we could send them campaign literature, regardless of where they might be stationed.”

In 1967, following the election and a week of large mobilizations against the Vietnam war, then New York governor Nelson Rockefeller signed a law described by the *New York Times* as the “anti-Judy White law.” It barred “ineligible” people—that is those under the age required for serving as governor—from being nominated for public office or appearing on the ballot. Backers of the law claimed White’s campaign had led the 12,000 people who voted for her to waste their votes.

“There are many fighters like Judy White,” said Ramirez. “Today when we honor Judy it is not surprising for me to learn of the role she played in the movement. It is an inspiration. The Young Socialists can learn from this experience and see an example of the kind of movement we are trying to build today.”

Mary-Alice Waters was the featured speaker at the event. “Judy was typical of a whole generation,” Waters said. “Her father was a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania who came to the United States in the early part of the century. Her mother was Alsatian. They moved to Boston where Judy was born in 1938. Her father ran a family hardware and dry goods business.”

“Judy didn’t talk about her family very much,” said Waters, “but occasionally she would explain that she had a very famous uncle, Harry Dexter White, who was probably second only to Alger Hiss as a target of the post-World War II witch-hunt of high-ranking government officials in Washington.”

Postwar ‘red scare’

Waters described Harry Dexter White’s life beginning with his work in dry goods and hardware stores in Boston. He eventually graduated from Harvard and Stanford becoming known as a capable and up-and-coming economist. In the early 1930s, he was hired to work on special projects in the U.S. Treasury Department in Washington and by the time the U.S. government declared war on Germany, White was rising fast, eventually becoming the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in the Roosevelt administration under Henry Morgenthau.

Though later accused of being a Soviet agent, White’s work in this period could not be separated from that of the Roosevelt and later the Truman administrations.

He was one of the authors of what became known during the final years of the war as the Morgenthau Plan for Germany. This was one of U.S. imperialism’s postwar schemes, eventually rejected, that put forward the perspective of making sure Germany did not reindustrialize after the war, forcing it to be a pastoral and agricultural country incapable of threatening either the Soviet Union or Washington and its postwar imperialist allies again.

The Morgenthau Plan and other such proposals were later described by opponents of Roosevelt and Truman as being in the

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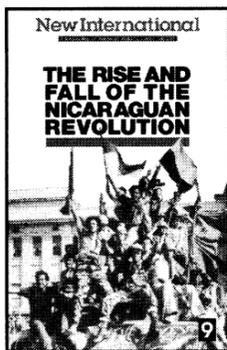
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on of Judy White

ped others see need for proletarian party

interests of the Soviet Union.

White was also the co-author along with British economist John Maynard Keynes of the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference agreement that organized the international monetary system coming out of World War II. Out of this came the International Monetary Fund, of which he was the first U.S. executive director.

"This same person found himself accused in 1948 of being a high level Soviet agent in the top reaches of the government," said Waters. He was brought before a federal grand jury in New York City that was also considering the charges against the leadership of the Communist Party of the United States and eventually brought indictments against 12 of them under the Smith Act. They were convicted soon after of "advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government by force."

Harry Dexter White was not indicted. But his name was spread across the pages of every newspaper in the United States as the example, together with Alger Hiss, of the kind of Soviet espionage activities organized by the U.S. Communist Party and the Soviet Union. White died of a heart attack a few months later.

Judy was 10 years old in 1948 when White was brought before the grand jury, Waters explained. Five years later this hit the newspapers again when then U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower's attorney general, Herbert Brownell, accused former Democratic Party president Harry Truman of having placed Harry Dexter White in key Treasury Department posts while knowing all along about his "espionage activity" on "behalf of the Soviet Union."

"This became one of the sharpest conflicts of the entire witch-hunt period, with Eisenhower finally calling it off saying it was getting a little out of hand. This was one of the turning points of the witch-hunt," Waters emphasized.

"The *Militant* did a very effective job of coming to the defense of Harry Dexter White," she said, calling meeting participants attention to the display area and to an issue of the *Militant* published in November 1953 with an article entitled "In Defense of Harry Dexter White."

Under the pen name John Petrone, the *Militant* editor at the time, George Breitman, wrote, "Politically I have little or nothing in common with Harry Dexter White. So far as his public record and statements go he seems to have been a typical New Dealer. A smart young man who was called to a bureaucrat's job in Washington where he served Roosevelt and the capitalist class well by promoting the New Deal reform program that was designed to keep a discontented working class from moving in the direction of independent political action." The author then went on to expose the kind of charges that were being brought against White on a totally unfounded basis.

"These events had quite an impact on Judy," stated Waters, "especially in her teenage years as reporters gathered outside her home trying to get interviews with family and friends. It was out of events like this that Judy's generation developed a deep hatred of the witch-hunt, and the House Un-American Activities Committee know as HUAC, with its hounding of people—innocent or guilty—like Harry Dexter White, destroying thousands of lives in the process."

Effects of Stalinism

"Judy came out of this also with a great hatred of Stalinism," Waters said. "She understood how deeply corrupted the individuals were that got involved with this who

confused the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution with the twists and turns of the privileged bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin. Harry Dexter White, like others in his generation, was attracted to Stalinism."

In the grips of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Harry Dexter White had wanted to travel to the Soviet Union to witness the benefits that a planned economy could bring to the world.

Harry Dexter White readily acknowledged that many of his personal friends and associates in Washington were part of the circle of people being charged with espionage, explained Waters.

"What Judy understood was that many of that generation attracted to Stalinism were honored to be asked to help the Soviet Union in that way, especially in wartime. Judy deeply comprehended what Socialist Workers Party leader Jim Cannon used to say when he explained that Stalinism destroyed the best of generations, not the worst."

Waters urged meeting participants to get a copy of the new Pathfinder title *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, an interview with Rodolfo Saldaña, which was conducted by Waters and Michael Taber in 1997. "I'm sure many of you will be impressed as I was when I talked to Saldaña and got his story. He was a leader of the Bolivian Communist Party at one time who broke from the Bolivian CP through being attracted to the Cuban Revolution. He became a genuine revolutionary. There weren't many people like that in Latin America or anywhere else in the world at that time. But the Cuban Revolution had opened up a totally different historical road that was also what Judy White was attracted to and became part of," said Waters. "Judy would have appreciated Saldaña's story had she been able to read it."

Rise of women's liberation movement

Waters noted, as Lyons had done earlier in the meeting, that White was typical of a whole generation of women who were affected by the rise of the women's movement and who became cadres of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance at the time.

"Women who joined our movement during that period of time never played second fiddle," said Waters. "The exact oppo-

site happened and we were pushed at every step, every moment, in every way, to take on greater and greater leadership responsibility, far beyond what most of us thought or believed we were capable of.

"This wasn't because of some special policy towards women, but because the revolutionary character of the party and the Young Socialists means the organizations are always reaching to maximize the capacities and the abilities of every single individual to help



Rally in Havana, August 1960, to support nationalization of imperialist-owned properties in Havana. Top banner reads, "Fidel—our country will be a tomb before it falls into foreign hands." One participant holds a poster of Nicaraguan revolutionary leader Augusto Sandino. "Judy saw in the Cuban Revolution a road forward. Workers and farmers of Cuba had marched onto the stage of history and showed it was possible to change the world," said Wendy Lyons at memorial meeting.

them rise to the heights of whatever they are capable of doing."

Waters detailed the many leadership responsibilities White took on in the SWP, including being secretary for the large New York branch in the 1960s, women's liberation director for the party in New York, a secretary for the party's Political Committee, and party financial director responsible for corresponding and working with SWP branches.

White was elected to the SWP National Committee as an alternate member in 1971 and as a regular member at the 1977 party convention. In the 1980s, she served on the party's Control Commission for a couple of years. In 1974 she was a fraternal delegate to the world congress of the Fourth International.

Struggles in Latin America

"Judy's role in the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA) was one of the things she was most identified with," said Waters. "Judy carried out this responsibility not as a 'Latin Americanist' but as a proletarian revolutionary who completely identified with the struggles. She was one of the very best mass workers I've seen in the party," Waters said. "She loved working with people and she was completely comfortable getting involved with other forces who didn't agree with us on every question."

USLA was founded in 1966, a day after the firebombing of the party's headquarters in New York by a right-wing Cuban group during White's campaign for governor in 1966. The immediate impetus for the founding of USLA was the fact that a number of members and leaders of the communist movement in Latin America were facing extremely harsh repression. The best example was Hugo Blanco in Peru who was facing the death penalty for his work organizing a mass movement of peasants to take land from the wealthy landowners in Peru's La Convencion Valley in 1961-62.

These events, which were one of the high points of the class struggle in Latin America

at that time, are detailed in the Pathfinder title *Land or Death*. Blanco was initially sentenced to death by a military court but after several years of a defense campaign, he was given 25 years in the infamous El Frontón prison on an island off the coast of Peru.

"On appeal Blanco's prosecutors asked for the death penalty," Waters said. "We joined others around the world in responding. It was in this context that USLA was launched." The breadth of USLA was very significant from the beginning, Waters explained. At its founding meeting, speakers on the platform who agreed to be executive board members of USLA included Paul Sweezy, who was the coeditor of *Monthly Review*; John Gerassi, author of the book *The Great Fear in Latin America*; Father Felix McGowan; Catarino Garza, who was at that time the Socialist Workers Party candidate for lieutenant governor of New York; and Joseph Hansen, who was editor of the *Militant*.

