

Bring the troops home now!

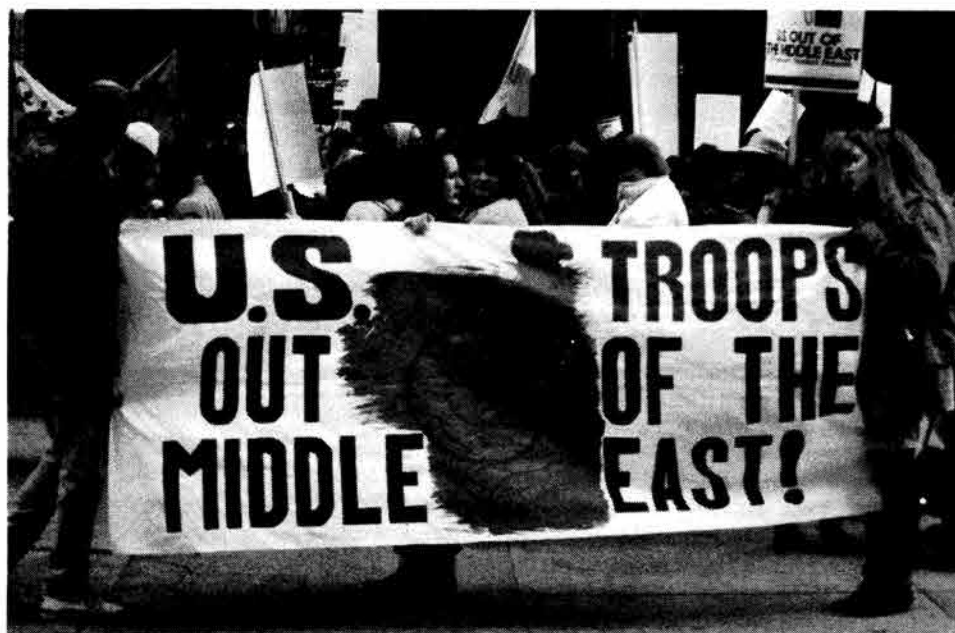
January 26 protests against war win support

BY GREG McCARTAN

"We've been swamped with phone calls about the demonstration," a volunteer at the New York office of the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East said. "People from around the country are calling us to find out what they can do and are telling us about local protests they are planning."

As the organizing center for the January 26 national march in Washington, D.C. against the U.S. drive toward war in the Mideast, the temporary office is starting to publicize the protest and a series of actions leading up to it.

A leaflet, now available from the office, notes that the protest action was called at a December 1 meeting of representatives of some 160 organizations, and highlights the march's demands: "No war in the Middle East. Bring the troops home now. Money for human needs, not war."



December 8 protest in Chicago against U.S. drive toward war in the Mideast. Some 5,000 people participated demanding withdrawal of U.S. troops.

"With a sense of extreme urgency and a commitment to build the broadest and strongest movement possible," the leaflet said, the December 1 meeting agreed on a range of activities including "increasing pressure on Congress, continued teach-ins and educational events, expanded work with the media, and deepening our support for resisters and the families of people in the military."

The National Campaign is encouraging local actions December 22-24 and on Jan. 15, 1991. The latter day marks both "the day of the UN deadline" for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, and "the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," the leaflet said.

Slated as the first broadly endorsed na-
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U.S. gov't presses war despite Iraqi moves

BY SELVA NEBBIA

Despite the Iraqi government's release of detained foreign nationals, Washington is pushing ahead with its massive military buildup in the Mideast and the days to January 15 are being counted down.

January 15 is the date set in a November 29 resolution by the United Nations Security Council after which a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq would be sanctioned if Baghdad does not withdraw its forces from Kuwait.

"I don't feel we are closer to a peaceful solution," U.S. President George Bush said in the wake of the December 7 Iraqi decision on the hostages. "I think you can make the case that this facilitates the tough decisions that might lie ahead." Bush spoke at a December 8 press conference in Caracas, Venezuela, during a five-country Latin American tour.

The U.S. president ordered the U.S. embassy in Kuwait closed the same day Baghdad announced the release of the foreign nationals. "When you don't have Americans there, and if force is required, that's just one less worry I've got," he said, referring to his decision and to the UN Security Council resolution.

Since its August 2 invasion and occupation of neighboring Kuwait, the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein had been holding hostage some 8,000 citizens from Western countries, Eastern Europe, and Japan in both Kuwait and Iraq. There were some 750 U.S. citizens in those two countries, the December 11 *New York Times* reported. About half of them have chosen to stay there.

There are also tens of thousands of foreign workers from Sri Lanka, Philippines, Pakistan, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, and Vietnam who have been left stranded in Iraq and Kuwait since the invasion.

The taking of hostages has been met with international condemnation and has been

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Continental Airlines files for bankruptcy

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

On December 3 Continental Airlines Holdings, Inc., the parent company for Continental Airlines and Eastern Airlines, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Continental cited increased fuel prices and interest costs from its \$2.2 billion debts as the reasons for its move. However, the 21-

month-long strike by 8,500 Machinists against Eastern Airlines was the biggest factor in forcing Continental to file bankruptcy and reveals how much the fifth-largest U.S. carrier has been drawn into the strike, which began March 4, 1989.

This is the second time Continental has been taken into bankruptcy. In 1982, Frank

Lorenzo, owner of nonunion Texas Air, purchased the airline. In 1983, Continental demanded huge concessions from its workers and members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) went out on strike. When all those who refused to cross the picket lines were fired, scabs were brought in.

A month into the strike, Lorenzo went to court and filed for Chapter 11. Continental then laid off all of its 12,000 employees and rehired about 4,200 of them at about 50 percent of their previous pay, effectively busting the Machinists and other unions at the airline.

Attempting to add to his Texas Air empire, Lorenzo went on to purchase Eastern in 1986. A step-up in harassment and victimization of workers, firings, forced overtime, and speedup ensued.

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JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO GET OUT THE FACTS!

U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations, also available in Spanish, is an irreplaceable tool in the fight against the accelerating U.S.-organized drive toward war. An introduction by Mary-Alice Waters outlines the stakes for working people in the coming war. The book contains a useful chronology of the U.S.-led war preparations since early August and 10 UN resolutions adopted on the Gulf crisis.

Featured in the book are statements by Cuban Ambassador to the UN Ricardo Alarcón and President Fidel Castro that rebut the pretexts and arguments used by Washington to justify its unilateral acts of aggression. Unionists, GIs, veterans, reservists, and other workers involved in struggles against the employers' offensive at home can use the facts and arguments it contains to arm themselves and help convince others to join in campaigning against the slaughter being prepared by the same employers, through their government, in the Mideast.

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Restrictions on GIs' rights, media censorship in Arab-Persian Gulf

BY RONI McCANN

From the first days of Washington's military buildup in the Arab-Persian Gulf region, the U.S. Defense Department has kept the entire area tightly sealed, including placing strict limits on media reports and GIs stationed there.

Under "Ground Rules for Coverage of U.S. Military Activities," reporters are prohibited from disclosing the exact numbers of troops or weapons, their exact locations, or the names of enlisted personnel.

At early August press conferences journalists were forbidden to tape record remarks made by officials and had to work as part of a 17-member National Media Pool accredited by the Pentagon.

The Pentagon justifies the restrictions on the grounds of security and "customs and ways of life" of their "hosts," the Saudi government.

Despite these limitations on news coverage and freedom of the press, the big-busi-

ness media has accepted the "ground rules" laid down by Washington. Dutifully respecting the guidelines, none have protested or violated Pentagon restrictions.

In October some 200,000 U.S. GIs in Saudi Arabia were given a pamphlet by the Pentagon listing topics to avoid discussing with Arabs, according to the *New York Times*. The 24-item list included "U.S. strategic cooperation with Israel"; showing "pictures of men and women embracing or dancing"; criticizing "Islamic religious customs, media coverage, and censorship, women's rights, and enforced dress and moral standards."

Washington has also issued restrictions on mail sent to GIs. Mail to Operation Desert Shield, as the massive buildup is called, is sorted at both ends by post office and military personnel. It then enters customs in Saudi Arabia.

According to an Army-Air Post Office official, soldiers cannot receive religious ar-

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Event marks closing of Managua bureau

BY SETH GALINSKY

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Some 75 people attended a reception at the offices of the Managua Bureau of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* November 23 to celebrate the two periodicals' 11 years of work in Nicaragua. Established here shortly after the July 19, 1979, triumph of the Nicaraguan revolution, the bureau closed December 5.

Participants in the reception bid farewell to the three bureau staff members — Susan Apstein, Seth Galinsky, and Cindy Jaquith — who are returning to the United States to continue their political work.

Union activists, artists

Among those attending the reception were workers and union activists from the Enaves garment plant, People's Metallurgical Industries factory, Polymer plastics plant, Rolter shoe factory, Carnic meat-packing plant, and Telcor, the national telephone company.

Union officials present were Carlos Borge, head of the garment-textile division of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST); Eligio Chávez, head of the CST metal workers division; Mario Malespín, national president of the Telcor workers union; Salvador Sandoval, president of the Telcor union in the Managua region; Andrés Zamora, international relations secretary of Fetsalud, the health care workers union; and Santos Mendez, publicity director of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), which organizes farm workers.

Also present were Dolores Roa, a member of the Managua executive board of the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers; Dorotea Wilson, a member of the North Atlantic Autonomous Regional Council; and Daniel Alegría, editor of *Barricada Internacional*.

Several executive board members of Nicaragua's National Union of Plastic Artists attended, including Arnolando Guillén, as did

painter Carlos Montenegro. Guillén and Montenegro, both prominent artists here, painted on the Pathfinder Mural in New York.

Mark Coplan, a Veterans for Peace activist and filmmaker, was present. Coplan produced the Spanish-language soundtrack for the video *The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis*.

Several activists came from the Benjamin Linder House, a center in Managua for U.S.-based Nicaragua solidarity groups, as did a number of activists in solidarity with the struggle in El Salvador.

In brief remarks to those attending the reception, Bureau Director Cindy Jaquith thanked everyone present for their support to the *Militant's* efforts over the years to report the truth about the Nicaraguan revolution to working people worldwide.

Jaquith explained that the *Militant* will keep sending reporters to Nicaragua and other countries in Central America and the Caribbean. It will continue covering the struggles of Nicaraguan working people for

land, union rights, autonomy for the peoples of the Atlantic Coast, and freedom from U.S. domination.

But with rising costs and changing political developments in the world, particularly in the Mideast, the *Militant* is no longer able to maintain a permanent office in Managua, Jaquith said.

Mideast war preparations

Jaquith pointed to the escalating military intervention organized by the U.S. government in the Middle East and the responsibility the *Militant* has to galvanize working-class opposition to the devastating war being prepared.

She reported that the Pathfinder publishing house has just released a new book, in English and Spanish, *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*. The book contains statements by Cuban President Fidel Castro and UN Ambassador Ricardo Alarcón against the imperialist-led war buildup and the text the UN Security Council resolutions on the Iraq-Kuwait conflict.

She noted the *Militant's* need to also continue sending reporters to other centers of the international class struggle, from South Africa to Cuba and Korea.

Jaquith announced Pathfinder's plan to publish an English-language edition of the works of Carlos Fonseca, the founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). A portrait of Fonseca, painted by Arnolando Guillén for the book's cover, was displayed to all present.

'Sisters and brothers in the struggle'

CST leader Carlos Borge asked to make a few remarks on the bureau's closing as well. "We in the CST have always considered the compañeros from the *Militant* to be sisters and brothers in the struggle," he said.

While regretting the fact that the bureau was closing, Borge said he believed the *Militant* "will keep on playing an important role in the fight against imperialism in Nicaragua" and pledged that the workers of Nicaragua "will continue the fight to defend the conquests of the 1979 revolution."

Eastern strike leader on unions and U.S. war

BY STEVE MARSHALL

PITTSBURGH — Experiences of strikers in the 21-month battle against Eastern Airlines have helped shape their views of Washington's military moves in the Middle East, says Frank Planinac, an Eastern strike leader here.

Striking members of the International Association of Machinists "have been hardened over the past 20 months," Planinac explained in a recent discussion at the strike headquarters. "They've seen the inequities in this country and the way the government operates."

Planinac is the president of IAM Local Lodge 1044 at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. He has been active in organizing picket lines, speaking engagements, and rallies to press the fight against Eastern. During the interview a half-dozen strikers stopped at the headquarters to pick up food donations, organize picket duty, sign for benefit checks, or write state senators to support an upcoming labor bill.

A son in the service

Planinac's 20-year-old son Mike just returned to an air force base in Texas after a short visit home. He has been assigned to a tactical bomber unit already deployed in Saudi Arabia, and could ship out soon. Mike Planinac thinks military action in the Persian Gulf will result in high casualties.

Mike Planinac is an outspoken champion of the IAM's strike. His booming voice has led hundreds of coal miners, steelworkers, and Machinists in a chant that has thundered through the Pittsburgh airport, "WE ARE UNION!"

Frank Planinac said the strike has changed his son's outlook about the future. But his

concerns about an impending war are not just personal ones. "I've got a son in the service," he said, "but I don't want to see any kid over there."

"This war is in the interests of the oil companies. They say Iraq will control oil prices — but who controls them now? The oil companies! And it's poor people, working people, who are being hit the hardest," he said.

"They say the polls show people are in favor of a war," Planinac continued. "Which polls — the ones on Wall Street? They need to do a real poll. There'll be a lot more opposition as people find out the true facts."

The union president rejected Washington's claim that the massive U.S. military buildup is aimed at supporting democracy around the world. "Why should anyone go fight to put an emir back on the throne — so he can suppress his own people?" he asked.

U.S. President George Bush "is suppressing working people everywhere, especially in the Third World countries. That's the new world order he's talking about — don't let them get an economic foothold where they can justify a basis for a better living," Planinac said.

In their invasion of Panama, he recalled, U.S. forces "wiped out a barrio of innocent working people. They killed hundreds of people in Panama, and Bush and [U.S. Secretary of State James] and the rest of them won't admit it."

Washington's war in Korea, Planinac noted, resulted in a dictatorship where "people are slaves to big business. They have no democratic rights, they live under a government that suppresses people and shoots them down like animals. And they're getting their

leadership right from Washington."

Since the strike began at Eastern, Planinac explained, "I'm more aware now of the government's role in putting down the working class of people."

For many Eastern strikers, he acknowledged, this came as a surprise. "Most of us were naive. We had no inclination that the government was that powerful in dictating how to break the unions and destroy the working class."

"The government has the upper hand to prop up big business. It has the power and control, through the courts and the news media. Like the bankruptcy court — the laws are all written for corporations, to keep a big business going even though it's a failure," he said.

"People should get more involved in response to Washington's war drive," said Planinac. "They should become more conscious of what is about to happen."

"I think there should be a lot of demonstrations and protests, now, before Bush can work up a war frenzy. We're the people — we should dictate, not Bush."

As a local union president, Planinac said he can't speak for the entire IAM or the top labor officials. "But," he stated, "I would hope that the major union leaders would stand up and be against the war over there."

"Unions have a moral and social responsibility to take a stand," said Planinac, "just like the 300 bishops the other day, who said there's no reason for a war. But the government won't take a religious group into account, or a lot of college kids. I would hope the labor movement would take a position against it."

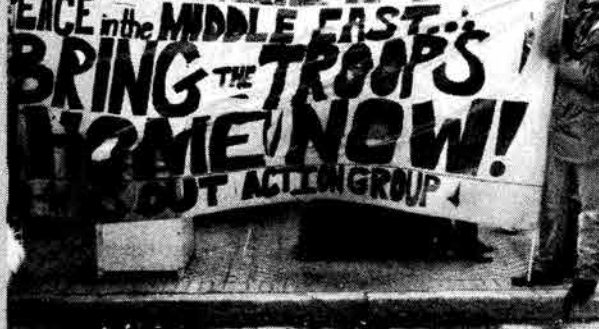
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Hundreds in London hear Cuban author

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — "The world is passing through a severe crisis," said Cuban economist and author Carlos Tablada. "The capitalist crisis is hardly mentioned by the media, but one statistic alone shows how severe it is: 40,000 children die every day from curable diseases."

"In the socialist camp," he continued, "they insisted on a model of development with no changes, no criticism, no self-criticism, and where relations of production were mechanically transferred from capitalism. This has led to collapse and breakdown."

"And now we're facing the prospect of a devastating war. There's peace between the big nations and war against the small," said the Cuban author to a meeting of 400 in London's Conway Hall.

Tablada is the author of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*. He is currently on a tour of several European countries after having spoken at numerous events in the Nordic countries.

Ernesto Che Guevara was a leader of the Cuban revolution who played an influential role in developing the revolutionary government's economic policies in its first years. He sought to develop the economic foundations for the transition to socialist society, and the political consciousness of working people necessary to carry it out.

Guevara was assassinated in 1967 while helping to lead a guerrilla struggle in Bolivia.

"Today, people are beginning to appreciate that the socialist revolution in Cuba has not only opened up the road to socialism but also to a revolution in ideas," said Tablada at the gathering. The meeting, hosted by the London Pathfinder Bookshop, was the final scheduled event in his three-week tour of Britain.

Those present included delegations from the Cuban and Angolan embassies and representatives of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador, the Polisario Front of Western Sahara, the Jamaican government, and many sponsoring organizations, including the Britain-Cuba Resource Centre.

'Tour has been a success'

"The tour has been a major success," said Alan Harris, director of Pathfinder in London. The tour was organized by Pathfinder which is the English-language publisher of Tablada's book. "In three weeks Tablada has spoken at 16 universities and polytechnics, public meetings in four cities, and a number of events with trade unionists. He was an invited speaker at a conference of farm activists and at another on the Third World debt, and was the guest of honor at six receptions. In all, some 1,600 people attended these gatherings," Harris told the audience.

"Tablada was also able to meet with members of Parliament at a meeting in the House of Commons," said Harris, "and he conducted 15 press interviews, including live broadcasts on Radio Sheffield and on Spectrum Radio in London."

The Conway Hall meeting was a high point of the British tour. It was the largest meeting on Cuba or with a Cuban communist speaker ever held in Britain.

During the question-and-answer period following Tablada's presentation, two people asked about the position of the Cuban government on the situation in the Mideast. "From the time we heard the news of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, we publicly condemned the invasion," said Tablada, "and we continue to do so because we respect a country's sovereignty."

Hypocrisy of United Nations

"But we oppose the hypocrisy of the United Nations Security Council," the Cuban author said. "Where was the response to the violation of sovereignty by Israel in annexing the occupied territories?"

"When the United States invaded Panama in December 1989, they killed thousands of civilians. Where was the Security Council embargo against the United States? Where were the troops sent to surround the United States then?" he asked.

"We're also opposed to the blockade of medicines and food to the people of Iraq," said Tablada. "This not only violates the UN Charter and the Geneva convention, it also violates the most fundamental human rights. The blockade won't hurt the Iraqi army, it will hurt children, women, and old people."

"Iraq gave the United States the opportunity to try and recoup what it lost with the

Iranian revolution in 1979 and the overthrow of the shah," Tablada pointed out. Washington "wants to reestablish its land military bases. We can't agree with that. Our principal is that the Arab community should discuss and solve the problem themselves."

Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

Many people had questions on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the impact of the crisis in these countries on Cuba and on socialism. Throughout the tour, this was a theme both of Tablada's talks and during discussion periods with meeting participants.

Tablada explained why Guevara and Cuban President Fidel Castro rejected the idea of following the Soviet model in Cuba. In the early years of the revolution, when he was responsible for the economy, Guevara visited the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. "He came back convinced that Cuba should neither apply the Soviet economic model nor the philosophy that goes with it," Tablada said.

"For Che, Fidel, and Karl Marx, a revolution is made in order to change human values," said Tablada. "If you read Marx you'll find he never questioned the management techniques of capitalism. Marx developed Marxism because he reached the conclusion that capitalism cannot give society a human face."

"Che recognized that this was also true of the Soviet model," said the Cuban author. "If you take a Soviet manual, it says that we must first develop a socialized technical and economic base, and that socialist consciousness will develop out of it. Che did not agree. He said that along with the production of material goods, thinking workers and thinking managers are also produced. How relations of production are organized affects this."

"Che also questioned the political theory that accompanied these manuals. This model arrived prepackaged on our sun-drenched shores. Our role was just to apply it. Che realized as early as 1966 that this path could take us back toward capitalism. It turned out he was right."

Speaking of political parties that continue to defend this path, Tablada said, "My heart gladdens when I see these parties changing their names away from communism, because they never were communist. When they change their names it makes things clearer."

"The countries in Eastern Europe were not socialist," he said at Northern College in Barnsley, "and the crisis they're going through is necessary for real revolutionary socialism to develop there."

Speaking of the changes taking place in Cuba today, Tablada said, "We've made much progress, including in the field of values and ideas. But we've also made serious mistakes that have themselves led to a regression in the field of ideas."

"In the 1970s, we made the huge mistake of applying the Soviet model," Tablada said. "As a result, what happened was exactly what Che and Fidel predicted would happen: workers became corrupted, managers became corrupted, ministers became corrupted."

Rectification process

"In 1984, Fidel made a speech in which he said we must begin to rectify this error," Tablada said. The Cuban author spoke of a number of the steps being undertaken through this "rectification process."

"We're putting the market at the disposal of the people, not the people at the disposal of the market," he said.

"Last year there were workplace assemblies where trade union members were able to discuss these matters," Tablada pointed out. "Through these assemblies, 70 percent of the union leaders were replaced. At the national trade union congress this year there was a 100 percent change in the central trade union leadership."

Tablada said that Cubans today are more committed than ever to socialism. He recounted that earlier this year 100,000 Cuban youth had marched, arms in hand, to declare their belief in socialism. "I dare any democracy in the world to hand over guns to 100,000 such demonstrating youth!" he said. "Armed with guns and ideas, we shall win," Tablada concluded.

On December 4 Tablada started a 10-day tour of France. After France he will travel to Spain, Portugal, and Greece before returning to Havana in early February.



G.M. Cookson

Meeting for Cuban economist Carlos Tablada in London. The blockade of Iraq, Tablada said, "not only violates the UN Charter and the Geneva Convention, it also violates the most fundamental human rights."

HANDS OFF THE MIDEAST! Campaigning worldwide against the imperialist war drive

Working people — in uniform and out — have been discussing and debating the accelerating buildup for an imperialist war in the Mideast led by the United States, Britain, Canada, France, and Australia.

In factories, mines, and mills, on warships, and among those now stationed in Saudi Arabia, workers and farmers have discussed and expressed opposition to the massive military buildup aimed at the Iraqi people.

Rallies, marches, and conferences are being held with broad participation, especially from youth; action coalitions are being formed in cities around the world; veterans, GIs, and reservists are speaking out; antiwar buttons are being worn at work; and more antiwar actions are being planned. We encourage readers to contribute items to this column that will help campaign against and build visible opposition to the war preparations.

NEWARK, New Jersey — At an Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Region 8 council meeting November 8-9, 44 delegates and guests signed a petition calling on Washington to bring home the troops stationed in the Mideast. The petition was promoted at the meeting by the Central New Jersey Coalition Against the War in the Middle East, which had received permission from the council president to set up a literature table.

"For decades labor has been portrayed as one of the staunchest supporters of U.S. foreign policy," the petition said. "We, the undersigned members of the OCAW, are writing you to state that you have no mandate from us to go to war in the Middle East."

"A policy that seeks to bolster Big Oil's domination over the Persian Gulf oil fields through military might will cause great misery for working people in the U.S. and in the Middle East," the petition said.

Officials from OCAW locals in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Ohio, and Maryland were among the signers. A number of discussions about the drive toward war were with veterans of the Vietnam War whose sons and daughters are now draft age. Many did not want them to suffer through what they had endured.

One union officer who was reluctant to sign was a member of a veterans organization that had been debating for weeks the U.S. troop deployments to the region. He said that they were close to adopting a resolution against the stationing of troops in the region.

Some \$40 worth of antiwar buttons and bumper stickers were sold to delegates. A few took extra petitions to distribute in their areas. The petition effort has continued in OCAW Local 8-575 at Merck Pharmaceuticals, in Rahway, N.J., where more than 60 workers and union officials have signed.

JACKSONVILLE, North Carolina — Camp Lejeune is the largest U.S. Marine base. It is located near here on North Carolina's east coast. Some 36,000 GIs are normally stationed at the base.

Some 9,000 GIs have already been transferred to the Mideast as part of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The remaining 27,000 are expected to be sent in somewhere between "10 days and three months, just about emptying the whole base," a local newspaper reported recently.

In mid-November, a *Militant* sales team sold copies of the newspaper at a supermarket near the base. They also handed out copies of an open letter calling on GIs to oppose the U.S. drive toward war in the Mideast. The letter was written by Andrew Pulley, a GI during the Vietnam War who actively opposed that war.

The sales team talked with several GIs who immediately agreed that Washington's war plans in the Mideast are not in the interests of working people. "That's not our war," one Black soldier said. "We shouldn't be over there."

A few GIs refused to talk to the team, but most were willing to discuss the issue. Many said that Washington had to act to stop Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Some who were reluctant to talk agreed to take leaflets after members of the team pointed out that they had a right to have an opinion.

One woman with several family members in Saudi Arabia said she "didn't like the situation at all" and thought "the troops should never have been sent." A woman of Vietnamese origin who is married to a soldier spoke at length about "the handful of rich families who run the U.S. government and own the oil companies, and are the ones who will benefit from this war."

Although reactions were mixed, a majority of the family members of GIs that the team spoke with had few illusions about Washington's motives and opposed the war drive.

Rachel Knapik from Newark, New Jersey, and Walter Blades from Greensboro, North Carolina, contributed to this week's column.

Fund is over the top; big boost to antiwar effort

BY JAMES HARRIS

We're over the top! As the fund chart shows, \$151,837 has now been received by the Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund, putting us over the \$150,000 goal by \$1,837. We encourage supporters

march toward war and the capitalist system heads toward a world depression.

Thousands of copies of the new Pathfinder book, *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*, have already

in mounting opposition to the coming imperialist war in the Mideast, the deepening world capitalist economic crisis, the significance of the continued resistance by workers to employer assaults, and the accelerated disintegration of the Soviet Union will be included.

Every unionist, striking worker, farmer, GI or reservist, and young person opposing Washington's war will want to read and study the upcoming issue of *New Internationalist*.

Working people who have been fighting their employers and who want to widen the discussion and debate in the working class about the Mideast conflict will find these new titles, as well as Pathfinder's range of books and pamphlets, invaluable tools for advancing the struggle today.

The production and promotion of these titles, in addition to the socialist publications the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, can only be possible by the voluntary labor of working people committed to seeing the ravages of the capitalist system done away with.

Contributing to the fund is one way many have joined in the effort to build the party and deepen the working class campaign against the war.

Please send remaining pledges to the Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund, 406 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

James Harris is the director of the Socialist Workers Party-Building Fund.

Where We Stand

Area	Goal	Paid	% of Total
Seattle	6,300	7,124	113
Greensboro, N.C.	1,622	1,733	107
Phoenix	1,480	1,574	106
Miami	1,850	1,874	101
Kansas City	1,915	1,920	100
Price, Utah	1,750	1,750	100
Austin, Minn.	1,750	1,750	100
Morgantown, W.V.	3,878	3,788	98
New York	10,383	10,136	98
San Francisco	5,355	5,225	98
Pittsburgh	6,600	6,422	97
St. Louis	8,000	7,775	97
Detroit	7,000	6,735	96
Atlanta	6,236	5,991	96
Brooklyn	6,525	6,184	95
Los Angeles	16,981	15,956	94
Oakland, Calif.	10,305	9,583	93
Birmingham, Ala.	5,945	5,405	91
Houston	5,225	4,795	91
Des Moines, Iowa	1,600	1,370	86
Newark, N.J.	7,370	6,236	85
Cleveland	5,350	4,375	82
Twin Cities, Minn.	5,300	4,315	81
Salt Lake City, Utah	4,050	3,140	78
Chicago	8,140	6,295	77
Charleston, W.V.	3,860	2,920	76
Philadelphia	5,380	3,890	72
Omaha, Neb.	2,455	1,768	72
Washington, D.C.	3,330	2,272	68
Boston	4,645	3,011	65
Baltimore	3,800	1,675	44
Other U.S.	4,757	2,921	61
International	1,929	1,929	100
TOTALS	171,066	151,837	101
SHOULD BE	150,000	150,000	100

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY-BUILDING FUND



to send in the additional \$19,229 pledged as soon as possible. Every dollar received will be put to good use in building the socialist movement.

As the employers deepen their assault on workers and farmers at home and the bosses' government widens its aggression against the Iraqi people, the fund will make possible the production and distribution of books, newspapers, and other literature needed by fighting workers around the world.

Hundreds of unionists — coal miners and Eastern strikers; garment and electrical workers; those in the rail, oil, and chemical industries; and others — were the backbone of the drive. Other friends and supporters of the party generously contributed because they know the importance of building a party of socialist workers as the imperialists

been sold around the world. The speeches by leaders of the Cuban revolution, in addition to the introduction and chronology contained in the book, have helped to widen the knowledge of and debate about the U.S.-led drive toward a massive slaughter in the Middle East.

Bookstores have placed orders, and coworkers and participants in antiwar rallies and conferences are getting copies as well.

One of the central projects the fund will make possible next year is the production of a new issue of *New Internationalist*, *Nouvelle Internationale* in French, and *Nueva Internacional* in Spanish. Featured in the magazine will be political resolutions from conventions of the Socialist Workers Party in 1989 and 1990.

In addition, a resolution outlining the stakes for working people

U.S. gov't presses war drive despite Iraqi moves

Continued from front page

used by Washington in its campaign to prepare working people in the United States to go to war.

The recent Iraqi moves would not hold up the deployment of 200,000 more U.S. troops to the Mideast or lead to any lessening of Washington's resolve, U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney said December 7 following meetings with members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He sought to get them to contribute more troops, supplies, and help in transporting U.S. forces to the Arab-Persian Gulf region.

Speaking about the steady U.S.-led military buildup in the Mideast, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker stated that unless the

military threat against Hussein is credible "we will not get a peaceful solution."

"Our aim is to ensure that if force must be used, it will be used suddenly, massively and decisively," Baker said. Some 31 countries, including the United States, are participating in the military buildup against Iraq.

Baker is scheduled to meet with Hussein in Baghdad around the first week of January and Bush has invited Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to a December 17 meeting at the White House. Both meetings were set by Washington following the November 29 vote by the UN Security Council. The meetings were described by Bush as going "the extra mile for peace."

In the event of an Iraqi pull out from

Kuwait, Baker said the U.S.-led forces in the Mideast would still be needed to "guard against" Hussein's "disproportionate military power" and the "possible use of his weapons of mass destruction."

Echoing Baker's "concerns," a group of leading Democrats and Republicans have formed a coalition called the Committee for Peace and Security in the Gulf. The group said it will argue that Washington should use force if necessary to dismantle or destroy Iraq's chemical, biological, and alleged nuclear weapons capability.

The plans to deploy 200,000 additional U.S. troops in the Gulf will roughly double the costs of Washington's buildup, Defense Department and White House officials said December 8.

The Pentagon will seek \$10 billion to \$20 billion in new spending authority when Congress convenes in January. Before the new troop deployment it was anticipated that Congress would have to allot some \$5 billion to pay for U.S. troop presence in the Gulf during the fiscal year that began October 1.

The expenses are now expected to reach \$31 billion. Since mid-September, when Baker and U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady circled the globe to raise funds, 54 countries have made pledges totaling \$20 billion.

Saudi Arabia is the biggest contributor with \$8 billion, which includes transportation, water, and fuel for the troops stationed there. The ousted government of Kuwait has pledged \$4 billion. Germany has guaranteed more than \$1 billion, \$260 million of it in cash. Japan has committed \$2 billion in cash and goods through March 30. And the United Arab Emirates has pledged \$1 billion.

South Korea said it would contribute \$225 million, but only after a warning from U.S. officials that the Congress would take the move into consideration when reviewing funding for the 46,000 U.S. troops based there.

Even before a widespread shooting war has begun, the people of Iraq are suffering the effects of the attempt by Washington to starve them into submission. On December 3 the Iraqi government said more than 1,400 Iraqi children have died because of a medicine shortage created by the international trade sanctions imposed on Iraq. After four months of a total embargo, the price of milk and other



U.S. Secretary of State James Baker

Jailed Israeli activists released

BY HARRY RING

Michel Warschawsky and Yacov Ben Efrat, victims of Israeli political repression, have been released from prison.

Warschawsky, director of the Alternative Information Center, was released in November and has resumed his activity at the Center.

Ben Efrat, who was editor of the paper, *Way of the Spark*, was released in October after serving a two-and-a-half year sentence, all of it in solitary confinement.

Ben Efrat and three other members of the editorial board of *Way of the Spark* were prosecuted in 1988 and charged with membership in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which is banned by the Israeli regime. Their paper was ordered shut down.

The other three *Spark* editors received lighter sentences and were released during 1989.

Ben Efrat was held in solitary because of his demand to be placed with political prisoners, which authorities adamantly refused to do.

During his confinement, Ben Efrat conducted three hunger strikes to protest this refusal. Forty Palestinian political prisoners joined him in one of these hunger strikes.

Like his three comrades earlier, Ben Efrat was denied the customary time off for good behavior and had to serve the full sentence.

The victimization of the *Spark* editors evoked international protest and Ben Efrat

was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

Michel Warschawsky was prosecuted after police raided the Alternative Information Center after the Israeli government ordered it shut down for six months.

Warschawsky and the Center were charged with "closing an eye" to the source of a booklet the Center had typeset. The booklet offered guidance to Palestinians interrogated and tortured by the Israeli police.

The government charged that the booklet had been prepared by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, also a banned organization.

Throughout, Warschawsky refused to divulge the identity of the person for whom the typesetting was done.

He was initially sentenced to 20 months in prison and the Center was fined a stiff \$5,000.

On appeal, Israel's supreme court upheld the fine against the Center but reduced Warschawsky's sentence to eight months in prison, plus 12 months suspended.

During his 12-month parole period, he must report regularly to the police. Travel and other rights are restricted.

As with the *Spark* editors, Warschawsky's victimization evoked significant protest in Israel and abroad.

staples has risen dramatically, as much as 400 percent in the case of powdered milk.

Speaking before the House Armed Services Committee on December 5, William Webster, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, said the blockade and embargo against Iraq "have worked more effectively than Saddam probably expected."

