

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Bosses' strike opposes  
Chávez in Venezuela**

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 65/NO. 49 DECEMBER 24, 2001

## Washington begins military occupation of Afghanistan

### Imperialist forces on the way to Kabul; U.S. expands bases

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With the defeat of the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan, Washington is broadening the imperialist military occupation of the country, with thousands of troops to be deployed in the capital Kabul. With its vastly superior military force in place, the U.S. rulers are calling the shots on the role to be played by its imperialist allies there.

Despite the end to fighting for control of cities or towns in Afghanistan, the U.S. military brass is seeking to keep the war atmosphere and momentum going, in part to justify the U.S. government's continued assault on workers' rights at home. "The war in Afghanistan is not won," said deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz December 10, vowing that U.S. military operations will be continuing in that country for "months from now."

Washington has given the green light to the formation of an occupation force of

some 5,000 troops to be led by British forces. The first soldiers are set to take up their positions in Kabul December 22.

Gen. Thomas Franks, the head of the Central Command, has indicated that he would prefer to have this British-led force report directly to him. "We need unity of command," stated a U.S. official, elaborating on the general's position. "It has to be General Franks who is in charge. To have separate commands in Afghanistan would not be acceptable. We want to make sure that we have freedom of action, anywhere and everywhere."

The force will initially include some 2,000 to 3,000 British soldiers, as well as troops from France, Italy, Canada, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Jordan. The German government announced it is ready to send 1,000 troops to be part of this force. Looking ahead, UK defense secretary Geoffrey Hoon

Continued on Page 6

## Groups demand U.S. gov't release five jailed Cubans

BY REBECCA ARENSON  
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

MIAMI—"We demand the immediate release of the five Cubans," said Andrés Gómez, national coordinator of the Antonio Maceo Brigade at a well-attended press conference here. "They are not a threat to the United States. Their mission was to infiltrate Cuban extremist groups that were responsible for thousands of terrorist acts against Cuba," he said.

Gómez spoke December 12 as federal prosecutors were demanding in hearings before U.S. District Court Judge Joan

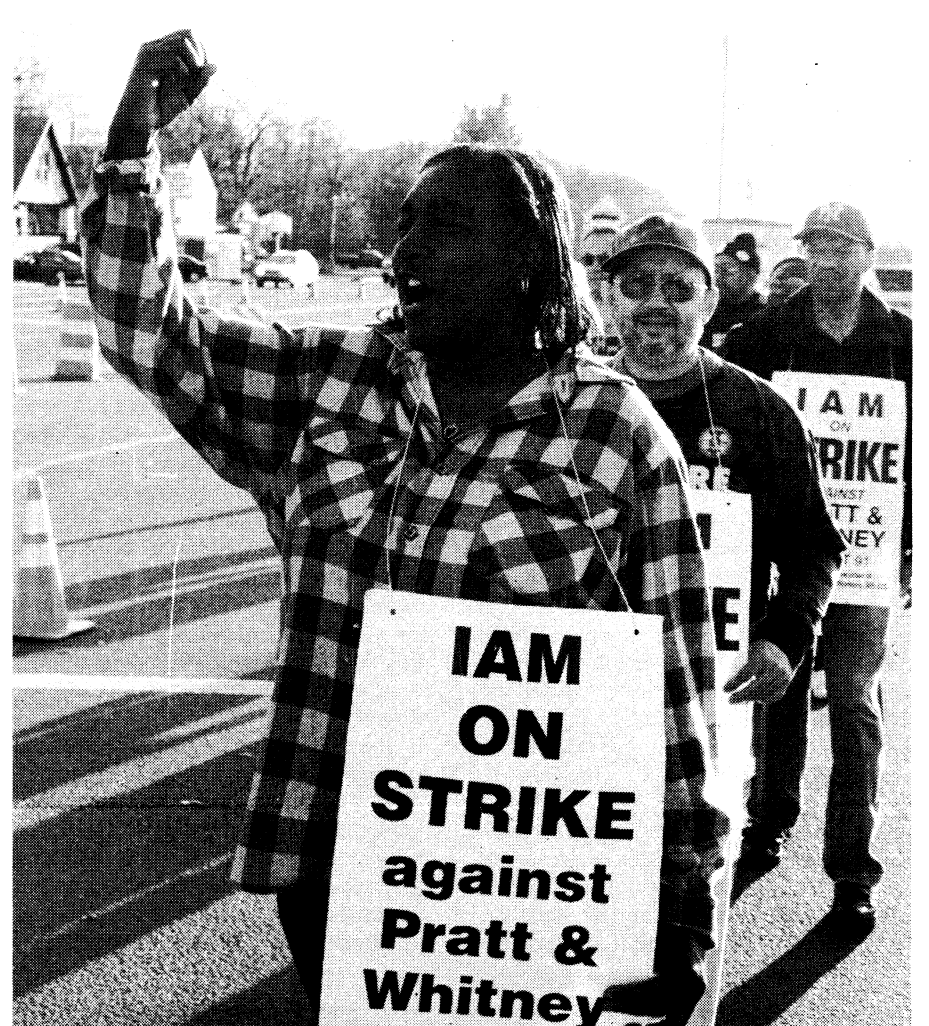
Lenard that the harshest sentences possible be imposed on the five. The press conference took place as court proceedings on the sentencing of the Cuban patriots, imprisoned on a range of frame-up charges from "conspiracy to commit espionage" and "conspiracy to commit murder," got under way.

Gerardo Hernández, the first to be sentenced, faces life imprisonment. All objections by Hernández's attorneys to stiffer sentencing guidelines were rejected by Judge Lenard.

The press conference was sponsored by

Continued on Page 14

### 5,000 strikers shut down jet engine maker



Militant/Jack Willey

Workers on picket line outside Pratt and Whitney in Connecticut December 5.

BY DAN FEIN

EAST HARTFORD, Connecticut—One week into their strike against Pratt & Whitney, more than 5,000 members of the Machinists union here remain united in their effort to win a new contract.

"We have support from every single

union in the area and we have community support," said Bill Coney, a picket captain. "On December 7 the SEIU [Service Employees International Union] organized a rally of their members at 1:00 p.m. in support of our strike and the

Continued on Page 11

### Our publishing schedule

The *Militant* will be closed December 21-27. Issues will be published and sent to distributors and subscribers on December 20 and January 3.

## Garment worker fired for political views wins unemployment benefits in Florida

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

MIAMI—"The claimant was discharged because of political views. No information has been submitted which substantiates misconduct." This is the reason given by the Florida Unemployment Compensation Pro-

gram for their decision to grant Michael Italie unemployment benefits. Italie was fired from his job as a sewing machine operator by Goodwill Industries here October 22.

"In accordance with Section 443, Florida

Statutes: Benefits are payable because: The discharge was for reasons other than misconduct with the work," read the determination by the government agency.

This victory in the fight against the political firing of Italie was welcomed by his supporters here. "Goodwill was trying to starve me out," Italie said in an interview, "but the company underestimated both my resolve and the determination of working people to defend freedom of speech. Together with other defenders of civil liberties we will expose Goodwill Industries for the vicious anti-worker outfit it is and make it pay the highest possible price for its anti-worker and unconstitutional action in firing me for expressing my political views."

The ruling came two days after a December 8 meeting of 90 people that featured a range of prominent speakers in defense of freedom of speech and calling for the reinstatement of Italie and Mohammad Rahat, a 22-year-old fired by the University of Mi-

Continued on Page 14

**Books from  
Pathfinder for  
working people  
and youth fighting  
imperialism and  
its war. Special  
offers, see page 7.**

## Despite repression, Israeli rulers fail to subdue Palestinian struggle

BY GREG MCCARTAN

The results of the Israeli bombing of Palestinian cities this past week have prompted statements by a number of government officials and columnists who both support and oppose the Palestinian cause. Many note that despite continued repression, the Israeli regime has not quelled the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and a homeland.

On December 4 Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon ordered a series of punishing

airstrikes against facilities of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and sent armored columns to occupy several Palestinian-controlled areas. The government declared the PA a "terror-supporting entity" and promised to use "all its might" to prosecute a war against the nominal Palestinian government. Hundreds were wounded and dozens killed in the attacks that have not let up.

The Israeli government used a series of

Continued on Page 7

**After jailings, teachers continue contract fight — page 11**

# Argentine rulers press more cutbacks as crisis deepens

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Working people in Argentina face a growing crisis, as the government enacts measures designed to meet interest payments on the \$132-billion foreign debt and shore up confidence among superwealthy bondholders in the imperialist countries. These measures include strict limits on bank withdrawals, seizing of pensions to pay foreign creditors, and a new round of austerity measures.

As the economic and financial crisis has deepened, the government has come under increasing pressure to end the one-to-one link between the peso and the dollar. The move earlier won wide support in the country because it broke a cycle of runaway inflation, but with the dollar strong on world markets, it has made Argentina's exports expensive, especially in countries such as Brazil where the value of the currency has fallen. Declining exports have pushed the economy into what is now a three-and-a-half-year recession and led to extensive borrowing by the government, pushing the country's foreign debt up to \$132 billion.

Declaring it could no longer pay rising interest payments, the Argentine government last month announced it would exchange current bonds for ones with a lower interest rate, a move widely seen as a massive default.

Some 35 percent of total Argentine bank deposits have been withdrawn this year, and a run on the banks was stopped only by a December 1 decree by Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo limiting the amount Argentine citizens could take out to \$250 a week for the next 90 days. Cavallo placed no limit on credit card or check transactions.

The minister announced the restrictions after depositors withdrew \$1.3 billion in one day, amid rumors that the government is preparing to break the link of the peso to the dollar—a move that would lead to a massive devaluation of the Argentine currency. The economy minister, who served in the same role in the government of former president Carlos Menem from 1991 to 1997, demagogically claimed that he had re-

sponded to "speculative attacks by people who seek to benefit from a devaluation.... These measures will serve to preserve the savings of Argentines."

The stopgap measure has not eased pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other imperialist agencies on the government to either devalue the peso or adopt the U.S. dollar as the national currency.

On the first business day after the government decree, many people, increasingly convinced that they will never see the full value of their bank deposits, waited anxiously for banks to open or lined up at automatic teller machines to withdraw money.

The measures will have an immediate impact upon workers who are paid in cash. What the government calls the "informal economy" is estimated to be worth around one-third of the gross domestic product. Among those who rely on cash payment from employers or customers are many maids, cab drivers, and tradespeople. In response to concerns raised about how these workers would be paid, the government callously said they should open up bank accounts in order to be paid with checks.

## Layoffs and closures likely to follow

The government claimed that tax revenues would benefit from companies that, lacking cash, would be forced to establish legal accounts and pay taxes for the first time. Others pointed to the more likely impact: many businesses will face a new income squeeze, leading to layoffs, closures, and more hardship. According to official figures, which understate the true picture, close to one in five workers is already unemployed.

Joblessness is just one aspect of the social impact of the crisis. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "each day an estimated 2,000 Argentines [in a country of 36 million people] cross an invisible line from middle class to poverty. Not only is there no inflation, but consumers have so little money that prices are actually falling." The economy is fore-



People in Argentina line up outside a bank on December 3, after the government limited withdrawals to \$250 a week, aiming to stave off a banking collapse.

cast to shrink by 10 percent next year.

The International Monetary Fund, representing the interests of the U.S. government and other imperialist powers, announced December 5 that it would withhold payment of a \$1.3 billion installment of a previously approved \$22 billion funding package. The decision effectively stalls payment of the whole package, and a further \$18 billion pledged by other lenders. Over the past year the IMF has put together a total of \$48 billion worth of emergency loan and "aid" packages for Argentina.

The announcement followed a weeklong review of the country's finances by IMF officials. Three months earlier the agency had approved a new \$6 billion loan after Cavallo and President Fernando de la Rúa gained agreement for a budget incorporating deep cuts in retirement pensions and state workers' salaries, and reductions in spending on public health. State workers and others organized widespread protest actions against the cutbacks.

In spite of its "zero deficit" billing, the budget in fact allowed for a \$6.5 billion deficit. With government revenue declining—tax receipts fell by 11 percent in both October and November compared to the same period last year—the government overshot the goal by almost \$1 billion. The failure apparently played a key part in the IMF's decision to freeze payment of the loan.

Cavallo flew to Washington on December 6 to try to persuade IMF officials to reverse their decision. He returned three days later "without a check in hand," the *Wall Street Journal* reported. An IMF spokesperson said that in their "fruitful discussions" Cavallo and the fund had agreed to further reductions on spending—cuts that, according to reports in Argentina, might go as high as \$4 billion, or nearly 10 percent of the projected spending in the draft 2002 budget.

The government is scrambling to pay \$4.5 billion in interest payments by April of next year, due on its \$132 billion foreign debt. Scraping together what it can find, it has taken control of \$3.5 billion in private pension assets to pay interest on debt to foreign banks and wealthy creditors, "exposing pensioners even more to the government's precarious finances," reported the *Journal*. Officials are also contemplating the postponement of an \$800-million payment of civil servants'

twice-yearly bonus, and a delay in transfers of tax income to provincial administrations.

Cavallo is pressing a debt-swap deal of massive proportions, the biggest ever by a semicolonial country, on both local and foreign holders of government bonds. Among the banks hired by the government to negotiate the restructuring of the debt with overseas investors are many that profited from the sale of Argentine bonds over the last decade. More than \$20-billion-worth of bonds have been sold in the last three years.

## A technical default

To most capitalist commentators, the attempted debt swap has already signaled a default by Argentina. However, "analysts say the IMF decision could force Argentina into a full moratorium on debt payments. That could provoke a more massive and disorderly default," reported the *Washington Post*.

Publicly, Cavallo has rejected the IMF's prescription of devaluation of the peso or a sweeping adoption of the U.S. dollar, and continued to defend the one-to-one peg of the two currencies, supervised by a currency board that also includes the value of the euro in its calculations—a system he instituted 10 years ago.

A steep devaluation of the peso—following a 7 percent devaluation already enacted this year—would have a catastrophic impact on working people and many others. One reason is that some 75 percent of loans and bank deposits are denominated in dollars, while wages and salaries are frequently paid in pesos. In value terms, one would soar and the other would plummet.

With the economic crisis devastating the living standards of millions of Argentine working people and formerly more prosperous layers, the two wings of the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) have called a 24-hour strike in opposition to the emergency measures, to be held on December 13—the fourth such national action under the administration of de la Rúa. The unions are demanding the immediate payment of all wages, rather than their deposit into bank accounts, and the restoration of the levels of family benefits, gutted during the austerity drive of the last 10 years. Announcing its support for the strike, the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA) adopted the slogan, "Neither devaluation nor dollarization."

## THE MILITANT

### For the reunification of Korea

*Japanese police raids on offices that serve as an unofficial embassy for north Korea fit with the hostility of the imperialist powers toward Pyongyang, and with Washington's threats toward the workers state. The 'Militant' reports on the struggles by working people in Korea for the reunification of their country. Don't miss a single issue.*



# SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

## NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

### RENEWAL

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,  
410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A20 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,800 • New Zealand, NZ\$20 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

## The Militant

Vol. 65/No. 49

Closing news date: December 12, 2001

Editor: MARTÍN KOPPEL

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Greg McCartan, Maggie Trowe, Jack Willey, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ROMINA GREEN

Published weekly except for one week in June, August and December.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

E-mail: TheMilitant@compuserve.com

The Militant website is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

**Latin America, Caribbean:** for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to

above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80.

**Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

**Canada:** Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4613 St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2T 1R2.

**Britain, Ireland:** £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. **Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East:** £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address.

**France:** Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U.

**Iceland:** Send 6,500 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. **Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark:** 550 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

**New Zealand:** Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$90 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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



# Enron fires workers, devastates pensions

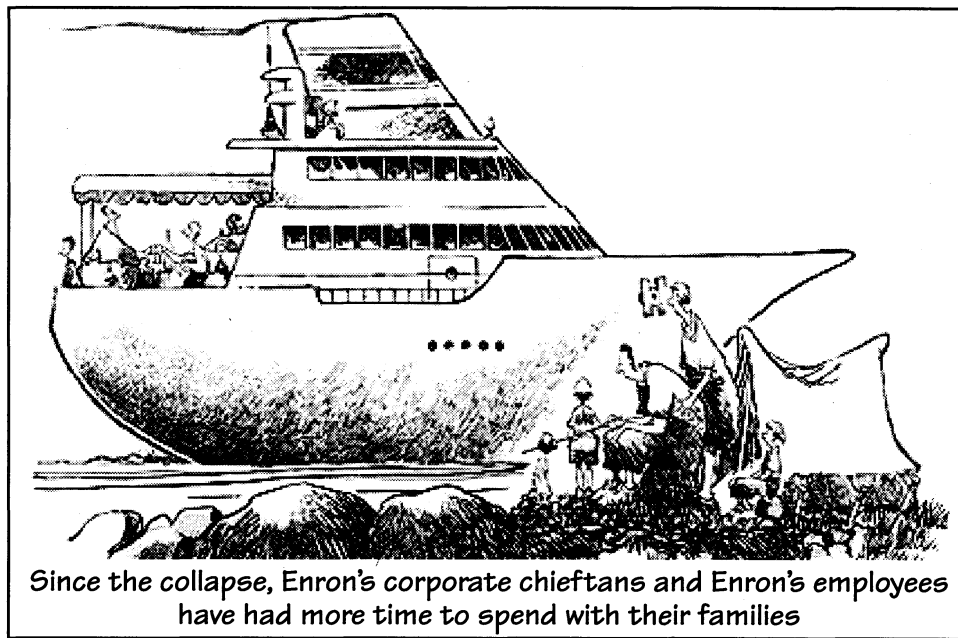
BY LEA SHERMAN

HOUSTON, Texas—The Houston-based Enron Corp., once the world's biggest trader of energy, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on December 2. Its stock went from \$84 a share in December 2000 to as low as 26 cents a share on November 31 of this year. In the largest corporate bankruptcy in U.S. history, Enron claims just under \$50 billion in assets and debts of \$31.2 billion.

In the wake of the company's collapse, the bosses fired some 4,300 of 7,500 Houston-area employees, leaving them without health insurance and with a worthless 401(k) retirement fund.

Many stories of angry and distressed unemployed Enron workers have filled the newspapers and TV and radio stations here. A man whose wife needed treatment for her illness asked where he would get the money with no health insurance, as did a single mother with an asthmatic son whose medicines are very expensive. A secretary who had worked 28 years for the company said she lost her entire retirement fund, which was in a 401(k) plan invested in now worthless company stock.

Employees, who were not permitted to divest themselves of their Enron stock,



Since the collapse, Enron's corporate chieftans and Enron's employees have had more time to spend with their families

were forced to watch their pensions disappear as the company stock took a dive. To add insult to injury, while laid-off workers were offered a \$4,500 severance package, top Enron executives and directors had sold

their stock earlier for hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, just days before the bankruptcy filing, "retention bonuses" worth \$55 million were given to 500 employees. Eleven received payments of be-

tween \$500,000 and \$5 million.

At a meeting with state and federal officials to find out their entitlements, some laid-off workers asked, "What is the government doing to make sure Enron lives up to its contractual commitments and legal obligations to its current and former workers?"

The best answer they got was, "We're looking into it."

Enron, which started as a natural gas pipeline company, became the world's largest buyer and seller in the deregulated market for electricity and natural gas. Much of its profit was made by buying and selling energy many times over, getting the difference between the buyers' bids and sellers' prices. It also expanded far beyond energy markets, speculating in "complex"—that is, risky—types of paper trading including "weather derivatives," a form of insurance used to cover weather-related losses. The company became more of a financial services conglomerate handling billions of dollars for wealthy investors. As a laid-off trader told the *Wall St. Journal* December 11, he and his colleagues saw it as "an investment bank with an energy-company front."

Ranked the country's number seven company on the Fortune 500 before its collapse with annual revenue of \$100 billion dollars and 21,000 employees, Enron started unraveling in the last couple of months when, among other things, it reported big third-quarter losses and lowered its reported income from 1997 on by \$586 million.

Dynegy Inc., a competitor of Enron, offered to buy Enron on November 9 for more than \$8 billion in stock. But Dynegy said they backed out of the merger after a series of disclosures showed Enron's dismal financial picture. Enron is now suing Dynegy.

Enron's meltdown has capitalist politicians scrambling. Republican chairman of the House Commerce Committee William Tauzin is calling for an investigation and hearings. Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, the ranking Democrat on the committee, warned, "There are likely other ticking time bombs out there with smoke-and-mirror earnings."

Lea Sherman is a meat packer in Houston.

## 'Licenses for all' demand California protesters

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

EAST PALO ALTO, California—About 80 people, in their majority originally from Mexico, marched here on December 9 to demand the right to a drivers license. The marchers chanted, "Que queremos? Licencia! Cuando? Ahora!" (What do we want? Licenses! When? Now!) Protesters carried signs reading, "The sun rises for everyone, let it shine for everyone," and "The people of East Palo Alto are fighting against injustices. Licenses for everyone!"

