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Battle of Seattle

WTO protests target U.S. monopolies

By Key Martin
Seattle

Police marched through downtown Seattle the night of Nov. 30 firing teargas, rubber and plastic bullets, and "flash and bang" concussion grenades to clear thousands of youth from the streets, after protesters closed down a World Trade Organization meeting with peaceful protests.

President Bill Clinton was expected to arrive shortly after midnight to address the WTO the next day.

A dusk-to-dawn curfew in downtown was invoked as Seattle Mayor Paul Schell declared a "state of emergency" and Washington Gov. Gary Locke called out the National Guard. Helicopters with searchlights and cameras circled as police continued to fire teargas up into the residential Capitol Hill area. Overlooking downtown, this district was supposed to be outside the curfew.

Cops began arresting people as residents from the Capitol Hill community—angered over the teargassing of their neighborhood—joined the protests.

Beginning early in the day, thousands of youths had linked arms just outside the police perimeter around the WTO meeting at the Seattle convention center. They blocked every street, alley and doorway, preventing delegates from entering the area. Police attempts to dislodge them with pepper gas failed as they stood their ground.

"Whose world? Our world. Whose streets? Our streets," chanted the protesters.

Many youths had come prepared with gas masks or bottles of water and bandanas. Some were

part of Direct Action Network. They were joined by feeder marches from the University of Washington. The Peoples Assembly, with a large participation from the Filipino, Korean and other Asian communities, joined later. It ended its march by singing the International in three languages.

40,000 march for labor

A few hours later a labor contingent that included John Sweeney, Linda Chavez-Thompson and other leaders of the AFL-CIO marched with what organizers said was 30,000 to 50,000 union members and youths from Memorial Stadium to the Convention Center area, stretching as far as the eye could see.

The march included large delegations from the Steelworkers, Machinists, Service Employees and AFSCME. In addition to raising labor issues, many signs read "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal." Organizers found a widespread awareness of Mumia's case among the rank-and-file unionists.

Taxi drivers struck for the day over the city's tightening of restrictions.

Longshore workers shut down docks

The most militant labor contingents were from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, which shut down the docks in Seattle and elsewhere on the West Coast

Continued on page 6

BIG POWERS, BIG BANKS Behind WTO

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Seattle Post-Intelligencer

THE VOICE OF THE NORTHWEST SINCE 1863

Wednesday morning • December 1, 1999

WTO SEATTLE 1999

Chaos closes downtown

■ Police use rubber pellets, tear gas against thousands

■ Demonstrators delay start of trade meeting for hours

■ Schell orders curfew; National Guard called in

By SCOTT SUNDE

Withstanding tear gas, rubber pellets and nightsticks, thousands of protesters faced down the World Trade Organization and police in Seattle yesterday, forcing authorities to order a curfew and call out the National Guard.

After night fell, police swept through downtown, pushing protesters out of the curfew area with a blanket of tear and pepper gas. The battle continued late into the night on Capitol Hill.

Protesters forced cancellation of the WTO opening ceremonies yesterday morning at the First Union Theater and for much of the day faced down outnumbered police on streets littered with the refuse of chaos, protest signs, spent teargas canisters and broken glass.

Protesters all along planned to occupy downtown and to halt the opening ceremonies. One protester summed up the day in white paint on a bank's picture window, writing "We win."

"Those who were protesting the opening of the WTO in fact were successful today," police Chief Norm Stamper said.

The unrelenting, daylong street battles prompted Gov. Gary Locke to call out the National Guard.

But when asked whether police were in control of the demonstrations, Mayor Paul Schell—who declared a state of civil emergency and the 7 p.m.-1:30 a.m. curfew—said yes.

"This administration had people who marched in the 60s—the last thing I wanted was to be mayor of a city that called in the National Guard," Schell said.

Then he urged Stamper, who hemmed and holed saying, "From a public safety standpoint, yes."

Still, protesters raged through the streets, while gangs used the cover of chaos to commit strong-arm robberies and loot some businesses, including Starbucks at Sixth and Stewart.

In addition to 200 or more regular-duty guardsmen who are to deploy today, Locke also ordered 300 more state troopers to Seattle.

This is the first time in modern history that the National Guard has been called into Seattle and the curfew is apparently the first since World War II, when a U.S. Army general

FIVE
PAGES
OF WTO
INSIDE



A Seattle police officer aims a rubber-pellet weapon at a group of anti-WTO demonstrators at Sixth and Pine who were attempting to block public access to the Washington State Convention and Trade Center.

WTO INSIDE

Police admit reputation is now 'tarnished'

P-1 EXCLUSIVE

NEW YORK

Mayor launches attack on homeless

By Imani Henry
New York

As of Nov. 19, if you were homeless and forced to sleep on the streets of this city but refused to go to one of the city's overcrowded shelters, you could be arrested.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani used a tragic incident to announce this harsh measure, which probably was on the drawing board already. He unleashed the cops to sweep homeless people off the streets after a Nov. 16 attack on Nicole Barrett, a white office worker who allegedly was attacked by a homeless African American man.

Sweeps against homeless people in public spaces and subways have been a routine tactic in Giuliani's war against the poor since he took office in 1994. This latest wave of repression is not only racist and anti-poor but has also targeted people with mental disabilities.

On Nov. 16, a man with a six-pound paving stone attacked Nicole Barrett from behind as she waited for a traffic light. The man then ran off and is still at large. With nothing else to go on but a description from onlookers, the media have assumed the attacker is both mentally disabled and homeless. This comes on the heels of New York police gunning down a mentally disabled Jewish man in the middle of Brooklyn just a few months ago.

Giuliani and Police Commissioner Howard Safir announced this new round-up of homeless people at a Nov. 19 news conference.

"The streets do not exist in civilized societies for the purpose of people sleeping there," Giuliani stated. "Bedrooms are made for sleeping." The mayor seemed not to know that in New York, bedrooms are an unattainable luxury for many people, including those with apartments.