"More than 90 percent of imports and 97 percent of exports have been shut off. . . . Industry seems to be the hardest-hit sector so far. Many firms are finding it difficult to cope with the departure of foreign workers and with the cutoff of imported industrial inputs, which comprise nearly 60 percent of Iraq's total imports prior to the invasion," Webster said.

The shortages have resulted in the closing of many plants, he pointed out.

"The cutoff of Iraq's oil exports and the success of sanctions have also choked off Baghdad's financial resources," the CIA director said. "The embargo has deprived Baghdad of roughly \$1.5 billion in foreign-exchange earnings monthly." Iraq, a country of some 16 million people had a gross national product of \$34 billion in 1988.

Webster said, however, that these "hardships are easier for the Iraqis to endure" because they became used to deprivation during Iraq's eight-year war against Iran. "Although sanctions are hurting Iraq's civilian economy," said Webster, "they are affecting the Iraqi military only at the margins."

Socialist unionists chart course to fight war at home, abroad

BY JAMES HARRIS

Members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) who belong to industrial unions held a series of meetings November 17–December 9. They discussed how they can deepen their resistance to the employers' 10-year offensive against the unions and working people by reaching out broadly to workers and farmers — in uniform and out — in a campaign against the coming U.S.-led war in the Middle East.

At meetings in 10 cities, socialist workers in the auto, mining, garment, textile, rail, oil and chemical, meat-packing, steel, electrical, and airline and aerospace industries discussed reports on "The Current State of the U.S. Labor Movement and Advancing the Party Campaign in Support of the Eastern Airlines Strikers," and "The Organization of the Working-Class Vanguard as Part of the Party Campaign Against the Imperialist War Drive."

At each meeting the socialist unionists charted a course of action to put building working-class opposition to the coming war at the center of all the party's work. Leadership elections were held at the conclusion of each gathering.

"In every war the ruling rich step up their repression," John Hawkins, an underground miner and member of the United Mine Workers of America, told the meeting of socialist miners. "They attempt to cut back on our democratic right to discuss and organize. They attack our wages and our working conditions in the name of waging war. The government is already working hard to convince a layer of working people that the war they want us to fight is in our interest and not exclusively for the benefit of the rich."

"The goal of the SWP is to organize the working class to fight in its own interests and not those of its exploiters," he said. "The ruling families who are preparing the deaths of tens of thousands abroad are the same people who are breaking our unions and slashing our wages here at home."

A party based in the working class

Hawkins noted that being in a position to discuss and debate with unionists, and mobilize working people around big questions in world politics, such as wars and revolutions, is why the party decided in the mid-1970s to get the big majority of its members into the factories and mills organized by the big industrial unions.

While socialist workers have participated in and helped to lead struggles and strikes over the past few years, this has not occurred in the context of a rising labor movement on the offensive. Aside from such a development, only enormous events, such as in the Mideast conflict, can significantly alter the openings, challenges, and possibilities for the working-class vanguard to strengthen itself and to recruit workers to the socialist movement.

Deep-going changes in the capitalist system have had a big impact on the working class in imperialist countries, he said. During the movement against the war in Vietnam, which the party participated in and helped lead, capitalism had not yet come to the end of its post-World War II expansion.

"The economic crisis that we are now

seeing had not hit and the working class had been pushed out of politics," Hawkins said. "But now capitalism is in crisis and we are seeing resistance from working people to the employers' offensive."

"It is from our base in the working class that we will carry out a campaign against the slaughter Washington is driving toward in the Middle East," he said. "The most consistent fighters against this war will be those who are fighting the employers at home."

At the heart of the discussions on the U.S. labor movement was the need to continue building solidarity with the 21-month strike by members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) against Eastern Airlines.

Machinists forced union-buster Frank Lorenzo out of the airline's management during the strike. The government is now running Eastern through its court-appointed trustee and is doing so in the interests of the U.S. capitalist class as a whole, not just Eastern's stockholders or creditors. They hope to divide up the airline among other companies in a way that helps the airline industry. The strikers and their supporters continue to hold picket lines and other events as part of their fight. A meeting of socialists in the Machinists union was held in Washington, D.C., November 17–18. (See *Militant*, Dec. 7, 1990.)

Jeff Powers, a leader of the SWP's trade union work in the United Auto Workers union (UAW), reviewed the Eastern battle for the 30 auto workers who met in Detroit. He pointed to it as an example of the fight-backs taking place today. "These fights are mainly defensive struggles by workers who face desperate conditions," he said. "This is the nature of the struggles taking place at Eastern, New York's *Daily News*, Greyhound, and the 1989 strike by miners against the Pittston coal company."

"At the same time, however, recent contract settlements between the auto companies and the UAW, and the settlement with the *New York Post*, show that the union officialdom is still able to lead many workers into accepting concessions without a fight," Powers said. "This makes the occasions when workers are able to find a way to open a struggle and use union power to defend their interests even more important."

Trade unionists from the Communist League in Canada participated in several of the meetings. At the meeting of socialist members of the United Steelworkers of America meeting in Pittsburgh, Michel Dugré, a leader of the Communist League in Toronto, reported on recent strikes by steelworkers across Canada.

"This struggle showed two things," Dugré said. "First, the capitalist steel bosses in Canada are just as determined to drive back workers' wages and working conditions as their counterparts in the United States. Second, workers in Canada who are trying to defend themselves against these attacks must work through the same challenges as U.S. workers who decide to fight: the need for solidarity, unity, and leadership."

In the United Food and Commercial Workers meeting, participants drew attention to the growing awareness of farmers and packinghouse workers that they face a common

enemy — the packinghouse bosses.

Restructuring and monopolization of the industry by the packinghouse bosses has meant union-busting, a drastic drop in wages, and speedups leading to higher injury rates. Packinghouse jobs are now the most dangerous work in the country.

Farmers have been driven out of raising livestock or have had their income on sales of livestock drastically reduced by the packinghouse bosses. Washington's war drive has also hit farmers hard through rising fuel prices and farm youth in uniform are being sent to the Gulf. As a result, farmers have become more open to supporting struggles of packinghouse and other workers.

Participants in the United Transportation Union meeting in Oakland noted that rail workers, like other workers, had come under increasing attacks by the bosses. Many rail workers have been without a contract for two-and-a-half years. Mandatory drug testing has been introduced, and crew sizes have been reduced.

In discussing the steps preparing the SWP and its supporters to carry out the antiwar campaign and stand up to the pressures of the war drive mounted by the imperialists, participants in the 10 meetings expressed the need to be better organized and more disciplined in order to effectively carry out their political work.

At the coal miners' meeting Hawkins explained that this is true for all unionists. "To be effective fighters, working people need to know the facts and need to be organized," he said. "They need to be able to use their unions to fight. And they need to be completely clear about what their interests are as a class. This is where the communist movement comes in. We can explain these things clearly, and truthfully."

In Chicago, members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, discussed their special responsibility to combat the pro-war propaganda of the oil companies.

"Our positions as refinery workers brings credibility to our statements opposing a war drive for Big Oil. We know something about the oil industry," Joel Britton told the 30 workers at the meeting. "And in the coming months we are all going to get a chance to speak out about it."

Oil workers at the gathering adopted a goal of selling 30 *Militant* subscriptions and 75 copies of the new Pathfinder book, *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*. At each of the 10 meetings the socialist unionists decided to make special efforts to sell subscriptions to the *Militant*, the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, the French-language magazine *Lutte ouvrière*, and the antiwar book.

IUE workers fight for democratic rights

At the meeting of members in the International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE), Laurie Burke, of Seattle, told of a struggle at the General Electric plant where she works. The plant produces parts for fighter planes and helicopters now being used in Saudi Arabia.

"GE is aggressively putting forward a pro-war policy," she said. "With our union contract expiring in June, the company is attacking the democratic and political rights of workers in the plant."

"Two workers in the plant were SWP candidates for public office," Burke said. "They centered their campaigns on explaining why working people should oppose the U.S. drive to war. This was widely discussed in the plant. Two weeks after the election, the company told the workers they could not have literature because it could be offensive to others in the plant. This included political literature opposing the war."

"The union has filed a grievance against this attack on democratic rights," she said. "A discussion has broken out in the plant about the right of workers to freely possess, display, and distribute literature."

"One coworker stated that although he didn't agree with what we had to say, he felt we had a right to say it," Burke said. "Another coworker who placed a leaflet on a bulletin board in his work area announcing a Militant Labor Forum on 'Issues in the Arab East' was instructed to remove the leaflet. He intends to fight this restriction."

At the meeting of socialists belonging to



Militant/Marc Lichtman

Socialists' meetings discussed union battles, building working-class opposition to war. Above are two workers of 6,000 who demonstrated December 10 in support of *Daily News* strikers.

the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) held in New York and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) held in Philadelphia, participants noted that many of their coworkers are immigrants from El Salvador, Nicaragua, or countries in Asia. Many know firsthand the devastating consequences of war and their experiences have made for lively discussions. A garment worker from Los Angeles reported that a Mexican coworker who has only been in this country for a few years just received his Selective Service registration forms in the mail.

Participants in the meetings noted that while war is not popular, many workers are confused right now and some support the war drive. Unionists explained how over time, the realities of war help foster active opposition by the working class. This opposition, moreover, will be bound up with the fight by workers against the war the ruling rich are waging here at home.

Reaching out to workers in struggle, new developments in the unions, fightbacks by family farmers, GIs and reservists, and others is the central task in building working-class opposition to the war, the unionists participating in the meetings concluded. Socialist workers will become better fighters and can deepen their education and leadership experience through the antiwar campaign.

As one participant said, "The book that we should be reading to help prepare us for the things we must do is *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* because this book goes to the heart of why our party is organized the way that it is."

"It discusses why we have units that function politically within industry and as part of the unions," she said. "These structures become even more important as we enter times of increased political struggle — during wars, revolutions, and economic catastrophe."

Socialist coal miners elected St. Louis miner Mary Zins as their organizer. Wendy Lyons of St. Paul, Minnesota, was elected organizer at the meat-packers meeting. Socialist oil workers chose Joel Britton of Los Angeles, and auto workers chose Jeff Powers of Detroit to head up their efforts. James Warren of Chicago was elected organizer by the steelworkers' meeting; Margaret Jayko of Oakland, California, by socialists active in the ILGWU; Meryl Lynn Farber of New York by members of the IUE; and ACTWU members selected Francisco Picado of Philadelphia as their organizer. Eastern striker Nancy Brown was elected to organize socialist IAM members.

Socialists launch campaigns

Continued from Page 32

2368. He helped organize support for miners on strike at A.T. Massey in 1984–85 and for miners on strike against the Pittston coal company in 1989. Hawkins is the SWP candidate for mayor of Birmingham, Alabama.

In Boston, Christopher Hedges, a member of IAM Local 1726, is the party's candidate for mayor. Margaret Pucci, an Eastern striker as well as a member of ACTWU, is the SWP candidate for mayor of Lynn, Massachusetts.

Danny Booher is the Socialist Workers mayoral candidate in Phoenix, Arizona. Jon Hillson, Margaret Husk, Dean Athans, and Kibwe Diarra are running for school board in Cleveland, Ohio; Jim White for mayor of San Francisco; Mary Selvas for mayor of Houston; and Stuart Crome for city council in Seattle.

Wendy Lyons and Laura Garza are the SWP candidates for city council in St. Paul, Minnesota, along with Evan Roberts for Minneapolis Board of Education. In St. Louis, the SWP is running David Rosenfeld for president of the Board of Aldermen, Charlene Adamson for Eighth Ward representative, Jim Rogers for 10th Ward representative; and Ruth Robinette and Andrea González for school board.

A slate of socialist candidates in Des Moines, Iowa, includes Nan Bailey for mayor; YSA member David Novack for city council, along with Héctor Marroquín; and Priscilla Schenk and Ted Leonard for school board. Bailey won 10,000 votes in Iowa's 1990 gubernatorial election.

In Omaha, Nebraska, socialists have announced rail worker Greg Preston and UFCW member George Chalmers for city council.

Continental Airlines files for bankruptcy

Continued from front page

In March 1989, after 15 months of contract talks and company demands of \$150 million in concessions, ramp workers, aircraft cleaners, and mechanics from the IAM struck Eastern. Five days into the strike, Eastern filed for bankruptcy protection. Lorenzo wanted to bust the unions and add the carrier to his nonunion Texas Air Corp. Instead, due to the strength of the strike and the solidarity it received, it is Eastern and Continental that have been adversely affected.

Eastern has lost millions of dollars since the strike began. In mid-September 1990, Eastern missed the deadline for a \$95 million payment to its pension fund. Failure to make the payment could have resulted in the pension agency placing liens against Eastern or Continental Holdings Inc. The holding company agreed to assume liability for up to \$680 million to cover Eastern's underfunded pension plans. A payment of \$80.5 million was made and Continental agreed to put up \$500 million in collateral to back the rest of the fund's deficit. This was a concrete indication of how far Continental had been drawn into trying to cover strike-related losses at Eastern, and the recent bankruptcy shows how deeply Continental has been dragged down by the fight at Eastern.

Eastern's safety records seized

On December 1 investigators from the Justice Department raided the corporate headquarters of Eastern in Miami and seized hundreds of the airline's safety logs. In July 1990, the New York District Attorney's office had brought indictments against Eastern and

nine former and current managers for failure to adequately inspect its airplanes.

At the time, Eastern's court-appointed trustee Martin Shugrue maintained that safety violations were in the past and did not reflect the airline's current practices. "We have the enviable title today of the world's most inspected airline," Shugrue said then. However, the December 2 raid was based on information from more than 10 people who told government officials that Eastern had continued to inadequately inspect planes.

Strikers march in Miami

Drawing attention to the strike during the heavily traveled holiday season, more than 600 Eastern strikers and supporters demonstrated and chanted "Don't fly Eastern" at the Miami airport December 1. The action was in part a response to the recent decision by the bankruptcy judge to grant Eastern another \$135 million for operating funds. In addition, strikers have mapped out a campaign to visit travel agents in the city with packets of information about the strike.

In Los Angeles, some 70 Machinists and their supporters held an expanded picket line at the airport on December 8. Recently, Eastern strikers there rallied with hundreds of meat-packers at a demonstration supporting the boycott of Farmer John, a company that has had a union for many years. The company is now refusing to bargain with its employees. In addition, striking Machinists have joined solidarity activities in Los Angeles for 75 workers at Quality Hardware, who are on strike in response to company demands for huge cuts in medical benefits.



Militant/Nancy Cole

Eastern strikers picket Miami airport December 1. The Eastern strike had a big impact on Continental's default.

Canada unionists protest 'insane drive toward war'

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN AND JOHN STEELE

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "Canadians do not want to fight a dangerous and unnecessary war," declared Angela Schira, secretary-treasurer of the British Columbia Federation of Labour (BCFL) to a demonstration of over 250 people held here November 29. The action protested the Canadian government's role in the drive toward war in the Middle East.

The rally took place during the annual convention of the BCFL. Dozens of unionists from around the province were joined by students from Vancouver campuses, and activists from End the Arms Race, the protest's sponsor.

Later in the day, more than 1,000 delegates to the convention representing 270,000 unionized workers debated the coming conflict for nearly an hour. The body then adopted a resolution by a large majority calling for the withdrawal of Canadian forces from the Arab-Persian Gulf and demanding that Ottawa not divert funds from government programs to pay for the war effort. The resolution also condemns the use of force to resolve disputes between nations, including the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Hospital Employees Union (HEU) delegate Mike Barker led off the debate explaining that United Nations approval for the war will result in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands, or even millions of working people. "If the board of directors of all the major corporations were put on the front lines, a solution would be found in 15 minutes," he said to applause. "Let's stop this insane drive to war. We must demand that the troops be brought home now."

A delegate from the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) told the delegates, "I have two sons of military draft age and I can tell you that my children and your children will be asked to go and die in the Persian Gulf, not the children of [Prime Minister] Brian Mulroney or [External Affairs Minister] Joe Clark."

David Lawther, another HEU delegate strongly opposed the resolution. He said that the membership would not agree with it and compared Iraqi President Saddam Hussein with Adolf Hitler, arguing Hussein must be stopped.

A delegate from the Union of National

Defense Employees asked how the BCFL could oppose the use of Canadian troops if the war was sanctioned by the United Nations. He also said that Canada should be involved in peacekeeping and expressed concern over the jobs of 40,000 workers in Canada's war plants.

A delegate from CUPE Local 23 replied, "I'm sorry, but I'm against the armaments industry. But we in the trade union movement must take responsibility to ensure that those brothers and sisters working in the industry be retrained and relocated for other jobs."

Longshoreman Dave Prichett argued that you "can't solve aggression with aggression." He explained that Washington is responsible for "over 50,000 deaths in El Salvador, 60,000 in Guatemala, and 70,000 in the contra war against Nicaragua."

"I'm not willing to support a war for the oil sheiks in Kuwait who deny union rights and women's rights," he said.

In Montréal on December 1, 175 people picketed the Canadian armed forces recruiting center in downtown Montréal. A wide range of organizations participated. The protest demanded the withdrawal of Canadian, U.S., and other imperialist troops from the Persian Gulf.

Following the action, a meeting took place to form a citywide action coalition against the developing war in the Middle East. After a discussion, the more than 50 people present voted on a statement of purpose that demands "the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Canadian forces and all foreign troops from the region." It also commits the coalition to building broad, visible actions aimed at Canada's role in the Persian Gulf. In addition the statement condemns the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The 20 organizations participating included the Canadian Peace Alliance, Artists for Peace, the Québec Teachers' Federation (CEQ), the McGill University Troops Out Coalition, Vieux-Montréal Junior College Student Association, Student Association of the University of Québec at Montréal, Young Socialists, Communist League, Gauche socialiste, Vie ouvrière, and others.

The next action will take place December 20, 6:30 p.m., at the federal government offices at the Centre Guy-Favreau on Boulevard René Lévesque.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

Fighting capitalism's wars, employer assaults, racist attacks, and sexism

This week the *Militant* begins a column devoted to reports on the activities of the Young Socialist Alliance. The YSA is a revolutionary organization of young workers, high school and college students and other youth. Its members seek to organize other young people in the fight against the wars, economic devastation, racism, and sexism bred by the capitalist system. They are part of the struggle, along with working people, to bring about a workers and farmers government in the United States that can join the worldwide fight for socialism.

The central campaign YSA members are carrying out today is engaging in the debates and discussions taking place about the coming imperialist war in the Mideast and urging others to participate in building visible opposition to the U.S.-led war drive.

We encourage members of the YSA, as well as members of the Young Socialists in Canada and New Zealand, to contribute items for this column.

NEW YORK — Since its debut shortly before the October 20 antiwar protests, a YSA button calling for "U.S. troops out of the Arab East!" has been a big hit. "More than 1,000 buttons have been sold and we just picked up an order for 2,000 more," said Derek Bracey, a member of the YSA National Executive Committee. He reported YSA members in Atlanta sold 20 buttons the first weekend they received them, and the New York chapter raised its initial order from 50 to more than 150.

"At the October 20 action, many youth and others wanted to buy and wear a button to show their opposition to the government's war drive," said Bracey. YSA members in many cities have reordered the button, he said.

It is now the most popular button produced by the YSA, followed by a "Break all U.S. ties with apartheid" button, and then buttons against racist attacks and for a woman's right to abortion. Bracey also announced that plans are in the works for a new YSA T-shirt with an antiwar slogan. The group hopes to have them out next month.

As part of the campaign to get out the truth about the imperialist war drive in the Mideast, young socialists from Cleveland; Omaha; Washington, D.C.; and Greensboro, North Carolina, were among the first volunteers to sign up to help in the effort to get the 30,000 signatures needed to place Socialist Workers Party candidates

on the ballot for the April mayoral elections in Chicago.

YSA members and other campaign supporters went December 1 to universities and working-class areas to talk with people about the war drive and the employers' war against workers and farmers at home. They will also be sponsoring classes through the January 22 conclusion of the petitioning.

YSA national chairperson Aaron Ruby joined in the first week of campaign events. He is speaking at a December 8 campaign rally and on two campuses in the area about the imperialist war. On December 9-14 he will visit Cleveland to attend a regional antiwar action.

Volunteers for the campaign effort are needed. Those interested can call Chicago YSA chairperson Eric Matheis at (312) 829-7018.

YSA members in the Twin Cities in Minnesota have been holding a weekly class series on the book *The Last Speeches of Malcolm X* and other Pathfinder titles. On November 17, 12 young people attended the class, including college students, community activists, and young workers, to hear a presentation given by University of Minnesota student Gerardo Sanchez.

"Was Malcolm X a Marxist?" "How did his travels impact on his internationalist ideas?" "Were his religious views in contradiction with his political views?" "What is the importance of unity in struggles such as the civil rights movement?" These were some of the questions raised during a lively discussion that lasted more than two hours.

The following day YSA members met to plan the next class series and phone some of those who had attended to invite them back and encourage them to subscribe to the *Militant*.

TORONTO — Two teach-ins against the coming Mideast war, organized by campus antiwar coalitions, were held here November 15 at the University of Toronto and York University. Colin McKay, a member of the Young Socialists, spoke from the platform at the York meeting, which included faculty members, representatives of student groups, and campus unions and was attended by 125 people. McKay urged those present to participate in a November 24 action and spoke of the importance of building "visible protests in the streets to fight against the coming war in the Mideast."

Working-class campaign against imperialist war drive

Fighting the employers' offensive at home and abroad

BY JACK BARNES

On November 1 the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party issued a statement calling on working people around the world to "put at the center of their political activity campaigning against the horrendous war Washington, London, Paris, and their allies are preparing in the Middle East." The statement emphasized, "We can have no illusions. The war preparations are now accelerating."

Today we can confirm the accuracy and urgency of that statement. What's more, events since then have brought a murderous war in the Middle East even closer.

On November 29 the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution giving Washington the green light to unleash its massive military force following a January 15 deadline for the Iraqi regime to withdraw from Kuwait.

Previous Security Council resolutions had condemned the August 2 invasion of Kuwait and called for the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops; demanded that Iraq rescind its August 8 annexation of Kuwait; called on the Baghdad government to immediately release all citizens of other countries without harm; demanded revocation of the order closing embassies and consulates in Kuwait and a halt to violations of the diplomatic immunity of their personnel; and condemned the mistreatment of citizens of Kuwait and of other countries by Iraqi occupation forces.

The U.S.-initiated measure adopted November 29 reaffirmed these demands from previous Security Council resolutions. It did something more, however. The new measure not only authorized "all member states . . . to use all necessary means" in order to "fully implement . . . the foregoing resolutions," but also "to restore international peace and security in the area." The Security Council called on "all states to provide appropriate support for actions undertaken" by Washington and its allies.

This wording, drafted by Washington, provides the U.S. government with an even more open-ended basis than

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U.S. troops on maneuvers in Saudi desert (top). Washington's accelerating military preparations are bringing murderous war in Mideast closer. Seattle antiwar protest December 1 (left). Campaign is urgently needed to organize workers, farmers, GIs, and students to challenge bosses' drive toward war and attacks on labor movement and working people at home.

Militant/Eric Simpson

This article is based on talks presented by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, in Washington, D.C., on November 17 and in New York City on December 1.

The Washington speech was part of a weekend conference of SWP members and supporters from around the United States who are members of the International Association of Machinists, including a number of rank-and-file leaders of the Eastern Airlines strike that began in March 1989. The gathering was the first of a round of such meetings over the next few weeks by communist workers in the United States and Canada who are active in 10 industrial unions. These meetings were called to discuss how unionists can deepen their resistance to the employers' 10-year-long assault on the unions and working people as they reach out broadly among workers and farmers — in and out of uniform — to advance a working-class campaign against the U.S.-led war drive in the Middle East.

The December 1 meeting was jointly sponsored by the New York City, Brooklyn, and Newark Militant Labor Forums. Among those attending the forum were unionists and students who had traveled to New York that weekend to participate in a national meeting of the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East. That meeting, attended by some 200 people representing organizations from across the United States, called a January 26 demonstration in Washington, D.C., to demand "Bring the troops home now," "No war in the Middle East," and "Money for human needs, not for war."

The article takes account of political developments over the 10 days following the New York talk.

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before to rationalize war against Iraq under the cover of enforcing UN decisions. For the U.S. rulers, "peace and security" in the Middle East has only one meaning: peace and security for imperialist interests. It would require the imposition of a regime in Iraq that, in political terms, is largely a U.S. protectorate in the region. It would require inflicting a massive defeat on the Iraqi armed forces and toppling the current government. Washington's minimum aim is to end up with a qualitatively weaker Iraq, vulnerable to imperialist dictates and continuing military threats.

Secretary of State James Baker told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee December 5 that if the UN conditions are not met and war is launched against Iraq, Washington will strike "suddenly, massively, and decisively."

Abdalla Saleh al-Ashtal, Yemen's chief UN representative, could not have been more correct in telling members of the Security Council November 29 that "in the annals of the United Nations this will long be remembered as the war resolution." That's what it was.

It was also a foregone conclusion. Virtually every aspect of the Security Council proceedings had been carefully staged by Washington through prior meetings with other supporters of the war drive against Iraq. These backers included Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, who feigned indignation when he warned the Iraqi government: "If even one Soviet citizen is harmed, I cannot say what the consequences might be, but they would be very, very serious." (Shortly after that the Baghdad regime announced that all Soviet citizens in Iraq were free to leave the country. A few days later all foreigners held until then as hostages in Iraq were permitted to depart.)

The government of Cuba strongly opposed the Security Council measure as a dangerous new step in Washington's massive military buildup and preparations for aggression. Paraphrasing the title of a novel by Gabriel García Márquez, Cuba's Minister of Foreign Affairs Isidoro Malmierca termed the resolution "the chronicle of a war foretold."

Massive military buildup

On November 29, the day of the Security Council vote on the war resolution, U.S., British, and Saudi troops went on the highest alert short of combat. The agreements are now all in place for the British and Saudi units to fight under U.S. command when the shooting starts.

The day after the UN vote, Bush sought to plug a loophole in his political rationale for war by going through the motions of "exhausting all the channels" before resorting to arms. Bush announced he was inviting Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington and sending Secretary of State Baker to Baghdad. Baker's job is to look Saddam Hussein straight in the eye and state: "There'll be no 'face-saving' way out. Comply to the letter of each of the UN resolutions or else."

The next day, December 1, Pentagon officials announced that 300 more fighter bombers were being sent to the Arab-Persian Gulf, bringing the number of U.S. warplanes in the region to some 1,900 — not to mention several hundred more provided by Saudi Arabia, Britain, France, Canada, the Netherlands, Italy, and others. (This is the first time since the Korean War that the Canadian government has sent combat forces to participate in an imperialist war. Unlike Australia and several other governments, Ottawa sent no troops to fight alongside Washington in Vietnam.) The Iraqi air force, by comparison, is estimated to have some 600 less-advanced planes.

All told, more air power has already been mobilized by Washington in the Gulf region than at the high points of the U.S. saturation bombing during the Korean and Vietnam wars. The air force and other Pentagon brass who have appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee have all testified that the U.S.-led forces are capable — during

the first week and a half of intensive bombing alone — of hurling more destructive power against Iraq than during the entire Korean War. In recent weeks, the air assault units that have been training since their arrival in Saudi Arabia have been moved closer to the border.

Britain announced just before the adoption of the UN Security Council vote that it was expanding its troop commitment from the current 15,000 to 30,000 — with the backing of the top leaders of both the Tory and Labour parties. This amounts to some 10 percent of its total active-duty forces. By comparison, the highest estimate for the number of British ground troops involved in the assault against Argentina's Malvinas Islands in 1982 is some 8,500 (although with a substantially larger offshore armada of some 30–40 British ships). In addition, London plans to send virtually every single one of the tanks it currently has in continental Europe, as well as additional ones from Britain itself.

Following the Security Council vote, the National Party government of New Zealand announced it was sending its first contingent of 300 military personnel to the Gulf.

President Turgut Özal has proposed that the Turkish government, already cooperating by mobilizing nearly 100,000 troops along its border with Iraq, may dispatch a contingent to join the U.S.-led forces in Saudi Arabia itself soon. He also offered to make the Incirlik air base in southern Turkey available to Washington if war breaks out. The government of Pakistan recently announced that it is sending another 10,000 troops to Saudi Arabia, bringing their combat strength up to 15,000 before January 15.

The Syrian minister of defense was quoted on ABC, NBC, and CNN television news December 1 as having said at a news conference that his government is prepared to commit half a million troops to combat if war actually breaks out. That's in addition to the 19,000 troops in heavy armored divisions already in place or on the way to Saudi Arabia.

Before the end of January, the U.S. government will have close to 450,000 troops there; the combined force of U.S. and allied troops will be 650,000 strong. Some 40 percent of the U.S. Army and about half of its combat troops are in the region or on their way. This includes more than half the U.S. Army units formerly stationed in Europe. Some two-thirds of the U.S. Marine Corps combat units will be in the Gulf. Half the U.S. armored forces in Europe are being sent to Saudi Arabia, bringing the number of modern U.S. tanks to 1,200. There are to be six U.S. aircraft carriers and naval battle groups in the seas around the Arabian Peninsula.

As the troops and armor relentlessly mount up, Washington is also escalating military maneuvers carried out in close proximity to Iraq's forces, such as Operation Imminent Thunder, which took place at the end of November. These massive operations by hundreds of fighter bombers and air assault units, the mock landings by invading forces — these are not primarily training exercises. They are aimed to be indistinguishable from the opening moves of the military assault itself. The longer they continue, the more provocative they become. As each day and each week passes, the fateful decisions confronting Iraq's armed forces in the face of the provocations become more and more difficult.

If the fighting does not break out soon, or if Washington is unable to score a relatively rapid military victory, then there is no way to sustain a mobilization of the size that has been carried out without reimposing the draft. Such a large percentage of trained U.S. combat forces is already committed to the operation in the Arab-Persian Gulf that there is no other means to make possible the replacement and rotation of forces over the long haul.

Already, some politicians — especially liberal Democrats — have begun to raise the call for reinstituting capitalist conscription, allegedly to redress the current class and racial imbalance of the armed forces. But, as anyone knows who thinks for a minute about the troops that fought in Vietnam, a conscripted capitalist army would be no less working class and no less Black and Latino than the current volunteer force. Communist workers maintain our historic position: Not one cent, not one man — or woman — for the imperialist army!

Brutal blockade

Alongside this ongoing imperialist military buildup, and the diplomatic maneuvers to give it cover, the economic blockade against Iraq has been reinforced. U.S. and allied war vessels continue to use armed might to prevent tankers and merchant ships from bringing imports into and transporting exports out of Iraqi ports.

It is easy to forget that this is the most effective embargo — in fact, the only real blockade — of a country in decades. Its scope, and the disparate economic and military power of the two sides involved, are unique in modern history. By any definition, it is an act of war.

It's sometimes said that Iraq is the third country since the founding of the UN in 1945 to be targeted by such a Security Council-sanctioned measure, the other two being Southern Rhodesia during the years of the white-minority regime and apartheid South Africa today. But the UN actions against these two racist regimes have involved only sanctions, not a blockade. They were openly cheated on by Washington itself. There were no mechanisms of enforcement whatsoever — let alone by massive naval, air, and ground forces

of the mightiest imperialist power on earth!

We often speak of the "blockade" against Cuba. But there's not a naval or air blockade of Cuba either, although the brutal U.S.-orchestrated ban on trade and aid has had much more devastating economic and social consequences than the UN sanctions against the racist regimes in southern Africa. (There was a U.S. naval blockade of Cuba for a few days in October 1962, when Washington declared its intention to intercept and turn back Soviet ships transporting nuclear-armed missiles.)

Even during the Vietnam War, the U.S. government never sought to interdict Soviet, Chinese, or European ships bringing armaments and other matériel into North Vietnam. In fact, the U.S. air force attempted to avoid sinking or damaging such vessels during repeated bombing assaults on Haiphong harbor.

With regard to Iraq, on the other hand, there is an actual embargo. Any ship that persists in seeking to run the blockade risks being blown out of the water — with the

“More air power is already mobilized by Washington in the Gulf than at high points of U.S. saturation bombing of Korea and Vietnam . . .”

blessing of Security Council Resolution 665, which euphemistically calls upon governments "deploying maritime forces to the area to use such measures commensurate to the specific circumstances as may be necessary . . . to halt all inward and outward maritime shipping." With that reality in mind, no Iraqi or other tanker or merchant vessel has so far run the blockade once hailed, although several have been the target of warning shots across the bow before agreeing to turn back or be boarded by imperialist forces.

The U.S. government estimates that the blockade has cut off 90 percent of Iraq's imports and 97 percent of its exports and slashed nonmilitary economic production by some 40 percent since September. Even if these figures are exaggerated, the effects of this brutal blockade are already taking a heavy toll on the peoples of Iraq and Kuwait. As Cuban Foreign Minister Malmierca explained before the Security Council November 29, the adoption of "a resolution implementing a total blockade that did not exempt foodstuffs and medicines" has "turned millions of elderly people, women, and children . . . into hostages of hunger and death."

"There are already children and those suffering illnesses among the civilian Iraqi population who have died as a result of the lack of medicine in the hospitals," Malmierca said. "The presence of more than 200 Cuban doctors and nurses, who have been rendering their services free of charge in that country for more than 12 years, enables us to testify to this fact."

There is already a lack of milk vital to infant health in Iraq, and its price has shot up by some 400 percent. The prices of other basic staples are also rising sharply.

From the outset of the imperialist-orchestrated efforts to impose the blockade in August, socialist Cuba has taken the moral high ground on this issue. Cuba's UN Ambassador Ricardo Alarcón explained to the Security Council in September:

"Cuba regards as completely inadmissible the very idea of claiming that hunger can be used to deprive peoples of what is an absolutely fundamental human right of every single human being in every part of the world and in any circumstance — that is, the right to receive adequate food and appropriate medical care."

"We do not believe that anyone has the political, juridical, or moral authority to apply inhuman measures such as those whose sole and exclusive victims would be innocent civilians."

Consistent with that position, the Cuban government has refused to cancel its food export agreements with Iraq or to withdraw its volunteer medical brigade from Iraqi hospitals.

Forced displacement of peoples

The August 2 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent U.S.-organized war drive have also resulted in the forcible uprooting and displacement of entire populations.

At the November 29 session of the Security Council, the ambassador from Yemen reported that some 900,000 Yemeni workers — many of whom have lived and worked in Saudi Arabia their entire lives — have suddenly had their work permits jerked by the Saudi government and been sent packing back to Yemen over the past two months. Why? Because the Saudi monarchy didn't like the way the government of Yemen had voted on resolutions in the Security Council.