"We are organizing these protests weekly to wake up people's consciousness and get their support," explained José Sandoval, a leader of Centro Azteca de Información, one of the groups sponsoring the protests. "Some people join in because they understand that it is very important to fight together so that all workers get the same rights as those who are born in this country," he said.

Other recent protests included one on November 18 in Oakland of 120 people, a march in Hayward of 20 people, and another action in Redwood City of 60. A protest is planned for San Francisco on December 16. "We will continue organizing them. We won't let go until all the workers get their license," said Sandoval to the crowd.

Other groups sponsoring the marches are the Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation, Day Labor Program, Alianza Comunitaria Latina, Asociación de Jardineros del Area de la Bahia (Bay Area Gardeners Association), Comité Pro-derechos del Inmigrante del Este de Palo Alto (Committee for the rights of immigrants in East Palo Alto), Cali-

fornia, Comunidad de Base Iglesia San Francisco East Palo Alto (Community of San Francisco Church of East Palo Alto), and Native Americans of the Americas, Inc.

The leaflet promoting the events reads, "Governors, Congressmen and President of the USA...who proclaim the world over the very democracy, justice and freedom which you don't grant us in this country, which we strengthen every day by our work." The flyer and a petition also being circulated demand the right to a drivers license, a social security card, legal status, and an end to police brutality and to the imprisonment of immigrants.

Luis Avelar, one of the organizers of the East Palo Alto action, said, "We want the authorities, those who are in power, to know what the people feel. If the people don't protest against the things they are suffering, those in power will think only about their business."

Julio Ramos said that although he is a citizen, he supports the fight "because if this country is one of democracy, everyone should be equals. It should not depend on if one is legal or not." Miguel Trejo, who is a landscaper, said that "without a license it is not possible to travel back and forth from the workplace to home."

Deborah Liatos, of the Socialist Workers Party, addressed the crowd. "The fight for the right to a drivers license for undocumented workers is part of the broader struggle to defend the democratic rights of all workers today," she said. "The U.S. government is carrying out a war against the

people of Afghanistan and a war against workers' rights in this country. This demonstration is important for all workers because requiring a social security number to get a drivers license is part of the ruling class attempt to establish a national ID card to better restrict the movements of all workers in this country."

Several people signed the petition to demand that Michael Itale be reinstated to his job. Itale, a garment worker who was the Socialist Workers candidate for Mayor of Miami, was fired from his job for speaking out against the U.S. war in Afghanistan and on other questions during a televised candidates' debate.

Rollande Girard is a garment worker in San Francisco.

## Textile layoffs spread in the South

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—In mid-November, VF Corp., the world's largest apparel manufacturer, announced layoffs of some 2,700 workers in Alabama. The company will shut plants in six towns and lay off workers in three others in a massive restructuring that will include layoffs of some 13,000 workers, or 18 percent of the total workforce.

These are relatively big plants in small towns and their closures will be devastating for working people and businesses in each area. Many sewing machine operators in these areas have moved from plant to plant over the past few years, fighting to hold on to work as companies shut down.

In the Lauderdale County town of Florence, where 425 jobs will be lost, official unemployment already stands at 7.2 percent. Earlier this year, VF closed its sewing plant in Centreville, Alabama, idling some 300 workers. The plant, which manufactured children's clothes, was the largest employer in Bibb county. Similar layoffs have affected other states in the Southeast, where most U.S. textile manufacture is located. In the first six months of 2001, nearly 25,000 textile workers lost jobs in Georgia, Alabama, and North and South Carolina.

At the same time as the VF job cuts were

announced, Russell Corp. announced another plant closing, affecting 275 workers in the southeastern Alabama town of Russellville. In 1998, Russell's Alabama plants employed more than 11,000 workers. Today the company employs fewer than 7,000 workers in the state, mainly in textile operations. Alabama apparel plants have been closing right and left over the past few years, and are down some 25,800 jobs since 1995. However, workers in these two industries still account for the largest share of the state's manufacturing workers, employing some 26,000 in apparel and 40,000 in textile.

At the end of November, the Alabama Department of Human Resources announced that December 1 will see the end of benefits for families who have exhausted the five-year lifetime limit mandated by the 1996 national welfare reform law. In 28 Alabama counties, however, unemployment is already so high that welfare recipients are exempt from the five-year limit. At \$164 a month for an adult with two children, Alabama welfare benefits are the lowest in the United States.

Susan LaMont worked as a sewing machine operator at the now-closed VF plant in Centreville, Alabama.

## Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists Holiday Celebration

### ❖ Pathfinder Fund Event ❖

- ❖ More effectively and rapidly mobilizing youth around the world to respond to imperialism's accelerating assaults on the toilers
- ❖ Interview with Cuban revolutionary leader Victor Dreke: *From the Escambray to the Congo*, a new Pathfinder title for advancing the fight against imperialism and its war drive
- ❖ Imperialism's militarization drive, assault on workers' rights, and war against Afghanistan
- ❖ Pathfinder's plans for participation in the expanded 2002 Havana Bookfair
- ❖ Why accelerated recruitment to Young Socialists opens an international fusion perspective for the communist movement

Speakers include:

**Mary-Alice Waters**, editor of *New International* magazine; just returned from Cuba and participation in events marking the 45th anniversary of the landing of the Granma

**Jack Willey**, SWP National Committee; on the way to international meeting in Athens that aims to accelerate responsiveness of anti-imperialist youth movement

**Norton Sandler**, Organizer, New York Local of SWP; returned from leading socialist workers and youth at Guadalajara, Mexico, Bookfair

**Jacob Perasso**, Organizer, Young Socialists National Executive Committee

**Sat., Dec. 15 at the Pathfinder Building,  
165 Charles St., Manhattan**

(2 blocks north of Christopher on West St.)

**Dinner, 6:00 p.m. \$7; Program 7:00 p.m. \$5. Social to follow**

*This event takes place during a weekend of voluntary labor.*

*To volunteer, call (718) 567-8014; (212) 695-7358;*

*or (212) 740-4611; or (973) 643-3341.*

Sponsored by the SWP branches in Brooklyn, Garment District, Upper Manhattan, Newark, and the New York Young Socialists.

# Seattle YS hosts speaking tour, holds classes

The Young Socialists is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information write to the Young Socialists, P.O. Box 33, Times Square Post Office, New York, NY 10108, or call (212) 695-1809, or send an e-mail to: [youngsocialists@attglobal.net](mailto:youngsocialists@attglobal.net)

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

SEATTLE—Members of the Young Socialists here helped to sponsor and build two events December 1–2 on “Youth and the Coming American Revolution,” featuring Jack Willey. One meeting was held at a community center in a working-class part of Seattle and another at the University of Washington (UW). The events were sponsored by the Black Student Union at UW and the local MEChA chapter.

Willey, one of the founding members of the Young Socialists, spoke on the U.S. imperialist war against working people, the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, and the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students held in Algiers last summer. Willey explained why books and pamphlets produced by Pathfinder Press help arm young people with the real history of working-class struggle so that we can learn from these lessons.

Among the activities of the Young Socialist chapter here is a class series on *Socialism on Trial*. This book lays out the basic ideas of socialism through the 1941 trial and testimony of James P. Cannon. Cannon, the National Secretary of the SWP, was one of the 18 defendants in the government prosecution of Minneapolis Teamster unionists and SWP members under the notorious Smith “Gag” Act.

Since last spring the YS in Seattle has arranged regular classes on Pathfinder titles such as *Palestine and the Arabs’ Fight for Liberation*; *Cosmetics, Fashion and the Exploitation of Women*; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*; *Revolution in the Congo*; and *The Communist Manifesto*. After the imperialist war drive began, the chapter organized a series of classes on the article in *New Internationalist* no. 7, “Opening Guns of World War III: Washington’s Assault on Iraq.”

As the imperialist war accelerated trends in world politics, our classes on socialist ideas have doubled in size. More people have approached us at Pathfinder literature tables, and at other political work on campuses and on the job. At Seattle Central Community College a YS member gave a classmate a flyer about the next YS class. She was immediately interested and purchased a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Socialism on Trial*. Through a short discussion she quickly decided that she wanted to attend the class. The next day the YS member talked to one of her teachers about the *Militant* and two teachers showed up at the next Militant Labor Forum.

This helped us to see the political space that is there, and that by using it as much as possible we are helping to broaden the communist movement. The YS chapter has also joined picket lines with strikers at Washington Beef and the protests against government raids on a Somali-owned store in the same neighborhood of the Pathfinder Bookstore.

People had a variety of responses to the forum by Jack Willey, but all appreciated that a different point of view was presented, aside from what they hear in the big-business media. One student from the University of Washington said she “liked the fo-

rum and the *Militant* because it’s different than the news you hear everyday,” which she sees as in favor of the war.

One young person who recently attended her first Militant Labor Forum and subscribed to the *Militant* plans to participate in a weekend of volunteer work, called a Red Weekend, at the Pathfinder Building in New York December 15–16. “I’m excited to learn more,” she said.

The Seattle chapter is beginning work building a tour for fired socialist worker Mike Italie, including engagements at campuses here so he can win support in his fight

against his firing by Goodwill Industries for speaking out against the war and in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

This is an important part of building a nationwide campaign not only to win Italie’s job back, but a move to defend against attacks on workers’ rights. The defense campaign sets a good example for future fights in which workers will defend ourselves against attacks by the employing class and prepare for the coming American revolution.

Brendan Weinhold and Brendan Mills-McCabe contributed to this article.

## Venezuelan bosses strike against Chávez gov’t

BY JACK WILLEY

The main employers’ association in Venezuela, Fedecámaras, staged a bosses’ strike December 10 to oppose 49 new laws adopted by President Hugo Chávez. Measures that have brought the fiercest condemnation from the capitalists include those on land reform and increasing royalty payments from private-sector oil companies. In a reflection of deepening political polarization in the country, bosses shut down 85 percent of the nation’s businesses and industries. The state-owned oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela, reported that it was not affected by the bosses’ shutdown.

The land reform law calls for government review of the holdings of wealthy landowners and the expropriation of unproductive or unused land. The expropriated land would be given to landless peasants to till. On the day of the work stoppage, Chávez told a crowd of 7,000 peasants and others in central Caracas that he would rapidly implement the economic laws and start granting land.

The law affecting oil exploration, dubbed the hydrocarbons law, increases royalty taxes on private companies wanting to exploit the country’s vast oil reserves, and is vehemently opposed by oil company executives. Venezuela, the fourth largest economy in Latin America, is also the world’s fourth largest oil exporter.

Officials of one of the trade union federations, the Venezuelan Workers’ Confederation, supported the employers’ strike, calling Chávez’s government “authoritarian,” and alleging a lack of collaboration on the new measures.

But in many working-class neighborhoods, street vendors and shop owners ignored the stoppage called by the big-business federation. “Many said they could not bear to support Fedecámaras,” reported the *New York Times* “Fedecámaras never supported the workers,” Manuel Huerta told the paper. “They support the entrepreneurial elite.”

Street actions by forces against and in

support of the government have risen in the last year. On the day of the work stoppage, Chávez supporters marched to the headquarters of Fedecámaras to protest the bosses’ strike. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that three days earlier, some 2,000 antigovernment protesters tried to march to the presidential palace and were turned back by a larger crowd of Chávez supporters.

### Acute social crisis

Hugo Chávez came to power three years ago in the midst of an acute social crisis in Venezuela. Half the workforce was unemployed or underemployed, 70 percent lived below the official poverty line, and successive regimes had implemented austerity policies to meet the demands of capitalist creditors and fork out interest payments on the country’s \$32 billion foreign debt.

Chávez presented himself as a strong and uncorrupted leader from outside the establishment, who would take decisive action—unilaterally if necessary—to fix these problems. He took a nationalist stand, evoking the figure of anticolonial hero Simón Bolívar, and presented himself as a defender of the country’s patrimony. He promised to improve the lives of workers and peasants, while defending the Venezuelan nation—both capitalist and worker alike. In this context, he came to power with widespread support among workers and peasants.

Supporters of big business have increasingly accused the Chávez government of trying to “Cubanize” the country. Earlier this year, Chávez decreed several measures on education to strengthen the hand of the state to fire teachers and principals, mandate all schools to teach a course on “Bolivarian Ideology,” and ban public schools from setting registration fees which were prohibiting thousands from attending school.

These measures, and an exchange program between Cuban and Venezuelan teachers, led Octavio de Lamo, president of the Venezuelan Chamber of Private Education and others to accuse the government of an “endorsement of Cuba’s education system and policies.” Similar remarks have been made in the big-business press in the United States and Venezuela around the latest economic measures.

The Venezuelan president has also been harshly criticized for building closer relations with several governments labeled “terrorist” by Washington—from Cuba to Iran, Iraq, and Libya.

Chávez’s government has progressively strengthened diplomatic and economic ties with Cuba, leading Venezuela to become Cuba’s biggest trading partner. Two-way trade doubled since 1999. Under a bilateral agreement signed by the two governments last year, Venezuela supplies Cuba with up to 53,000 barrels of oil a day on favorable terms.

In a December 7 opinion column featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, Mary O’Grady, editor of the paper’s Americas section, ex-



Hugo Chávez, left, the president of Venezuela, angered native and foreign capitalists after taking measures that cut into their profits.

pressed the views of many in U.S. ruling circles toward the Chávez government. The article was entitled, “Opposition builds to Castroite tactics of Hugo Chávez.”

The Venezuelan president “regularly seiz[es] the airwaves for hours at a time,” she wrote, with “Fidelish orations that have often included references to his dream of a Venezuelan collectivist utopia.” O’Grady bemoaned the recent measures, saying they will “sharply jack up the cost of private-sector oil exploration and development by enlarging government royalty claims.”

Apparently forgetting the history of her own government, including recent measures by the Bush administration, O’Grady condemned Chávez because the new laws were “drafted in secret and decreed through the use of special executive power that the president won last year from the parliament he effectively controls.”

O’Grady also pointed to fissures in the army and growing opposition to what she called Chávez’s “anti-American, pro-Cuban ranting.”

Leading up to the bosses’ strike, Fedecámaras president Pedro Carmona indicated the desire of large sections of the capitalist class to be rid of the Chávez government. “We cannot accept interventionism and discretion, or attitudes of central planning and total control,” he said in a November 28 speech. “We cannot remain silent before the violation of the constitution and the law or the disrespect of private property,” the big business representative said.

### The Communist Manifesto

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communism is derived not from preconceived principles but from facts and proletarian movements springing from the actual class struggle. \$3.95

## Montreal garment workers reject concession contract

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

MONTREAL—Four thousand members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) from a score of garment shops here voted by a slim majority to reject the contract offer made to them by the Men’s Clothing Manufacturers Association (MCMA).

In the proposed three-year contract the company offered no wage increase in the first year and only 20 cents an hour in each of the next two years. Another factor in the “no” vote was the bosses’ demand to alter the contract to allow them to technically fire workers who extend their vacations without authorization and to rehire them as new workers. This irritated many immigrant workers who need to take extended vacation time to travel more cheaply to their country of origin during peak summer shutdowns. The MCMA had initially demanded that all minimum wages be withdrawn from the contract, with no wage increases.

The offer had been presented to more than 1,000 members of the union at a general meeting December 4. Only two workers spoke at the meeting. The first was

loudly applauded when he called for workers to reject the offer and for the vote to be taken on the spot. The other worker was booed by many when she said that union members should accept the offer and be grateful that we still have jobs given the impact of the events on September 11 on the economy.

The vote was taken the following day during working hours in each shop. However, the results of the vote in individual shops were not made public, as this had resulted in selective lockouts by the bosses in 1992.

In 1998, the MCMA collapsed during the negotiations process under the pressure of the growing competition in the industry and the determined resistance of UNITE members. The bosses were forced to withdraw several concession demands, including lower wages for new hires after a one-week strike.

Union members have returned to work pending further negotiations.

Sylvie Charbin is a sewing machine operator and a member of UNITE local 2581 in Montreal.



# Sales campaign shows political opportunities

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The circulation drive to win new readers to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International* ended on a high note with campaigners in several countries, many cities, and two industrial union fractions going over their goals. Through their efforts, partisans of the two socialist publications won nearly 2,000 new subscribers and readers for *New International* magazine during an imperialist war and an accelerated assault on working people.

While the drive fell slightly short in all three categories—reaching 94 percent of the 1,100 *Militant* subscription goal, 415 out of 500 *PM* subs, and 609 out of 800 *New Internationals*, a number of important gains were made in reaching out to working people and youth during the 10-week campaign.

We would like to welcome all of our new readers, encourage you to contribute letters and articles to the paper, and introduce friends and co-workers to the socialist press. We hope you use the papers to get more involved in building support for the free speech fight of Mike Italie, organize solidarity with strikes and other struggles, find out about Militant Labor Forums and other political activities to attend, and learn about the Young Socialists, Socialist Workers Party, and Communist Leagues.

And we encourage distributors in every area to follow up with everyone who purchased a subscription to make sure they are receiving the paper.

Some of the highlights of the final push in the drive included a report from Joe Swanson in Des Moines, Iowa. "We sold two more *Militant* subscriptions to students at Grinnell College this week following the two we sold there last week. A few students expressed interest in the Michael Italie fight against political firings and one of the subscribers said if Italie does a tour in the Midwest he would like to help organize a meeting for him."

In Chicago, participants in the sales campaign said they met two young Latinas at a Latino book fair who bought a *Militant* subscription and the pamphlet, *Joining the Young Socialists*. They came to a special fund-raising event for the Pathfinder Fund and signed up to participate in the December 15-16 volunteer work weekend in New York.

"As the sales drive headed toward the last day we organized a special effort to make our goal, calling up workers and youth who earlier expressed interest in signing up for the *Militant*," said meat packer Joel Britton. "We sold *Militant* subscriptions to a student at DePaul University, a meat packer who was a subscriber to *PM*, and to several others in a flurry of phone calls."

"We sold two more *Militant* subscriptions and four *PM* subscriptions this past week, including four at an apartment complex in the workers' district where the Pathfinder bookstore is located," wrote Jacquie Henderson from Houston. "One worker who lived there was interested in the topic of the latest *Militant* Labor Forum—the background to the collapse of the giant Enron corporation that has laid off 4,200 workers in Houston this past week. She and hundreds of others were laid off from one of the big hospitals here after their wages were slashed from \$10 an hour to \$6.50."

Another new *PM* reader, a meat packer in Houston, bought a subscription after reading an issue. "He decided to subscribe because he liked the coverage on the capitalist crisis in Argentina, the country he comes from," said sales drive participant Lea Sherman, who works with him.

Henderson reported they sold another *PM* subscription after having a discussion about the paper at the door of a worker's home that was followed up a few days later by a meeting at the state employment office.

*Militant* campaigners in Minnesota said they made a fi-

nal push to reach out to radicalizing youth on college campuses and to their co-workers. "Our last subscription was sold at the packinghouse," wrote Tom Fiske. "One campus that we had not yet visited was St. Cloud State, about 60 miles northwest of Twin Cities. The campus was the site of some demonstrations and protest meetings last year against racism. Four students had participated in the Cuba/U.S. Youth Exchange from the college. We sent out a team two weeks ago and spoke to some leaders of student groups and some faculty. A leader of the group on cultural diversity bought a *Militant* subscription."

Fiske said they set up a literature table during a well-attended meeting on the U.S. sanctions against Iraq this past week where they sold three *Militant* subscriptions. A local grouping called the Antiwar Committee, which sponsors pacifist marches that attract a number of youth, sponsored a conference December 1 at the University of Minnesota. "We had another literature table where we sold \$78 worth of Pathfinder literature and four *Militant* subscriptions," wrote Fiske, "including one to a Somali college student and one to a high school student."

"Two participants in the sales campaign took a day off work and set up a table all day at the University of Minnesota in Twin Cities last Wednesday and sold an additional subscription," Fiske added. "The table was a lightning rod for discussions on Israel's aggression against the Palestinians."

Socialist workers in Pittsburgh went over their *PM* goal after selling all six *PM* subscriptions to poultry workers in the Mifflin, Pennsylvania, area. "The new *PM* subscribers came from Chile, Honduras, and Puerto Rico," wrote Chris Remple, a garment worker. "People responded to the *PM*'s coverage of the imperialist war against Afghanistan and the working-class resistance to the growing capitalist economic crisis."

Another garment worker in Pittsburgh, Kathie Fitzgerald, said she sold a *Militant* subscription to a co-worker after going through weeks of discussion about the anthrax scare promoted in the big-business media. "She kept asking me if I was scared and I kept saying no. Then one day she told me, 'I think this anthrax stuff is all a hoax' and bought a subscription to the *Militant*."

In New York's Garment District a young garment worker originally from Nicaragua stopped by a table set up by a plant-gate team and purchased a single copy of *Perspectiva Mundial*, promising to meet a regular street table a block away to get a subscription. When he picked up his sub he asked to meet later to purchase several Pathfinder titles and copies of *New International* magazine.