Safir gave the green light to unleashed police terror with, "If they don't obey, then we will arrest."

As of the end of November, over 100 homeless people had been arrested. A Nov. 22 poll by New York 1 News found that 77 percent of those surveyed opposed the arrest of homeless people who refuse shelter. The Rev. Al Sharpton and the Coalition for the Homeless have scheduled a protest and an all-night "tent city" vigil for the homeless at City Hall Park on Dec. 5.

Falling under Giuliani's so-called "quality of life" laws, these arrests are part of the effort to further gentrify New York by handing over working-class neighborhoods to rich real-estate developers and the tourist industry.

They're also a bid by Giuliani to line up racist, conservative Republican support from outside New York for his expected run for the U.S. Senate in 2000. Hillary Rodham Clinton recently threw her hat into the ring for the Democratic nomination. Giuliani's strategy is to push the "tough on crime" image versus her seemingly more liberal positions.

Regardless of the electoral dog and pony show, the fact remains that you can't vote in the United States without an address. Neither Democrats nor Republicans want to take on the real-estate interests and do something about the quality of life for homeless people, which means tackling the real issue—the lack of affordable housing.

So people go to shelters in an attempt to keep their families together while waiting for their names to come up on housing lists, or when they're unable to afford a rent deposit on an apartment until wages start coming in.

Housing must be a right

Giuliani pitched this round-up of homeless people as "an act of compassion" during the so-called "Thanksgiving" holidays. He had used the same warm and fuzzy lie the week before, when he announced that people living in shelters would have to take workfare assignments in exchange for a cot—the ultimate in slave labor.

Those refusing risk not only being kicked out of the shelter but even having their children placed in foster care. Once ejected from a shelter, families and individuals are denied re-entry for a minimum of 30 days. Giuliani wants to start this new policy on Jan. 1, 2000.

Over 5,000 families, including more than 9,000 children, currently reside in the city's public shelters. Another 7,000 single, homeless adults will also be affected by this new policy.

WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Fri., Dec. 10

Workers World Party public forum. The U.S. war drive: Prospects for the worldwide struggle for socialism. Featuring Brian Becker, WWP National Committee. 7 p.m. At 422 S. Western Ave., #114. For info phone (213) 487-2368.

Sat., Dec. 18

"Save a Generation, Life the Sanctions Against Iraq." Vigil and teach-in. Candlelight vigil 4:30 to 6 p.m., Westwood Federal Building at Wilshire and Veteran. Teach-in 6:30-8:30 at Westwood Methodist Church, Fellowship hall, 10497 Wilshire Blvd. Speakers: Rev. James Lawson, Michel She-

hadeh, Gloria La Riva. Award-winning video: "Genocide by Sanctions." Co-sponsored by University of Wisconsin and International Action Center. Endorsers include Muslim Public Affairs Council, SEIU Local 535, United Church of Christ of So. Calif. and Nevada, Peace Guides, SGI-LA and many others.

STATE COLLEGE, PA.

Every Tuesday

Students and Youth Against Racism and the Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal meeting. 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. At the Paul Robeson Center at the Hub. For info phone John at (814) 237-8695.

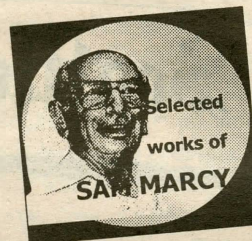
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"How the hell is he gonna say, 'Go to the shelters or I'll arrest you!' this week, when last week he threatened to throw people out of the shelters and take their kids away?" asked Vondora Jordan, co-coordinator of Workfairness.

Workfairness, an organization by and for New York workfare workers and people on public assistance, has called a community meeting for Dec. 4 in response to Giuliani's latest attacks.

Instituted in New York in 1996, the strict requirements of workfare have already purged thousands from the rolls of public assistance.

"It's a crime and a damn shame that you have to work for a bed and have to work hard to save your children," Jordan continued. "There's already a freeze on Section 8 vouchers [for subsidized housing]. Many families are still at the bottom of housing lists, and many landlords aren't renting to families on welfare. Giuliani is attacking not only homeless people or people on welfare, but poor folks in the city in general."

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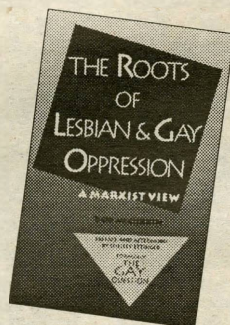
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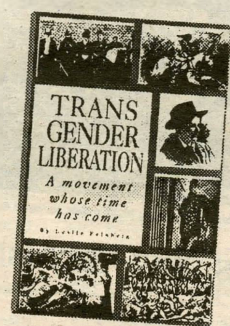


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PLYMOUTH, MASS.

Native nations say 'No thanks'

Special to Workers World
Plymouth, Mass.

A thousand people turned out in a driving rain for the 30th National Day of Mourning in Plymouth, Mass., on Nov. 25. Since 1970, hundreds of Native people and their supporters have gathered in Plymouth on "Thanksgiving Day." There, Native people speak the truth about the conditions faced by Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas.

According to United American Indians of New England co-leader Moonanum James, from the Wampanoag nation: "Native people have no reason to celebrate the arrival of the Pilgrims. We want people to know that the stories we all learned in school about the Pilgrims and the first Thanksgiving are nothing but lies. Native people have

certainly not lived happily ever after since the arrival of the Pilgrims."

James stressed, "To us, Plymouth Rock is a monument to racism."

Participants in National Day of Mourning included members of Native nations from all over the Americas, many African American, Latino, Asian, Arab and white people, lesbian/gay/bi/trans people and labor unionists. Ages ranged from infants to elders.

A major element of National Day of Mourning has long been the demand for freedom for Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier, unjustly imprisoned by the U.S. government for nearly 24 years. This year's event was dedicated to Peltier, whose case was raised by all of the speakers.

One speaker called on all people there to dedicate themselves to the struggle to free

Peltier and to force President Bill Clinton to grant presidential clemency. "It's 1999. We must bring Leonard home to us so that he will be standing here with us at next year's Day of Mourning!"