"From the very beginning, USLA was not a committee to defend just individuals who were part of our movement," said Waters. "The committee took up cases of Latin American political prisoners of all political tendencies, all political currents, in country after country of Latin America." USLA's efforts and the effort of others around the world resulted in Blanco being able to beat back the death penalty attempt again. He served seven years in prison before his release was won in late 1970. "Just as the Young Socialist Alliance convention was convening in New York that year, we learned that Hugo had finally been sprung from prison and it was just a joyous celebration for the entire convention," said Waters. After a visa fight that the U.S. government stretched out for years, Blanco was finally able to get into the United States in 1977 and spent two months on a speaking tour.

The high point of the USLA Justice Committee came with the defense work following the coup in Chile in 1973, led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet, which resulted in thousands of workers and peasants being slaughtered by the military regime.

The committee turned, as thousands did in the United States and around the world, to responding to the situation

Continued on Page 9



Militant /Left, Brian Shannon; above, Fred Murphy; right, Ed Berger Left, Student Mobilization Committee contingent in 1968 march against Washington's war on Vietnam. White was active in the "Bring the Troops Home Now" wing of the antiwar movement in Boston and New York. Above, Peruvian revolutionary Hugo Blanco is welcomed in Lima, Peru, in July 1978. Right, Young Socialists member Ana Ramirez addresses the memorial meeting.



LA meeting celebrates life of Judy White

Continued from Page 9

faced by the victims of the U.S.-backed military dictatorship. And at that point, Judy White was on staff for USLA and editor of the committee's publication, the *USLA Reporter*. The committee organized a benefit art showing that raised \$30,000 for the coup victims and their families. USLA issued a special issue of its *Reporter* running 10,000 copies. White went to Mexico to interview a number of those who were able to get out. The USLA Justice Committee organized a meeting in New York City in which more than 1,300 took part.

White edited a USLA book titled *Chile's Days of Terror*, which was a collection of interviews with coup victims. "This USLA title," Waters said again pointing to the displays, "was copyrighted by Judy White and

distributed by Pathfinder."

"The record of the Socialist Workers Party in defense of the Latin American political prisoners throughout the period of time that Judy was at the very center of it saved a good many lives of our comrades in Latin America and those from other political tendencies," said Waters. "This was an example of communist defense policy at its best and one of the proudest chapters in the history of the Socialist Workers Party."

Launching of 'Perspectiva Mundial'

White was a staff writer for *Intercontinental Press* in 1976-1977, a weekly Marxist news magazine edited by Joseph Hansen. While on the *IP* staff, White, who was fluent in Spanish, began editing the Spanish-language section of the publication. This

was a precursor to *Perspectiva Mundial*, which was launched in 1977. "In the fall of that year, she formally became the editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* on the masthead," Waters said, "but in point of fact she had been editing the magazine since its inception in collaboration with two comrades from Mexico who spent time in the United States helping get the publication off the ground. This year is the 25th anniversary of the founding of *Perspectiva Mundial*," said Waters. "I hope we can organize some appropriate celebrations of this fact around the country."

This was the period of Judy's greatest leadership responsibilities in the party, said Waters. "Later, Judy herself set limits on what she would and would not do. More and more she limited herself to what she

was most comfortable with. The greatest disappointment from the party's point of view was that she was capable of doing more. We joked with her about her bourgeois beatnikism, or 'bohemian streak.' She was a disciplined cadre of the party for many years but at a certain point, in 1978, she walked into the office and said she was going to Mexico to be part of building a pyramid. She said 'that's what I want to do and I'll probably be back in a few years.'"

Revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada

Waters said White returned to the party in 1979-1980. "It was the strength of the Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions and the party's decision to concentrate our forces in the mines, mills, factories, and rail yards organized by the industrial unions that attracted Judy back to the party," said Waters. She was a party member for another 16 years, helping to build party branches in San Diego, Phoenix, and Los Angeles. She participated in the work of the party's industrial fractions in the United Auto Workers union and the International Association of Machinists as an aircraft assembler, on the production line at a Revlon cosmetics factory, and later in the kitchen at United Airlines. In 1984 White participated in a session of the party's leadership school, teaching Spanish there.

In the late 1980s she was part of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* Bureau that provided readers of those publications uninterrupted eyewitness coverage for more than a decade of the developments during the rise and fall of the Nicaraguan revolution.

"Judy's contributions were extremely important," Waters said. "But it was the party that she built that made it possible—the party she left as a legacy to the comrades coming onto the scene today."

John Benson, as chairperson of the meeting, read portions of several of the more than a dozen messages that were received. Among them was a message from Róger Calero, a meat packer and an activist in Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which is fighting to win a contract at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota.

"I was a young participant in the revolutionary process in Nicaragua from 1979 to 1985," Calero wrote. "Working through these events with a communist in the United States was decisive to my integration into the class struggle in the United States and the communist movement here. Judy was one of those who helped explain to me the difference between revolutionary leadership and both social democracy and Stalinism."

Betsy Stone, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in Chicago, wrote about White's abilities as translator. She had an ability to get the "meaning of exactly what the speaker was saying, giving as accurate a translation as possible. She didn't try to improve on what the speaker said, or add her own idea or emphasis, so people—including those whose political ideas were different from hers—grew to trust and appreciate her translations. Often the applause she would get afterwards would match that given to the speaker."

Norton Sandler, from the SWP's national committee, told how White had twice contributed to the party's Capital Fund. The first was from a sizable inheritance she received and the second was from a back pay settlement she won from a San Diego employer who had laid her off out of seniority while providing jobs for male co-workers who had less seniority. Sandler urged participants in a position to do so to make a contribution of \$1,000 or more to the SWP Capital Fund, which goes to the continued production of Pathfinder titles, including upgrading the printing equipment and building in New York where these books are produced.

Sandler explained that everyone present could contribute to the Judy White Party-Building Fund to honor her work in building the SWP for three and half decades. Participants contributed \$3,500 to the fund at the Los Angeles meeting. Contributions to the Judy White Party-Building Fund can be sent to the SWP at 406 West Street, New York, NY 10014-2570.

Wendy Lyons is a sewing machine operator and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles. Norton Sandler contributed to this article.

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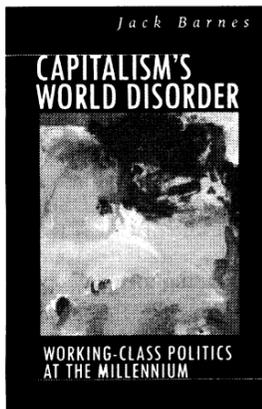
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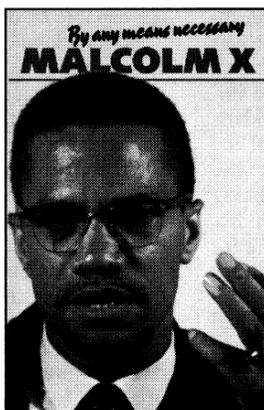
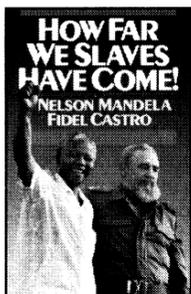
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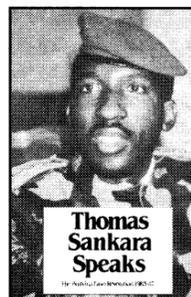
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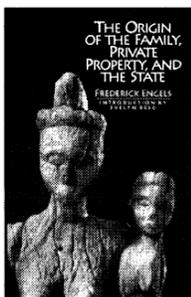
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Bush administration probes new military threats against Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As former U.S. president William Clinton made his exit from the White House and George Bush prepared for his inauguration, U.S. and British warplanes bombed civilian targets in Iraq's southern province of al-Muthana. The air strikes came just hours before Bush was sworn in January 20.

Six Iraqi workers were killed at a veterinary clinic by the attack that also destroyed a residential house and burned down a farm, according to the Iraqi News Agency.

U.S. military officials claimed the missile attack was on an anti-aircraft radar installation in the town of As-Salman. But international aid workers who visited the town three days before the assault told the *Christian Science Monitor*, "There were no anti-aircraft facilities in the area...around the clinic." Aswan Habib, whose cousin was killed by the air strikes, explained, "They say they always hit military targets, but this was a civilian target."

The U.S. warplanes were patrolling the "no-fly zone" over southern Iraq that Washington imposed after the 1990-91 Gulf war. The Iraqi government does not recognize the infringement on its sovereignty and since 1998 has ordered anti-aircraft units to try to shoot down the British and U.S. planes.

The air strikes in Iraq took place three

days after the 10th anniversary of the start of Washington's brutal six-week bombing campaign against the country's 23 million people. A number of articles appeared in the big business media commemorating the 1991 bombardment and subsequent 100-hour invasion of Iraq by Washington and its allies.

The allied assault, led by U.S. armored divisions, naval bombardment, and punishing airstrikes slaughtered an estimated 150,000 Iraqis.

Carl Nolte, a reporter who covered the war, wrote in the January 17 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle* about the "Highway of Death," where U.S. warplanes trapped tens of thousands of Iraqis fleeing the battlefield in disarray in thousands of vehicles on the road that leads from Kuwait City to Basra in Iraq. U.S. forces systematically and mercilessly bombed them for 48 hours. "It was a traffic jam, bumper to bumper on the road to Iraq, a retreating army that had lost all organization," Nolte wrote. "Vehicles ran off the road, crashed into each other, were bombed, caught fire. The desert was littered with dead trucks and dead men. Television crews filmed the wreckage."