One highlight of the subscription drive is the consistently larger number of single copies of the *Militant* sold each week in many cities. Socialist workers and young socialists can build on all these accomplishments in the coming months. There is clearly a desire among workers and youth for a working-class paper that tells the truth. Continuing weekly street tables, plant-gate teams, and sales on the job and at political events will help fill that need.



Striking nurses in New York check out *Militant*, which received very good response on picket line. Some strikers called others over to take a look.

## Militant/Perspectiva Mundial subscription campaign final scoreboard Sept. 22-Dec. 9

Country	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden*	18	22	122%	4	4	12	16
United Kingdom	35	41	117%	10	12	20	30
Australia	16	17	106%	4	4	16	20
Canada							
Montreal	12	14	117%	5	5	20	12
Vancouver	15	16	107%	3	5	20	13
Toronto	17	16	94%	5	2	17	13
Canada total	44	46	105%	13	12	57	38
United States							
Twin Cities*	45	60	133%	20	37	30	37
Seattle	25	33	132%	10	7	25	23
Houston	30	37	123%	15	11	45	19
Atlanta	36	42	117%	15	16	35	25
Miami	20	23	115%	20	20	25	27
Pittsburgh	40	46	115%	5	6	25	11
Upper Manhattan	65	68	105%	50	35	40	26
Philadelphia	25	26	104%	10	8	20	8
Detroit	35	36	103%	10	9	30	22
Des Moines*	40	41	103%	25	23	20	20
Chicago*	45	46	102%	30	8	35	25
Los Angeles	50	51	102%	30	20	25	25
Boston*	38	38	100%	13	12	25	17
Charlotte*	20	19	95%	6	4	25	8
San Francisco	50	46	92%	25	25	40	22
Newark	45	41	91%	30	16	30	16
Omaha	11	10	91%	15	14	10	13
Allentown	25	22	88%	5	4	10	8
Western Colorado*	35	30	86%	8	14	15	10
Tampa	12	10	83%	5	5	14	12
Tucson*	10	8	80%	2	1	6	6
Washington	25	20	80%	20	13	10	12
NY Garment Dist.	100	71	71%	50	29	55	42
Cleveland	25	17	68%	4	5	20	15
Birmingham	20	13	65%	3	6	20	3
Brooklyn	60	37	62%	30	34	70	46
U.S. total	932	891	96%	456	382	705	498
Iceland	8	5	63%	2	0		
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	6	60%	1	1	8	5
Christchurch	7	4	57%	1	0	3	2
N.Z. total	17	10	59%	2	1	11	7
Int'l totals	1070	1032	94%	491	415	737	609
Goal/Should be	1100	1100	100%	500	500	800	800
IN THE UNIONS							
United States	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
UAW	5	6	120%			4	2
UFCW	55	57	104%	55	67	70	53
UNITE	50	21	42%	35	16	55	11
UMWA	20	7	35%	2	0	15	3
Total	130	91	70%	92	83	144	69
Australia							
AMIEU	3	2	67%			1	1
MUA*	2	1	50%			5	4
Total	5	3	60%				
New Zealand							
NDU	2	1	50%			1	0
MWU	2	1	50%			2	0
Total	4	2	50%			3	0
Canada							
UFCW	5	3	60%	1	0	8	5
UNITE	5	0	0%	2	3	3	0
Total	10	3	30%	3	3	11	5
raised goal*							

## Students rally for affirmative action

BY OSBORNE HART

CINCINNATI—In a cold, steady rain, college and high school students marched December 6 in defense of affirmative action in the heart of downtown here.

More than 200 young people, overwhelmingly Black, from campuses in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee marched through city streets from the University of Cincinnati campus to the rally site. A contingent of students from three Detroit high schools waved placards and chanted as they walked the two-mile route.

Just a few blocks from the demonstration, the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals hearing on the University of Michigan's affirmative action admissions policies was in session. The nine judges' ruling on whether or not to uphold Michigan's affirmative action procedures will affect universities in four states.

The appellate court hearing is the result of the university's appeal of a U.S. District judge's March decision in the case of *Barbara Grutter vs. the University of Michigan Law School*. The judge in that dispute declared unconstitutional the use of race as a factor in admissions to the law school. That ruling contradicted an earlier decision by another U.S. District Judge in a nearly identical suit, giving the okay to a similar admissions policy used in the undergraduate school. These contradictory decisions increase the likelihood the Michigan cases will go before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Fred Shuttlesworth, a veteran leader of the civil rights movement and a founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, encouraged the crowd to "keep your eyes

on the prize. Young people, it's up to you to determine what kind of country we live in. Let's fight like hell until we win."

It is important "that this rally is being held in Cincinnati," said NAACP national youth coordinator Jeffrey Johnson. "For the last five years we've seen young people die at hands of the police," Johnson said to cheers and chants denouncing police brutality. "Affirmative action will not die on the streets of Cincinnati. The cops can't turn us back. The rain didn't turn us back. And no court can turn us back."

Pamela Vossenas, a supporter of the Miami Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights, addressed the gathering. Vossenas explained the case of Michael Italie, a garment worker and Socialist Workers mayoral candidate fired from his job after he opposed the war in Afghanistan, defended the Cuban revolution, supported union organizing efforts, and took other pro-working-class positions in a televised candidates' debate.

"This case is not about the right to freedom of speech for one person, but the right of all people to freedom of speech," Vossenas said, "so that everyone can do what you all are doing here today."

Student organizations at several regional schools, including NAACP campus chapters, Black student groups, minority law student associations, and chapters of the group Equality By Any Means Necessary organized the demonstration.

# U.S. rulers begin occupation of Afghanistan

Continued from front page

"suggested Britain might contribute 10,000 troops to a multinational force of up to 50,000," reported the London-based *Financial Times*.

Washington is making it clear that the U.S. Central Command will have ultimate authority and real control over this force, which will depend heavily on U.S. logistic support.

## U.S. bases of operation

Aside from the force to be placed in Kabul, Washington is concentrating on establishing bases of operation connected to the country's airfields. A total of around 1,500 U.S. Marines are deployed at a desert airfield outside Kandahar, from which they patrol within 12 miles of the city, at the large airbase near Kabul, and at the airport near Mazar-i-Sharif. Special operations forces, CIA teams, and other military units are active elsewhere in the country, but press censorship by Washington is keeping reports out of the U.S. media.

The call for placing these troops in Afghanistan was officially sanctioned by a UN-sponsored conference in Bonn, Germany, where delegates from four Afghan factions met for nine days. The delegates gave the

nod of approval to the appointment of Pashtun commander Hamid Karzai, a candidate favored by the U.S. government, as leader of the interim government. The new regime is set to take over December 22.

The pact calls for the withdrawal of the Northern Alliance forces from Kabul and other major cities. They are to be replaced by troops from the occupation force, which will begin operations around Kabul but, according to the agreement, could "be progressively expanded to other urban centers and other areas."

One week after signing this pact, Mohammad Fahim, Afghanistan's newly appointed defense minister, insisted that Northern Alliance troops will remain in Kabul and will not withdraw as the Bonn agreement obligates them to do.

Karzai, for his part, has given his full backing to Washington's military operations inside Afghanistan, and has urged the U.S. government to not "walk away," but to maintain a strong presence within the country. The new Afghan leader also pledged to disarm the Afghan people.

One indication of the influence of the U.S. government over the new Afghan officials is the response on December 6 by U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld to terms

worked out by local militias for the surrender of Kandahar by Mullah Omar, the Taliban's central leader.

The original deal reported in the media would have allowed Omar to continue living in Kandahar under the protection of a local Pashtun leader. Rumsfeld made it known in no uncertain terms that this was unacceptable. "American officials," reported the *New York Times*, "signaled that any amnesty for senior Taliban leaders could end military cooperation and reconstruction aid for opposition groups, whose success depends on both. And they seemed confident that the final settlement would meet American goals."

Washington has been bombarding the Tora Bora area in the White Mountains in eastern Afghanistan, where an intricate system of caves, some of which lead into Pakistan, is located. "The places we're bombing, we're really bombing, but there are not as many of them now," a U.S. military officer told the *New York Times*. On December 9 U.S. warplanes dropped a 15,000 pound "Daisy Cutter" bomb on the area.

## Further inroads into Central Asia

Following a visit to Uzbekistan, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell secured agree-

ment from the government there to open the Friendship Bridge, which provides a key land route into northern Afghanistan, for the first time since 1996. The bridge will make it much easier for Washington to reinforce and resupply U.S. forces operating on the ground in this area of the country.

During his one-day trip to the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, Powell assured President Islam Karimov, who is notorious for running an extremely repressive regime, that Washington's "interests in this country and region go far beyond the current crisis in Afghanistan." The U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division is now stationed at a strategic base in Uzbekistan.

Heeding the U.S. government's request, the parliament in the Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan overwhelmingly approved December 6 the opening up of its substantial air bases to U.S. military operations. U.S. military officials are most interested in the Manas air base, which can accommodate 30-40 aircraft of different types at any one time. According to Kyrgyz officials, the initial military force to be deployed in the country may also include contingents from France, Italy, Canada, Australia, and south Korea.

With some 30 to 40 ships in the Arabian Sea area, the U.S. Navy have been interdicting, and in some cases boarding and searching, vessels ranging from large ships to small boats in the area. On average about 40 boats are being challenged daily. British, French, Italian, Canadian, and Australian ships are assisting Washington in carrying out this operation.

## U.S. military predominance over allies

Assessing the results of the U.S. war, the *Financial Times* noted December 9 that the "rapid collapse of the Taliban under withering American air power has emphasized a trend with profound ramifications far beyond Afghanistan: growing U.S. military predominance.... The gap between the military capabilities of the U.S. and the rest of the world is huge and is growing."

The article cites a study by Yale historian Paul Kennedy, who says the United States now accounts for 36 percent of all military spending around the world, and spends more than the next nine nations together. "This is the largest share of military expenditures around the globe in all of history," stated Kennedy. "You are talking about a Potemkin military alliance where the U.S. does 98 percent of the fighting, the British 2 percent and the Japanese are steaming around Mauritius."

But the paper also sounded a note of caution for those who envisage unlimited future success for Washington. "The U.S.-led victories of the last decade have been against forces that had already been weakened by years of war. It would be perilous to extrapolate from that and assume victories elsewhere will come so cheaply."

Among the nations cited at the top of the Pentagon's list for future attacks are Iraq, Yemen, and Somalia. A delegation of U.S. military personnel "have secretly entered Somalia," reported the December 11 London-based *Telegraph*, in a move aimed at identifying future targets for U.S. bombing attacks in the next stage of President George Bush's so-called war against terrorism. Nine officers met with leaders of the Rahanwein Resistance Army (RRA) in Baidoa in central Somalia and visited an airport and several former military barracks as well, reported the *Financial Times*.

The RRA is part of a wider Ethiopian-backed anti-government alliance called the Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council. This group, which is backed by Hussein Aidid, charges the new government in Somalia with having "Islamist sympathies."

# U.S. bombs kill thousands of civilians

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

According to an extensive study released December 10 by Marc Herold, professor of economics, international relations, and women's studies at the University of New Hampshire, thousands of civilians have been killed in Afghanistan by U.S. bombs. The report states that between October 7, the day the bombardment began, and December 6, "at least 3,767 Afghan civilians had died in U.S. bombing attacks," an average of 62 per day. The report noted "that 10 percent to 30

percent of the U.S. missiles and bombs dropped on Afghanistan did not explode, posing a lasting danger. Fourteen thousand unexploded cluster bomblets littered the fields, streets, and homes of Afghanistan by late November."

Included among the numerous instances cited in the report are: "November 10—the villages of Shah Aqa and a neighboring siddling, in the...Khakrez district, 70 kilometers [43 miles] northwest of Kandahar are bombed, resulting in over 300 civilian ca-

sualties"; "November 11—U.S. planes bombed a bus carrying fleeing refugees on the north road out of Kabul... 35 died"; and "November 18—carpet-bombing by B-52s of frontline village near Khanabad province of Kunduz, kills at least 150 civilians."

In addition, after surrendering to Northern Alliance forces in the northern Afghanistan city of Kunduz, dozens and possibly hundreds of Taliban soldiers were asphyxiated while being transported to prison sites in shipping containers that lacked oxygen. Colonel General Jurabek, the Northern Alliance commander in charge of some 3,000 prisoners admitted that 43 had died in half a dozen of these containers. The actual figure is probably quite a bit higher.

Several of the Pakistanis being held as prisoners were interviewed by the *New York Times* December 9. One by the name of Omar "said through the bars of his prison wing that all but seven people in his container had died from lack of air. He estimated that more than 100 had died," stated the *Times*. "Another Pakistani said 13 had died in his container and that the survivors had taken turns to breathe through a hole in the metal wall." The prisoners are jammed into cells with about 40 men to each room.

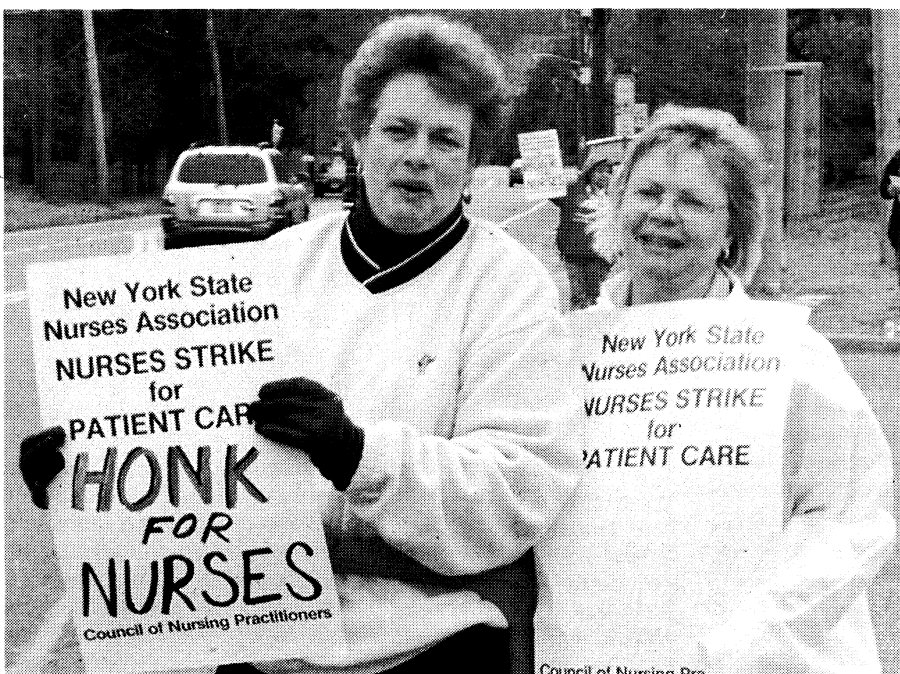
## CIA man threatened to kill POW

The U.S. youth John Walker, who had joined the Taliban movement and survived the massacre of prisoners in the fortress in Mazar-i-Sharif, continues to be vilified in the U.S. media, even though no charges have been filed against him. He is being held in a shipping container—10 feet high, 20 feet wide and 10 feet deep—at the U.S. marine desert base southwest of Kandahar. Washington is calling him a "battlefield detainee" and officials, including FBI agents, are interrogating him.

The *New York Post* on December 7 ran a front page article titled "Hero vs. Rat," referring to CIA agent John Spann and Walker. Spann was killed by prisoners who rebelled after Spann reportedly shot and killed several of them. Shortly before Spann was killed he attempted to interrogate Walker, as well as a number of other prisoners being held there. Walker refused to respond to any of the questions from Spann and another CIA agent on the scene known only as "Dave." In an exchange recorded on videotape, the CIA agents told Walker that if he didn't talk to them he was "going to die here. Or he's going to f—ing spend the rest of his short f—ing life in prison" with no access to the Red Cross.

Walker's family in California has hired noted criminal lawyer James Brosnahan to defend their son. Neither his parents nor Brosnahan have been allowed to speak to or visit Walker. As a U.S. citizen he cannot be tried by a military tribunal or any other military courts. Among the charges that Walker could face, according to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, are treason and seditious conspiracy.

## New York nurses strike for dignity



Nurses picket medical center on November 27, the day after their strike began.

BY SARA LOBMAN

SMITHTOWN, New York—Some 200 of the 474 nurses on strike against St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center attended the first negotiating session with the hospital to take place since the strike began more than two weeks ago. "There was no change in the company's positions, so the strike will continue," Michael Chacon, a New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) representative and a member of the negotiating team, reported.

Barbara Crane, president of the NYSNA at St. Catherine, explained that the union decided to invite any member who wanted to observe the entire December 11 negotiating session. "We met in a big room and set up microphones so everyone could hear everything that was said. And when union members had questions or suggestions for the negotiating team they could pass them a note."

"I think a lot of nurses were disappointed that there wasn't any progress

today," she added. "But they're also angry after watching how the hospital acted toward us at the session. It really proved that the strike is not just about the specific issues like mandatory overtime, retirement benefits, and staffing ratios, but it's about being treated with respect."

In preparation for the negotiations, 150 people participated in a candlelight vigil December 7. A union membership meeting is scheduled for December 12 to discuss the negotiations. The mediator has scheduled the next negotiating session for December 19.

The nurses are urging supporters to join them on the picket line, which is up every day from 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For directions check their web site at [www.nysna.org](http://www.nysna.org). The union has also established a strike fund. Send contributions to NYSNA Economic & General Welfare Program, Attn: Anne Parrish or Marilyn Bauer, 120 Wall St., 23rd floor, New York, NY 10005. Make checks payable to "NYSNA St. Catherine's Strike Fund."

## NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11

❑ **U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War** by Jack Barnes

❑ **The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today** by Mary-Alice Waters

❑ **Socialism: A Viable Option** by José Ramón Balaguer

❑ **Young Socialists Manifesto**

\$14.00

AVAILABLE FROM BOOKSTORES, INCLUDING THOSE LISTED ON PAGE 12.



# Israeli rulers fail to subdue Palestinians

Continued from front page

suicide bombings that left 25 Israelis dead as the excuse to launch the offensive. The Bush administration, which had just sent a high-level delegation to Palestine to conduct talks with both sides, found itself in the position of being unable to openly oppose Sharon's response. The Israeli prime minister insisted that PA president Yasir Arafat round up members of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Arafat's security forces complied to the degree they were able, arresting around 200 people and closing the offices of the two organizations. They were unable to stop attacks on Israelis, however.

Within days, Israel suspended its airstrikes as U.S. envoy Anthony Zinni pressed for a resumption of talks. A senior Bush administration official told the *Washington Post* that the White House is "not going after Arafat and we haven't taken decisions or positions about Arafat as a leader. The last thing we need to see is the collapse of the whole Palestinian Authority." Asked if the United States has a "Plan B," in the event that Arafat doesn't measure up to the expectations of the U.S. and Israeli governments, the administration official reiterated his point. Arafat is "Plan A, B, C, D, and Z," he said. "We want him to do his stuff. Among the quickest ways to let him off the hook is to put out some other plan."

Edward Abington, former U.S. consul general in Jerusalem, added, "I'm not sure there is a Plan B. That's the problem. I think we're kind of drifting toward a terrible catastrophe out there."

The *Post* interviewed Jordan's ambassador to the United States, Marwan Muasher, who said, "The end of the Palestinian Authority will bring chaos to the streets. And any regime that comes after that will be seen as a puppet regime."

European Union officials chimed in, stating Arafat must "convincingly and relentlessly" pursue those deemed by the Israeli government to be responsible for the attacks. They also warned Israel not to go too far in destabilizing the PA.

## Alarmed by prospect of overthrow

The Egyptian foreign minister arrived in Jerusalem December 7 for talks with Israeli leaders, following a visit to Cairo by the head of Mossad, Israel's secret police. While the foreign minister did not condemn the Israeli bombing, the *Financial Times* noted that he "was alarmed by the prospect that the Israeli offensive could lead to the overthrow of Mr. Arafat, a development that might further destabilize the region."

In an editorial printed the same day, the

*New York Times* encouraged the Israeli government to "exercise restraint in its military operations" and to let Arafat "follow through on his promises to break up Hamas's terror network." Recognizing that the Palestinian Liberation Organization that Arafat chairs is not the only voice of the Palestinian people, the *Times* acknowledged that "Hamas has emerged as a powerful force in Palestinian-administered areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip," and expressed concern that it is "more popular than Mr. Arafat's secular nationalist Fatah party."

"More than eight years after the signing of the first Oslo peace agreements with Israel," the paper added, "Palestinians have lost faith in Mr. Arafat's negotiating strategies. They despair of ever seeing an end to the daily humiliations of Israeli occupation."

The arrests of Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists ran into opposition among Palestinian people, even from within Arafat's own Fatah organization. At a march to show support for Arafat, many expressed reservations about the PA's action. "We're against the arrests," Ghassan Jabala, a Fatah Youth member and vice-president of the student council at Gaza University, told the press. "I believe it is just a temporary measure by Arafat, who is accused on all sides." A professor at the march said it was better for the people to be arrested, since "they will be safe from the Israelis."