Free Mumia!

The crowd cheered loudly when Teresa Gutierrez, a Chicana, demanded freedom for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Gutierrez noted that she had just returned from supporting the struggle in Vieques, Puerto Rico, and the crowd cheered again when she demanded, "U.S. out of Puerto Rico now!"

Juan Gonzalez (Maya) read a message from the Council of Maya Elders and called for an end to U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of the countries of Central America.

Raul Ruiz (Mexicano/Chicano) read a message from Zapatista Subcomandante Marcos to Leonard Peltier [see box].

The National Day of Mourning garnered international attention in 1997 as a result of Plymouth city officials' refusal to allow participants to engage in a peaceful march. Twenty-five Native people and their supporters were arrested.

The frame-up criminal charges against them were dropped when U.A.I.N.E. reached a settlement with Plymouth in October 1998. That settlement included a payment from Plymouth of \$100,000 toward a Native American educational fund, as well as Plymouth agreeing to pay for two historical markers regarding Native American history to be erected in Plymouth. Those plaques were dedicated at this year's National Day of Mourning.

James said: "One of those plaques will be here on Cole's Hill to honor the Day of Mourning and another will be in Town Square to honor Metacom. I am proud to announce that the plaques will be dedicated today as part of the 30th National

Day of Mourning. Today, you will see only temporary markers.

"But we will dedicate the earth where the stones and the bronze plaques will shortly be placed.

"I am happy to say that finally, there will be two rocks in Plymouth that speak the truth," he continued.

U.A.I.N.E. co-leader Mahtowin Munro (Lakota) noted that during the past year both Boston newspapers and some reactionaries had attacked the use of the word "genocide" in the text of the plaque about National Day of Mourning. "What part of genocide don't they understand?" she demanded to know.

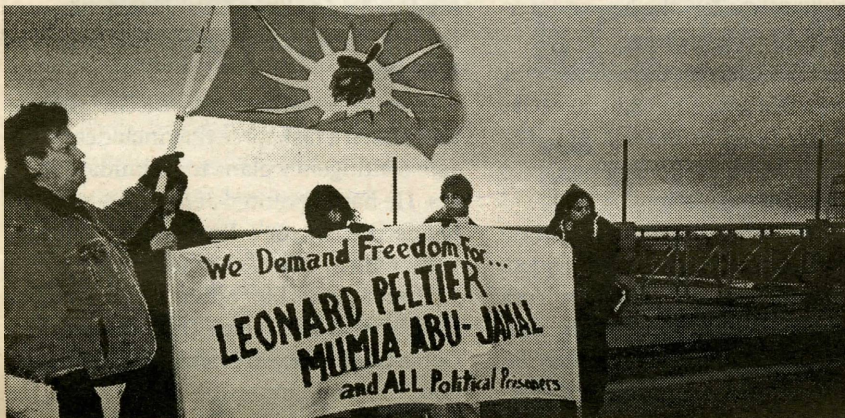
"Wasn't it genocide when they stole our land? Wasn't it genocide when they took us from our land so many times, from the Trail of Tears on? Wasn't it genocide when they herded us onto reservations or internment camps and left us to starve? Wasn't it genocide when they intentionally gave us smallpox-infected blankets?

"What do they call all the massacres, from Mystic, Conn., to Wounded Knee and Sand Creek and so many, many others?

"Wasn't it genocide when, in the latter half of this century, the Indian Health Service sterilized thousands of Indian women without their knowledge or consent, preventing much of an entire generation from coming into being?"

After the outdoor rally, members of Danza Azteca Cuahtemoc led a powerful march through the streets of Plymouth.

James summarized what National Day of Mourning has accomplished in 30 years: "In 1970 very few people would have given any thought to the fact that the Indigenous people of this hemisphere do not look upon the arrival of the European invaders as a reason to give thanks. Today, many thousands stand with us in spirit as we commemorate our 30th annual National Day of Mourning."



Blocking traffic on Peace Bridge between the U.S. and Canada, Nov. 28. WW PHOTO

ACTIVISTS STOP INT'L TRAFFIC

'Free Peltier! Free Mumia!'

By Bev Hiestand
Buffalo, N.Y.

The growing movement to free all political prisoners was on display here Nov. 28, as Native people and their supporters stopped all international traffic on both sides of the Peace Bridge between the United States and Canada.

The protesters demanded clemency for long-held Native prisoner Leonard Peltier, death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Puerto Rican prisoners and all other political prisoners in the U.S.

Grandpa Bear, founder and coordinator of the North American Native Warriors Association, said the Nov. 28 protest was also held to show solidarity with the National Day of Mourning, held in Plymouth, Mass.

"We must not let up the pressure," Grandpa Bear told Workers World. He pointed out that on Oct. 10, a similar car caravan shut down the Peace Bridge in order to press the same demands.

But on Nov. 28, he explained, the size of the car caravan had almost doubled. And there was much broader participation this time from more communities.

"We have shown by our growing numbers," Grandpa Bear said, "that we are united and will not stop until all political prisoners are free. United, there is nothing we cannot do," he said.

Despite the bitterly cold weather on Nov. 28, activists gathered on the wind-blown bridge for over an hour. Native drummers from the Eagle Heart Drum Group performed during the protest.

Other participants in this event included MOVE Toronto, Aboriginal Action



WW PHOTO: MARCY BOOZER

Movement, Nation of Islam, Buffalo Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Food Not Bombs, Workers World Party; and the Religious Society of Friends/Quakers.

The demonstration also demanded justice in the killing of Dudley George, a Native man killed by the Ontario Provincial Police during their forcible removal of Indigenous people from their land at Stony Point.

2,000 on Alcatraz Island

On Nov. 25, over 2,000 people gathered for the sunrise ceremony on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco. The ceremony commemorated the 25th anniversary of the American Indian Movement's three-month takeover of the island in protest of the "Thanksgiving" myth and to demand a return of Alcatraz Island to Native people. Elders at this year's ceremony asked supporters to remember and honor the many Native nations that have been wiped out through the U.S. government's genocidal policies both before and after the so-called "reconciliation."

