

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban people thwarted U.S. invasion plan in 'missile crisis' — PAGES 8-9

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Canadian gov't orders end to postal strike

BY BRIGITTE GROUX AND MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — Late in the evening of December 2, the federal parliament in Ottawa adopted back-to-work legislation against a country-wide strike by 45,000 postal workers. The bill had been introduced the day before by the Liberal government of premier Jean Chrétien.

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) members have been on the picket line since November 19 against Canada Post, a crown corporation. Under the law, union officials advising their members to defy the order can be fined up to CAN \$50,000 a day and their organizations up to \$100,000 a day. Individual union members refusing to go to work face up to \$1,000 a day in fines.

Two days before the introduction of the bill, Chrétien had threatened strikers, "In Canada, citizens respect the law or they must answer for their actions to the justice system."

The antilabor law also imposes wage increases of 1.5 percent, 1.75 percent, and 1.9 percent for the three years of the contract — less than Canada Post offered at the bargaining table, according to the union. All other outstanding issues in the contract will

Continued on Page 14

Racist killing sparks protests in Denver

BY ARDY BLANDFORD

DENVER, Colorado — On November 25 more than 1,500 people attended a "rally against racism" to protest the killing of Oumar Dia, a West African immigrant who was shot to death. Nathan Thill, who calls himself a "warrior" in a race war, and a "national socialist," publicly confessed to murdering Dia on November 18, simply because he was Black.

According to the affidavit for his arrest, Thill approached Dia saying, "Are you a n —? Are you ready to die like a n —?" He also shot and paralyzed Jeannie VanVelkinburgh, a woman who was standing at a bus stop and who tried to help Dia. Thill and his alleged accomplice Jeremiah Barnum, are being charged with six felonies from murder to ethnic intimidation.

At the November 25 rally a taped message was broadcast from VanVelkinburgh, who told the crowd she had no regrets, and "if I had to do this all over again, I would." The demonstration was organized by Mayor Wellington Webb and local religious leaders. Other speakers included Gov. Roy Romer, Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, along with other local leaders. Activists organized several other events, including the November 21 funeral for Oumar Dia where 500 people attended. Ahmad Nabhan, leader of the Islamic Center of Colorado where Dia's service was held, called for the death penalty. This was also one of the demands raised at a march and rally held the

Continued on Page 5

Korean workers will pay price for 'bailout'

IMF plan means austerity, buying up of nat'l patrimony

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Hours after government officials in south Korea announced a deal was reached with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for an "economic rescue," Lim Chang Yuel, the minister of finance, told a December 2 Cabinet meeting that there are still issues to be resolved and adjourned the meeting after 10 minutes. Lim had also skipped a news conference scheduled the day before, where he was to disclose the details of the IMF "bailout" plan. After four rounds of talks, Seoul struck an agreement on December 3 with IMF officials that includes a pledge by the country's leading presidential candidates that they will honor the terms of the financial arrangement if they win the December 18 elections.

The finance minister's actions reflected south Korea's rulers' nervousness as they maneuvered to get a better deal from the IMF, which is demanding austerity measures from Seoul in exchange for delivering a \$55 billion loan package — the largest ever. The "bailout" is intended to maintain the flow of blood money into the coffers of U.S. banks and other imperialist financial institutions. It will force Seoul to impose deep cuts in social programs and

layoffs that could triple the country's unemployment and to give up chunks of the country's national patrimony to U.S. and other foreign investors.

South Korea, like other countries in southeast Asia, has been slammed by the storm of currency devaluations that have raised the specter of defaults on loan payments to imperialist banks. Also, throughout the region

prices for goods have been falling as markets are glutted with automobiles and other commodities that cannot be sold at high enough profits for the employers.

Washington is also trying to take advantage of the effects of the financial crisis on Japan, its main imperialist competitor in the region, by pushing to pry open Japanese

Continued on Page 10



Bank workers protest in Seoul December 2 against massive layoffs. The International Monetary Fund demands immediate closing of nine banks as part of the \$55 billion "rescue."

U.S. rulers continue propaganda campaign to justify sanctions on Iraq

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Washington's war drive against Iraq slowed down after the Clinton administration suffered a setback in its attempt to launch devastating bombing raids of urban centers throughout that country in mid-November. Capitalist politicians and the big-business press in the United States, however, are not letting up on their propaganda campaign to justify maintaining a draconian

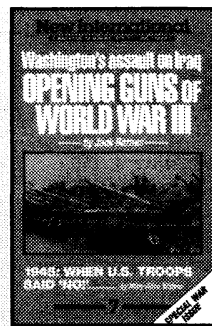
embargo on Iraq and ready possible future assaults to topple the regime of President Saddam Hussein and extend U.S. domination of Iraq and control of its vast oil resources.

"If diplomacy failed, Congress was clamoring for an attack punishing enough to topple Mr. Hussein's regime," said an article in the November 30 *New York Times*. It was referring to the deal engineered by

Paris and Moscow that led Baghdad to allow U.S. representatives in the United Nations arms inspection teams, who had been expelled from Iraq, to return to the country. The article was featured in the Sunday "Week in Review" section of the *Times* under the headline "Americans decide war may not be quite so scary." It quoted Republican Trent Lott, the Senate majority leader, say-

Continued on Page 12

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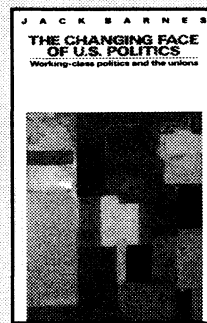
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Washington, TWA: real criminals in Flight 800 crash — page 14

Czech premier forced to resign

Vaclav Klaus resigned as prime minister of the Czech Republic November 29 at the insistence of President Vaclav Havel. Klaus is currently enmeshed in a scandal over a large campaign contribution from a businessman who won the privatization bid for a major state steel factory. Klaus has been widely praised in the big-business press for his role in spearheading the Czech government's privatization drive and other "market reforms."

The Czech regime, which is a candidate for membership in NATO and the European Union, has faced a growing economic and political crisis over the last year. The country's gross domestic product is predicted to grow by less than 2 percent this year, the government's current-account deficit stands at 6.7 percent, and the value of the Czech koruna has dropped 10 percent against the German mark this year. The government insists it plans to move ahead with bank privatizations and further austerity measures projected for 1998.

Farmers in Italy protest EU fines

Hundreds of farmers unleashed truckloads of sheep into downtown Rome November 25, and marched beside them demanding that the government pay the more than \$200 million in European Union fines slapped on Italian farmers for the so-called overproduction of milk. In Turin, Vincenza, Brescia, Florence, and other cities in the north of the country, thousands of farmers disrupted traffic by blocking highways and railroad tracks with their trucks. Protests began on November 19, when negotiations broke down between the unions and the government on lowering the fines. On November 28, Prime Minister Romano Prodi backed down and announced the government would reimburse farmers for the penalties.

Government collapses in India

The coalition government in New Delhi headed by United Front prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral collapsed after the Congress Party withdrew its support November 28, forcing Gujral's resignation. This is the third government to fall in India in the last two years. Officials of the Congress Party, which lost power two years ago after nearly five

decades as the ruling party, claimed the United Front had dealings with forces that killed former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Congress Party is now trying to paste together its own government along with fragments of the 14-party United Front. If this fails, a new election will need to be called three years ahead of schedule. The right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party, which won the largest number of seats in the last parliamentary vote, is gearing up for new elections.

Palestinians reject pseudo peace

Under accords previously signed between Tel Aviv and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israeli troops are supposed to withdraw from chunks of the West Bank three times between April 1997 and mid-1998. Having refused to comply with the first two of these deadlines, the Israeli Cabinet approved a proposal by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu November 30 to carry out one withdrawal over the next five months. The latest scheme would only give back about 8 percent of the occupied territory to Palestinian control, and Netanyahu says it will only happen if the Palestinian authority moves decisively against so-called terrorists.

Palestinian officials denounced the plan when Netanyahu first announced it at a November 27 news conference. "If Netanyahu wants to give out test balloons to tackle his problems with the Arabs, the United States, and the rest of the international community, we tell him we will not negotiate through the media," said Saeb Erakat, chief Palestinian negotiator. Tel Aviv is also "reneging or canceling signed agreements and then going into the oblivion of negotiations without a genuine commitment." Some rightist forces also condemned the proposal. A new Zionist group, Idea Front, posted a picture of Netanyahu with Arab headdress with "Liar" written as a caption. Tensions within the ruling Likud Party



Protesters rallied November 22 in Santiago, Chile, to demand higher wages and better working conditions. The demonstration was part of national union actions against the economic policies of the government.

are escalating. This is reflected in the Israeli newspaper *Jerusalem Post*, which has recently carried opposing views on whether Netanyahu should be ousted.

Winnie Mandela faces Truth Commission, runs for ANC post

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela faced more than a week of hearings before South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission over charges of her involvement in the killing, abduction, or torture of half a dozen youth in the late 1980s, during the fight to overthrow the racist apartheid regime. Madikizela-Mandela was earlier found guilty in a criminal trial and fined in the kidnapping of 14-year-old Stompie Seipei; one of her former bodyguards was convicted of his murder.

Madikizela-Mandela, who is the president of the African National Congress Women's League, is currently running for deputy president of the ANC. The election will take place during the ANC's congress in December. Her campaign has focused on attacking the ANC leadership for not doing enough to resolve problems of housing and crime, and she has called for reinstating the death penalty.

Cuban court sentences terrorist to 15 years in prison

Walter Van der Veer, a non-Cuban mem-

ber of the U.S.-based counter-revolutionary group Comandos L, was sentenced to 15 years in prison by a Cuban court November 26. He was arrested in 1996 and charged with organizing a terrorist act — which carries a maximum penalty of death — while gathering material for Molotov cocktails. When seized by Cuban authorities, he possessed a commando knife and U.S. military garb. Tony Bryant, one of Van der Veer's counterrevolutionary cohorts said he wanted Washington to step in and force Van der Veer's release, saying the man "posed no threat." The defendant confessed to distributing anti-government leaflets and said he went to Cuba as a militant and a missionary, but denied trying to organize the overthrow of the government.

Sugar strikers rally in Mexico

About 100 striking sugar workers in Mexico stormed the Congress floor November 26 demanding the return of \$780 million in union benefits they had not received. Chanting "Down with the government!" and "We demand our money," the protesters squared off with several dozen guards, who attempted to block their entry using sticks and fire extinguishers. More than 20 people were injured, and the legislature was suspended for two hours. Some 700 sugar workers in the National Sugar Workers Union have camped outside the Congressional building since September 10, demanding that the government reimburse funds allegedly swiped from them by a union official.

Cops attack anti-'Pilgrim' rally

On November 27 hundreds of protesters attempted to march through Plymouth, Massachusetts, to Plymouth Rock — a site where for more than a quarter century the United American Indians of New England and their supporters have held an annual National Day of Mourning to remember the genocide against their ancestors. Local cops attacked the demonstrators with mace and arrested 25 activists, most of them Native Americans.

Diaper baron will cut 5,000 jobs

Kimberly-Clark, a leading U.S. paper tissue company, in the name of battling "stiffer competition" announced plans to lay off 5,000 workers and shut down or sell as many as 18 plants. Huggies diapers and Kleenex tissues are among their well-known products in competition with Procter and Gamble, who produces Pampers.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Protest racist attacks

The killing of an African immigrant by skinheads in Denver should be condemned by working people around the world. The 'Militant' explains why the labor movement should mobilize its ranks against this racist violence and demand these thugs be put in jail. Don't miss a single issue!



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Australian gov't tries to gut Aboriginal rights

BY BOB AIKEN
AND RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia — Prime Minister John Howard has moved to sharply curtail Aboriginal land rights. His proposed amendments to the Native Title Act (NTA) — denounced by many pro-land rights figures as “the final act of indigenous dispossession” — have been met in recent months by protest rallies and public meetings across the country in defense of native title.

Howard's amendments known as the 10-point plan come in response to a rightist campaign to nullify a December 1996 High Court ruling in the *Wik* case, which legitimized native title claims on pastoral leases — public land leased to farmers and pastoralists (ranchers). But the polarization over the issue is shaking his government.

With the proposed amendments likely to be blocked in the Senate, where his government lacks a majority, Howard has threatened to call a special general election over this issue.

Thousands rally to defend land rights

In one of the larger protests to date, around 5,000 people rallied against the amendments October 11 in Sydney. Two days later, several hundred people took part in an action at Parliament House in Canberra, delivering a petition to support native title rights signed by 60,000 people. “Native title” refers to the customary land use rights — such as hunting, fishing, camping, and access to ceremonial sites — of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, the indigenous peoples of Australia.

Some 200 Aborigines, representing 11 tribes from across the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia, protested in Broome October 6 at a hearing called by the parliamentary committee examining the bill. One of the Kimberley peoples, the Nyigina Mangala, have filed a native title claim on part of the Fitzroy River. “We don't want to keep people out. We've got to look after the place where we're born and bred,” they declared. “We belong to this river.”

The hearing also heard testimony about a group of 300 people who live on a 1 square kilometer Aboriginal reserve in the middle of a station (ranch) operating under a pastoral lease. With all the gates padlocked, the Aboriginal community is barred by the leaseholder from using station roads or visiting their cemetery.

“Extinguish our title and you extinguish our people,” declared the Kimberly Aborigines in their submission to the hearing. The statement was read by Kimberley Land Council executive director Peter Yu, who later denounced the hearing as a “sham” after it was revealed that statements made in Aboriginal languages were never translated.

Gatjil Djerrkura, Howard's appointee as the chairperson of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC), announced November 5 that it would protest the prime minister's attack on native title on the world stage.

Aborigines, who make up less than 2 percent of the population, comprise the most oppressed section of Australian society. Unemployment among Aborigines was 38 percent in 1994, compared to 10 percent for the general population, while the rate of imprisonment for Aboriginal youth is 18 times greater than for other youth.

Howard has further angered supporters of Aboriginal rights by opposing a campaign by representatives of the “stolen generations” for compensation and an apology.



Aboriginal leaders (left to right) Yvonne Margarula and Jacqui Katona. Both are part of fight against Australian government's and uranium bosses' land grab schemes.

Tens of thousands of Aboriginal children were permanently taken from their families and placed in institutions or foster care, in a racist official policy carried out up through the late 1960s in some states.

Meanwhile, federal Minister for Resources Warwick Parer announced October 8 the go-ahead for the Jabiluka uranium mine in the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory. The mine is opposed by the Aboriginal tribe whose lands contain both the proposed mine and the existing Ranger uranium mine. They have been joined by environmental groups in a national campaign to block the mine.

Ground retaken

It was only in 1992 that a ruling by the High Court in the *Mabo* case ended the legal myth of *terra nullius* — that Australia was an “empty land” at the beginning of European colonization. The *terra nullius* doctrine gained currency in the 1880s, as the colonial rulers sought to justify their course of action to dispossess Aborigines of the land. This aspect of the *Mabo* decision belatedly reflected the political ground already taken by Aboriginal rights fighters since the mid 1960s.

As part of *Mabo*, the High Court also ruled that Aboriginal title had been extinguished on freehold (private) land and on government-issued leases that gave “exclusive possession.” It said that “continuous association” with the land was necessary to prove a native title claim. This legitimized the dispossession of the vast majority of Aborigines, who now live in more settled regions of Australia. The NTA, which was drafted by the Labor government of Paul Keating and took effect at the start of 1994, states in its preamble that native title is extinguished on leasehold land.

In December 1996, in a case brought by the Wik people of northern Queensland, the High Court ruled against that, saying that native title could be argued to coexist on a case-by-case basis and as a subordinate right on pastoral leases, which cover some 42 percent of the continent.

Pastoral leases in Australia originated to limit massive land grabs by wealthy settlers in the 1840s and permit the grazing of sheep and cattle, primarily in the more thinly settled regions in the interior of the country. Today, in addition to large corporations, thousands of working farmers also work land under pastoral leases, which are issued by state governments.

Scapegoating of Aborigines

Over the course of this year, the National Farmers Federation (NFF), which represents mainly capitalist farmers, has spearheaded a campaign asserting that small farmers' right to work the land is in jeopardy from the newly recognized native title rights. This scare campaign is backed by the National Party and sections of the Liberal Party, including the state governments in Queensland and Western Australia. Howard's measures were drawn up under the pressure of these forces.

In early 1997 the presidents of the Queensland and West Australian National and Liberal parties and the Northern Territory Country Liberal Party — the governing parties in these states and the Northern Territory — declared in a joint statement that captured the sharp tone of the polarization,

“The history of the past two decades proves that the Aboriginal industry has an insatiable appetite for this nation's public lands, its pastoral estate, mineral fields, rivers and seacoast.”

“Aboriginal industry” is a derogatory term for the movement for Aboriginal rights.

Howard's coalition government faces additional pressure from the ultraright, with the rise of Pauline Hanson's incipient fascist One Nation Party. Hanson has demagogically targeted the limited gains in land rights and affirmative action that Aboriginal people have made in recent times.

The campaign against the *Wik* ruling is taking place against the backdrop of an ongoing farm crisis. In a period of rising indebtedness, uncertain commodity prices, and long-term drought, these capitalist forces have zeroed in on Aboriginal claims for native title rights as the alleged source of “uncertainty” for working farmers.

Central to the solution the capitalist farmers are demanding is the upgrading of pastoral leases to private ownership in a giant land grab that will benefit large leaseholders.

Howard's proposed amendments would do that, and by doing so, virtually exclude most native title claims. The 10-point plan makes it more difficult for Aborigines to register a claim on crown (public) land, places obstacles to their right to negotiate on land use, and sets a six-year time limit for making a claim.

Three rightist National Party MPs joined Hanson and ultrarightist Australia First MP Graeme Campbell in an October 29 House of Representatives vote to support alternative amendments that would go further than Howard's in extinguishing native title.

Important sections of the capitalist rulers

are opposed to outright “extinguishment” of native title, however. Attempting to end the ongoing political wrangles around the issue, and with a view to their standing in international politics and trade, they favor a compromise “reconciliation” with the Aboriginal peoples.

This includes negotiation — based on the limited rights recognized in the current Native Title Act — with Aboriginal people over land use in areas subject to native title claims. Three Liberal Party MPs have stated their opposition to Howard's amendments on these grounds.