"Comparatively speaking," Yemen's ambassador explained, "it is like having 30 million jobless Americans come back home within a short period of two months. You can imagine the economic strain that will be caused by this demographic dislocation."

The comparison is even more striking when you consider the low level of economic development and already meager

living standards in Yemen. What's more, the governments of Saudi Arabia, the Gulf emirates, and other Arab countries lined up behind Washington's coalition have cut off virtually all economic assistance to Yemen since August. And to top it off, as reported in the *New York Times* December 2, just minutes after the Yemeni ambassador cast his vote against the U.S.-initiated war resolution, "a senior American diplomat was instructed to tell him: 'That was the most expensive no vote you ever cast' — meaning it would result in an end to America's more than \$70 million in foreign aid to Yemen."

In addition to the Yemeni workers expelled from Saudi Arabia, many Jordanian and Palestinian immigrant workers have shared the same fate at the hands of the monarchical Saudi and Gulf regimes.

And the Palestinian people have been shoved around by the Baghdad government, as well. More than 180,000 Jordanian citizens previously working in Kuwait, many of them Palestinians, have been expelled by Iraqi occupation forces.

In addition, an estimated 2 million noncitizens from other countries remain in Kuwait and Iraq, a substantial majority of them against their will, with no government or international agency willing to foot the bill of transporting them back to their homelands. Of these, some 98 percent are from Third World countries. These include more than 20,000 from India, 90,000 from Pakistan, 15,000 from Bangladesh, nearly 6,000 from the Philippines, 65,000 from Sri Lanka, 55,000 from Lebanon, 14,000 from Vietnam, and nearly 5,000 from China.

Washington's bipartisan goals and course

When the Iraqi regime ruthlessly swallowed up Kuwait last August, the U.S. rulers saw that Saddam Hussein had served them on a silver platter the best chance in a decade to achieve one of their key strategic goals in the region. These goals have to do with safeguarding and advancing Washington's economic and strategic interests in the Middle East, not defending national sovereignty in Kuwait or anywhere else. The U.S. rulers' aim is to shift the relationship of class forces in the Middle East to its advantage, to take back some of what has been lost over the past three decades. The most recent big blow to Washington's power in the region came in 1979 with the victory of the Iranian revolution.

Prior to the overthrow of the shah, Iran had been one of Washington's most reliable client states. In the configuration of imperialist props in the region, the shah's "peacock throne" had formed the third leg of a tripod. The other two were Israel — by far the strongest leg, in its capacity as a massively armed junior imperialist power — and the Saudi and Gulf state monarchies, the weakest.

For more than 10 years the U.S. rulers have been trying to recoup some of what they lost with the overthrow of the monarchy in Iran. For much of the past decade they did so by providing encouragement to Saddam Hussein's war against Iran and supporting the course of their imperialist allies, especially the French government, in supplying arms to Iraq for the war effort. That conflict, launched in 1980 with a massive Iraqi invasion of southern Iran, has been among the most slaughterous conflicts in this century, with hundreds of thousands of deaths and injuries.

Despite Washington's thinly disguised aid and comfort to Baghdad, however, that murderous 10-year war brought the U.S. rulers no closer to their goal of establishing another subservient regime in the region directly beholden to imperialist interests and reliant on imperialist military support.

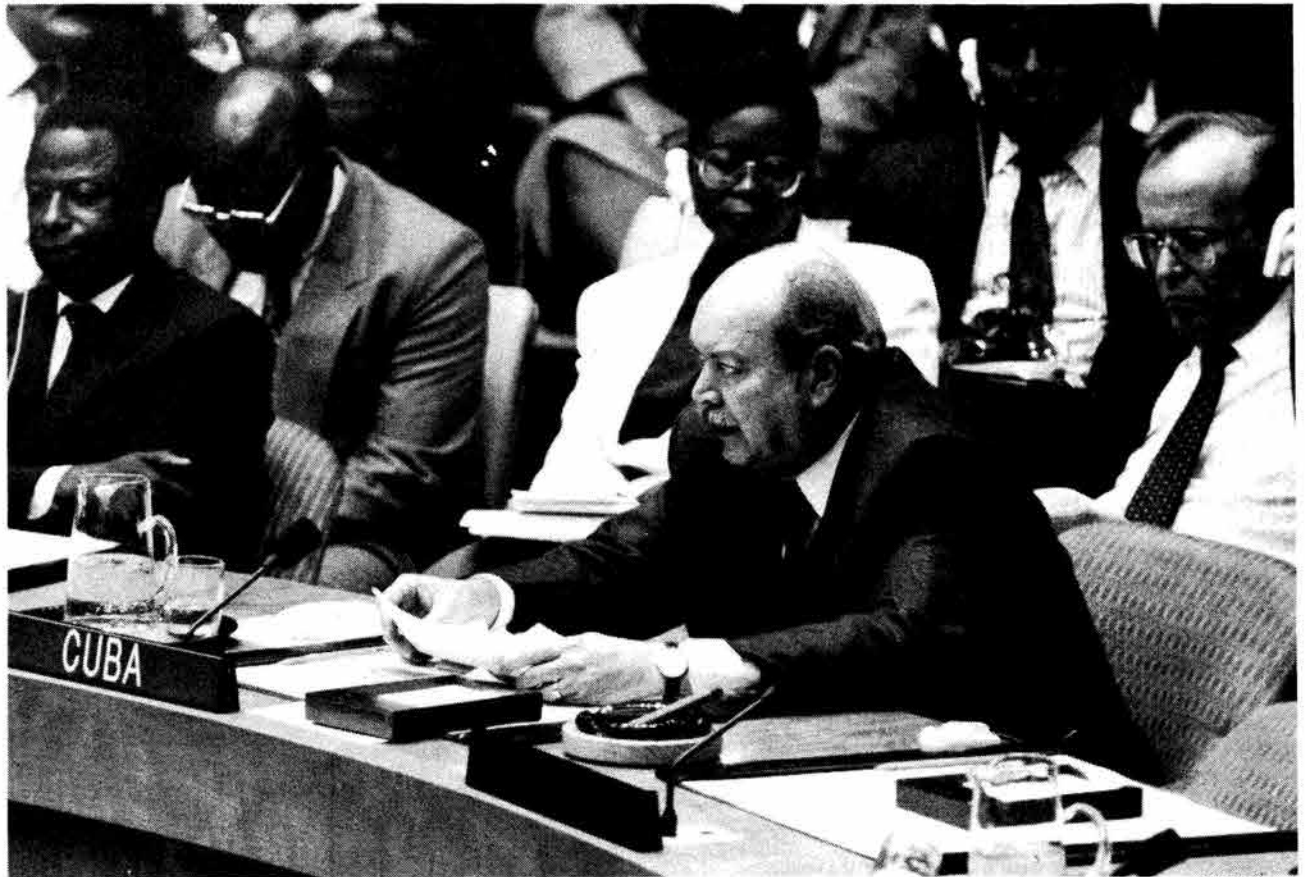
Since August, however, the U.S. rulers — with bipartisan Democratic and Republican support — have grabbed the opportunity presented to them.

The Republican and Democratic party leaderships agree that military action is justified to achieve their goals, including all-out war against Iraq if necessary. They support the Bush administration's stated policy of rejecting negotiations with the Iraqi government (although behind-the-scenes talks have undoubtedly been under way from the outset, as they are prior to — and during — most armed conflicts).

Congress supported the Bush administration's decision in August to begin pouring massive U.S. ground, air, and naval forces into Saudi Arabia and the Arab-Persian Gulf region. There was bipartisan agreement with Washington's move to organize its imperialist allies, various bourgeois regimes in the region, and other governments — 32 in all by now — to throw troops, armor, air, and naval power, war matériel, and financial backing into this mammoth military mobilization.

There has been bipartisan backing above all for the brutal and unilateral U.S.-organized war already being carried out by Washington in the Gulf — the war of attrition aimed at starving the workers and peasants of Iraq and Kuwait into submission through a criminal and inhumane blockade of imports and exports, including food and medicine.

Acclaim has been showered on the White House by Democrats and Republicans alike for winning international



Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca at UN Security Council session November 29. Casting Cuba's vote against U.S.-initiated resolution, Malmierca termed it the "chronicle of a war foretold." Seated behind him at right is Cuba's representative to the UN, Ricardo Alarcón.

political cover for this unilateral aggression through after-the-fact endorsement of each new step by the UN Security Council — with unanimous help from the council's other four permanent members: Britain, China, France, and the Soviet Union.

Imperialist politicians on both sides of the aisle in Congress have hailed Washington's achievement in bringing the bourgeois regimes in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, Egypt, Syria, Turkey, and others in tow behind the U.S.-led military operation to crush Iraq. They have been heartened by imperialism's success in scrambling all past alignments and sharply exacerbating conflicts among the rival bourgeois ruling classes in the Middle East.

A war they'll break their teeth on

The U.S. rulers' main problem is not a military one. It's true that not many decades ago Washington and other imperialist powers were in the practice of taking on countries the size of Iraq with a relative handful of marines, some gunboats, several planes, and a few paid-off traitors. Someone even coined a term for it: "gunboat diplomacy." That's over!

But, as shown by the mammoth size, modern character, and rapidity of Washington's mobilization in the Middle East, a relative decline of military power is not the source of its weakening. To the contrary, military power remains

“Cuban revolutionists' course has been courageous, consistent, principled, and internationalist . . .”

the U.S. rulers' single most dominant advantage over its imperialist allies and other governments. Instead, their problem is twofold.

First, sections of the ruling class are concerned about Washington's capacity to win a war against Iraq that yields greater gains for U.S. imperialism than losses from the uncontrolled social and political forces it sets in motion. What will be the outcome of such a war beyond the borders of Iraq and Kuwait? Will a military victory simply end up exacerbating the very failures of imperialism in the region that made it necessary for the U.S. rulers to launch the war in the first place? Will it be a pyrrhic victory?

The answers to these questions are not ultimately subject to control by Washington. This dilemma registers the consequences for U.S. imperialism of the ongoing shift in the international relationship of class forces to its disadvantage. The rulers of the declining U.S. capitalist empire confront the prospect of never again winning an unambiguous victory in a protracted war, as they did in the First and Second World Wars in the opening half of the 20th century.

The second major problem confronting the U.S. rulers as they gear up for a war in the Middle East is how, or whether, they can win a military victory quickly enough to forestall destabilizing social and political consequences at home. How long can such a war go on, how many body bags can be flown back, many ruling-class politicians want to know, before organized antiwar opposition replaces grudging support or fatalism in the working class and begins to make the political price of the operation greater than the

benefits? How long before they are compelled to reinstitute conscription?

The capitalist rulers will not be stopped from going to war by antiwar sentiment in the population; they never have been in this century, in the United States or anywhere else. But the bourgeois politicians and military officer corps are united in their determination that any war against Iraq, if it is launched, must be able to be completed quickly and successfully. The slogan of opponents of U.S. wars is today given a different content by the imperialist ruling class of the United States: "No more Vietnams!"

The U.S. rulers proclaim they will not let a war against Iraq become another Vietnam. But whether or not such a war would turn out the way the U.S. rulers hope, and as rapidly as they intend, is their biggest problem. That is the source of their tactical divisions and hesitations, and of their periodically shrill arguments with one another as they preen and prance across the television screen.

It's important for opponents of imperialism's war drive to take a closer look at these considerations, in order to guard ourselves from becoming subject to disorientation and resulting demobilization by the weekly or daily ebbs and flows of debates over tactics in the ruling class and diplomatic maneuvers by the contending forces in the Middle East; to become pushed and pulled by bourgeois public opinion. Only with a clear understanding of the U.S. rulers' objectives and problems can communists maintain an independent and steady working-class campaign against the growing danger of a war being organized by Washington — a war whose consequences in death and destruction will be horrible for working people, in and out of uniform, throughout the Middle East, in the United States, and around the world.

The 'peace party' in Washington

While the "loyal opposition" in Washington never questioned the U.S. buildup of some 230,000 U.S. troops in the Gulf between mid-August and the beginning of November, some have expressed hesitations over the Bush administration's subsequent decisions that will roughly double the size and firepower of that order of battle by the end of January.

Bush's actions are no mystery. The military might concentrated in the Gulf in early November was nowhere near sufficient to win a rapid victory in a war against the Iraqi regime. There were not enough troops, tanks, bombers and fighter planes, attack helicopters, warships, logistical units, and so on. The U.S.-organized force was not yet a credible threat to the Saddam Hussein regime.

The tactical differences in the rulers' twin parties and top brass are *not* over whether military action is justifiable, or whether at some point war is likely to be the correct and necessary next step. On those questions there is overwhelming accord.

The real tactical debate among the rulers — reflecting their different weightings of the pros and cons of these two fundamental problems they face — boils down to: *How long will it take for the U.S.-enforced blockade of Iraq to weaken the regime sufficiently to make possible a relatively more rapid military victory or perhaps to achieve Washington's goals some other way?*

Washington should first try "squeezing [Saddam Hussein] to his knees" through the embargo, Sam Nunn, the

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chairman and ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said on a television news program December 9, and then move on to a "viable military option if that fails." At the Armed Services Committee hearings two weeks earlier, Nunn spelled out what he means by a "viable military option." He called for opening up the attack by waging war "over the horizon with air power" — that is, sustained massive bombing of Iraqi cities and troop concentrations to minimize subsequent U.S. losses in a ground assault.

Adm. William Crowe, a former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, appearing before the Armed Services Committee, also advocated tightening the militarily enforced economic chokehold on the Iraqi people before launching a war. His testimony was accompanied by that of Gen. David Jones, another former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After giving the blockade some more time to strangle Iraq, Jones said, "If we take military action, we're not going to stop in Kuwait."

Caspar Weinberger, Ronald Reagan's secretary of defense, wrote in the *New York Times* in early December that the blockade "will bring Iraq to its knees if we and our allies have the patience to keep it tightly in place, and the willingness to wait until its full effect is felt."

Weinberger added, "Of course, we must keep our own military strength . . . in place and ready to be used if necessary. The objections to President Bush's recent strengthening of our force make little sense: If we are in the Gulf because we have to be, every military consideration dictates that we should be there with overwhelming power."

And then there's the ultimate antiwar senator, Edward Kennedy. He proposes an anniversary present for the Iraqi people. After a full year of starving them out, Kennedy suggests that a war be launched only after Aug. 2, 1991, if the Iraqi regime has not yet withdrawn from Kuwait.

These are the most prominent voices of the "peace party" among the Democratic and Republican politicians and in the Pentagon! The are the most vocal advocates of laying a grim, months-long economic siege of Iraq — enforced by the largest naval armada assembled since the end of World War II. And, we can add, these are the most vocal advocates of reinstituting imperialist military conscription as well.

As Bush caustically points out, his critics in Congress won't even call themselves back into session!

The most important thing for opponents of imperialist war to recognize, however, and to help their coworkers and others prepare for, is the fact that when the shooting starts, the two capitalist parties in Congress will close ranks behind the flag.

Pattern for the 1990s

These are not problems the U.S. rulers confront just for the moment, or just in one part of the world. They are permanent dilemmas facing the foreign and military policy of U.S. imperialism at this point in its decline. This will be the pattern for the 1990s.

In fact, one element not accounted for by those in Congress and the Pentagon who recommend prolonging the squeeze on Iraq before launching a war is the fact that the rest of the world will not stand still for them in the meanwhile — nor will the Iraqi or Israeli regimes.

The deepening crisis of the world's capitalist economies and of the imperialist system will keep driving the U.S. rulers and their allies to war, if not in the Middle East then in Asia, if not there, somewhere else. And the hand-wringing in Washington will continue.

Military power is the main advantage the U.S. rulers have left in their decline relative to their imperialist competitors and to the world's toilers. While U.S. capitalism still has enormous economic power, as well, its position has slipped substantially in recent decades vis-à-vis its German, Japanese, and other rivals. Moreover, the entire world capitalist system itself has become more vulnerable and crisis-ridden than any time since the Great Depression.

Washington has not undergone anything approaching a comparable weakening of its relative world strategic military power, however. One fact is sufficient to illustrate the point: it is impossible to conceive of any other single imperialist power — or even any coalition of other imperialist powers — capable of mounting a military operation in the Gulf to take on the Iraqi regime and have a reasonable chance of a military victory.

British imperialism, the former colonial power in Iraq and Kuwait (as well as in Egypt — and Palestine — what is now Jordan and Israel), certainly couldn't. The Thatcher government would not have been able to defeat the Argentine regime in the Malvinas war without decisive transport, intelligence, and logistical support from Washington. Nor could French imperialism, the former colonial power in Syria and Lebanon.

Moreover, there's not some clever trick being carried out by the German and Japanese ruling classes, who haven't committed any military forces to the Gulf. They aren't waiting in the wings to somehow grab part of the spoils of war when it's over. It's not for lack of desire that the German and Japanese ruling classes are not more involved. They are simply too weak politically to confront the consequences at home of trying to commit major military forces abroad for the first time in half a century. And they will pay a price



U.S.-led troops in assault on Korean village. Washington initiated Korean war confident it could roll back revolution there, but failed. Today, U.S. rulers are not even confident they know how a Mideast war will turn out.

in international imperialist political relations for this weakness, just as the British and French rulers will gain a bit of edge from the relatively big — though far from decisive — roles that their troops, tanks, planes, and warships are playing in the operation.

Washington's preparations for previous wars in this century have not been characterized by any similar lack of confidence. In fact, prior to World War I, the main protagonists on all sides thought they knew what was going to happen. They thought they were going to win and profit greatly from the outcome.

The same was true prior to the outbreak of World War II. In the United States, Wall Street and its bipartisan

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Washington's accelerating drive to war against Iraq is not the product of a strengthening of imperialism. To the contrary . . .
”

representatives in Congress had concrete goals that they were confident could be met by crushing their Japanese and German imperialist rivals. Of course, as it turned out they didn't exactly get everything they had hoped for, even with their victory over Tokyo and Berlin. They hadn't planned on being unable to crush the Chinese revolution, to cite just one example. Or on the scope of anticolonial struggles throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas that received an impulse from the interimperialist conflict. Nonetheless, the U.S. rulers had been overwhelmingly united and confident in going into that war.

The same was true prior to the Korean War and the Vietnam War. In each case the U.S. rulers were confident they could win, advance their strategic interests, and reorganize those countries and regions to the greater good of imperialism. In Korea they thought they could roll back the expropriation of imperialist and other capitalist property in the North (and perhaps even push on into China), and in Vietnam they thought they could at least hold the line at the 17th parallel. As we know, of course, the outcome in both Korea and Vietnam did not match up to Washington's initial expectations. But the rulers embarked on both these wars with confidence.

That is not true today. They are not confident they know how the war they are preparing will actually turn out. So, both sides in the tactical disputes in the U.S. ruling class argue on.

The U.S. rulers got away with an easy victory in Grenada in October 1983 because the popularly supported workers' and farmers' government led by Maurice Bishop had already been overthrown in a bloody counterrevolution by the Stalinist faction led by Bernard Coard. The Grenadian

toilers, who only a few weeks earlier would have fought arms in hand to defend their revolution, had been disarmed — physically and politically — and demobilized and demoralized by the murderous actions of the Coard gang.

The U.S. rulers were able to roll back the workers' and peasants' government in Nicaragua without the use of U.S. troops because the leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front — after organizing the toilers to militarily defeat the U.S.-organized contras — turned their backs on a revolutionary course and sought to come to terms with the capitalists and landlords.

Washington made short work of the National Guard in Panama last December and early January because the corrupt and cowardly leadership around Gen. Manuel Noriega refused to organize a fight. It left the anti-imperialist-minded workers and peasants mobilized in the Dignity Battalions without any organized support or direction, while Washington used massive firepower to overwhelm the courageous resistance that was put up in many working-class neighborhoods in the first days.

In each of these cases, the U.S. rulers were able to achieve their bipartisan goals by military means and without a conflict of the scale and duration that either threatened their broader class interests in the region or undermined social and political stability in the United States in any big way.

But nobody in the U.S. ruling class expects an assault on Iraq to be another Grenada or another Panama, nor can a 500,000-strong, heavily armored contra army be found to do the job.

Stability in Middle East?

The actions already taken by Baghdad and Washington have irreversibly shaken up long-standing political alignments throughout the Middle East.

The historic and oft-betrayed hopes of many toilers and even middle-class layers in the region for pan-Arab unity in the fight against imperialist domination and Israeli dispossession of the Palestinians have been pushed back even further.

The Iraqi regime brutally seized a neighboring Arab-ruled country and now faces along its borders an imperialist military force that is larger — and many times more deadly in modern firepower — than that mobilized for the invasion of Normandy in 1944.

The government of Saudi Arabia — which despite its long political collusion with Washington had never previously permitted U.S. or other foreign armed forces to set foot on its soil — now has some half a million troops there poised for an assault against Iraq. Moreover, the Saudi rulers have placed their own soldiers under U.S. command in the event of war. They have found the first of many problems they cannot buy their way out of.

The U.S. rulers have also lined up the governments of Egypt and Syria — only recently at sharp loggerheads in the Arab League — under a common umbrella, both dragging their people toward a war in alliance with imperialism.

As part of the deal, Washington has given its tacit blessing to the bloody partition of Lebanon by the Syrian and Israeli regimes. Syria has mobilized massive forces along Iraq's northwestern border, putting itself in a position to open up a second front and perhaps annex some territory. The more and more divided government of Turkey has followed suit along its border with Iraq.

The governments of Pakistan, Bangladesh, and other countries with largely Muslim populations have fallen in step behind U.S. imperialism. On the other hand, Jordan's King Hussein, previously one of Washington's most pliant collaborators, fears the price he might pay at this point for open participation in the U.S.-organized operation, given what could be loosed among the country's majority Palestinian population. The government of Yemen — strangled by the Saudi ruling families because of its failure to fall in step — doubts the honorable intentions of that regime toward Yemeni sovereignty under the best of conditions. And the list goes on.

No matter what happens, the changes already brought about in the region mean that the Arab League will henceforth be seen as an even more transparent fake than before as an instrument for defense of common interests and shared aspirations of the toilers of the Middle East.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

“Egypt and Syria are dragging their people toward war in alliance with imperialism...”

(OPEC) and relations among its member ruling classes and governments will never be the same. Washington and the capitalist families who own the U.S. oil monopolies have bolstered their position against the ruling classes of all the oil-exporting countries — not to mention vis-à-vis U.S. imperialism's oil-dependent Japanese and German competitors.

The U.S. rulers, on the one hand, are extremely pleased with themselves over what they have been able to accomplish in so short a time. Who would have imagined even a few months ago that any of this was possible without social upheaval in the Middle East? Without the fall of one or more governments?

But the chips have not yet been called in, either. The U.S. rulers pose the questions: How can we stabilize Syria and U.S. relations with the Syrian regime? The government in Turkey? The Egyptian regime? But they have no confident answers.

The U.S. rulers' deals with the various bourgeois Arab regimes involve Israel, too. None of them dare admit to this, of course, for fear of the consequences at home. But many of these governments are ready to recognize the State of Israel. They hope an agreement can be reached whereby some of the borders of the so-called occupied territories are shifted. They want to finally get the Palestinian question off their backs. After all, there's not a single one of these bourgeois regimes, on either side of the impending war, that doesn't itself have the blood of Palestinians on its hands: the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, the Iraqis, the Saudis. None of them.

But U.S. imperialism has a problem with delivering on that kind of a deal too: The Israelis may not accept it. So that's not a straight road to greater stability in the region, either.

Washington also fears what the Israeli rulers themselves may do if the U.S.-led forces go to war against Iraq. The U.S. government wants Israel to stay out, since its involvement would threaten the internal stability of Washington's allied Arab regimes. The Israeli rulers themselves have mixed feelings about getting involved, since they too recognize the uncontrolled forces that can be set in motion, redounding to the disadvantage of the interests of Israel's capitalist ruling class.

At the same time, the Israeli rulers have their own direct, strategic military stake in preventing a possible attack by the Saddam Hussein regime if war breaks out. On that the Israeli rulers will take orders from nobody. They will use whatever military force they can muster — short of their strategic nuclear arsenal — to prevent such an attack. If they're convinced that missiles capable of reaching Israeli soil have not been taken out of commission by preemptive U.S. air strikes, then they will move to do so themselves — the consequences be damned.

No economic, political solutions

None of the Democratic or Republican politicians have any answers to the underlying social and economic problems that produce and reproduce crises such as those throughout the Middle East today. None have any proposals as to how these countries can be turned into prosperous, stable societies with some degree of space for the big majority of the population to organize and engage in politics. Not that they care about the conditions of the toilers. But none even claim to have any proposals on this level.

Continued on next page

32 countries back U.S. forces in the Arab-Persian Gulf

The total U.S. forces in or on the way to the Gulf region:

Troops: 450,000

Tanks: 2,200

Ships: 6 aircraft carrier groups; 2 battleships with Cruise missiles and 16-inch guns; some 50 additional warships

Submarines: eight nuclear submarines

Warplanes: 1,900, including F117-A Stealth fighters, F-16 fighters, A-10 antitank jets, refueling planes, RF-4C reconnaissance jets

Reserves: 110,000 army, National Guard, marine, and navy personnel on active duty; a total of 188,000 can be called

Almost one-quarter of the U.S. military and a full one-half of its combat forces are now stationed in, or are on their way to, the Arab-Persian Gulf region. Two-thirds of the U.S. Marine Corps combat forces will be assigned to the region, as well as two-thirds of the army's most powerful heavy tank units.

Countries involved in U.S.-led intervention in Mideast include:

Argentina: 100 troops, 2 ships

Bahrain: small force in Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) rapid deployment force, plus regular armed forces

Bangladesh: 2,000 troops so far out of 3,000 pledged

Britain: 15,000 troops, 15,000 more pledged, including two armored brigades, two armored infantry battalions equipped with Warrior fighting vehicles, an armored reconnaissance squadron, a Field Regiment Royal Artillery, engineers, and supporting services; 12 ships; 58 warplanes; 163 Challenger tanks equipped with 120-millimeter guns.

Canada: 1,700 troops, 3 ships, 18 planes

Czechoslovakia: 200 troops (chemical defense unit)

Egypt: 20,000 troops out of 27,000 pledged, including 15,000-man Third Mechanized Division and Fourth Armored Division

France: 15,000 troops, 14 ships, 75 planes

Kuwait: 7,000 in GCC rapid deployment force

Morocco: 2,000 troops, possibly increasing to 7,000

New Zealand: Two Hercules aircraft and a medical team, comprising about 300 military personnel

Oman: small force in GCC rapid deployment force, plus regular armed forces

Pakistan: 5,000 troops

Qatar: small force in GCC rapid deployment force, plus regular armed forces

Saudi Arabia: 60,000 troops, 8 ships, 180 planes, small force also in GCC rapid deployment force

Senegal: 500 troops

Syria: 19,000 troops, including 15,000-member Ninth Armored Division; 270 tanks; 50,000 additional troops on Iraqi border

Turkey: 95,000 troops on Iraqi border

United Arab Emirates: small force in GCC rapid deployment force, plus regular armed forces

Those with just naval and/or air forces:

Australia: 3 ships

Belgium: 3 ships

Denmark: 1 ship

Greece: 1 ship

Italy: 4 ships, 8 planes

Netherlands: 3 ships, 18 planes

Norway: 1 ship

Poland: 1 hospital ship

Portugal: 1 ship

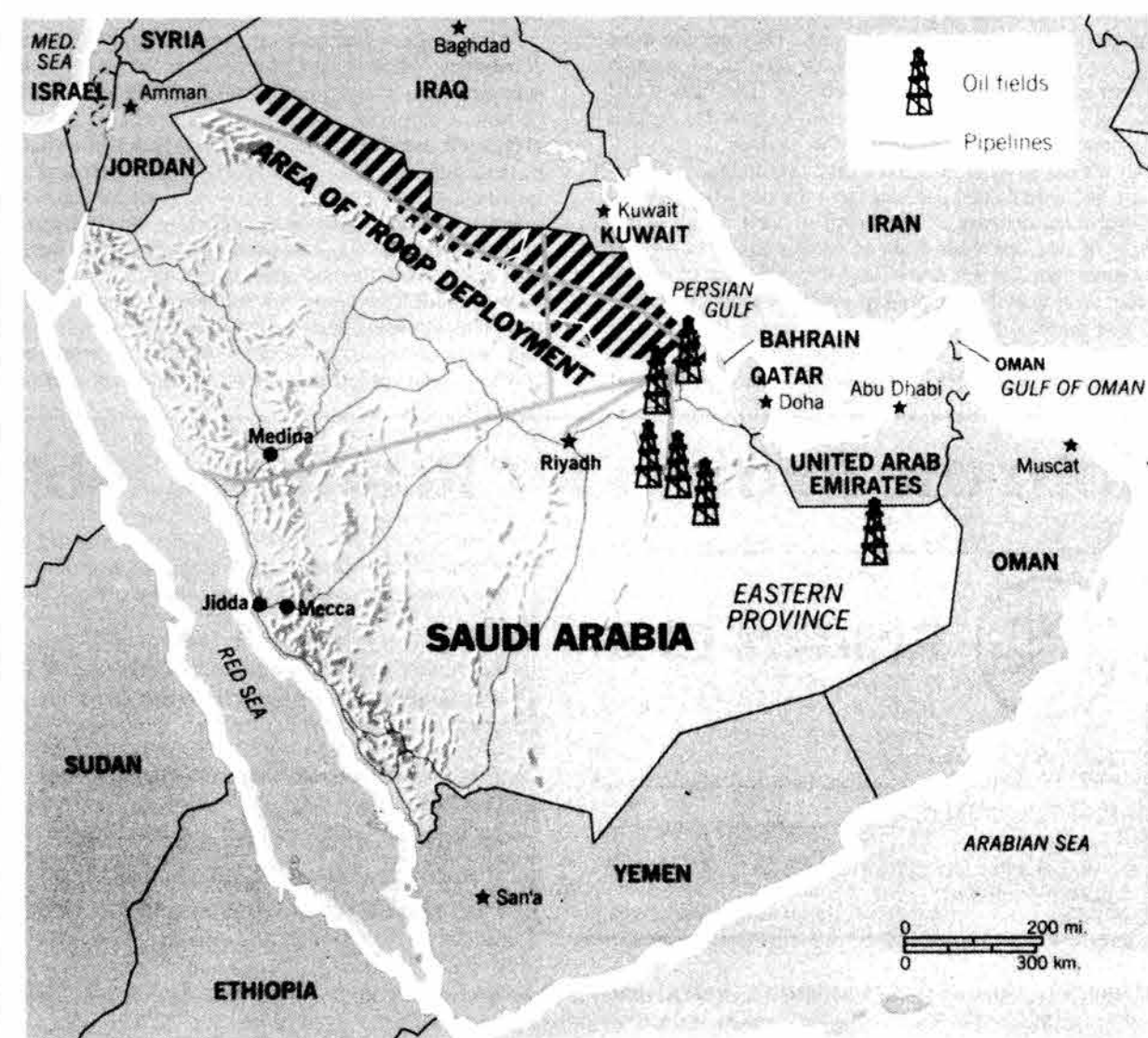
Soviet Union: 2 ships

Spain: 3 ships

Countries that have forces pledged:

Japan: civilian contingent including retired military officers

Niger: announced decision to dispatch troops to Gulf



Continued from previous page

The structure of imperialist exploitation and domination and the deepening crisis of world capitalism preclude any such solutions in a bourgeois framework. So all the politicians in Congress have to propose are various tactical military solutions. They may emerge from a war in worse shape to stabilize capitalism in the region. But the political spokespeople for a declining empire have little else to offer.

Finally, one additional point. For opponents of the coming war, this problem confronting the U.S. rulers should underline the fact that the argument "Who wants to die fighting to defend feudalism and put a royal family back on its throne?" is not a very powerful or convincing one.

Not that we shouldn't remind people that Washington's closest regional ally in this effort — the Saudi Arabian government — did not declare slavery illegal until 1962. Or that its ruling family has made it a state offense for a woman to drive a car. Or that the Kuwaiti ruling family gave citizenship rights to only 40 percent of the population — excluding the overwhelming majority of those who worked and produced the wealth of the country from even the most basic civil rights and freedoms.

But the slaughter being prepared by Washington will not be a war for these reactionary and exploitative ruling families. It will not be a war for feudalism. *It will be a war for capitalism* — a war to advance U.S. imperialist economic, political, and military interests in the Middle East against the toilers there.

The danger of denial

Right now, at this stage in the rulers' war drive, perhaps the biggest hazard that faces the working-class vanguard, including communists among them, is the danger of denial.

These hazards are compounded for those who are buffeted by the day-to-day swings and tactical divisions reflected in bourgeois public opinion. One day the news covers a tough-talking press conference by Bush — War! The next day, a sharp exchange at congressional hearings between Baker and several senators — War has been pushed back. The UN Security Council adopts a new resolution — War! The Iraqi regime releases the hostages — War has been

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**Communists above all must have
no illusion that antiwar sentiment
can prevent imperialist war . . .**
”

pushed back. Several returning hostages call for bombing Baghdad — War! And so on.

The political vanguard of the working class must steel itself against such impressionistic reflexes. The workers' movement has always faced a double problem leading up to every imperialist war.

On the one hand, the capitalists and bourgeois politicians who are themselves preparing the war always claim to be acting in the interests of peace — and of freedom, democracy, and national sovereignty as well. They are the most fervent opponents of war! They publicly agonize, as cameras roll and reporters fill up their notebooks. The bosses and politicians do this in order to maintain support for actions they must take to preserve their social system.

But it's not just the bourgeois propaganda that is disorienting. Individuals and currents from the petty bourgeoisie — sometimes because of the depth of their shock at the horrors of war, and their fears of its consequences — lose their moorings and get drawn into the undertow of one or another section of the war-makers and their political parties.

These middle-class currents have a bigger direct impact on layers of fighting workers and farmers, since — unlike the employers and most bourgeois politicians — they fre-



Palestinian youth. Iraqi regime's invasion and occupation of Kuwait has dealt blow to struggle of Palestinians for national self-determination.

quently function in or around organizations of the labor movement and in broader radical politics. They often make common cause with petty-bourgeois bureaucrats in the unions and other workers' organizations — whether social democrats, Stalinists, or the homegrown U.S. business-unionism variety. These middle-class layers, whether well-intentioned or incurably corrupted, serve as a culture for the growth of all varieties of bourgeois ideas and pressures inside the working-class and labor movement.