NEW YORK TRANSIT

Will 33,000 workers be forced to strike?

By Milt Neidenberg
New York

The contract between the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the 33,000 members of Transit Workers Union Local 100 expires on Dec. 15.

Local 100's fight for a decent contract is heating up. Will the workers be forced to strike? The MTA is taking this question seriously.

The transit workers' mood could be seen on Nov. 17 when they and their allies took to the streets in a militant rush-hour demonstration at MTA offices. Thousands clogged mid-Manhattan streets as workers were on their way home and holiday shoppers crowded into department stores nearby.

The union action sent a strong message to Wall Street and the MTA that represents finance capital's interests. "We are prepared to strike if we don't get a catch-up contract; a contract not to be funded by give-backs," said one transit conductor.

The MTA has accumulated huge surpluses over the last three years, resulting from give-backs in previous contracts as well as the horrific increase in productivity that threatens the safety of workers and the lives of the over 6.5 million riders they move every day.

On Oct. 7, the TWU put a package of 130 demands on the table. These included a substantial wage increase, removal of workfare from the contract, improvements in health benefits and sweeping changes in disciplinary procedures. The package also calls for changes in contract language—this includes protection from discriminatory practices and health-and-safety violations arbitrarily imposed by management.

Nearly a month later, MTA bosses responded with a set of five counter-demands that they knew would be unacceptable to the union. These included the right to assign workers to any job for which they felt

they were "appropriately trained."

This proposal would threaten job descriptions and security, gut employees' rights spelled out in the Civil Service laws, and downsize any worker to cut costs and increase productivity.

It was a declaration of war against the union.

Anti-union law props up MTA bosses

What makes the MTA so arrogant and contemptuous of the union that its executives feel they can whip the 33,000 rank-and-file bus and subway workers into line?

It is the fact that they have an anti-union, anti-worker law on the state books that makes it illegal for public-sector workers to strike.

And Wall Street, the financial center of the world, wants to be sure transit workers and other unions won't shut city transportation down.

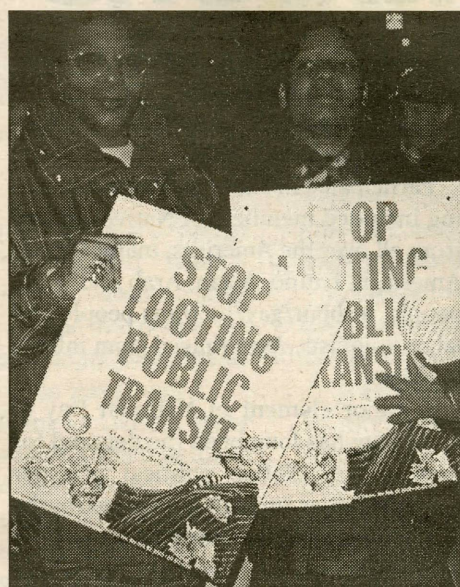
In a strike, many millions of dollars—perhaps a trillion, depending on the length of a strike—would go down the drain for their transnational banks, global corporations, and many other big business financial operations that need labor power to make their profit system run.

This is exactly what happened on New Year's Day, 1966. Thirty-five thousand members of the TWU, along with the Amalgamated Transit Union, shut down 135 miles of subways and 2,200 hundred buses.

The strike's impact was felt around the world. Business losses were enormous.

A settlement was reached on Jan. 13, after almost two full weeks of the strike. TWU President Mike Quill and other union officials who had been jailed were released as part of the final agreement. Quill died a few days later.

The sympathy and solidarity for the transit strike was so strong that union workers at a Catholic cemetery who had been waging a militant strike against the powerful



WW PHOTO: ANN PRUDEN

New York transit workers Nov. 17.

Cardinal Spellman and his diocese opened their picket lines to allow the hearse carrying Quill to enter the cemetery.

Before the Taylor Law, the law denying public-sector workers the right to strike was called the Condon-Wadlin Act. The language contained in this act was even harsher and more repressive.

But it failed to intimidate the militant 1966 strike. And it was replaced nearly two years later on Sept. 1, 1967. The New York state legislature passed the "Public Employees Fair Employment Act." The legislators claimed it was less vindictive and threatening to the public-sector labor unions. They said binding-arbitration procedures would replace the need to strike.

It was a lie.

The legislation included, among other penalties, a two-day loss of pay for each day on strike. This law is commonly known as the "Taylor Law."

It still didn't stop the TWU from striking. On April 1, 1980, transit workers rallied at the Brooklyn Bridge and shut down city

transportation for 11 days. It cost the union \$1.5 million in fines.

Bosses and state close ranks

There is much to be learned from these two strikes. There must be careful and organized preparation to shut down New York, the financial center of the world.

There must be a unity of purpose, discipline, stamina—and much sacrifice, if the TWU is to win the economic and social justice that has been denied the transit workers.

Other municipal unions—including State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37 that represents over 100,000 members, and the United Federation of Teachers—are in negotiations with the city. A crisis could be in the making for the racist, anti-union, anti-poor Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

It is time for all these unions to unite in order to fight together to overturn the infamous Taylor Law. This victory can only be won through struggle in the streets of New York.

Fearing a walkout, Mayor Giuliani has assembled a task force that includes elaborate contingency plans to intimidate strikers. He has appointed Jerome Hauer, who heads the Mayor's Emergency Management Office, to lead the task force.

Hauer said his office "was working closely with the Police Department, Fire Department, Department of Transportation, Taxi and Limousine Commission, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and surrounding counties."

Dec. 15 is the day the transit contract expires. Will the public-sector unions unite to shut down the city? Will the unions work closely with the oppressed communities that are fighting the same oppressors as their multinational sisters and brothers in the labor unions? Is a strike in the making?

The next two weeks will tell the story.