The de facto head of state, governor-general William Deane, has opposed Howard's course, saying November 6 that it was “essential” that the “hopes of true reconciliation be kept alive. If they are not I weep for our country.” Former Liberal senator Neville Bonner, the first Aborigine elected to Parliament, has denounced Howard's amendments as “racist” and “detrimental.”

A number of major mining companies, who had initially campaigned loudly against the *Mabo* decision along with the NFF, have taken a different approach following the *Wik* decision. The High Court upheld the validity of mining leases being challenged in *Wik*, and Howard's amendments further strengthen the position of the mining companies.

Bosses from both Rio Tinto, formerly RTZ-CRA, and Placer have declared that native title is “a fact of life” that their companies “accepted.”

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) has proposed changes to Howard's amendments that would remove the six-year time limit on making native title claims, would allow Aboriginal claimants the right to negotiate over the upgrading of pastoral leases, and would grant mining companies tax deductibility for expenses in negotiating agreements with Aboriginal communities.

Sensing the weakness of the Howard government and basking in the recent defection to the ALP of the leader of the Australian Democrats, the biggest of the minor capitalist parties in Parliament, ALP leader Kim Beazley has declared that he too is ready to go to the polls on the issue.

Meanwhile, the Howard government's problems over native title were highlighted by South African president Nelson Mandela, October 26. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Scotland, also attended by Howard, Mandela publicly offered to mediate between Aborigines and the Australian government.

“We sympathize with communities that have been discriminated” against, Mandela said, “and that have been denied their basic human rights.” ATSIC head Djerrkura has invited Mandela to visit Australia.

Bob Aiken is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union in Sydney.

Madrid jails 23 leaders of Basque independence struggle

BY MEGAN ARNEY

On December 1 the Spanish Supreme Court jailed 23 central leaders of Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity), the Basque pro-independence political party. The entire leadership of the party was sentenced to seven years on charges of collaboration with the armed independence group ETA (Basque Homeland and Liberty). The Basque people are an oppressed nation of about 3 million people in northern Spain and southern France.

Five of the accused held seats in regional parliaments in the Basque country. Herri Batasuna is the third largest party in Spain and has two members in the national parliament. The independence activists were to start their sentences within 48 hours of the decision. They were also fined US\$3,355 each and barred from standing for election while in prison.

The Spanish government's excuse for the prosecution of the Herri Batasuna leadership was a video prepared to be shown on television as part of the party's election campaign. The broadcast included a presentation of the ETA's proposal for a peace initiative, the main points of which include recognition by the Spanish state for the right to self-determination and territorial integ-

rity of the Basque country, or Euskal Herria; the removal of Spanish occupational forces; and a general amnesty for Basque refugees and some 580 political prisoners.

The proposal also lists issues “to be discussed and agreed among the Basque population,” including how to realize self-determination, normalization of the Basque language, demilitarization of the Basque country, educational rights, and democratic liberties.

CORRECTION

An error was introduced in editing the article “Communist League in New Zealand organizes to meet new opportunities” that appeared in the December 8 issue of the *Militant*. The first sentence in the last paragraph should have read: “[Winston] Peters, a former cabinet minister in Bolger's National Party government, was dumped by the party in 1993 and built a following for his New Zealand First with attacks on the austerity policies of the Labour Party and National Party” (emphasis added).

The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

by V.I. Lenin

The working class advances and advocates the right of all nations to secede, Lenin explains, but it “values above all the alliance of the proletariat of all nations, and assesses any national demand from the angle of the workers' class struggle.” \$4.00

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YS leader speaks against U.S. war moves in southern tour

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY MEG NOVAK

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — More than a dozen students and others came together November 19 to discuss building a revolutionary movement today. The event, sponsored by the University of Alabama-Huntsville Sociology Club, kicked off a week-long speaking tour of Young Socialists leader Jack Willey through the South, building the upcoming regional socialist conference in Birmingham. Willey condemned Washington's war moves against Iraq and

explained how they are one product of the weakening imperialist system that is creating more crises like the financial turmoil racking Asia.

"At the same time Washington has its tentacles stretched all over the world — in Africa, Yugoslavia, and with the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe — the U.S. rulers are telling the people of Iraq, 'You have one choice: capitulate to our demands or we are going to bomb you,'" Willey said.

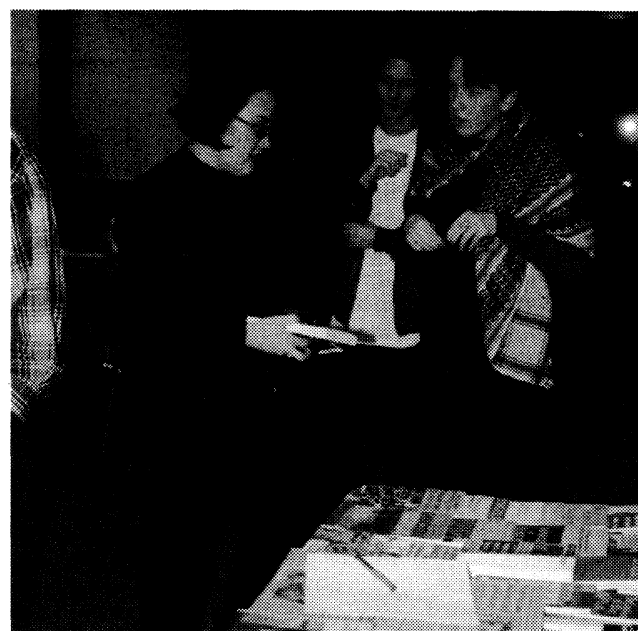
"U.S. foreign policy is nothing more than an extension of what the capitalist class carries out in this country," he explained. "But we have something to look forward to, and that's the growing resistance we see among working people who have been pushed to the wall and are saying, 'We won't take this anymore.'"

Willey pointed to the examples of recent strikes, from last summer's victory of the Teamsters against UPS, to the French truck-

ers strike that last month shut down transportation in much of that country, as well as the ongoing Steelworkers strike against Michelin tire in Indiana.

During the discussion, a young worker at the university pointed to the UPS strike as "an inspiration to other workers."

One student who visited Cuba last summer on an exchange program pointed to gains of the revolution, like housing, health care and education. "However," he stated, "there is a big leap between being disgruntled about working conditions here and making a revolution. What are some of the potential solutions here besides overturning the



Students check out books at meeting with YS leader Jack Willey in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, November 20.

system?"

Willey responded, "What we face today cannot be solved within this system. There is a historic conflict between those who own all the wealth of society, the capitalists, and those who produce all the wealth — workers and farmers. This can never be resolved within a system driven by profit." He explained that the Young Socialists is a part of "the fight to overthrow this system and replace it with one based on human solidarity."

There was quite a bit of further discussion of whether or not capitalism can be reformed.

The following day Jack Willey spoke at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa. About half a dozen students showed up, most of them subscribers to the *Militant* who heard about the Young Socialists through sales of revolutionary literature on the campus.

Justin Hovey, a student who helped organize the meeting, stated, "The U.S. ruling class is looking for an excuse to start a war to help the economy. This whole system is based on panic and depression.... I grew up in a farming town and I've seen many neighbors forced off their land because they could no longer pay the massive debts to the banks. The way the government exploits people, they don't really leave us a choice but to get rid of this system."

There were a range of questions and topics discussed, including: how can working farmers wage a successful fight against foreclosures; isn't it possible to follow the example of Gandhi and passive resistance to make fundamental change in society; and how do the rulers use antidrug laws to victimize working people.

After the meeting, Hovey met with YS members to discuss further activities to organize in Tuscaloosa for the Young Socialists.

The next evening, November 21, Willey spoke at a Militant Labor Forum in Birmingham on "Revolutionary Perspectives for Youth Today." Two students from Miles College came to the forum and a party afterwards. The discussion focused on the war preparations by U.S. imperialism against Iraq and how the nationalist campaigns waged against "fast track" legislation by the AFL-CIO officialdom is part of drawing working people into supporting the U.S. rulers' interests.

On Saturday, November 22, Willey spoke at a Militant Labor Forum in Atlanta where the Young Socialists raised \$200 for the national fund drive.

Willey ended his tour with a forum in Gainesville, Florida, November 24 on "Growing Resistance by Workers and Youth: Prospects for Socialism Today." Fifteen students from the University of Florida and others participated in a rolling two-and-a-half-hour discussion, and several people stayed afterwards to talk for another hour.

The hot topic was Washington's war moves against Iraq. One person said he agreed that Washington goes to war to defend the bosses' interests, but isn't there something objectively positive about the U.S. attacking Iraq if it means getting rid of a dictator? Others raised similar questions and comments.

Willey explained, "The U.S. rulers are driven to war by profits and protecting their money interests. They never go to war to

Continued on Page 5

Regional socialist conference Birmingham, AL • Sat.-Sun., Dec. 20-21

Main presentations

The Siren Call of Economic Nationalism and Washington's Drive Toward War

JACK BARNES

National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party

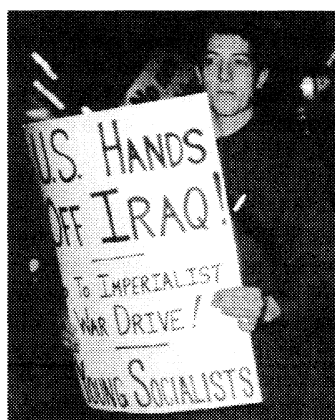
The Seduction of the Entire North American Left by the 'New Leadership' of the AFL-CIO ■ Liberal Reformers and Petty Bourgeois Radicals Walk Workers and Youth toward Patrick Buchanan's Fascist Trap ■ Poor Little Tibet: Today's Poor Little Finland ■ The Weakening of the Clinton Administration and Its Dangerous Lurches toward War ■ Seattle, Boeing: The Central Political Test of Workers' Space in the War Industries

Che Guevara, Socialism, and the Weight of Cuba in a World of Growing Capitalist Disorder

MARY-ALICE WATERS

Editor of 'New International' magazine

The Special Period, Rectification, and the Homecoming of Che's Reinforcement Brigade ■ The Scope of the Spreading Economic Crisis in Latin America and Asia ■ From Brazil to Japan: Washington's Drive to Buy Up the World ■ The October 1962 'Missile Crisis' and the Example Set by the Cuban People ■ An Action Program to Confront the Capitalist Crisis and the Offensive of the Exploiting Classes



Protest against U.S. war drive, New York, November 17.



Rally in solidarity with UPS strikers, Atlanta, August 7.

Saturday, December 20

Registration	8:30 a.m.
Meeting of socialist workers in Machinists union (IAM)	8:30 a.m.
Visit Civil Rights Institute	10:00 a.m.
Reception	12 noon
Main presentations and discussion	1:00 p.m.
Dinner	7:00 p.m.
Meeting of Young Socialists	
Dance & social	8:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 21

Meeting of socialist workers in Machinists union	7 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Classes	9:30 a.m.
Summary of conference	2:30 p.m.

For transportation and further information

Young Socialists: (773) 772-0551
Atlanta: (404) 724-9759
Birmingham: (205) 323-3079
Greensboro: (910) 854-6073
Houston: (713) 847-0704
Miami: (305) 756-1020
Pittsburgh: (412) 381-9785

Hosts: Young Socialists National Committee and the Atlanta, Birmingham, Houston, Miami, and Pittsburgh branches of the Socialist Workers Party

Classes

Who will change the world? The Battle of Birmingham and the fight to end racist segregation

Stephen Bloodworth and Derek Bracey

Cuba, Iraq, and the working-class campaign against imperialist war

Diana Newberry and Chris Remple

War, immigrant workers, and the transform- ation of the working class in the United States

Lessons from World War II, Korea, and the Maritime unions
Tom Leonard

Miami forum celebrates Che and Cuban revolution

BY BILL KALMAN

MIAMI — “There is no time for later; the struggle against imperialism is now,” Andrés Gómez said at the Militant Labor Forum here November 18. “Later is for the liberals. Today and now is for people like us.” Gómez, leader of the Miami-based Antonio Maceo Brigade, spoke on a panel with Ernest Mailhot, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party and member of the International Association of Machinists, on the subject, “The Cuban Revolution Today and the Legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara.” The Brigade is an organization of Cuban-Americans who support the Cuban revolution.

The 37 people in attendance also viewed two videos as part of the program. One showed Cuban president Fidel Castro’s speech in Santa Clara marking the return to Cuba of Guevara’s remains along with those of six fellow combatants in the *guerrilla* he headed in Bolivia. (An English translation of this speech was published in the November 10 issue of the *Militant*.)

The second video was an interview shown on Cuban TV with Gen. Harry Villegas, known as Pombo when he fought with Che in the Congo and Bolivia. In it Villegas comments on Che’s leadership abilities and the confidence of Cuban anti-imperialist fighters in supporting revolutionary struggles around the world.

Mailhot began his remarks by noting the number of international meetings and conferences that were organized in Cuba this past year. “The Cuban people have turned the corner on the Special Period,” Mailhot

said, referring to the economic and social hardships sparked by the cutoff of aid and trade at preferential prices with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since 1990. “They are now able to focus more of their energies on reaching out to fighters around the world with the message that they need to join the fight against imperialism.”

Mailhot also pointed out that imperialism is weaker today, not stronger. “One thing that clearly shows this is their miserable failure to build a coalition of governments supporting their war on the Iraqi people. We see more instability and resistance to imperialism in the Mideast, not less. The Cuban communists are correct when they advise other fighters to not be awestruck by the power of imperialism.”

Gómez was in Havana last October when Guevara’s casket was displayed at the Plaza of the Revolution and thousands of Cubans filed past to honor the Argentine-born revolutionary’s legacy. He also attended the Santa Clara ceremonies where Che’s remains were interred. Gómez explained to the audience, “Fidel refers to Che and his *compañeros* as reinforcement platoons, not just for Cuba, but for the revolution worldwide. The Cuban leadership is calling all conscious people to deepen the struggle against imperialism, to retake the struggle from those who set it aside.”

During the discussion period several people in the audience remarked on recent revelations in the *Miami Herald* about the U.S. government’s record of attempting to assassinate Castro and overthrow the revo-

130 titles snapped up at Miami book fair



Militant/Angel Lariscy

MIAMI — Tens of thousands of people attended the Miami Book Fair November 21–23 and many were drawn to the Pathfinder book stall, where 130 books by revolutionaries and about working-class struggles were bought in English, French, and Spanish. Titles related to Cuba were the most popular, with 41 sold. *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels was the top seller with nine sold. “Are these their own words?” a young woman asked volunteers who staffed the table as she picked up Marx’s work. A couple from Israel came to the stall twice before deciding to buy *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* and *Palestine and the Arabs’ Fight for Liberation*. People attending the fair also bought subscriptions to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the Cuban publications *Granma* and *La Gaceta de Cuba*.

lution. The *Herald* also independently confirmed the Cuban government’s statements that the bombings of several tourist hotels in Cuba this year were organized and funded out of Miami.

The forum, translated into Spanish and Creole, attracted activists from the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the Association of Cuban Workers (ATC), and Haitian rights group Veye Yo, among others. One example of the

barbarity of U.S. imperialism raised in the discussion was a recent incident of a U.S. Coast Guard cutter attempting to “shoulder” a wooden freighter crammed with some 400 Haitians bound for the United States, including men, women, and children. “They may call it shouldering, but in reality the Coast Guard was attempting to ram this ship and murder hundreds of people,” Mailhot said. “This is the system we must replace.”

Help digitize Pathfinder books

BY RUTH CHENEY AND JERRY GARDNER

OAKLAND, California — Volunteers around the world are helping Pathfinder convert its arsenal of Marxist works to digital format. The books, most of which were originally produced in the pre-computer era, are being carefully scanned and proofread, making it possible to more easily produce new editions in modern type. As resources per-

mit, new covers will be added as well, along with indexes for those books that do not already have one.

Currently 87 of the more than 200 Pathfinder books exist in digital format, with more being added each month. The process begins with using a scanner to electronically “read” the book into a computer; software then converts the scan into a word processing file that can be “massaged” (cleaned up) and printed out as pages for proofreaders to check. Proofreaders compare the original book pages to the new manuscript and mark the errors for correction. This process is repeated a second time to reduce errors to an absolute minimum. The corrected text is then e-mailed to Pathfinder, where it becomes the basis for a newly typeset edition.

Examples of books that have been reprinted recently with new type as part of this process are *Socialism on Trial*, Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leader James P. Cannon’s testimony during a World War II frame-up sedition trial, explaining the ideas of socialism; and two basic works of Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism* and *The Third International after Lenin*.

In the San Francisco Bay Area a dozen

volunteers are actively working week in and week out. So far, we have digitized eight books and scanned several books for volunteers in other cities to proofread.

Volunteers are working in places as far as Ramat (Israel), Miami, Cleveland, and Seattle. Some have no experience with computers, but are able to proofread — which is the most labor intensive aspect of the project.

The Pathfinder staff in New York is working daily on the project as well. Editor Michael Baumann reports that so far this year the three volumes of Trotsky’s *Challenge of the Left Opposition* have been completed by Pathfinder, along with Evelyn Reed’s *Sexism and Science*. In addition, with some help from the field, the staff is also closing in on the third and final volume of Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution*.

We would definitely like more volunteers on this project, including those with the ability to work in Spanish and French. There are 115 more books to digitize. If you would like to participate, or to find out more about the project, contact Michael Baumann at Pathfinder (212-741-0690, E-mail 73321.414@compuserve.com). A computer helps but is not necessary.

YS leader speaks

Continued from Page 4

defend ‘human rights.’ They want to replace Hussein with a government that is subservient to U.S. dictates. U.S. imperialism has more blood on its hands than any other ruling class around the world.”

There was also discussion on Zionism and the Palestinians’ fight for liberation, the rise and fall of the Nicaraguan revolution, and the Cuban revolution.

Wiley said, “It’s inevitable people will fight. It’s inevitable this system will breed more crises. But fundamental change is required. What’s required is working people and farmers taking power out of the hands of the bosses and then running society in the interests of humanity. That’s socialist revolution. This requires leadership and an organization like the one I’m part of — the Young Socialists — an organization that is involved in the struggles taking place today, that studies the history of the working class, and gets the books with those lessons into the hands of fellow fighters.”

Kristin Meriam contributed to this article.

Alabama Goodrich workers buy ‘Militant,’ discuss U.S. war drive

“Another *Militant* supporter and I sold outside the Uniroyal Goodrich plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, today at the 3 p.m. shift change. It was great!” wrote Susan LaMont in a December 2 note to the *Militant*.