Closer to war

Based on the facts, communists can provide an independent working-class answer to the question of whether the capitalist rulers are pushing us closer to war. The answer is yes. The danger of a bloody slaughter in the Middle East is greater today, and the need for a working-class campaign against the imperialist war drive is more pressing.

It is closer, first of all, because Washington is nearer to having in place in the Gulf the forces it needs to fight a war and win it militarily.

There is a second factor we should look at, as well. Marxists understand that economic relations — or more precisely, the social relations of production that constitute the economic structure of society — are ultimately the determining factor in the evolution of history. But the specific actions that make history at any given time are the product of political decisions by human beings representing the interests of different social classes.

While politics has correctly been called "concentrated economics," there is no precise time in the ripening of economic and social contradictions that determines when or how a particular political decision will be made. Big events are determined in their timing and in the character of their outbreak not by the broadest economic and social factors underpinning them but by the political decisions of organizations and individuals reflecting the conflicting interests of various classes operating in the larger historical framework. And this includes "accidents."

We can all think of specific examples: social revolutions that break out when the revolutionary classes are still young and weak in historical terms; strikes that erupt before conditions are really ready, or conversely long after condi-

tions have become overripe; workers initially being stunned by the impact of an onslaught against their living conditions and only later beginning to fight back as pressures mount and openings accumulate. There are innumerable examples of this unevenness in politics and the class struggle.

In this regard, there's something else we need to keep in mind as we follow Washington's buildup in the Middle East day in and day out, and its stiffening enforcement of the embargo.

Just as politics is concentrated economics, military force

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**The events pushing toward
carnage have been set
in motion by Washington . . .**
”

is the carrying out of politics by specific means — violent and explosive ones. And these means, too, can have their own momentum in the short run. In fact, over the past month the very weight, speed, and massive character of the order of battle that the U.S. government is putting in place in the Gulf pushes politics and conflicts in the region toward resolution by military means. Never in this century has an imperialist ruling class assembled such a gigantic military force without these preparations eventuating in a full-blown war.

Already behind us

The events pushing humanity toward carnage and devastation in the Middle East have already been set in motion by Washington. They have already produced permanent, and potentially explosive, shifts in the balance of class forces in the region. There is nothing pessimistic or fatalistic about recognizing this reality. To the contrary, only by looking at it and refusing to blink in the face of it will vanguard fighters in the working class in the United States and other countries be prepared to act in an effective way against the war drive.

The positions advanced on all sides by the bourgeois politicians and military brass in Washington have nothing in common with the interests of workers and farmers in the United States, the Middle East, or anywhere in the world. As Mary-Alice Waters explains in the introduction to the Pathfinder book *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*:

"This war drive and its results are being orchestrated by the bipartisan government of the United States. But the people in whose name this is being done — those whose economic livelihoods will be devastated and whose sons and daughters will die in combat — have no say.

"No political party of working people sits in Congress, and no mechanism gives citizens of the United States — in or out of uniform — the right to debate the issues and vote on a declaration of war. That prerogative is reserved to the representatives of the twin imperialist parties that control the Congress and White House.

"After much argument and debate over tactical alternatives — and unanimous protestations of a desire for peace — those same parties have already dragged the people of the United States into four horrendous world wars this century: in 1917, 1941, 1950, and 1964. They are on the verge of doing it again, with all the unspeakable consequences it will entail in the Mideast and in the United States itself."

What are the configuration and dynamics of the world in which this war buildup is taking place? Vanguard workers

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must understand this if we are to organize effectively against the imperialist war drive.

When I spoke in New York City in November, a very good question was asked during the discussion period — one that provides a useful framework for looking at the state of world politics and the class struggle. I briefly addressed the question at the time, and I'd like to return to it tonight. It was a three-part question that I'll paraphrase.

Shoring up a declining empire

The first part was: "Doesn't Washington's capacity to mount this kind of military mobilization, and pull such a broad coalition of governments behind it, indicate that we may be living through the coming together of a new world order? Or isn't this at least what the U.S. and other imperialist rulers are attempting to accomplish and think they can bring about?" The phrase "new world order" has been used in recent years by Gorbachev, and by Reagan, Bush, and various commentators associated with both the Democratic and Republican parties.

The second part of the question was: "If the above is true, then some prominent figures in the U.S. ruling class and government must believe they have won the Cold War. Isn't that how they read the disintegration of Stalinist parties and regimes throughout Eastern Europe and the deepening social crisis and devolution of the Soviet Union? Aren't the imperialists now trying to take advantage of what they see as that shift by upping the ante in the Middle East more than they might otherwise seek to do?"

Finally, the third part of the question was: "Aren't the U.S. rulers and some of their imperialist allies, then, operating with a 'triumphalist' view of their world position? Doesn't this register the culmination of proclaimed successes during the 1980s of what came to be seen as Reagan- and Thatcher-style 'free market' — and internationally aggressive — capitalism? Aren't the imperialists operating from a position of greater strength? Don't communists have to face that reality?"

(The limits of the "success" of Thatcherism are probably denied a bit less than they were before her personal defeat and retreat to the Tory back benches.)

Answering these questions will help us think more clearly about the place of the military blockade and the war drive in the world class struggle, about some broader implications of the deeply shared bipartisan war course, and about the tactical divisions in the U.S. ruling class. What should workers organizing opposition to the war anticipate about the impact of the conflict on U.S. and world politics? How can that help us explain to other workers fighting at our side against the employers' offensive at home why our struggles are interconnected with uncompromising opposition to imperialist war as well as to debt slavery and the exploitation of the wages system?

Seeking to salvage the old order

First, what the U.S. rulers are doing in the Middle East is in fact the opposite of any attempt to establish a new world order. The point is not the words they may or may not use, but the economic, social, and political reality behind those words.

World orders *have* been put together by exploiting classes at different times in history. They've been built following major defeats of working people and their revolutionary upsurges. They've been consolidated and extended on the basis of sustained periods of economic expansion. Sometimes under these conditions the ruling groups have been able to maintain themselves in power for decades, influence the course of world politics, and deal further blows to toilers fighting for democratic liberties, for liberation, for socialism, or simply for the most elementary justice.

But what the U.S. rulers are doing by using military power to move toward a virtual protectorate in Iraq has nothing to do with establishing a new world order. To the contrary, it's aimed at trying to stave off a further crumbling of the old capitalist world order.

Following World War II the imperialists succeeded in the Middle East, as in many other parts of the world, in adjusting their system of world domination to the new situation they faced with the victory of decolonization and spread of national liberation movements. The former colonies were largely transformed into a set of politically independent countries with bourgeois social relations and ruling classes integrated into the world capitalist system. These new capitalist regimes often absorbed — and put to the service of local and foreign exploiters — substantial elements of feudal, semifeudal, and other preexisting forms of social organization.

But the organization and exploitation of labor in these countries remains subordinated to the world system of imperialist plunder. The ruling capitalist and landlord classes — even in places like Iran, South Korea, or Brazil, where there has been a relatively substantial degree of industrialization — maintain their own power and privilege by brutally enforcing a neocolonial social system that traps

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Four-week chronology of U.S.-led war buildup

November 12 — Pentagon announces up to 4,000 additional navy reserves will be called for duty in Operation Desert Shield, code name for massive Mideast military buildup.

British *Guardian* newspaper reports, "Britain's naval hospitals have more than doubled the amount of space set aside for mortuary preparations, according to officers on duty in the Gulf." The hospitals "have each turned a medical ward into a mortuary to allow them together to deal with up to 100 bodies each day."

November 13 — Speaking to reporters after meeting with Canada's external affairs secretary, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker declares the primary reason Washington must go to war against Iraq is to save U.S. jobs.

"The economic lifeline of the industrial world runs from the Gulf, and we cannot permit a dictator such as this to sit astride that economic lifeline," says Baker, referring to oil reserves in the Arab-Persian Gulf region. "To bring it down to the level of the average American citizen, let me say that means jobs. If you want to sum it up in one word, it's jobs."

November 14 — Following a 90-minute meeting with President George Bush, congressional leaders drop their demands that a special session of Congress be held to discuss and approve steps toward war.

November 16 — Washington orders 15,000 more army and National Guard reservists to report for active duty and announces 12,000 more, including the marine combat reservists, will be activated within a few days.

In an interview Bush asserts that Iraq will soon have nuclear weapons. This, he says, along with destroying Iraq's chemical weapons, are central reasons to go to war.

November 17 — Baker travels to Europe to begin meetings with representatives of governments of countries in the 15-member United Nations Security Council. Bush and Baker start rounds of meetings to win support for draft resolution authorizing use of military force against Iraq.

November 18 — Iraqi government offers to release all foreign hostages over a three-month period beginning at the end of the year, providing there is no outbreak of war.

November 19 — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announces Baghdad will dispatch 250,000 more troops to Kuwait; some 150,000 will be reservists. The buildup would make for a total of about 680,000 Iraqi troops in Kuwait and southern Iraq.

November 20 — Forty-five House Democrats file lawsuit to bar Bush from taking offensive action against Iraq without obtaining a congressional declaration of war.

November 22 — Bush arrives in Saudi Arabia on a Thanksgiving tour of U.S. troops stationed there. "We won't pull punches," he says at a marine outpost near the Kuwaiti border. "We are not here on some exercise. This is a real world situation. And we are not walking away until the invader is out of Kuwait."

British Defense Minister Thomas King announces 14,000 more troops and additional tanks, aircraft, and ships will be sent to the Gulf, bringing the total number of British troops there to 30,000 by the end of the year.

Baker meets with President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen to try to persuade his government to support a UN resolution authorizing the use of force against Iraq. Yemen is currently seated on the Security Council.

November 23 — U.S. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney signs order giving the U.S. Army authority to freeze departures of officers and enlisted personnel from the service, thus extending their time of service.

Bush meets with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo.

Bush meets with President Hafez al-Assad of Syria in Switzerland.

Bush asks NATO allies to provide sea and air transport to move military personnel and equipment to Gulf.

Baker meets with Colombian Foreign Minister Luis Jaramillo in Bogotá. Colombia currently holds Security Council seat.

November 24 — Baker meets with the foreign minister of Malaysia, a member of the Security Council, in Los Angeles.

November 26 — The five permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union — agree on a draft resolution that authorizes "all necessary means" against Iraq, giving Washington a diplomatic green light to invade Iraq by mid-January.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev warns Iraqi For-

eign Minister Tariq Aziz that Iraq faces a "tough" UN resolution if forces are not withdrawn from Kuwait and adds, "Time is running out."

Saudi government officials say they seek destruction of Iraq's "missiles, chemical weapons, and nuclear capabilities," and to "reduce the [Iraqi] armed forces."

November 28 — Britain and Syria restore diplomatic relations, severed four years ago when the British government accused Syria of sponsoring terrorism.

Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca and Baker meet at UN to discuss the upcoming Security Council meeting. This is first such high-level meeting between representatives of the governments of the two countries in 30 years.

November 29 — In a 12-2-1 vote, UN Security Council adopts U.S.-sponsored Resolution 678 (1990) that approves Washington unleashing military forces against Iraq after January 15. Four permanent members, who hold veto power, vote in favor: Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The fifth, China, abstains. Cuba and Yemen vote against the resolution.

Introduced by Baker, Resolution 678 authorizes "member states cooperating with the government of Kuwait . . . to use all necessary means to uphold and implement" all Security Council resolutions passed since August 2 invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi troops.

November 30 — Bush invites Aziz to meet with him in Washington. He says he will also send Baker to meet with Hussein in Baghdad to demand Iraq comply with UN resolutions.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates announce a loan to the Soviet Union of more than \$3 billion.

December 1 — Pentagon officials disclose Washington is sending 300 more planes to the Gulf. The buildup will include about 15,000 air force personnel.

The Iraqi government announces it will accept Bush's offer of direct talks.

The Saudi government announces it has canceled Egypt's debt, estimated at \$4 billion.

Amid numerous antiwar picket lines, conferences, and marches, an action coalition meeting in New York calls a national march on Washington for January 26. Demands are, "No war in the Middle East!" "Bring the troops home now!" and "Money for human needs, not for war!" A January 12 national demonstration is also called for London.

December 3 — The Pentagon announces a 63,000 increase in the maximum number of military reservists who can be ordered to active duty in the Mideast; some 188,000 reservists can now be activated. The Pentagon has put more than 110,000 reservists on active duty since August.

Baker tells Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "Our aim is to ensure that if force must be used, it will be used suddenly, massively, and decisively."

Even if successful in defeating Iraqi forces in Kuwait, Israel warns the U.S. government to completely "remove the military threat" posed by Hussein's forces.

The newly elected National Party government of New Zealand announces it will send first New Zealand armed forces units to the Gulf to join massive imperialist buildup.

Baghdad says more than 1,400 Iraqi children have died because of a medicine shortage created by international trade sanctions imposed on Iraq.

UN General Assembly votes to condemn Iraq for human rights violations in occupied Kuwait and agrees UN should continue monitoring Iraq's behavior in Kuwait.

December 6 — Hussein announces he will free all foreign hostages held in Iraq and Kuwait since the August 2 invasion of Kuwait.

December 7 — Washington wins postponement of UN Security Council meeting to take up resolution calling for an international peace conference on the Mideast with Israel and the Arab countries, including Palestinian participation. The resolution is sponsored by Malaysia, Colombia, Cuba, and Yemen.

Washington announces that it will vacate U.S. Embassy in Kuwait once all U.S. citizens have been allowed to leave that country.

Cheney says he has asked NATO allies to send additional forces to the Gulf, including "units that are self-sustaining, and would add ground combat power, or additional air defense, or artillery."

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the toilers in economic and social conditions far below those of even the weakest imperialist countries. The debt crisis is just one prominent manifestation of this reality. In fact, the gap in economic development and living standards between the handful of imperialist countries and those of the great majority of the so-called Third World has widened over the past two decades, as has class differentiation and polarization within them.

The neocolonial capitalist structure of these countries is a permanent barrier to long-term, stable bourgeois democracy or any political and social equilibrium. Various sections of the national ruling classes alternately conspire and conflict with the imperialists to drive these countries more deeply into indebtedness — at the expense of the peasants and workers, whose labor is savagely superexploited to cover the staggering interest payments. These countries and their toilers are hit the hardest by explosions of inflation, sudden rocketing of oil prices, intensified protectionism by the strongest imperialist powers, and slumps in the world capitalist economy.

This bitter fact of the world imperialist system confronts the vast majority of humanity. Capitalism creates the very conditions that result in increasing breakdowns and social instability; that result in the incapacity of the great majority of these countries to develop, and the consequent social disintegration; that deepen the class polarization and give rise to struggles by workers and farmers even in the handful of Third World countries that do experience industrial

“Imperialist ruling classes of the United States and Europe did not emerge as victors from Cold War...”

development. It's the expansionist drives of the neocolonial ruling classes themselves that erupt in border disputes, land grabs, and wars.

Today, these countries also face a mounting threat of a world depression, one that will have a devastating impact in Asia, Africa, and the Americas — areas of the world that have already been through the wringer of a decade-long decline in the 1980s. *All these conditions created, reproduced, and perpetuated by imperialism increasingly destabilize its poorest capitalist components and block their development.*

The massive Third World debt combines with the balloon of corporate debt and the results of a decade of real estate speculation in the imperialist countries to threaten collapse of the international banking system. Imperialist-backed austerity drives imposed by neocolonial capitalist regimes to squeeze interest payments from the blood and sweat of the toilers result in unanticipated explosions. These conditions — the product of the decline and disintegration of the old world order, not the emergence of a new one — are the real underpinnings of the political crisis that makes inevitable the U.S. drive toward war in the Middle East.

The capitalist regime in Iraq

In Iraq the imperialists do not confront a workers' and peasants' government that they seek to crush in order to reverse the tendency toward expropriation of capitalist property. In that sense, too, Iraq is not another Korea, Vietnam, Nicaragua, or Grenada. The government of Saddam Hussein is a corrupt, brutal, expansionist capitalist regime — a regime of imperialist democracy's own making, in large part.

Despite the Iraqi capitalists' sometimes sharp conflicts with imperialism over the division of the spoils from pillaging the Iraqi toilers, the regime there — as with many other neocolonial regimes — has served as an agency to organize the exploitation and suppression of the workers and peasants to the benefit of Wall Street and Washington and other imperialist powers. It has helped imperialism police the toilers elsewhere in the region as well, not only by waging a bloody war to weaken the Iranian revolution but also by organizing repeated repression of Palestinian militants and of any class-conscious workers' leaders who try to organize.

But Saddam Hussein also heads the government of an Iraqi capitalist class that has its own national interests, which it seeks to advance at the expense of its rivals in the region and — to the degree possible — by wresting concessions from the imperialist bourgeoisies. That's what led to the invasion of Kuwait. It's not complex. The Iraqi capitalist rulers, like all capitalist ruling classes, think and act pragmatically, not on the basis of science or theory. They do what they judge they can get away with at a given time to boost their profits, expand their base, and defend and advance their national class interests.

By invading Kuwait, the Iraqi capitalists hoped to gain what every capitalist class hopes to gain when it goes to war. They want Kuwait's oil, they want its territory, they want its deep-water port. So, when they figured the time

was ripe, they took them. (As it turned out, they figured wrong. They may even have been entrapped by the U.S. State Department.)

They'll hold onto Kuwait as long as they think they can do so. They've held onto Kuwait since August; now they've got another six weeks or so until January 15, they figure. They'll wheel and deal, see what happens, and then try to cook up something else. Hope for a deal, perhaps offer some territorial concessions. They'll act pragmatically, just like Bush and company. And the history of humanity over the past several hundred years teaches us that wars — often started through “miscalculations” — are the result of this pragmatic capitalist expansionism and maneuvering for advantage, and that the workers and farmers, in and out of uniform on both sides, always pay the highest price.



Militant/Selva Nebbia
Working-class neighborhood bombed by El Salvador's government in November 1989, during offensive by rebels of Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Imperialist war in Mideast will increase pressure on FMLN.

The Saddam Hussein regime started the war against Iran back in 1980 for the same reasons. Yes, Iraq's bourgeois rulers felt threatened by the revolution and wanted to deal a blow to it if they could. But they also wanted Iran's oil fields, its refineries, and its tanker ports, and they hoped that the recent disintegration of the shah's army would work to their benefit. They had one big advantage, too: they were backed and to some degree armed by the imperialist powers, who feared above all the deepening or extension of the Iranian revolution. So the Iraqi rulers launched a 10-year war at an appalling cost in deaths, injuries, and destruction. What did they end up gaining? One relatively small strip of land. And then they gave that back to Iran one month after their invasion of Kuwait to gain some diplomatic advantage and relieve military pressure on their eastern border in face of the imperialist buildup.

It's important not to fall into thinking that the only wars that take place in the capitalist epoch are imperialist wars. They are a minority of the armed conflicts, although usually the largest ones. Capitalism itself is an expansionist social system. There were capitalist wars of conquest and plunder before the consolidation of the modern system of imperialism, and there have been many since then — including wars between capitalist ruling classes of countries oppressed by imperialism.

So, despite Saddam Hussein's services to imperialism, his regime has proven too unreliable, too unpredictable, and too destabilizing in a part of the world where imperialism has enormous economic stakes — oil, above all — and where all varieties of national, social, and political conflicts are very explosive and can be very costly in their consequences for the imperialists.

The U.S. rulers need a government in Iraq that they can dominate much more directly. This is because of what Washington has failed to accomplish, because of imperialism's weakness, not its strength. But even if Washington succeeds in imposing such a subservient regime, this new regime would be no more capable than its predecessor of bringing development and stability to Iraq or to the region.

The rulers in Washington, in pursuit of their class inter-

ests, may well subject the Iraqi people to a massive blood-bath — and the result will be to reestablish a new version of the neocolonial capitalist regime that has failed and brought them to this point in the first place. Another Syngman Rhee — installed as president of Korea by U.S. armed forces in 1945, preserved in power by a massive U.S.-organized war, only to fall a decade later in the face of a popular uprising. Another Guillermo Endara — sworn in as president of Panama on a U.S. military base.

That's what Washington's bloody victory would put in place in Baghdad — another regime to oversee the brutalization of workers and peasants on a scale beyond our imaginations, another series of cynical and betrayed promises of economic development, another failure for the world capitalist system.

Acting from weakness

So Washington's accelerating drive toward war against Iraq is not the product of some strengthening of the imperialist system, some new period of its expansion and stabilization. To the contrary.

Nor is it built on the capacity of the rulers in Washington, London, or other imperialist centers to smash the working class and labor movement at home, as the capitalists succeeded in doing in Italy, in Germany, elsewhere in Europe, and in Japan in the 1920s and 30s.

Nor is it based on the imperialists' ability to offer substantial enough economic and social concessions to layers of the working class to ensure relative social peace for a decade or so. That's what the U.S. ruling class was able to do following World War II on the basis of a sustained period of capitalist economic expansion in the 1950s and 60s — itself the product of the prior smashing of the working-class movement in Europe; U.S. imperialism's victory in the war; and the political derailing, bureaucratization, and narrowing of the unfolding social movement that the CIO industrial union movement exemplified.

Nothing comparable to either one of these previous situations exists for the imperialist ruling classes today. During the 1980s the employers in the United States and other imperialist countries did deal some big blows to the labor movement and were able to push down the living and job conditions of the working class. But nowhere did the imperialists' antilabor offensive accomplish enough to break the resistance of the working class, smash its elementary institutions of defense — the unions — and thus lay the foundations for a prolonged period of capitalist economic expansion and political stability. It hasn't gotten rid of the workers' tendency to find ways to fight back against the antilabor offensive.

What the bourgeois commentators hailed as the “Reagan-Thatcher” revolution of the 1980s has come a cropper. It failed. We've just witnessed one small chapter in that unfolding story with Thatcher's stepping down in Britain — amid rising unemployment and double-digit inflation and interest rates.

The U.S. rulers have entered a recession with corporate indebtedness, the banking system, the mammoth insurance business, commercial real estate, and the stock market all in the worst shape they've been in on the eve of an economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This will be a worldwide recession for sure, and one rife with potential for breakdowns and sudden failures that could send the international banking system tumbling.

In short, what Washington is racing toward in the Middle East is the first major war in the 20th century prepared by the U.S. rulers from a position of relative weakness, not strength — economic, social, and political weakness combined.

U.S. imperialism lost Cold War

That brings us to the second part of the question: Didn't U.S. imperialism win the so-called Cold War?

The answer is no. Week after week, month after month, the evidence keeps getting stronger.

At the end of November a conference was held in France of the heads of state of the United States, Canada, and 32 European countries — including imperialist powers, all the Eastern European governments (except Albania, but they'll be there soon), and the Soviet Union. With great ballyhoo they signed a “Charter of Paris for a New Europe.” These 34 strokes of the pen, we are told, put a formal end to the Cold War — and, I guess, opened the prospects for a “new world order” (although that term is less popular in Europe, where it has some bad echoes from the 1930s and early 1940s).

But the truth is, what's shaping up in Europe for the capitalist ruling classes is a debacle, not a new order. As recently as several months ago it was common to hear on television and to read in the financial pages of major newspapers, or in magazines like *Business Week*, the *Economist* of London, and *Newsweek* how the West German capitalists were on their way to becoming the world's dominant economic power as a result of the unification with East Germany and the big investment and trading edge a united Germany would have with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This was supposed to be a tremendous way forward for world capitalism, a powerful locomotive of sustained growth.

Today, however, the hosannas are fading. The German and other Western European ruling classes are looking at Eastern Europe as if it's a massive brood of poor relations

who've dropped in to visit and overstayed their welcome. And this is not just in a manner of speaking — it's literally true. Today, the preoccupation of the capitalist rulers throughout Western Europe — who supposedly won the Cold War a year ago — is how to forestall massive migrations of working people from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe seeking to flee the rapidly deteriorating economic and social conditions there.

In place of the Berlin Wall that was knocked down a little over a year ago — an act supposedly symbolizing the "new world order" — capitalist governments are today talking about erecting a new political wall dividing Western Europe

Workers will have to be fought and defeated before capitalist system can be reimposed . . .

from everything to its east. The aim of this new wall — consisting of immigration restrictions enforced by border cops, roundups, and deportations — is to prevent freedom of travel, freedom to look for jobs, freedom to live and work where you choose. To prevent the very freedoms promised to working people just a few months ago. (The appearance in Berlin of T-shirts with the cynical and reactionary message "Bring back my wall" is an omen of these coming restrictions.)

It is now clear, as communists have recognized from the outset, that no stable regime has been or will be established soon anywhere in Eastern Europe or in the Soviet Union itself. The remnants of the ruling bureaucratic castes, and those privileged layers who to a greater or lesser extent have supplanted (or incorporated) them at top governmental levels in some countries, will seek to maintain whatever degree of centralized power they need to keep themselves in command. They will maintain strong police, military, and semimilitary forces to preserve their power in the face of growing economic, social, and political instability.

These regimes and the privileged personnel who administer them continue to bank everything on their hopes of being integrated more and more into the world capitalist system. They have no other plan for a way out of the economic and social crisis in these countries.

At the same time, none of these countries is any closer today than they were a year ago to reestablishing stable capitalist property relations in the basic means of industrial production and wholesale trade, or to winning acceptance of the social relations of production that must accompany them. The very efforts of the ruling groups to maintain themselves in power, and to ensure their continuing access to the comforts made possible by the labor of workers and farmers, creates constant obstacles to achieving the conditions necessary for the restoration of capitalism.

Most decisively, the working class itself in these countries will have to be fought and defeated before the capitalist system can be reimposed. One of the first major strikes of workers in what was formerly East Germany broke out recently. It was a strike of railway workers protesting massive layoffs planned by the government and demanding wage parity with railway workers in the western part of the country. The determination of the regime of Chancellor Helmut Kohl to make German workers pay for the fiasco in that country will not meet with ready acceptance either. There have been strikes, farmers' demonstrations, and other protests in Poland, Hungary, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere, as the privileged ruling layers seek to make working people bear the brunt of the crisis and of the increasing reliance by these regimes on capitalist market methods.

Accelerating disintegration of Soviet Union

The crisis in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics continues to accelerate, including the pace of the disintegration of the so-called Soviet Union itself. The USSR hasn't been soviet nor heading toward socialism for decades. It hasn't been a workers' republic since the late 1920s either. Now it threatens to cease being a union as well. In fact, it may be the most misnamed country in the world.

The communist course of the Bolshevik leadership in the opening years of the Soviet republic — a course that guaranteed the right of national self-determination to the oppressed peasants and workers in the tsarist prison house of nations — was reversed by the Stalinist counterrevolution in the late 1920s and 1930s. A new prison house of nations was erected by the Stalinists — not only in the Soviet Union, but to a greater or lesser degree within each of the Eastern European workers' states as well. Today that involuntary "union" is coming apart.

The economic and social crisis in the Soviet Union is worsening as well. Shortages of food and other basic necessities are growing more acute. Demonstrations and defensive strikes continue to occur to protest the devastating consequences on working people of this downward spiral.

In the face of this mounting instability, we should be prepared for the Gorbachev regime to deepen its Bonapartist course and to lash out with increasing violence and repression against resistance by workers and farmers.

Gorbachev has already unleashed murderous assaults on oppressed nationalities, so far almost entirely against those in non-European parts of the Soviet Union such as Azerbaijan. The central government has also used economic sabotage and blackmail against the national aspirations of the peoples of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Most recently, under the cover of populist demagoguery against price-gougers and profiteers, Gorbachev has set the stage to legitimize the organization and unleashing of paramilitary thugs against food protests, strikers, or others who can be labeled as "economic saboteurs." He has prepared the way for more aggressive use of the militarized police units.

How long Gorbachev himself will be able to survive this deepening social and political crisis, however, is still to be determined. It's hard not to believe that late at night Saddam Hussein doesn't get satisfaction out of thinking that even with his own prospects, he may well outlast the treacherous Gorbachev.

It's not only Gorbachev and the Stalinists who decry this outbreak of demands for national self-determination in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe.

The editorial writers for the *New York Times* and many other ruling-class mouthpieces have also warned of the destabilizing consequences for the world capitalist system of a breakup of the Soviet Union and the nationalist forces that this development could accelerate elsewhere in the world. A few days ago, *New York Times* senior columnist Flora Lewis wrote an article under the headline, "The Bane of Nations." Speaking of the "new partition threatening Europe," Lewis cited approvingly the warning of an unnamed high-ranking "Western leader" against "the risk of a new 'fragmented Europe of tribal states.'"

But growing demands for national rights are inevitable today. They are the consequence of what capitalism and imperialism have wrought over the past century. They are the consequence of what the Stalinists carried out by reversing in blood the Bolsheviks' efforts to forge greater internationalist unity among toilers of all nations and nationalities through an uncompromising fight against national chauvinism and oppression.

Capitalism and the imperialist system reproduce and deepen economic and social inequalities among peoples of

different regions, nationalities, skin colors, languages, and so on — more sharply than ever during periods of economic crisis and decline such as today. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and of the regimes in Eastern Europe inevitably lead to an explosion of national demands by peoples long oppressed by more powerful nations.

There will be an upsurge of the demand for national rights as the old world order continues to come apart. It's important for the communist movement to stick strongly to what we've said many times before — that the national question will not diminish in today's world, but will increase; and that the uncompromising championing of the right to national

Championing national rights is a precondition to advance toward socialism . . .

self-determination of oppressed nations and nationalities is a precondition for any successful revolutionary advance toward socialism and proletarian internationalism.

This right must be assured not only to those who are a nation in the economic and social sense — but for all those driven down by capitalism and imperialism who, through struggle against that oppression, come to recognize themselves as a people or a nationality. Certainly that is one of the lessons learned from Lenin and the Bolsheviks that was reinforced by the Nicaraguan revolution and the central place in it of the autonomy process among the Black and indigenous Indian peoples of the Atlantic Coast.

Regimes of permanent crisis

What exists throughout Eastern Europe, and in the Soviet Union itself to an accelerating degree, are regimes of permanent crisis, with a disintegrative aspect to all of them. Far from being a boon to the imperialist economies, this threatens to place new economic pressure and strains on the world capitalist system.

So, the answer is no: the imperialist ruling classes of the United States and Europe did not emerge as the victors from the Cold War. In fact, they have suffered a historic defeat with the ongoing disintegration of the Stalinist parties and weakening of these bureaucratic regimes. This is the case because this process was not accompanied by a decisive defeat of the workers; by the "appearance" of capitalist property relations; or by an increase in the number of revolutionary-minded workers who look to the Soviet regime and thus can be politically misled by it. Just the opposite has occurred.

The Cold War was imposed on the imperialists in the years following World War II by their inability — due to the international relationship of forces — to carry out by means of a hot war, a shooting war, their goal of restoring capitalism in the Soviet Union and other countries where it had been overturned following the war. They were not strong enough to do so right on the heels of World War II, in part because of organized resistance by U.S. GIs to being used as cannon fodder in China or Eastern Europe rather than being demobilized and sent home.

The U.S. rulers' failure, mentioned earlier, to achieve their aims in the 1950–53 Korean War was another relatively early test of the limits on what Washington could accomplish through direct military might. Rather than rolling back the overturn of capitalist property relations, the war actually accelerated the deepening of the anticapitalist revolution both in Korea and in China.

So during what came to be called the Cold War, the U.S. rulers had a standoff with the privileged castes in the Soviet, Eastern European, and Chinese workers' states and watched them break the revolutionary continuity of the workers' movement in those countries, demobilize and demoralize working people, turn them away from internationalism, and isolate them from struggles by workers and peasants around the world. This was deeply in the interests of the imperialists.

The counterrevolutionary castes sought stable relations with imperialism. They aided revolutionary struggles against imperialism and capitalist rule only to the degree necessary for their own defense and diplomatic leverage. In fact, Stalinist political corruption and miseducation — the Soviet Union's universal export, the "invisible goods" that came along with the aid — became the biggest obstacle throughout the world to forging revolutionary leaderships up to the task of organizing workers and farmers to defeat their class enemies and carry through to the end the uprooting of imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation.

Throughout this period, Washington and its allies continued to wage hot wars, launch armed aggression, and organize mercenary armies throughout the Third World — in Korea, Vietnam, Algeria, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua, to name just a few well-known examples. Meanwhile, they hoped that the pressure exerted on the workers' states through the transmission belt of the bureaucratic castes — what became known as the Cold War — would weaken these states sufficiently that they could at some point in the indefinite future be toppled militarily and capitalism restored by force of arms.

Continued on next page

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As we've seen over the past year, however, that's not how things turned out. The brutally repressive regimes that had blocked the workers and farmers of these countries from entering into politics and acting in their own class interests are crumbling. The regimes that have replaced them are in irresolvable crisis. And the imperialists have no prospect of restoring a stable capitalism, or even reasonable social equilibrium, without a fight against the toilers — a fight whose consequences they cannot foresee.

The crisis will deepen in all these countries. It will get worse. The assaults on the living standards, on what workers and farmers in these countries have come to recognize as social rights, will intensify.

But working people will resist these attacks. And through these defensive battles, workers in these countries will find ways to link up with fights by other workers, not only elsewhere in Europe, but around the world — an opportunity they were denied for half a century by these regimes.

Permanent crisis and instability, mounting struggles by workers and farmers — that is what will mark the months and years ahead in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The outcome, like everywhere else in the world, will be determined in struggle.

Moreover, the Stalinist misleaders — not only in these countries, but in the imperialist countries and throughout the Third World — are less able than ever before to disorient and betray revolutionary workers who look to them under the illusion that their policies point the road out of oppression and exploitation and toward socialism.

Imperialist war

With this understanding of the world in mind, we can see more clearly why the word *triumphalist* is not an accurate description of the imperialists' world position.

In one way, the war that is being prepared by Washington in the Middle East today is a "post-Cold War" war. That's because, unlike any other war they've prepared since 1945, the U.S. rulers can't present this one as part of the battle

“Wars Washington fights will be more nakedly imperialist in every sense of the word . . .”

against communism or the Soviet threat. What's more, this too will be a pattern from here on out. The wars that Washington fights will be more nakedly imperialist wars — and imperialist in every sense of the word.

Imperialist, first of all, in the most popular sense — like imperial Rome and its legions. The legions of a dominant power that exaggerates its contributions to human culture and ideas, in order to rationalize marching off to dominate other parts of the world. A war fought by an imperial army, claiming imperial rights and prerogatives for an imperial race. A war against illogical heathens with strange gods. A war aimed at economically draining, politically oppressing, and militarily subjugating another people. An imperial power — often with high-flown rhetoric and practiced apologetics — that claims the right to police the world.