In the wake of the imperialist assault, millions were left homeless and exposed to hunger and disease, and large regions of the



Demolished home of Iraqi family in al-Jumhuriya, outside Basra, after U.S. jets bombed several targets on Jan. 25, 1999. New U.S. president indicates Washington will continue policy of repeated airstrikes on Iraq.

country were in ruins. In addition, the economic blockade, which has prevented medicine, foodstuffs, and agricultural implements from being imported, has resulted in acute malnutrition, cholera, and other epidemic horrors in the region.

The U.S. rulers had seized on Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 to launch a war aimed at removing the government of President Saddam Hussein and installing a protectorate in the country that would police the region for Washington. Because Iraq has the world's second-largest known oil re-

serves, achieving this goal would have also enabled the U.S. rulers to secure greater control over that crucial commodity.

Washington also aimed to push back the resistance of the Palestinian masses and in the process stabilize and strengthen pro-imperialist regimes in the Mideast. Despite the massive military mobilization, Washington failed to achieve most of these aims.

Gulf war coalition in tatters

Waged behind the facade of a United Nations-sponsored "international coalition," the Gulf war was a U.S.-government operation that instead exacerbated the rivalry and conflicts between Washington and other imperialist powers. It was the first of Washington's wars since World War II in which it sought to use its military might to deal economic and political blows to its rivals in Europe and Japan. Despite claims of a "New World Order" by then U.S. president George Bush, articles on the 10th anniversary of the bombing point to an opposite conclusion.

"Today's 10th anniversary of the beginning of the Gulf war should be the cause for celebration for the US and the impressive coalition it assembled to drive Iraq out of Kuwait," said an article in the January 17 *Financial Times*. Instead the article noted, "The Gulf war coalition is in tatters and support for sanctions has been diluted."

The Gulf war also intensified the political conflicts between Washington and the workers state in the former Soviet Union, whose government backed the imperialist assault on Iraq. The governments of the workers states in Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic participated in the 1990-91 war and all have joined NATO as part of Washington's moves to expand its military presence eastward, a drive opposed by Russian government officials who see the logic of the military expansion.

The Clinton administration's inaugural day bombing and killing of Iraqis was part of a consistent eight-year policy. His administration opened with a massive bombing of the country and expanded the "no-fly zone" to cover all but a small band of the country over the capital of Baghdad. A United Nations survey last year reported the air strikes killed one Iraqi civilian every other day since the end of 1998.

Meanwhile, the U.S. rulers have floated new threats of military action against Iraq under the pretext that Baghdad is producing chemical and biological weapons. "Saddam Hussein must understand that this nation is very serious about preventing him from the development of weapons of mass destruction," declared Bush in an interview before taking office. His vice president, Richard Cheney, said in a campaign debate last October, "We'd have to give very serious consideration to military action" against Iraq.

A report released January 10 by former secretary of defense William Cohen claimed "some of Iraq's facilities could be converted fairly quickly to production of chemical weapons." Clinton had threatened military force against Iraq whenever Washington deemed Baghdad was developing chemical, nuclear, or biological weapons. It was under this guise that Clinton ordered air strikes on Iraq in 1998.

The report by Cohen was contradicted by

Continued on Page 12

Half of Pathfinder titles to be digital by May 1

BY TOM TOMASKO

OAKLAND, California—The drive to computerize all of the titles published by Pathfinder Press is steadily increasing in pace and scope. The Pathfinder Reprint Project has adopted the goal of putting on compact disks at least one-half of all Pathfinder's titles by May 1, the day of international workers' celebrations. This makes it possible for the books to be reprinted at a moment's notice. As of January 20, 43.7 percent are completed.

It has taken three years to get to this point. In the first six months of 1998 when the project was just beginning, two books were made digital, and that work only included the text. Later the project took on the challenging task of digitally reproducing all the graphics, which includes photos, maps, and covers. In the last six months volunteers turned 33 books from cover to cover into digital format.

By mid-January of 2001, volunteers completed *Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism* and *Haciendo historia* (Making History). Five more are projected to be completed in the month. One of those is the new book titled *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*.

The Pathfinder edition of *Haciendo historia* and the new book *Fertile Ground* are a politically valuable addition to Pathfinder's titles, which contain the history and lessons of the revolutionary struggles of working people for power. *Haciendo*

historia contains interviews with four generals of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces about what made them come to revolutionary ideas and act upon them in their youth during the struggle in the late 1950s against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. All of them went on to serve in internationalist missions in such countries as Angola and Nicaragua.

Fertile Ground is an interview with Rodolfo Saldaña, who joined with Ernesto Che Guevara in the 1966-67 revolutionary front that Guevara led in Bolivia. Both books are products of editorial collaboration between Pathfinder Press and Editoria Política in Cuba. The Spanish edition of *Haciendo historia* that was produced in Cuba is now out of print. Pathfinder's new edition will be available for the Havana International Book Fair, February 2-10.

Producing *Fertile Ground* has taken close collaboration between the editorial staff of Pathfinder and the volunteers of the reprint project. Careful planning and a collaborative spirit are necessary in organizing the give and take of new book production between reprint volunteers, who live in many different cities and countries, and Pathfinder in New York. For instance, in order to rapidly format the text of the book, a volunteer in Seattle did some formatting before he went to work in the morning and e-mailed the part he had partially completed to another volunteer in Pittsburgh, who worked on it after his day job and then e-mailed it

to a third person in San Francisco who completed the work.

Four volunteers living in four different cities then simultaneously proofread it in one day. And of course, as with all new books, there are constant changes being made right up to press time. These were incorporated into the book and checked by proofreaders, formatters, and the editors.

Since the last book fair in Havana, the project has made available for reprint 10 books in Spanish: *Socialismo y el hombre en Cuba; En defensa del marxismo; La revolución traicionada; Che Guevara, Cuba y el camino al socialismo* (Nueva Internacional no. 2); *Segunda declaración de La Habana; El ascenso y el ocaso de la revolución nicaragüense* (Nueva Internacional no. 3); *Wall Street enjuicia al socialismo; Pathfinder nació con la Revolución de Octubre; Che Guevara: Economía y política en la transición al socialismo; and 50 años de guerra encubierta*. This is one of the most important political contributions the volunteers in the reprint project made for the communist movement worldwide.

The volunteers are also becoming adept at producing titles in French and have nearly completed formatting the Icelandic translation of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*. They will soon begin work on the Swedish edition of the same title.

Reprint volunteers spend many hours at their computers working on formatting text, creating graphics, or proofreading. What motivates every participant to put in this many hours before or after work and on weekends is the knowledge that the ideas contained in the books are decisive in order for a successful revolution by working people to overturn social relations engendered by class society and put us on the road to creating a society fit for human beings.

It has also inspired many of the volunteers to participate in the new international effort to win orders for Pathfinder titles from bookstores, libraries, bodegas, and other outlets where working people buy books. While this effort is just underway, thousands of dollars worth of books have been sold already. To cite just one example, last week in San Francisco Pathfinder supporters visited a bookstore that specializes in books related to the African-American struggle for equality. The buyer ordered 70 books worth more than \$700.

If you would like to volunteer for the Pathfinder Reprint Project, please contact Ruth Cheney at ruthchen@pacbell.net.

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Pathfinder Press publishes books that make the continuity of the communist movement, the line of march of the working-class, and a Marxist explanation of today's world accessible to vanguard workers and farmers. The work of the Pathfinder Reprint Project is to digitize—computerize—books that were prepared using old-style film and printing plates. The new technology makes possible rapid printing of short runs to respond to demand in the class struggle.

The project's current goal is to put on compact disks at least one-half of all Pathfinder's 355 titles by May Day 2001. In the chart above a bit more of the Pathfinder Mural is revealed as progress is made.

Thousands in Ecuador protest gov't austerity

Continued from front page percent, the highest in Latin America, and more than 70 percent of the population now lives under the official poverty line. Ecuador is a country of 12.4 million people, located in the northwestern part of South America.

In response to the protests, Noboa reaffirmed his determination to stick with the government's cutbacks, and in a speech claimed the planned construction of an oil pipeline will create 30,000 jobs. A total of \$1.1 billion has reportedly been allocated to the project, which will cover three regions in Ecuador.

The military and the national police announced their support to the government by warning that those who want "another January 21" will be met with force to stop "any attempt to destabilize the constitutional order." The police are referring to the overthrow of president Jamil Mahuad last January by a popular rebellion of tens of thousands of working people, led in part by indigenous people. In face of growing popular opposition, Mahuad had pressed forward with austerity measures, a drive to make the U.S. dollar the official currency of Ecuador, and talks to give Washington the right to use as a military base the seaport and airport in Manta. The U.S. government is now upgrading this facility, which it is "leasing" free of charge, to accommodate large military jets and house 400 troops.

Following Mahuad's ouster, a short-lived governing junta took over, composed of Antonio Vargas, president of CONAIE; Carlos Mendoza, one of the army colonels involved in the action; and Carlos Solórzano, a former supreme court president. In a recent article on delays in getting the Manta base going, the *Washington Post* reported that following the ouster of Mahuad "by a military coup aided by left-wing indigenous groups" a year ago, "intense pressure from the State Department forced the military to back down, allowing civilian Gustavo Noboa, then Mahuad's vice president, to assume the presidency."