LaMont, who is a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), is among the socialist workers and young socialists who are working to build the upcoming regional educational conference in Birmingham.

“We sold 10 copies of last week’s issue [of the *Militant*] with the article on the Goodrich strike at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, plus three of the current issue,” she continued. “The workers in Tuscaloosa are members of USWA Local 351. ‘Oh yes,’ one worker who bought the paper said, ‘we’ve been taking up a collection for them every week.’

“We talked about Iraq with workers and got an interested response — no real hostility and some agreement that working people should oppose Clinton’s war moves. One worker who listened to us on Iraq returned the paper, but with no antagonism. One worker who looked at the masthead said, ‘Socialism?’ Then he smiled and pulled out money for the paper. Another worker said, ‘Socialism can’t be any worse than Clinton. I’ll give it a try.’”

Antiracist protests in Denver

Continued from front page

Nearly 400 people participated in the November 22 action, which was organized by Alvertis Simmons, head of the local organizing committee of the Million Man March, and Jamal Muhammad, former minister of Denver’s Mosque No. 51. One of the chants of the march was “Hey, hey, ho, ho — skinheads, you’ve got to go!” That evening some 400 people attended the Denver NAACP Youth Council’s and Urban League’s “Stop the Violence, Start the Love” rally at a local church. Some 150 people attended a November 24 rally organized by several oppressed nationalities and social-justice groups on the Auraria campus at Metropolitan State College.

On Thanksgiving morning, just two days after the city’s “rally against racism,” six skinheads attacked Shomie Francis, a 26-

year-old Aurora resident. She told the *Denver Post*, “All I heard was something n——, and I said, ‘What did you say? ... What’s the problem, are you guys skinheads?’ and they told me ‘Yeah,’ and then they started hitting on me.” All six suspects were arrested for investigation of ethnic intimidation and assault.

“The upcoming Martin Luther King Day March takes on added importance in light of these racist attacks,” according to Jamal Muhammad. He said Denver has a history of large turnouts for anti-racist protests, including in 1992 when thousands marched in opposition to a Ku Klux Klan rally.

Ardy Blandford is a member of United Auto Workers Local 270 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Young Socialist Fund Drive November 7– December 19			
CITY	GOALS	PAID	%
Atlanta*	450	200	44%
Newark	500	202	40%
New York	500	199	40%
Chicago	700	250	36%
Los Angeles	350	73	21%
Twin Cities, MN	300	35	12%
Pittsburgh	450	50	11%
Des Moines	250	0	0%
Houston	300	0	0%
Miami	200	0	0%
Philadelphia*	250	0	0%
Seattle	500	0	0%
Washington, DC	150	0	0%
TOTAL	4,900	1,009	23%
Should be	4,400	2,200	50%
* raised goal			

Cuban leader Alarcón denounces U.S. embargo at UN

Below we reprint the statement presented by Ricardo Alarcón, speaker of Cuba's National Assembly, to the United Nations General Assembly on Nov. 5, 1997. Alarcón was speaking in support of the resolution "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial, and Financial Embargo Imposed by the United States of America Against Cuba." That resolution was adopted with 143 states voting in favor, three opposed, and 16 abstentions. The text of Alarcón's statement was issued by the Cuban mission to the United Nations. Translation and subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY RICARDO ALARCÓN

Mr. Chairman:

For six years now, the General Assembly has been analyzing the need to put an end to the economic, commercial, and financial blockade the United States imposes on Cuba. Five resolutions have been adopted by the vast majority of this Assembly, but the United States has ignored them and has not ceased to take measures to strengthen the blockade and to add new violations to the sovereignty of other nations.

The arrogance and cynicism of that policy cannot be matched.

In 1991, when the issue was considered for the first time, Washington went so far as to say that the blockade did not exist. On August 21 of that year, in an official document which was distributed here, the State Department was brazen enough to state that: "A blockade implies that the United States is taking measures to prevent other countries from trading with Cuba. Clearly, this is not the case."

The truth is that by then the United States had been taking measures to prevent trade between Cuba and other countries for more than 30 years. To achieve this purpose, it established mechanisms and regulations and carried out illegal measures and acts of interference that on many occasions brought forth protests and legitimate countermeasures of other countries.

In 1992 the General Assembly adopted its first resolution demanding end to the blockade. That same year, Washington enacted the Torricelli Act, which specifically forbids the subsidiary enterprises of U.S. companies in other countries from trading with Cuba and prohibits entry into U.S. ports of ships of any flag involved in transactions with Cuba. In other words, it not only seeks to prevent trade between Cuba and other countries, but also violates the sovereignty of those countries. The inadmissible extra-territoriality contained from the very beginning in the law's administrative regulations and in actions by U.S. officials took on the character of law, spurious in itself.

Every year since then, this Assembly reiterates its rejection of that policy — one that not only is the greatest crime against my people, and which does not limit itself to grossly violating international norms, but is also a clear demonstration of the most scandalous disrespect for the rights, interests, and feelings of humanity, including broad sectors of the United States itself.

In support of its conduct, Washington cannot cite a single intergovernmental, religious, or trade union organization. No other government, parliament, or political party endorses it. No institution, no decent person in any part of the planet advocates it. The number and diversity of those all over the world who demand a stop to this conduct grows. Religious institutions, business people, and personalities in the United States itself are joining the universal clamor.

But Washington's reply cannot be more obstinate.

In 1996, as if out of the Stone Age, emerged the Helms-Burton Act. Its infamous text denies Cuba's independence and overtly proclaims the intention of dominating it totally, reviving the annexation plans of almost two centuries ago. This act codifies all the regulations and practices that the world has been rejecting for three decades and includes new and more aberrant ones in violation of international legality and of the legitimate rights of other states, their en-

terprises, and citizens.

We come to 1997 under circumstances that compel the international community to act more energetically and consistently.

Since passing the Helms-Burton Act, the United States has been practicing the most grotesque farce. It is trying to implement a machination it knows is irrational and indefensible. In face of international rejection, it engages in negotiations and makes commitments it does not plan to comply with. Lacking true leadership, its rulers acknowledge that they are serving only the vile interests of a tiny group and want the rest of the world to follow suit. Only a few weeks ago, President Clinton, who is supposedly the leader of a superpower, admitted that that policy is the responsibility of the most extremist elements in the city of Miami.

It's a sorry task for representatives of sovereign states who try to negotiate seriously with those who gleefully accept being prisoners of a municipal mafia.

And this is confirmed by facts. They announced with great fanfare the understanding signed with the European Union last April 11, but they have done nothing to honor it. On that occasion they committed themselves to trying to bring about some minor modifications to the law in question, but until now nothing has been done in this respect. On the contrary, in the course of this year, many amendments and other proposals that would make the law more inadmissible have been put forward in Congress, some of them directly contrary to that understanding and others that seek to universalize the measures originally conceived against Cuba.

Cuba is obviously not part of the negotiations that are supposedly taking place concerning that law and its implementation. We only know what sometimes leaks out to the press. We must, nevertheless, make certain points of clarification.

Revolution met needs of Cuban people

U.S. hostility toward Cuba, including its first actions in the economic war it imposes on us, began prior to the nationalizations carried out by the Cuban revolution. Furthermore, these nationalizations were conducted in full compliance with international law and with our own legislation, had the support of all the people, did not have an arbitrary or discriminatory character, and responded to deep-seated needs and the most legitimate interest of our nation. The legitimacy of those nationalizations was acknowledged by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1964, in a memorable decision in which it reiterated: "Every sovereign State is obliged to respect the independence of each of the other sovereign States, and the courts of one country must not judge the actions of a government of another country performed within its own territory."

Our laws envisioned a just and fair compensation for the former owners, regardless of their nationality, and those laws were strictly applied and are still in force. Based on those laws, the matter was successfully resolved with the other states involved. The United States was the only exception, and this has been the exclusive responsibility of its rulers and no one else.

Washington has no right to place on anyone else's shoulders a problem that exists solely because of its blind obstinacy.

As a matter of fact, the U.S. blockade against Cuba was not contrived to defend the interests of the former U.S. owners. If this had been the case, they would have accepted our sovereignty and our laws as all other states did, and as the United States did with socialist countries or countries it considers as enemies, including states whose existence it did not recognize. The maintenance of the blockade for more than 30 years, far from favoring those former owners, has harmed them. Its intensification now, with the new law, turns them directly into victims of those who allegedly represented their interests. All one has to do is read the Helms-Burton Act to realize in whose benefit it was conceived, who are the "proprietors" who drafted it.

Besides setting up a plan for the colonial



Militant/Betsey Stone

200 youth rally in Chicago October 8 protesting Washington's embargo against Cuba. "The Cuban people shall continue to resist and shall never yield to the barbarous forces that seek to annihilate it," Ricardo Alarcón told UN General Assembly.

absorption of Cuba, and seriously attacking the rights of other states, it introduces an element that radically changes even the traditional position of the United States. This makes it particularly abhorrent for the Cuban people and should bring about the strongest rejection from the other states and from the U.S. business people themselves who are affected by it.

Washington's new position is no longer the alleged defense of those people who were U.S. citizens when the nationalization laws were enacted in Cuba and who were not compensated, in accordance with our own laws, because of their government's conduct. Washington's new position confers nonexistent prerogatives on people who were Cuban citizens when they were affected by our nationalization laws. Making this arbitrary equivalence constitutes a juridical absurdity, it contradicts universal and U.S. norms and violates the Constitution of the United States by granting a special group of its citizens privileges that it does not give to the rest. It must be said that they have already been granted a unique advantage by being permitted to reimburse themselves through tax reductions for the alleged value of the property that was nationalized before they even obtained U.S. residence. This is a privilege that no one else has received in the history of the United States and that has turned the other taxpayers into their contributors for several decades now. How many times over have they collected the value of those properties? What are they still claiming? But Washington's new stance goes even further: Batista's gang, his band of murders and torturers, his thieves and flunkies, who illegally grew rich during the bloody regime that started to crumble on January 1, 1959, are the main beneficiaries of this despicable act.

That date, incessantly repeated throughout the text, is the key to understanding the unfathomable moral abyss and the juridical stupidity of the Helms-Burton Act. According to it, the fierce blockade they impose on us will continue until we Cubans "return" the properties to those who lost them on January 1, 1959, and other states and their own subjects will be punished if they establish economic ties to those properties.

Some historical clarifications

It's useful to make some historical clarifications. The first revolutionary law that entailed nationalization in Cuba was the Agrarian Reform Law, enacted on May 17, 1959. No revolutionary law was passed on January 1, 1959. On January 1, 1959, the Cuban revolution had not yet conquered power. It was still confronting the U.S. attempts to save the old regime, and, in order to prevent this, the people began a general strike, responding to a call by Fidel Castro, which brought victory a few days later.

What actually occurred that day was Batista's flight and that of his main collaborators and their replacement by a military junta that sought to prevent the complete victory of the people.

Those who fled had plundered the treasury and left behind abandoned lands, factories, and other enterprises they had illegally appropriated through the abuse of power, theft, and often violence.

That band of criminals was described by the *New York Times* in an editorial of January 3, 1959 as: "sadists and perverts in high positions and in the business world, who had

enriched themselves through graft and corruption."

Those bandits, who totally controlled illegal gambling and the business of prostitution, also appropriated state resources and became the owners of numerous farms and urban lands, sugar mills, banks and financial institutions, of almost all of the textile, chemical, steel, and construction industries.

The expropriation of those illegally acquired assets — in reality their recovery by the nation — was an act of justice fully endorsed by all of Cuban society without exception. There were no protests or complaints by any foreign government then.

The United States later welcomed those people, protected them and turned them into its main instrument against the Cuban revolution to this day.

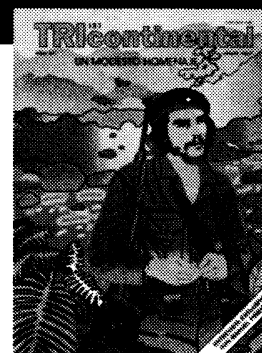
Washington now openly proclaims with shameless gall its identification with a tyranny that existed only due to U.S. support in all fields. But to compel the world to also do this is, to say the least, a despicable aberration. To try to protect such criminals with "property rights" is an affront to human dignity, an insult to honest business people. To make this a condition to resolve the bilateral differences between Cuba and the United States is also to sacrifice the legitimate interests of the U.S. people and U.S. businesses.

Mr. Chairman:

It is urgent to put an end to arbitrary U.S. actions. While it is true that these reach their greatest intensity against Cuba, which the United States is trying to suffocate with a total blockade, the economic sanctions that Washington unilaterally imposes on other countries are multiplying at present. According to data published by the National Association of Manufacturers of this country, from 1993 to 1996, the United States has imposed 61 economic sanctions of this type against 35 countries. In addition, there are 40 similar measures dictated against 18 countries by state and local governments. Currently, 42 percent of the world population lives in countries that suffer from this practice, which is contrary to the system of world trade. How far will such a policy that attacks everyone go? How long must we put up with it? My delegation trusts in the world's ability to confront it. The vote of this assembly will serve to confirm, once

Continued on Page 10

Tricontinental Special issue on Che Guevara



Features interview with Cuban leader Manuel Piñero and articles by Harry Villegas (Pombo), Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano),

and other figures on Guevara's internationalist efforts in the Congo, Bolivia and other parts of the world. In Spanish, \$5.00. Available at Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12.

'Urbano' speaks on experiences with Che in Bolivia

Below we reprint an interview with Leonardo Tamayo that appeared in the Cuban magazine *Tricontinental*, in a special issue devoted to Ernesto Che Guevara. As a peasant youth in Cuba's Sierra Maestra, Tamayo joined the Rebel Army in Cuba in 1957 and served in Guevara's column. He fought with Che in Bolivia under the *nomme de guerre* Urbano, and later carried out internationalist missions in Nicaragua and Angola. This selection is reprinted by permission of *Tricontinental*. Translation and footnotes are by the *Militant*.

Leonardo Tamayo, known as "Urbano" in the Bolivian guerrilla unit, is one of the three Cuban survivors who escaped and returned to Cuba after Che's death. Tamayo met the Heroic Guerrilla for the first time at the age of 15 when he joined the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra, remaining with his commander as aide and bodyguard after 1959. He was with Che in Bolivia from November 1966 until October 1967.

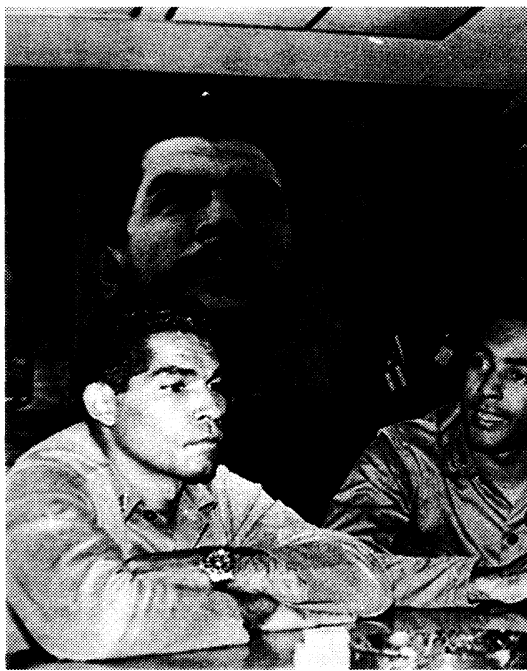
The journalist José Mayo includes a long and lively interview with Leonardo Tamayo in his book *With Che in Cuba and Bolivia*, soon to be released by the Cuban publishing house Capitán San Luis. We are reproducing four excerpts from that book: the first time Tamayo spoke with Commander Guevara; the discussion between Che and Bolivian Communist Party leader Mario Monje; the capture of the Samaipata barracks, and the news of Che's murder.

The first encounter

Through other guerrillas of peasant origin who I met in the Sierra Maestra, I'd begun to know about the audacity and courage in battle of the Argentine Ernesto Guevara. I knew he had been a *Granma* expeditionary,¹ and that because of his way of speaking he was called Che.

The rebels used to say that Che had a lot of guts because he always faced the enemy standing up, without fear of bullets. One day I asked him why he fought on his feet, since it was more dangerous. He answered me that he had once been shot in the foot, and that if he'd been lying down the bullet would have got him in the head. He told me this a few months after I joined his command-post squad in Column no. 4.

What I had heard about Che made me picture him as a hero of legends, and that's why I wanted to be with him in battle. So I spoke with Lalo Sardiñas, and told him I wanted to fight alongside Che. He agreed. Then I went to Altos de Conrado, where they had told me I would find Che. When I saw him for the first time I didn't think it was



Che, because I had imagined him to be very different physically. At that time he was really thin and smoked a pipe.

Since I had been told by some people that Che wasn't very talkative, I decided not to try to speak to him. Fidel had already named him a commander and head of Column no. 4. The first person I met who was under Che's direct command in Altos de Conrado was Hugo del Río. When he learned I had been fighting with Lalo Sardiñas he took me to see Che. Che looked at me and asked: "And what are you doing here?!"



Meeting between Che and Monje

Soon after we were settled in this place [the Main Camp, eight kilometers from the Nanchahuazú farm in Bolivia], on December 31, 1966, Che met with Mario Monje, general secretary of the Bolivian Communist Party, at Camp no. 1. Guido Peredo, Coello, René Martínez Tamayo, and I were with Che. When Monje saw Che he said, "Jesus, Che, look how skinny you are!" And Che shot back: "Jesus, Monje, look how paunchy you are!"

That's how they greeted each other. They talked for a long time about different things and then started discussing the armed struggle in Bolivia.

The last part of the conversation is engraved in my mind as though it were a tape recording.

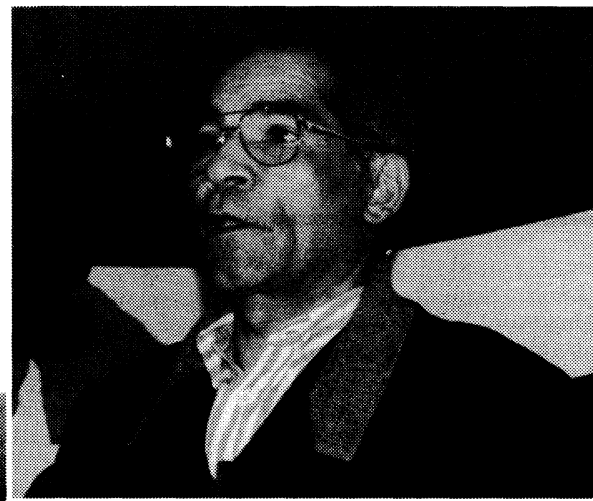
Che said to Monje: "Well, Monje, the moment we've been waiting for so much has come. It's fallen to

ter consultation with Washington.