## 'Sharon flinches'

Bourgeois columnist Charles Krauthammer addressed the results of the Israeli government's course in "Sharon Flinches," a column in the December 7 *Washington Post*. Flush with anticipation of a massive



Palestinians inspect damage to car hit by Israeli missile December 10 in West Bank town of Hebron. Despite repression, Palestinians continue fight for self-determination.

Israeli assault on the Palestinians, Krauthammer expressed the hopes he had held that suicide bombing would give the government in Jerusalem "the opportunity to do as America is doing to the Taliban: destroy the Arafat regime that harbors and protects Hamas terrorists... Here is the opportunity to detain and deport the Palestinian Authority leadership that brought Israel more terrorism in the eight years of the 'peace process' than in all of its previous history."

"What does Prime Minister Sharon do?" lamented Krauthammer. "He flinches. He temporizes. He attacks symbolic targets—destroys two of Arafat's helicopters, tears up his Gaza airport runway, flattens a few police stations, blasts the office next door

to Arafat's... The message is clear. Israel does not (yet) have the will—or the government—to fight its own war."

Rarely addressed in the discourse among capitalist politicians is the fact that like its recent predecessors the Sharon government is less and less able to stir up a war fever among the Israeli population. Rather, the apparent absence of any resolution to the endless conflict feeds war-weariness.

Ali Abunimah, a Palestinian and the vice president of the Arab American Action Network, addressed some of the same questions from a different point of view in an opinion column from Chicago that was picked up in some large U.S. dailies.

"What other punishments will be imposed  
Continued on Page 10

# Tokyo cops raid Korea-linked credit unions

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

A November 29 raid by Tokyo police on a banking organization that frequently functions as an unofficial diplomatic link with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has stirred up protest and controversy in Japan.

Alleging that the banks' funds have been funneled to north Korea, police seized documents of the General Association of Korean Residents, or Chongryon, a network of credit unions used by working-class families of Korean descent. Cops used batons against a crowd of hundreds of people who protested the raid. Earlier in the week seven Korean-Japanese people associated with the organization were arrested.

Taku Yamasaki, an official of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, described the Chongryon as a "diplomatic channel to north Korea, until now." With the raid, he said, "this function will be significantly hampered." The two countries do not maintain formal relations. Like Washington and the neocolonial regime in Seoul, Tokyo, the former colonial master of Korea, maintains a hostile stance toward the workers state in the north.

Japanese government officials say they are investigating allegations that losses by the credit unions correspond to money sent to Korea. Defenders of the banks note that the entire Japanese banking system is in deep crisis, with many billions of dollars in

bad loans filling up the books of major banks. "This financial investigation is just a pretext for the Japanese police to investigate what is a virtual embassy," said Kim Myong Chul, a supporter of normalization of relations between the two countries.

In a statement released on November 29, Chongryon's Central Standing Committee said the police action was part of a "repressive campaign" in which authorities had carried out numerous searches at different locations and interrogated more than 100 people. The crackdown was prompted by "national discrimination" against Koreans in Japan, it added.

## Infringement on DPRK sovereignty

The government of north Korea described the raid as an "infringement upon the sovereignty of the DPRK." Calling for the release of those who have been arrested, and rejecting any charge of "illegal transactions" by the bank, it noted that "a large number of businesses of Japan and the south Korean residents association in Japan are now undergoing a financial crisis." The Foreign Affairs statement said that Japan is "taking advantage of the anti-terror war" in Afghanistan to further its "design for overseas expansion."

The credit unions were originally set up to cater to Korean workers who remained in Japan after World War II. Some 635,000 workers of Korean descent live in Japan today, forming the largest immigrant group in the country. Despite the discrimination they face, many have become integrated into the Japanese working class.

Meanwhile, statements by U.S. president Bush and other White House officials linking their threats against Pyongyang to the "war against terrorism" continue to cause unease in Seoul. "Some South Korean officials fear Washington's recent rhetoric will provoke a security crisis like that of 1993-94, when north Korea's refusal to allow inspections of its nuclear facilities brought it to a tense standoff with the U.S.," reported the December 6 *Wall Street Journal*.

A senior South Korean Foreign Ministry official said that Bush "is not sensitive to north Korea's possible responses." Washington's stance, said the official, has "created unnecessary concern not only for the South Korean public, but also in North Korea that the Korean Peninsula can be a battleground again" as it was in the 1950-53 Korean war.

## Books for working people and youth fighting imperialism and its war

### Che Guevara Talks to Young People

Ernesto Che Guevara, drawing on his experience as a leader of the Cuban Revolution, talks as an equal with youth of Cuba and the world. In English and in Spanish. \$12 (regular price \$14.95)

### Malcolm X Talks to Young People

Includes Malcolm X's condemnation of imperialist wars in the Congo, Vietnam, and elsewhere. \$9 (regular price \$10.95)

### The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

By James P. Cannon

A founder of the communist movement in the U.S. and leader of the Communist International during Lenin's time defends the proletarian program and party building norms of Bolshevism on the eve of World War II. \$21.95

### Capitalism's World Disorder:

Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

by Jack Barnes

The accelerating social devastation, police brutality, and military assaults are the inevitable forces unleashed by capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store can be changed by the united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. In French, English, and Spanish. \$20 (Regular \$23.95)

### New International no. 7

Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III

The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. \$12

Also by Jack Barnes

### Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

Discusses the struggles in the imperialist heartland and the example of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. \$10 (Regular \$13.00)

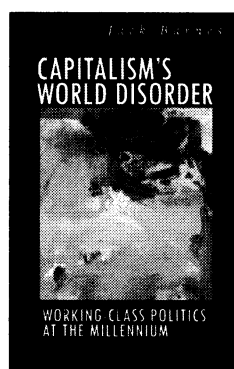
See directory on page 12

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

A handbook for the new generation coming into the factories, mines, and mills as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism today. In French, English, and Spanish. \$16 (Regular \$19.95)

### The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity." In French, English, Icelandic, Spanish, and Swedish. \$3



From Pathfinder

# Meeting in Miami builds support for fired garment worker

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND LAWRENCE MIKESH

MIAMI—About 90 people turned out for a public meeting here December 8 to defend freedom of speech. The forum registered growing support for the fight to reinstate garment worker and former mayoral candidate Michael Italie and University of Miami researcher Mohammad Rahat to their jobs. Panelists and other participants also took on Washington's intensifying attacks on democratic rights.

The featured speaker was Michael Italie, the recent Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami. He was fired from his job as a sewing machine operator by Goodwill Industries October 22 after speaking out against the U.S. war against Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution at a televised debate with other mayoral candidates.

Among those also on the platform were Howard Simon, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in Florida; attorney John Due, a veteran civil rights activist and NAACP representative; Altaf Ali, director of the Council for American Islamic Relations in Florida; and Leroy Jones, a founder of Brothers of the Same Mind, an organization based in the Black Community here that defends the rights of prisoners and former inmates.

The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights, formed to organize a nationwide fight to demand Italie's reinstatement, sponsored the December 8 program. Sheri Bevel and Chris Hoepfner, members of this group, co-chaired the event. Bevel is also coordinator of the Philosophy Club at Florida International University South campus.

In opening the program Hoepfner quoted from a December 5 *Miami Herald* column by Robert Steinback. "South Florida has long been a focal point of the clash over liberty. Frankly we're pretty confused over the concept," Steinback wrote.

"Since the Sept. 11 attacks, two men were fired from their jobs solely for expressing unpopular opinions. The University of Miami fired Iranian-born medical technician Mohammad Rahat for criticizing U.S. policy in Israel and Afghanistan.

"Former Miami mayoral candidate Michael Italie was fired from his job for speaking in support of the Cuban revolution and against U.S. bombing in Afghanistan.

"There has been no groundswell of indignation over these unjustified and outrageous firings," said Steinback.

"We are here to say no!" Hoepfner stated. "These 'unjustified and outrageous firings' and the current dragnet targeting thousands of immigrants and others will not go unanswered. We will speak out. The Bush administration has overreached itself in its assault on civil liberties. This panel is testimony to that fact."

## Violation of IRS tax exempt status?

Co-chairperson Sheri Bevel reported on the results of some research she had done. Goodwill is tax exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code, Bevel said. IRS rules state that private companies or individuals that qualify for this exemption "may not participate at all in campaign activity for or against political candidates.... A 501(c)(3) organization may not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.... The motivation of an organization is not relevant in determining whether the political campaign prohibition has been violated. Activities that encourage people to vote for or against a particular candidate, even on the basis of nonpartisan criteria, violate the political campaign prohibition of 501(c)(3)."

In a statement to the *Miami Herald* published in its October 30 issue, Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana said he fired Italie because "We cannot have anyone who is attempting to subvert the United States of America. His political beliefs are those of a communist

who would like to destroy private ownership of American enterprises and install a communist regime in the United States."

The day of a news conference to protest the firing, held by Italie outside the plant where he worked, Goodwill bosses sent all 400 workers home early, with pay, to prevent them from talking with Italie or the press. Several workers told Italie that the bosses told them to punch out early because "Mike the communist would be out there talking to the media." The next day when Italie and his supporters returned, some 70 workers took information on his fight.

"I am not a lawyer," Bevel said, "but it seems to me Goodwill has violated these rules by firing Mike. I will work with others to determine how far we can take this as part of the fight for reinstatement."

Bevel also noted other messages of support sent to the meeting—including from the Orlando chapter of the Boricua Human Rights Network, civil rights veteran fighter Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, and Maggie Becker, spokesperson for the defense of the Miami Five—Cubans framed-up here by the FBI on "spying" charges. New endorsers of the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights in Miami include Jobs with Justice, J. W. Johnson and Jeffrey W. Mitchell from the Transport Workers Union, and Sherman Henry, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1184.

## 'Outrageous firings must be protested'

Florida ACLU director Howard Simon pointed to the arrogant defense by U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft of the Bush administration's executive order to establish military tribunals to try suspected "terrorists" and other antidemocratic steps like the indefinite and secretive detentions of hundreds of immigrants. Citing Ashcroft's charge that opponents of these measures are "aiding the terrorists," Simon said: "To brand critics of the government as accomplices of terrorists, to equate dissent with disloyalty, is going too far. We can't permit this administration to turn the clock back 50 years to the era of Joseph McCarthy."

There is a wide perception that Miami has had a history of violations of the First Amendment and freedom of speech, Simon noted. "These used to be so routine here that a number of us in the ACLU joked about the 'Miami exception to the First Amendment.'" Simon cited a number of examples, including efforts, such as occurred when the Cuban band Los Van Van played in October 1999, to prevent Cuban artists from performing in the city. Pointing to how 19th century Virginia slaveholders outlawed any advocacy of the abolition of slavery, Simon said, "For the ACLU, freedom of speech is not an abstract principle. No struggle for social justice can be effective without First Amendment rights."

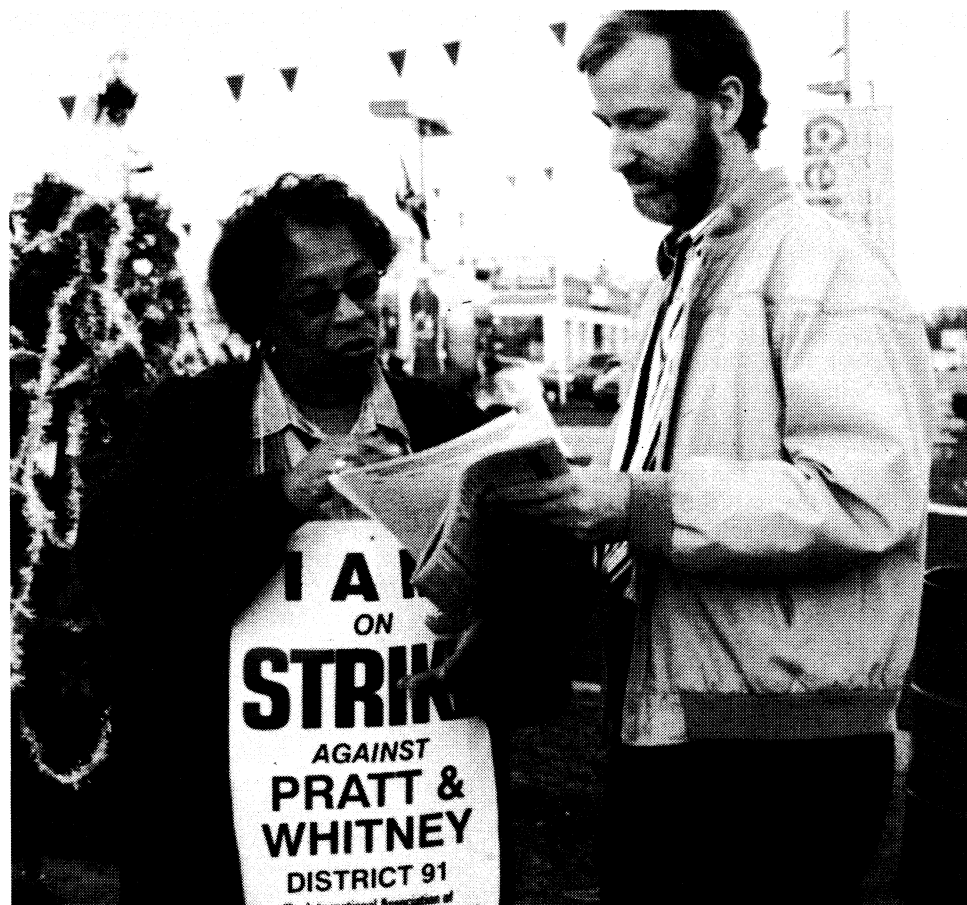
Italie and Rahat's firing are "outrageous acts that must be protested," Simon said. Just because some of these practices may not be explicitly prohibited by law, it doesn't mean that they are not reprehensible, the ACLU representative stated. "Censorship is wrong whether it's carried out by the government or private individuals and institutions."

In his presentation, John Due said, "I don't consider myself a civil rights lawyer when a man like Ashcroft claims that the U.S. government stands for civil rights. I prefer to be called a human rights lawyer." Those like Italie standing up to such political firings today are setting an example similar to that set by Rosa Parks when she refused to give up her seat on the segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955, Due noted. "We may have to do the Rosa Parks thing again in these cases."

Mike Italie reported on some of the highlights from the first stops on his national speaking tour.

## Support from striking workers

"Workers, farmers, and young people fighting for their rights are the people we need to see as key in winning battles in de-



Michael Italie talks to striking Machinists union members at Pratt and Whitney in Connecticut during visit to picket line on December 5. A number of strikers signed the petition calling for the fired garment worker's reinstatement to his job.

fense of workers' rights and civil liberties," stated Italie. This was demonstrated when he joined picket lines of Fashion 21 garment workers in Los Angeles fighting for back wages and sanitary working conditions, striking Catholic school teachers in New York, and Pratt and Whitney workers on strike in Connecticut. Italie said he offered solidarity for these struggles and won support for his fight.

Italie noted that Miami has recently been classified as the poorest large city in the United States and that workers at Goodwill receive poverty wages. Pointing out that he had joined co-workers at protests in defense of immigrant workers' rights and against police brutality, Italie stressed that "Employers like Goodwill Industries, and its CEO Dennis Pastrana want to intimidate and silence any workers who speak up against the conditions we face on or off the job or in support of organizing unions."

The meeting marks the beginning of the broadening of the fight, Italie said. "We are in a stronger position now to speak out to college and high school classes, unions, churches, and other organizations. I ask you to join this fight to win back my job and that of Mohammad Rahat, and to make Goodwill and the University of Miami pay the highest price for their attacks on freedom of speech."

## 'I thought Muslims were isolated'

Altaf Ali of the Council on American-Islamic Relations spoke about the ongoing government attacks on people of Middle Eastern background. "Before I came here I thought the Muslim community was isolated," said Ali. "I am very happy to see so many different people came out tonight. What happened to Mike and Mohammad really shocked us in the Muslim community."

Ali sparked laughter when he said he was surprised to hear of Italie's firing "because he is a handsome man with his beard." Part of the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim propaganda in

the media, he said, included pressure for Middle Eastern men to shave their beards and reject the struggles of Arab and Muslim peoples for their liberation. He added that justice can only be won against these firings by putting pressure on the companies that carry out attacks on freedom of speech, and suggested that an effort be waged to brand Goodwill in public opinion as "Badwill."

Yvonne Hayes, assistant vice president of United Transportation Union Local 1138 in Miami, gave the fund pitch. She read a portion of a letter of support from Bill Pearson, president of UFCW Local 789 in St. Paul, Minnesota (see below).

Participants contributed \$1,141 to aid the work of the free speech committee.

## Link with struggle against racism

In expressing his support for the fight to reinstate Italie and Rahat, Leroy Jones of Brothers of the Same Mind recounted his most recent experience with mistreatment by the police while protesting racism in hiring at a construction site in Miami. Jones was arrested a few days before the December 8 forum by cops on the pretext his organization had violated its permit for the affirmative action protest. He was quickly released as other Brothers of the Same Mind leaders came to the police station to spotlight the racist conduct of the cops. "If the police decide to press charges, I tell them I welcome the fight," he said.

Sandra Collado, representing the Miami Coalition To End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, and Max Rameau, of the Miami Antiwar Coalition, also addressed the meeting. Rameau said that "if the firings of Mike and Mohammad are legal, we need to make them illegal. We need to fight to change the law."

During the discussion, Anjali Sardeshmukh said she had read in the media that the president of the Miami ACLU chapter stated the ACLU would not take Italie's case and made a statement that aided

Continued on Page 12

# Minnesota meatpackers official says, 'reinstate Italie and Rahat'

The following is a message from Bill Pearson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 in Minnesota, in support of the reinstatement of Michael Italie and Mohammad Rahat.

Shortly after September 11, 2001, I called a conservative talk show host in the Twin Cities. My comments were brief and pointed: "Bomb the Bastards." It was easy, it was the popular opinion.

Having said that, I read with horror of the decisions to terminate Michael Italie and Mohammad Rahat. Their opinions weren't the popular ones. Nonetheless, their statements reflected their viewpoints. While I don't agree with them, I find it inconceivable to fire workers simply because they don't think the way we do.

Let's cut to the chase. If the actions taken by Goodwill and the University of Miami are allowed to stand, then the events of September 11th will have been wildly successful. We will have let the terrorists take away the most important component of our freedom: the right to dissent, the right to speak our minds without fear of reprisal.

It's always been a divergence of ideas that has given us our greatness. We've grown as a nation because we have been able to accept our differences. The terrorists have stripped Afghanistan of those freedoms, and now we're about to let them do it here. That's the real tragedy.

Reinstate Michael and Mohammad, or we become a country much closer to the old Afghanistan than the United States that we all love.



# Celebration opens Colorado Pathfinder outlet

BY MARION RUSSELL  
AND JASON ALESSIO

CRAIG, Colorado—Celebrating the opening of a Pathfinder bookstore in the heart of the western coalfields here, socialist workers and youth, along with supporters of the publishing house, put the finishing touches to the new store and held a grand opening event December 8.

Participants in the public celebration meeting discussed developments in the class struggle in the region and the need to build a revolutionary leadership of working people to take on imperialism's increasingly brutal onslaught against workers and farmers—from Palestine to Afghanistan, and from the coal mines to teachers jailed for going on strike in New Jersey.

"About a year ago, socialist workers with coal mining experience moved to Western Colorado to deepen our political work in the coalfields," said Alice Kincaid, an underground coal miner, in her opening remarks at the event. Kincaid described the strikes by miners in the region over the past two years and the interest in the *Militant* and Pathfinder books among mine workers. "The history of the United Mine Workers of America stamps the region," she said.

Kincaid recounted some of the activities of socialist workers since arriving here. "We've met people involved in the fight of the uranium miners and their survivors to gain compensation for death and illnesses caused by the radioactive ore, and have written extensively about their struggle in the *Militant*. We've done political work on area campuses, including collaborating with a group of students at Colorado College in Colorado Springs who visited Cuba, and who are currently organizing against the imperialist war on Afghanistan," she said. "We participated in an antiracist march of more than 1,000 people in Rifle, Colorado, where a man went on a racist rampage, killing three Mexican workers. These are all examples of why we want to begin having a regular Militant Labor Forum series. The bookstore and the political forums will be tools to arm workers in struggle in the whole region."

The main speaker at the event, which also aimed to raise funds for the Pathfinder Fund, was Jack Willey, a staff writer for the *Militant* and previously a coal miner in southern Illinois. Willey explained that the war in Afghanistan is an imperialist war for political, economic, and military domination of the region, waged by finance capital. Drawing a comparison to the Roman empire, Willey said that U.S. president George Bush "says that this is a war against terrorists. The Roman Empire rationalized its invasion of foreign lands as an act to rid the world of barbarians. It exaggerated its contribution to culture to justify military domination. This is a war by Washington for oil and other resources, and to dominate the world markets."