It's good to use the term this way. There's nothing wrong or "unscientific" about it. It is an imperialist war in that most classical, most popular sense. It goes back thousands of years, and rings a bell with people throughout the world. Moreover, it's completely accurate in another sense, too. Because Washington — the last of the world's massive, brutal, imperial powers — is now embarking on a series of final wars to try to hold together a crumbling order, the capitalist order. And in the course of these conflicts — regardless of how long it takes — that empire will go down to defeat under the combined blows of workers and farmers at home and abroad.

War for Big Oil

It's also an imperialist war in the popular economic sense — a war over oil. It will be a war to guarantee that the profits derived from the organization and control of petroleum remain in the hands of Big Oil, of the monopolies and the imperialist governments that defend their interests. That's the sense in which you hear people say, "I'm not sure oil is worth a single life over there."

We shouldn't be hesitant to use the word *imperialist* in that sense, either. There's a great deal of truth to the statement that the war is being fought over oil. It's a battle over resources — a battle by the U.S. rulers to stop another capitalist class, in this case the Iraqi capitalists, from gaining too much control over those resources, directly or indirectly.

We should remember that the U.S. capitalists — alone — use 26 percent of the world's oil production. Moreover, every aspect of the world oil market — right down to the gas pump — is highly monopolized by a handful of super-rich capitalist families in the United States, Britain, and other imperialist countries.

Today, while the price of a barrel of oil remains well

above what it cost four months ago, substantially more is being produced, sent through pipelines, and put on tankers than prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In fact, in November world oil production reached a six-month high. Washington has played up information about the Saudi Arabian government bearing a big load in financing the U.S. military buildup there. But the windfall profits to the Saudi ruling families from the rise in oil prices since August 2 has produced five times as much income for them as they've laid out for Operation Desert Shield.

But it's not the Saudi throne or the ruling classes of the OPEC countries that are the biggest victors of this price-gouging — although they do benefit, and at the expense of the workers and peasants in their own countries and those in non-oil-producing countries throughout the Third World.

The big winners are the wealthy families who own the imperialist oil monopolies. They more than anyone else — more than OPEC — determine the world price of oil. This is true even though most of the Mideast oil fields have been nationalized since World War II, as well as those in many other semicolonial countries. The imperialist-owned monopolies not only own and operate their own massive oil fields, but also dominate world petroleum refining capacity, transportation, and distribution networks. The government of the Soviet Union, the world's largest oil producer, has also benefited from recent price increases, helping to offset falling revenues from the declining output of its crisis-racked petroleum industry.

The great losers economically — not to mention from the slaughter that is being planned — are working people in the United States and around the world. The majority of humanity — those in the semicolonial world — are being hit the hardest by the monopoly-rigged leap in oil prices. The Third World is being devastated. The working people of Eastern Europe are special victims too. They have been hit by the price hikes, the cutoff of Iraqi oil, the failure by the Soviet government to come through with contracted supplies, and — beginning Jan. 1, 1991 — with the necessity for the first time in decades of paying for Soviet oil in hard currency at the world market price.

So, the war that is being prepared is an imperialist war in that sense too — a war for Big Oil.

War for finance capital

There's a third way in which it's an imperialist war — the way Marxists have used the term for most of this century. It's a war waged by finance capital. It's a war over economic domination and control — redivision — of a big piece of the semicolonial world. It's a war against other propertied classes in other countries for the domination of raw materials, markets, and access to the superexploitation of low-paid labor.

It even has the aspect of a war to redivide world power and influence among rival imperialist ruling classes. Despite the broad backing of the world's capitalist ruling families for the war drive, the massive military operation in the Gulf is not a "coalition" effort. It's not a partnership of equals. U.S. imperialism is calling the shots.

The bottom line, however, is that this will be a war in which all the imperialist powers — U.S. imperialism above all — stand to lose. It will be a war of a declining, not an advancing, imperialist power.

Revolutionists and communists

With this understanding of the crisis of world imperialism today, and how the war that Washington is preparing fits into its grinding decline, we should take a look at the political leadership working people need to advance toward national liberation and socialism. Because world capitalism, no matter how deeply crisis-ridden it should become, will not collapse into socialism under its own weight. The imperialist ruling classes and the various bourgeois agencies of exploitation and oppression throughout the world will have to be replaced in the course of revolutionary struggles.

Thus, when we point to the accuracy of Cuban President Fidel Castro's statement that "in the world of today and tomorrow being revolutionary means, and will increasingly mean, being communists, and being communists in the full revolutionary sense," we're not just repeating a well-turned phrase. We're not simply restating what communists have always held about the need for proletarian leadership.

Today, to become and remain a revolutionist increasingly necessitates becoming a communist. That is a political judgment. And it flows from our assessment of the evolution of the world system of capitalist exploitation and imperialist oppression, the weight of this evolution in international politics and the class struggle, the stage of the crisis of Stalinist parties, and the tasks confronting revolutionists at this point in the 20th century.

This assessment underlies the necessity of forging a revolutionary leadership of the workers and farmers in every part of the world. The particular problems and challenges — the weight and priority of various demands — in accomplishing this task, however, differ substantially depending on the class structure of a given country, the degree of



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World but in the imperialist countries and throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It requires an anticapitalist program and proletarian leadership. And it requires the fight to replace the current neocolonial bourgeois regimes with workers' and peasants' governments.

Revolutionists and communists

This is why we are convinced (1) that struggles to carry through national liberation to the end will be a stronger, not a weaker, force in world politics in coming years; and (2) that in the great majority of these countries, to be an effective revolutionist today and tomorrow is to be a communist.

Over the past three decades we have seen how such leadership can and will develop in the course of revolutionary struggles against national oppression.

On the one hand, we have seen how the development of capitalism itself in semicolonial countries — even its lim-

“Building a revolutionary leadership is set back by equivocating on Iraqi regime's expansionism . . .”

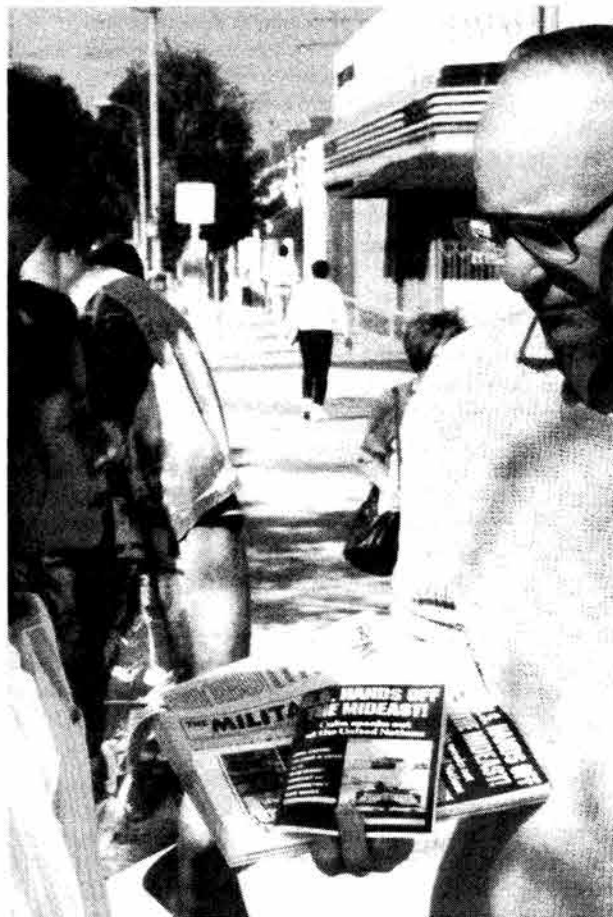
ited and distorted forms — continues to create a stronger working class and new layers of toilers in city and countryside from which new generations of fighters will come forward and form revolutionary organizations.

At the same time, we have seen communist leadership of world-class caliber emerge from hard-fought battles for national liberation around the world.

We have seen the leadership of the July 26 Movement around Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara forge a communist party as they led the workers and peasants of Cuba to carry through to the end the liberation of that country from Yankee exploitation and oppression.

We have seen the development of outstanding communist leaders such as Maurice Bishop in Grenada and Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso. Right here in the United States, we have experienced the evolution of Malcolm X — through his uncompromising struggle against the national oppression of Blacks, and his revolutionary opposition to U.S. imperialism's oppression of the peoples of Africa and elsewhere in the Third World — to openly anticapitalist, and increasingly prosocialist, political views.

These examples alone, and there will be many others, are sufficient confirmation that new advances in the struggle for national liberation will contribute mightily to forging



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

Selling subscriptions to *Militant* and circulating U.S. *Hands Off the Mideast!* book published by Pathfinder are central to working-class campaign against war drive today. Above, Joel Britton, SWP candidate for governor of California in November 1990 election, participating in Los Angeles antiwar protest.

leadership of the caliber needed to rebuild a world communist movement.

Building a revolutionary leadership of the fight for national liberation is set back by any equivocation in recognizing the reactionary character of the Iraqi regime's expansionist grab for land and oil in Kuwait.

Anti-imperialist fighters, communists, and other revolutionary-minded workers and farmers throughout the world demand the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and other foreign troops from the Middle East. They advocate a victory for Iraq over the blockading imperialist-organized armies, navies, and air forces and will unequivocally hold to that position if a war breaks out. But they will be fighting the imperialist invaders *despite* Saddam Hussein, not with him. They know — or if not, they will rapidly learn — that this bourgeois regime and its officer corps will disorganize and weaken an effective defense of Iraq in the face of such an onslaught.

This is not something new for communists and other uncompromising opponents of imperialism in this century.

We actively supported the defeat of German imperialism when it invaded the Soviet Union during World War II. But we did so in spite of Stalin — whose counterrevolutionary course would have ensured defeat had it not been for the sacrifice and determination of millions of Soviet workers and peasants who fought and died to defend the conquests of the October 1917 Russian revolution. We fought the imperialist invasion from within the armies commanded by Stalin only because the vanguard of the working class was too weak to replace him with a proletarian leadership. We never gave up our perspective of replacing the leadership that beheaded the toilers with a leadership of the toilers.

Communists and other revolutionists fought for the defeat of Japanese imperialism when it invaded China in the 1930s, but we did so despite the leadership of the Chinese army by the reactionary butcher Chiang Kai-shek.

That's our stand with regard to the Baghdad regime and the defense of Iraq against imperialism today. We say: "Get the imperialist troops out now! End the blockade! Let food and medicine through!" A defeat for imperialism would open up the greatest possibilities for workers and peasants to burst free of bourgeois misleadership and build their own power and their own organizations. The Saddam Husseins of the world feed off imperialist pressure as a justification to tighten the space for political life and to crack down with savage brutality on trade unions, peasant organizations, and political parties of working people.

The biggest blow of all dealt by the Iraqi regime's occupation of Kuwait and treatment of the workers there (a minority of whom are Kuwaitis) has been to the struggle of the Palestinian people for their national self-determination. At a time when the *intifada* had opened millions of new

doors to support and sympathy for this struggle in recent years, the actions of the Iraqi regime have pushed the Palestinian movement out of the center of political attention in the Middle East. The invasion of Kuwait has diverted attention from the brutal increase in Israeli repression — an opening the rulers there saw and immediately took advantage of. It has weakened the campaign in the Middle East to place negotiations with the Palestinians at the center of all demands against Israel and its backers.

Saddam Hussein's demagoguery about "linkage" between Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories could not be more cynical. It's an obstacle, not an aid, to the efforts of the Palestinian people to win a hearing for their demands from workers, farmers, and democratic-minded people around the world.

What possible "linkage" is there between the Palestinians' just demand for their national sovereignty in face of Israel's dispossession of their homeland on the one hand, and, on the other, Baghdad's reactionary assault on national sovereignty in Kuwait? Absolutely none. They're the opposite.

Hussein's claim that he launched his invasion of Kuwait in order to advance prospects for a "settlement" of the Palestinian question is a bald-faced lie. He was after oil. He was after territory. He was after booty. That's all he's ever been after the entire time he's been in power. Iraqi troops subjected Palestinian workers in Kuwait to the same callous and brutal treatment meted out to hundreds of thousands of other immigrant workers there. To connect these actions in any way with the Palestinians' fight for national self-determination is a criminal diversion from that struggle.

The Iraqi regime's blow to the Palestinians has been compounded by the refusal of the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization to unequivocally condemn the in-

“We point to the accuracy of Castro's statement that being a revolutionary today more and more means being a communist . . .”

vasion of Kuwait, demand that the Iraqi troops get out immediately, and, on that principled basis, declare to the world that the PLO will fight to the death alongside its Iraqi brothers and sisters to resist any imperialist assault.

This harm has been made still worse by PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat's public statements backing Baghdad's proposal tying talks on the withdrawal from Kuwait to "an overall settlement" of conflicts in the Middle East. Because of the esteem accorded the Palestinian people for their decades of courageous resistance, these positions of the PLO leadership help pretty up the Iraqi bourgeois regime and sow confusion among layers of other fighters worldwide.

Cuba's leadership in fighting war drive

The role played by the revolutionary Cuban government and Communist Party in world politics today is an example of the profound difference that the class character and orientation of a leadership makes in the fight for national liberation, including in the fight against imperialist war.

That's why one of the most effective political weapons in a working-class campaign against Washington's war drive is Pathfinder's U.S. *Hands Off the Mideast!* *Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*. As Mary-Alice Waters explains in the introduction:

"Mobilizing world public opinion — and U.S. public opinion in particular — as a counterweight to Washington's drive toward war is the goal of all those concerned about the future of humanity. That is why the role that the representatives of the Cuban government are playing in the United Nations Security Council today is important. As they have done before, leaders of the Cuban revolution are using the United Nations as a tribune from which to speak out and chart a course of action in defense of the interests of working people around the world."

The book contains 10 U.S.-initiated resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council between early August and the end of October, followed by speeches by Cuba's UN representative Ricardo Alarcón. In these speeches Alarcón explains his government's opposition to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, while uncompromisingly exposing Washington's drive toward war and its use of a blockade to deny food and medicine to the Iraqi people. The book also has several related letters by Fidel Castro and a portion of a recent speech by him.

Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca's November 29 speech before the Security Council, reprinted in full in the December 14 issue of the *Militant*, reaffirms these positions and condemns in the strongest terms the new UN war resolution.

Prior to that session of the Security Council, Malmierca had met in New York with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker — the longest meeting at a high governmental level between the United States and the Republic of Cuba since 1960. Since the chair of the Security Council in November was held by the U.S. government, Washington was formally

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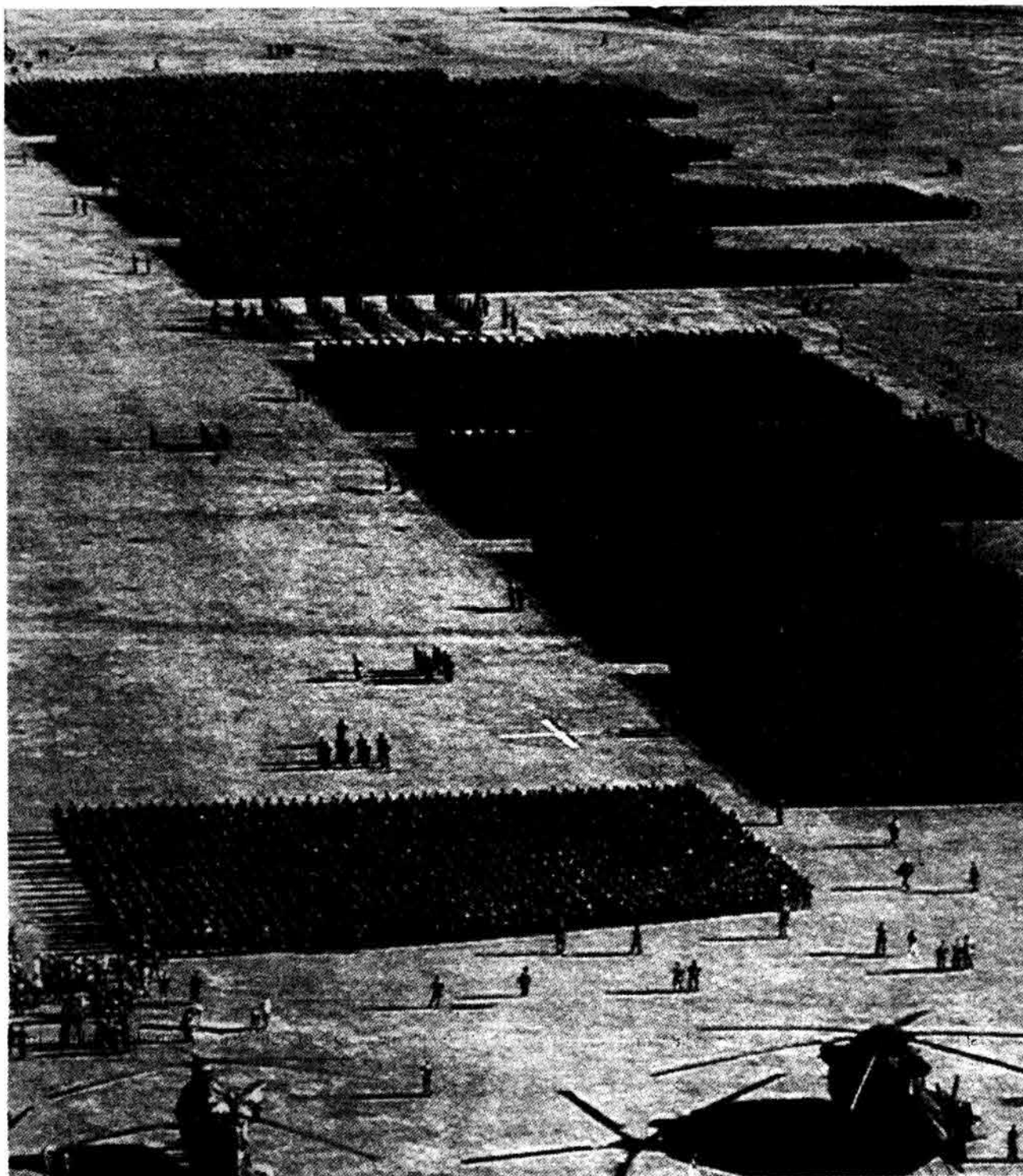
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24,000 marines prepare to leave Camp Lejeune in North Carolina December 10. Two-thirds of U.S. Marine Corps will be in Gulf by end of January.

obligated to meet at least once with each member of the council to try to come to agreement on a common resolution. That was a diplomatic convention that the U.S. delegation had to abide by. And Baker himself was to occupy the chair for that special session.

This was perhaps the only thing surrounding that entire meeting of the Security Council that Washington hadn't planned on — having to hold the first formal meeting in thirty years with Cuba's foreign minister. Most of Baker's other meetings were useful to the U.S. government — carving out agreement on the exact date of the deadline to Baghdad, working out wording to provide some cover at home for various delegations, and so on. They were like business luncheons to settle the price and nail down the deal.

But the meeting with Malmierca was different. The Cuban foreign minister spoke with Baker, and then upon leaving the meeting simply reported to the press that Cuba intended to vote against the resolution and continue pressing for a peaceful solution. Moreover, unlike the governments of some other members of the Security Council, Cuba did not receive a follow-up invitation from Baker for meetings in Washington. Nor was Cuba compelled to hold a news conference a few days later denying any connection between a sudden new aid package or International Monetary Fund loan and how it had voted on the UN resolution.

In his remarks to the November 29 meeting of the Security Council itself, Malmierca reiterated Cuba's uncompromising opposition to the Iraqi government's invasion and annexation of Kuwait, as well as its holding of foreign nationals as hostages. These actions, Malmierca said, weaken "the unity and solidarity that [Third World countries] sorely need in order to face the challenge of overcoming underdevelopment."

Malmierca went on to condemn the UN Security Council-sanctioned war moves by Washington against Iraq, including the inhumane embargo. He expressed Cuba's concern "about the enormous and increasing concentration of military forces from the United States and its allies in the Gulf and over the danger of the outbreak of a war that . . . would bring enormous destruction to the countries of the region, beginning with Kuwait and Iraq and their neigh-

bors, in addition to the losses by the attacking forces."

Malmierca reaffirmed Cuba's long-standing solidarity with the struggle for national rights by the Palestinian people and condemned the hypocrisy of the U.S. government in acting to block Security Council consideration of a resolution — drafted by Cuba together with Colombia, Malaysia, and Yemen — calling for a UN commission to monitor the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians in the territories it occupies. At the same time, Malmierca said, Cuba continues to reject "any linkage between Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and the Arab territories occupied by Israel."

The Cuban foreign minister then pointed to the example of Korea to underline the horrible consequences for humanity of the last time that the UN Security Council gave its blessing to a U.S.-organized war. The case of Korea, Malmierca said, "is an example of how — after three years of war, hundreds of thousands of victims, and enormous material destruction — the use of force under the banner of the United Nations ended in an armistice that even today keeps that country divided as it was before the conflict broke out. There are still tens of thousands of soldiers and foreign military bases in the southern part of that territory."

Finally, Malmierca concluded with the remarks I cited earlier, terming the UN resolution the "chronicle of a war foretold."

The course that has been charted by Cuban revolutionists from the outset of the Gulf situation has been a courageous, consistent, principled, and internationalist one. It is correct not because it is a communist position that advances the fight for socialism — although it is certainly the only conceivable position for communists to take. But you don't need to be communist to stand up and be counted alongside the Cuban revolutionists in championing this course.

Cuba's stand is correct above all because it is the course that can advance the fight against imperialism in the Middle East, because it is the only principled position on behalf of the fight for national liberation. It is the only correct and revolutionary position for any anti-imperialist fighter and national liberation movement anywhere in the world.

Cuban revolutionists know that they will suffer consequences for this principled stand against the U.S. imperialist-led war drive. They know that Washington will do what

it can to make things rougher for them — and that if a war is unleashed against Iraq, the going will get rougher still.

More than any other people on the face of the earth, Cuban revolutionists know what a massive and bloody war in the Middle East will mean for every single fighter anywhere in the world who is standing up to imperialist oppression and plunder.

They know the pressures that will be brought to bear on revolutionists, including in the United States. They know the greater squeeze that will come down on democratic rights and the space to organize and resist. They know the increased dangers of imperialist military moves in other parts of the world.

An imperialist war in the Middle East would open the way for the bipartisan gang in Washington to throw even more weight behind the murderous regime that protects the property and privileges of the landlords and capitalists in El Salvador. It would bring greater pressure — political and military — on the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front, which is continuing to press its revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed regime there.

A Mideast war would inevitably be accompanied by further retreats by the imperialist governments from their supposed good wishes toward the African National Congress and the fight it is leading to destroy the apartheid system in South Africa once and for all.

Such a war would be a blow against the fight for the reunification of Korea — where the presence of some 45,000 U.S. troops, along with military bases, and nuclear-armed ships makes it second only to the Gulf region today

“ Hussein's 'linkage' of Iraqi invasion and Israeli occupation is cynical . . . ”

as a zone of U.S. imperialist military power. *Rodong Sinmun*, the North Korean daily, pointed to this reality in a December 3 news analysis pointing to the war dangers posed by the recent Security Council resolution.

"[T]he adoption of the resolution approving the use of armed forces against Iraq under conditions of sharp confrontation of ultramodern means of war and huge armed forces massed in the Gulf region," the North Korean article explained, "cannot but be a danger signal that a war might break out in the region. . . . Should a war break out in the Gulf region, an irrevocable situation will be created in the region and it will pose a serious danger to the peace and security of the world."

An exemplary model

To the best of our knowledge, the Iraqi toilers are confronting the prospects of a brutal imperialist onslaught today without the existence of any organized revolutionary current among vanguard workers, peasants, and youth. Revolutionary-minded militants in Iraq face extremely repressive conditions — imprisonment, torture, assassinations.

There is one example from the recent history of the region, however, of how communists conducted themselves in the face of an imperialist-backed war.

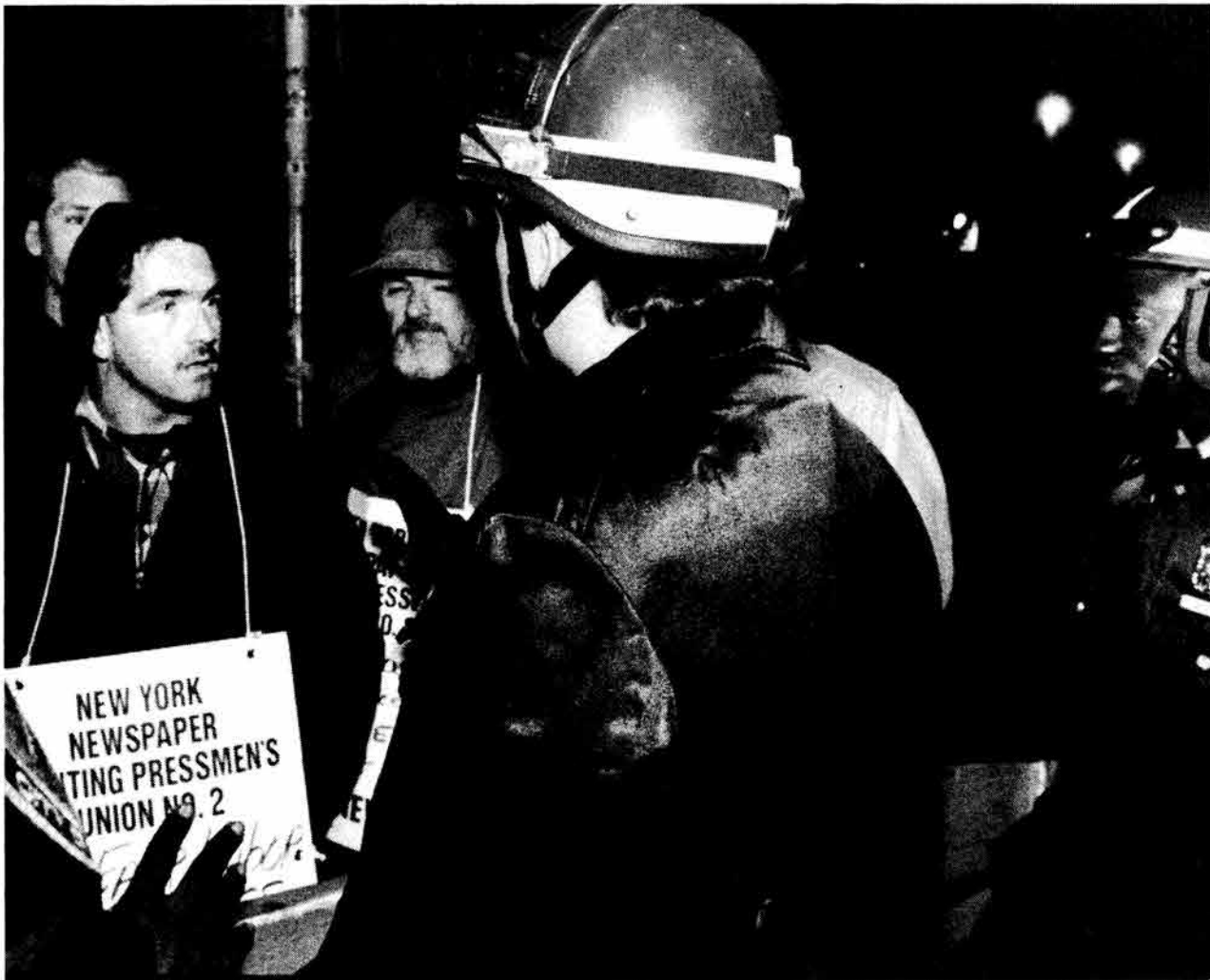
During the opening years of the Iraqi government's war against the Iranian revolution, launched in 1980 with Washington's blessing, there was a communist organization in the working class in Iran called the Workers Unity Party — in the Farsi language, *Hezb-e Vahdat-e Kargaran*, the HVK. The HVK was the victim of repression by the capitalist government in Iran; its members faced harassment by government-organized thugs and frequently found themselves in prison.

HVK members were among the draftees and the volunteers from the factories who fought and died fighting the Iraqi regime's reactionary assault on the Iranian revolution. They acted on the conviction that communists had to be the best fighters in defense of the gains wrested by the toilers in Iran from the revolutionary overthrow of the U.S.-backed regime of the shah.

At the same time, these same HVK cadres deepened their participation in and support to struggles in the factories against the efforts by the capitalist government to intensify the exploitation of workers — under the cynical cover of the need to sacrifice for the war effort, while the capitalists themselves raked in the profits. The HVK championed the fight by peasants for land and for government-supplied means to work it. Nothing could have more sharply raised the peasants' determination to resist the imperialist-sponsored Iraqi invasion. The HVK joined in the fight for democratic rights in the face of the government's increasingly brutal crackdown on all forms of independent political expression and organization by the toilers.

At the same time, the HVK gave unconditional support to the national rights of the Kurdish and other peoples oppressed by the Iranian capitalist regime. It explained that deepening the fight by workers and peasants for their class interests was the only way to consolidate the conquests of the Iranian revolution and prevent the defensive war against

Continued on next page



Impact Visuals/Robert Fox

Daily News strikers have faced cold-blooded assault by employers. But working class in New York area has rallied behind strike, keeping *Daily News* off more and more stands.

Continued from previous page

Iraq from becoming a slaughterous stalemate that drained the blood and the energies of the most courageous and self-sacrificing revolutionaries. They pointed to the need to establish a workers' and peasants' government in order to carry through the job of freeing Iran from oppression and exploitation by imperialism and all of its agencies, inside and outside the country.

This communist course was explained in a resolution adopted by the HVK in 1981. It was translated into English and published that year in the magazine *Intercontinental Press*. It's a magnificent example for revolutionaries, anti-imperialist fighters, and communists everywhere in the world.

March toward war and depression

The same week in November that the UN Security Council adopted Washington's war resolution, top U.S. government officials were finally forced to admit that the recession already unfolding in Canada had also begun in the United States and could turn out to be a deep one — for North America and much of the world.

It was also the same week that the federal government announced that, for the fourth year in a row, the average life expectancy of Black people in the United States had declined — declined in absolute terms. This year that decline was large enough to result in a drop of the overall average life expectancy in the United States. Moreover, this decline has been very class-divided, resulting from rapidly deteriorating health conditions among the worst-off layers of the working class, not limited to those who are Black.

The very fact that average life expectancy can drop in the last decade of the 20th century in the world's wealthiest imperialist power — and that it can decline for four years in a row for working people from an oppressed nationality — is a sign of the depth of the underlying capitalist economic crisis. Intensifying exploitation and deepening class polarization are both reinforced by capitalism's regeneration of institutions of racist oppression as it reproduces the social relations of production necessary for its own existence.

Behind this statistic lie many others, and all of them point to the truth about what is coming, about the character of the international social crisis we are heading into, and the stakes for working people in the battles that lie ahead. We can't predict the exact timing or how events will unfold, but we can say with certainty that the imperialist ruling classes today are marching workers and farmers toward war and depression.

As the working class in the United States goes into the current recession, it has already been the victim of a more than decade-long offensive by the employing class against our living and working conditions. Workers' real wages have fallen some 10 percent over the past decade alone. Our buying power has dropped steadily since 1973 and is

now at the same level as in 1961. Since 1980 our pensions, health benefits, and insurance protection have dropped about 15 percent on average in real money terms. As a result of the pressures from this assault on workers' incomes, the debt burden on working-class families has skyrocketed as they desperately seek to somehow buffer the blows to their living standards.

With unemployment already rising sharply, only some one-third of those out of work in this country are currently receiving jobless benefits, due in large part to major government slashes in the form of stiffer eligibility requirements. This contrasts to more than three-quarters of jobless workers during the 1974-75 recession and about half during the deep capitalist downturn in 1981-82.

Working farmers are in for another round of accelerating indebtedness, bankruptcies, and foreclosures. The capitalist farm crisis that drove tens of thousands of exploited producers off the land in the early and mid-1980s — the worst times since the 1920s and '30s — is far from resolved.

The capitalists are weighed down under an enormous debt structure that reached historic heights during the 1980s. Investment in new, capacity-expanding plant and equipment stagnated throughout the decade. Meanwhile, there was an explosion of real estate speculation, debt-financed buy-outs and mergers, and junk bonds, plus growing instability on the stock and commodities markets. The Third World debt continued to climb to staggering levels, devastating the workers and peasants in those countries and putting new strains on the imperialist banking structure. The banks, savings and loan institutions, and giant insurance companies in the United States — as well as the funds today available to government agencies that supposedly protect depositors and beneficiaries — are in their weakest condition in many decades.

Sudden breakdowns or partial crises on any one or more of these fronts — all of which are more vulnerable given today's capitalist downturn — threaten to turn a recession into a collapse of the international banking system that can plunge the world into a major depression and social crisis.

Antilabor offensive

The employers, their government, and the Democratic and Republican party politicians continue to press their anti-working-class, union-busting offensive. The ultimate solution to all the country's economic problems, they insist, is to guarantee workers the "right" to work in a "union-free environment." More and more they act as if the only good worker is a "permanent replacement" worker.

The bosses continue to demand takeback contracts — like the recent pacts accepted by the United Auto Workers officialdom — that deepen divisions in the working class by agreeing to trade off wages, conditions, and job opportunities for younger workers and new hires, in return for the will-o'-the-wisp of "job security" for a declining number of higher-seniority union members. The employers continually push to gut health and pension benefits, speed up production with less union control over safety on the job, and ravage the environment.

City and state governments around the country — as in the mid-1970s — are complaining of "declining tax revenues" and "tightening budgets," and "reluctantly" point to the need to sharply cut the rolls of public employees and impose takeback contracts. Governors and mayors begin slashing expenditures on basic health services, education, child care, and other social programs that millions of working people depend on. Bridges and roads continue their dangerous deterioration.

So workers and farmers in this country face a double march today: a march toward a horrible war; and a march not only into a recession but toward a seemingly inexorable worldwide depression and social crisis.

This reality is sensed by growing numbers of working people. And it poses big challenges and responsibilities for every thinking worker, every rank-and-file union militant, every communist.

Labor movement not pushed out of politics

The U.S. working class and labor movement have suffered blows; our unions have been further weakened by the class-collaborationist and proimperialist course of the labor officialdom; and we have been put on the defensive by the accelerated onslaught of the employers in the 1980s.

But we have not been defeated. The labor movement has not been shoved out of the center of politics in this country. Our capacity to resist has not been broken.