As part of the commemoration of this anniversary in Cuba, dozens of articles, speeches, and interviews by those who worked with Che are being published, dealing with the Cuban revolution, its impact in world politics, and the actions of its leadership.

Many of Guevara's collaborators and family members have spoken at conferences and other meetings, bringing Che to life for a new generation and explaining the importance of his rich political legacy today. These materials contain many valuable firsthand accounts and information, some of which are being written down and published for the first time. They are part of the broader discussion taking place in Cuba today on how to advance the revolution.

The *Militant* is reprinting a selection of these contributions as a weekly feature, under the banner "Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution."



Bottom photo: Granma; Inset: Militant/Russell Johnson

At top, Leonardo Tamayo speaks at Auckland University in New Zealand, June 1996. Below, Cuban survivors of the Bolivia campaign are interviewed by Cuban paper *Granma* Oct. 1, 1969. From left: Urbano, Harry Villegas (Pombo), and Daniel Alarón (Benigno).

again. Che met with all the guerrillas and assured them that Monje's negative stance would not stand in the way of the armed struggle in Bolivia.



Occupation of the Bolivian army barracks in Samaipata³

Ricardo, Pachó, Coco, Ernesto (Freddy Maymura Hurtado), Julio (Mario Gutiérrez Ardays), and Chino (Juan Pablo Chang Navarro) took part in this action. On the outskirts of Samaipata they seized a truck to get to town and on arriving they saw that the barracks chief, a Bolivian army lieutenant, was sitting in the village park. They detained this officer and then Ricardo, Pachó, and Coco went with him to the barracks, where there were 10 soldiers. The other guerrillas went to buy food and medicine. When they reached the door of the barracks, which was closed, the lieutenant gave the password, followed by the counterpassword. As soon as the door was opened the three guerrillas rushed in and ordered everyone not to move. One soldier tried to open fire but Pachó got him with a rifle shot. They took all the weapons from the barracks and loaded all the soldiers onto the truck. Once outside Samaipata they were released, wearing only their underwear.

Although Che approved of the Samaipata action, he criticized those who took part for not having brought the necessary food or medicines, especially the medication he needed for his asthma, which he was suffering from very much in those days. Later we heard that the villagers had ridiculed the soldiers when they appeared in town wearing only their underpants.

During that time we heard over the radio that the leader of Bolivia's military regime had announced that Che was at the head of the guerrilla movement, and that the army was carrying out an offensive to wipe out the guerrillas. From then on the army's pursuit of the guerrilla unit got more intense.



On Che's death⁴

We had a feeling they were going to murder Che, like they had done with other captured guerrillas, because Che alive was a great threat to the imperialists and their allies. Had they put him on trial, the accused would have been transformed into the accuser, charging them with being enemies of the Latin America peoples. That same day we heard over a number of Bolivian radio stations that Che had died in battle. We all understood that the Bolivian army had killed him on orders from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), but no one imagined that the crime had been committed in La Higuera, because if we had known Che was there we wouldn't have hesitated to try to rescue him, even though it would have been a suicide mission.

¹ The *Granma* was the yacht in which Fidel Castro, Guevara, and 80 other members of the July 26 Movement sailed to Cuba in November-December 1956 to initiate the revolutionary war against the Batista dictatorship.

² Gen. Rodion Malinovsky was Soviet defense minister and commander of its land forces.

³ On July 6, 1967, a guerrilla squad captured and briefly occupied Samaipata, the capital of Florida province in Bolivia, causing an international sensation.

⁴ Guevara was wounded and captured Oct. 8, 1967. After consulting Washington, the Bolivian government ordered his execution, which took place the following day at the La Higuera schoolhouse. Not knowing Guevara's fate, Urbano and the other five remaining guerrilla combatants had been within sight of the schoolhouse the night of October 8.

Cuban people thwarted U.S. invasion plan in October 1962 'missile crisis'

Domestic political cost of enormous U.S. casualties stayed Kennedy's hand

BY STEVE CLARK

On Saturday morning, Oct. 20, 1962, U.S. president John Kennedy was at the Sheraton Blackstone hotel in Chicago with a full schedule of campaign events ahead of him on behalf of Democratic Party candidates in the November midterm elections. Kennedy's press secretary Pierre Salinger called an impromptu press conference to announce that the president had an upper respiratory infection and fever. "The bulk of the activities were outdoors," Salinger told reporters. "And it was the feeling of [Kennedy's doctor] that it would be better to cancel his schedule and return to Washington."

Many at the time, including reporters for the big business dailies and TV, were dubious at best that a common cold would stop Kennedy from campaigning in the home base of Mayor Richard Daley's Democratic Party machine. An expanded majority in Congress in November would boost Kennedy's own chances for reelection two years later. What's more, the president owed one to Daley, who was widely believed to have stolen the White House for Kennedy in 1960 by stuffing ballot boxes in Illinois's Cook County.

The 'October Crisis' begins

Those who doubted Salinger's story were correct. Four days earlier, Kennedy had been informed that U.S. government spy flights over Cuba had photographed Soviet-supplied nuclear missiles on the island. The Democratic administration had decided to go ahead with scheduled campaign visits that week while preparing its own next moves, but by the weekend Kennedy called off all further trips.

The proposal to deploy the missiles in Cuba had been made by Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev to the Cuban government earlier that year. In a 1992 interview with NBC news personality Maria Shriver, President Fidel Castro explained that at the time the leadership of the new revolutionary government in Cuba considered it "an unavoidable duty" of international solidarity to accept the missiles, in face of U.S. nuclear bases in Turkey and elsewhere ringing the USSR. Castro said he and other Cuban leaders argued with Khrushchev that deployment should be preceded by a public announcement of the agreement but ultimately signed the mutual defense treaty when Moscow officials flatly refused to budge from their insistence on secrecy.

"We were not too pleased with the missiles actually," Castro said in another 1992



Cuban militia prepares to defend revolution during the October 1962 crisis. "Often it's hesitation that leads to war, not firmness," said Cuban president Fidel Castro.

interview for a PBS television documentary. "If it had been a matter only of our own defense, we would not have accepted the emplacement of the missiles here. But don't think that this was because we were afraid of the dangers entailed with the emplacement of the missiles here, but rather because this would damage the image of the revolution throughout the rest of Latin America, and the presence of the missiles would in fact turn us into a Soviet military base and that had a high political cost."

Escalating U.S. invasion plans

The installation of the missile defense system in Cuba in 1962 occurred at a time when the Kennedy administration was not only tightening its brutal economic embargo against Cuba, but was also demonstrably preparing for an air and land war aimed at doing the job the Bay of Pigs invasion had miserably failed at the previous year. On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The action, organized by Washington, aimed to establish a "provisional government" to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. The invaders, however, were defeated within 72 hours by Cuba's militia and its Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the

name Cubans use for the battle.

In November 1961 President Kennedy put his brother Robert Kennedy, who was also U.S. attorney general, directly in charge of a new covert action program code named Operation Mongoose with the goal of crushing the socialist revolution in Cuba. In March 1962 Gen. Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, drafted guidelines for Mongoose that were presented to the White House. Taylor wrote:

Operation Mongoose will be developed on the following assumptions: a. In undertaking to cause the overthrow of the target government, the U.S. will make maximum use of indigenous [Cuban] resources, internal and external, but recognizes that final success will require decisive U.S. military intervention. b. Such indigenous resources as are developed will be used to prepare for and justify this intervention and thereafter to facilitate and support it.

As top administration officials began meeting October 16 to map a response to the deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba, the opportunity for a pretext to launch the long-sought air assault and invasion was high in the priorities of John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and others. In a nationally televised speech on Monday evening, October 22, the U.S. president announced Washington's provocative initial step of imposing a naval blockade around Cuba—euphemistically dubbed a "quarantine." Troops on U.S. warships would use all necessary force to stop, board, and inspect any vessel en route to the island, Kennedy said, and would turn back ships if "offensive weapons" were found. The blockade would continue, he threatened, until "all offensive weapons" in Cuba were dismantled and returned to the Soviet Union, "under the supervision of UN observers."

Kennedy continued pressing plans for an invasion over the next few days. Several hours before the October 22 speech, the U.S. president told British ambassador David Ormsby-Gore that he doubted his administration would ever again have as good an excuse to invade Cuba. By the weekend, however, both John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy had decisively shifted course.

What had happened to change their plans?

Staggering U.S. casualties

The answer to that question, known in its essentials by many ever since the conclusion of the October Crisis, has been confirmed with additional facts in recent years, as previously classified U.S. government tapes and documents have been released eyedropper-style by Washington. Several days into the October 1962 crisis—as Cuban workers and farmers and their commu-

nist leadership mobilized in the millions to defend the revolution—Kennedy became convinced that an invasion would result in staggering U.S. casualties that would end up in a domestic political disaster for the administration. Pentagon advisers estimated some 18,500 casualties during the first 10 days of fighting—more than were to be inflicted on U.S. forces in Vietnam between 1961 and 1966.

Since the beginning of 1997, substantially more information has been declassified or released that, taken together with material previously available, helps fill out the picture of the shift in Kennedy administration policy in October 1962. These include transcripts of tapes secretly made by Kennedy of meetings of the National Security Council; of its executive committee (ExComm), hand picked by Kennedy in the opening days of the crisis; and of numerous informal meetings and consultations. The most complete collection of these transcripts was published by The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997, this year under the title *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*, edited by Ernest May and Philip Zelikow. Excerpts from these transcripts, plus other previously classified documents, were also released last year by the U.S. State Department under the title, *Cuban Missile Crisis and Aftermath: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–63*, Volume XI, published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996.

As the midterm elections approached in the fall of that year, Kennedy was still on the defensive against Republican Party critics in the aftermath of the Bay of Pigs defeat. Republicans in Congress were charging that the Democratic administration was blind to a Soviet military buildup in Cuba. And Kennedy himself was impatient that Operation Mongoose had yet to result in a single successful operation that he could play up politically.

'How long would it take?'

On Tuesday morning, October 16, when Kennedy first learned of the missiles in Cuba, he pulled together a meeting of top administration and Pentagon officials. "How long does it take to get in a position where we can invade Cuba?" Kennedy asked Robert McNamara, the secretary of defense. McNamara said it would take at least seven days, preceded by heavy air strikes. That would allow time to put together a force of some 90,000 troops for the invasion.

"Do you think 90,000 is enough?" Kennedy asked.

"At least it's enough to start the thing going," Gen. Maxwell Taylor replied.

A few moments later Robert Kennedy broke in. "How long? Excuse me. I just wondered how long it would take, if you took it and had an invasion."

"To mount an invasion?" Taylor asked. "No. How long would it take to take over the island?" Robert Kennedy replied.

Taylor estimated that "in 5 or 6 days the main resistance ought to be overcome." McNamara added: "Five or seven days of air, plus 5 days of invasion, plus —"

John Kennedy interrupted: "I wonder if CIA could give us what state.... Yeah, so we get some idea about our reception there."

Later that day, when the meeting reconvened, the U.S. president insisted that the political evolution in Cuba over the previous year, "shows the Bay of Pigs was really right."

At the same time, John Kennedy and his brother Robert cautiously probed the likely domestic political consequences of an invasion of Cuba for the Democratic administration. Between the morning and late afternoon White House meetings October 16, Robert Kennedy called together a meeting in his office of Pentagon and CIA officials responsible for Operation Mongoose. A memorandum on the meeting, prepared by deputy CIA director Richard Helms—later the agency's director under Lyndon Johnson—is reprinted in the new State Department collection. Helms notes that

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To Speak the Truth Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

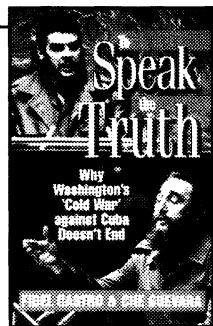
"The United States tries to get the UN to inspect our territory. But we emphatically refuse, since Cuba does not recognize the right of the United States, or of anyone else in the world, to determine the type of weapons Cuba may have within its borders." — *Che Guevara, 1964 speech to the UN General Assembly*

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Kennedy "asked some questions about the percentage of Cubans whom we thought would fight for the regime if the country were invaded."

Over the next several days, administration officials met virtually nonstop. Kennedy fulfilled a scheduled campaign commitment in Connecticut on Wednesday, and then the Ohio and Illinois campaign trip on Friday. By late in the week consensus was building for a naval blockade as Washington's opening salvo. At a White House meeting on Thursday, October 18, however, Robert Kennedy threw cold water on the suggestion by a State Department official that the blockade itself might bring down the Cuban government.

"Has a blockade ever brought anybody down?" the attorney general interjected.

Meeting with congressional leaders

Late in the afternoon Monday, October 22, just two hours before his televised 7:00 p.m. speech, Kennedy convened a White House meeting of 20 members of the bipartisan leadership of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. This was the first time he had taken the crisis beyond a narrow circle in his administration and top Pentagon brass. The majority expressed no disagreement with the course Kennedy told them he would present that evening. But Democratic Senators William Fullbright and Richard Russell, chairmen respectively of the Foreign Relations and Armed Services committees, challenged the blockade proposal, arguing for a rapid invasion.

"[T]o assemble the force which would give us the 90,000-odd men who might participate in an invasion will take some days," Kennedy replied to Russell. "... We are now assembling that force, but it is not in a position to invade Cuba in the next 24 to 48 hours. Now, I think it may very well come to that before the end of the week. But we are moving all of the forces that we have, that will be necessary for an invasion, to the areas around Cuba as quickly as we possibly can."

McNamara added that it had not "been possible during this week to carry out more than one to two days' worth of the 7-day preparation without breaking the whole story."

"The President ordered us to prepare an invasion of Cuba months ago," McNamara continued. "I think it was — Mr. President, perhaps you recall better than I, but I believe it was November of last year. And we have developed plans in great detail.... We're well prepared for an invasion and as well prepared as we could possibly be, facing the situation we do."

On Tuesday morning, October 23, Kennedy once again convened the ExComm. Among the decisions taken was to initiate immediate military action "to take out," in Kennedy's words, any surface-to-air missile installation (SAMs) that shot down any American U-2 spy plane over Cuba. If a second U.S. spy plane were brought down, then all the SAM sites would be attacked.

The meeting then turned to what McNamara called "the next subject: invasion preparation."

Cuban working people respond

That same evening, October 23, Premier Fidel Castro went on television in Cuba to present the calm but intransigent reply of Cuba's workers and farmers and their revolutionary leadership. "We have decided to put the nation in a state of combat readiness, the highest state before action," Castro said. (At a January 1992 Havana conference on the October Crisis, involving direct participants from the United States, the former Soviet Union, and Cuba, Castro reported that "at the time, we could count on some 300,000 men and women to be armed — or able to get weapons — and, to a certain extent, organized and trained. We had cannons, artillery, tanks — a few — and the troops that manned them had received accelerated training.... And there was great enthusiasm among the population.")

"We have taken the necessary measures not only to resist but to repel — hear it well — to repel any aggression from the U.S.," Castro said in his October 23 speech. "We are not sovereign through any concession made by the United States. And to take away our sovereignty they will have to wipe

us from the face of the earth....

"If the U.S. gave Cuba ample guarantees against aggression, Cuba would not have to arm. They ask us to disarm, but they will not renounce aggression.... What have we done except to defend ourselves?"

"We will acquire the arms we deem necessary for our defense," Castro said. "And we don't have to give an accounting to anyone. None of our arms are offensive because we have never been aggressive. We will never be aggressors, but we will never be victims either."

Castro flatly rejected Kennedy's demand that United Nations "inspection teams" be admitted to the country by the Cuban government. "We refuse to give permission to anyone to examine, to investigate our country — no matter who it is," Castro replied. "... Anyone who comes to inspect anything in Cuba had better come prepared for battle."

"If they impose a total blockade, we will resist it," Castro said. "We can resist. We

will be damn tough to shoot them out of those hills, as we learned so clearly in Korea."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff had provided the White House with a detailed breakdown of U.S. casualties that could be expected during an invasion of Cuba — day by day, and service by service. That assessment, according to an official U.S. military report the following year, took "into account the latest intelligence information available relating to Cuban capabilities," and assumed combat with Cuban not Soviet units. The Joint Chiefs estimated 18,484 U.S. casualties during the first ten days of fighting — 4,462 on the first day alone!

On October 26 John Kennedy began raising with increasing insistence the need to probe a secret deal with the Soviet government to withdraw U.S. nuclear-armed missiles from Turkey in exchange for removal of the missiles from Cuba. "Our quarantine itself won't remove the weapons," Kennedy

it down. "It's still a mystery what led the Soviet commander and the commander of that battery to issue the order to open fire," Castro said at the 1992 conference. "[T]he order was not issued by Moscow. Now, what is my interpretation? These soldiers were all together. They had a common enemy. The firing [by Cuban troops] started and, in a basic spirit of solidarity, the Soviets decided to fire as well. That is my interpretation.... I can add that Khrushchev for some time believed that we had shot down the plane."

"I was in full agreement with the shooting down of the plane," Castro asserted. "... When you are expecting a surprise attack, when the adversary has the initiative and when they can decide when that surprise attack is going to be launched, I think that the only correct thing, militarily and defensively, was to be ready to prevent a surprise attack at all cost.... So I assume full historical responsibility for the shooting down of the plane."

Washington blinks

When the downing of the U-2 was announced by McNamara at an afternoon White House meeting October 27, John Kennedy commented: "Well now, this is much of an escalation by them, isn't it?"

"Do we want to announce we're going to take counteraction, or just take it tomorrow morning," Kennedy asked. After further discussion he initially proposed announcing that "action will be taken to protect our various aircraft," and McNamara interjected: "Exactly. Then we ought to go in at dawn and take out that SAM site."

Then hesitation began to set in. "Do we want to say it was shot down? We don't know," Kennedy said. There might have been a mechanical failure, added an unidentified voice. But "the other plane was shot at," Kennedy replied. "[T]hat's why I'd like to find out whether Havana says they did shoot it down."