The January 21 protests this year took place in various major cities around the country and included marches and road blockades. In Latacunga, Cotopaxi, more than 1,500 peasants occupied the Pan-American highway, paralyzing traffic between Quito, the capital, and other cities. Participants also marched on the government building there. Similar actions took place in the provinces of Chimborazo, Carchi, Tungurahua, Pastaza, and Loja, in the Andes.

In a move denounced by CONAIE, military troops attacked and fired on a peaceful demonstration of 5,000 indigenous people in Latacunga. Six peasants were wounded and more than 100 people arrested. In response, some 2,000 peasants occupied the government building in Latacunga and replaced the governor of the province with the president of the Federation of University Students of Ecuador (FEUE), Paul Jácome.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Malcolm X: What Working People Today Can Learn from Him. Speaker: Ilona Gersh, member, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Auto Workers. Sat., Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m. Northwest Activities Center, 18100 Meyers Rd. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

NEW YORK

Upper Manhattan

What's Behind the Energy Crisis. Speaker: Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party, member of the United Food and Commercial Workers. Fri., Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m.

Entitlements vs. Charity: How Bush's Social Service Scheme Deepens the Clinton-Gore Attack on Social Security. Fri., Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m. Both events to be held at 540 W 165th St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

BRITAIN

London

Eyewitness Accounts from the Actions in London and Derry Marking the Anniversary of Ireland's Bloody Sunday. Fri., Feb. 9, 7:00 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

Marches were held in Guayaquil and Babahoyo among other cities on the coast. Lucio Gutiérrez, one of the colonels involved in the January 21 overthrow of Mahuad, led a demonstration of 6,000 in Cuenca, saying that if Noboa continues the austerity measures "the people will oust

you." Gutiérrez has also participated in and spoken at other marches in Quito.

A January 16 demonstration of 3,200 high school students protesting austerity measures included students from nine high schools who were marching together for the first time. The action was attacked with tear gas by the po-

lice, despite the peaceful character of the march. In the provinces of Pichincha and Azuay classes were suspended in the public schools because of the actions. The government deployed 23,000 police who collaborated with the army to patrol highways where indigenous groups are holding their blockades.

Airline mechanics in Atlanta press for contract

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA—Airline mechanics at Northwest and United Airlines stepped up their contract fights with coordinated actions at 17 airports across the country on January 26. Informational picket lines went up in Atlanta, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Memphis, Minneapolis, New York, Newark, and other cities. Literature distributed to passengers drew attention to what it called a "minefield path to a fair contract" in the airline industry.

Labor negotiations at airlines and railroads are governed by the Railway Labor Act. Under this law, unions cannot strike without permission from the National Mediation Board. The Railway Labor Act serves to string out negotiations and tie workers up with restrictive regulations. Even after a federal mediator declares an impasse and agrees to release the unions from contract talks, the unions are not allowed to strike until they have gone through a 30-day "cooling-off period."

The more than 10,000 members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) at Northwest have been without a contract for four years. At United, mechanics, ramp workers, and service agents organized by the International Association of Machinists (IAM) have been without a contract since July 2000.

The mechanics explained that the mediation board has suspended their contract talks at both airlines, charging that the unions were demanding too much. Mediation board chief of staff Stephen Crable told AMFA negotiators that they could "sit 'until Hell freezes over' if they did not move substantially toward Northwest's proposal." Union mechanics counter this charge by explaining that the average starting hourly pay at the top ten major airlines of \$14.96 has not changed much since the mid-1980s.

Felix Saenz, a Northwest aircraft mechanic at the Atlanta maintenance base, expressed the sentiments of many participants with the comment, "Let us talk or let us walk." Hundreds of AMFA members in At-

lanta participated in the well-organized activities, which included distributing literature at each doorway and on every concourse at Hartsfield airport, while maintaining an informational picket line in front of the maintenance base throughout the day.

In Atlanta 35,000 pieces of literature were distributed by the uniformed cleaners, custodians, and mechanics. Mechanics from Delta, United, and American Airlines joined in the effort. "This was excellent," said Saenz. "The turnout, the unity. The passengers were very receptive."

Pilots from Delta Airlines also partici-

pated. On January 18 the 11th U.S. Circuit Court backed up Delta Airlines in its fight against the pilots union by issuing an injunction against the Air Line Pilots Association for not doing enough to stop what the company charges is a union campaign to turn down overtime.

Under the existing contract however, overtime is supposed to be voluntary. The pilots association is appealing the court's decision.

Arlene Rubinstein is a meat packer and a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1996.

New U.S. threats against Iraq

Continued from Page 11

unnamed senior government officials who admitted the Pentagon did not have evidence any Iraqi factories, including two reconstructed plants demolished by U.S. and British air raids in 1998, are weapon factories, the *New York Times* reported January 22. "There is no smoking gun," said one U.S. official.

'Reenergize the sanctions'

The new administration in the White House has indicated it aims to step up its efforts to strangle Iraq through the U.S.-UN embargo imposed on the country in 1990. At his confirmation hearing before the Senate, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell said Washington must "reenergize the sanctions regime" against Iraq.

The 10-year-old sanctions have wrought disaster for the population. "Approximately 250 people die every day in Iraq due to the effect of the sanctions," stated a 1998 UN report. More than 1.2 million people, including 750,000 children have died since the embargo was imposed on the country. The Iraqi people are also suffering from increased cases of leukemia and cancer linked to depleted uranium in bullets and warheads

fired by U.S. and British tanks and warplanes. UN officials estimate that more than 300 tons of depleted uranium ammunition is scattered throughout Iraqi territory.

The U.S.-led embargo on Iraq is being undercut by its imperialist competitors and some Arab governments over the past year. The *Financial Times* noted that "two pillars" of the U.S. rulers' policy on Iraq—maintaining sanctions and enforcing the no-fly zones—"have been crumbling."

Since last fall dozens of civilian flights have arrived in Iraq from several countries in the Mideast. The regime in Syria recently announced the reopening of a pipeline from Iraq, allowing Baghdad to ship out 200,000 barrels of oil a day.

The prospects for lucrative billion-dollar contracts to develop Iraqi oilfields has brought business executives from France and Russia to the country. Even Washington's most steadfast ally, the imperialist rulers in the United Kingdom, are probing for oil deals with the Iraqi government. "We've had low-level, largely technical, discussions about developing oilfields" in Iraq, said a spokesperson from Royal Dutch Shell, the Anglo-Dutch oil conglomerate.

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Who flunked—the students or the education system?—“Cracking down on unprepared students, the California State University sys-



Harry Ring

tem kicked out about 2,000 students—more than 6 percent of last year's freshman class—for failing to master basic English and math skills within their first year of

classes.”—*Los Angeles Times*.

Obviously not a pro—The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defense is grappling with a disclosure that, like U.S. GI's, British soldiers who handled Iraqi tanks hit by uranium-depleted bombs face a high risk of cancer. A Ministry medical report on this was written four years ago and suppressed. A spokesperson said the author of the report was a “trainee.”

We were waiting for this one—“The state's [California] electricity crisis threatens to spill over into the gasoline and jet fuel distribution system, raising the specter of short-

ages as major pipelines and oil fields are being starved of power needed to operate pumps.”—*Los Angeles Times*.

Capitalist education—England's Labour government allocated more than \$250 million to step up the drive against truancy. The money will expand sweeps by truancy cops to collar youth they deem should be in school, plus community “awareness” campaigns.

Here's an idea—In England's Essex county, school officials said that a shortage of teachers might make them put the area school system on a four-day week. That, of

course, would be cheaper than paying teachers a decent wage and providing them an opportunity to do some serious teaching. And it would narrow the opportunity for students to absent themselves from school.

Golly, if we weren't temperance—A travel deal: Board a private jet to check out some of the world's great vineyards. Plus, shopping, gourmet meals, etc. Reserve early for the 25-day tour and get \$1,000 off the regular price of \$59,500 (double occupancy).

See, he cares—Health care officials say that in the past decade, 1,000 U.S. hospitals and 1,100

emergency rooms have been shut down. Declared the president of the Massachusetts Ambulance Association: “We're dealing with lives. It's not like we're selling widgets.”

The 'justice' system—Joseph Bini, a Denver cop, is getting his badge and gun back. He had written the wrong address on a search warrant for a no-knock raid. The result, a SWAT team went to the wrong house and fatally shot Ismael Mena who lived there. Bini will receive back pay for nine of the 12 months he was suspended. The city manager said he realized the reinstatement would spark criticism, but it was the “fair” thing to do.

Opposition to nuclear power blocked rulers' plans

Reprinted below are excerpts from “What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold,” a resolution adopted by the August 1988 convention of the Socialist Workers Party. The entire text of this document appears in *New International* no. 10. Copyright © 1994 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted with permission.

The thirty-year accelerated expansion of U.S. capitalism that began in 1941 created a substantial enough aristocratic layer in the U.S. working class to fasten a class-collaborationist officialdom on the labor movement; extinguish the embers of the broad proletarian social movement that had begun to

Book of the Week

take shape through the struggles that built the industrial unions and fought racism and reaction; eliminate the need for the rulers to move outside imperialist democracy in order to maintain stable political control; and foster the gutting of union power that continues to this day. With a time lag, a process with increasingly similar elements took place throughout the imperialist countries over the postwar years.