A pattern has emerged in the evolution of resistance by the working class and unions in the United States since the middle of the 1980s. Despite the difficulties, despite the blows, workers and unionists in the United States pushed to the wall by the employers' assaults have found ways to fight. Layer after layer have found ways around simply being handcuffed, chained, and prevented from organizing to defend themselves. They have done so even when the bosses and labor bureaucrats have combined to block them from using standard union tactics that have brought victories throughout the history of the labor movement — that is, even when they are blocked from organizing union power and solidarity to shut down production.

As workers have moved into action in the face of these odds, other working people have expressed solidarity with their battles. Important experiences rich in lessons in how to forge unity, overcome divisions, and wage an effective struggle have begun to be accumulated by a small vanguard of fighters in the labor movement. These defensive efforts

“
The labor movement has not been defeated, shoved out of the center of politics, or had its capacity to resist broken . . .
”

are waged from a position of weakness. The ranks are not in a strong enough position to push aside the current labor officialdom and replace it with another leadership with an alternative, class-struggle strategy. These efforts have to take place largely *within* the limits of the strategy imposed by this ossified bureaucracy. But this fact makes these experiences no less important as the arena where rank-and-file fighters find each other and test each other.

All this is being experienced right now as the *Daily News* strike unfolds in the greater New York City area.

This is a strike that began as one of the most cold-blooded, brutal, militarily organized lockouts by management in years. The ranks of the drivers, press operators, and other unionized employees were forced into a fight without any preparation by the officialdom, who hoped against hope that it would not happen. The ranks have no democratic union structures through which to organize, make decisions, argue out tactics, strive for greater unity among themselves, reach out for broader solidarity from the rest of the labor movement — to bring their real potential power to bear.

Management, on the other hand, was well prepared. For the first time ever in a labor dispute at a major New York City daily paper, production never stopped. The *Daily News* didn't miss a single edition. It had scabs lined up months in advance to do everything from writing copy, to typesetting and printing the papers, to transporting them throughout the metropolitan area. The scabs were at their posts within a matter of minutes — together with armed thugs to go after the unions. The rest of the New York media joined in the company's violence-baiting of the unions.

But then something happened that management had not anticipated. They could write the paper, print the paper, and truck the paper with "permanent replacements." But they couldn't get working people to buy it! The working class in the New York area pulled together to keep the *Daily News* off the newsstands. They put pressure on the owners of the newsstands they patronize not to carry the scab paper; they argue with them, try to convince them. Some of these small shopkeepers have put up solidarity signs announcing: "We don't carry the *Daily News*."

Workers argue with coworkers on the job not to buy the paper, and with friends and family members. They've made

buying the *Daily News* an immoral, rotten, unconscionable act for any working person with an ounce of decency, human feeling, and solidarity. Unionists have volunteered to go out and ring doorbells to urge people to cancel their subscriptions.

There are thousands of retail outlets that carry daily newspapers in greater New York. Prior to the strike, the *Daily News* was the second-largest selling metropolitan daily in the country. Yet, today it's difficult to find a newsstand that carries it. This was not accomplished by centralized organization. It took the actions of tens of thousands of workers and unionists. Newsstand owners found that carrying the *Daily News* was considered an insult by regular customers — people they've gotten to know, made friends with, depend on for steady business. These kinds of factors play a role in labor and other social struggles, and they are having a big impact on the *Daily News* strike.

The point here is not to try to predict what the outcome of this strike will be, given the character of the officialdom in these unions and the overall state of the labor movement. To keep moving forward against the *News* management, space must continue to be opened by the printing trades officialdom for the ranks to operate, and the ranks must have time to find ways of organizing and structuring themselves, as we saw happen in the Eastern Airlines strike. The

“Workers' real wages have fallen 10 percent over past decade and are now at same level as 1961...”

ability to gain solidarity from other unionists and workers — the growing hatred of the working class for the antiunion assault — opens some unexpected space even if the strike does not have the ability to shut down production. Other expressions of struggle and solidarity are not a substitute for the strike; they are a supplement to it. They become a way for the ranks to assert themselves and prove that union-busting is not a sure winner for the bosses. All this is very important right now — and deserves the active support of all workers — regardless of the duration or expected outcome of the effort.

The *Daily News* strike is just the most recent example of the pattern that has emerged from the labor struggles in this country in recent years. It is an uneven pattern, one with gaps and breaks. But the pattern is nonetheless clearer today than when it began to take shape back in late 1985 with the strike of the packinghouse workers against the Hormel Company and other battles in meat-packing over the following 18 months.

Since then there have been other fights: by paperworkers, by cannery workers, by coal miners both in the eastern and western fields, by telephone workers, by hospital employees. All have been defensive in character, waged by workers pushed deeper and deeper into a corner by the employers. They've had various outcomes: some substantial setbacks or defeats, some standoffs, a few victories. The most weighty victory in the recent period has been that won by members of the United Mine Workers of America and their supporters against the union-busting of the Pittston coal company.

But through all these fights you can watch not just the cumulative impact of the assaults, but also the cumulative effect of workers finding ways to resist slightly longer, or surprising the employers a bit more with what they are able to accomplish, and thus giving greater confidence to other layers of the working class who will find themselves in struggle.

The strike by members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) against Eastern Airlines that began back in March 1989 has been a little different from the rest. There, through the initial months of the battle, a rank-and-file leadership of the strike came forward and had enough time to structure itself. It kept reaching out to maintain maximum unity while drawing in broader solidarity from elsewhere in the labor movement. These strikers demonstrated the capacity to take the blows and withstand the shocks that came their way, and to outlast and outfight the employers. And it was not your run-of-the-mill boss they were up against. Frank Lorenzo was the man the employing class considered the union-buster of the decade, a model for them all.

The Eastern strikers blocked Lorenzo from imposing on them the kind of nonunion operation he had rammed down the throats of workers at Continental Airlines in 1983. In fact, the IAM strikers drove Lorenzo out of the airline industry, and their nearly two-year-long fight has brought both parts of Lorenzo's former Texas Air empire — Eastern and Continental — to bankruptcy. They have made the government step in and openly take direct responsibility for Eastern's future — to the horror of its individual stockholders and creditors. This has made other employers, suppliers, and bankers — inside and outside the airlines industry — less confident that blatant union-busting, “Lorenzoism,” is the high road to high profits that it seemed to be in the mid-1980s.

The labor movement is not on the offensive against the

Immigrant workers from Third World uprooted by crisis

Immigrant workers from Third World countries make up some 99 percent of the civilian foreign nationals currently living in Iraq and Kuwait. The chart below shows the number working in Iraq or Kuwait prior to August 2 and the number who remain as of December 7.

In addition, an estimated 1.5 million Yemeni citizens in Saudi Arabia have been ordered to return to their homeland by the Saudi government or find Saudi “sponsors” since August 2, because of the refusal of the Yemeni government to back the massive U.S. military deployment in the region.

Some 400,000 Palestinian immigrant workers were in Kuwait prior to August 2.

Country of origin	Before August 2	As of December 7
Bangladesh	110,000	15,000
China	10,000	4,800
Egypt	1,600,000	1,200,000
India	190,000	22,000–24,000
Lebanon	60,000	55,000
Pakistan	130,000	90,000
Philippines	93,000	5,800
Sri Lanka	150,000	65,125
Thailand	8,150	320
Turkey	4,000	100
Vietnam*	15,000	14,000

* Total for Iraq only.



Militant/Eric Simpson

employers. There are no developments anywhere in the unions that represent the organized beginnings of an alternative, class-struggle strategy. The labor movement is still being weakened by the class-collaborationist course of the officialdom in the face of the rulers' offensive, which continues. All that is correct.

But that is not the entire story. The pattern of resistance by workers and unionists over the past half decade, the search for ways to bring class solidarity to bear, the openness to reaching beyond themselves, beyond the union movement, beyond the country to seek and extend solidarity — these facts, too, have to be brought into the picture. And they are among the *decisive* facts on which communist workers, who are part of this working-class vanguard, must chart our strategy and tactics — including in campaigning against the imperialist war drive.

Independent working-class political action

These struggles bring additional experience to a vanguard layer of workers that makes them more open to seeing themselves as part of a class with interests different from and opposed to the employers, the employers' political parties, and the employers' government. The unity workers have needed to forge to advance their own fights, and the solidarity they have reached for, helps clear away some of the divisions and reactionary prejudices promoted by the employers; this increases the capacity to recognize common interests with other working people both in this country and around the world.

These shifts are important for communist workers, because they provide new opportunities — grounded in common experiences of rank-and-file union militants — to win broader understanding of the need for a labor movement that operates on the basis of democracy, class solidarity, and independent working-class political action. For a labor movement that rejects the narrowness of unionism as conceived by a timid officialdom, and fights for a movement that thinks socially and acts politically — in the interests of its own class, not that of the bosses. This becomes more necessary than ever in the face of increasing imperialist war moves.

The tactical divisions in the ruling class are real, and we haven't found it difficult to explain the reasons for them. They enable us to see the dangerous character of the con — promoted by the bourgeois press — that the debate in Congress pushes us further away from war. The truth is the opposite. The imperialist assumptions and goals shared by both Democratic and Republican party politicians, and the bipartisan policies they have already set in motion, are the

“U.S. workers and farmers face a double march today — a march toward a horrible war and toward depression and social crisis...”

very ingredients propelling forward the probability that the siege war will become a massive ground war (perhaps with a devastating air war as a prelude).

Workers and farmers, as well as any authentic opponent of Washington's course toward war, have no voice, no representatives in Congress of any kind. There have been tactical divisions and squabbles among bourgeois politicians in Congress, and between Congress and the White House, prior to every imperialist war in this century. There has also been a growing concentration of governmental power in the executive branch. But without exception, whenever the president has asked Congress for support in a war — whether in the form of a declaration of war such as in 1917 and 1941, or the Gulf of Tonkin resolution in 1964, or simply military funding — there has been overwhelming bipartisan support. This time around will be no different.

What the working-class movement needs is space to organize a broad public discussion of the connection between the rulers' war policies at home and abroad; space to organize active opposition to those policies in the factories, through our unions; space to join with all those willing to debate the issues in a civil manner, and to take our protest to the streets; space to engage in politics in the class interests of workers, farmers, and our allies here and around the world. This debate above all should be organized among the almost half-million citizen soldiers sent to the Arabian desert by Frank Lorenzo's friends in Washington.

Those who are going to have to fight and die in any war waged by the bipartisan rulers of this country should have the direct say over whether or not such a war is declared. On the face of it, that simply seems decent and just. But there's a lot more to it than that, since it poses the biggest single problem facing the working class: the fact that we have no independent political organization, no political voice of our own, no policies that advance our class interests against those who are responsible for exploitation, oppression, and war.

The working class has no foreign policy. The labor

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War and the communist movement

The following is excerpted from the December 1 speech in New York City by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes.

More than any event other than a mass revolutionary contest for power by the workers and peasants, wars have the biggest political impact on the working class, on its vanguard layers, and on union and political leaderships that claim to speak and act in the interests of working people.

Wars concentrate and accelerate every political trend and development. They intensify pressure at every vulnerable point and put every strong point to the maximum test. They hasten the defection of the weak and bring out unexpected abilities in the strong to shoulder new responsibilities.

There is a deep interconnection between how a political party goes into a war and how it comes out. The history of the 20th century proves that if political clarity, courage, and determination are marshalled by vanguard workers, then the wars inflicted on us by the imperialist rulers can be turned against them as more and more workers turn against the war.

The communist movement in this century was built, more than anything else, around the struggle for a working-class political orientation in the face of imperialist war:

- Why communists don't have a revolutionary policy for peacetime and a peace policy for wartime
- How the working class must be organized to use the fight against imperialist war to deepen the revolutionary struggle to overturn the capitalist system responsible for these slaughters.

October 1917 revolution in Russia

Modern communism, the communism of the 20th century, passed its first decisive test when the Bolsheviks under the leadership of V.I. Lenin showed their capacity to chart a revolutionary course throughout World War I, which culminated in the triumph of the Soviet workers' and peasants' republic in October 1917. That victory rapidly brought that bloody war to an end on the Russian front and hastened the end of the broader slaughter.

The Bolsheviks championed the uprisings of oppressed nations throughout Europe, Asia, and the Middle East that were given a mighty impulse in the course of the war and its aftermath. The Bolsheviks organized and agitated against the war among the soldiers — the peasants and workers conscripted into the tsarist army. No matter how deeply underground they were forced to operate as a result of tsarist repression, the Bolsheviks never stopped carrying out consistent revolutionary work in the factories, mines, and mills. They never stopped mobilizing support for the peasants' struggle for land. They never stopped advocating the defeat of the tsarist and capitalist war plans, abroad and at home, and seeking ways to transform the war into a revolutionary struggle to overturn the imperialist tyranny and bring to power a government of workers and peasants.

Following the outbreak of the war in August 1914, the big majority of those in all the imperialist countries who had previously been looked to as leaders of the revolutionary workers movement lined up — often very "critically" and "reluctantly" — behind "their" national capitalists and governments in that war. The international Marxist movement collapsed in disarray, with most of its former leaders applauding the massacre of workers on "the other side."

Out of the many-million-strong international socialist movement that had existed prior to August 1914, only a handful initially emerged who were determined under wartime conditions to keep on doing everything in their power to ensure that their own ruling class was defeated — just as before the war they had always fought to defeat the exploiters and their governments in every strike, peasant uprising, and political battle.

The Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky reports in his autobiography, *My Life*, that those former leaders of the bankrupt Socialist International who remained revolutionists and internationalists joked in the war's opening years that when they held a conference in Switzerland, they could all fit in four taxis to go to the meeting site. It was a joke, but not that much of an exaggeration.

The communists sought every opportunity to turn the bloody war — and the growing resistance by workers, peasants, and soldiers to its devastating effects — into a revolutionary struggle to wrest the power to make war out of the hands of the capitalists and landlords once and for all. (You can read about this in Pathfinder's book, *Lenin's*

Struggle for a Revolutionary International, part of the series *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*.)

Then, following the revolution that toppled the tsar in February 1917, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were responsible for one of the greatest gales of laughter ever to shake the soviets. (The soviets were councils of representatives from various workers' and peasants' organizations that had emerged in the course of the revolution.) Initially, the majority of these representatives were from the wing of the prewar Socialist movement that had rejected the Bolshevik's revolutionary course.

During a nationwide congress of the soviets in June, a leader of these organizations said that, whatever other differences might exist among the delegates, no party represented there was so foolish to say it was ready to take power away from the new liberal bourgeois government.

Lenin shouted from the floor: "There is!"

Most other delegates laughed. But four months later the Bolsheviks led the toilers in the establishment of the world's first workers' and peasants' republic. That revolutionary victory encouraged other working people the world over to try to emulate the Bolsheviks and deepen the international struggle for national liberation and socialism.

During each war since then, the workers' movement has paid a big price for misleadership by those who claimed to be communists but who in practice either diverted the revolutionary struggle against capitalism into pacifist by-

ways, or who directly and openly aided the capitalist rulers in waging war and propping up their bloody system of exploitation and oppression.

World War II

During World War II, leaders of the Stalinized Communist parties in many countries joined with those in the regrouped Socialist International to impose this treachery on the vast majority of workers' organizations and national liberation movements. The leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, however, along with small groups of communists in other countries, refused to break from the revolutionary proletarian course charted by the Bolsheviks.

During the very week in December 1941 that Washington declared its entry into World War II, 18 leaders and cadres of the SWP — most of them class-struggle leaders of the Teamsters union and its antiwar wing in the Midwest — were sentenced to federal prison. They had been framed up on charges aimed at silencing the working-class campaign that they were waging in the labor movement against the coming imperialist war.

During the opening period of the war, the *Militant*, the weekly communist newspaper that campaigned week in and week out against the bosses' war, their racist policies, and their repression, was assaulted by U.S. postal authorities. The FBI increased its spying on the party and its members and supporters. SWP members working in industry and functioning in the unions came under increasing pressure from the bosses, the cops, and those in the union officialdom and in the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties who helped marshal support for the war.

But less than two years later, by 1943, the coal miners organized in the United Mine Workers of America had begun resisting the wage freeze and no-strike pledge imposed on them in the name of patriotic unity. Black workers and other

“
Working class must use the fight
against war to deepen the struggle
to overturn the capitalist system
responsible for these slaughters...
”

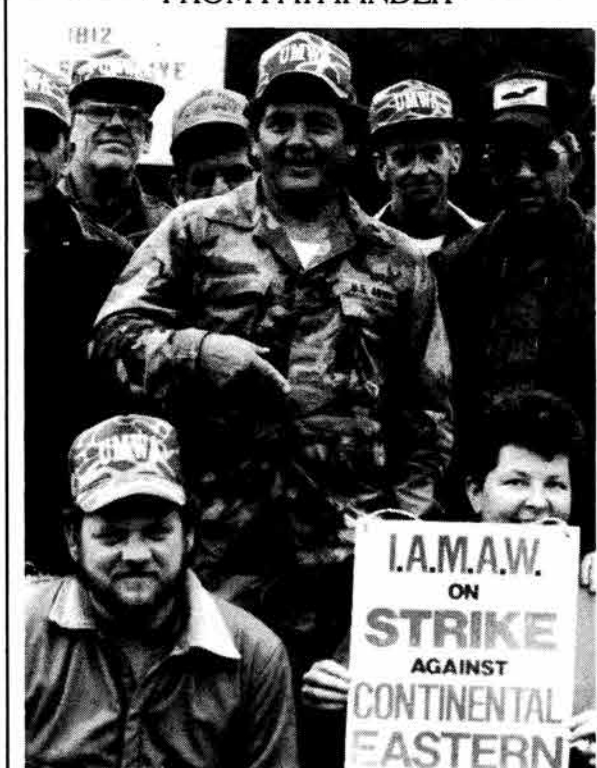
opponents of racist discrimination opened a new stage of the fight for equality in employment and on the job in the burgeoning war industries, as well as in the still-Jim Crow U.S. armed forces; mass rallies for these demands were organized by the March on Washington movement as early as June 1942.

The newspaper that U.S. postal authorities had tried to gag exploded in the greatest subscription campaigns in its history, gaining a readership of more than 30,000 by the summer of 1945. GIs in the Pacific mobilized mass demonstrations following the armistice, demanding to be brought home now instead of being used — as Washington had been planning — to hold back national liberation struggles breaking out in China, Vietnam, and elsewhere in the wake of the war.

In fact, the years at the close of and just after the war saw the most rapid increase in the size of the SWP in our history. This explosive growth came on the crest of the potential that existed for a year or so to recapture the momentum of the social movement that had built the CIO industrial union movement in the mid-1930s and to open a new stage in the fight for Black liberation. That potential was not to be realized, due to international political and economic factors beyond the control of the revolutionary workers movement, as well as the class-collaborationist misleadership and betrayals of workers' interests by the union officialdom, Stalinists, and Social Democrats in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere.

As part of fighting the imperialist war drive, we should be going back to the lessons of how communist workers waged a working-class campaign against an earlier war. We can read and organize study of books available from Pathfinder that tell this story, such as: *Teamster Bureaucracy: The Trade Union Campaign Against World War II* by Farrell Dobbs; *Letters from Prison: The Communist Campaign Against Wartime Repression* by James P. Cannon; and *Fighting Racism in World War II*.

FROM PATHFINDER



The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

The Proletarian Party and the Trade Unions

Edited by Jack Barnes

How deep-going political, economic, and social changes since the 1970s have transformed the thinking of the working class in the United States; prospects for the construction of a party of communist workers; and the proletarian party's work in the industrial unions. 346 pp., \$18.95.

Available from Pathfinder bookstores. Or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include \$1 for each book for postage and handling.

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movement has no foreign policy. The labor *officialdom* faithfully pushes the foreign policy of the employers and does what the bosses tell them to do. But the labor *movement* — the workers, the ranks, who are the unions — has no foreign policy. The classes who die in the wars waged by the bosses' parties and government — and who are pitted in those wars against working people like ourselves in other countries — have no foreign policy.

Many workers agree that it's unacceptable for the bosses to have a monopoly over setting all sorts of other policies: the policies that govern our unions; health and safety conditions in the mines and factories; work rules on the job; the right to slash our wages or throw us out of work; the right to bust our unions and keep up production with scab labor.

But when it comes to foreign policy, the monopoly by the bosses is still largely accepted as almost a fact of life. The spectrum of valid choices is set by their two political parties. What's more, their foreign policy is viewed as "ours," the foreign policy of "our" country. But countries don't have policies. Countries are divided into classes, and classes have foreign policies. And the foreign policy of the capitalist class in this country — and in every other capitalist country, everywhere in the world — is not "ours," it's "theirs." As Malcolm X taught us, working people in this country are not "Americans," we're the *victims* of this kind of Americanism.

Workers have no military policy, either. The labor movement has no military policy. Only the ruling class has a military policy. It begins with the hired thugs and the cops they use to bust up our strikes, to ride in scab trucks in West Virginia or in Bayside, Queens. And it goes right on through the organization of a massive imperialist armed forces.

But the working class needs our own military policy like our own foreign policy. And there are layers of workers in recent years who have learned why, even if they haven't yet drawn this conclusion or thought of it this way. The *Daily News* strikers who have been victims of the goon squads brought in by management are learning about the military policy of the bosses; so are the coal miners, paperworkers, meat-packers, and others whose picket lines have been attacked by cops, whether "private" or "public." Also learning about it today are the workers and farmers in uniform — the cannon fodder (a term that has horrible concrete meaning in face of today's march toward a desert war of heavily armored armies) who make up the armed forces used by the imperialists to fight *their* wars to advance *their* class interests.

As long as capitalism and imperialism exist, there will be no peace. As long as the working class has no political party of our own — no labor party based on the unions, and independent of the imperialist Democratic and Republican parties — we will have no effective mass political organization to resist the war policies of the employing class by counterposing and fighting for our own foreign policies and military policies. And we will have no political party of our own to organize a fight against the bosses' war on our rights, our living standards, and our unions here at home, either. Instead, we will always be facing the framework of political choices set by *their* parties.

Let the people vote on war

For the same reasons, communists are raising as part of our working-class campaign against the imperialist war that the people in this country should have the right to vote on war.

The point here is not to divert the energies of workers, farmers, and other opponents of the war into electoral channels — there will be plenty of referenda to do that. The point is just the opposite. Our demand is that the question of war and peace be taken out of the hands of the Democratic and Republican politicians, out of the hands of Congress and the White House, and be taken into the factories and into the streets.

We know that the imperialists always seek to tighten and restrict the space to organize and practice politics when they go to war. That's what happened during the First and Second World Wars, during the Korean War, and during the Vietnam War. And it will happen again. Many of us remember the so-called Cointelpro spying, disruption, and harassment operations organized by the FBI, CIA, local police "red squads," and other government cop agencies during the period of the Vietnam War. Our party was a direct victim of those assaults, along with others involved in the fight against the war, in the struggle for Black liberation, and in other social and political struggles. Recognizing this reality puts a special premium on vanguard workers treasuring and fighting for every inch of space we can.

That's why thinking workers pay special attention to any group of individuals and organizations who want to reach out and use democratic rights to publicly oppose the war drive — to discuss, to debate, to march; to initiate public protests, rallies, teach-ins, demonstrations. Those activities help create greater space for discussion and action around the war, greater space for the working class to get involved in politics.

This is the opposite of the terrain to which the capitalist rulers always seek to restrict the discussions and decisions



GIs in Saudi Arabia are being kept quarantined and isolated by U.S. government. Labor movement must support full democratic rights for these workers in uniform as citizen soldiers.

on war. We are told that a great debate is taking place on Capitol Hill today — but it's a debate that involves at tops 536 people, most of them millionaires, and all of them (Democrats, Republicans, and their "socialist" subspecies alike) opponents of independent political action by the working-class movement. These are the same people who have led workers and farmers into every bloody war in this century.

The fight against the war and the fight to defend democratic rights necessitates the broadest forums for public debate and exchange of views, as well. The bourgeois politicians will try to block such discussion, and, as in the past, the union bureaucrats, petty-bourgeois pacifists, Stalinists, and social democrats — usually in the name of supporting this or that proposal or election campaign by a capitalist politician — will often join them in this reactionary effort.

The working class, on the other hand, has every interest in promoting such discussion. Political clarity becomes more important than ever, and such clarity can be advanced only through *political differentiation*. That's why we advocate the norms of civil discussion — of the right to express your point of view, to argue for it without fear of verbal abuse or physical recriminations — inside the workers' movement. This also means having the courage to clarify differences — which often reflect conflicting class outlooks and interests — rather than paper them over.

At the same time, proponents of a wide range of different views can and will join together to act, to organize, and to participate in antiwar demonstrations and other public protest actions. Communist workers are the most energetic advocates of such united action for common goals, and the staunchest opponents of efforts to exclude individuals or organizations from such efforts because of their political views.

We seek to draw more workers, more soldiers, more farmers into these activities, so that those who have been struggling against the employers' offensive in this country can become part of the debate and a growing component of the fight against the war drive.

A working-class campaign

The SWP is campaigning to reach out from vanguard unionists to broad layers of the working class and its allies in the United States and around the world, to draw them into activity to demand: Bring the troops home now! End the criminal blockade, including the embargo on food and medicine to Kuwait and Iraq! Foreign troops out of the Mideast!

A campaign by a revolutionary workers' party against imperialist war preparations is a time to turn more deeply than ever to the workers and farmers we are and have been fighting alongside in struggles here at home. As war approaches, more of these working people — including some in the communist movement — end up in the armed forces as well. It is above all the workers and farmers, in and out of uniform, who we seek to inform about the war drive and its reactionary goals, and to mobilize in action against it.

The SWP's campaign against the war is a political

campaign of a workers' party that is structured along dual lines: through party branches in many cities, and through units of its members active in various industrial unions. It is not a campaign of frenetic activity based on the illusion that there is something we as a party can do to stop the imperialists' course toward war. Instead, it is a campaign to involve the party more deeply in the life, struggles, activity, and politics of the only class that — when its organizations are mobilized in action in its own interests — can and will affect the course of history, including decisions on war and peace.

As a party of industrial workers, the SWP's campaign against the imperialist war drive will take us more deeply into the working class and the labor movement itself. It is through our coworkers and our unions that we will find our way to the broadest layers of GIs — to other unionists, to friends and family members of young coworkers serving a few years in the armed forces. Through such campaigning a workers' party forges its firmest links with layers of

“Those who will fight and die in any war waged by the bipartisan rulers should have the direct say over whether or not war is declared...”

fighting farmers and agricultural laborers.

This campaign will be carried out through the party's existing structures, through our established lines of leadership development, and with our fundamental propaganda instruments and institutions. That's why the single most important Pathfinder book that needs to be read, reread, and studied as part of this campaign is *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: The Proletarian Party and the Trade Unions*. This book contains reports and resolutions adopted by SWP conventions and elected leadership bodies outlining the fundamental elements of the party's strategy for carrying out communist political work in the labor movement and building a revolutionary workers' party and world movement.

The SWP campaign against the war drive will be carried out by expanding the readership above all of the weekly *Militant*, as well as *Perspectiva Mundial*, *Lutte ouvrière*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, and other publications of the world communist movement. The same Eastern strikers, coal miners, and other workers and farmers who have become readers and supporters of the *Militant* because it is the best regular source of information about key working-class struggles in this country will discover that the *Militant* is also the only source of accurate information and analysis about Washington's march toward war. Some who have already lent their names and made promotional comments for weekly subscription advertisements in the *Militant* will now have an additional reason to do so once again.

Socialist workers are getting the *Militant* and other publications into the hands of unionists, GIs, veterans, reservists, farmers, and other working people. They are circulating it

Continued on next page



During World War II, labor's struggle against war at home and abroad began to open up in 1943. Scene from Harlem rebellion that year (left), sparked by cop shooting of Black soldier. Striking coal miners (right), who walked out despite government orders to go back to work in name of patriotic unity in wartime.

Continued from previous page

to young people, students, and others demonstrating against the U.S. war drive, organizing solidarity with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and participating in fights for Black rights and women's equality.

Discipline, democracy, and leadership

Central to the success of this campaign will be the activity of communist workers who are members of 10 industrial unions in the United States and Canada: the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; the International Association of Machinists; the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; the International Union of Electronic Workers; the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union; the United Auto Workers; the United Food and Commercial Workers; the United Mine Workers of America; the United Steelworkers of America; and the United Transportation Union.

These workers meet together to collectively discuss and decide their political work and priorities on both a local and national level. In launching the party campaign, national meetings of the SWP members and supporters active in each of these 10 unions have been held in recent weeks. As the short article in the *Militant* announcing these meetings explained, the workers participating in them "will discuss [the] 10-year offensive by the employers on the labor movement, the resistance to it, the deepening economic crisis at home for working people, and how this is intertwined with the fight against Washington's accelerating steps toward a slaughter in the Mideast."

Thinking workers sense that a war in the Middle East will reinforce every reactionary assault in this country on our democratic rights and our living and working conditions. It will exert pressure on the fight for full equality and against racist attacks on Blacks, other oppressed nationalities, and immigrant workers. It will encourage probes to roll back women's rights and will make the defense of past gains more difficult. It will reinforce the employers' union-busting assaults aimed at continuing to drive down wages and benefits, extend the workday, intensify speedup, take back gains for health and safety on the job, and increase snooping on workers — at work and elsewhere.

The outbreak of an imperialist war is always a moment at which a revolutionary workers' party finds out whether what it has done beforehand has adequately prepared it for the most decisive experiences and biggest political questions confronting the working class and the labor movement. War puts revolutionary organizations to the test. If you are not fundamentally ready beforehand, there is nothing much an organization can do about it under the pressures of wartime. We are convinced that what the cadres of the SWP have accomplished over the past decade — by building a proletarian organization of the kind I have described — has prepared us to meet whatever test may come.

But a party campaign against imperialist war *does* mean that we have to look at our basic party institutions and make whatever adjustments are called for to best prepare us for the tasks and opportunities that we will face. And we do so

openly in front of fellow workers and supporters, both to solicit their views and to give them the confidence of knowing what we can be counted on for.

The stakes are much bigger, as are the opportunities for building the communist movement and the political consequences of errors. Thus, the party's work becomes more centralized, more organized, and more disciplined.

Now is not the time for the party units to set up antiwar committees or other ad hoc structures, but for the branch executive committees and union fraction leaderships to take in hand the party campaign against the war drive and lead every aspect of the work. This includes joint efforts with others who agree that organizing protests in the streets is vital to reaching out to the broadest layers of working people and increasing the confidence to act.

Disciplined functioning can only be assured if at the same time the party becomes more *democratic* in all of its work. The communist workers active in the industrial unions must meet more regularly, both locally and nationally. They need to elect their leadership structures from among those communist workers who step forward in this situation — those

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It is workers and farmers, in and out of uniform, we seek to inform and mobilize in action . . .
”

who have shown how to lead in resisting the employers' offensive, and shown how to lead a campaign against the war. This must come through the activity of the workers actually carrying out the campaign on the job, through their unions, reaching out to farmers and GIs, in broader action formations. In the process we go through common experiences and draw collective lessons.

Political openness

In the face of the rulers' tightening wartime pressures on democratic rights, the greatest protection for communists and other vanguard fighters in the working class is to go deeper into their class and its organizations and to press to the furthest limits possible the space for political organization and activity — from the factory floor, through all the institutions of capitalist society. We need to encourage debate and discussion. We need to encourage coworkers and other unionists to join with us — and with other opponents of the war — in protests, public meetings, and demonstrations.

When the bosses framed up Mark Curtis, we recognized that they went after him because he was a representative of other workers like him who were resisting the intensifying assaults of the packinghouse bosses; fighting for the rights of immigrant workers; and joining in struggles against racism, against U.S. intervention in Central America, and

for women's rights. They picked out Mark as one among other vanguard fighters in our class, and they went after him. With the outbreak of an imperialist war, the bosses, the cops, and the government will have an eagle eye out more than ever for the other Mark Curtises, outside or inside the SWP, who are explaining and organizing opposition to the slaughter. That is what's happened at the outset of every imperialist war.

At such times, it is more important than ever for revolutionary-minded workers to reaffirm the truth explained in the founding program of our movement, *The Communist Manifesto*, that communists "disdain to conceal their views and aims." We explain and advocate the same things to our coworkers and broader working class public as we do to our members and supporters.

Party members will wear antiwar buttons to work and to union gatherings, prompting discussions and catching the attention of other workers interested in joining with us in campaigning against the war. We will promote the *Militant* and other communist publications that speak from the point of view of the working class about the war. We will sell *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast!* and other Pathfinder books and pamphlets that are invaluable weapons for working people in this fight, and that recount experiences and lessons from previous working-class opposition to war and to attacks by the employers and their government on unions and democratic rights.

When a war breaks out, when massive struggles erupt, that's when fighters read the most — just at the time when they're the busiest. They read more because they need to, because they want to arm themselves politically for the tasks and challenges they are facing, because they want to discuss with others. That's always when it's most valuable to read, when its most valuable to study. That's when you learn the most. That's how our class reconquers its true history, its best traditions, its lessons from previous struggles, its revolutionary political continuity.

Institutions such as weekly Militant Labor Forums become more important. These forums need to be organized to advance this campaign along a working-class axis. What we need most of all are forums that provide a platform for unionists, farmers, and soldiers to discuss the war drive, to debate their differing views of it — how it relates to other battles they are involved in, what they face, what needs to be done.

Socialist election campaigns, and fights for ballot status, take on special importance when the capitalist rulers are marching working people into a war. These election efforts are not only a means to take the campaign against the war drive to a broader working-class audience by taking advantage of the additional platforms and broader press opportunities available to socialists at such times. They are also an important battlefield in our fight for political space, to assert the legitimacy of working-class political parties, to use the space that has been won previously.

With this in mind, the SWP is launching municipal election campaigns in some 20 cities and towns across the United States in 1991. The Chicago Socialist Workers Party

has already announced a major effort to get on the ballot there for the spring mayoral election. Socialist election campaigns will also be run in Boston and Lynn, Massachusetts; Baltimore; Birmingham, Alabama; Charleston, West Virginia; Cleveland; Des Moines, Iowa; Detroit; Greensboro, North Carolina; Houston; Miami, Miami Beach, and Miami Shores; Omaha, Nebraska; Phoenix; San Francisco; Seattle, Washington; St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Socialist workers are taking the fight against the war into meetings of their unions and other labor gatherings; to plant gates, airports, and mine portals; to farmers' conferences; to military bases and departure points; to high school and college campuses; and to street corners across the country. They are working with members of the Young Socialist Alliance to draw young workers, soldiers, and students into political discussions and debates in order to win them to this fight. They are helping to build protest picket lines and demonstrations such as the upcoming January 26 march on Washington, and participating in committees and coalitions organizing these actions.