Kennedy left the meeting for about an hour, while discussion continued. Earlier in the day, Khrushchev had publicly broadcast a proposal for a mutual withdrawal of U.S. and Soviet missiles from Turkey and Cuba. During Kennedy's absence, Undersecretary of State George Ball argued strongly for exhausting the possibility for such a trade before initiating air strikes and

an invasion.

"We're talking about a course of action which involves military action with enormous casualties," Ball said, "and a great, great risk of escalation. I really don't think this is — we ought to shift this one."

Shortly after 7:00 p.m., Kennedy returned to the meeting. Vice President Lyndon Johnson recapped the opposing views. Summarizing the position he himself had argued for, Johnson said the administration should announce: "You shot our man there, and we aren't going to take any more of this."

"Well, what do you do on Cuba on that one?" Kennedy replied.

A minute or so later an unidentified voice informed Kennedy that "Havana has announced it, that he was shot down by anti-aircraft fire."

"Oh they have? I didn't know that yet," Kennedy replied. Quickly changing the subject, however, he returned to Khrushchev's proposed trade.

"We can't very well invade Cuba, with all the toil and blood it's going to be," Kennedy said, "when we could have gotten them [the missiles] out by making a deal on the same missiles in Turkey. If that's part of the record, then I don't see how we'll have a very good war."

After a break the White House meeting reconvened at about 9:00 p.m. Kennedy announced his decision to take no immediate action in response to the downing of the U-2.

'If you publish it, the deal is off'

While the initial rallying around the flag in response to military action might have boosted Democratic results in the midterm elections barely a week away, John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy also knew that an ava-

Continued on Page 15



Above: Jack Arnold
Above, picket line Oct. 27, 1962, in New York demanding "Hands off Cuba." President John Kennedy feared the political consequences of an invasion of Cuba, which the Pentagon estimated would result in 18,500 U.S. casualties in the first 10 days. Right, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, President Kennedy, and Secretary of Defense McNamara meet to discuss 1962 crisis.

will not starve to death. If there is a direct attack, we will repel it. I can't speak more plainly....

"They menace us with nuclear attack but they don't scare us. We will see if the U.S. congressmen, bankers, etc. possess the same calmness as we. We are calmed by the knowledge that, if they attack us, the aggressor will be exterminated.... Humanity must fight for peace. It must mobilize against those who endanger peace.... [Kennedy] proposes that we disarm. We will never do so while the U.S. continues to be an aggressor....

"What sovereign nation hasn't the right to arm?"

'Expect heavy casualties'

The newly released transcripts show that by Thursday morning, October 25, Kennedy and his advisers had begun to be concerned about what they were learning about the determined defense mobilization in Cuba. At the White House meeting of the NSA executive committee that morning, CIA director John McCone reported "antiaircraft guns on the roofs of buildings. And their military is in a high state of alert." Kennedy asked McCone "if we could get from Cuba any sort of report or an analysis ... so we can be up to date about the state of morale of the people there, and their viewpoint on all of this."

According to Robert Kennedy's posthumous memoir of the October crisis, *Thirteen Days*, at the ExComm meeting on Friday morning, October 26, "Secretary McNamara reported the conclusion of the military that we should expect very heavy casualties in an invasion.... John McCone said everyone should understand that an invasion was going to be a much more serious undertaking than most people had previously realized. 'They have a hell of a lot of equipment,' he [McCone] said. 'And it



said at the White House meeting that morning. "So we've only got two ways of removing the weapons. One is to negotiate them out, or we trade them out. And the other is to go over and just take them out. I don't see any other way we're going to get the weapons out."

Spy plane shot down

The following morning, Saturday, October 27, the Cuban government made the decision to begin firing antiaircraft artillery at low-flying U.S. reconnaissance planes. At the 1992 Havana conference on the October Crisis, Castro explained that in response to an aggressive increase in the frequency of U.S. overflights the previous day, the Cuban government informed Soviet military officials "that we had decided to fire against the low-level flights.... Those were flying not just for observation, but also to demoralize our troops. These planes were, in effect, training daily on how they could destroy our weapons."

"All our batteries fired on all low-level flights on the morning of the 27th when the planes appeared at their usual time," Castro continued. "So the order was fulfilled.... We could say that the war started in Cuba on October the 27th in the morning."

All surface-to-air missiles were under Soviet command, so Cuban soldiers were limited to heavy artillery. "Our artillery men were not experts," Castro said. "The planes were flying at an altitude of 100 or 150 meters.... I saw them flying over; the planes seemed quite vulnerable, but we couldn't shoot down any of the low-flying planes. But we demonstrated our resistance."

Against instructions from the military command in Moscow, however, a Soviet officer in Cuba issued an order to open fire on a high-flying U.S. U-2 plane and brought

'Bailout' in south Korea, crisis in Japan

Continued from front page

markets and buy up banks and other property there.

These moves, however, are stoking the pressures toward explosive confrontations in a region of hundreds of millions of people, increasing the stakes for the barons of finance capital and for working people.

The three major south Korean television stations reported December 2 that Seoul had agreed to the IMF demands to shut down more than half of 12 banks that are burdened with bad loans. That same day the government suspended the operations of nine of the country's 30 investment banks.

"Officials and bankers said a main sticking point in the talks is Korea's financial sector," the December 2 *Wall Street Journal* reported. "Labor unions are strong at banks, and a union umbrella group has threatened to strike if an IMF package leads to layoffs."

Bank workers organized protests against expected job losses in Seoul for two days, December 1-2. Last January hundreds of thousands of workers in south Korea participated in a general strike for more than three weeks to demand the repeal of anti-labor legislation that restricted union rights, allowed companies greater latitude to impose layoffs, and gave additional powers to the secret police.

"IMF officials are said to have complained about Seoul leaking details of the talks to the domestic media and encouraging public resistance to the IMF demands," London's *Financial Times* reported December 3. The IMF delegation in Seoul is "scared about driving the economy into collapse and are uncomfortable about the implications," a U.S. investment banker told the financial daily.

Mexico set the pattern

When world stock prices soared December 1, pushing the Dow Jones Industrial average to above the 8,000 point level, some investment officials said this indicated the financial crisis had waned. "The message of the rally is relief that some of these concerns have been lessened," remarked Richard Cripps, chief market strategist at Legg Mason Wood Walker. But the currency devaluations and mushrooming bank failures throughout the region are setting the pattern, not the gyrations of the stock markets.

What the U.S. rulers are pushing for in Asia is a repeat — on a much greater scale — of the "bailout" scheme imposed on Mexico following the collapse of the peso there in December 1994.

U.S. president William Clinton told reporters Washington would join in providing new loans to south Korea only if Seoul agreed to take some "tough medicine" like the government of Mexico did when its economy was hammered three years ago. During a December 2 speech to the Economic Club of New York, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, said the prospects for many Asian economies were good, "provided their markets are opened up to the full force of competition."

When the regime of Ernesto Zedillo announced a devaluation of the Mexican peso three years ago, international money traders unloaded the currency, driving it down 40 percent against the U.S. dollar. At the time the country's foreign debt stood at \$98 billion, or 38 percent of the country's gross domestic product. In 1995, Washington pieced together \$48 billion in "loan guarantees," \$20 billion of which came from the U.S. treasury and the rest from the IMF and banks in Europe.

In exchange, the Zedillo administration agreed to deposit all revenues earned from the state-owned oil monopoly Pemex into an account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York before being transferred to Mexico — or seized in case of a loan default. The Mexican government acceded to implementing the IMF austerity program to repay the loans and pay interest on the country's foreign debt. The regime subsequently imposed a limit on pay raises well below the rate of inflation, hiked the sales tax from 10-15 percent, and raised fees for public services.

During the 1996 presidential campaign, Vice President Albert Gore bragged that Washington collected an extra \$500 million profit in the deal, by charging "premium" interest to Mexico, 4 percent higher than normal U.S. rates, supposedly to compensate for the risk. *New York Times* columnist

Thomas Friedman remarked at the time, "To pay for the bailout, Mexico cut the standard of living for most of its people by 20 percent. There should have been a revolution, but there was barely a demonstration." Since the currency devaluation in Mexico more than one-fifth of Mexico's banking system has been sold off to international investors. Four Mexican banks that were "bailed out" in late 1994 and early 1995 are now owned by foreign banks, including Banca Confia, now owned by the U.S. banking giant Citibank.

Three major 'bailouts'

Washington has now engineered major "bailouts" for three countries in south-east Asia similar to the massive loans arranged to shore up the Mexican economy. The government of Thailand negotiated a \$17 billion package and the regime in Indonesia agreed to a "rescue plan" of \$40 billion.

The stakes for capitalist investors are higher in south Korea, which has an economy as large as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia combined. One-third of south Korea's \$70 billion in short-term foreign debt is due to be paid by the end of the year, while its foreign reserves have reportedly dwindled from \$30 billion to \$20 billion. The currency has been devalued 20 percent against the dollar this year, making the loans even more expensive to repay.

The IMF program for these regimes demands cuts in social spending, shutdowns of insolvent banks, the sell off of state-owned enterprises, and allowing international investors to take over commercial banks and other financial institutions through mergers and acquisitions. Other measures include industrial "restructuring" that would close debt-ridden conglomerates, throwing thousands out of their jobs.

Halla Heavy Industries, south Korea's fourth-largest shipbuilder, announced November 26 it was firing 3,000 workers in December, anticipating IMF "restructuring" conditions. The company missed a loan payment of \$324 million that was due December 2. Workers at Halla said they would resist the measures. And mass layoffs are banned under Seoul's current labor laws.

John Lee, manager of the investment firm Scudder, Stevens & Clark, was reported to be eyeing the purchase of the south Korean steel producer Pohang Iron and Steel (Posco), whose stock is now trading for less than 10 times this year's expected earnings.

The Doosan beverage company said November 10 it planned to sell its bottling operations to Coca-Cola for \$432 million, making the purchase one of the largest sales ever to a foreign investor.

Elsewhere in the region, Citibank announced a deal on November 26 to buy a majority stake in Thailand's seventh largest bank, which has assets of nearly \$7 billion. If the pact is approved for the First Bangkok City Bank, it will be the first outright takeover of a Thai bank by a foreign institution.

Thailand remains on the brink of a financial collapse: the U.S. credit rating agency, Moody's Investors Service Inc., downgraded Thailand's debt ratings to one notch above junk status. It was the third such demotion this year, reflecting apprehensions that the regime could default on its \$95 billion foreign debt.

Penetration of Japan's markets

South Korea's financial troubles have had the biggest impact on Japan. Capitalist investors in Japan held \$24.3 billion in Korean bank debt last year. Seoul's finance minister acknowledged that Japanese banks have halted credit to south Korea.

U.S. capitalists are using the currency devaluations to bust open Tokyo's protections of its economy. "Japan's financial crisis has created an unprecedented opportunity for U.S. financial technology," declared an article in the December 15 issue of *Forbes* magazine. "That spells boom times for U.S.



Protesters in Philippines rally against austerity measures. In late October 20,000 marched to the presidential palace to protest a government decision to increase oil prices to counter the economic crisis. It later reversed its decision.

bankers, brokers and asset managers."

"For years American companies have complained that it is too expensive to invest in Japan; now they can pick up companies on the cheap," the November 24 *New York Times* asserted. "By the same token, American companies that have long complained that Japan is cornering key growth markets, like Vietnam, now have a chance to move while the Japanese are distracted."

During the month of October, the top trading houses in Japan were Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, not Nomura and Daiwa as in the past.

Citibank, with \$10 billion in deposits and Fidelity Investments, a Boston-based mutual fund company, will begin selling mutual funds in 1998, when Tokyo opens the country's financial markets to foreign competition. The big-business media in the United States is campaigning to press Tokyo to go further. "The failures point the way to the creation of a much sounder regional economy that could propel global growth," the December 8 *Business Week* opined. "But before the failures can pay off, authorities have to allow even more institutions to fail ... and even accept foreign ownership of major banks and companies."

Japanese officials pledged to shore up the largest financial institutions that are at risk and close the weakest banks. "Banks are to be given a chance to come up with plans to improve their business," stated Sei Nakai, senior deputy director of the ministry's banking bureau. "But if those plans are short of substance we will have no mercy."

Four financial institutions went belly up in Japan during the month of November, including Yamaichi Securities with \$188 billion in investments — the largest bankruptcy ever in the country.

Moody's Investors Service announced November 26 it was considering downgrading the credit rating of five Japanese banks, including Mitsui Trust and Nippon Credit. A similar downgrading preceded the collapse of Yamaichi.

In response, Hiroshi Mitsuzuka, the finance minister, and the Bank of Japan's governor, Yasuo Matsushita, issued a joint state-

ment that day "strongly requesting people not to be guided by groundless rumors and to act sensibly." Long lines are forming daily outside weaker banks as nervous depositors withdraw their savings. "Confidence in the financial system is collapsing," declared the November 29 *Economist*.

U.S. uses weight at Asia Pacific summit

President Clinton and other White House officials engaged in arm twisting during the November 24-25 meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Canada to push the IMF-sponsored programs as their solution to the Asian financial crisis. Washington initiated the annual grouping of 18 governments four years ago as a regional club to hammer its capitalist rivals in Europe. The Clinton team squelched demands pushed by the Malaysian government and other regimes for a regional monetary fund that would undermine IMF. They had laid the groundwork by calling a special meeting in Manila one week before the APEC conference to press finance ministers and central bank officials to accept the IMF proposals.

U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright chided Philippine president Fidel Ramos, who complained about Washington's "enhanced" position and the dangers of developing nations in Asia being forced back into colonial status as a result of "the medicine the United States is prescribing."

"Will we squander our energies on finger-pointing and blame-pinning, or will we focus on how to get back on track?" Albright barked in response.

Response by U.S. ultrarightists

The Clinton administration's response to the financial crisis sweeping southeast Asia has fueled the nationalist demagoguery of the incipient fascist movement in the United States. Ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan deepened his attacks on the Clinton administration, which he has described as being weakened by the defeat of its attempts to pass "fast track" trade legislation in Congress and by the setback the White House suffered in its drive to launch a war against Iraq. These events, Buchanan said in a November 19 syndicated column, indicate "the first triumph of a blazing American nationalism."

In a November 29 column, Buchanan wrote, "Asia's financial crisis is not a natural disaster; it is man-made, the work of corrupt and incompetent political elites, crony capitalists and idiot investors who deserted their own countries to chase hot profits in Asia." Buchanan called on "Congress to run a sword through this corrupt global system." In an earlier article he had stated that "not another dime should go to the IMF or its neo-socialist little sister the World Bank." He said the two imperialist financial institutions were "leeches of U.S. capital."

He continued his campaign to fan the flames of resentment by "U.S. taxpayers" against these corrupt bankers, pointing once again to U.S. treasury secretary Robert Rubin and the investment bank Goldman Sachs — explicitly Jewish names — as his examples. "Clinton will come back from Vancouver Asia-Pacific summit and demand even more money to bail out Robert Rubin's Wall Street buddies," he wrote in his November 29 column. "We do it all — to make the world safe for Goldman Sachs."

In a demagogic appeal trying to draw working people into his "America First" campaign, Buchanan said that with the devaluation of the Mexican peso, "U.S. companies saw the price of Mexican labor had been cut in half in dollars, they laid off their workers, shut down their U.S. plants and headed south for the Rio Grande."

Alarcón denounces U.S. embargo

Continued from Page 6

again, that there are many who are willing to defend the principles of justice and of respect among nations.

The Cuban people shall continue to resist and shall never yield to the barbarous forces that seek to annihilate it. We are facing a big challenge, but even greater than this is and shall be our will to preserve the independence and justice conquered through many years of struggle and immense sacrifice of successive generations of Cubans.

No one can take away from the people of

Cuba their houses, their lands, their factories, their schools, their hospitals. No one shall strip them of their properties or their rights. The executioners and exploiters, who were defeated for good and forever, shall never return. Cuba is not and shall never be a colonial possession of the United States.

Next year will mark 100 years since the U.S. military invasion robbed Cuba of its independence and imposed a domination that ended once and for all in January 1959. Those in Washington who are still delirious with their imperial dreams should realize that it is high time that they wake up.

Workers rally as Maple Leaf moves to close struck plant

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

EDMONTON, Alberta — While hundreds of members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 312A on strike against Maple Leaf Foods packed a union information meeting November 24, the company removed its signs from the hog-packing plant here.

For the next two days, strikers blocked a mobile crane and transport truck from entering the plant. The company was attempting to remove equipment. Michael McCain, the plant owner, has announced that the factory will be closing for good.

The 900 UFCW members here and 900 others at Maple Leaf's plant in Burlington, Ontario, have been on strike since mid-November. They are resisting company demands for deep concessions, including cuts in pay, holidays, and benefits.

Maple Leaf failed in its attempt to obtain a Labour Relations Board ruling that would prevent meaningful picketing. On November 28, the board ruled that up to 25 pickets be permitted at any gate, and an unlimited number of further strikers can patrol between gates. Alberta premier Ralph Klein announced the government will be seeking another company to take over the facilities.

The unionists are building a boycott of Maple Leaf products and seeking to promote solidarity with their fight in the region. Motorists frequently honk in support as they drive by the pickets. The Ontario Federation of Labour endorsed the boycott at its convention the last week in November.

Hundreds of UFCW strikers rallied outside the Edmonton plant November 22. They were joined by striking postal workers and unionists wearing identifying placards from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP), the Alberta Union of Public Employees, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, to name a few.

Greg McMaster, Canadian Union of Postal Workers local president, addressed the rally, as did Alberta New Democratic

Party leader Pam Barrett, Audrey Cormack, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour, and other union officials.

Jack Westgeest, president of the striking local, drew cheers when he declared, "Michael McCain does not own this land, this building. We've had six employers, we welcome employer number seven."

He was referring to the lease on very favorable terms that the provincial government accords the company. Maple Leaf owns only the plant equipment outright. The facility is 90 years old and was the scene of a hard-fought strike in 1986, when it was called Gainers and owned by Peter Pocklington.

Fred Finlay, a box maker with 33 years in the plant, told the *Militant*, "We'll boycott every product he's got. We boycotted in '86 when it was Gainers, and it took him seven years to get his business back."