"Like a drumbeat in the background,"

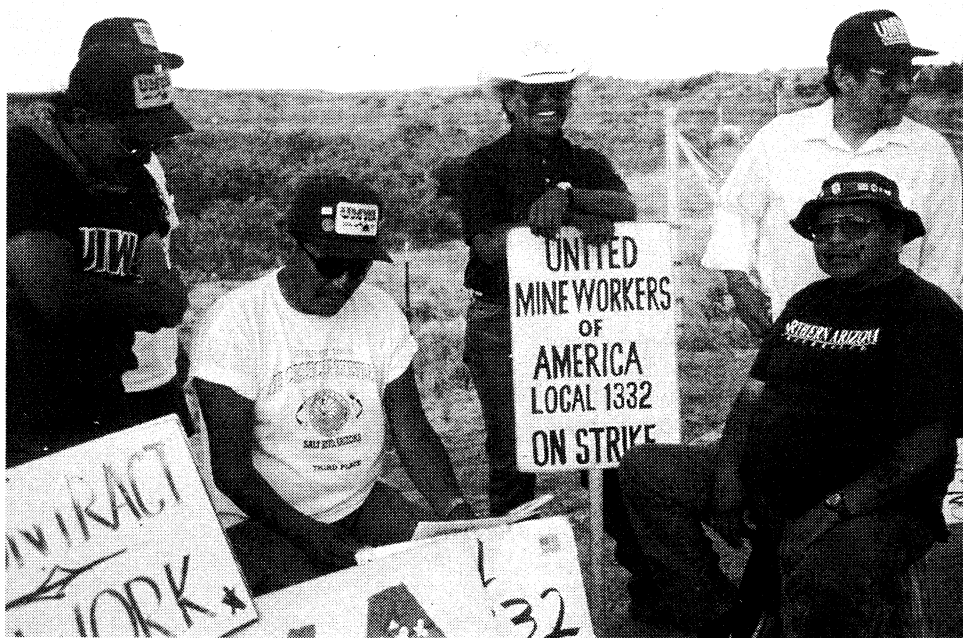
Willey said, "the U.S. rulers have a constant theme of the next place they want to attack. Their next target, like the ones they have previously attacked, will be an unstable regime in some area of the world where declining imperialism wants to advance its interests. But in the end, their brutal military occupations cause increased instability in the region, and a drain on the U.S. treasury. They will never be able to pull out of Bosnia, Iraq, or Afghanistan because in the decline of capitalism they cannot establish a stable ruling power."

Willey also described the government and employer assault on workers' rights in the United States, which so far has especially targeted immigrant workers. "They have rounded up more than 1,200 people, many of them Arabs and Muslims, and have held them in prisons to be questioned. For the first time, we are experiencing 'disappeared' people in this country. Many are being held in solitary confinement. Some are literally people who went to the store and never came back. Their stories are just beginning to come out," he said.

Willey ended his talk by describing the increasing resistance worldwide of working people fighting the impact of the deepening capitalist disorder. "These conditions will lead to a socialist revolution here in the United States," he said. "The rulers' accelerated attacks on working people will drive us to fight back." Willey pointed to hundreds of teachers on strike in Middletown, New Jersey, who were arrested for refusing to obey a court order to go back to work, as well as other strikes occurring in a time of war.

"In Palestine," he said, "no matter how many fighters are killed by the state of Israel, the capitalist rulers there cannot stop the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. These fighters are showing selflessness and dedication." This kind of repression, imperialist war, and assaults on working people is what the superwealthy rulers will repeatedly impose on humanity, he said, until a revolutionary leadership can be built that can chart a course to lead working people in their tens of millions out of these horrors. "We need to build a world communist movement capable of confronting the U.S. ruling class as well as Israeli military brutality, and open the road for the struggle for socialism. We need to organize to use Pathfinder books, which keep in print our common revolutionary heritage, as part of this fight to bring an end to these atrocities and brutalities."

As of the meeting, a total of \$4,470 has been pledged to the Pathfinder Fund from this area. Participants pledged an additional \$175 and contributed \$1,360 that evening. The 13 people in attendance traveled from Boulder, Denver, and Rangely in Colorado, as well as Salt Lake City. The next day seven people attended a class on *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, a Pathfinder book authored by Jack Barnes.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

At a meeting to open a Pathfinder bookstore in Craig, Colorado, speakers described the strikes by miners in the region over the past two years and the interest in the *Militant* and Pathfinder books among working people in the area. Above, striking members of UMWA Local 1332 near Gallup, New Mexico, look over the *Militant*.

## Meetings discuss world politics, raise funds for Pathfinder Press

BY RÓGER CALERO

Pathfinder supporters are redoubling their efforts heading into the final week of the international campaign to raise \$125,000 for the publishing house. Meetings to celebrate Pathfinder books, discuss developments in world politics, and raise money for the fund in St. Paul, Minnesota; Craig, Colorado; Boston; New York; and Pittsburgh are helping to win new contributions.

Supporters of the fund in six cities report they have raised their overall goals, bringing the total pledged to \$109,200, still \$15,800 short of the international goal.

Showing the potential that exists to reach out for contributions among those opposing imperialism and its war abroad and against workers' rights at home, participants at a fund-raising meeting in Seattle this past weekend contributed \$2,000, bringing the efforts of supporters there \$35 over their local goal of \$8,000. Similarly, supporters in France reported that they have gone over their goal of \$200. A meeting of 25 people in Boston heard a talk by Pathfinder's editorial director Steve Clark, giving a boost to the drive there.

Some 20 people participated in a fund event in Philadelphia December 8. Ma'mud Shirvani, Pathfinder's Farsi-language editor, presented the main talk titled "U.S. imperialism's war against Afghanistan and against workers' rights at home: moves of a weak and declining empire." A fund pitch at the meeting netted \$1,215, leaving supporters there with only \$300 more to meet their goal.

On the final days of the drive, socialist workers in Pittsburgh are hosting a weekend of activities for the fund, including a class on Malcolm X and a showing of the 1920 film depicting the Baku Congress, the topic of a Pathfinder title, *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920—The First Congress of the Peoples of the East*.

The feature advertisement on page 3 of this issue describes another important event in New York on December 15, which will double as a holiday celebration and a wrap-up event for the fund. Over that weekend supporters of Pathfinder are planning two days of voluntary labor in the building the houses the publishing house and its printshop. A range of projects will help in the reorganization of the printshop, as well as provide an opportunity for participants to learn more about the advances being made by volunteers in the Pathfinder Reprint Project in

keeping the 350 Pathfinder titles in print. There will also be a demonstration of recent upgrades to the printshop's web press, improvements that have allowed a dramatic increase in the productivity of the press crews.

For more information about the event, or to make a contribution to the fund, contact the nearest Pathfinder bookstore in your area listed on page 12.

To be counted on the final Pathfinder Fund scoreboard, payments need to be received by the Militant Business Office by Tuesday, December 18 at noon.

### Pathfinder Fund

	Goal	Paid	%
<b>Tucson</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>139%</b>
<b>Allentown</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>1,740</b>	<b>105%</b>
Seattle	8,000	7,145	89%
Houston	3,700	3,120	84%
NY Garment District	6,500	5,160	79%
Des Moines	1,400	1,155	83%
Newark	3,500	2,869	82%
Western Colorado	4,400	3,600	82%
Boston	4,000	3,070	77%
Atlanta	5,000	3,827	77%
Detroit	4,000	2,969	74%
Washington DC	3,000	2,000	67%
Los Angeles	9,000	5,940	66%
Upper Manhattan	3,500	2,261	65%
Charlotte	3,650	2,140	59%
Birmingham	3,200	1,875	59%
San Francisco	8,500	4,365	51%
Brooklyn	3,500	1,513	43%
Tampa	800	385	48%
Pittsburgh	5,000	2,250	45%
Philadelphia	3,000	1,300	43%
Twin Cities	4,000	1,395	35%
Omaha	800	270	34%
Miami	2,200	580	26%
Chicago	6,000	1,515	25%
Cleveland	1,500	100	7%
Other	0	1,042	0%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>99,950</b>	<b>63,794</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>140%</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>106%</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>87%</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>5,208</b>	<b>4,412</b>	<b>85%</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>53%</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Int'l Total</b>	<b>108,198</b>	<b>70,431</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Total Should be</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>113,750</b>	<b>91%</b>

## Fired garment worker wins support from strikers, students in Northeast

BY JACK WILLEY  
AND ANGEL LARISCY

MIDDLETOWN, Connecticut—Michael Italie spent December 5 in Connecticut, walking the picket line with strikers at Pratt & Whitney and joining a fund-raising dinner for 18 people arrested on false charges during an October 25 Hartford protest against Washington's war in Afghanistan. Italie is touring cities across the country to win support for the Committee to Defend Free Speech and the Bill of Rights, which is campaigning to reverse his political firing by Goodwill Industries.

"Every person I had a chance to talk to about my fight was angered that a worker could be fired for expressing his views," said Italie. "They may not have agreed with everything I said, but they said no employer should be able to get rid of somebody for expressing his beliefs." The nine strikers Italie spoke to about the campaign signed a petition addressed to the mayor of Miami and the Miami city commissioners urging them to throw their weight behind the demand that his unjust firing be reversed.

While in New York, Italie spoke with 10 students at Brooklyn College at the Center for Diversity. Italie explained that he was not fired for his job performance "but for explaining my opposition to the U.S. war in Afghanistan, in defense of the Cuban Revolution, and for union rights."

Mohammed Hussain spoke after Italie's presentation about the recent report in the Brooklyn College newspaper *The Kingsman* of FBI agents visiting the campus to investigate students. Hussain noted that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is supposed to protect student records from disclosure but is being circumvented by the government and school administration. In late September the U.S. Department of Education issued a statement to campuses saying they can release information without a subpoena or the consent of the student when there is a health or safety emergency.

During the course of the brief tour, dozens signed up to get involved in the newly formed New York Committee to Defend Free Speech and the Bill of Rights.

# Volatility of capitalism and labor resistance

Printed below is an excerpt from "There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba," from *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

We're at a turning point of a certain kind in working-class politics in the United States.

Communist workers recognized several years ago that a decade-long retreat of our class was bottoming out and that we had entered a period of renewed resistance by workers and farmers. It's not primarily that for the first time in quite a while we are seeing a few more victories in strikes and organizing drives, which we are. But even in the still-more-typical struggles that end in standoffs with the bosses, we are finding groups of workers who remain ready for a fight, who are reaching out to extend support to other struggles, who are open to new and radical ideas about the root causes of the economic and social ills facing working people and to broadening views of solidarity.

The pace of the manifestations of this sea change in the class struggle, of course, goes through ebbs and flows. Resistance speeds up and broadens for a while, and then slows down. The unions, the sole mass institutions of the American labor movement today, continue to weaken. The traditions promoted by the union officialdom—a product of their bourgeois outlook and values, and their petty-bourgeois conditions of life—leave them utterly unready for what can suddenly erupt under the current crises-ridden conditions of world capitalism. Above all they are unprepared for the struggles building up underneath, not to mention frightened by that prospect. They, too, can never understand the capacities of the ranks.

For most of the past decade, we heard more and more from the big-business press and capitalist politicians about the "new economy." The new era capitalism had entered, we were told, was fueled by a computer-driven "productivity miracle." Growing numbers of bourgeois spokespeople went so far as to suggest that recessions and business cycles were a thing of the past.

Today, however, a few more facts are coming out that confirm what communist workers have been explaining all along.

First, to the degree there's been an increase over the past decade in what the bourgeoisie measures as labor productivity—and it's far from the ballyhooed "miracle"—the source has not been computers and the Internet. The bosses have boosted their profit margins by cutting real wages and benefits, speeding up production, lengthening the workweek, increasing part-time and temporary labor, and reducing government-funded social security programs. And because of the misleadership of the labor movement, the employing class has largely been able to get away with it.

Second, the long upturn in the business cycle during the 1990s—and it was long by capitalist standards, going on ten years—



Participants in October 22 day of protest in solidarity with 500 workers at IBP plant in Amarillo, Texas, who struck the meatpacking giant in September. Massive immigration means that "what it means to be an 'American worker' today is changing."

was not based on a historic acceleration of capacity-expanding capital investment. It was not based on drawing more and more workers into plants, mines, and mills and massively increasing the production of salable goods. It was not based, in short, on a major expansion of social wealth. Instead, the long upturn was the product of a giant speculative bubble, an enormous mountain of debt.

## Ballooning stock market valuation

While stock prices as measured by the Dow Jones Industrial Average, for example, rose 225 percent between 1994 and the Dow's high point in January 2000 (and that's staid compared to the more than 500 percent increase in the high-tech-heavy NASDAQ stock index over that same period), the Gross Domestic Product of the United States rose only a little more than 25 percent and corporate profits around 65 percent. In fact, while the total market value of all stocks issued in the United States as measured by their share prices had never risen much above 75 percent of GDP in the twentieth century (and then only on the eve of the 1929 crash that ushered in the Great Depression), it shot up to 175 percent of GDP in the late 1990s.

As for debt levels, corporate indebtedness exploded in the latter half of the 1990s. It was fueled in part by a spate of multibillion-dollar mergers that substantially increased the concentration of capital in the United States even further. Debt levels surpassed those reached even during the borrowing binge of the 1980s, which in turn had helped set the stage for the 1987 stock market crash. Last year alone corporate debt shot up by nearly half a trillion dollars.

And personal debt has rocketed to record levels, as most of us know concretely from our co-workers, family members, friends, and credit card bills.

Layoffs, too, have begun to climb sharply since the end of last year. So too the number of workers filing claims for unemploy-

ment benefits. The flip side of the employers' drive to maintain low, "just-in-time inventories" has been an increase in the volatility of the demand for labor—including an explosive growth of temporary jobs, or what some big-business writers and economists callously label "just-in-time labor."

So, the vulnerability of world capitalism to sudden and destabilizing shocks is being confirmed, despite the bourgeois triumphalism of much of the 1990s. A further deepening of the farm crisis, a spread of the California power breakdown, the bankruptcy of another debt-racked Wall Street "hedge fund" that holds the big banks in bondage, a financial collapse beginning in Argentina or Indonesia, a plunge in the dollar's value, a rash of bank failures stemming from these or other jolts—these are just a few of the myriad possible developments that can plunge workers and farmers in the United States and other imperialist countries into a deepening social and economic crisis.

## Uneven impact of crisis in Third World

Throughout Africa and much of Latin America and Asia, of course, hundreds of millions are already facing a downward-spiraling catastrophe, and have been for almost two decades. Even in the most devastated areas of the semicolonial world, a tiny handful of privileged families have prospered, however, as well as a larger middle class and pockets of toilers in various countries. What's more, the effects of the capitalist crisis have been very uneven and polarized, giving rise to the illusion in certain parts of Latin America and particularly Asia (the "Tigers") that applications remain open to join the club of industrially advanced capitalist nations. But the workings of the market system, and the class structure it unrelentingly reproduces and reinforces worldwide, are once again confirming what Lenin explained to workers and farmers on the eve of the Russian Revolution in his booklet *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*—that by the opening of the twentieth century the doors to that exclusive club had been slammed shut once and for all.

The current officialdom of the labor movement in the United States seek to avert their eyes from these realities. To prepare for battle means you might end up having to fight one, and that's exactly the unsettling prospect union bureaucrats fear most. They have no intention of doing so.

But the explosive mixture building up in the United States is being enriched by the ongoing shift in the composition of the working class in this country. Immigration is changing the face of the working population in virtually every imperialist country except Japan. But nowhere to the same degree as right here. Nowhere.

In search of inexpensive labor, U.S. finance capital continues to draw in toilers driven off the land and left without jobs or livelihoods throughout the Third World. It draws in workers who are determined to take advantage of its relatively higher wages to support families and get a grubstake. Over the past half decade, the United States has taken in roughly half of all emigrants to the imperialist countries—one half! The U.S.

rulers know that these massive labor inflows are essential to the "productivity miracle" and profit drive that are central to further widening their edge over capitalist rivals in Germany, France, Japan, and elsewhere in Europe and Asia.

As a result of this immigration, New York City has grown by nearly 10 percent in as many years, and Chicago and several other cities that had declined in population over the half century since World War II increased in size during the 1990s. Nearly 11 percent of the U.S. population today is foreign-born, and the percentage of immigrants in the ranks of the working class is substantially higher than that.

At the opening of the twenty-first century, the United States is the only country in the imperialist world whose rate of population growth is increasing not declining; it is also the imperialist country in which the median age is rising most slowly.

The American working class is getting younger. And the implications of that fact for prospects to transform the labor movement and build a revolutionary proletarian party are a pleasure to behold.

What it means to be an "American worker" today is changing. The experience and traditions—and image—of the working class and labor movement in the United States are being enriched by the diverse cultures and lessons of struggles by workers and peasants from Latin America and the Caribbean, from Asia and the Pacific, from Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere. In the course of common struggles, and through growing recognition that solidarity is essential, these workers are finding ways to communicate with each other. They are finding ways to work, and more and more often to fight, shoulder to shoulder.

## Party reflects changing class

Most important, the communist movement in the United States—through the mix of workplaces and unions where we find jobs; through the workers districts where we locate our halls and bookstores; through our regular Militant Labor Forums; through our efforts to produce and sell periodicals, books, and pamphlets in both English and Spanish, and as much as possible in French—is beginning to find more and more ways for the activity, composition, and leadership of the revolutionary party to reflect this changing American working class.

Some of you may recall that in the late 1980s supporters of Pathfinder Press organized artists from around the world to paint a six-story mural on the side of its building. The large banner across the bottom of that mural declared, in English, Spanish, and French: "For a world without borders. Por un mundo sin fronteras. Pour un monde sans frontières." Among other things, that slogan was connected to a number of struggles we were involved in at the time to prevent the U.S. government from deporting several fighters back into the hands of cops and jailers in Mexico, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere. And we always pointed out that while a world without borders is impossible to achieve under capitalism, the fight for that goal is an essential part of mobilizing the class forces to overturn that brutal and oppressive social system in country after country worldwide.

This transformation of the working class in the United States and other imperialist countries is irreversible. The capitalists can pull 'em in, but they can't push 'em out.

Toilers impressed into debt slavery by domestic exploiters and imperialism in their countries of birth are pouring into this country and becoming wage slaves. For the U.S. ruling families, that process is a more and more indispensable engine of capital accumulation. As they inflate more and bigger balloons of debt worldwide in hopes of counteracting capitalist overproduction and clearing world markets, those who are the hardest-hit victims of indebtedness are joining other gravediggers of the imperialist global order right here in its strongest bastion.

Class-conscious workers glory in these historic changes. We glory in these reinforcement brigades coming to the aid of our class, refreshing the heterogeneity and richness of the labor movement. The historic wave of immigration transforms the proletarian movement in the United States into something more and more recognizable as the class that will overthrow capitalism.

## Israeli repression fails to quell Palestinian struggle

Continued from Page 7

on the Palestinians?" he wrote. "More shelling of refugee camps? More houses destroyed? More kidnappings? More torture? An even tighter blockade?"

"None of these strategies are likely to end the violence; after all, all have been used relentlessly and without mercy."

If the Israeli regime exiles or executes Arafat, wrote Abunimah, "the occupation will still be there. The Israelis will be the losers because they no longer have the de-

crepit old man, their bin Laden, to blame for all their problems. They will come face to face with the fact that it is the occupation that is the fuel of the conflict."

The Palestinian added that "no serious person believes that Mr. Arafat and his lieutenants, nominally controlling a few divided scraps of land in the West Bank and Gaza, can through coercion, arrests and torture do what Israel with all its might has failed to do: bring about an unconditional end to all resistance against the occupation or attacks on Israeli civilians..."

"Mr. Zinni said he will stay in the region until he succeeds in getting a cease-fire. But if American policy avoids dealing directly with the root causes, he should plan to be in the Mideast war zone for a long time," he concluded.

This publication is available in microform from University Microfilms International. Call 1-800-521-3044, or mail inquiry to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106



# After jailing, teachers in New Jersey press fight for a contract

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK  
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

MIDDLETOWN, New Jersey—With more than 230 of its members thrown in jail and the number rising every day, the teachers union here agreed to call off the one-week strike after the Board of Education said it would place contract negotiations before a court-appointed mediator. The courageous stand by the teachers, who defied court back-to-work orders, is being looked to by others who face contract disputes and restrictions on their right to walk off the job.

The 10-day strike that began November 29 by 1,000 members of the Middletown Township Education Association (MTEA) polarized the community, with many middle-class people condemning the teachers for disrupting their lives, not being respectful to those who died September 11, and threatening property values in the area.

Although the teachers returned to work December 10, the issues that led to the strike are far from resolved. "The school board has been trying to break the back of the union for 15 years," said Mel Clifford, a teacher at Middletown High School North. Her view of the antiunion drive by the school board was echoed by many on strike.