Development of antiwar opposition

Vocal and organized opposition to a drawn-out war by Washington against Iraq will develop much faster and with more working-class and union involvement from the outset than during the Vietnam War or other U.S.-organized wars in this century. This is because of the weakening of U.S. imperialism, the legacy in the working class of the massive, organized opposition to the Vietnam War, the deepening social crisis in this country, and labor resistance to the employers' offensive at home.

At the same time, communists need to be clear-eyed about the pressures that will inevitably come down in the initial period of any war. Given the opposition to the war drive that we already find among many — although far from all — of our coworkers and other people we know, we can unconsciously fall into the error of thinking that imperialist preparations for previous wars in this century were substantially more popular among working people. That's not true. Going to war has never been broadly popular.

Prior to U.S. entry into World War II there was a large movement against the military preparations. It was centered in the working class and reflected the deep opposition to going to war among workers and farmers. It had a strong base of organized support in the CIO. It was interlinked with sections of the rising movement for Black rights.

The opening chapters of *Teamster Bureaucracy: The Trade Union Campaign against World War II* by Farrell Dobbs provide a good feel for the depth of the opposition. It was strong. But during the opening two years of the war there was little evidence of that previous opposition.

Labor struggles against Washington's war at home and abroad began to open up again in 1943, however, with the coal miners' strike, a resumption of Black rights struggles, and then in 1944 a renewed and growing interest among workers in communist ideas reflected in expanding subscriptions to the *Militant* and recruitment to our movement.

Communists above all must have no illusion that antiwar sentiment can prevent an imperialist war. It never has. The



James Warren, member of United Steelworkers Local 3246 and socialist candidate for mayor of Chicago, is one of SWP candidates running in 20 cities and towns this year, campaigning to bring troops home. Warren headed SWP presidential ticket in 1988.

rulers don't care what working people think or feel, so long as they are convinced they can get away with what they need to do to defend their profits and class interests. Modern history has taught the rulers that actually starting a war always results in dampening antiwar sentiment for a while. But only for a while.

The army in Saudi Arabia will fight. Other workers and farmers will give grudging support initially, even many who currently oppose going to war. Especially given the living memory of Vietnam, this fatalism will often take the form of just wanting to get it over as quickly as possible — to minimize the deaths of buddies and family members, and life can get back to normal. That's especially the case among GIs, among workers and farmers in uniform, of course. Bush and the bipartisan gang from Congress who accompanied him to Saudi Arabia in November knew what they were doing when they embraced the slogan "No more Vietnams" as their own. They assured the soldiers that if "we" have to do it, we'll throw in everything we have and get it over with fast.

Fatalism among layers of working people, in and out of uniform, in the initial stage of a war is normal — but it is

quite different from wanting to go to war. And as wars drag on, they always become increasingly unpopular and give rise to mounting working-class resistance. World War I culminated in the formation of revolutionary councils of soldiers, workers, and peasants in Russia, Germany, and elsewhere in eastern and Central Europe. In Russia, the workers and peasants took power. Similar revolutionary developments began to take place in the closing stages of World War II, many of them crushed and demobilized by the joint efforts of the Stalinists, social democrats, and bourgeois forces throughout Europe. And we've explained the rise of workers' struggles that took place here in the United States.

That process of polarization and differentiation will have to be gone through again if war is unleashed in the Middle East. We're convinced that it will be fought through more quickly this time. Opposition during war can develop very rapidly. That's what we are getting ready for. That's what we have our eyes on in this working-class campaign against the war.

Turn to the workers and soldiers in uniform

If we're serious about this campaign, then we must pay close attention to the place where a large section of our class is organized. The men and women in the U.S. armed forces become decisive in a period leading up to a war.

Don't simply call them "marines," or some other term. There is something more fundamental that defines them. They are workers in uniform. They are fellow workers, part of our class.

The labor movement must stand in complete solidarity with these workers in their fight to exercise their rights as *citizen soldiers* — the right to say what they want, read what they choose, and participate in organized political life.

These rights are already under assault. The U.S. armed forces has slapped restrictions on the kinds of reading materials GIs can receive in the mail; even newspaper clippings are screened and sometimes returned to the sender. Washington has placed the troops in virtual desert quarantine, not even allowing press correspondents to say where in Saudi Arabia they are reporting from when they visit the bases — something that was not even done during the Vietnam War, or World War II. And the big-business press hasn't uttered a peep of protest — not UPI, AP, the *New York Times*, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, none of them.

This is one of the reasons why the Pentagon has decided to halt any rotation of the troops. The rulers want to keep to a minimum the GIs' exposure to any information, discussion, or debate on the war. The rulers don't want to have workers and farmers going back and forth from Saudi Arabia to the United States, back and forth to discussions and debates with friends, fellow workers, and family members.

Workers and youth who are opposed to this war drive can still reach tens of thousands of GIs in this country, including some who will soon be on their way to the Gulf. I'm sure they will set up literature tables near military bases, at transportation centers, wherever they can think of. They will have debates, and their views will get a hearing.

Communists are opposed to individual resistance to serving in the armed forces. We're opposed to any clear-thinking worker in the army or the reserves not going with the rest

Continued on next page

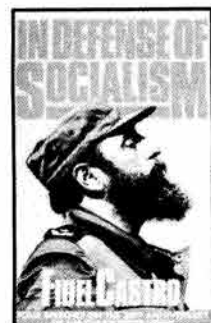
For further reading

Fidel Castro at the United Nations

Speaking to the General Assembly in 1979 as head of the Movement of Nonaligned Countries, Fidel Castro explained how the unjust economic system upheld by Washington is driving Third World countries to ruin, preparing explosive struggles. Calling for cancellation of the growing foreign debt, Castro said, "We aspire to a new world order based on justice, on equity, and on peace." 46 pp., \$2.50.

Che Guevara at the United Nations

In December 1964 Ernesto Che Guevara addressed the UN General Assembly, representing Cuba. The U.S. government, Che said, is "the perpetrator of exploitation and oppression against the peoples of the world." His speech is included in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, the major collection in English of Guevara's writings. 413 pp., \$20.95.



In Defense of Socialism

FIDEL CASTRO

In these speeches from 1988-89, Fidel Castro argues that the future belongs to socialism, not capitalism. Castro also discusses Cuba's role in helping to defend the peoples of Angola and Namibia against the apartheid regime. 142 pp., \$12.95.

Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism

CARLOS TABLADA

Examines Ernesto Che Guevara's contributions to building socialism. Guevara explains why the "dull instruments" of capitalist methods can only lead away from new social relations based on growing political consciousness and control by working people. 286 pp., \$16.95.



Available from the Pathfinder bookstore nearest you or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include \$1 postage and handling per book.

From PATHFINDER



Militant/Susan Zárate



Militant/Salm Kolis

Machinists from Eastern Airlines, who struck in March 1989, have shown capacity to outfight and outlast employers. They learned how to maintain unity while drawing in broader solidarity from labor movement.

Continued from previous page

of the working people in his or her unit to wherever they are sent.

Class-conscious workers go with the rest of their class, and they are "good soldiers" in the sense Farrell Dobbs, Fred Halstead, and other leaders of the communist movement have taught us to understand that term.

Good soldiers are those who keep their buddies from getting killed, who keep them out of harm's way. But that means insisting on your full democratic and political rights to read, speak, and organize. As GIs have learned throughout this century, the officer corps is not concerned about a citizen soldier's rights — or life — any more than foremen or management personnel in a packinghouse care about a worker's rights, health, or safety on the job.

At the same time, communists have always called on the workers' movement to defend unconditionally the democratic rights of any individual who refuses to serve, of any individual resister or conscientious objector. We reject their being jailed, repressed, or penalized by the imperialist government in any way. During World War II, Jim Cannon, Farrell Dobbs, and other SWP and Teamsters union leaders who opposed the war landed in the same federal prison with a good number of members of religious, nationalist, and other groups who refused to serve. Cannon wrote about this in the book *Letters from Prison: The Communist Campaign against Wartime Repression*.

But we must not confuse our human solidarity with these individuals and our support for their democratic rights with support for their political course — which points away from the fight to organize and advance the rights of the hundreds of thousands of workers and farmers who are in the armed forces and who will fight and die if a war is unleashed.

It is the workers in uniform who are already feeling most directly the crackdown on democratic rights that accompanies every imperialist war drive, just as workers in so-called defense industries in this country will also begin to see their rights restricted. And the fight for political space for the entire working class will be advanced or pushed back by how much the rulers get away with in denying the rights of workers, in uniform or out, today.

Soldiers will go through wrenching experiences, and their attitudes and views will change. Their confidence in what they can accomplish, and must accomplish, will change. And that will be a decisive part of the transformation of the working class as a whole in the course of any war. It will be central to organizing and mobilizing working-class opposition to an imperialist war.

Revolutionary-minded young people

It's in a period such as this that a youth organization like the Young Socialist Alliance faces the greatest challenges, as well as the greatest opportunities to win young workers, soldiers, and students to the communist movement. It is always among young people that the greatest reservoirs of energy, commitment, and sacrifice for organized resistance to imperialist war will be found.

This is not simply, or even primarily, because young people have to do the fighting. That's true. The young people who have to do the fighting will discuss and debate the war, and in growing numbers they will get involved in organizing opposition to it.

But there's more to it than that. Young people are the least ground down by the pressures of bourgeois society, less tied down by family, financial, and other obligations. They are less cynical, on the whole, less routinized, and more sensitive to the contradictions they see between what

is and what's supposed to be. Regardless of how much or how little they understand politically, they are more alert to the flagrant inequalities and prejudices rife in capitalist society, the hypocrisy of the bourgeois politicians and their apologists, the brutalities of imperialist exploitation, racism, aggression, and wars.

* * *

The U.S. rulers are marching working people toward war and depression. But if they launch that war, there will be nothing about its consequences that will remain in their control. There will be resistance to the imperialist slaughter — throughout the Middle East and countries with large Muslim populations; in both Western and Eastern Europe; in many parts of the Third World; and right here in the United States. The emerging opposition to the war in this country will combine with fights against the employers' offensive here at home, which will increase in the period of recession and greater economic and social crisis that we have already entered.

It is the *mobilization*, not antiwar sentiment, of these powerful social forces — the working people of this country — that can ultimately stay the hand of the imperialist war makers.

In the course of these fights, more and more workers, farmers, soldiers, and young people will draw revolutionary conclusions and recognize both the need and the advantages of being members of a communist organization, of joining the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party.

We should know what it is that a revolutionary workers' party has to offer people who join our ranks as imperialism

is marching toward war. Above all, the party offers fighters a way of working together democratically, collectively, and effectively at a time when what is shaping up in world politics is so important that the dissipation of our energies as individuals — no matter how committed — is unthinkable.

Up till now, the characteristic above all that has marked even the most conscious and committed of the rank-and-file fighters in the labor movement is the fact that they have found no sustained, disciplined, collective way of functioning. They have stood up against big odds to take on the packinghouse bosses, Eastern Airlines, the coal operators, and many others to fight their way around obstacles thrown up by the labor officialdom. And they have registered important achievements and emerged as better and more class-conscious fighters.

But they remain individual fighters. They may have gone through one, two, or more battles. But whatever they and other workers accomplish in any one battle, against any single employer, they end up back as individual militants.

The Socialist Workers Party has something important to offer fellow workers and young people who look for the forces in society that can change it. We offer a disciplined, democratic party of workers that can give them a way to be part of fights on many fronts against the employers and their wars against working people at home and abroad. We offer them the only road to advance the fight to build a powerful, revolutionary social and political movement of working people — a movement that can take the power to exploit and to wage war out of the hands of the capitalists by establishing a government of workers and farmers in this country.

CANADA

Communist League 2nd Convention

The Communist League in Canada is encouraging unionists, strikers, and students and other youth to attend its convention in Montréal, December 29 – January 1. Building working-class opposition to the coming war in the Middle East through deepening participation in labor struggles in Canada is the meeting's central theme. The first session, featuring a talk by Steve Penner, is open to the public (see box at right). Other reports include:

- Political Situation in Canada — Michel Dugré
- Communist Strategy of Party-Building Today — Susan Berman
- A December 31 antiwar rally will launch promotion and fund-raising for the Marxist magazines *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, and *Nueva Internacional*.

Those interested in attending the entire convention should contact the Communist League, C.P. 340, succ. R, Montréal, Québec, H2S 3M2; telephone (514) 278-1743.

The Middle East War and the Changing Framework of World Politics

- An imperialist war to crush resistance by peoples of Mideast
- End of the Cold War: Capitalism, not socialism, the loser
- Soviet Union & Eastern Europe: Crisis of Stalinism deepens
- Capitalist slide to worldwide depression
- What are the stakes for working people?

Hear: Steve Penner
Executive Secretary
Communist League

Sat., Dec. 29, 2 p.m.
Hotel Europa, 1240 rue Drummond
Montréal, Québec
Donation: \$5

Hundreds sent messages supporting parole bid

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who was framed by police on rape and burglary charges. He was convicted in September 1988 and is now serving a 25-year sentence in the John Bennett state prison in Fort Madison, Iowa.

Despite harassment by au-

On November 20 the Iowa State Board of Parole turned down Curtis' request to be released even though he is an excellent candidate for parole. Hundreds of messages and letters from across Iowa and around the world supporting parole for Curtis were handed to board chairman Walter Saur prior to the hearing. Below we reprint excerpts

worker, but he has also shown his capacity for associative activity, having been an elected officer of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Organization [an inmates' group].

The facts clearly demonstrate that all conditions have been met to make possible a positive reintegration into society, which, we believe, was the aim of the sentence that was imposed.

*Hélène Duberos
General Confederation of Labor
Paris, France*

As you know, Mr. Curtis has already served 27 months in prison despite serious questions regarding the fairness of his conviction. It is apparent that he poses no threat to society and that he has the distinct advantage of a strong support network of family and friends. There seems no gain to his community nor himself through further incarceration.

*Coleman Young
Mayor
Detroit*

As one of the endorsers in the Mark Curtis case, I've always believed in the innocence of Mark Curtis who, up till the time of his arrest, led an exemplary life providing services to the poor and illiterate, among coloreds and Hispanics. Despite nationwide protests by those Americans who believe in his innocence, Mark was found guilty of his charges and has served close to 26 months in prison.

It is my request that he be granted parole at this time and be reinstated into society and the lov-

ing circle of his family and friends. I believe that sentences should be given with rehabilitation in mind and not just punishment as the means to an end.

*Piri Thomas
Novelist and poet
Berkeley, California*

I submit to you that Mark Curtis qualifies for your consideration for parole. He is a hard-working individual who cares about his fellow men and women and will make real contributions to his community upon his release. Society and justice would not be served if Mark Curtis is kept behind bars. If his incarceration is to continue, it would be a sad waste of human potential and energy.

*Jaime Vásquez
Councilman
Jersey City, New Jersey*

As the labor coordinator of the recent Nelson Mandela Bay Area tour, I am deeply concerned with the cause of prisoners of conscience, particularly trade unionists.

Therefore, I am petitioning you at this time to grant parole to Mark Curtis. His record of service to working people fighting for justice over the past 10 years, both prior to his arrest and since his conviction, demonstrate that society will be best served by his release at this time.

*Franck Pottier
Iron Workers Local 378
Oakland, California*

I have been made to understand

that Mark, as I had expected from my knowledge of him, has been exemplary in his conduct in prison. He has displayed a sense of compassion toward other inmates, and I think it is time a similar compassion is shown toward him.

As a former prisoner myself in South Africa, for advocating both the end of apartheid and the instituting of a democratic nonracial society over there, I know what it is to be a political prisoner, which is what I consider Mark Curtis to be. Iowa would be better served with his parole, so as to enable him to work towards an improvement of society as a whole.

*Fred Dube
Professor, Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington*

Now is the time to fully consider Mark Curtis for parole. We say, "Free Mark Curtis."

*Maureen Stubbings
Women Against Pit Closures
Sheffield, England*

I believe that Mr. Curtis is an excellent candidate for parole. His work record and personal conduct while in prison have been excellent; he has a devoted family and a long history of community activism; and he has no previous criminal record prior to his 1988 conviction. I believe that Mr. Curtis will be an honest and productive member of his community when he is released.

*William Kunstler
Attorney and rights activist
New York, New York*

DEFEND MARK CURTIS!



thorities, he continues to be politically active in prison and refuses to be isolated from the world beyond the prison walls.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee, based in Des Moines, is leading an international campaign to fight for justice for Curtis and to defend his rights in prison. More than 8,000 unionists, defenders of democratic rights, political activists, prominent officials, and others — from the Philippines to Sweden, from South Africa to Canada — have endorsed the committee's efforts.

For more information about the case or how you can help, write to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695. If you have news or reports on activities in support of Mark Curtis from your city or country, please send them to the *Militant*.

from a sampling of the letters.

It is clear that Mr. Curtis poses no threat to the community and that no further purpose can be served by keeping him in prison at additional expense to the taxpayer. Like hundreds of his supporters, I feel strongly that the interests of justice and the community can best be served by your decision to release Mr. Curtis so that he will be able to resume his life as a productive citizen.

*Coretta Scott King
Chief Executive Officer
Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for
Nonviolent Social Change, Inc.
Atlanta, Georgia*

Leaving aside the fact that Curtis' imprisonment was unjust in the first place, we call attention to his conduct while serving his sentence, which has been irreproachable. Not only has he been cited as a good

Panama: U.S. forces arrest former police chief

BY SETH GALINSKY

Five hundred U.S. troops surrounded Panamanian police headquarters on December 5 in an attempt to capture former police chief Eduardo Herrera Hassan, who had taken over the building with 100 supporters after escaping from jail.

Herrera managed to break through the cordon, but was arrested by U.S. troops a short time later. According to reporters at the scene, no Panamanian police, except those being arrested, were present. A former colonel in the Panamanian Defense Force, Herrera fled the country in 1988 after attempting a coup against Gen. Manuel Noriega.

Guillermo Endara, after being sworn in as president of Panama at a U.S. military base during Washington's invasion of the country in December 1989, named Herrera police chief. In August 1990 Herrera was dismissed amid rumors he was planning a coup. He was arrested and imprisoned in October, although no charges have been filed. Herrera denied the accusations.

On December 4 a helicopter plucked Herrera off the island prison at Naos. Hours later he took over the central police headquarters in Panama City, with little resistance, as U.S. officers were directing efforts to recapture him.

In a broadcast over Panama Radio, Herrera presented demands that included more low-cost housing and pay raises for police. Endara charged that Herrera was planning "a coup to install a government remote from representative democracy."

Since the invasion, U.S. officers have directed all operations of the Panamanian security forces. There are now about 10,000 U.S. troops in Panama compared to 25,000 at the peak during the invasion.

In an interview with the *New York Times*, Colonel Jack Pryor, a senior officer of the

United States Military Support Group, which directs U.S. involvement in Panama, had claimed U.S. forces would end their police activities by November 11. "We have been withdrawing out of the police business," he said.

The rebellion led by Herrera reflects the deep economic and political crisis in Panama. Thousands of people lost their homes as a result of the invasion, and more than 500 people were killed. Mass graves of victims of the U.S. assault were uncovered months after the invasion.

Although the U.S. government promised to aid the country after the removal of Noriega, only about \$90 million has actually been allocated, much of that to shore-up Panama's faltering banking system. One out of every five Panamanians is unemployed.

Numerous protests have taken place against the continued U.S. occupation and the economic austerity policies of the Endara government. Residents of neighborhoods destroyed by the U.S. invasion, demanding more aid, have held demonstrations, as have unions that oppose plans to revise the labor code.



Sanitation workers on strike in Panama City in March. Protests against deteriorating economic and working conditions have continued since December 1989 U.S. invasion.

Militant/Seth Galinsky

Washington limits press, GI mail in Mideast

Continued from front page

ticles, alcohol — because it is forbidden in Saudi Arabia, "anything detrimental to the Islamic faith," and magazines containing "lewd material."

Tod Ensign, a lawyer and the director of Citizen Soldier, said the organization has been investigating the impact of the mail restrictions on getting the group's newsletter, On Guard, into the hands of GIs. Citizen Soldier is a GI and veterans' rights organization.

"My experience has been that whenever the military can, they try to tell people," especially those who have differing political views or are defending their rights, "that they can control their access to the media," he said. "Of course that is exactly what they are trying to carry out in the Persian Gulf, only in an extreme way."

"They got the reporters to agree only to go with them and where they allowed them to go," Ensign said. "They are always accompanied by Public Information Officers

and this, of course, has a chilling affect on GIs." He emphasized that GIs have a right to express their opinions and receive their mail uncensored.

A subscriber to the *Militant* has become concerned with what has happened to information he has been sending to a friend stationed in the Gulf.

Kymphus Jahi, a student at the University of Minnesota, is not 100 percent sure his letters are being received. What Jahi does know is that the content of his friend's last few letters indicates he has not seen newspaper clippings, antiwar leaflets, and other items sent to him.

Jahi's friend is in the Navy and was stationed in the Gulf prior to the invasion of Kuwait.

"What I've tried to do recently," Jahi said, "is with each letter I send I enclose an antiwar flier, or an article out of the *Militant* or from the daily paper so the Navy can't indoctrinate him and make him think as though people

back home are 100 percent for the war and the sanctions."

Jahi explained that in his return letters, the GI hasn't mentioned the materials. Knowing his friend, Jahi questions whether the mail is being censored.

"I'm already wary of the government anyway," he said, "because I know how they try to hush up any type of resistance. People say to me, 'they wouldn't do that,' but throughout history I know that you can never be relaxed about the way the government operates."

Jahi says that getting some news to his friend is important so he and other GIs can get facts from sources other than the government.

"I wanted to send him articles from the *Militant* because they have logical arguments against the war, not just saying it is wrong, but posing logical reasons," he said.

Jahi agreed that GIs have rights, a fact some might be unaware of. "Maybe they think because they sign on the dotted line that all of their rights are given up," he said.

How to write Mark Curtis

✉ Address letters to Mark Curtis #805338, Box 316 JBC Dorm, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627. Sender's full name and address must be in upper left of envelope. Sign name in full at end of letter. Greeting cards and photos less than 8½ x 11 inches are permitted.

CALIFORNIA

Berkeley

Cuba and the Middle East Crisis. Speaker: Clinton Adlum, first secretary, Cuban Interests Section, Washington, D.C. Wed., Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m. La Peña, 3105 Shattuck. Donation: \$5-\$15. Sponsor: Venceremos Brigade, Socialist Workers Party, Workers World Party. For information call (415) 436-7682.

Los Angeles

Protest to Stop the War in the Middle East. Every Saturday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Federal Bldg. (Westwood), 11000 Wilshire Blvd at Veteran. Sponsor: LA Coalition Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East. For more information call (213) 655-3728 or (818) 780-8238.

Revolutionary Cuba Today. Speaker: Clinton Adlum, first secretary, Cuban Interests Section, Washington, D.C. Sat., Dec. 15, 6 p.m. First Unitarian Church, 2936 W 8 St. Sponsor: Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba. For more information call (213) 383-9283.

"You Can Stop The War!" Teach-In on the Middle East. Speakers: Ramsey Clark; Daniel Ellsberg; Ron Kovic; Maxine Waters; Yigal Arens, University of Southern California professor; Jeff Cohen, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting; Rev. Mary Jensen; Casey Kasem; Ian Masters, KPFK "National Security"; Bill Press; Nancy Tuttle, mother of GI stationed in Saudi Arabia; Edward Asner. Sun., Dec. 16, 6 p.m. Fairfax High School, 7850 Melrose Ave. For information call (213) 651-4441.

Oakland

U.S. Hands Off the Mideast. Panel discussion of students, workers, veterans. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave., Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (415) 420-1165.

San Francisco

Cuba and the Middle East Crisis. Speaker: Clinton Adlum, first secretary, Cuban Interests Section, Washington, D.C. Thurs., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. Western Addition Cultural Center, 762 Fulton, 3rd Floor. Donation: \$5-\$15. Sponsor: Venceremos Brigade, Socialist Workers Party, Workers World Party. For information call (415) 436-7682.

FLORIDA

Miami

No War in the Arab East! Bring the Troops Home Now! Panel discussion. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

The Struggle for Freedom in Northern Ireland. Speakers: Georgia Fleming, activist and wife of Irish-American political prisoner Brian Fleming; Joe Keenan, Irish Northern Aid; Miesa Patterson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

Class: Stop the U.S. War Drive in the Mideast! Class 1: Mon., Dec. 10, 6:00 p.m. Class 2: Tues., Dec. 17, 6:00 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

The Mideast War Crisis and the Fight for Peace. Socialist Educational Conference. Sat., Dec. 15. Registration, 10-11 a.m.; "Burning Issues of the Mideast War Crisis," 11 a.m.-1 p.m.; "Lessons for Antiwar Activists from World War II and Vietnam," 2:30-4:30 p.m. "The Working-Class Road to Peace," 7:30-

9:30. Party to follow. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$10. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

What's Behind Detroit Bashing: A Response to ABC TV's 'Prime Time Live' Program. Video, panel discussion. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Palestine and Arab's Fight for Liberation. Speakers: Julie Nalibov, Palestine Solidarity Committee; representative, Palestine Center of Paterson; M.J. Rahn, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Support the Daily News Strike. Speakers: Dan McPhee, *Daily News* striker; Anna Schell, Socialist Workers Party, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 23-25. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

The Crisis Facing Black Farmers. Speakers: Leon Crump, farmer from Quinby, South Carolina; John O'Sullivan, professor, N.C. A&T State University; representative, Land Loss Prevention Project of Durham; Diane Shur, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 15, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

UTAH

Price

Capitalism in Crisis: War Against Working People at Home and Abroad. Speaker: Tony Dutrow, Socialist Workers Party, member United Mine Workers Local 1190. Sat., Dec. 16, 5 p.m. 253 E Main. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (801) 637-6294.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Free Mark Curtis! Report Back from Visit to Des Moines, Iowa. Speakers: Kim Ramsey, president International Union of Electronic Workers Local 1002; representative, Seattle Mark Curtis Support Group. Sun., Dec. 16, 2 p.m. CAMP, 722 18th Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Mark Curtis Support Group. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston

War in the Persian Gulf. What Does It Mean for Us? Teach-in and forum. Video: *Crisis in the Gulf*. Speakers: Rev. Larry Mackey, Emmanuel Lutheran Church; Trudy Laurensen; Rev. Thom Keely, Methodist Ministry; Rock Wadsworth; Phil Rolleston, singer. Sat., Dec. 15, 2-6 p.m. Greenbrier Valley Mall, main entrance. For more information: (304) 645-4809 or 645-3383.

BRITAIN

Cardiff

Fund-raising Social. Help the *Militant* get out the truth about the Gulf war. Sat., Dec. 15,

8 p.m. 3 Kelvin Rd, Roath.

Class: Cuba's Part in the Fight Against Apartheid. Thurs. Dec. 20, 7 p.m. 9 Moira Terrace, Adamsdown. Tel: 0222-484677.

CANADA

Montréal

Fund-raiser for Lutte ouvrière Antiwar Supplement. Sat., Dec. 15, 6 p.m. 7674 Drolet, south of Villaray. Donation: \$5-\$10. Sponsor: Communist League. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Toronto

The Struggle for Korean Reunification and Washington's Accelerating War Drive.

Speaker: Margaret Jayko, National Committee, Socialist Workers Party, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

'Daily News' strike office is center for support activity

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

NEW YORK — In the bustling office of the Newspaper Guild that serves as the strike center of the nine unions on strike at the *Daily News*, Joan Shepard is busy organizing a December 10 Rally for Justice. The 2,400 *Daily News* workers were locked out October 25 in a union-busting drive by management.

A 17-year employee of the newspaper, Shepard was the Manhattan cultural affairs editor at the *Daily News* and is now serving as the office manager of the strike center. In 1987, she was one of four Black reporters who successfully sued the paper for racial discrimination.

A massive effort is under way to mobilize labor and its allies for the rally. Leaflets are available in five languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and Urdu, a language spoken in Pakistan. Teams of strikers are being organized out of the office to distribute leaflets and speak to various union locals.

In the past several days, Shepard has spoken to various groups, including the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and a meeting of unionists who work at Bellevue Hospital. She is scheduled to speak at a journalism class at Hunter College. Shepard also does an early morning strike update every day on the local Pacifica radio station, WBAI.

One million copies of the strikers' newspaper, the *Real News*, published by the Allied Printing Trades Council, are being distributed. The 12-page paper features a large ad promoting the Rally for Justice. Copies have been distributed to unions in the New York area, to major libraries, and by strikers and their supporters to newsstands. Some stands carry the official strike sign, "The *Daily News* is bad news — Not sold here," along with another sign, "*Real News* available here. Free." Strike activist Dan McPhee said a new issue of the *Real News* will soon be available and encouraged strike supporters to pick up copies to distribute.

Called to coincide with a December 11 meeting of *Daily News* stockholders, the Rally for Justice will feature Jesse Jackson, Cardinal John O'Connor, and Richard Trumka, the president of the United Mine

Vancouver

The Middle East War and the Coming Depression. Speaker: Steve Penner, executive secretary, Communist League. Sat., Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Wellington

March Against the War in the Middle East. U.S. and Allied Troops Out! No New Zealand Involvement! Fri., Dec. 14. Assemble 6 p.m. Cenotaph (outside Parliament). Sponsor: Committee on the Gulf Crisis. For more information call (4) 828-129.

Christmas Peace Vigil. Fri., Dec. 21, 7 p.m. Midland Park. Lambton Quay. Sponsor: Committee on the Gulf Crisis. For more information call (4) 828-129.

Workers of America.

At the office Shepard also compiles information for strikers on where and how to apply for food stamps. Other strikers staff a weekly strike benefits finance table or prepare the copy for the daily strike bulletin. Others, coming in from picket duty, pick up coffee and donuts and discuss their experiences and the latest developments in the strike.

Shepard has been through other strikes at the *Daily News*. This time around, she says, the company is "not negotiating in good faith. Management wants to bust our unions."

"I see this as a turning point for labor," she explains. "Unions are pulling together; this is something new. This is a very serious moment — labor must stick together to stop union-busting."

Since a ruling by a U.S. District Court to allow *Daily News* hawkers to peddle the newspaper in the city subways and railroad stations, strikers have countered by sending leafleting teams into the subways to distribute the *Real News* and leaflets urging a boycott of the paper. Shepard was on a team a few days ago at the busy Columbus Circle subway station. She met with a warm response from fellow working people.

The December 5 *Guild Strike News* reports on the union's campaign to "wage a peaceful battle to win the hearts of rush-hour subway commuters."

"I would say that the response was overwhelmingly in our favor," says striking Guild member Mike McCormick, who helped out on the morning of December 4. "There were a few commuters who defiantly bought the paper in front of us, but most ignored the hawk and wanted to give us money for the *Real News*."

As support continues to grow, other unions have widened their backing for the strike. For example, hospital workers Local 1199 is printing all the leaflets for the Rally for Justice free of charge. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union has taken on the responsibility of policing the newsstands in the Manhattan garment district, organizing its members to encourage vendors and customers not to buy the paper.

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SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10. Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

Successful underachiever — Just before it went bankrupt, union-busting Continental Airlines prepared an image-improvement ad



Harry Ring

crafted to rip off some of the popular appeal of TV underachiever Bart Simpson. The ad offered a likeness of Bart, with the caption, "It's Continental, Dude. Get used to it."

Would they kid you? — The

commercial media emphasized that the announcement of Continental's bankruptcy didn't spark any significant cancellation of existing reservations. Responded one travel agent, "Most people don't have refundable tickets."

Tough situation — "With hindsight, we would not have invested the money." — A Scandinavian Airlines exec announcing his company was writing off most of the \$106 million it sank into becoming Continental's biggest shareholder.

Not as dumb as he looks — Sen. John McCain is one of the five lawmakers being tried in the Senate for being owned by thrift kingpin Charles Keating. McCain testified

that before he met with someone like Keating, an aide would provide him briefing material. "When you have a meeting of any consequence coming up," he explained, "they'll give you a memo ahead of time so that you won't appear as stupid as you are."

March of Yugoslav perestroika — By way of Finland's *Evening News*, it's reported that the manager of a newly opened brothel in Yugoslavia boasted of advertising for prospective employees in an official state paper and choosing the most likely candidates from 360 respondents.

One for every room — The major Japanese electronic compa-

nies are now marketing their new high-definition, giant-screen TVs. For openers, they're selling at \$34,000 apiece. But, the companies advise, in five years the price will drop down to about \$7,500.

Free-market medicine — Doctors who own their own X-ray and ultrasound machines use them four times as often as other doctors. A study found that doctors with their own machines ordered X-rays for 46 percent of patients with such ailments as colds and flu as against 11 percent ordered by other doctors. The machine owners also charged 40 percent more for X-rays.

Speeding up the fast track — The ScanCard Organizer is a gus-

sied-up binder with notepad, file cards, etc. (The calfskin model, \$250.) In an ad, insecure executives are advised that in a recessionary time, "it makes sense as a survival tool . . . You can double, even triple, the number of projects you can keep going at one time."

Equal rights ruling — We're tardy in reporting it, but a California appeals court upheld a San Francisco ordinance against sleeping overnight in cars, campers, and trailers on public streets. The court held the ordinance was not discriminatory because it applied to the rich as well as the homeless. "Motor homes are not used exclusively by the poor," the judges pointed out.

Antiwar actions called for U.S., Canada, Britain

Continued from front page

tional march since the U.S.-led military buildup aimed at Iraq began in August, the National Campaign is urging individuals and organizations to endorse the action, make a financial contribution, and build it in their local areas. Call (212)727-3069 for more information.

Coming amid widespread discussion and debate taking place in many countries on the Mideast war crisis, the national march is one example of the opposition to, or questioning of, Washington and its allies' blockade of Iraq and invasion plans.

Responding to the call for the January 26 action, the Troops Out of the Gulf Coalition in Toronto has called an action for the same day.

Following an early December meeting of college students, peace groups, and political parties, the action coalition issued an appeal for support to the Toronto event. "No to war!" and "U.S. and Canadian troops out of the Gulf!" are the main slogans of the protest.

Chicago regional action

Chicago's Daley Plaza was filled December 8 as 5,000 protesters with banners and signs rallied and marched demanding "No blood for oil!" The antiwar event, called by the Emergency Coalition for Peace in the Middle East, attracted demonstrators from cities throughout the Midwest. Marchers, mostly high school and college students, carried signs that read, "No war for oil," "No draft," and "U.S. out of the Middle East!"