Dave Ferris, originally from Oshawa, Ontario, moved out here for the oil boom 22 years ago and has worked in the plant for the past 17 years. "This is my third strike here — in '84, '86, and now '97," he said with a grin.

Ferris and other pickets described the company campaign of intimidation before the strike. Letters were handed out on the shop floor threatening closure, and also hand delivered to employees' homes the same day to ensure that other family members saw them. Foremen would call union members to their office and leave supposedly secret company memos lying in full view. Both the union and the company provided vans to ferry union members to the place where the strike vote was being held.

Shelby Bishop, who works in porkcuts and has 11 years in the plant, is docked 20 cents a minute for going to the bathroom, "and that includes walking time. They've got these chits and sometimes the foremen stand outside [the bathroom] timing."

Russ Campbell, a meat cutter with three years' service, makes Can\$11 an hour

Steelworkers strike in Pueblo, Colorado



Militant/Horace Kerr

Over 1,000 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Locals 2102 and 3267 in Pueblo, Colorado, (above) and Portland, Oregon, respectively have been on strike against CF&I/Oregon Steel since early October. According to the union, the company has made huge profits since workers gave concessions worth \$35 million four years ago. The steelworkers are fighting company demands for massive forced overtime, and calling for respect of seniority, adequate health coverage for retirees, and pensions comparable to other steelworkers.

(Can\$1=US\$0.70). "If I was working in Red Deer or Winnipeg, I'd be making \$4 or \$5 more." He thinks McCain is making too much money to close the plant. Explaining why many workers have felt confident to strike, despite threats of permanent plant closure, Russ said, "He might as well shut it down now. There's lots of jobs out here because of the boom." Oil development is expanding in Alberta now.

Terry Jaguary, a member of CEP Local 777, was walking the line with her husband, Tim, who has just begun making Can\$10 an hour after two and a half years in the plant. He developed carpal tunnel syndrome from meat cutting and has since changed departments. She explained she comes from a strong union family, and was very happy when her husband landed a unionized job. "And then, he's out on strike!"

Pickets explained the tough working conditions and problems obtaining compensation for injuries. "They told me that working on the kill floor didn't cause my hernia," said Dave Brockbank, who eventually won his case. Long-term disability pay-

ments are pooled and divided among the beneficiaries, so the more injured there are, the less each gets paid. Workers report the injury payments are less than Can\$250 a month. There is a lifetime cap of Can\$10,000 on drug benefits, which means that a number of workers with decades of seniority have used up their allocation. Al Williamson spends Can\$200 every three months out of his own pocket.

Williamson, who has worked in the plant for 27 years, said McCain "doesn't want to talk. This is the same as what's happening to the postal workers, too ... I still have to pay [for prescription drugs] while I'm out here, but I'm committed to this strike." He organizes the union members' phone tree.

A number of UFCW members went down to the postal workers picket after the rally. And others joined the postal workers' rally November 24 protesting government threats to legislate CUPW back to work.

Katy LeRougetel is a member of USWA Local 5338 in Toronto. Ted Lenoir contributed to this article.

Labor has stake in keeping LTV plant clean, open

BY LEROY WATSON

PITTSBURGH — LTV Corp. announced on July 14 that it would close its 44-year-old Hazelwood coke plant here at the end of the year, saying it would cost

centives, and to offer younger employees positions elsewhere in the company. So far, LTV has refused to give the members of USWA Local 1834 any information on these incentives and has not made any offers of employment at other LTV plants.

USWA officials state that "LTV has the ability to meet all its environmental obligations." A plant closing would not be for environmental reasons and "might well violate the terms of the 1986 Coke Purchase Agreement between LTV and the USWA," said a letter to local members.

The union has requested that LTV provide information on the company's coke supply situation and their environmental obligations, and filed a grievance that led the dispute into arbitration. Arbitration hearings have been under way in Pittsburgh since October 13.

On November 6 Steelworkers held rallies simultaneously in Pittsburgh and in Cleveland to protest the announced shutdown of the Hazelwood plant. About 400 people attended the Pittsburgh rally, including members of USWA Local 1843, their supporters from other steelworkers locals, and members of the United Mine Workers of America and Service Employees International Union. Labor officials and politicians made speeches promising to fight the closing.

As I see it, workers at the coke plant should be fighting to demand that LTV clean up the plant with its own money — its profits — and keep the plant open. We should reject any attempt by the company to obtain a concession agreement where workers pay for the cleanup to save jobs.

We should also reject any idea of "buying" the plant through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). ESOP's do not save jobs nor do they prevent layoffs. What they do is tie workers to the interests of the company and stockholders whose only interests are profits and dividends, not the safety, health, and wages of employees.

Steelworkers at LTV should demand the company open its books to the membership in order to know the truth about the company and to counter any claims by LTV bosses that they cannot keep the plant open because of financial or environmental considerations.

One of my co-workers, Albert McGhie, said at the Pittsburgh rally, "I came to the rally to keep the plant open. The company is violating the manning agreement and the coking agreement. The contract is in effect until 1999 and there shouldn't be any layoffs or closing. The company has made no official offer and the rank and file is left in the dark."

The company had initially said it was closing the plant because it couldn't meet

environmental regulations without a \$500 million rebuild of the coke works. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said in an October 30 letter to the union, that a complete rebuild of the plant "is not necessary" to comply with EPA standards.

While companies should be forced to comply with current EPA standards, we should remember too that the EPA is not a neutral, independent agency that stands above both working people and the bosses. The EPA is an agency of the federal government that represents the capitalists' interests, not an agency for workers and farmers.

A union committee should be in charge of monitoring the environmental quality of production. Coke workers themselves are the first ones to be affected by the by-product emissions. They are exposed to the highest concentrations of particulates and gases emitted during production. Making it safer for us will make it safer for the environment and communities at the same time. We can't rely on the company or any governmental agency to do the job for us. Union committees should work with committees from the community to make decisions about what is safe based on full and accurate information about the ecological and health effects involved. Workers should insist that production be halted at once, on demand, and at no loss in pay whenever safety of personnel is at stake.

The workers and the community cannot afford pollution, plant shutdowns, or bosses who put profits above all other considerations. I think LTV workers and other working people should mobilize to fight to keep Hazelwood open, coking cleanly at LTV's expense.

Leroy Watson is a member of USWA Local 1843 at LTV Hazelwood Coke Works.

UNION TALK

\$500 million to upgrade the facility to meet environmental standards. The closing would affect about 750 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), as well as hundreds of other workers for various suppliers to the plant.

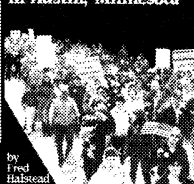
LTV said it planned to offer nearly two-thirds of the workforce early retirement in-

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U.S. rulers try to justify Iraq sanctions

Continued from front page

ing about the Iraqi president, "I'd like to see him taken out."

"Even liberal pundits are sounding blood-thirsty these days," the *Times* article continued. "Last week George Stephanopoulos, President Clinton's former senior adviser, called on his old boss to ignore a Ford-era Presidential order barring American-sanctioned assassinations and put out a contract on Mr. Hussein. 'If we *can* kill Saddam, we should,' Mr. Stephanopoulos wrote in the current issue of Newsweek."

The liberal daily laid out once again how Washington is trying to justify its war moves and turn public opinion in its favor. "The United States and its allies have had seven years to demonize Mr. Hussein," it said. "President Clinton can pick and choose from Iraq's terrifying array of poison gases and killer germs as a rationale to bomb away."

"Defense Secretary William S. Cohen, playing show-and-tell on national television a couple of weeks ago, plunked down a five-pound bag of sugar and proclaimed that if the sugar were anthrax, a deadly bacteria, it could kill half the population of Washington. In case anyone missed the point, he said last week that the United Nations believes Iraq may have produced up to 200 tons of VX nerve gas, 'theoretically enough to kill every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth.'"

Meanwhile, the U.S. armada that Clinton amassed in the Persian Gulf over the last month remains there. It includes two aircraft carriers with over 50 warplanes each and a dozen warships, which are capable of delivering Tomahawk cruise missiles deep into Iraq. Some 20,000 U.S. troops are also stationed in the region.

Washington is using the UN inspectors to keep up its pressure on Baghdad. These investigators are supposed to certify whether Iraq has gotten rid of "weapons of mass

destruction," as stipulated by the cease-fire agreement the Iraqi regime was forced to sign after the Persian Gulf War in 1991. This is a precondition for lifting the UN sanctions. The White House is threatening to use the "inspectors" for a new provocation over the demand that they be allowed entry to more than 60 presidential compounds that Baghdad has declared off limits.

On November 30 thousands of Iraqis gathered in downtown Baghdad, the country's capital, to protest the U.S.-engineered sanctions. The demonstrators paraded 100 small wooden coffins carrying children whose deaths they attributed to malnutrition and lack of medicines caused by the embargo. More than half a million people have died in the last seven years as a result of these sanctions.

The procession was held the day after the Iraqi government said it would accept in principle the renewal of a deal with the United Nations that allows it to sell a limited amount of oil, its main export, to import much-needed food and medicines. The announcement reversed Baghdad's earlier stance that it would accept nothing short of lifting of the embargo altogether. "Iraq has accepted the oil-for-food deal as a temporary measure, not as an alternative to the complete lifting of sanctions," said a statement from the Iraqi Information Ministry.

Under the deal, Baghdad can sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil every six months.

But the revenue is put into a UN-controlled account and a big percentage of it is taken for "war reparations" Iraq is supposed to pay for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. During the negotiations that led to the easing of the confrontation with Washington, Moscow promised it would press for raising the ceiling of oil sales to \$3 billion. The UN Security Council was scheduled to vote on whether to renew or alter this deal on December 4.

U.S. ambassador to the United Nations William Richardson said Washington may consider the expansion of the "oil-for-food" program. But in the same breath he indicated that the door is still open for U.S. military strikes if the Iraqi government continues to limit the reach of the weapons inspectors.

"The new-found bellicosity toward Saddam Hussein seems to spring from a belief that the military can thwart him with unmanned Tomahawk cruise missiles or a few bombing runs, and suffer a few if any casualties," said the November 30 *Times* article. "But this view doesn't take into account how many bombs were dropped on Iraq in 1991 without forcing a withdrawal from Kuwait. For that, it took tanks and infantry."

Pointing to the essential role of the UN inspectors for Washington's strategy, the article said, "Without inspectors on the ground, the only reliable option would be

to send in ground forces."

* * *

Another article on the front page of the December 2 *New York Times* complemented Washington's war propaganda against regimes not under its boot in that part of the world. Prominent liberal reporter Raymond Bonner alleged that a major pipeline the Libyan government is building for irrigation has some mysterious military purpose instead. "A tunnel of pipes 4 meters, or 13 feet, in diameter is large enough to accommodate military vehicles, even a rail line," Bonner wrote, referring to the tunnels being dug through the desert that the Libyan government says will allow it to expand cultivation. Citing interviews with unnamed engineers supposedly working on the project, the article said that underground storage facilities are being constructed about every 50 miles along the pipeline. "These sites, made out of reinforced concrete, would be suitable for bivouacking troops or storing military supplies, including poison gas, the engineers said."

Washington has kept an embargo on Libya since 1982. For the last five years, the United Nations has also renewed a ban on flights to and from Libya at the U.S. government's urging. The Reagan administration ordered a bombing of the country in 1986, killing 37 people and wounding 100, after accusing Tripoli of terrorist activities.

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CALIFORNIA Los Angeles

Mexican Maquiladora Workers Fight for Independent Unions. First-hand report by Mary Tong, Director, San Diego Maquiladora Workers Support. Fri., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

MASSACHUSETTS Boston

Repression and Resistance in North of Ireland: What's the Reality of the All-Party Talks? Panel discussion. Fri., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN Detroit

The Governments Attack on the Teamster Union: What it Means for Working People. Panel discussion. Fri., Dec. 12, 7 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. 7414 Woodward (one block north of Grand Blvd.) Donation: \$4. Dinner and program: \$9. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

NEW JERSEY Newark

How Do You Defend Affirmative Action? Issues in the Piscataway, New Jersey, Case. Fri., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (one block north of Broad St.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3361.

OHIO Cleveland

Defending Affirmative Action: What are the Stakes for Working People? Fri., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 1832 Euclid Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 861-6150

PENNSYLVANIA Philadelphia

How Do You Defend Affirmative Action? Fri., Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

WASHINGTON Seattle

Why Working People Need Affirmative Action. Discussion led by students from the University of Washington and Seattle Central Community College. The Seattle Young Socialists will show excerpts from the video "Struggles in Steel" as a special fund-raiser for their chapter. Fri., Dec. 12. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND Christchurch

Discussion on the War at Home and Abroad: Oppose Attacks on Workers' Rights, Oppose Intervention in Iraq and Bougainville. Wed., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. 199 High Street (corner High and Tuam). Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

New York students host antiwar meeting

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

NEW YORK — About 25 students and others took part in a meeting at the City College of New York (CCNY) to protest U.S. war moves against Iraq. The November 25 program was sponsored by the CCNY Coalition, ROOTS, and the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM). The panel of speakers included a student representing the CCNY Coalition and SLAM, who recalled the participation of CCNY students in protests against Washington's assault on Iraq in 1991. Dr. M.T. Mehdi of the Arab American Relations Committee described the devastating effects of the U.S.-led embargo against Iraq. Nancy Rosenstock, a member of the International Association of Machinists representing the Socialist Workers Party, urged participation in pickets against any further escalation of Washington's war moves. A wide-ranging discussion followed. One student commented, "I'm from Sudan. I don't like the U.S. embargo of our country. If something needs to be changed, we should change it ourselves."

— CALENDAR —

CALIFORNIA Oakland

To Fight is to Win. Demonstrate to demand freedom for Irish Political Prisoners Terry Kirby, Pol Brennan, and Kevin Barry Artt of the H-Block 4, 550 Sixth Street, North County Jail. Sun., Dec. 14. Meet at 12 noon. Sponsored by the East Bay Irish American Unity Conference. For more information, call (510) 824-1119.

MINNESOTA Minneapolis

Victory Celebration and Update on Free Speech Fight to Sell Socialist Literature. Fri., Dec. 12, 7 p.m. Walker Community Church, Centennial Hall, 3104 16th Ave. S. Sponsored by the Committee to Defend Free Speech. For more information, call (612) 827-7708.

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Debauched? Perhaps. But gentlemen — Three businessmen on a birthday bash dined and wined at a London restaurant where — if



Harry Ring

price is a reliable gauge — the food and drink is quality stuff. The tab was \$333,000 plus, most of it on wine. The manager assured that the three chaps “were not at all ostentatious.”

Let them drink champagne? — Scientist Erik Millstone said 1 in 10 British children suffer learning or behavioral difficulties as a result of lead pollution. Estimating that 10 million homes still get their drinking water through lead pipes, he declared, “The government has chosen to do nothing about it, knowingly and deliberately. They seem much more concerned with protecting the water companies than protecting human health.”

Not just a British thing — “The five most serious environmental threats to children in the United States are lead, air pollution, pesticides, tobacco smoke, and contaminated drinking water, according to

a study by the Natural Resources Defense Council.” — News item

Next, cargo-area steerage class? — To ensure room for more passengers, airlines are looking to reduce the amount of carry-on luggage. New rules may peg the number of pieces brought on to the price of the ticket. United Airlines will do test flights in which lowest fare passengers may be limited to one piece instead of the usual two.

Facts-of-life dep’t — In Plano, Texas, the school system signed a 10-year contract to sell only Dr. Pepper beverages in return for \$1 million a year. Explained a school official: “We feel that we have to

become entrepreneurial to provide the funds we need....”

The medium is the message? — “Colorado Springs — The school system sells [advertising] space on everything from school buses to school hallways.... Other promotions are provided, including the sponsor’s corporate logo on numerous school system’s publications and public address announcements at football and basketball games.” — News item

We can hear it now — “OK children, back to our reading lesson. But first a few brief messages from our sponsors.”

You can count on Uncle — In

1995, Montserrat, a tiny United Kingdom colony in the Caribbean, suffered a major volcanic eruption. Recently it was disclosed to the British parliament that used tents bought from the U.S. for emergency housing had to be thrown away because they were full of holes.

Inside dope — The Dept. of Education was being tactful when it rejected John Gardner’s application for a grant because it wasn’t typed double spaced. A blind scientist, Gardner requested the grant to further develop a Braille computer software program he invented. Actually, his request was rejected because it wasn’t written in Gobble-dyhook.

U.S. gov’t’s threat to independence of unions

The selection below is excerpted from the article “New Threat to Independence of Unions.” The entire article appears in *Selected Articles on the Labor Movement*, a collection of articles written for the *Militant* in 1966–67 by Farrell Dobbs, who was the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party at the time. The publication is part of the Education for Socialists series. It is copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

Current thinking in Washington about stiffening the Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin Act has been summed up by A. H. Raskin of the *New York Times* editorial staff, who is in a

BOOK OF THE WEEK

good position to get the facts. “The federal government, which passed a law less than a decade ago to insure more democracy in unions,” he wrote on Jan. 8, “is beginning to worry now about too much democracy in unions.”

His estimate of contemplated changes in K-L-G not only suggests the nature of impending government action against labor; it calls to mind the Socialist Workers Party’s analysis of the law when it was passed in 1959. When capitalist politicians pretend concern about bureaucratic abuses of democracy within the unions, the SWP said the real aim is to raise false hopes that the rank and file can rely on the government to uphold their rights. It is a trick designed to get workers to accept government intervention in internal union affairs.

The government’s immediate aim is to scare the union bureaucrats and make them even more servile to capitalism than they already are. A more basic objective is to strip the unions of their autonomy and make them state instruments for policing the working class.

Adoption of the Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin law was preceded by an extended period of deliberate preparation that began during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s first term in the White House. A myth was fabricated that modern unions owe their existence to the federal government, especially to Roosevelt’s “New Deal.” The Wagner Act of 1935 was given a phoney buildup as “Labor’s Magna Charta,” and it was falsely credited as the main organizer of industrial unions in basic industry. The object was twofold: to tie the workers to capitalist politics out of unearned gratitude and misplaced

trust; and to lay a foundation for justifying government regulation of the unions.

The Wagner Act disapproved certain “unfair practices” by employers; for example, compelling workers to sign individual “yellow dog” contracts or to join company unions; and it disapproved openly firing workers for union activity. All this amounted to nothing more than recognition of labor’s right to organize and bargain collectively.