Despite this grave weakening of the labor movement, the toll that the international profit system has exacted from working people worldwide through and following the 1974–75 and 1981–82 recessions falls far short of the blows that the capitalists must deal to living standards and conditions of

¹The political consequences of the failure by the leaderships of the organized labor movement and popular organizations in Latin America to take up the Cuban government's call for a campaign to demand cancellation of the debt is discussed in “Defend Cuba, Defend Cuba's Socialist Revolution” by Mary-Alice Waters, published elsewhere in this issue (of *New International*.) How international finance capital averted a potential banking collapse in the latter half of the 1980s by “securitising” the unpaid loans as other forms of paper assets (“Brady bonds”) is described in “Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War.”

work as preconditions for launching and sustaining a new wave of capital accumulation. Nor have the rulers been able to impose the draconian reorganization of class relations and degree of additional social devastation on the peoples in the colonial and semicolonial countries that would be necessary to collect the Third World debt...¹

From the late 1940s through the 1960s, the “peaceful use of the atom” was presented throughout the capitalist world as a virtually unlimited economic boon. Nuclear power was going to drastically lower energy costs across the board and result in a general increase in the average industrial rate of profit. The massive investments necessary to construct and outfit the reactor plants—given their long-term profit potentials—would further stimulate economic expansion.

Instead, over the past two decades nuclear power has ended in a debacle. The politics of nuclear power became the opposite of what had been expected by the capitalist rulers. As a result, it has proven to be an economic disaster for them. Nuclear power has met growing public opposition, as accidents such as those at Three Mile Island in the United States and Chernobyl in the Soviet Union have put a spotlight on its unalterable catastrophic dangers. On top of the ever-present threat of a meltdown, nuclear reactors day in and day out produce mounting radioactive wastes (22,000 tons in the United States as of 1987) that remain life-threatening for tens of thousands of years and cannot be safely stored or disposed of.²

Popular opposition to nuclear power has become a permanent political factor throughout the imperialist countries. It has cut deep into industry profits by forcing the shutdown or cancellation of many plants and steeply increasing capital costs to cover additional safety equipment and procedures. The capitalists have increasingly concluded that nuclear power is a losing proposition. No new plants have been ordered in the United States since 1978, and more than 100—some near completion—have been canceled. Only three are currently scheduled to be completed and opened after 1989, and all of these are in jeopardy from challenges to their operating safety.³

There is massive overcapacity in the U.S. nuclear reactor manufacturing industry, which now produces almost entirely for

plants being foisted onto semicolonial countries. Especially following the Chernobyl disaster, capital investment in nuclear power has slowed across most of Western Europe, and the debate over phasing out existing reactors is under way in many countries. Even in France, where nuclear power accounts for 65 percent of electrical generation, the industry faces a \$32 billion debt.

Because of the change in consciousness about its irremediable dangers, nuclear power cannot be made profitable. While the wealthy owners of utilities monopolies are now organizing to recoup some of their colossal outlays through tax breaks, higher rates, and accounting write-offs, there is no way for them to transform a massive loss into a profitable new source of expanded productive capacity. They are now waging a battle within finance capital as a whole to share out the losses, not divide the profits, of four decades of investment in nuclear power.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the capitalists anticipated that nuclear energy would bring a drastic lowering of the circulating costs of constant capital (that is, the costs of raw materials, in this case, energy). Instead, by the closing decade of the twentieth century the nuclear industry and related public utilities



Burial of radioactive wastes in Idaho. “Nuclear reactors produce mounting radioactive wastes that remain life-threatening for tens of thousands of years.”

were saddled with an enormous increase in the fixed costs of constant capital (that is, the costs of nuclear plant and equipment). Much of this capital has been simply written off, with many reactors mothballed in recent years. At the same time, the “promise” of nuclear power has left a long-term legacy to humanity of tens of thousands of tons of deadly radioactive wastes, as well as hundreds of useless concrete-and-steel monuments to the truth of Marx's insight into capitalism's tendency to transform the forces of production into forces of destruction.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



February 13, 1976

The agribusiness-Teamster conspiracy has mounted a concerted drive to bury California's farm labor law providing secret-ballot union representation elections for field hands.

On January 28 a coalition of Republicans and farm-area Democrats in the state legislature blocked passage of a \$3.8 million appropriation needed to keep the Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) functioning until July 1.

If money is not appropriated, the board, which conducts the representation elections, will become virtually defunct by February 6 when its present operating funds run out.

The law, which went into effect this past August 28, was enacted on the basis of an agreement that Democratic Gov. Edmund Brown worked out between the growers, Teamsters, and United Farm Workers. Now, after five months of the law, the growers and Teamsters are having serious second thoughts.

The growers and Teamsters are charging that the statute is weighted in favor of the UFW and that the ALRB is biased toward the UFW.

The reality is, however, that the growers and the Teamsters underestimated the support the UFW could mobilize among the field hands. The UFW has come out ahead in the elections held to date, despite widespread coercion and fraud and despite the

persistent failure of the ALRB to halt the massive violations of the farm labor law.



February 12, 1951

The “sick report” walkout of railroad yardmen went into its 9th day as members of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen demonstrated their rebellion against the two-year stall of their completely justified demands.

President Truman, who has it within his power under the “seizure” of the lines to force the companies to come to an agreement, has centered all his fire upon the union, which he charged has “acted in bad faith” by refusing to accept government mediators' proposals for settlement.

If Truman were seriously concerned with the effects of the rail walkout on the military situation, he could settle the dispute as he did the miners' strike in 1949 after government seizure. After every attempt made to force the miners back to work proved unsuccessful, the government mediators ordered a wage increase acceptable to the union.

But in the railroad dispute, Truman has taken advantage of the craft division in the rail unions, the lack of militant leadership, and the cover of the Korean war to try to force the workers to work against their will without a decent wage and hour agreement.

NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 10

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

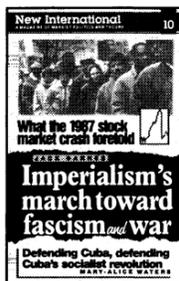
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Mary Alice Waters

The Curve of Capitalist Development by Leon Trotsky
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Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

²For a concise account of nuclear power's special hazard to health, safety, and human life, see Fred Halstead, *What Working People Should Know about the Dangers of Nuclear Power* (New York: Pathfinder, 1981).

³Five years later, as of the end of 1993, there were still no new nuclear power reactors on order in the United States and only one more had been completed and licensed for operation over that period. This trend is not limited to the United States, as indicated by an article headlined “Concern over lull in plant construction” in a special supplement on the world nuclear industry in the November 21, 1994, *Financial Times* of London. It reported that no nuclear power plants are under construction anywhere in Western Europe except France, “and even it is close to the end of its programme.” The International Atomic Energy Agency estimates that nuclear power's market share in energy production worldwide will drop from 17.5 percent in 1993 to between 13 and 15 percent by the year 2000.

So long as the capitalists hold power, however, they will not conclude once and for all that nuclear power is a losing proposition. The political fight will have ebbs and flows with the course of the class struggle and capital's energy and profit needs.

Social security, not charity

With substantial bipartisan support, President George Bush's moves in his first two weeks in office reflect the degree to which he is building on the assaults on working people under the previous Clinton administration and Republican Congress on a number of fronts.

The administration's proposals to undercut government entitlements, including Social Security, by channeling federal money to churches and nonprofit organizations to carry out a host of social services is a threat to workers and farmers. The proposal crosses the constitutional bar on separation of church and state. By giving funds to religious and other organizations that are not bound by federal regulations, it is a direct attempt to undermine affirmative action, antidiscrimination laws, and other federal guidelines that reflect advances won by working people.

In addition to these grave threats, which simply pry the door open to greater violations, Bush's moves to make the federal government a big conduit of funds—both through grants and tax breaks—to advance the work of charities targets the kind of social solidarity essential to the working class.

The premise underpinning the turn to religious groups and charities is that finding a job, seeking medical care and counseling, dealing with homelessness and lack of food, the care of children who have lost a parent, and other crises workers face under capitalism are individual, not social problems.

Under this plan working people will more and more have to face the indignities, intrusions into their private

lives, and violations of their rights by having to face religious proselytizing, lectures on "morals," and discrimination that go hand in hand with the White House office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

It is not surprising that this move comes in the wake of the abolition of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which was part of the original Social Security Act passed by Congress in 1935. Now a bipartisan commission is being set up to see what further inroads can be made by the wealthy rulers against Social Security, a conquest of labor battles of the 1930s, expanded through the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

Bush hopes to push back the conquests won in earlier struggles that old age pensions, health care, unemployment compensation, income for the sick and disabled, and other measures should be federally financed as a guaranteed social wage for every person from cradle to grave. In waging battles to defend broad layers of working people from the vagaries of life under capitalism, the labor and civil rights movements sought to insure that no person was left to fend for themselves or forced to turn to the poor houses, religious charities, and soup lines.

In order to press forward their assault on working people, the ruling rich must continually drive to divide the working class, break down social solidarity, and open up even wider layers to economic devastation. It is against this attack that the labor movement can inscribe the fight for the unity and defense of workers and farmers at the center of its banner.

No to nuclear power

"So long as the capitalists hold power...they will not conclude once and for all that nuclear power is a losing proposition. The political fight will have ebbs and flows with the course of the class struggle and capital's energy and profit needs."

As the energy crisis in California has unfolded, the accuracy of those words from "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," printed in *New Internationalist* no. 10 and distributed by Pathfinder Press, has been confirmed. In an attempt to take advantage of the widespread anger at blackouts and rising prices, various politicians, opinion columnists, energy "experts," and nuclear power advocates have spoken up more boldly in favor of nuclear power than they have dared to for years.