During the week of the walkout, striking teachers assembled with their supporters outside the Monmouth County Hall of Records in Freehold, waiting to be called before Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Clarkson Fisher Jr. The strikers, called in alphabetical order, were asked by the judge if they would return to work. Striker after striker said "no" and was then handcuffed in pairs and hauled off to jail. Some of the handcuffed teachers held their fists in the air and received a standing ovation from their co-workers in the spectator section of the courtroom.

"We keep getting stepped on," Barbara Bachmeister, one of the jailed teachers, said when she appeared in court. "After a while, you have to stand up and do what's right. That's what we're doing."

The teachers contract expired June 30. At the heart of the dispute is how much the MTEA members would have to pay toward health insurance premiums. The current plan, which the union is fighting to maintain, has each unionist paying a flat fee of \$250, with up to \$1,400 in deductibles for family health coverage. The school board is demanding each teacher pay a percentage of his or her health-care premium based on a sliding scale. Other issues include pay raises and workload.

Strikes by public employees are prohibited in New Jersey. This is the second largest jailing of striking teachers in the state. According to the New Jersey Education Association, 300 teachers in Newark were sent to jail in the 1960s for refusing to return to work. And in Camden teachers were jailed in 1978. The Middletown strike came on the heels of a four-day strike by the MTEA in 1998 that ended in the school

board imposing a contract.

Robert Chase, president of the National Education Association, said the mass jailing of the Middletown teachers was the largest number of arrests of teachers he could recall since 1978 when 300 teachers were imprisoned in Bridgeport, Connecticut, for going on strike.

"Certain laws have to be broken and civil disobedience is a great American tradition," said MTEA president Diane Swaim.

## Strike watched nationwide

The strike and jailing of the Middletown teachers was watched closely by thousands of teachers across the United States, especially those who are involved in contract negotiations with school board officials. Last week, 150 teachers in Livingston, New Jersey—one of four Essex County districts still without contracts—held a rally as their negotiators entered talks.

"Oh, yes, we have been watching [the Middletown strike]," said Jerry Spindel, a member of the Massachusetts Education Association. "It certainly resonated here, and there has been a great outpouring of sympathy."

"What they went through is something never to be forgotten, a rallying cry. If it doesn't do that for all the association leaders, we should just fold our tents," said Giovanna Musto, an elementary school teacher in Piscataway, New Jersey, who is also president of the Piscataway Township Education Association. She was among scores of union members from across the state who traveled to the courthouse in Freehold to support the Middletown teachers as they appeared before Superior Court judges.

Many students came out to support the teachers, including Jon Downs, the 17-year-old vice president of the senior class at Middletown High School South, who spoke at a teachers rally December 5. Some students outside the courthouse sported signs saying, "Free the teachers." Nicole Shabat-Waugh, 17, a senior at Middletown South, told the *Asbury Park Press*, "These teachers are a big part of everyone's life. I don't think they should go to jail for fighting for what they believe in."

# Strike of 5,000 shuts jet engine maker

## Continued from front page

Teamsters did the same at 4:00. If there is no agreement by December 13, we're organizing another rally that day at the Silver Lane entrance to the plant."

The members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) walked off the job at four plants in the Hartford area December 3. Michael Stone, president of IAM Local 1746, one of four striking union locals, said, "Very few union members are crossing the line. The company is trying to

would be paid for by the employees but administered by the Archdiocese, their employer. So far, the Archdiocese has turned down this demand, and has offered an 8 percent salary increase over the three-year contract. The current pension pays out \$13,000 a year after 25 years service. Workers under 30 years of age receive no pension fund contribution.

The teachers originally walked off the job September 10, a few weeks after their contract had expired, but returned to work after the World Trade Center attacks.

According to the unionists, the Archdiocese is trying to use the September attacks and economic problems in New York against the strikers. "We can't let them manipulate us by using that," said Frank Coughlin, a religion teacher. "The struggle for justice does not stop."

Teachers told *Militant* reporters that they were inspired by the striking teachers in Monmouth County, New Jersey, where

## Students in New York oppose tuition hike targeting undocumented students



Militant/Roberta Black

Around 30 people demonstrated December 10 at the City University of New York (CUNY) Board of Trustees' headquarters to protest the university's plans to hike tuition for students who are undocumented immigrants. Some of the signs held by students read "Stop anti-immigrant purge," "Stop racist tuition hike," "Stop CUNY's racial profiling," and "Is CUNY registrar's office a branch of the INS?"

Beginning next semester the tuition fee will rise from \$1,600 per semester to \$3,400 at four-year colleges. "They are targeting South Asian and Middle Eastern students and using this tuition hike to drive us out," said Tejal Ajmera, president of the Hunter College Indian and Pakistani Club.

University officials say the increase is being made to comply with the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act signed into law by the Clinton administration. In the wake of the September 11 attacks, New York state senator Frank Padavan has pressed CUNY officials to impose the increase, citing "national security" issues.

The strike also registered polarization among residents in Middletown, and the nearby communities of Leonardo and Belford, many of whom mentioned that they were opposed to the teachers walkout. A number of people said the teachers made "good money," and cited how it is now commonplace for people to pay a portion of their health-care costs. A few complained about the inconvenience to themselves and their children by the action of the teachers.

Robert Hordt, the business editor of the *Asbury Park Press*, echoed this view in a front-page opinion article in the December 9 business section of that paper. Titled "Unions hung up on health care," he stated, "The teachers made a huge mistake. The

world has changed. The vast majority of employees working today are paying a portion of their premiums, and it's a lot more than the \$250 a year that the Middletown teachers originally were willing to pay."

In the working-class neighborhood of nearby Red Bank, the attitude among many others was quite different. Explaining that one of her church members was a striker and her mother a union member, Delores McKinney, who works in a children's clothing store there, said, "Of course I support the strike."

Nancy Rosenstock is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

## N.Y. Catholic school teachers strike for pensions

BY ROBERTA BLACK  
AND CANDACE ROBBINS

NEW YORK—Alvaro Pérez and José Lopez, seniors at Cardinal Hayes High School, came out December 10, to show solidarity on the picket line with their striking teachers. "We have very good teachers. They should get what they deserve," stated Lopez, emphasizing that "more students need to come out in support."

Some 377 Catholic school teachers and guidance counselors, members of the Lay Faculty Association, walked off the job November 29 at nine high schools in the New York area, demanding a 15 percent raise and an employee-financed pension plan. Charles Chesnavage, union delegate at Cardinal Hayes, said that classes are not taking place at the school. "The strike was absolutely necessary," he said. "We are fighting for a just wage, and improved pension."

Chesnavage explained that the supplemental pension the teachers are asking for

around 230 went to jail rather than abide by a return-to-work order issued by a Superior Court judge.

"If we were here in that situation, I would have gotten arrested too," stated Mildred Colon, a Spanish-language teacher. "We are grateful for their stand," explained Sandra Jean, a guidance counselor for 20 years. "It fortifies us."

"Those teachers in New Jersey set an example for their students," stated Alvaro Pérez. "You should stick up for what you believe in."

Meanwhile, 3,200 workers organized in the Federation of Catholic Teachers in New York have won a halt to archdiocese plans to increase their medical plan contributions after a week of protest action involving "sickouts" by a number of members. They also won an 11 percent increase in salary, up from the 6 percent originally offered. The archdiocese succeeded in switching to a more restrictive health plan, however.

over the company's contracting out of work and threats to move the plants elsewhere.

"Corporate America doesn't give a damn about blue collar workers," said Steve McKenzie. "Our union has already given the company a lot in the past, and now we're saying enough is enough. That's why 98 percent of us remain solid this time around." During a strike in 1985, a larger number of union members crossed the picket line. Many workers note the difference today in the backing for the walkout after a decade and a half of company assaults.

"We're on strike for two main issues," said Ronald Roy, an electrician with 16 years seniority at the company. "Job security and pensions. Global companies are shipping our jobs out to where they can find cheaper labor. On the pension, we want to be able to retire after 30 years on the job regardless of our age. Multinational companies have more than enough money invested in pension funds, so workers should be able to retire after 30 years," he added. "The company is under pressure to settle now because of commitments to the military. We are at war."

Howard Huestis, who is a shop steward and works in material process, said, "We want to preserve job security. The company tried to subcontract some of our work to a non-union Texas outfit, but the courts upheld our contract, which has a clause prohibiting subcontracting. Now the company wants to rewrite the clause to allow subcontracting."

Verne Pharmer also said stopping subcontracting and defending job security is an important issue in the strike. Pharmer, who has 29 years at the company, said, "What good is a good wage if you can get laid off in six months?"

# Steel bosses discuss merger, target workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The steel bosses in the United States are discussing a massive merger that, combined with plant closures, job eliminations, further attacks on pensions and health benefits won by the unionized workers, and a protectionist trade war, would put them back in a profitable position.

USX-U.S. Steel Corp., the nation's largest steelmaking company, has begun merger talks with Bethlehem Steel—the third largest. Among the others said to be discussing this consolidation move are Wheeling-Pittsburgh, Weirton, LTV, and Ispat's Inland Steel.

On December 7 the International Trade Commission, a U.S. agency, recommended that U.S. president George Bush impose tariffs on imported steel of between 20 percent and 40 percent. Such a move, commented Pascal Lamy, European Union trade commissioner, would virtually close the U.S. steel market to the rest of the world and would lead to retaliatory moves. Top suppliers to the United States include countries in the European Union, Canada, south Korea, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, Brazil, China, Russia, Taiwan, South Africa, Argentina, and Ukraine.

An across-the-board 40 percent tariff favored by the steel bosses would increase industry revenues by \$2.2 billion, according to a recent study. The U.S. steel industry lost \$1.4 billion in the first half of 2001.

Within the capitalist market there is currently a 10 percent to 20 percent worldwide "overcapacity" in steel production, that is, the level of production over and above what can be sold at a profit. This has led to a plummeting of prices the steel trusts can demand on the world market. U.S. companies represent about 12 percent of global steel production—now around 850 million tons a year. Steel prices have been hovering at a 20-year low.

The steelmakers involved in the consolidation discussions are all integrated companies that make steel from coke and iron ore. It would not involve the dozens of newer "mini-mills"—companies like Nucor that take slabs of semifinished steel and turn them into finished products.

The steel bosses have cut employment in U.S. mills in the United States from nearly 600,000 in 1960 to 142,000 today. This massive downsizing has been aimed first and foremost at reducing the steel bosses' costs and seeking to boost their profit margins. Another tactic has been to refuse to fully

fund pension and health plans for workers who have decades of service at the mills. There are currently some 560,000 steelworkers who are entitled to health benefits and pensions for the rest of their lives under the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) contracts.

As part of the consolidation these major integrated steel companies say they cannot return to profitability if they are held to these contractual pension and health-care benefits. They are demanding the federal government fork over \$13 billion to the newly created mega-steel company to cover these costs. Bethlehem Steel, for example, has \$2 billion in unfunded pension liabilities plus \$3 billion in health benefit claims by the 74,000 workers who retired from the company.

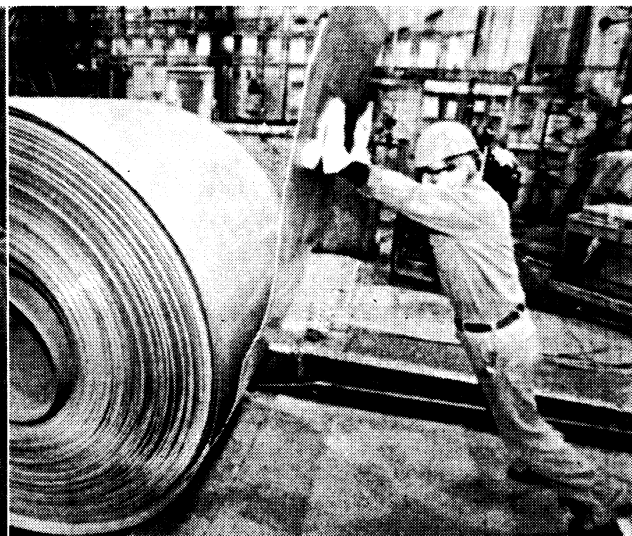
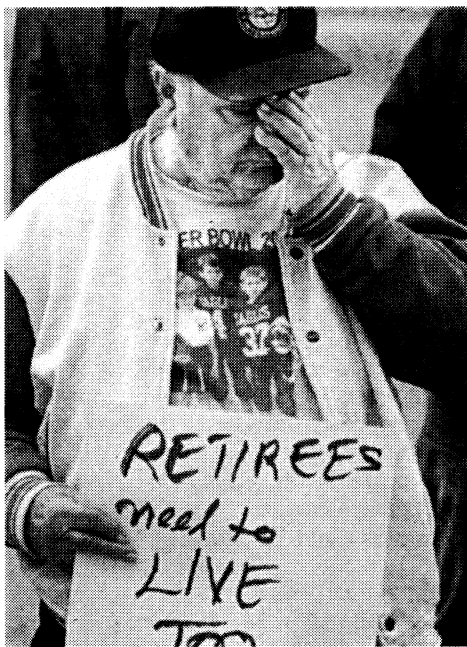
## Companies to demand new concessions

The steel giants involved in the merger talks are also pressing the USWA to renegotiate their labor contracts. "The industry will seek significant concessions from the unions in the consolidation plan in a move to keep labor costs down," noted a recent *Financial Times* article.

The leadership of the USWA, which has been in the forefront of drumming up support for the steel bosses' anti-import campaign, has also announced its backing for these consolidation moves. "If it is possible, we would like to have every integrated steel company to join into one company," stated USWA spokesman Marco Trobovich. However, "we are not going to allow the industry to be consolidated on the backs of the people who have already paid a price."

Since 1998, 26 steel companies have declared bankruptcy, with decisions on what to do with their assets and future production to be decided in the courts. This includes Bethlehem Steel which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in October.

LTV, the fourth largest U.S. steel company that accounted for 5 percent of the nation's steel production, filed for bankruptcy protection last December. The company is now seeking permission to shut down its entire steelmaking operation and



Above, worker feeds steel coil into mill at Wheeling-Pittsburgh plant in Allenport, Pennsylvania. Left, retired steelworker participates in union rally December 4 in Youngstown, Ohio, against cutbacks in benefits.

sell off its plants. The company had employed some 18,000 workers and provided pension payments to 70,000 retirees. A ruling by the judge is expected December 19.

The *Wall Street Journal* in a December 6 editorial titled "Political Steel," hailed the consolidation moves while railing against any new kind of government subsidy for the steel industry. They pointed to the steps that were taken by current Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill in relation to the aluminum

industry when he was chairman of Alcoa.

O'Neill "was a key organizer of a plan to reduce worldwide capacity and prop up slumping prices," noted the *Journal*. Alluding to the plant closures, job cuts, and other attacks on the social wage of those working in the aluminum industry, the editors concluded, "The means weren't pretty, but it worked. It wouldn't be the worst thing if Washington could now do something similar for steel."

## Meeting defends fired worker's rights

Continued from Page 8

the bosses' side. When did the ACLU change its position? she asked.

Simon responded that the ACLU has not decided to take up a legal case for Italie. The law in Florida is written in such a way that gives employers wide legal leeway for such firings, Simon stated. He said he concurred with Rameau's statement about the need to change the law. This firing must be fought politically, Simon added.

Participants in the meeting included members and supporters of the NAACP, the Green Party and Workers World Party, Food Not Bombs, and Alianza Martiana. A number discussed how to broaden support for this fight—from collecting thousands of signatures on petitions, to organizing similar meetings on campuses, to getting publicity

in the media, and raising funds.

More than a dozen youth took part, including three high school students. "Most young people in my school oppose these attacks on democratic rights," Eddy Alpizar, 15, told *Militant* reporters. "I was glad to hear at the meeting that if you can fire someone for expressing their political beliefs, it means you can fire someone for advocating Black rights or women's rights. I am against this. We are part of this fight."

To join the campaign contact The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights at P.O. Box 510127, Miami, FL, 33151-0127. Tel: (305) 724-5965. E-mail: DefendFreeSpeech@yahoo.com

Argiris Malapanis is a meat packer in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

Israeli Offensive and Palestinian Resistance. Fri., Dec. 21, 7:30 pm. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 4208 W. Vernor. (313) 554-0504.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

Oppose the Israeli War against the Palestinians. Speaker: Paul Pederson. Fri., Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

### NEW YORK

#### Brooklyn

Capitalist Crisis, Working Peoples' Resistance in Latin America. Speaker: Luis Madrid, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. Donation: \$5 program, \$6 dinner. (718) 567-8014.

#### Garment District

Pathfinder and the World Working-Class Struggle: Experiences from the Guadalajara Book Fair. Speaker: Norton Sandler, National Committee member, Socialist Workers Party, leader of the team staffing the Pathfinder booth at the Guadalajara Book Fair. Fri., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4 program, \$5 dinner. (212) 695-7358.

## CALENDAR

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

Holiday Open House at Pathfinder Bookstore. Refreshments, music, special book sales. And more. Sat., Dec. 21, 12 noon to 6:00 p.m. 3926 Mission Street. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

### UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA:** Birmingham: 1356 Hueytown Road, Hueytown. Zip: 35023. Tel: (205) 497-6088. E-mail: 73712.3561@compuserve.com

**CALIFORNIA:** Los Angeles: 4229 S. Central Ave. Zip: 90011. Tel: (323) 233-9372. E-mail: 74642.326@compuserve.com  
**San Francisco:** 3926 Mission St. Zip: 94112. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: sfsfpw@hotmail.com

**COLORADO:** Craig: P.O. Box 1539. Zip: 81626. Tel: (970) 826-0289. E-mail: westerncoloradoswp@yahoo.com

**FLORIDA:** Miami: 8365 NE 2nd Ave. #206 Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 751-7076. E-mail: Pathmiami@yahoo.com  
**Tampa:** P.O. Box 16002. Zip: 33687. E-mail: TOC1004@aol.com

**GEORGIA:** Atlanta: 2791 Lakewood Ave. Zip: 30315. Mailing address: P.O. Box 162515. Zip 30321. Tel: (404) 763-2900. E-mail: atlpathfinder@cs.com

**ILLINOIS:** Chicago: 1212 N. Ashland Suite 201. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. E-mail: ChicagoPathfinder@compuserve.com

**IOWA:** Des Moines: 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. E-mail: swpdesmoines@cs.com

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Boston: 12 Bennington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

**MICHIGAN:** Detroit: 4208 W. Vernor St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 441580 Zip: 48244. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

**MINNESOTA:** St. Paul: 113 Bernard St., West St. Paul. Zip: 55118. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

**NEW JERSEY:** Newark: 506 Springfield Ave. 3rd floor. Zip: 07103. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: swpn Newark@yahoo.com

**NEW YORK:** Brooklyn: 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Mailing address: PMB 106. 4814 4th Ave. Zip: 11220. Tel: (718) 567-8014. E-mail: swpbrooklyn@earthlink.net  
**Garment District:** 545 8th Ave. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 695-7358. E-mail: swpnygd@attglobal.net;  
**Upper Manhattan:** 540 W. 165 St. Mailing address: 4049 Broadway #275. Zip: 10032. Tel: (212) 740-4611. E-mail: swpuptown@usa.net;

**OHIO:** Cleveland: 11018 Lorain Ave. Zip: 44111. Tel: (216) 688-1190. E-mail: 103253.1111@compuserve.com

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Philadelphia: 5237 N. 5th St. Zip: 19120. Tel: (215) 324-7020. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com  
**Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave. Suite 225. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 365-1090. E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

**TEXAS:** Houston: 619 West 8th St. Zip: 77007. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: swphouston@ev1.net

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 3437 14th St. NW Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 387-1590. E-mail: dc-swp@starpower.net

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

### AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St.,

Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl\_australia@bigpond.com

### BRITAIN

**London:** 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 020-7928-7993. E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

### CANADA

**Montreal:** 4613 St. Laurent. Postal code: H2T 1R2. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: Librpath@sympatico.ca

**Toronto:** 2761 Dundas St. West, Postal code: M6P 1Y4. Tel: (416) 767-3705. E-mail: milpathtoronto@sympatico.ca

**Vancouver:** #202D-4806 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3R8. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: clvancouver@cs.com

### FRANCE

**Paris:** Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

### ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Skolavordustig 6B. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milpth@mmedia.is

### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885. E-mail: milpath.auckland@actrix.gen.nz

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

### SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Domargränd 16 (T-bana Västertorp) Postal code: S-129 04. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com



**Maybe they are crazy**—While Enron stock shot down to junk status, employees saw their retirement savings wiped out. The electric



Harry Ring

utilities trust had deftly frozen their 401 (k) pension stocks. But Enron cares. They're lining up "grief counselors" for the shafted workers.

**Capitalist Grinch**—On a call-

in radio show, New York's departing Mayor Giuliani clashed with Jimmy, a construction worker on the World Trade Center rubble site. Jimmy explained he had missed Thanksgiving with his family and asked what were the chances of giving everyone off for Xmas. Giuliani responded with a harsh no-way.

**Still belching**—Later, in an a "be patriotic, buy now" appearance at an upscale shop, Giuliani bought an \$85 tie and renewed his attack on Jimmy, suggesting that if he didn't like his sacred job, maybe he should go elsewhere.