BALTIMORE

Killer cops provoke angry protest

By Sharon Black
Baltimore

Once again the familiar sight of a makeshift memorial with flowers, candles, teddy bears, and hand-written poems decorates the bleakness of a Baltimore alleyway. These items were left to mark the spot where the life of another young man was tragically snuffed out by police bullets.

Seventeen-year-old Eli McCoy was shot three times by Housing Authority Police Officer Kenneth Dean on Nov. 25. Neighborhood witnesses all testify that McCoy had his hands in the air and had surrendered when he was shot. They dispute the police version of events, which claims McCoy was reaching for a gun. No weapon or gun was recovered from Eli McCoy.

Just one month ago, a similar memorial was erected by East Baltimore neighbors, friends and relatives of Larry Hubbard, who was shot in the back of the head by Baltimore police. This month teddy bears and candles have been placed at North Duke-land and North Avenue in West Baltimore in remembrance of Eli McCoy.

Two neighborhood groups, the All People's Congress and Unity for Action, began

an immediate mobilization in the community. They distributed fliers and spoke to family members, neighbors and witnesses. The groups called for a rally for justice on Nov. 27 at the site where Eli McCoy died.

Close to 400 people attended, shutting down traffic on North Avenue and Duke-land. The Rev. John Wright, a civil-rights activist and pastor of the First Baptist Church, began the groups' takeover of the streets with a prayer calling for justice. In response to what many in the community see as a cover-up, Wright exclaimed: "The police are going to cover themselves. Does that mean if I see a police officer I have to take my hands out of my pockets?"

Bill Goodin, President of Unity for Action, chaired the rally. Goodin called for immediate justice and the jailing of the police.

Lee Patterson, representing Workers World Party, said: "This is a war on the poor and on Black youth. From the boardrooms and corporate offices where they conspire to pay our youth pennies to work in their sweatshops; from the CIA and bankers in suits who bring in illegal drugs; to the KKK in white sheets and those in blue—all of them seek to commit genocide. We need to say no!"



Protesters surround Baltimore police cruiser.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Demonstrators force cops to retreat

During the middle of the street rally, state police attempted to drive their cruiser through the crowd. Angry protesters surrounded and banged on the car. The police in the cruiser called for reinforcements. At this point dozens of city police arrived with sirens blaring. Police pulled out batons and waded into the crowd.

The demonstrators refused to move. Sensing the mood of the crowd, police retreated.

The rally continued. Eli McCoy's family members spoke from the microphone in tears, expressing their pain and demanding justice. Elton McCoy, the victim's father, said: "How would you feel if that was your son? I want justice, so that my son did not die in vain."

Debra Carr, Larry Hubbard's mother, lent

her support to the McCoy family, saying: "Another Black man is killed on the street like an animal. That's why I am here."

Family members of James Quarles—whose shooting by police was recorded on videotape and viewed nationally on the news—were also present.

Andre Powell, spokesperson for the All People's Congress and one of the organizers of the event, said: "There is an epidemic of police killings in Baltimore. You cannot separate this from the growing epidemic of racism, low wages and deteriorating health care. We need community control of the police and the indictment and jailing of killer cops."

The group vowed to continue to rally and organize. The event ended with a procession in front of the makeshift memorial to honor Eli McCoy.

Who said it?

'Americans have two parties—they are exactly the same'

By Greg Butterfield

"Americans have two parties—they are exactly the same."

During the recent debates, who among the Democratic and Republican candidates vying for the presidency in 2000 made this sharp observation about capitalist politics in the United States?

Did it fall from the lips of Republican oil baron George W. Bush or millionaire publisher Steve Forbes? Was it ultra-right talk-show host Pat Buchanan, who recently bolted the Republican Party for Ross Perot's Reform Party?

Or was it that pro-NAFTA "friend of labor," Democratic Vice President Al Gore? How about J.P. Morgan's favorite liberal, former Sen. Bill Bradley?

The correct answer is: None of the above.

No, none of these ruling-class-approved show horses has the courage to make such a statement—even though they all know it's true.

Cuban President Fidel Castro made the remark during Illinois Gov. Jim Ryan's recent visit to the socialist island.

For workers in this country, the exchange between Castro and Ryan was much more educational than the stage-managed affairs of the Republican and Democratic contenders.

Bush blows off debates

Debates are supposed to be a pillar of U.S. democracy. So far three have been held among the Republican contenders. So how important have they been?

Texas Gov. George W. Bush, the front runner, hasn't bothered to show up for any.

In fact, Bush's absence has been the main topic of "debate" there. The candidates jockey to offer the biggest increase in the bloated military budget and the crudest racist "crime" proposal.

Bush has promised to finally attend one of these sordid gatherings, scheduled for Dec. 2 in Manchester, N.H.

So far the only significant statement at a Republican debate has come from a member of the audience.

According to the Associated Press, police ejected an unidentified woman from the Oct. 28 debate at Dartmouth College after she challenged the candidates to cut military spending "so we can have good schools, good health care and good education."

Democrats Gore and Bradley try to offer a slightly more humane image to the public while staying carefully within the boundaries of Clinton-era politics.

At their Oct. 28 face-off, Bradley and Gore both gave lip service to lesbian and gay rights. But Bradley didn't take a stand in support of same-sex marriage. Gore flatly rejected it.

Beneath the rhetoric, all these candidates share the same basic platform: Soak the workers, repress the poor, and put more money into the pockets of the rich.

Workers' democracy vs. big business

Around the same time as this first round of debates, Illinois Gov. Ryan brought a delegation of 45 elected officials and corporate executives to Cuba in opposition to the 40-year U.S. blockade.

Cuba's government welcomed the group because of its opposition to the blockade, knowing full well that these representatives of U.S. imperialism are also intent on overturning the socialist revolution.

When Ryan arrived, he said he had not

come to Cuba to criticize the island's political system. He had high praise for Cuba's health and education systems, calling them "an inspiration to the entire Western Hemisphere"—something no capitalist politician would be caught dead saying in the United States.