These individuals claim that nuclear reactors offer the safest and most environmentally friendly method of producing electricity. But nuclear power is not a straightforward alternative to oil, coal, and other methods of power generation. It is inherently dangerous. Radiation produced in every step of the nuclear production cycle, from mining to waste disposal, is poisonous even in small quantities. If containment fails, as it inevitably threatens to do, then potentially fatal radiation can be released in sufficient quantities to endanger the health and lives of many thousands of people—including generations not yet born.

Three Mile Island in the United States and Chernobyl

in Ukraine are the two best known sites of major accidents involving nuclear power facilities. Along with the toll of illness and disease they caused, these catastrophes helped raise popular understanding of the dangers of nuclear power. They contributed to the deep opposition to the technology that developed among working people. In the face of this opposition, the capitalists had to scale back and eventually shelve most of their plans for construction of new plants. They also had to put aside their hopes that nuclear power would drive down the costs of electricity and foster a major long-term boost in profits.

As the bosses step up their efforts to rehabilitate nuclear power, workers and farmers should acquaint themselves and others with the truth about this lethal technology. In this regard, the publication *What Working People Should Know About the Dangers of Nuclear Power*, written by Fred Halstead and first published by Pathfinder Press in 1979, is a particularly effective resource. In the pamphlet, Halstead concisely explains the scientific facts and the political issues bound up in the debate.

The labor movement today should take the lead and speak out in the interests of all working people. On this issue they should demand that all plans for construction of new plants be scrapped. All nuclear power plants in use or in mothballs must be decommissioned. Decision-making over energy sources must be taken out of the hands of the profit-mongers: Nationalize the energy industry!

Jobs for all!

The Militant is setting aside editorial space to print the following excerpt from a January 30 statement issued by the Communist League in the United Kingdom.

In face of growing numbers of plant closings and redundancies in the United Kingdom that are putting thousands of workers on the streets and threatening entire communities, the Communist League urges the unions to initiate a campaign to demand the Labour government of Anthony Blair take immediate and wide-ranging action to defend the interests of working people.

The recent determined actions by auto workers stands as an example of the potential to mobilize the broad ranks of labour in a struggle to demand the government reduce the workweek with no cut in pay in order to spread the available work around. We can demand Blair enact a massive, long-term public works program to put tens of thousands to work building needed social projects, such as schools, hospitals, affordable housing, and a refurbished mass transport system.

In response to claims of hard times by General Motors and other companies that are cutting jobs and closing plants, the labor movement can demand of the corporations: Open the books! Show us your records! These capitalist concerns seek to make working people pay for the crisis of overproduction in the auto and steel industries. But there is no reason why the unions have to bow before the hallowed sanctity of corporate secrecy or sacrifice the livelihoods and well-being of tens of thousands of workers and their families at the altar of big business profits.

The effects of the crisis of capitalism and the slowdown in the economy are worldwide; the fight by workers and farmers to defend ourselves from its devastating consequences must be an international one as well. In imperial-

ist countries such as France, Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom, the consequences of a potential downturn in the capitalist business cycle will be devastating for working people. In the semicolonial world, already wracked by social and economic dislocation, it will be a catastrophe. The labor movement can take the moral high ground and take concrete steps to unite with workers and peasants in the Third World by also demanding the imperialist governments cancel the foreign debt of these countries whose payment in yearly tribute is exacted from the toil of working people.

The strikes, walkouts, and demonstrations by workers at General Motors across Europe struck an important note of this kind of international working-class solidarity. The union actions helped cut across what will become a heightened drive by the corporations to pit workers in one country against another and to put the unions in the dead-end framework of defending "British jobs," "German jobs," or "French jobs."

Workers in France are also fighting a government and corporate drive to raise the retirement age and to implement other measures to cut back the social wage of working people. The massive turnout across the country the same day as the mobilizations against General Motors point to the power the labor movement has to stand and fight in the broad interests of all working people.

Embarking on a course of struggle along these lines points to the need to fight for a government that consistently and uncompromisingly stands and fights in the interest of working people, something that will take a revolutionary struggle by tens of millions to accomplish. The mobilizations across Europe this past week are the initial indications of the pressing need for such a struggle and of the capacity of workers and farmers to see it through to victory.

Bush proposals

Continued from front page

on significantly expanding the "charitable choice" provisions of the 1996 law promoted by former U.S. president William Clinton that drastically cut welfare programs, including Aid to Families with Dependent Children. This "charity" provision opened the door for religious groups to compete for government contracts and funding.

Since going into effect, several lawsuits have been filed against states over the discriminatory treatment from these church-based charity organizations. Texas, for example, gave \$8,000 to the Jobs Partnership of Washington County, which required participants to study scripture and, as the program described, "to find employment through a relationship with Jesus Christ."

The American Jewish Congress and the Texas Civil Rights Project have filed a suit in federal court charging that the Jobs Partnership bought Bibles for its students. According to the *Times*, "A third of the program's students said they had been pressured to join a church or change their beliefs."

Another case in Kentucky was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Separation of Church and State against the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, which receives financing from the state. The suit is in response to the firing of one of the group's counselors after a picture of her at a gay rights parade appeared in a photography exhibit at a county fair.

Education plan

Claiming that his proposals would "transform the federal role in education," Bush announced a series of measures on January 23 that take aim at the 36-year-old Title I program, which provides some \$8 billion to aid the nation's poorest and "lowest-achieving" students.

Under this plan, any "failing schools" that are part of the Title I program that did not improve after three years would have the federal funds available to them cut. Instead, a taxpayer-financed voucher worth around \$1,500 annually would be given to the families of these students, to be used either to attend a private school, another public school, or to hire a tutor. An annual test of students from third through eighth grade would provide the basis for measuring results.

Bush says he will enforce a law already in effect that allows the president to withhold federal money that states use to hire employees to administer the Title I program. Currently the federal government funds just 7 percent of the public education budget.

A January 24 *New York Times* article pointed to the devastating impact that Bush's voucher plan would have on New York's public schools. "With nearly 10 percent of new York's 1,100 public schools classified by the state as failing, the city could lose tens of millions of dollars in federal education aid," it stated.

Jack Jennings of the Center for Education Policy spoke out both against the voucher aspect of Bush's plan and a proposal to allow parents to deduct up to \$5,000 of their yearly income to pay the educational expenses of each of their children attending private elementary and secondary schools. "The real action to aid private schools will be in the tax route," he said.

Senator Joseph Lieberman, the former Democratic Party candidate for vice president, hailed Bush's charity proposals. Appearing with him at an after-school program run by a former police officer in Washington, D.C., Lieberman said that he and the president were "of like minds" on expanding federal support to private charitable groups. Lieberman, with backing from both Democrats and Republicans in Congress, has also put forward an education plan similar to Bush's, except that instead of projecting vouchers he calls for shutting down "low-performing schools" and opening more charter schools.

Meanwhile, Bush has outlined a tax plan that would give hefty breaks to wealthy families and individuals, including a proposal for an across-the-board cut in income tax rates. The reductions in the tax rate are structured so that those in higher income brackets receive the biggest tax breaks. The president's tax scheme calls for a \$1.6 trillion tax cut over 10 years that would also eliminate the gift and estate taxes. This would give a whopping \$236 billion to the wealthiest 2 percent in the United States. The measure also opens up loopholes that would provide the rich with various ways to reduce or eliminate other taxes.

"With the estate tax gone," the *New York Times* noted, "the wealthy would be encouraged instead to create trusts on which little or no tax would be owed." In some states opulent families could avoid paying taxes on their wealth indefinitely. Bush has already received bipartisan support for his tax proposal, in which he projects inheritance taxes to be phased out by 2009. Democrat Zell Miller and Republican Phillip Gramm introduced legislation into the Senate that nearly matches Bush's tax plan. "We're joining together in a crusade to see this tax cut is passed in its totality," crowed Gramm. Federal Reserve chairman Greenspan also gave a nod to the tax plan.

CORRECTION

Two photo captions in *Militant* no. 5, dated February 5, are incorrect. The photos illustrate the article "Five-year lockout ends at Crown refinery." They show a broadly attended rally held February 5, 1999, at the refinery and at the union hall in Pasadena, Texas, on the three-year anniversary of the lockout, not the January 1996 march that preceded the lockout by a few weeks. Both photographs were taken by Jacquie Henderson.

El Salvador quake becomes a social disaster

BY JANNE ABULLARADE

An earthquake that hit El Salvador January 13 has left at least 726 people dead, 4,440 injured, and 2,000 missing. Serious damage was inflicted to buildings in most municipalities in the central and coastal regions of the Central American country.

According to the official statistics reported on January 24, more than 54,000 people have been evacuated from areas damaged by the earthquake and 1.1 million people, or 18 percent of the country's population of 6.2 million people, are homeless. Emergency shelters that have been set up only have the capacity to house 75,000 people.

The earthquake has aggravated the already precarious social and economic conditions working people face, such as lack of adequate housing, access to medical services, medicine, drinking water, and sanitation facilities. Rapid deforestation has made the effects of the earthquake worse, and inadequate roads and highways have hampered rescue efforts. These social conditions are consequences of the distortion and underdevelopment of El Salvador's economy as a semicolonial nation dominated by U.S. and other foreign capital.

In addition, the policies of successive capitalist governments have accelerated the plunder of El Salvador by finance capital, placing the burden of the country's economic crisis on the backs of workers and peasants.