**'Besides, they don't matter'**—Los Angeles and Orange Counties

have ruled that homeless people seeking wintery shelter in National Guard armories be required to have photo IDs, and must allow their belongings to be searched nightly. Piped up a presumably non-homeless official: "The homeless population doesn't think it's unreasonable to be searched entering a military facility during times like these."

**Take your vitamins**—Data gathered by pollsters in 11 countries in Europe, the United Kingdom, and the Americas: In 1960, 8.5 percent of the working force were doing more than 9 to 5 shifts. By 2000, it was 17 percent. During that same period the number of part-time workers swelled from 6 percent to 20 percent. In 2000, the

average retirement age was 59. In 2010, it's projected to be 72!

**You don't hate capitalism?**—In Minden, Nevada, a factory explosion killed one worker and badly burned three others. All part of an extended family, two women moved in to help the men in constant pain. The landlord went to court for an eviction because he had a three-person contract. The judge advised them to get out and set a final hearing December 3. Meanwhile the landlord, in a fit of human concern, offered the family new quarters—at a higher rent.

**Cracking the whip**—Over the past decade, 126 Denver cops shot people. Five of the cops were dis-

ciplined. One got hit the heaviest—a day's pay and a three-day suspension. Declared a top cop: "We hold the officers to a very high standard."

**Hold the fries**—A reader sent a picture ad of Barbie deced out in an apron with the big "M" logo. Commented the reader: "A Barbie dressed for her future as a minimum-wage worker at McDonalds. I call her Recession Barbie."

**S.F., Cool City**—"Days after the lids of eight ballot boxes were found floating in San Francisco Bay, the City Department of Elections has announced it found an additional 240 ballots that were not counted in the elections earlier this month."—News item.

# Lessons for fight against antilabor witch-hunt

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—This year marks the 50th anniversary of a referendum to amend the Australian Constitution, when proposals by conservative Prime Minister Robert Menzies to outlaw communism and communist organizations were defeated in a close vote in the midst of the Korean War.

The fight against the antilabor witch-hunt laws in the late 1940s and early 1950s offer important lessons for working-class fighters today, at a time when the capitalist rulers are using the creation of a war atmosphere to try to expand police powers, curtail political rights, step up attacks on the rights of immigrants, and use patriotic calls to blunt workers' resistance to the bosses' attacks.

The Menzies government organized this referendum after the High Court declared unconstitutional the thought-control legislation known as the Communist Party Dissolution Act. The prime minister put forward the repressive act in April 1950, but the court struck it down in a 6-to-1 vote a year later, with only Chief Justice John Latham voting to uphold the law. Menzies had placed banning the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) at the center of his program since 1948.

The witch-hunt bill, derived in part from the 1940 U.S. Smith Act, defined a communist as "a person who supports or advocates the objectives, policies, teachings, principles or practices of communism, as expounded by Marx and Lenin." The government could declare a person to be a member of the CPA or a communist. A "declared" person couldn't hold office, be employed by the commonwealth, or an "authority of the commonwealth," such as a trade union.

Under the act, the CPA would be dissolved as an unlawful association and a receiver appointed to dispose of the party's property. Members who continued to function after its dissolution faced five-year jail terms. Wide search powers were to be granted to the cops.

The High Court heard the case beginning Nov. 14, 1950, at the height of the Korean War.

The source of the anticommunist witch-

hunt was the rulers' pressing need to curb working-class militancy at home. This would enable Australian capitalists to take maximum advantage of being part of the victorious U.S.-led alliance in World War II and to increase their profit rates in a period of relative economic expansion.

Throughout Asia, which the Australian imperialist rulers arrogantly considered part of their backyard, workers and peasants were seizing the opportunity to free themselves from imperial control. While the class struggle in Papua New Guinea, the colonial jewel in the Australian imperialist crown, was quiet, independence wars or civil wars were under way in Indochina, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaya, Korea, and China.

In Australia, in the context of a huge labor shortage, the working class was trying to claw its way back from the austerity and sacrifice imposed during the war, when wages had been "pegged" to 1941 levels, strikes officially prohibited, and rationing imposed. Inflation meant that prices had risen by late 1950 to about 75 percent above the pre-World War II level.

Demands for an immediate postwar increase of 21 percent in the basic wage, for equal basic wages for women, the establishment of a commission to determine a "just" minimum wage, and a shorter workweek were at the heart of working-class expectations.

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) formed the government from October 1941 to December 1949.

In 1949 the ALP government of Benjamin Chifley, with Herbert Evatt as attorney general, prosecuted two CPA leaders for "seditious" speech and revamped domestic spying by establishing the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO).

These were a continuation of moves by earlier governments, which saw the CPA and the Communist League banned in mid-1940. The ban on the CPA was lifted in late 1942 after the Stalinized party pledged to prevent strikes as part of its patriotic support to the rulers' war. The CPA, founded in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, had by the early 1930s succumbed to

the pressures of Stalinism and ceased to be a revolutionary party.

## Postwar upsurge

The period between 1946 and 1949 saw some of the biggest strikes in Australian history, including months-long national disputes involving steelworkers, meat workers, metal workers, railway workers, stevedoring workers, printers, and miners.

The 1949 national coal miners' strike, in the midst of a cold winter, marked a watershed in politics.

Miners voted to strike by a 10-to-1 margin and 23,000 walked off the job on June 27, 1949. The Chifley ALP government swiftly moved to break the strike. Parliament passed a bill two days later, drafted by attorney general and deputy ALP leader Evatt, to prevent union funds from being used for strike relief. Fund-raising didn't stop, and eight union officials were jailed for defying the bill.

Within two weeks the miners' action brought the economy to a standstill. The government went on a red-baiting blitz with full-page ads in every newspaper across the country attacking the strike and in particular the section of the leadership of the union that belonged to the Communist Party. Rail-

way union officials and members were pressured to move coal, but that didn't break the strike either. Then the ALP organized a "mission to the coalfields," with politicians going into mining towns and villages to try to create a return to work movement.

The Sydney headquarters of the CPA was raided by cops. Finally, when all that failed, Chifley called in 2,500 troops to mine coal in the open-cuts beginning August 1. The strike was broken. Miners voted to return to work—against the recommendation of the union's executive—which they did on August 15.

Labor lost the December 1949 election to the Liberal-Country Party coalition of Menzies and Fadden, partly because of the rise of red-baiting and reaction but also because of workers' anger at Chifley breaking the coal strike. The ALP wouldn't win government again for 23 years.

## Alliance with U.S. imperialism

In June 1950 U.S. imperialism launched its war against Korea. The new Menzies government intoned the stock-in-trade phrases of "communist expansionism" and "aggression from the north" and was the first to answer Washington's call to back up the tee-

Continued on Page 15

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



December 24, 1976

LOS ANGELES—Tucson, Arizona, community workers facing prison for counseling "illegal aliens" have made an appeal for public support here.

The government has indicted on felony charges three employees of the Manzo Area Council and a nun who works with them. They are Margo Cowan, director of the agency, Catalina Montano, Marguerita Jauregui Ramirez, and Sister Ann Gabriel Marcaicq.

Partially funded by the federal government, the Manzo agency provides a variety of services to the poor in Tucson's west side barrio. One important and independently funded service has been counseling undocumented immigrants who have the possibility of legalizing their status here on the basis of having a child, spouse, or other relative who is a citizen or permanent resident.

Such counseling is provided by countless social service agencies, attorneys, and licensed immigration counselors throughout the country. If the Manzo workers are successfully prosecuted, it would jeopardize all immigration counseling.

Successful prosecution would threaten more than immigration counseling, Margo Cowan added. Public health nurses, county hospitals, and schools that in any way relate to undocumented people would also be open to victimization.

The indictment is sweeping. The twenty-five counts include "aiding and abetting" aliens to elude detection, "transporting" them, and knowingly aiding "felons," that is people here "illegally."

Cowan, indicted on all twenty-five charges, faces a maximum of seventy-seven years in prison and a \$98,500 fine.



December 24, 1951

BOSTON—"I have probably been the most outspoken professor with full tenure in the Greater Boston area, and if I am convicted of this false charge it will be a great threat and intimidation to the university world," Prof. Dirk J. Struik told the *Militant* in an interview.

Struik has become a central figure in the witch-hunt following his indictment last September under the Massachusetts "Anti-Anarchy" law for conspiring to overthrow the government. In addition to this charge he is also being prosecuted under the same law along with a Malden, Mass., business man, Harry E. Winner, and Mrs. Margaret Gilbert for "conspiring to teach...the overthrow of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the United States of America."

The "Anti-Anarchy" law was passed in 1919 as an "emergency" measure to cope with the situation which the legislators, looking through the spectacles of the Palmer Red Raid hysteria, professed to see. However the political stooges of Big Business in Massachusetts never used the law. They found it more to their liking to deal with anarchists by frame-up and legalized murder as in the Sacco-Vanzetti case. The present indictments under the "Anti-Anarchist" law are the first in the 33 years this legislation has been on the books.

Struik, an internationally famous mathematician and professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has frequently stated that though he is a Marxist he has never been a member of the Communist Party. He also told this interviewer that he agrees with many of the policies of the Communist Party and at one time even considered joining but decided against it.



Cartoon appeared in Melbourne paper the *Argus*, the only daily to campaign for "no" vote in referendum, with caption, "Can I sell you a deodorant?" Defeat of the anti-communist measure weakened government's antilabor witch-hunting drive.

# A revolutionary leadership

The acceleration of the imperialist militarization drive over the past three months and the events this past week in Israel underline the weakness of imperialism and the need to build a revolutionary international movement of working people.

The first conclusion is not necessarily obvious on the surface of events. Washington has brought enormous military power to bear on a country halfway around the world, overthrown the government, and cobbled together a new regime. It has extended its military foothold in Central Asia, demonstrating its dominance in relation to its rival imperialist powers. At home, the U.S. rulers are pushing through the biggest militarization of the country in decades, not only building on the “accomplishments” of the Clinton administration, but taking new steps such as the authorization of use of military tribunals against noncitizens. While the Bush-Ashcroft-Rumsfeld trio reached too far in some of their domestic measures, their unrelenting drive is a clear indication of the lines along which the government will continue to probe the further militarization of civil and political life.

The need to build, maintain, and more and more use the U.S. military forces against people in country after country is the sign of the decline of the dominant imperialist power and the system of exploitation and domination of finance capital as a whole. From Argentina to Algeria, from Indonesia to Turkey, capitalism is unable to offer any path to economic and social development. Instead, a crushing debt burden, rising unemployment, erosion of basic infrastructure, and growing hunger and disease is what working people confront on a daily basis.

And Washington needs to rely on its military might not only against the semicolonial countries, but as a major weapon to keep its advantage against the German, French, and Japanese imperialist powers as well.

The imperialist assault on Afghanistan is a good example of what workers and farmers will face again and again in the years to come, as Washington tries by military force to hold together what they can no longer keep in place with a rising world capitalist economy.

In their assault at home, the U.S. rulers seek to chip away at democratic rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly, prohibitions on unreasonable search and seizure, and other liberties. But in a militarization drive and in wartime, workers’ rights are the special target of the employers and their government. Patriotic pressures do not come down equally on all classes.

Bosses aren’t asked to call off a strike against concession demands because a war is under way. Instead, they find ways to profit off the patriotic war fever through government handouts and price-gouging. Wealthy Democrats and Republicans don’t have to worry about being fired from their job for stating their views: they have rarely worked a

day in their lives for a boss at all. Middle and upper class people don’t get their homes invaded or have cops find problems with their legal papers and visas, subjecting them to indefinite detention and deportation. Capitalists charter their own jets and fancy cars, bypassing harassment and searches at airports and street searches by cops.

In Israel, the events of this past week demonstrate that the Israeli rulers have no answer to the fury of the Palestinian people who continue to be denied self-determination and a homeland. Neither Jerusalem nor Washington have a plan or any idea about how to resolve the situation in their favor. The bombings by Israeli military forces—while devastating to the Palestinians time and again—get weaker results and accomplish less. The unending war is not popular among wide sections of the Israeli population who would like to see a solution to the continued conflict. The Israeli rulers know they were unable to control the dispossessed Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and that Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat is even less able to do so. The Palestinian people are not under anyone’s control and continue their historic fight.

Time is running out on the Israel project, which has been based upon the idea that somehow the Palestinians could be expelled and a stable, garrison state aimed at the Arab masses could exist, grow, and prosper. The Zionist dream is becoming a nightmare, and the deathtrap of the Israeli state is opening up for the Jewish people who live there.

The Palestinian people are showing that fighting is a necessity. Otherwise the capitalist and imperialist exploiters will slaughter them. Millions of workers, farmers, and peasants around the world are drawing similar conclusions and entering a road of struggle, one that doesn’t result in an immediate revolutionary victory, but opens up possibilities for other fights, broadening solidarity, and gaining political experience. It is out of these struggles, collaboration, and experience, which bring greater self-confidence and a desire to reach out to others who also stand up and fight, that a leadership of working people can be forged and tested.

“The important thing is that without taking on the working class and our organizations in gigantic battles *that we will have the opportunity to win*,” Jack Barnes writes in *Capitalism’s World Disorder*, “the exploiters cannot use their enormous military might to unleash a third imperialist world slaughter. A point is always reached where working people can be conned no longer and struggles begin to mount. And with revolutionary leadership, forged and tested in coming struggles, the international working class has the numbers, social power, the culture, the values, and the program to defeat the reactionary forces loosed by finance capital. We can organize victorious revolutions and open the construction of socialism on a world scale.”

# Teachers’ strike sets example

Thumbs up for the Middletown, New Jersey, teachers who had the audacity to defy threats and pressures against their right to walk off the job. Their fight provides an example to all working people, inspiring thousands of teachers and other workers across the country who face contract disputes and restrictions on their right to strike. “We are grateful for their stand,” remarked one of the teachers on strike across the Hudson River at Catholic schools in New York.

The teachers’ battle is not over, however. They don’t have a contract, so they need the support of the entire labor movement.

The big-business media played its part in aiding the school board’s assault on the teachers union. Every day during the one-week strike, the capitalist press quoted someone complaining about how the walkout was causing “inconvenience” and “disruption for the children.” The papers featured claims that teachers’ high salaries justified the school board’s demands that they pick up more of health-care costs. The teachers make “good money,” so why should they be any different from those who have to pay health premiums? This is the way the capitalist rulers try to pit workers against each other.

The jailings show what the capitalist rulers have in store for working-class fighters who stand up to the bosses’ assault on our living standards. All workers are targeted by the repressive measures put in place by the Clinton administration and strengthened by President Bush. Widespread detentions, use of secret evidence, eavesdropping by spy agencies, and military tribunals targeting noncitizens will also be used against U.S.-born toilers as the political and economic crisis of world capitalism intensifies.

These moves by the wealthy class and their political servants point to the need for the trade unions to chart a political course to defend our class interests. The employers use not only threats of firing to defend their position, but also the cops, courts, prisons and two political parties.

By organizing in the political arena independently of the Democratic and Republican parties and from a base in the unions, the labor movement can wage a struggle against antilabor measures, such as laws on the books that bar public employees from striking. And the working class can begin to take on the offensive by the ruling rich and the increasing brutality and repression that goes hand-in-hand with it.

# Garment worker wins benefits

**Continued from front page**

ami for a statement he made about Osama bin Laden.

Italie said that when he submitted his unemployment compensation application, he was asked by the interviewer why he was fired. Italie explained that bosses at Goodwill had dismissed him for political statements he made as a candidate of the Socialist Workers Party during a televised debate outside of work. He told the official that Goodwill had given no work-related reason for his dismissal.

So far, Goodwill has not responded to the unemployment agency with any statement about the firing. By dragging their feet, though, Goodwill bosses did delay the issuance of unemployment benefits for nearly two months.

In addition to the ruling, Italie celebrated this step forward in his fight because he received a check for \$781 to cover jobless benefits for the first five weeks since his dismissal. His weekly unemployment check will be a little over \$140.

The December 6 ruling by the Florida unemployment agency states that either party has 20 days to challenge its findings, and that any appeal must be filed in writing.

Italie encouraged his supporters across the country to inform others of the victory and to put to use the fact that the state unemployment office stipulated the political character of the firing and the fact that it had nothing to do with Italie’s work performance.

# Release the five jailed Cubans

**Continued from front page**

the Antonio Maceo Brigade; Alianza Martiana; Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community; Casa de las Americas in New York; the Cuban-American Coalition; the Cuban-American Defense League; Rescate Cultural Afro-Cubano; the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba; and the International Action Center.

Speaking of the five Cubans, former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark sent a statement explaining that the “federal authorities who have accused them well know that their mission was to defend their country against violent attacks.” Clark added that over the past four decades, “countless attacks on Cuba, many with deadly consequences, have originated from Florida.... Truth, justice, and peace can only be truly served by releasing these five Cubans and freeing them to return to their country.”

The courtroom was packed with people for the sentencing hearings. On the prosecution side of the courtroom were seated several FBI agents along with relatives of the four rightists who piloted planes of the counter-revolutionary outfit Brothers to the Rescue.

On the other side were family members of four of the Cuban prisoners who flew in from Cuba. These included Carmen Nordelo, the mother of Gerardo Hernández; Magali Llor, mother of Fernando González; Irma Schwerert and Irmita González, mother and older daughter of Rene González; and Mirta Rodríguez, mother of Antonio Guerrero. Ramón Labaniño’s wife, Elizabeth Palmeiro, did not receive a U.S. visa in time to come to the hearing.

At the Miami court house Carmen Nordelo said that her son “was just trying to protect his country. He is not a criminal.” “Our sons did nothing wrong,” agreed Magali Llor, mother of Fernando González. “They were defending their country...they are patriots.”

Despite six months of solitary confinement, all five Cuban patriots entered the packed hearing room in high spirits, smiling and waving at family and friends, who reciprocated in kind.

## Frame-up convictions

In 1998, the FBI announced it had discovered a “Cuban spy network” in Florida and arrested 10 people. They were charged with trying to “infiltrate” the U.S. Southern Command, passing U.S. “military secrets” to Havana, and “infiltrating and “disrupting” right-wing Cuban-American groups in Miami that seek to overthrow the revolutionary government of Cuba. The charge of “conspiracy to commit murder” was added later.

The arrests and convictions of the five constituted an attack directed not only at revolutionary Cuba but at democratic rights in the United States. FBI agents broke into their homes repeatedly over the three years prior to the arrests, violating the Fourth Amendment protection against arbitrary search and seizure. The prosecution “evidence” consisted of information the FBI claimed to have collected in these raids, and from short-wave radio transmissions assertedly intercepted between Havana and the defendants. The judge refused a defense motion to move the trial out of Miami. And the big-business media all but convicted the five as spies even before the trial began.

The FBI has also arrested and jailed Ana Belen Montes, a senior analyst for the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, for allegedly providing classified information to the Cuban government. FBI break-ins into Montes’s apartment and electronic eavesdropping are also featured in government actions against her.

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

Three of the Cuban patriots—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labaniño, and Antonio Guerrero—were convicted of “conspiracy to commit espionage” and “conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent” and could get life imprisonment. Fernando González and Rene González, convicted of “conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent,” face possible 10-year sentences.

The defense argued that the five men on trial were seeking information, all of which was available to the public, about the terrorist Cuban-American groups in Miami in order to prevent further attacks on Cuba. The Cuban government also issued a statement, published in the June 20 issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*, saying the five Cubans were part of an operation to “discover and report on terrorist plans hatched against our people.”

A national Free the Miami Five committee and affiliated local groups have publicized the case, including through public meetings in California, New York, Florida, and elsewhere.

As the *Militant* went to press on December 12, Judge Joan Lenard sentenced Gerardo Hernández to life without parole.

*Rebecca Arenson is reporting from Miami. Patrick O'Neill is reporting from New York.*



# Why Bolsheviks took the name Communist

Printed below is an excerpt from *Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922* by Farrell Dobbs. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. The section quoted is from the chapter "Communist Movement Launched." Copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

In April 1917, soon after the abdication of the tsar, Lenin had outlined key aspects of the Bolsheviks' political responsibilities to the proletariat of Russia and the world in a series of proposals that became known as the "April Theses." Among these was the proposal to change the name of the Russian

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

party, then formally called the Social Democratic Labor Party (the formal name of the Mensheviks, as well). Lenin urged that the Bolsheviks, who traced their programmatic continuity to the *Communist Manifesto*, call themselves communists as Marx and Engels had done.

In a subsequent article, Lenin noted that it was only following the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871 and the ensuing decline of revolutionary working-class struggle—which made long-term "organisational and educational work the task of the day"—that Marx and Engels had acquiesced to the German party's adoption of what they considered to be the inaccurate, ambiguous designation "Social-Democracy." And that name, over subsequent decades, had more and more been given opportunist content.

Lenin stressed that the Bolsheviks, as Marx and Engels had done in their day, should "understand the specific features and tasks of the new era." They should not imitate the sorry Marxists of an earlier day

about whom Marx once said, "I have sown dragon's teeth and harvested fleas."