In the actual class struggle, union protests about violations of the Wagner Act were brushed aside by the corporations and usually pigeonholed by the government. It took the bitterly fought 1936–37 wave of sit-down strikes for the workers to assert their constitutional rights.

The Wagner Act also established the National Labor Relations Board, empowering it to conduct union representation elections and to approve or void the results. With unions filing notice with the NLRB of intentions to call a strike, it joined in government maneuvers to prevent walkouts or wangle a strike settlement on terms favorable to employers. As time went by the NLRB increasingly took on the characteristics of an antilabor relations body....

In January, 1957, McCarthy introduced in the Senate a resolution to set up a “Select Committee” to investigate labor “racketeering,” a term applied by reactionaries to all forms of union activity. The committee was quickly formed under the chairmanship of Senator John McClellan, an Arkansas Democrat. McCarthy was put on the committee, but he died soon thereafter and, as the May 13, 1957, *Militant* put it “The late Senator Joseph McCarthy got a generally bad press on the occasion of his death.”

Robert F. Kennedy, who had earlier served as an apprentice witchhunter under McCarthy, was made counsel for the McClellan Committee. Later on, as attorney-general during his brother’s administration, he was to spearhead a government vendetta against James Hoffa of the Teamsters.

McClellan opened the committee hearings with an announced intention of investigating various charges against union officials. The main charges were goon tactics against the rank and file, looting the union treasury and taking bribes from employers. As the hearings got under way the capitalist news media had a field day.

Good union men and women, who needed no McClellan to tell them about the wrongs inflicted by union bureaucrats, developed illusions about his intentions as they watched the hearings unfold. They began to entertain a hope that the government would actually do something to protect their rights. Not realizing that a booby trap was being laid for them, they favored what was taking place in Washington.

McClellan made the Teamsters his central target, starting with Dave Beck, who was then president of the union. Throughout the proceedings Beck relied on his rights under the Fifth Amendment. Hoffa, who was a vice president of the Teamsters at the time, got the next major grilling. While this was going on the real purpose was given away by Senator Lausche, an Ohio Democrat, who said on TV that the Teamsters were too powerful and should be curbed.

Meanwhile George Meany had called a session of the AFL-CIO Executive Council, but not to mobilize united labor defense against the government attack. He put through a criminal decision that any union official who invoked his constitutional rights under the Fifth Amendment should automatically lose



The *Militant* ran this cartoon in its April 8, 1957, issue when the McClellan committee was investigating the Teamsters.

his post. Beck was suspended from the Executive Council for taking the Fifth. A few weeks later Hoffa — who had not taken the Fifth — was elected president by a Teamsters convention and, simply because he had become one of McClellan’s targets, the Teamsters were suspended from the AFL-CIO....

On the government side, a federal judge used a suit brought by union members to impose a “monitorship” over the Teamsters and it was maintained for an extended time. During the same period the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a scab can sue in the state courts for damages against a union that keeps him off the job with a picket line.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



December 15, 1972

NEW YORK, Dec. 4 — At 12:01 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 30, 5,000 members of 12 unions closed down the Long Island Railroad. The unions represent carmen, teamsters, clerks, electrical workers, sheet-metal workers, and others.

The picket lines of the strikers were respected by the 1,500 trainmen of the United Transportation Union (UTU) and the members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. (These unions represent “operating employees” such as engineers, firemen, and switchmen.). This brought to a halt the normal weekday movement of 260,000 daily riders on 670 trains over the 326 route miles of track of the LIRR.

The last strike called by any of the dozen craft unions against the railroad was in 1922. The LIRR trainmen, however, organized in the UTU, have struck several times in recent years and had a major strike of 26 days in 1960 that won a five-day workweek. John Buccarella, a car repairman who has worked for the LIRR for more than 25 years, told reporters that his base pay was \$38 a day. Out of this, he said, he paid \$22 a week for retirement benefits. In addition, there are taxes and other deductions. “With a large family like mine, how do you expect us to live?” Buccarella asked.



December 15, 1947

The first result of the UN partition of Palestine was the sharpening of relation between Arabs and Jews throughout the Middle East. While the heads of Arab governments held a “war council” in Cairo, the Jewish Agency for Palestine called for full mobilization of all Jews between the ages of 17 and 25.

Jews, in their exultation over the establishment of a “Jewish state,” have closed their eyes to the full implication of the strife that lies ahead. Unfortunately, the Jewish masses in almost all countries — blinded by the miserable fate of the Jews during the war and by the glowing promises now being made to them — are supporting the Zionist leaders.

The Jews of the Middle-Eastern countries, however, are not in such wholehearted sympathy with the “Jewish state.” Despite the conflict which has existed in Palestine, Jews in other Arab countries have lived peaceably with their neighbors for many years. Now scores have been murdered in Aden and other Arab lands. The partition plan has jeopardized their position to the point where the Chief Rabbi of Baghdad called for Jews in Iraq to support the Arab cause. In response to this call the Jews collected \$2,000,000 to help the Palestinian Arabs.

Available from Pathfinder

Selected Articles on the Labor Movement

FARRELL DOBBS

Labor’s role in social change, why unions need class-conscious leaders, and the reasons behind the increasingly harsh governmental regulation of union activity. \$5.00

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

Mexico 'bailout' revisited

Capitalism's "tigers" in southeast Asia have turned out to be nothing but paper-maches. The so-called Asian miracle, promising millions that the profit system would lift these "emerging markets" into the wonders of advanced capitalism, is turning into a nightmare, not just for working people, but also for the middle classes and the ruling bourgeoisies of south Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand.

"I have come here to beg the forgiveness of the Korean people," Lim Chang Yuel, the country's minister of finance and economy, cried in crocodile tears in a televised speech December 3. "Please understand the necessity of the economic pain we must bear and overcome," he said, hoping to avert a major showdown with the labor movement, which is being asked to swallow deep social cuts and layoffs for the sake of international finance capital.

The IMF "bailout" of south Korea, the largest ever, following similar packages engineered largely by Washington and Tokyo in Indonesia and Thailand, has set in motion in Asia a process patterned after the so-called rescue of the Mexican peso.

What happened in Mexico is what toilers and other social classes can expect in southeast Asia. Only this time, there are three countries involved so far, rather than one, with a combined population of 311 million compared to the 96 million people in Mexico. By the time the Mexican government of Ernesto Zedillo paid back the "loan guarantees" cobbled together by Washington in 1995, budget expenditures for schools, hospitals, housing, food subsidies, pensions, and other programs won by workers and peasants had been slashed. Real wages had also declined and unemployment increased. At the same time, U.S. capitalists ended up owning a much bigger chunk of the country's national patrimony.

As the recent events confirm, the fundamental relationship between U.S. imperialism and the rulers in south

Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand has not changed. What is happening to toilers in those countries right now is another variant of what working people in Mexico faced in the last three years and what the future holds for every country held in economic bondage to world finance capital. This relationship among the oppressed and oppressor nations, debtors and creditors, accelerates conflicts among the imperialist countries themselves. This is what Wall Street's conduct toward Tokyo shows. It underlines the fact that, in the context of world capitalism's deflationary conditions, the stability of the imperialist countries themselves is increasingly held in bondage to the effects of crises and breakdowns in the exploited Third World.

The worst nightmare for U.S. "investors" and the bourgeoisies in southeast Asia, however, is how working people and other exploited producers may respond. If the massive labor upsurge in south Korea less than a year ago is any indication, the masters of world finance capital and the local exploiting classes may be in for a surprise this time. Columnist Thomas Friedman's arrogant conclusion that "there should have been a revolution but there was barely a demonstration" in Mexico after the U.S.-led "bailout" will eventually turn to its opposite somewhere in the world, as the financial crisis spreads from the Korean peninsula to Japan and Brazil.

As lawful and inevitable as the workings of the international capitalist system and its resulting sudden breakdowns are, the resistance, mobilization, and organization of the gravediggers of that social system — the working class and its allies — are equally inevitable. Out of the social explosions that are coming millions will act towards taking power out of the hands of the exploiting classes and changing the world forever, following the example of the Bolsheviks 80 years ago and of Cuban revolutionaries four decades later.

The real crime in TWA crash

There's an "overwhelming absence of evidence indicating a crime" in last year's deadly crash of Trans World Airlines Flight 800, claimed FBI spokesman James Kallstrom when he announced that the federal cop agency was closing its investigation. But the opposite is true. There is a high crime here. The criminals are the airline bosses, the owners of Boeing, which manufactured the plane, and the government. They have all flaunted airline safety and shown utter disregard for the lives of passengers and crews by placing top priority on the employers' profits rather than human needs. While the company and government whipped up a scare campaign over a supposed bomb, the real questions of airline safety and maintenance were shunted aside. The speedup and workforce cuts at TWA and other airlines have continued, guaranteeing further disasters like this one that took 230 lives.

From the beginning the *Militant* said, "Safety is the issue." In the weeks after the July 17, 1996, crash of TWA 800, facts came out indicating that the most likely cause of the explosion was a mechanical failure. But details like the pilots' report of "an erratic fuel-flow gauge" just two minutes before the Boeing 747 exploded went virtually unreported. Instead massive media coverage and government investigations focused on the supposed theory that a bomb or missile brought down the plane — despite the lack of a single shred of evidence for this assertion.

For years before this disaster Boeing, the airlines, and government agencies knew of a number of safety problems with the 747. These included weak fuse pins that caused a crash in 1992, problems with part of the aircraft's

structural frame known as Section 41, and a tendency for older 747s to develop leaky fuel tanks. Upgrades to address some of these problems have only been partially carried out. A proposal by the National Transportation Safety Board to introduce "inerting" procedures that would reduce the possibility of fuel tank explosions have been shelved as too expensive.

These problems are exacerbated as TWA and other airlines hold back from investing in new planes and equipment as part of their drive to cut costs and boost sagging profits. The average age of TWA's fleet has grown to nearly 20 years, and the average for its Boeing 747s is 25 years. At the same time the airline has cut crews, speeded up the pace of work, and extracted concessions from union members to the tune of \$660 million.

Washington, TWA, and Boeing have carried out a real crime by sweeping these safety questions under the rug. Also criminal is the government's cynical use of the crash to step up police presence at airports and curtail democratic rights in the name of fighting a supposed "terrorist" threat. The explosion was used to justify increased searches of passengers at airports throughout the United States, investigations into airport workers' backgrounds, and scapegoating of immigrants from the Mideast, even as the bomb charges were revealed to be nothing but hype.

Safety is a central question for the labor movement. Airline workers and their unions have the biggest stake in exposing the real crime of TWA Flight 800, and fighting to force the bosses and government to spend the time and money needed to prevent further disasters.

Land mines, a weapon of poor

The *Militant* fully agrees with the revolutionary leadership in Cuba in opposing the land mines treaty recently signed by government officials of 120 countries. "Land mines are the weapon of the poor," said Cuban Brig. Gen. Luis Pérez Róspide, director of the Union of Military Industries. His agency is responsible for ensuring each Cuban citizen has a rifle, a land mine, and a grenade to defend the country in face of Washington's nearly 40-year campaign of aggression. While liberals are congratulating each other about the "victory for humanity" of the treaty ban on land mines, no one discussed this issue with those who are threatened with nuclear weapons and have none of their own, Róspide pointed out.

The land mines treaty has nothing to do with humanitarian concerns or stopping military slaughter. Like all other "arms control" agreements, it can and will be violated as needed, and even includes a loophole for participants who "are engaged in a war." In practice, the treaty will be used as a club against those who stand up and fight or aren't compliant enough with imperialist dictates, the same way Washington uses the pretext of concern over chemical and biological weapons to justify its war threats against Iraq and Libya.

The world's biggest holder of weapons of mass destruc-

tion is Washington. It's only the U.S. government that has ever used nuclear weapons against human beings — twice against the people of Japan. Washington, with 37,000 U.S. troops occupying south Korea four decades after its military invasion divided the Korean peninsula, refused to sign the treaty because it did not include a clause allowing its 1 million land mines in Korea. What arrogance!

Even now the U.S. government has thousands of troops and a massive arsenal of warplanes in the Persian Gulf threatening to bomb the people of Iraq. Will a ban on land mines make Iraqi lives more secure? More likely they could use some land mines to halt any invasion of U.S. ground troops.

The heroic Vietnamese people made ample use of land mines to defend their country's sovereignty, which helped defeat Washington's war and finally ended the brutal slaughter of millions of people in Indochina. Malcolm X praised the Vietnamese brothers who had "nothing but sneakers on and a rifle and a bowl of rice," who chased out the French occupation forces. "The French aren't there anymore," he said. "We don't care how they did it; they're not there any more." That's the attitude working people should have when fighters use the "weapon of the poor" to defend themselves against imperialist aggression.

Gov't orders postal strikers back in Canada

Continued from front page

be put before a mediator, who will impose a settlement if Canada Post and the postal union do not reach an agreement by February.

Two of the four opposition parties in parliament, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Quebecois, voted against the bill. But both made clear beforehand that they would not try to slow down the debate in parliament, allowing the measure's expedited adoption. The NDP is a social-democratic party with close links to the trade unions outside of Quebec and the Bloc Quebecois is a Quebec-based bourgeois nationalist party.

The workers and their union oppose Canada Post's plan to cut \$200 million from its budget in the next five years, at their expense.

André Lepage, a striker at the Downtown sorting station in Montreal, explained to the *Militant* earlier in the strike that a major stake in the conflict "is the cut of 4,000 full-time jobs by changing the routes of the letter carriers" and forcing them to deliver more mail.

"There are 9,000 temporary positions that we want to change into permanent jobs," said Lepage. "This is cheap labor. They [Post Canada] hire people from minorities and women. It looks good. But they are placed in a position... that is some kind of slavery." In the current negotiations, the CUPW is demanding that 1,500 part-time jobs become full-time. Some 18,000 postal workers are currently either part-time or casual.

After eight months of fruitless negotiations and five days into the strike, Ottawa appointed Warren Edmondson as mediator in the conflict on November 24. A few days later, Edmondson told the government that the negotiations were at an impasse. This was the pretext that the government had been looking for to introduce back-to-work legislation.

Since the beginning of the strike, Canada's rulers have been campaigning against the postal workers. The official opposition party in parliament, the Reform Party, demanded that the government take away the right of postal workers to strike altogether. "This is the fourth strike in ten years" at Canada Post, complained Reform member of parliament Jim Gouk. "It has cost over \$2 billion. It must be the last strike for Canada Post." The Canadian Federation of Independent Business announced that small- and medium-size businesses were losing \$200 million per day because of the strike.

Even before the bill was introduced in parliament, postal workers were outraged by the prospect of an antistrike law. "It isn't democratic," said Richard Delisle, a letter carrier for 24 years at Canada Post in Montreal. "You could sense it during the negotiations that it had been pre-arranged," he added. Alfonso Gagliano, the federal Minister responsible for Canada Post, had made the promise of an early end to a postal strike last August to the Canadian Direct Marketing Association.

CUPW members responded to the antistrike bill with a series of actions across the country. In Ottawa some 100 strikers picketed November 30 in front of an "open house" visit organized at the house of Reform Party leader Preston Manning. On December 1 protests were held in Toronto; Vancouver, British Columbia; St. John, New Brunswick; and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. And on December 2 strikers blocked deliveries of Canada Post cargo at the Pearson international airport in Toronto, delaying some flight departures. Some 500 workers demonstrated in Montreal and 200 in front the federal parliament in Ottawa. Other noisy protest pickets were held across the country.

Wearing green ribbons in solidarity with teachers fighting against the Ontario Conservative government's education "reform" legislation, strikers at South Central sorting station in Toronto explained to the *Militant* earlier in the strike that they were getting a lot more honks of support than during previous strikes. "Everybody is having a lot of trouble, not just the postal workers," commented striker Kenny Dayal.

In Montreal the roughly 600 participants in a Nov. 28-29 conference that launched a new "sovereignist and progressive" movement of political action against the ruling Parti Quebecois in Quebec adopted a motion of support to the postal workers strike and denounced Ottawa's antistrike legislation.

Union meetings will be held across the country in the next day or so where union members will be able to discuss out their reaction to the back to work law.

In the Montreal demonstration workers these reporters spoke to were resigned to the perspective of going back to work. But the crowd's mood was undefeated, with very noisy whistles and chants in French of "So, so, solidarity!" Strikers responded with a roar of approval when André Frappier, president of the CUPW local in Montreal, said, "Social peace, it's over. Canada Post will find it a long three years," in reference to the duration of the imposed contract.

Joe Young and Annette Kouri in Montreal and Katy LeRougetel in Toronto contributed to this article.

How Cubans halted 1962 invasion plan

Continued from Page 9

lanche of body bags and protracted fighting could be deadly to the president's own prospects in November 1964. At the same time, the Kennedys were worried about Republican charges of having "caved in" to the Soviet and Cuban governments, and were also very much aware of the reaction they would get from Washington's NATO allies in Europe if the administration openly embraced Moscow's offer of a Cuba-Turkey missile swap.

With these factors in mind, Kennedy's advisers drafted a letter to Khrushchev that made no mention of the U.S. weapons in Turkey and instead offered — in return for removal of Soviet missiles "under appropriate United Nations observation and supervision" — to end the naval blockade and "to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba."

During the evening break in the White House meeting October 27, Robert Kennedy delivered this letter to ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin at the Soviet embassy in Washington. The attorney general, however, made clear to Dobrynin the actual deal the Kennedy administration was offering: withdrawal of U.S. missiles from Turkey.

As Robert Kennedy explained in his handwritten notes preparing for a follow-up meeting with the Soviet ambassador two days later: "No quid pro quo as I told you." The U.S. missiles would leave Turkey, Kennedy wrote. "[Y]ou have my word on this & that is sufficient...; if you should publish any document indicating a deal then it is off."

Cuba not consulted

On Sunday morning, October 28, Khrushchev announced over Radio Moscow that he had ordered the dismantling of the missile sites in Cuba "and their crating and return to the Soviet Union." The White House rapidly issued a statement calling the announcement "an important and constructive contribution to peace."

Khrushchev had made this decision with absolutely no prior consultation with the government of Cuba. Although Cuban workers and farmers were the direct target of Washington's aggressive course both before, during, and after the October Crisis, they and the communist leadership of the revolution learned of the Soviet government's actions

over the radio.