The current regime, led by the right-wing



Salvadoran army soldier on search team after January 13 earthquake left 2,000 people missing. Quake has exacerbated precarious social conditions of workers and peasants.

ARENA party, approved a law that pegs the national currency, the colon, to the U.S. dollar and allows the free circulation of the dollar. This will have devastating consequences for the living standards of working people. The government has also carried out the privatization of banks, and a sell-off of crucial services such as electric and telecommunications companies, leading to layoffs and rising prices.

The regime approved a 13 percent tax on basic grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and medicines last April, in a country where the income of 48 percent of all households falls below the poverty line.

Since the earthquake, officials from the Ministry of Health have reported a 70 percent increase in cases of acute diarrhea, which affects mostly children. There is also concern that cholera, dengue, and other gas-

trointestinal diseases could reach epidemic proportions as a result of the social crisis.

Government officials' initial estimate of the damages stands at \$1 billion—almost half the country's annual budget. Since the quake disrupted communication and travel throughout the country this figure is likely to increase, as more reports of damages trickle in from rural areas.

The earthquake devastated the homes of many workers and farmers. The National Emergency Committee has reported that 118,326 homes were damaged, 74,955 destroyed, and 688 buried. Of the \$206 million allocated for earthquake damages, however, only \$9.5 million has been targeted to help working people directly.

Half of the deaths were registered in a middle-class neighborhood called Las Colinas in Santa Tecla, a city located 12.5 miles from the capital city of San Salvador. A mudslide there, triggered by the earthquake, buried 500 homes and an estimated 1,000 people.

Environmentalists from the Salvadoran Center for Appropriate Technology (CESTA) and the Salvadoran Ecological Unity (UNES) blamed ARENA members of congress, building companies, and the Flores government for the tragedy because they allowed construction and indiscriminate deforestation on land classified as "high risk" for landslides. The groups had organized marches of residents of the area—on the same streets that are now buried—to protest the construction. The previous mayor of Santa Tecla had asked the Supreme Court to block about 20 construction projects due to the risk, a request turned down by the court last year.

Numerous newspaper reports indicate that the aid effort by the government is disorganized and slow, especially in the devastated rural communities, and that some officials have not sent aid to municipalities where opposition parties are in control.

Most of the aid from the United States has come from private businesses, organizations, and working people. The U.S. Department of Defense sent five helicopters from the U.S. military base in Soto Cano, Honduras, with 400 tents and 30 tons of food. One plane of medical and emergency supplies was sent as well. This is in sharp contrast to the \$6 billion Washington poured into El Salvador to back the military regime in its 12-year civil war against the revolutionary struggle that unfolded in the 1980s.

The government of Cuba has sent three teams of volunteer medical specialists, nurses, and technicians as well as medicine, specialized equipment, and half a ton of insecticides.

Dr. Arturo Linares, a Cuban doctor, commented that the sharp political exchange that erupted at the November Iberoamerican summit in Panama between Salvadoran president Flores and Cuban president Fidel Castro has not affected Cuba's offer of solidarity because "we are working people of the Americas, and as working people of the Americas, we are one."

The Cuban health-care volunteers have gone to remote and difficult areas of the country where other doctors have been unwilling to go.

Meat packers endangered by toxic gas leak

BY ROSE ANA BERBEO

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Toxic fumes overcame one worker and endangered others at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse in South St. Paul where workers are fighting for a union contract.

"A toxic gas concentration developed in the bottom floor of the plant at some point before day shift's starting time. A worker, Luisa Páramo passed out from exposure to the fumes and was taken to the hospital," reported the January 23 *Workers' Voice*, the newsletter produced by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789. The newsletter is distributed to workers at Dakota and at Long Prairie Packing, another slaughterhouse owned by Rosen's Diversified, Inc.

Workers at Dakota voted 112-71 last July to join Local 789 after a seven-week organizing drive that began with a sit-down strike to protest conditions in the plant, especially the increase in line speed. The company has so far refused to recognize the union, even though the National Labor Relations Board dismissed its objections to the election and certified the union representation vote.

Jim Garnett, a trimmer in the boning department and a member of the union's Communications Committee at Dakota, said he was near Páramo on January 22 and saw her pass out. He said he smelled "a strong smell of bleach, like gas. The smell was so strong it made my eyes burn," Garnett said. "It was enough to make me feel dizzy, and it felt hard to breathe." Garnett said he was worried that it was some type of gas leak, hav-

ing experienced a chlorine gas leak at a previous job at another meatpacking plant.

"If you've got a gas leak, you can see people drop like flies," Garnett said. "Apparently the supervisors didn't realize how strong the smell was or that the lady [Páramo] was sick." Garnett said he yelled "Gas!" and started getting co-workers outside. He ran to the security guard and told him to dial 911 and get an ambulance for the sick worker.

Páramo vomited repeatedly after regaining consciousness outside the plant. After being examined at the hospital, she was brought back to the plant by her supervisor and sent to work on the line, reported Amy Roberts, a boning worker and member of the union's Communications Committee, who works on the same line.

"I was confused," Páramo told the *Workers' Voice*. "I still felt dizzy and at times I saw double. I tried to have some soup at lunchtime, but I vomited again. When I came back from lunch my hands were 'freezing' and I told the 'yellow hat' [lead person] that I could not continue working." Páramo was finally sent home sick and was out for four days. By the end of the week, the company still hadn't informed workers of the cause of the fumes or Páramo's illness. Some workers were angry about the potential danger of the fumes.

"It was wrong how they treated Luisa and others that might have gotten seriously sick from the chemicals," said Celia Grande, a worker with three years in the packaging department. "The company doesn't care for

our safety."

Kenny, a worker with 19 years in the packaging department, said that the company has never had an alarm system for evacuation. "They have to start having drills for us in case of fires so everyone knows what to do and to prevent anyone from getting injured," he said.

"We need to have a group of people who can respond in an emergency," Garnett said. He proposed the company organize emergency evacuation drills and safety training, including on the chemicals that are used every day in the plant.

A month earlier, when a fire broke out on the kill side of the plant, the evacuation process was chaotic, with workers, some in their shirtsleeves and soaking wet, standing outside in subzero weather while the bosses figured out how to respond. Workers were first herded into the adjacent stockyard, then across the street into several bars, where they spent the afternoon while the fire was extinguished and the area inspected. "There seems to be a general apathy on the part of management," Garnett commented.

After consulting with the Dakota workers who make up Local 789's Communications Committee, the local's president, Bill Pearson, filed a formal complaint with the government's Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA). The agency is obliged to investigate, said Local 789 union representative Francisco Picado.

Rose Ana Berbeo is a meat packer.

LETTERS

Lenin on business secrecy

The front page *Militant* editorial in the January 22 issue titled *Nationalize the Energy Companies!* explains the need for "full public knowledge about all aspects of the operation. The energy industry's books, which today are kept secret, must be opened to public scrutiny."

This is something, of course, that the energy barons will fight tooth and nail to prevent from happening. V.I. Lenin, central organizer of the Russian Revolution, explained the hypocrisy of the imperialists defending their business secrecy in a wonderful passage from "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It," written in 1917.

"When an engineer or banker publishes the income and expenditure of a worker, information about his wages and the productivity of his labor," Lenin wrote, "this is regarded as absolutely legitimate and

fair. Nobody thinks of seeing it as an intrusion into the 'private life' of the worker.... Bourgeois society regards the labor and earnings of a wage-worker as its open book, any bourgeois being entitled to peer into it at any moment, and at any moment to expose the 'luxurious living' of the worker, his supposed 'laziness', etc."

Lenin explains, "What if the unions of employees, clerks, and domestic servants were invited by a democratic state to verify the income and expenditure of capitalists, to publish information on the subject and to assist the government in combating concealment of incomes? What a furious howl against 'spying' and 'informing' would be raised by the bourgeoisie! When 'masters' control servants, or when capitalists control workers, this is considered to be in the nature of things; the private life of the work-

ing and exploited people is *not* considered inviolable.

The bourgeoisie are entitled to call to account any 'wage-slave' and at any time to make public his income and expenditure. But if the oppressed attempt to control the oppressor, to show up *his* income and expenditure, to expose *his* luxurious living even in war-time...oh, no, the bourgeoisie will not tolerate 'spying' and 'informing'!"

The complete essay can be found in Volume 25 of Lenin's *Collected Works*.

B.K.
Albany, California

Views on energy crisis

On Saturday January 20 I and another supporter of the *Militant* newspaper went out to sell a few papers and talk to working people in the San Francisco area about the so-called "energy crisis."

Our first stop was the Electrical Workers Union hall, where about 200 men and women were lined up to get applications for a union apprenticeship program.

I spoke with a young auto body worker from Oakland, who told me the power in the shop went out the day before with no warning, causing the men to have to redo some work as their paint guns had cut out. He said that he didn't understand all the ins and outs of it but he knew they wanted him to pay for bailing out the power companies. He didn't think that was right.

We sold three *Militants* there and went down the road to set up a literature table at a Safeway store. As we drove there the traffic lights cut out. A rolling blackout had started. Folks navigated the intersections as best they could. Patrons and workers in the many shops and restaurants on Mission Street stepped out

into the light or ate and worked in the gloom. Cash registers did not work.