Yet on Oct. 25, Ryan attended a Havana news conference with a small group of counter-revolutionaries. The U.S. Interests Section organized the meeting.

The governor told reporters there, "Basically, that's the problem with Cuba—Fidel Castro." (Chicago Tribune, Oct. 26)

Ryan reportedly asked President Castro to release several counter-revolutionaries convicted for their involvement in the terrorist bombings of Havana hotels. Cuba's people believe Washington is be-

hind their campaign.

Cuban officials dismissed Ryan's ploy as a "propaganda show."

"We do not accept any condition with respect to our position and our internal policies," President Castro said. "You cannot strangle a country economically and criticize it at the same time."

The corporate media portray Cuba as a brutal dictatorship. It's often criticized for having only one political party—the Communist Party.

But for working-class people—the vast majority in Cuba, as here—there is much more real democracy than in the United States.

Instead of electing candidates picked by big money, Cubans vote for their co-workers and neighbors, who get no special priv-

ileges for serving their fellows.

Cuban workers' democracy is based on the tremendous social revolution that has unfolded on the island since 1959. The great agriculture holdings and industry, once owned almost exclusively by U.S. capitalists, was taken over by the workers themselves. Today they belong to all the Cuban people.

What are the results? Jobs, housing, health care and education are the rights of all. Racism and sexism are illegal. Labor unions are a powerful force in society.

President Castro and the Cuban Communist Party embody this revolutionary process. And the Cuban people, mobilized to defend and strengthen their revolution, participate at every step.

What could be more democratic?

TOGETHER AGAIN

Exxon & Mobil play monopoly

By Gery Armsby

Exxon and Mobil corporations are expected to gain Federal Trade Commission approval for their \$82 billion merger any day now, pending an agreement on details about how many assets the two oil giants would have to sell off for the merger to meet full approval. The deal, initiated a year ago, will create the world's biggest oil company by far.

Pro-capitalist ideologues may extol the glories of "free trade," the "free market" and competition. But the Exxon-Mobil deal—just the biggest in a long list of monopoly mergers—is a more honest expression of today's capitalism.

Exxon and Mobil have combined oil reserves currently proved at over 8.7 billion barrels, assets such as worldwide refineries and offshore drilling facilities worth billions of dollars more. The two oil monopolies are re-consolidating two of the huge blocks of holdings severed in the breakup of the Standard Oil Company in 1911 under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

From 1870 to 1911, Standard Oil Co. and Trust formed the industrial empire of John D. Rockefeller and associates. It controlled almost all oil production, processing, marketing and transportation in the United States. Despite its gigantic size, the conservative company was unwilling to foot the bill for technological

advancement and industrial innovations needed in order to meet the demand brought on by the introduction of the motor car.

Such monopolies are never immune to changes in technology. Therefore, during periods of rapid industrial growth and change, they will split up and free their smaller former subsidiaries to participate in the wave of cutthroat competition with an eye toward re-consolidating those that take a technological and productive edge in the competition.

This same type of competition and technological change is what has led the former Standard Oil monopoly to reform itself. Now the big oil companies are involved in worldwide competition over sources of oil. Vast capital investments—along with vast bribery and intimidation—are needed to win this competition. The dance from monopoly to competition and back reveals the key contradiction of monopoly capitalism.

Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin wrote in his classic work "Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism" that "competition becomes transformed into monopoly. The result is immense progress in the socialization of production. In particular, the process of technical inventions and improvement becomes socialized. ...

"Capitalism in the imperialist stage leads right up to the most comprehensive

socialization of production; it, so to speak, drags the capitalists against their will and consciousness into some sort of new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialization.

"Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private property of a few."

Under Exxon Mobil, the vast machinery producing and selling oil organizes hundreds of thousands of workers in many countries around the world. That's the socialized production. But profits and means of production are privately owned.

If in addition to being socially produced, oil were socially owned, there would be enough oil to supply every industrialized and developing nation. In addition, other more environmentally sound sources of energy that may temporarily be more expensive and unprofitable under capitalism could simultaneously be developed.

Instead, the private ownership of these vast productive forces and the capitalist drive for profit inevitably leads to sharper competition among the remaining monopolies. The mergers bring layoffs. The competition leads to overproduction, which provokes the next capitalist economic crisis with mass layoffs and bankruptcies.

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BY VINCE COPELAND

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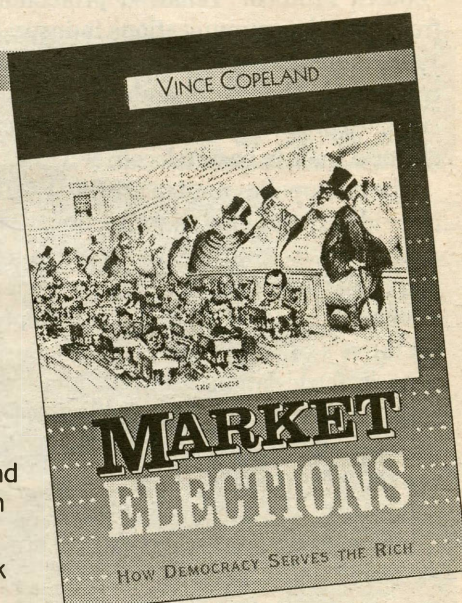
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Caspian Sea

A new sphere of influence

By Brian Becker

"For America the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia. ... Most of the world's physical wealth is there as well, both in its enterprises and underneath its soil," wrote Zbigniew Brzezinski, former United States national security advisor, in a book published in 1997.

Brzezinski's comments are useful to keep in mind when analyzing the current conflict raging in Chechnya. This autonomous region, located in southern Russia, is at the pivot of Europe and Asia.

Why is the Yeltsin regime in Russia carrying out its brutal aerial assault against the separatist rebel movement in Chechnya? Because the Russian government now fears that the Pentagon and CIA are moving aggressively to grab the former territories of the USSR, especially in the oil-rich Caspian Sea area. This is the same government that has done so much to try to please the United States capitalist establishment since it dissolved the Soviet Union in 1991.