It was necessary to recognize that the conditions that shaped the post-1871 period had now been bypassed. The entire world had come under the domination of a handful of imperialist powers. And an entirely new objective situation had been created by the imperialist war and consequent revolutionary upheavals. Marxists must think and act in keeping with that changing reality.

The Bolshevik leader presented several reasons for the proposed change in party name. The designation "social" was scientifically incorrect, Lenin said; it was too limited. Following Marx's explanation to German socialists in the mid-1870s, Lenin explained that in overturning capitalism on a world scale, the workers could first construct socialism; by this, Lenin explained he meant state ownership of the means of production under which "the distribution of products [would be determined] according to the amount of work performed by each individual."

That doesn't end the matter, however, Lenin said. "Our Party looks farther ahead: socialism must inevitably evolve gradually into communism." Society would then have the abundance and productive capacity to apply the motto, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

The term "democracy" as used in the party's name was also scientifically incorrect, Lenin added. Democracy had come to signify a form of bourgeois state, a parliamentary republic, used to consolidate capitalist rule by means of a police, army, and government bureaucracy as a repressive force over the people. The goal of Marxists is the eventual abolition of "every kind of state," Lenin said.

Unlike anarchists, however, Marxists recognize "the need for a state for the purpose of the transition to socialism," he explained. Even this will not be a state in the previous sense of "domination over the people by contingents of armed men divorced from the people." It will be a state in which the armed forces are "the masses themselves, the entire people," mobilized to crush all attempts

at counterrevolution.

Such a state, Lenin said, would represent an "emergent new democracy, which is already ceasing to be a democracy, for democracy means the domination of the people, and the armed people cannot dominate themselves." Therefore, the emergence of soviets of workers and peasants as the sole power in a state would be "the harbinger of the 'withering away' of the state in every form."

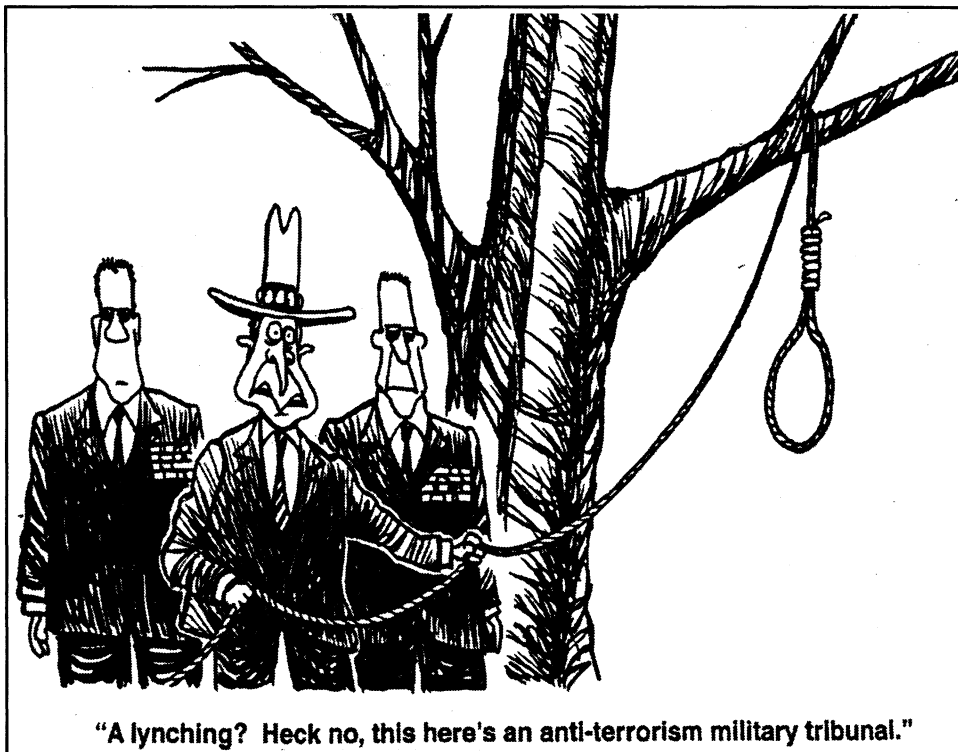
It was above all necessary to take into account, Lenin pointed out, that the official leaders of social democracy internationally had distorted and betrayed the *Communist Manifesto* on two main counts. They had repudiated the Marxist doctrine of the state by their political support to the bourgeois state under the guise of defending democracy, and they had gone over to "their own" national bourgeoisie in the imperialist war.

The people had been deceived and then led into the imperialist slaughter by those

leaders. Hence, the Bolsheviks would inadvertently be aiding and abetting that deception if they kept the out-of-date name, which was as decayed and discredited as the Second International.

In fact, in December 1914, only a few months after the open betrayal by the main Second International leaderships, Lenin had written, "is it not better to give up the name of 'Social Democrats', which has been besmirched and degraded by them, and return to the old Marxist name of Communists?"

Lenin placed the proposal to change the party's name before the March 1918 congress of the Bolsheviks. His report on this question again touched on the reasons why it was scientifically correct for the Bolsheviks to call themselves communists, and the importance of an unambiguous break with the old social democracy. The congress agreed with Lenin's proposal and adopted the official designation Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).



## Lessons for fight against antilabor witch-hunt

Continued from Page 13

tering Syngman Rhee dictatorship. Equally gung ho on intervention, the ALP opposition demanded only that the government act more decisively.

Australian fighters flew their first combat missions on July 2, with warships arriving one day earlier. Combat troops arrived on September 28. In all, some 17,000 Australian sailors, soldiers, and airmen engaged in combat and support in Korea over the next three years. The rapid backing of Washington reflected Canberra's recognition during World War II that London's world domination, with its Pax Britannica, was a thing of the past. It moved to ally with Washington, the now dominant imperialist power.

For showing their reliability in Korea and dropping their disagreements with Washington over the rearming of Japan, the Australian rulers secured the ANZUS treaty, which

was drafted in February 1951. The war pact's mutual defense provisions were invoked for the first time only in September 2001.

Menzies' Communist Party dissolution bill was opposed by the ALP and many unions, despite deep internal divisions. ALP leader Chifley opposed the bill for curtailing the free expression of opinion and explained, "It opens the door for the liar, the perjurer and the pimp to make charges and damn men's reputations and to do so in secret without having either to substantiate or prove any charges."

Albert Monk, president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, explained, "Experience throughout the world has shown that the banning of one political party by a government, irrespective of political ideology, has always been a prelude to suppression of other political parties and the smashing of trade unions...."

But after months of maneuvering, the ALP let the bill pass unamended. Menzies commented that the ALP did this "not because it is in favor of it, but because it is frightened to risk its political skin on the issue." The bill passed on Oct. 19, 1950, in the midst of fierce fighting in Korea. As it became law the next day, cops raided CPA offices in major cities. Simultaneously, 10 unions and the CPA challenged it in the High Court, with Evatt agreeing to represent the Waterside Workers' Federation.

Shortly after the High Court's March 1951 decision declaring the law unconstitutional, Menzies called a special election and then won control of both houses of Parliament. On July 5 he proposed the referendum to amend the Constitution to enable the government to make laws regarding communists and communism. The proposal included the provisions of the 1950 act that the High Court had struck down.

From then until the September 22 referendum, the political issues posed were at center stage. Evatt, by then the ALP leader, ran the official "no" campaign, speaking at large meetings around the country. Divisions within the ALP were so deep that some state

and local branches boycotted his meetings, with the Victorian branch having supported a "yes" vote within the ALP national executive. Menzies faced fewer internal divisions, but a vice president of the Young Liberals was suspended for campaigning for the "no" vote.

Evatt, now branded a "defender of Communism," argued that the ALP in government had acted against those with "proven subversive records" and noted its record in passing resolutions against Communist Party "disruption" of unions.

Evatt's arguments centered on saying the constitutional changes were unnecessary, as antisubversion and sedition laws already existed, and that the Menzies government had a wider intent than it was admitting. He explained that the powers being granted would be open-ended, and could be extended against the ALP itself or others in future. His stance was to oppose "totalitarianism of the Left and Right."

### CPA's response

In 1951 the CPA was still a large organization. Its leaders ran a sectarian campaign for a "no" vote, for example, calling for "a united front from below" with ALP supporters. CPA leaders urged support to the party's program, which included chauvinist opposition to Japanese rearmament, rather than focusing on explaining the stakes for the entire working class if Menzies's proposals won out.

Above all, CPA propaganda was marked by Australian nationalism and chauvinism. One CPA leaflet pictured a Japanese soldier about to decapitate an Australian prisoner and is captioned: "One of Menzies's friends...dealing a death blow to an Australian.... Don't let Menzies deal a death blow to Australia." Another shows a vicious Asian face behind the muzzle of a gun and reads, "Stop Rearming Japan—Vote 'No.' Millions of its leaflets were distributed in Sydney alone.

As the referendum campaign opened, opinion polls showed 80 percent supported a "yes" vote. Every big-business daily in the

country editorialized for "yes," with one exception. As the campaign continued, some prominent individuals joined in calling for a "no" vote.

One of the few places a working-class campaign was waged for a "no" vote was on the Balmain waterfront in Sydney in the massive ship repair facilities at Mort's Dock. The workforce had gone on strike repeatedly during WWII and had run up against Stalinist union officials time and again. A small group of mostly unskilled workers at the dock who were revolutionists helped form a "No" committee and organized a mock referendum. The vote was 658 no, 101 yes, and 195 abstentions or spoiled ballots.

On September 22, despite years of anti-communist rhetoric and in the midst of a shooting war, Menzies's witch-hunt proposal went down to defeat. The results were close, with the "no" vote at 2,370,009, or 50.48 percent, of the 4.7 million votes cast. Some 66,653 others abstained. A majority in the states of New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria voted no.

After it failed, the rulers, the government, and those who looked to them continued along a witch-hunting course. But their efforts were weaker as a result.

By the mid-1950s, the ALP had split along the seams exposed by the referendum. It didn't regain government until 1972. Menzies remained prime minister from 1949 to 1966, far outstripping both Franklin Roosevelt and Margaret Thatcher's records.

In 1962, Menzies himself pointed ruefully to the referendum's lessons. It showed that "electors...are not only reluctant to vote for new powers for the Commonwealth but are also, by deep instinct, unwilling to modify in any way the old principle that 'a man is innocent until he is proved guilty.'"

Menzies had badly misjudged the real class relationship of forces when he called the referendum. Millions of working people struck a counterblow because they understood the totalitarian character of the government's moves. They were convinced that they could be next and acted in their class interests.

### for further reading

#### Revolutionary Continuity Marxist Leadership in the United States

Farrell Dobbs

How successive generations of fighters took part in the struggles of the U.S. labor movement, seeking to build a leadership that could advance the class interests of workers and small farmers and link up with fellow toilers around the world. Vol. 1 \$16.95, Vol. 2 \$18.95



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690.

## New Zealand health workers stage strike

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—In a show of determination and solidarity, 2,500 nurses and health-care workers marched through downtown here as part of a December 3-4 strike against 16 area hospitals.

At a rally after the demonstration, union representatives said the strike of some 3,000 hospital employees is about more than pay. Long hours and low staffing levels are leading to a decline in patient care, they said. Jane O'Malley, national president of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, received a big cheer when she responded to the accusation that the union was using patients as pawns in an industrial dispute and putting lives at risk. "When the media talks about patient safety, who do they think they are talking to? We are very aware of patient safety. The risks to patients' lives did not start on Sunday" when the strike began.

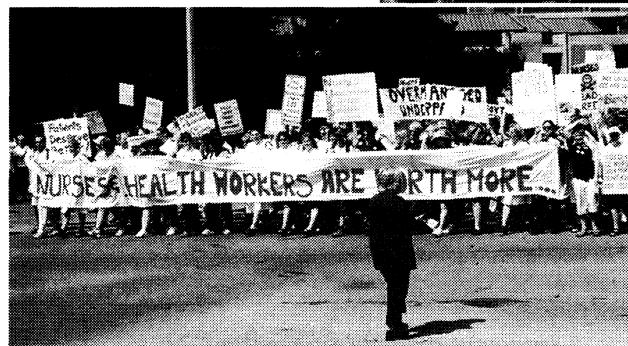
Several union members have countered the attacks against their fight in the local newspapers. "Hospitals are typically understaffed, undersized, and caught up in outdated operational practice," wrote Roxanne McKerran, a clinical nurse specialist, in an opinion piece in the *Press*. "This dispute is about recognition for nurses' work. The expanding remuneration gap between nursing and other professions is increasing, and has been doing so for the last 10 years." Pay parity with other professions and with nurses

and workers covered by other health boards is a question at the center of the dispute.

The walkout affected hospitals across the Canterbury region, in New Zealand's South Island. At the Christchurch Hospital, some 200 nurses and health-care workers joined a picket line after coming off midnight shift the morning of December 3. Many of the pickets sang a spirited rendition of the



Militant/Annalucia Vermunt  
Nurses and other health-care workers lead December 3 march in Christchurch.



pop tune, "We're not going to take it any more."

Striker Donna Cherry said she has 20 years' experience on the job and earns the top pay rate of NZ\$18 an hour (NZ\$1 = US

42 cents), making overtime pay a necessity in meeting living expenses. In addition, she explained, with nodding approval from her co-workers, they are often denied the chance to take a meal break, and are not paid for that time. "I don't want us to give up, otherwise this heartache and pain is for nothing," Cherry said. "We have to keep going until we settle, otherwise the old philosophy will return that nurses capitulate too easily."

Two union contracts are involved in the dispute, both with the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB). The first covers about 1,100 health workers at Princess Margaret and Hillmorton hospitals. The workers are from a variety of occupations and are members of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation, Public Service Association, National Union of Public Employees, or the Service and Food Workers Union. They also held a one-day strike in November. These unions are demanding a 6.5 percent pay raise over two years, and pay parity, annual leave, and career progression provisions.

The second contract covers 2,000 midwives and nurses. Both contracts expired within a few months of each other. A third contract, which expires this month, covers 700 clinical support services staff.

At the end of the two-day strike the Canterbury District Health Board still refused to budge from its offer of a 4 percent pay increase. The 2,000 nurses and midwives are demanding a 13 percent pay hike and point to a number of other issues that are important to resolve this dispute. Crying poverty, the CDHB claims NZ\$7 billion is spent on health each year, 70 percent of which is on wages and remuneration. Accepting the nurses' claim would add \$637 million to the country's health budget, they say.

Two resolutions were adopted at the rally. One calls for a round of stop-work meetings to discuss future industrial action. The other expresses a lack of confidence in the government to appropriately fund legitimate health sector wage claims.

Preparing for the strike, nurses picketed the 13th Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting at the Christchurch Convention Center November 29. Annette King, the minister of health in the Labour Alliance coalition government, refused to speak with the nurses there, claiming the dispute is between the workers and the health board, and that she would not intervene.

In a separate move, 91 radiation therapists struck in Auckland, Waikato, and Palmerston North December 4-5. The Association of Professional and Executive Salaried Therapists want raises of 20 percent to 25 percent to help stem the flow of staff overseas, which is causing serious treatment delays for New Zealand patients. They are planning further industrial action December 14-19.

*Annalucia Vermunt is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.*

## Locked-out TV workers picket in Toronto

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—"I'm proud to be out here with my co-workers. I didn't know them before. But it renews your faith in humanity," said locked-out Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) technician Arlene Hamilton. With 12 years at CBC, she was walking the picket line in front of the company's building in downtown Toronto December 8.

The day before, CBC bosses locked out the 1,600 members of the Communications, Energy and Paper Workers Union (CEP) across the country. The workers include camera operators, sound and lighting technicians, and all behind-the-scenes broadcast personnel. The workers could legally strike starting at noon on December 6 following seven months of negotiations. The talks broke down in face of concessions demands by the CBC bosses that would lengthen the workweek and worsen working conditions.

To put pressure on the company, CEP members held study sessions in St. John's, Halifax, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver following the noon deadline, then returned to work. Several hours later the CBC locked out the workers. The CBC is a Crown Corporation funded by the Canadian government.

In Toronto pickets said security guards employed by the notorious strike-breaking outfit London Protection International cleared the workers out of the CBC building. "Seven guys dressed in black came up to me and told me to get out of the building," said CEP member Wayne Glover, who has worked 14 years at the CBC and is currently an audio technician.

The first issue of the union's strike newsletter reported that the CBC "has hired the London Protection International to look after our picket line. These folks are known as the 'Men in Black' or 'Injunctions R Us.' These mercenaries know the strike game inside and out. They will push you into confrontations and situations so they can go running to a judge and get an injunction against our LEGAL job action."

The CBC management tried to justify their use of what the union calls "paramilitary" security guards. "These actions [referring to the study sessions] clearly establish that CEP members are engaged in a strike action under the Canada Labour Code," said Fred Mattocks, executive director of production and resources. "We can't allow striking workers on our properties or our buildings," he added.

The strikers say the bosses had been preparing the lockout for some time. They reported that a month and a half ago surveyors had staked out the property lines around the CBC building, marking them on the sidewalks in preparation for picket lines and possible injunctions. Another striker reported they had "locked out Santa Claus" by canceling a December 6 annual Christmas party for employees and their children, claiming they couldn't guarantee facilities for it.

In an impromptu meeting with a number of strikers on the picket line, CEP Local 71M president and negotiating committee member Anton Szabo reviewed the stakes in the fight.

"They want to eliminate all language in the contract that commits them to guaranteeing meal breaks, or compensation or lieu time off if we have to miss them because of work," he said. "They also want to increase the workday by 15 minutes, cut the wages of temporary workers by 6 percent, and eliminate breaks between shifts so you can be forced to work an extra shift without a break."

Szabo stressed that the workers want to provide quality programming for people. "But with the continued cuts and stand of management, it is difficult to do," he said.

The lockout immediately affected the CBC's national radio and television programs. Local television news and regional radio programming have been cut back.

Many of the workers on the Toronto picket line are veterans of a two-month strike in 1999. Another picket, Dave, who had only started with the CBC a month ago, said his previous contact with labor struggles had been as a television technician with news teams for other companies he had worked for who were reporting on strikes and picket line events.

"They say their budget is overdrawn because of the costs of covering the September 11 events," he said. "But they are just using that as an excuse to take advantage of us."

*John Steele is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 175.*

## Garment workers in Atlixco, Mexico, win strike

BY BERNIE SENTER

BERKELEY, California—What started as a small act of defiance at the Kukdong garment factory in Atlixco, Mexico, blossomed into a determined labor battle and ended with workers winning a new union and improved working conditions. Fed up with rotten food served at the in-plant cafeteria, they launched a boycott of the facility.

Speaking to 125 people at the University of California December 5, Marcela Muñoz Tepepa discussed the labor battle. Muñoz, 23, a seamstress and strike leader, was on a two-week tour of U.S. campuses to thank those who supported the strike. Also touring with Muñoz were Huberto Juárez Nuñez and Catalina Gúzman Albalá from the Autonomous University in Puebla.

The Kukdong factory, a *maquiladora*, is in the heart of Mexico's textile industry 70 miles south of Mexico City. It is a principal supplier of college sweatshirts to Nike and Reebok, producing up to 500,000 of them a month. Students from 85 U.S. colleges joined in supporting the strike with boycotts, demonstrations, and pickets on campus. This helped pressure Nike and Reebok to force the company into negotiations. On

September 21, the 900 workers won recognition of their new union and improved working conditions.

"The struggle began for three reasons," Muñoz explained. "Food was in very poor condition at the cafeteria. Workers faced verbal and physical abuse. Salaries were so low that workers were not able to fund education for their sons and daughters." Workers report earning only \$5 a day, making it impossible to support themselves and their children.

The company's response to the cafeteria boycott was to fire workers last January. Muñoz said that the workers then organized a complete work stoppage. Their reaction at first, Muñoz said, "was 'OK, where do we go from here.' None of us ever experienced anything like this before."

On January 11 state police arrived at the factory and beat the workers. "Some still have scars from that night," Muñoz said. But the workers kept up the struggle, finding wide support from others in the area and internationally. "A majority of the factory were women," said Muñoz. "Many are single mothers and others are 13- to 15-year-old workers. Most asked their moms and

dads if it was OK to do this. Parents showed up and supported the work stoppage. People arrived with food."

"We got an e-mail of support from Kukdong workers in Indonesia during the work stoppage," she reported. "They explained to us the steps they went through to win an independent union. It inspired us." Other Kukdong factories are in Brazil and Bangladesh.

"There aren't any more 13-year-olds working in the factory," Muñoz explained. "They did away with these workers. This was a difficult moment because we had to explain to these girls why it was harming them. They really needed a job. At the end, they understood the situation. So the day they are old enough, they will be the first to be hired."

"If we bring together international solidarity for workers struggles," Muñoz said, "we will all triumph—not just in Mexico but in the whole world. So let's move forward."

*Bernie Senter is a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.*