"This is overwhelmingly successful," said Marc Luzziotti, a leader of the DePaul University Committee Against U.S. Intervention. He said students were present from more than 20 campuses, including from the eight in the Chicago area that make up the Chicago Campuses Against the War.

Octavia Miller, another activist in the DePaul committee, said students made phone calls and leafleted high schools throughout the city to build the event.

Miller, a junior at Lincoln Park High School, said the students "were told at my school that we couldn't sponsor a speaker and have a discussion about the war because it was too political. But its young people who will be sent to die," she said.

Demonstrators at the event carried banners from dozens of organizations including the Progressive Student Network, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the Palestine Solidarity Committee.

On December 1 some 5,000 also demonstrated at the Federal Building in Seattle. A march following the rally stretched out for blocks as hundreds carried homemade signs calling for a halt to the escalating drive toward war by Washington.

A November 28 protest outside McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey was held to support Ronald Jean-Baptiste, an air force reservist who has refused to be deployed to the Mideast with his unit.

The reservist said he became disillusioned with the armed services in 1988, two months into his basic training, when the service refused to let him donate blood because of his Haitian ancestry. He has also been refused a discharge to care for his ailing mother who has cervical cancer.

Calling for the withdrawal of French, U.S., and British troops from the Middle East, 6,000 people marched from the Place de la République to the heart of downtown Paris December 4. Dozens streamed out of offices

to join the demonstrators.

One of a series of actions in recent months, the march included a contingent of Palestinians and one of workers from the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). The largest of the recent demonstrations drew 10,000 participants on October 20.

Third national action called in Britain

Britain's broadly-based Committee to Stop the War in the Gulf has called a third national demonstration in London on January 12. After gathering at Hyde Park, the protesters will march to Trafalgar Square. Labour Party Member of Parliament Tony Benn, just back from visiting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, called for "massive support" for the demonstration.

Affiliated to the committee are the Fire Brigades Union, the Industry and Service Union, and the National Union of Mineworkers. The committee is organizing in cities across the country.

In a letter to Britain's *Guardian*, the secretary-general of the National Union of Mineworkers, Peter Heathfield, wrote that he "was dismayed but hardly surprised that the United Nations, in supporting Resolution 678, had given the United States and its more bellicose allies carte blanche to proceed with military action against Iraq in less than seven weeks' time." Resolution 678 condoned the use of "all necessary means" against Iraq.

Saying that the U.S. and allied intentions were "hardly the cause of defending democracy . . . [or] national sovereignty," the leader of the coal miners union pointed to the double standard practiced by the United Nations toward Iraq and other "blighted areas of the post-colonial era."

"The drive to a Gulf war is simply a naked rush for secure oil and gas reserves



November 29 protest in Toronto against Canada's participation in U.S.-led war drive.

by those industrial nations sufficiently armed and cynical to take what they believe to be rightfully theirs to the exclusion of the less developed members of the world community," he wrote.

"To spill human blood in a war for carbon fuel for which there are ample substitutes is an act of the most monumental folly."

"The tragedy is that we are heading towards a continental land war, the barbarity and devastation of which is little

understood by the public, but is by any calculation likely to culminate in a catastrophe. It is time for the labor movement to take the moral high ground on this issue and stand against the rush to a carbon war for which humanity would pay an appalling cost," Heathfield wrote.

Roni McCann reporting from Chicago and Brian Grogan in London contributed to this article.

Jobless, Blacks hit hard as U.S. economy slows

BY GREG McCARTAN

A series of recent U.S. government announcements admitted that an economic slowdown has begun. While not calling the downturn a recession, Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan told the House Banking Committee that "all indications are that a meaningful downturn in aggregate output occurred as we moved through October and into November."

Asked at the November 28 hearing if a recession has started, Greenspan said, "What we're looking at is a gradual decline, which, if it persists, will give us a fourth-quarter GNP [gross national product] which is negative."

A decline in the GNP for two consecutive quarters is what the government officially calls a recession.

On December 7 the government reported that the unemployment rate had increased to 5.9 percent in November, the highest since October 1987. Employment in factories declined by 200,000, bringing the number of jobs cut in manufacturing since the beginning of 1989 to 800,000.

As determined by the U.S. Labor Department's survey of business payrolls, some 267,000 people were thrown out of work last month. Revising previous estimates of 68,000 more unemployed in October, the report said the actual number was 178,000.

The unemployment rate for all factory workers rose a full percentage point, to 6.6 percent. In the durable goods sector the figure

rose from 5.8 to 7.1 percent. Joblessness climbed to 13.6 percent for construction workers.

In addition, the number of people who are working part-time jobs because they cannot find full-time employment rose by 170,000.

The report also says that out of the total working-age population, only 62.1 percent are employed. This is down from 63 percent during 1989 and the first half of 1990. For working-age women the figure stands at 54.5 percent, down a full percentage point from June.

In addition to the total job loss, other recently released statistics demonstrate the extent of the breakdown in social benefits for working people and the differential impact of the capitalist economic crisis on Blacks.

Barely one-third of jobless workers are receiving unemployment benefits. At the depth of the 1975 recession more than three-quarters of those out of work received compensation. By 1982 the figure had dropped to about 50 percent.

While the size of payments received has kept pace with inflation over the years, weekly checks only average about 35 percent of the earnings at previous jobs.

Part of the decline in the number of workers who are granted unemployment compensation is a result of tightened eligibility requirements implemented by most states. Many are now requiring workers to hold a job for a longer period of time before receiving benefits. They are also generally denying

compensation to workers who were not laid off, but quit their jobs.

According to the Washington, D.C.-based Urban Institute, the growing number of non-union workplaces makes it easier for employers to challenge unemployment claims by workers.

The Institute said that even if unemployment rose to 9 percent, the number of workers receiving compensation would reach only 36 percent to 38 percent.

Decline in life expectancy for Blacks

Continuing a four-year trend, life expectancy for Blacks has declined from 69.7 years in 1984 to 69.2 years in 1988. Life expectancy for whites in 1988 was 75.6 years, unchanged from the year before.

A National Center for Health Statistics report documented the steady rise in life expectancy over past decades, a trend that was sharply reversed in the 1980s.

For Black men life expectancy dropped from 65.2 years in 1987 to 64.9 years in 1988. For Black women the figures dropped from 73.6 to 73.4.

The percentage of Black women receiving prenatal care in the first three months of pregnancy declined from 62.7 percent in 1980 to 61.1 percent in 1988.

The percentage of babies born to Black women receiving no care increased from 8.8 percent in 1980 to 11 percent in 1988. For white women the figure rose from 4.3 percent to 5 percent over the same years.

U.S. blockade: an act of war

Four days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Washington began a brutal embargo against Iraq. Not even during the height of the war in Vietnam nor during the 1950-53 war against the people of Korea did Washington impose such a complete air, sea, and land blockade. This act amounts to a declaration of war against the people of Iraq and Kuwait and the hundreds of thousands from other countries who have been stranded there since the invasion.

The UN Security Council adopted a U.S.-backed resolution banning trade or any financial undertakings with Iraq or occupied Kuwait. Despite objections from representatives of the Cuban and Yemeni governments at the United Nations, Washington made sure the embargo included foodstuffs and medicines.

Since it began, the embargo — with U.S. and allied naval vessels to police it — has practically been airtight. Ships going to or coming from Iraq and Kuwait have been stopped and searched in the waters off Saudi Arabia. Vessels have been shot at and boarded at gunpoint by U.S.-led forces deployed there.

The blockade and these imperial acts by Washington should be condemned by working people the world over.

Despite tactical differences on how to proceed in smashing Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's army to shift the

relationship of forces in the region to imperialism's favor, both the Democratic and Republican parties wholly support the criminal blockade. They are willing to see more Iraqi children die from a lack of medicines and foodstuffs in pursuit of their goals.

Seizing on the Iraqi government's detention of many foreign nationals, Washington has shed crocodile tears over U.S., British, and French citizens in Iraq and Kuwait. But their concern is unmasked by the untold hardships imposed by the embargo on workers from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East who have been trapped by the crisis. Thousands have been left jobless and many have gone hungry or without care.

The barbarity of the imperialist blockade reflects the U.S. rulers' determination to use all the economic and military might at their disposal to shore up their crumbling world order. The devastation of Washington's moves so far is an indication of the scope of the slaughter they will unleash in a widespread and bloody shooting war.

Through discussions in workplaces, on warships, at anti-war protests, and elsewhere in the coming weeks, working people, GIs, students, and others should discuss the war being waged today and the need to demand Washington lift its murderous embargo against Iraq.

Working-class unity is needed

The growing worldwide capitalist economic crisis continues to drive down the living standard of workers and farmers everywhere. Officials in Washington have admitted that the U.S. economy is on the verge of a recession, one that could, moreover, turn into a full-scale depression.

The human toll in the Third World, generated by the colossal debt to banks and corporations in the imperialist countries, will reach catastrophic proportions during such a downturn in the capitalist business cycle. The crisis will bring untold misery as well to working people in the advanced capitalist countries.

In November, the U.S. unemployment rate went up, and employment in factories declined again. The number of those working part-time jobs because they cannot find full-time jobs rose.

Over the last 10 years, real wages in the United States dropped to the level they were at the beginning of the 1960s, and the percentage of workers earning poverty-level wages has gone up. Worst hit by the economic crisis are Blacks and other oppressed nationalities.

In addition to unequal terms of trade and foreign debt payments, oil price hikes are wreaking havoc in Third World countries. Prices of basic necessities have gone up as well.

In the face of a capitalist system in crisis, the struggle to unify working people at home and abroad to defend our common interests against the handful of billionaire ruling families becomes an urgent task.

Trade unionists who resist employer attacks on their unions and standard of living know that breaking down

employer-fostered divisions is an important part of waging an effective fight. In fact, the unification of workers along race and sex lines, and across national boundaries, is a challenge before the whole labor movement.

Rather than protecting the interests of a narrower and narrower layer of union members — the perspective of the top officials of the trade unions — labor needs to develop a broad social outlook to address politically the needs and interests of all working people.

To combat growing unemployment, we must mount an effort to fight for jobs for all through a worldwide campaign to radically reduce the workweek — with no reduction in pay. A shorter workweek would immediately open up jobs for millions of workers.

The labor movement can combat the inequality that the bosses use to divide and weaken the working class by demanding the establishment and enforcement of affirmative action quotas. These measures both defend workers from racist and sexist hiring practices and from losing ground when layoffs mount.

The fight to unify working people must be worldwide. Championing the demand to cancel the Third World debt identifies our interests at home with the interests of the millions of toilers abroad who are saddled with its huge weight.

Charting a course to organize against the impact of the coming depression, combined with mounting opposition to the U.S.-led drive to war in the Mideast, will strengthen and advance the labor movement.

U.S. out of Panama!

One year after the U.S. government invaded Panama, wiping out whole neighborhoods, killing hundreds, and deposing Gen. Manuel Noriega, its goal of a stable pro-imperialist regime is still out of reach. Front-page photos of U.S. troops in Panama City arresting Panamanians led by former police-chief Eduardo Herrera show that the government of Guillermo Endara has not changed one iota since it was installed on a U.S. military base during the invasion.

One year ago President George Bush claimed it was necessary to invade Panama to restore democracy. But the real reason was to maintain control of the Panama Canal, establish a client regime, and strengthen U.S. domination in the region.

The Endara regime is certainly subservient to Washington, but it is not stable. Herrera had only a hundred men with him when he took over the central police station. "Loyal" Panamanian forces were nowhere in sight. If it weren't for the rapid intervention of U.S. troops, he might have toppled the government.

On the same day that Herrera was being pursued by U.S. troops, 30,000 government workers marched through the streets of Panama City, protesting government refusal to pay the traditional Christmas bonus. Residents of neighbor-

hoods leveled during the invasion are still living at a former air force base in wooden cubicles.

Remembering that the invasion of Panama was supposed to be a quick in-out operation, some in U.S. ruling circles fear that an invasion of Iraq may not be so simple either. Some 25,000 U.S. troops were used in Panama. Nearly a half million are in the Arab-Persian Gulf, poised to take Kuwait and turn Iraq into a U.S. protectorate. If the United States is still mired in Panama, how long will it be stuck in Iraq? That is the fear that is behind the present tactical hesitations and divisions among the U.S. rulers over how to achieve their common goals.

Bush claims his aim in bringing the world to the brink of war is to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty. But as the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, Ricardo Alarcón, points out, the invasion of Panama proves this is sheer hypocrisy.

The U.S. goal in the Gulf is the same as its goal in Panama: to create a subservient regime and try to regain some of the ground lost with the overthrow of the U.S.-sponsored dictatorship in Iran in 1979.

Working people, unionists, GIs, and others who defend national independence and sovereignty should demand: U.S. troops out of Panama!

How socialist workers prepared for war pressures

Doug Jenness, who normally writes this column, is headed for Seoul, the capital of South Korea, to cover the meeting there between the prime ministers of North and South Korea scheduled for December 11-14.

This week we reprint an excerpt from a document in the book, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Building a Party of Socialist Workers*, edited by Jack Barnes and Steve Clark. First published in 1981 by Pathfinder, this volume includes reports and resolutions from conventions and other meetings of the Socialist Workers Party. These materials describe the turn in the crisis of the capitalist system on an international scale and the more central place the working class has begun to assume in politics. The SWP responded by making a radical turn to get a large majority of its members and leaders into industry and the industrial unions.

The book is well worth reading today to learn and relearn how socialist workers, by responding to the new situation,

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

were preparing themselves and their party for the pressures and opportunities arising out of the employers' offensive at home and imperialist wars, like the one that Washington, London, Paris, and their capitalist allies in the Middle East have begun to put into place against Iraq.

The following excerpt is from the main political resolution adopted by the 27th National Convention of the SWP held Aug. 17-21, 1975.

* * *

The American ruling class that was so confident and arrogant from 1945 on is now floundering in search of a new world strategy. This is reflected in the pessimism expressed by the bourgeois statesmen and commentators as they seek to assess the prospects of American imperialism from a broader historical perspective.

Such pessimism stems from a recognition of the shift in the world relationship of class forces to the disadvantage of capitalism, the shift in relative weight among the imperialist rivals themselves, and the scope of the problems generated today by a decaying world capitalist order.

This crisis of leadership and orientation is not confined to the American bourgeoisie. Despite the relative decline of the American dollar and Washington's power, there is no other capitalist power, not even the strongest, Germany or Japan, capable of stepping in and replacing Wall Street's hegemony.

However much the lesser capitalist powers may chafe under U.S. domination, they cannot free themselves from dependence upon Washington. Singly or collectively, they cannot afford, nor are they able, to police the world. Yet they cannot afford not to have it policed.

Under these circumstances the *real* perspectives that continued capitalist rule present to the American workers are cuts in the standard of living, new military adventures, and curtailment of democracy.

1. The ruling class will seek to boost profit rates by squeezing even more out of the American workers. This means holding down real wages, whittling away working conditions, lowering the standard of living, and slashing social welfare programs. It means seeking to increase divisions among the workers through the use of racism and sexism especially, and trying to prevent the development of international working-class solidarity.

It also means cutting down on the social legacy to be bequeathed to future generations — the natural environment, schools, hospitals, housing, organization of the cities, and the entire productive system.

2. The threat of military adventures, and along with them the possibility of nuclear annihilation, will continue. Rivalries among the imperialist powers will sharpen as they compete for markets and raw materials. There will be increased efforts to impose American imperialist needs and perspectives on the masses of the colonial and semicolonial world with the inevitable resistance this will generate.

At every opportunity, the ruling class will push as far as it can, testing the limits on the use of its massive military power and nuclear blackmail, trying to see how much of an edge it can get through threat of military action. The danger of miscalculation is always inherent in this bellicose probing.

3. The ruling class will seek to curtail the democratic rights of the American workers, to undercut their ability to learn the truth about the actions and activities of the big corporations and the government, to hamper them from entering the political arena in an independent manner. They will strive to drive back both the social gains and the new rights won by the oppressed minorities and women in recent years.

Driving down the living standard of the masses of American workers, maintaining American economic positions abroad by deploying U.S. military might, curtailing the rights and liberties won by the American people on the job and in society as a whole — these are the realities America's imperialist rulers hold out for the coming period.

LETTERS

This week we devote the letters column to our brothers and sisters who are in prison.

The *Militant* receives numerous letters and articles from our readers behind bars. Other subscribers in prison send us poems, drawings, or works like the one reprinted here. And still others send us material about their cases and the injustices they face. We are able to print only a small part of what we receive, and many items are abridged.

Most of the letters are from prisoners without financial resources who request subscriptions to the *Militant*. Our special prisoners' fund enables us to send these subscriptions. Nearly 600 people behind bars receive the paper thanks to contributions from our readers. This year \$2,012 was donated.

To help in this important effort, send your contribution to the *Militant's* Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Thank you

I am presently incarcerated at Folsom Prison and receive the *Militant* through your prisoners fund. Thank you for enlightening me about what is taking place in the "socialist camp," as I am a socialist who wants to know.

Represa, California

I would like to express my gratitude for your most informative newspaper. I've never read any paper that covers political events quite like yours — truly in a class by itself.

Midway, Texas

Militant way

I am an African born in America, and I'm currently in solitary confinement in an Iowa prison. I've had several discussions that usually lead to arguments on socialist views and America's role in imperialism. Though it seems I am largely outnumbered in the discussions, I stand my ground.

There's a stereotype that goes with the word "militant," and it usually goes for the negative. Your articles are helping stop this false stereotype.

"By any means necessary," continue to print the truth, the militant way!

Fort Madison, Iowa

Turkey

I am a journalist and political prisoner and have been in jail for 11 years. I was sentenced to 36 years under the Turkish penal code by military courts since I was the editor-in-chief of a weekly socialist newspaper.

I have taught myself Spanish in prison and would like to receive *Perspectiva Mundial*, the Spanish-language socialist monthly. Unfortunately, I have no possibility of sending money, especially because of the difficulty of getting currency exchanged in prison.

Çanakkale, Turkey

In the hole

I am 19 years old; I'm in the hole right now. I read one of your papers and have heard it is the best. Could you send me a few issues? I would just like to see if it's really what I want to read.

Portage, Wisconsin

Gets around

I want to say a whole lot, but let me just say this: I'm not the only one here in Texas that reads your paper. When I finish it, about 25 other people read it.

Please keep it coming.
Lovelady, Texas

I have been in prison for about 20 years. A fellow prisoner has let me read your newspaper. I have found it to be enlightening, to say the least, as I seem to share a common philosophy. Being in prison for so long, I have had the time to think and reflect upon our social ills and the repression and oppression that is the tool of our capitalist rulers to indoctrinate and destroy the free will of the people — the poor and the working poor.

If you can place me on your mailing list, you may be assured of the circulation of the paper to a wide audience here of people who share your views and welcome your insight.

Columbia, South Carolina

Gulf crisis

My subscription will soon be running out and I am writing to request that it be renewed. My only source for the truth on the Gulf crisis and topics of interest to me is the *Militant*.

Craigsville, Virginia

Corruption

I am a former political refugee from the Soviet Union, now a prisoner here, thanks to the corrupt and criminal system calling itself a justice system in this country.

I would like to receive your paper.
Chillicothe, Ohio

I am in maximum security extended lockdown because of my petitions about the corruption of this state's judicial and penal system. They have barred me from the law library, and I have no access to the outside world other than an occasional newspaper.

Angola, Louisiana

From Iowa

I've been reading a copy of your paper that I borrow from a fellow inmate. He informed me about the way I may acquire a subscription. I've enjoyed reading this wonderful and informative paper thus far.

Fort Madison, Iowa

I'm serving time here at the State of Iowa's penitentiary for a property offense. I am in daily contact with Mark Curtis, who has been mentioned frequently in this paper. I can report that Mark is strong and dedicated to his principles.

One useful by-product of Mark's imprisonment is that close contact and conversation with him has prompted me to organize my thoughts and to express them here.

Please accept my salute and respect for any of your efforts against capitalism, whoever you are, and for whatever blows you inflict upon it.

Fort Madison, Iowa

Book requests

This is a plea for books! We have absolutely nothing here to sustain us. We are the handful of politically minded African men held under special management circumstances here. The library facility is as much a tool for the maintenance and control of the captive population as the isolation/segregation units.

McAlester, Oklahoma

I'm presently incarcerated at the state correctional facility at Camp Hill. We went through a major riot a year ago and our property was destroyed. I am very interested in continuing to enhance my knowledge of our world in the past, present, and future. Can you forward any of the following books: *The Struggle Is My Life*, Nelson Mandela; *FBI on Trial*, editor Margaret Jayko; *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*, Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed; and *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*?

Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

I am a rebel inmate incarcerated in a maximum security facility. I wish to be added to your subscribers list.

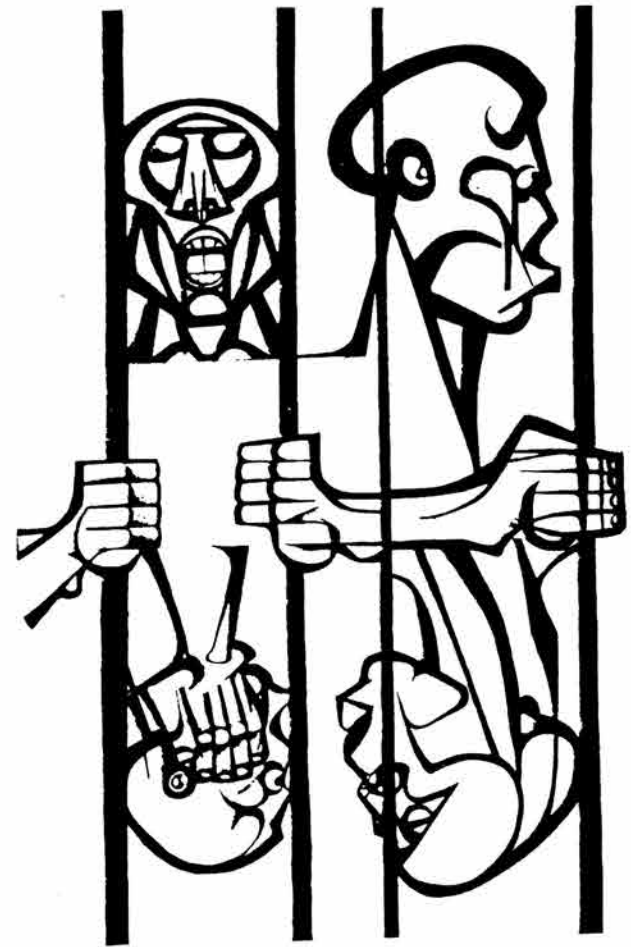
I have completed reading several books on the speeches of Brother El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X), and his speech at the Militant Labor Forum. So I want to know your points of view as well as your philosophy.

I have been trying to get books on socialism, but my poverty and the administration's refusal to stock the library with this type of books has prevented me from discovering for myself what socialism is all about.

Aiea, Hawaii

Please send any books on Black history or the Middle East.
Joliet, Illinois

Editor's note: Many readers send



Drawing by Dumile Feni, South African artist jailed on various occasions by apartheid regime. Feni painted portrait of African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela on Pathfinder Mural in New York.

requests for books from Pathfinder Press. The publisher makes seconds of its titles available to prisoners at half price and absorbs shipping costs.

Bigotry

I am presently confined in the hole for a year by the prison staff in the KKKuaker state of Pennsylvania, having been transferred from the fascist camp at Huntingdon in the midst of rioting there and at the sister camp at Camp Hill. The bigotry and racism that said staff instituted and cultivated came to a head and we prisoners brought it to the fore, although the media swept the main issues under the rug with its usual glib use of propaganda.

I would like to be on your subscription list since I, as well as others transferred with me, will be out of touch with current events for some time.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Trade-off

Something very stupid happened here in Attica. The system gave us a choice: they will put TV in the cells but we have to give up our packages — we'll only get packages on our birthdays.

A lot of brothers went for that. The system got over really good with its psychology. Now they can really control the brothers' with the TV.

Attica, New York

Cuba

I am a Spanish-speaking person from Cuba. I am confined in this Missouri State Prison.

I want to subscribe to the *Militant* because everything in the paper is news, no commercials, no lies, no falsehoods. Real news for real people.

I agree with those people who say that there is only one thing worse than war, and that is slavery. As a

refugee from Cuba, I came to find peace in this so-called free country. Instead I found a U.S. government "war" and slavery against its people.

For me, I will go back to Cuba where there is no war. At least in Cuba a man is recognized for his worth.

Mineral Point, Missouri

News is king

I read your newspaper and find it to be very interesting, informative, and of substantial value and import to prison inmates. Here at the state reformatory, I serve in the capacity of newspaper editor and inmate minister. In today's world, news is king and that sentiment is closer to home if you are locked behind four walls with little hope of ever getting out.

Monroe, Washington

Rations

I can't afford the cost of a subscription because we don't get paid here. We only get \$35 a month in rations — cookies, potato chips, soap, etc. — but no money for the pocket, which we could all use.

I've often wondered: can they really do this here? A lot of other prisoners think we've got it made here at Fort Leavenworth since it's a military prison. As they say: The grass is always greener on the other side.

Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas

Released

I would like to thank you for the free subscription you sent me. Since I am being released, I'd like to cancel the subscription to give someone else the opportunity to receive your paper free of charge.

I really find your paper interesting, especially the struggle of Mark Curtis. As soon as I get myself situated outside prison, I will get your paper as a paying subscriber.

Coxsackie, New York

Militant Prisoner Fund

Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____ to help defray the costs of providing *Militant* subscriptions to prisoners.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Clip and mail to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

'What's really going on'

I am a prisoner in the California Department of Corrections. I am a Black man, age 22, and protesting with the antiwar posse.

I have a rap here that needs to be heard. It has a real strong message in it, with all my respect for the American GIs and workers who are victims of this friv-

olous war.

Please print my full name and address. Maybe someone would like to put this to music.

Ontwone Spencer

D-61412

P.O. Box 3476

Corcoran, California 93212-8309

Listen up! to this sound
I am a prisoner speaking for the underground
I have a message that's critical
So listen close 'cause I'm going to get political

A threat of war is burning up the media
It seems the capitalists are getting greedy/a
Riskin lives of innocent civilians
So their companies can make milli'ans

The president says something ironic
But we know it's all economic
It's insane to war with Iraq
So Uncle Sam, Sam, Sam . . .

(chorus)
Brang'em back!
(repeat chorus)

I'm a prisoner housed on death row
They're trying to kill me with a little cap'so
That's why I feel for American GIs
That's being sentenced to die for someone's enterprise
It's not the question of who's being loyal
It's just the fact blood's thicker than oil
We have no beef with the country of Iraq
So Uncle Sam, Sam, Sam . . .

(chorus)
Brang'em back!
(repeat chorus)

Chicago: socialist mayor candidate campaigns against U.S. war drive

7,000 sign up to put working-class ticket on ballot

BY RONI McCANN

CHICAGO — The drive to collect 30,000 signatures to place Socialist Workers Party candidates on the ballot for the upcoming city elections here got a big boost the weekend of December 8-9.

Campaign supporters gathered 3,179 names during two days of activities, bringing the total to 7,010 people who have signed petitions in the first nine days of the ballot effort.

Wearing bright-yellow buttons that called for "U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! James Warren for Mayor," 50 volunteers fanned out December 8 to working-class neighborhoods, public transportation stops, and downtown shopping areas urging working people to help put the antiwar candidates on the ballot.

Warren, 38, a steelworker and member of the SWP National Committee, heads the ticket. Also running are Estelle DeBates, 30, for city clerk and Eric Matheis, 26, a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, for city treasurer.

That afternoon campaign supporters joined 5,000 workers, students, and other opponents of Washington's war drive in the Mideast at a protest march. Supporters hosted a fundraising rally in the evening that featured a presentation by the SWP mayoral candidate.

Volunteers from eight states, from throughout the Midwest and as far away as Britain, came to help with the campaign effort. Due to undemocratic ballot laws, the SWP and other working-class parties must gather 25,000 signatures to appear on the ballot.

The socialists have set a goal of collecting 20,000 signatures by December 23 and a total of 30,000 by January 20. A big target weekend is planned for December 15. The candidates are encouraging workers and others to join in campaigning against Washington's drive to war by helping to collect signatures.

At the antiwar action in downtown's Daley Plaza, the socialist candidates spent the day



Militant/Samad Yervani
Socialist Workers Party mayoral candidate James Warren talks with participants in protest march against Washington's war drive in Middle East.

introducing themselves and the proposals and perspectives of their working-class antiwar campaign to hundreds of interested demonstrators, especially young people who crowded around a Pathfinder literature table.

The socialists explained that the employers and their government in Washington are waging war at home and abroad. Workers and farmers are being sent to Saudi Arabia to fight and die in a war that is not in their interests. They have seen their unions, democratic rights, and standard of living come under attack as well.

"We think working people can see this connection and a fight can be waged against this war and the conditions imposed on us here at home," said mayoral candidate Warren. "We are fighting to win the signatures we need to get on the ballot so we can more effectively present a perspective of practicing politics now, as we are doing here today."

Many young people listened intently and raised their opinions with the candidates. After shaking his hand, one student invited Warren to come speak at her high school as did several other young people through the course of the day.

Curious about Cuba

Many of the students that stopped to talk said they knew from reading the daily papers that Cuba had voted against the United Nations resolutions backing the U.S. war drive and were curious to know more about that country.

DeBates explained she had visited Cuba and that capitalism, which breeds wars like the one unfolding in the Mideast, has been abolished there. "This book is the place to find the answers you're looking for," she told one youth and pointed to a copy of *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*. Several participants picked up copies of the book during the event.

At the antiwar action some 1,000 participants signed the socialist candidates' petitions.

During the antiwar action, 10 people subscribed to the *Militant* and more than 100 bought copies of the paper. Participants bought \$200 in Pathfinder literature and \$200 worth of political buttons, most of which were produced by the Young Socialist Alliance.

At a campaign rally held after the antiwar protest, DeBates welcomed supporters and

announced the results of the day's campaigning.

Speaking along with mayoral candidate Warren, Aaron Ruby, national chairperson of the YSA, invited young people to join the revolutionary youth group. Ruby, who participated in the campaign effort and spoke about the war drive at two college campuses, said five students had decided to join the youth organization. SWP leader Joel Britton, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, appealed for funds needed to make the Chicago campaign effort a success. Campaign sup-

porters have set a goal to raise \$7,000.

Warren said that the SWP candidates politically defend and speak in the interests of all working people. The drive to collect 30,000 signatures is a central part of campaigning among unionists, striking workers, GIs, reservists, farmers and others to build opposition to the crime against humanity unfolding in the Mideast.

Interests of working people

The SWP candidates do not start with just the U.S. lives that will be lost in the coming war but the hundreds of thousands of working people who are being driven into the imperialist slaughter on both sides of the battle lines — from the United States, Iraq, and other countries, the candidate explained.

"It is working people who will die," he said. "Working people who happen to be from the United States or Iraq or the Mideast — that's who stands to lose in this war and that is the class question posed and the framework in which we will be discussing politics with workers in this campaign."

The socialist said that the conditions of life for a growing number of working people in Chicago — the disease, hunger, homelessness, and desperation — as in most other major cities, "really reflects what is happening to humanity around the world and what the employers are doing to us."

The socialist candidates raise the political perspective of fighting for a break with the Democratic and Republican parties responsible for the war at home and the war drive abroad, Warren said. Working people must chart their own independent political course, he said.

Warren invited everyone present to join the campaign effort. A university student who marched in the protest decided to join the YSA. Supporters raised \$1,730 for the Chicago socialist campaign effort.

Socialists in U.S., Canada field candidates for office

BY SUSAN APSTEIN

The Socialist Workers Party has announced candidates for municipal offices in more than a dozen cities as part of deepening its working-class campaign against the accelerating imperialist war preparations in the Middle East.

The candidates are discussing with working people the central political issue facing them in the United States and throughout the world: the devastating war the U.S. government is heading toward in the Mideast, in which thousands of working people will die.

Union fighters at Eastern Airlines and other striking workers, coal miners, and young people are part of the slates.

They are fighters in working-class struggles taking place today. Through building solidarity with the strikes at Eastern Airlines and the *Daily News* and with other struggles, the candidates and their supporters are reaching out to unionists; their fellow workers in uniform; reservists; farmers; and others, urging them to join in campaigning against the coming war. In many cities campaign supporters will be collecting signatures to put the candidates on the ballot.

The Communist League of Canada has also announced three candidates for legislature in the province of British Columbia: Nancy Walker, an airport worker and member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM); Robert Demorest, a member of the Young Socialists and a steelworker;

and Maggie Trowe, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Cleve Andrew Pulley is the SWP candidate for Detroit City Council. He works at the General Motors Orion assembly plant and is a member of United Auto Workers Local 5960. Pulley, a Vietnam-era veteran who campaigned against that war among fellow GIs, was the party's candidate for president of the United States in 1980.

A union militant and longtime fighter for Black rights, Rashaad Ali, is the party's candidate for mayor of Baltimore. Ali is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 27. The Socialist Workers slate includes Catherine Monahan, Edwin Fruit, Glova Scott, James Sarsgaard, Kenneth Morgan, Michele Smith, and Rachele Fruit for city council; Margret Kreiner for city council president; and Glen Swanson for comptroller.

Naomi Craine, a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance, is the SWP candidate for city council in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is a textile worker and member of the Amalgamated Textile Workers Union (ACTWU).

A worker at Union Carbide Construction and member of IAM Local 298, Linda Joyce, is the party's candidate for mayor of Charleston, West Virginia.

John Hawkins is a coal miner and member of United Mine Workers of America Local

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'Militant' reporters in S. Korea, Japan

The third meeting this year between the prime ministers of North and South Korea opened December 11 in Seoul, the South's capital. Korea has been divided for 45 years and the fact that these meetings are taking place reflects the widespread sentiment for the reunification of Korea that exists on the peninsula and among Koreans around the world.

Militant reporters Doug Jenness of New York and George Fyson of Auckland, New Zealand, were on hand in Seoul to provide our readers firsthand coverage of this important political event. Following the meeting, Jenness and Fyson traveled to Japan to report on political developments in that country.

This trip is a timely and needed initiative by the *Militant* to bring our readers coverage of the struggle for the reunification of Korea. The plane fares, lodgings, reporting expenses, and other costs go beyond our regular budget. Contributions from our readers are needed to help us meet the financial challenge of fielding this reporting team. Send your contribution today.

Contributions should be sent to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.