Chechnya and Dagestan, where fighting has raged for the last four months, are territories close to the Caspian Sea. The Caspian has vast oil and natural gas deposits.

A consortium of 11 oil monopolies from the United States and Europe have gained control of more than 50 percent of the region's oil since the USSR was dissolved in 1991. The July 6, 1997, Washington Post described this process as the "last great oil rush of the 20th century—targeted at a potential \$4 trillion patch in Central Asia's Caspian Sea."

The Yeltsin government in Russia asserts that the United States is stimulating, if not directly supporting, the Islamic sep-

aralist movement in Chechnya.

"The national interests of the U.S. correspond to a scenario in which an armed conflict is constantly smoldering in the North Caucasus," Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev said in a recent news conference.

A few days later, Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Avdeyev said at an international conference organized by the Russian Diplomatic Academy that the country may be heading for a direct conflict with the United States.

These were not accidental or isolated comments by Russian officials. The United States has a "growing readiness to use military force in its direct, most crude form at various levels ... the [U.S.] operations in Kosovo and Iraq only herald this readiness. We must assume that it may extend to others, including former Soviet territories," said Anatoly Kvashnin, the military head of the General Staff, in a speech to the same conference.

The politics of an oil pipeline

Before the USSR was dissolved in a U.S.-backed capitalist counter-revolution in 1991 the Caspian Sea was bordered on the east, west and north by the Soviet Union. Now that its former republics are formally independent, five countries border the Caspian. These include Azerbaijan, Kazakstan and Turkmenistan, as well as Russia and Iran.

The United States government is now attempting to take control over the Caspian Sea oil by transforming the non-Russian former Soviet republics into virtual colonies and grabbing control over the vast oil and gas resources that were once used to fuel socialist construction in

the Soviet Union.

"The prospects of potentially enormous hydrocarbon reserves is part of the allure of the Caspian region," the United States Energy Information Administration said in a December 1998 report. "New transportation routes will be necessary to carry Caspian oil and gas to world markets," according to the EIA.

Why is a new Caspian oil pipeline necessary? According to the EIA, because "the existing pipelines were designed to link the Soviet Union internally, and were routed through Russia."

On Nov. 18, President Bill Clinton and Energy Secretary Bill Richardson met with the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Turkey to announce plans to construct a new \$2.4 billion oil pipeline from Baku, Azerbaijan, to Ceyhan, the Mediterranean port in Turkey. The new pipeline entirely bypasses Russia. It is calculated to turn the Caspian into an "American lake."

Throughout the Cold War U.S. policy makers insisted that they opposed Soviet socialism because it deprived people of "personal liberty" and "stifled individual initiative in the free market." But now it's easy to see that their hatred of the USSR was based on it having prevented U.S. cor-

porations from exploiting the land and resources of the Soviet Union.

The imperialists want to weaken Russia for their own reasons. But the Yeltsin regime's motives for the war in Chechnya have nothing in common with the interests of working people in the region. Yeltsin's grouping became the champions of capitalist exploitation that, in turn, rapidly revived national antagonisms.

The nascent bourgeois grouping among each nationality, including in Chechnya, sought to dominate its "own home market." The smaller republics have sought a new pact with imperialism that comes at Russia's expense.

"The real reason for the [war in Chechnya] is the annihilation of the socialist society," notes the Russian Communist Workers Party in a recent statement. "Before, power and law were directed toward the equality of people on a social and national level. However, at present a society is being built on the basis of overt inequality and property. This has evoked the meanest tendencies amongst people, a cruel power struggle, the separatism of national elites, and, centrally, the principle of divide and conquer. ... The origins for this bloody tragedy are the [Yeltsin] ruling regime and its policy of restoring capitalism in Russia."

Pentagon builds permanent base in Kosovo

By G. Dunkel

Even the imperialist countries that just bombed Yugoslavia admit on paper that Kosovo, a southern province of Serbia, is an integral part of that country.

But that didn't stop President Bill Clinton from dropping into a U.S. Army base there for eight hours on Nov. 23—without any permission from Yugoslav authorities. The head of the empire, it seems, doesn't apply for visas.

The base is another completely unauthorized U.S. intrusion. Called Camp Bondsteel, it is still under construction, yet already it is causing raised eyebrows all over Europe.

It is the biggest U.S. foreign base built from scratch since the Vietnam War. The Christian Science Monitor of Nov. 22 reported it will have cost \$36.6 million when completed. The work has been contracted to Brown & Root, a Texas firm favored by the Pentagon since the 1960s.

The base contains an impressive array of creature comforts—200 cottages with air conditioning, a Burger King, a weight room, e-mail facilities, a volleyball court, a library and two chapels.

The European forces in Kosovo have set up tent camps. But Bondsteel has every earmark of being a permanent facility that can house close to 5,000 troops. And there are more U.S. troops in a smaller base about 20 miles away.

Bondsteel is heavily fortified, swaddled in miles of barbed wire and earthen berms. There's a big helipad for Apache helicopters as well as transport and reconnaissance helicopters. It could be the logistics center for future U.S. military moves in the Balkans.

What was Clinton doing there? He certainly wanted to anoint the Albanian lead-

ership of the "Kosovo Liberation Army" with his hypocritical preachments on civil rights, reconciliation, respect and ethnic diversity. He met with Kosovo Albanian leaders Ibrahim Rugova and Hashim Thaci, former head of the KLA.

During this photo-op visit, Clinton gave a speech to a group of Albanians at Urosevac, Yugoslavia—which he called by its Albanian name, Ferizaj. Urosevac is in the middle of the U.S. sector.

"We won the war," he bragged. "But listen, only you can win the peace. The time for fighting is past."

While many Kosovo Albanians regard Clinton as their "savior," when he talked reconciliation they sat on their hands. They know Clinton isn't serious about this. Thousands of Serbs and Roma people have been attacked in Kosovo since the United States and other NATO countries took over. Hundreds have died. Little has been done to stop these ethnic assaults, which shows that the U.S. war on Yugoslavia was never really about stopping alleged ethnic violence.