"The reaction of our nation was of profound indignation, not relief," Castro told participants in the 1992 Havana conference. "So the political decision we adopted was to launch our five-point list of demands, five very simple points:

- First: An end to the economic blockade and all economic and trade pressures throughout the world by the United States against our country.

- Second: an end to all subversive activities, drops of weapons and explosives by air and by sea, organization of mercenary invasions, infiltration of spies and saboteurs — actions all carried out from U.S. territory and from some accomplice countries.

- Third: An end to the pirate attacks from bases in the United States and Puerto Rico.

- Fourth: An end to all violations of our sea and airspace by American aircraft and naval craft.

- Fifth: Withdrawal from the naval base in Guantánamo, and return of the territory occupied by the United States."

"Naturally we did not want war," Castro told Maria Shriver in the 1992 interview broadcast by NBC. "We wanted a solution, but an honorable solution.... We didn't know that the crisis was on its way to the almost unconditional concessions made by Khrushchev. They left everything the way it was. They left the blockade. They left a dirty war. The left Guantánamo Naval Base."

Shriver asked Castro: "So if you had it to do over again, you wouldn't accept the missiles?"

"With the information I have now?... No. I would not have accepted the missiles. With the experience of the Soviets' hesitation, I would not have accepted the missiles."

'Hesitation, not firmness, leads to war'

The alternative in October 1962 was not between capitulation to U.S. imperialism and a nuclear holocaust, Castro insisted in his remarks at the 1992 Havana conference. "If this whole operation had been carried out with the same resolution [as the decision to fire on the low-flying reconnaissance planes]," Castro said, "the outcome would have been different, and it would not have been war.

"The fact is that often it's hesitation that can lead to war, not firmness.... So we are



Militant Joe Swanson
Chanting, "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!" about 25 people rallied outside the Des Moines Police Department November 20 in the second protest in a month called by the Iowa Coalition Against Police Brutality. The speakers included Anthony Flores, whose brother David Flores, a Latino youth, was just convicted on murder charges in a police frame-up. Ardella Blandford, who was recently the Socialist Workers candidate for city council, and Rosa Leverett, mother of Charles Dudley Jr., also spoke. Dudley was killed by Des Moines cops on June 21 with four bullets in the back. Above, Anthony Flores speaks to the rally and press at October 22 protest of 50 people.

not making a moral assessment of this event," he said, referring to the downing of the U.S. spy plane. "What are we to regret? Why should we repent?"

As the Cuban leadership and many supporters of the revolution have long pointed out — contrary to the public stance of both the U.S. and Soviet governments — Washington never entered a "non-invasion pledge" in exchange for withdrawal of the missiles.

The assumption "that the Kennedy administration gave a pledge, upon conclusion of the missile crisis, not to invade Cuba ... is not correct," Robert McNamara acknowledged at the 1992 Havana conference. "There was no non-invasion pledge by the Kennedy administration," since the Cuban government never backed off its refusal to allow UN inspectors into the country.

Such a pledge, in any event, would not have been worth the paper it was written on. If the U.S. rulers had become convinced at any time over the next 35 years that their gains from an invasion outweighed the political price they would have to pay at home for the enormous U.S. casualties sustained in such an assault, they would have done it. But that's precisely what the U.S. rulers —

in the very midst of the October Crisis — had been convinced *was not possible* in face of the calm, dignified, and courageous stance of millions of Cubans workers and peasants and their determined mobilization to defend, arms in hand, their national sovereignty and their socialist revolution.



In the days immediately following Khrushchev's announcement, top U.S. military officers continued to press Kennedy to carry out a surprise invasion of Cuba. A previously "Top Secret" November 5 letter from Kennedy to McNamara rejecting one such proposal appears for the first time in the recent State Department collection.

"As I have communicated to General Wheeler, through General Clifton," Kennedy wrote, "the plans for X seem thin. Considering the size of the problem, the equipment that is involved on the other side, the nationalist fervor which may be engendered, it seems to me we could end up bogged down. I think we should keep constantly in mind the British in Boer War, the Russians in the last war with the Finnish and our own experience with the North Koreans."

— LETTERS —

Capitalist school system

I am writing to take up some of the questions that Ian Harvey raised with his contribution to the letters column in the November 24th issue of the *Militant* regarding the article in the October 27th issue on Chelsea High School.

Harvey misses the point entirely which the article was seeking to put forward. The Socialist Workers campaign statement from Linda Marcus clearly underlines the main reason for these repressive measures against the students, "The capitalists want youth in school to learn to be obedient, to be prepared to work hard throughout their life as a wage laborer and to be grateful to get any employment at all."

This is what all these various attacks stem from, including banning cellular phones and pagers. School administrators have no right to determine, nor in any way to decide if pagers and cell phones are needed by students for various aspects of their lives. Having worked and gone to high school at the same time, I can see how they are sometimes necessary and useful, especially for young mothers. Harvey does nothing more than play into the bourgeois campaign against youth with his statement that these things are "unnecessary accouterments of bourgeois 'success.'" It's useful to note that similar arguments have been used to justify school uniforms.

The idea that administrators of public schools have absolute au-

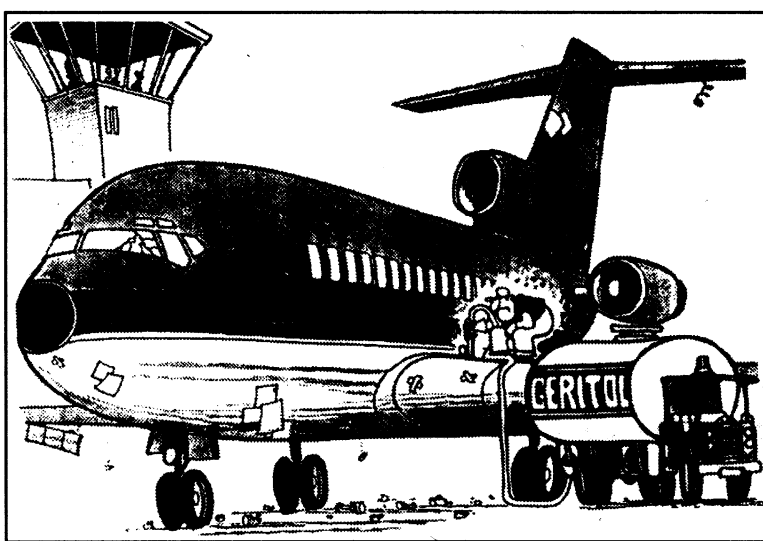
thority to submit whatever rules they care to and then bar a requested assembly of students and faculty to discuss this is an example of how the rulers of this country seek to push young people down today.

It's not directly important to me what exactly the principal's excuse was for banning the assembly or "what happened before the principal refused." The point is that it is a denial of a discussion on rules and measures that attack students and strengthen the campaign to beat resistance out of them before they reach the workforce.

Harvey goes on to criticize the article for not giving direct quotes of supposed "abusive language" that caused Superintendent Douglas Sears to refuse to meet with the protesters saying, "I don't meet in the face of demands couched in abusive language and loud tones." Should Leonard have also given decibel levels for the yelling protesters in order that readers could determine if Sears was correct in this regard?

Again Harvey misses the point. I think Sears was most offended that high school students demonstrated their capacity to fight back in the face of these draconian measures and showed some backbone in the face of a system that seeks to break them and smash their democratic rights.

Finally, Ian Harvey believes that readers of the *Militant* cannot have any other opinion than that of thinking teachers, who are not mentioned in the article, are automatically pas-



sive drones who follow school administrators to the letter. It is true that it would have been a positive thing for Leonard to include any information on supportive teachers. However, readers of the *Militant*, a paper that, as Harvey points out, covers the struggles and strikes of working teachers, are more likely to believe that there are teachers like Harvey himself who are opposed to at least some of these attacks.

Students continue to face jail like conditions such as metal detectors, cops, police dogs, locker searches, and ID tags that, if they are caught without, could end in suspension. This further proves that protests and walkouts like the one at Chelsea High are needed more and more and should be fully supported. I'm confident that the *Militant* will continue

its coverage of all such protests in the future. Cops out of Chelsea High!

Tami Peterson
Chicago, Illinois

Protest sanctions on Iraq

A delegation traveling to Iraq with medical relief supplies held a press conference here on November 17. The delegation was organized by Voices in the Wilderness, a group that is campaigning to end the United Nations and United States sanctions against Iraq. The meeting with the press was held in the Sea-Tac Airport just hours before the delegation boarded a plane with over \$20,000 worth of medicines that will be delivered to hospitals in Iraq.

The delivery of the medicine is an open violation of the sanctions against Iraq. "A United Nations study estimates that well over 500,000 children, more than 200 per day, have died unnecessarily in Iraq as a result of the sanctions which have been in force since August 6, 1990," the delegation said in a written statement to the press.

Joseph Zito, at age 27, is the youngest member of the delegation. Zito said that this is the seventh such delegation to travel to Iraq since March of 1996 and that U.S. authorities have warned the organizers that the penalties for violating the Treasury Department law regarding such shipment of goods is a \$1 million fine, 12 years in prison, and/or a \$250,000 civil penalty.

"So far they have filed no charges for our violations of their sanctions," said Zito. "If they charge me I would use the trial as a stage to ask U.S. officials why they are killing children."

Zito and the other delegates plan on doing speaking tours and engagements upon returning from their 10-day trip in Iraq.

Estelle DeBates
Seattle, Washington

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Tens of thousands of students in Germany protest education cuts

BY ERNESTO OLEINIK

STOCKHOLM — In the largest student demonstrations in Germany in nearly 30 years, more than 45,000 students, youth, and others marched through the streets November 27 protesting a lack of study materials, a new law shortening the time students are allowed to study, and the overfilled classrooms in which students sometimes outnumber professors 600 to one.

Demonstrators are also protesting the government's attempt to regularize and increase tuition fees.

In Bonn the protesters numbered 40,000, while in Kiel 5,000 marched through the city center. Other actions took place in Berlin, Frankfurt, Leipzig, and elsewhere.

The demonstrations, which followed student protests in late October and a November 26 boycott of classes by 4,000 students in Berlin, are in response to cuts in education funding by the different state governments. The cuts are carried out in the name of reducing the budget deficit in order to qualify for the European Monetary Union (EMU).

The education system in Germany is financed with taxes through the university level, which was free until last year. Lately both the federal and state governments have floated plans to charge for education and make it more difficult for students to study for a longer period. Most of the comments in the bourgeois dailies argue that the rea-



More than 40,000 students marched in Bonn November 27 to protest education cuts, overcrowded classes, and the government's attempt to impose tuition fees.

son for the crisis is too many students are financed by tax money.

One of the main themes of the student demonstrations was that education should

remain an entitlement paid for by the state. Fabian Wagner, a 21-year-old engineering student, told the *International Herald Tribune*, "Education must be available to ev-

erybody, not only to the children of the wealthy."

German chancellor Helmut Kohl has tried to put the blame for the lack of university financing on the 16 state governments — a majority of which are controlled by the opposition Social Democrats.

Claiming to support the protesters, Kohl declared, "Many of the students' complaints are justified and deserve our sympathy and support."

Pointing at the state governments he asserted, "The states are responsible for education, not the federal government."

Many students didn't buy this, though. A popular chant in the protests was: "Education, not Eurofighter," referring to the parliament's decision to approve the new Eurofighter project, a military joint-venture between the governments of Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

The government called for further cuts in the social security system in order to secure Bonn's competitiveness and get Germany in the EMU.

In Berlin students have been forced to pay 100 DM (US\$56) per semester in tuition fees since last year. This move provoked protests of tens of thousands of students in Berlin in June 1996, who saw this simply as the first step in institutionalizing a fee for education.

Ernesto Oleinik is a member of the Young Socialists in Sweden.

Rivalries heat up over oil fields in Kazakhstan

BY MEGAN ARNEY

The Chinese government recently signed two deals to buy state-owned oil companies in Kazakhstan and offered to build a 1,860-mile pipeline across the land-locked country. The deals, finalized in September by Chinese premier Li Peng, formally commit China to \$9.5 billion in investments in Kazakhstan.

A Japanese company, Chori, is also maneuvering to expand the rail line between Kazakhstan and China. The upgraded line could transport some 5 million tons a year — mostly steel imports from Kazakhstan's mills. Total trade between China and Kazakhstan was about \$500 million last year. "Overnight the center of gravity in the transport equation has shifted due east," said David Skeels, a British Gas representative in Almaty, the Kazak capital.

The Caspian Sea, Caucasus, and Central Asia have some of the world's largest concentrations of energy resources, including up to 200 billion barrels of oil, worth about \$4 trillion, plus a comparable reserve of natural gas. The recent competition over control of the region has highlighted conflicts between the imperialist powers, as well as tensions between Washington and Moscow.

More than 50 foreign oil companies have flocked to Kazakhstan since the collapse of the Soviet Union, looking for lucrative investments. That country contains some of the largest oil reserves in Central Asia. The biggest problem for imperialist exploitation of energy resources in the region is how to transport the oil and gas. Kazakhstan is bordered by Russia to the north and China to the east. To the south and west there have been wars in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Chechnya, and Georgia. And to the southwest, the almost 20-year-old U.S. sanctions against Iran, tightened just last year, make capitalist investment difficult.

On July 27 Washington announced that it had no objection to a gas pipeline begin built from Turkmenistan to Turkey across northern Iran. But lately the U.S. government has been pushing for an alternative pipeline through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea. Almaty

says it will drop the plans for a pipeline through Iran, but only if Washington comes up with funding for the other project within a year.

Another pipeline proposal, costing \$2 billion, is to run from western Kazakhstan to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk. This is the pipeline preferred by the U.S. oil giant Chevron, which was forced to transport oil from the giant Tengiz oil field in western Kazakhstan by rail to China up until November — an awkward route.

U.S. drive to dominate region

Last July U.S. deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott outlined a major foreign policy shift for Washington — a drive to establish unquestionable U.S. domination over the huge oil reserves and other natural resources in the Caspian Sea region, Caucasus, and Central Asia, opening up a new "Silk Road." About a month later Caspar Weinberger, the chairman of *Forbes* magazine and a former advisor in the Ronald Reagan administration, said that Talbott's speech was a welcome policy shift, but argued for an even more confrontational approach to prevent Moscow, Tehran, and other governments from hampering Washington's goals in the region. "The U.S. currently consumes more than a quarter of the world's oil, even though we only have about 2% of its proven resources. The question is not whether we import, but from where," Weinberger wrote in *Forbes*.

Several major U.S. oil companies are investing nearly half of the capital going into oil production in the region — some \$20 billion. And major U.S. oil companies have signed an \$8 billion deal to begin drilling next year in the Karachaganak oil and gas fields in the northwest corner of Kazakhstan.

Kazak president Nursultan Nazabayev signed a bilateral defense agreement with Washington November 17. This was another step in opening the Central Asia and Caspian region for a greater U.S. military presence. Last September 500 troops of the 82nd Airborne Division flew 19 hours from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to participate in week-long U.S.-led military exercises in Kazakhstan.

U.S. Marine Corps Gen. John Sheehan, who headed the operation and was the first to parachute out of the lead U.S. transport jet into Kazakhstan, bragged, "The message is that there is no nation on the face of the earth that we cannot get to."

Meanwhile, Paris has stepped into the modern version of the "Great Game," as the fierce colonialist rivalry over Central Asia in the 19th century was called.

In September, the French oil company Total SA, Russia's Gazprom, and Petronas of Malaysia defied the U.S. ban on investment in Iran with a \$2 billion deal to develop a gas field there. Gazprom and Total SA said that the profit to be made outweighs the costs "incurred by sanctions against us." French prime minister Lionel Jospin earlier this year declared that he "rejoices" such a project.

"This attitude, particularly prevalent in France, greatly annoys U.S. policy makers, as it should," the *Wall Street Journal* editorialized October 6. "It is especially annoying when a French prime minister seems to be reveling in yet another exercise in twisting America's tail."

The European Union stepped in behind Paris, warning Washington against retaliation. Total had a legal right to make the deal, the European Commission chairman, Sir Leon Brittan, said in a statement in early October.

Total's action is a challenge to the U.S. government's Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, signed by President William Clinton last year. The measure calls on Washington to impose sanctions on any company investing more than \$20 million with energy industries in either of the two countries.

In a move to shore up its own interests in the region, Moscow announced a policy shift in October, according to foreign policy advisor Sergei Karaganov. "As we get nearer to the big oil deals, we have more interest" in stabilizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Karaganov said.

Major Russian oil companies including Gazprom — the biggest enterprise in the country — and AO Lukoil are increasingly aggressive in moving in to exploit Caspian Sea oil contracts. Officials of both

Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan went to Moscow in August to pursue a dispute over an oil field that lies between them.

Gazprom said in August that it wouldn't carry gas from Kazakhstan's giant Karachaganak field, which is developed by U.S. oil barons Texaco, and British Gas, Italy's Agip, and Russia's Lukoil. And since March, Gazprom has stopped Turkmenistan from exporting gas through its pipeline in Russia to states in the former Soviet Union and Europe.

Not the safest investment

Capitalist investors are finding other challenges in turning a profit in the workers state of Kazakhstan. Two U.S. companies, World Wide Minerals, USA, and Nuclear Fuel Resources claim they have lost millions of dollars because the Kazak government refused to honor contracts. Several other corporations in Germany and Canada say they too have lost money there. World Wide Minerals, for example, alleged that it went into Kazakhstan, paid off bad debts and wages for 4,500 workers, and then was refused an export license by the Kazakhstan government.

When Hurricane Hydrocarbons Ltd. from Canada ventured into the oil-rich area of Kyzylorda, Kazakhstan, it had similar problems. "Apart from a near-absence of export routes, the deal was accompanied by an array of obligations," complained *Wall Street Journal* writer Hugh Pope. "As the oil majors in Central Asia have discovered, companies seeking a long-term role here soon find they have to step into an expensive, unaccustomed social role left empty by the withering away of Soviet-era rules and rubles."

Hurricane took on 5,500 employees, promising not to lay off anyone for 18 months. Along with the oil drilling, it was forced to build roads, create a construction company, supply a 2.3 million-acre farm, and now "bears on its shoulders the expectations of a region of 700,000 people," reported Pope.

"When I arrived and saw their stony faces, I realized how much we had to do if we were not going to be tossed out," said Keith McCrae, president of Hurricane.