At the Safeway we sold a *Militant* to a young Safeway worker who told us he and his co-workers were in the back of the store unloading product when the power cut out. There was no warning, he said, and no emergency lights in the back, so they had to feel their way out. He stayed to talk with us about 20 minutes and signed up on the forum mailing list. We sold six *Militants*.

Raul Gonzalez
Redwood City, California

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

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

Congo military installs son of slain ruler

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—Laurent Kabila, president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was reportedly shot dead January 16 in that country's capital, Kinshasa. The ruling apparatus quickly named his army officer son, Joseph Kabila, as his successor.

Laurent Kabila, a former businessman, stood at the head of an armed rebellion that in May 1997 ousted—with extensive military support from the governments of Rwanda and Uganda—the already crumbling regime of Zairean dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. He rapidly consolidated a plundering bourgeois regime that brought few changes for workers and peasants in the country.

A little more than a year later, in August 1998, a military rebellion opened against the new regime in Kinshasa, this time with the Rwandan and Ugandan armies opposing Kabila alongside a fractured lineup of rebel organizations. Today they control more than half the country. In response, the governments of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe sent troops to back the Congolese army.

The current war is basically being fought for land and loot. Various businessmen and military figures in Zimbabwe, for example, have won rights to exploit diamond concessions in the Congo. Press reports indicate that peasants in areas under control of both pro- and anti-Kinshasa forces are routinely subjected to brutality and theft by soldiers.

An additional aspect of the war is the continuing presence in eastern Congo of former Rwandan army and Interahamwe militias, of which there are estimated to be 30,000–40,000, or about 20 percent of Kinshasa's frontline army. These forces were driven out of Rwanda in 1994 after playing a key role in the slaughter of up to 1 million people, most of Tutsi origin. The Rwandan government says it is involved in the war because these rightist militias remain active across the border and still seek to regain power. Kabila's government also vilified Tutsis from the days the war broke out.

The two-and-a-half-year war has displaced up to 2 million of the country's 50 million people and sent 250,000 more across Congolese borders.

Contradictory death reports

Reports of Kabila's death were murky, with some officials in Kinshasa denying for days that he was killed. Other reports said fighting had erupted in a meeting between Kabila and army officers. Latest press reports state that one of Kabila's bodyguards, unhappy with pay and working conditions, walked into his office and shot him—and was then himself killed by other bodyguards.

Congolese officials now suggest that "foreign forces"—the implication being a plot by the governments of Uganda or Rwanda—were responsible. However, it is just as likely that the ruling apparatus imploded upon itself. A report in the January 25 *East African*, published in Nairobi, cites unnamed Congolese sources as saying Kabila had planned to purge some of his generals, who got wind of this and had him killed instead.

The nomination of 29-year-old Joseph Kabila as the new president has not met with universal approval. Working people interviewed on news reports screened in South Africa pointed out that their country was supposed to be a republic, not a monarchy: by what right was Kabila's son taking over? A report in the January 21 *New York Times* stated Joseph Kabila "does not speak the national language and is expected to face a potentially explosive power struggle from the moment his father's body is put in the ground."

Laurent Kabila, dead or alive, was flown to Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe, after he was shot. At his funeral in Kinshasa on January 23, security was provided exclusively by Zimbabwean troops, of whom there are reportedly 12,000 in the Congo.

A report in the January 25 issue of *The Namibian*, printed in Windhoek, said: "Re-



Army officers escort Kabila's coffin under heavy security at its arrival in the capital of Kinshasa on January 21.

gional military sources told Reuters that as many as 6,200 fresh allied troops had arrived in the Congo to reinforce the capital Kinshasa, the copper and cobalt city of Lubumbashi, and the diamond center of Mbuji-Maji in response to the vacuum created by Kabila's death.... The troops are accompanied by medium-to-light field armor, fighter planes and attack helicopters."

Colonial and imperialist plunder

Congo is a former Belgian colony. It was the Belgian king, Leopold, who launched the late 19th century colonial carve-up that became known as the Scramble for Africa. Congo's labor and natural resources—copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, and other metals—were brutally exploited for decades by the Belgian rulers, who slaughtered millions of Congolese while capitalist mining houses built massive fortunes.

Working people in city and countryside rebelled, and through mass struggle conquered independence in 1960. Patrice Lumumba, the central leader of the fight for national liberation, became prime minister. Washington and Brussels, however, employing Congolese agents and United Nations

troops, organized to smash the new government. They ordered Lumumba's arrest and organized for him to be shot while preparing the coup that brought Mobutu to power.

Mobutu, in turn, made sure that Congo's mineral wealth was open for exploitation. Its location, size, wealth, and large population made the country a key ally of imperialist interests in the region. Mobutu used his military forces at the behest of Washington and Paris. For example, he sent troops to invade, along with the apartheid regime in South Africa, the newly independent country of Angola. His successor Kabila, despite rhetoric about national sovereignty, also ensured that the imperialist powers saw a "for sale" sign whenever they came knocking on Congo's door, though he often angered them by play-



ing off competing interests.

The first imperialist official to hold talks with Joseph Kabila was Belgian foreign minister Louis Michel, on January 23, when he asked Kabila to make "signs of opening," according to a South African Press Association dispatch. But many working people and youth would like to see signs of something else. According to the January 24 *New York Times*, "A group hurled stones at two buses carrying Belgian officials to the funeral. 'Belgians, killers!' the youths yelled. 'Diamond thieves!'"

Congo has the third-largest population, and the second-largest land area, in sub-Saharan Africa. The colonial legacy, brutal capitalist rule, imperialist exploitation, and the current war have devastated the country. According to the World Bank, per capita gross

national product is about \$110. Out of every 1,000 children born, 141 die before they reach the age of five. "The country's formal economy has virtually collapsed in the last few decades," says the imperialist financial institution, which puts the blame on "mismanagement and instability." Per capita Gross Domestic Product in the 1980s was only a third of that in 1962, and it declined even further in the 1990s. Congo's foreign debt is \$12.2 billion.

The UN has given initial backing to a so-called peace plan brokered in 1999, which nearly all the contending governments and rebel groups have signed, but which, as a report in the *Financial Times* put it, is until now a "dead letter." The plan calls for the introduction of thousands of UN troops to enforce its provisions. Washington, London, and Paris—the competing imperialist powers that dominate the UN Security Council—have delayed the troop deployment until they see a clear advantage.

Framed-up Charleston dockworkers win solidarity

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in Charleston, South Carolina, are winning solidarity within the labor movement and from others in their defense against a police frame-up of five dockworkers. The five were indicted on felony charges in the wake of a police riot against the dockworkers' attempt to picket the port a year ago. Their case is expected to go to trial soon, though no date has yet been set.

"The response has been overwhelming," said ILA Local 1422 president Kenneth Riley in a January 26 phone interview. Riley said he has been "constantly moving" throughout the United States and internationally to explain the longshoremen's fight and raise contributions to the Dockworkers' Defense Fund. He had spoken earlier that day at the College of Charleston to a sociology conference. The week before he addressed participants in the Martin Luther King Day parade in Greensboro, North Carolina, which coincided with an AFL-CIO conference on civil rights.

Riley will be back on the road next week, participating in a regional meeting of AFL-CIO officials in Atlanta and the International Dockworkers Council meeting in Barcelona, Spain. A teach-in open to students and the community is scheduled at the College of Charleston the evening of February 8.

At the heart of the defense case is the fight to defend union rights in South Carolina. In

December 1999, Nordana Lines began using a nonunion stevedoring company to service its ships at the Charleston port, paying workers less than half of what they had been paying ILA members under the terms of the union's agreement with the Container Carrier Council. ILA members responded to this challenge by picketing Nordana. Just after midnight the morning of Jan. 20, 2000, some 600 cops assaulted hundreds of dockworkers as they attempted to march from their union hall to the port to picket one of Nordana's ships.

The cops "provoked what happened," one union member told the *Militant* soon after the assault. A number of workers were injured by the police, who used shock grenades, smoke bombs, dogs, and tear gas. A police cruiser struck at least one protester. The press reported that police fired guns containing "bean-bag-like" projectiles at the crowd to move them back.

At one point, when the union president tried to mediate, a policeman hit him in the head with a baton.

Eight unionists were arrested the night of the cop riot, but a magistrate threw out the charges for lack of evidence. State officials would not let the matter rest, and got grand jury indictments against five longshoremen on various charges including criminal conspiracy, riot, and assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature. These felony charges carry penalties up to 10 years in prison.

State attorney general Charles Condon has justified his office's campaign against

the ILA on grounds that he is upholding South Carolina's antiunion "right to work" laws. While awaiting trial, the "Charleston Five" face draconian restrictions, including not leaving their homes at night unless they are working or at a union meeting.

Following the police riot, members of ILA Local 1422 continued to picket Nordana Lines, and last April won an agreement to resume working the company's ships. They have reached out for support from other unions against the criminal frame-up, and against a civil lawsuit for "damages" filed by the nonunion stevedoring company hired by Nordana.

Over the last year the union local, whose membership is majority Black, has also joined actions demanding the removal of the Confederate battle flag from the state capitol. Three days before the police riot, a large contingent of ILA members took part in the 50,000-strong Martin Luther King Day rally to bring down the racist symbol in Columbia, South Carolina. The longshoremen also led the fourth annual Labor Day rally and picnic in Charleston last September.

According to Riley, solidarity actions will be held in ports across the United States and internationally the opening day of the trial of the five framed-up dockworkers. Students plan to protest at Attorney General Condon's office that day as well.

Naomi Craine is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 1501.