The United States, Germany and France are trying to destabilize what is left of Yugoslavia. Montenegro just adopted the German mark as its currency. The United States is trying to stir up the Hungarian-speaking area of Serbia. The European Union has threatened to supply heating oil this winter only to the cities in Serbia controlled by the opposition to President Slobodan Milosevic.

Meanwhile, at Camp Bondsteel, U.S. troops are digging in for "a presence in the Balkans for years to come," says Bryan Hopkinson, Kosovo director of the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank. "It shows the U.S. means business."

And the business of the United States means more suffering and slaughter for the peoples of the Balkans.



Ramsey Clark participates in an inquiry of U.S./NATO war crimes in Yugoslavia. WW PHOTO: JULIE LA RIVA

U.S./NATO guilty in Los Angeles

Some 250 people filled a room in Los Angeles Nov. 14 to participate in a hearing of the Independent Commission of Inquiry to Investigate U.S./NATO War Crimes Against the People of Yugoslavia. Prominent speakers from the United States and Canada came to speak of the horror of the bombings and the genocidal nature of the sanctions against Yugoslavia.

Ruba Fakhoury, International Action Center-San Diego, talked of the many and various violations of international law that took place as the United States bombarded Yugoslavia. Spomenka Zeljkovic, American-Serbian Association for Peace, showed videotaped footage of the bombings' destruction of power plants, bridges, schools, and residential areas, killing thousands of innocent people.

Sonali Kolhatkar, anti-war activist and local IAC member, showed irrefutable and scientifically based evidence of the dangers of depleted uranium and how the long-term effects of these weapons will seriously undermine the health of tens of thousands of people, including U.S. soldiers.

Dr. Michel Chossudovsky, professor at the University of Ottawa and co-author of "NATO in the Balkans," traced the legacy of the main conspirators from both the U.S. camp and that of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army.

Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general, described the various U.S. bombardments and invasions of sovereign countries since World War II.

Hearings on the same topic were held Nov. 13 in San Francisco, and in Detroit and Ann Arbor, Mich., also on Nov. 13.

Big powers, big banks

Behind the World Trade Organization

By Fred Goldstein

The Seattle Conference of the World Trade Organization is calculated to further extend the global commercial domination of U.S., European and Japanese imperialism over the oppressed countries of the world.

It is also meant to serve as an arena for the mediation of inter-imperialist trade disputes. The ceremonies have happily been disrupted by militant anti-corporate demonstrators in a bold challenge to the rulers of the WTO.

The Clinton administration in particular threw its weight behind the conference. However, instead of a smooth victory, all the contradictions of the world capitalist system of commerce have surfaced and the conference is "in danger of failure," according to Director General Michael Moore.

To shore up the effort, Bill Clinton quietly tried to persuade the heads of state of Japan, various European countries, Canada, Brazil and others to attend. "But for weeks," wrote the New York Times of Nov. 24, "the White House got tangled up in the question of whom to invite, compiling lists and then abandoning them. 'Every time we put together a list of names,' a White House aide said, 'it became clear that we would make 20 enemies.'"

Given the U.S. program for Seattle, it is not hard to understand.

For example, the WTO bosses are looking forward to revising the General Agreement on Services, which covers 160 sectors of economic activity worth hundreds of billions of dollars. The aim will be to reduce "protections for a whole host of areas, including telecommunications, transport, distribution, hospitals, clinics, outpatient facilities, assisted living arrangements, nursing homes, education, prisons, real estate, banking, insurance, construction, environment, tourism and the entertainment industries, among others."

They are using the "horizontal" approach, according to Third World Network, a network of non-governmental organizations from oppressed countries. An agreement for any one sector is automatically applied to all others. Any protections removed from telecommunications, for example, can automatically be applied across the board—like health care.

If the U.S. has its way in the WTO, the giant insurance companies will get the chance to swallow up the world's health-care services.

U.S. firms gobble up world's companies

For example, six months after the WTO's "Fourth Protocol" removed protections from the telecommunications industry in 1998, more than one tenth of the world's companies changed hands. When the smoke cleared, U.S. firms owned 38 percent of world trade in basic telecom services.

The monopolies want to use the WTO to override environmental protections. The American Electronics Association, for example, of which Microsoft is a prominent member, has asked the U.S. Trade Representative's office to lobby against European draft legislation that would phase out toxic substances from computers and electronic equipment. It claims the legislation violates WTO rules.

Similarly, the chemicals, plastics, electronic, and food processing industries have pressured the WTO through the U.S. delegation to ban "eco-labeling"—the right of consumers to know what they are buying and how environmentally destructive it might be.



As the labor march left downtown Seattle, police began their confrontation.

The most infamous use of the WTO to foster death at a profit was its suppression of the use of the generic AIDS drug Zidovir 100. Produced by an Indian company and exported to Belgium, Tanzania and Uganda, it cost less than half the patented AZT of Glaxo-Wellcome. Under the WTO's so-called Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the generic drug could not be used. A similar ruling had made against South Africa, which had passed a law enabling the production of generic anti-AIDS drugs.

The Kenyan delegation to the WTO, speaking on behalf of the African group, demonstrated the complete hypocrisy of the multinational corporations when it requested an amendment on the issue of genetic engineering of seeds and intellectual property rights. The patenting of "essentially biological processes" is outlawed by the Convention on Biological Diversity, Article 27.3(b). "Why," asked the African group, "does the option of exclusion of patentability of 'essentially biological processes' not extend to 'microbiological processes,' as the latter are also biological processes?"

The reason is that the multinational biotech firms want to be free to create "terminator seeds," which die after one generation, so that the oppressed countries will have to buy their seeds over and over again.

Marx on free trade

All this market manipulation by the big firms is done in the WTO under the guise of promoting "free trade."

Even if so-called free trade really existed, it would be highly injurious to the less developed countries. When Karl Marx in 1848 wrote the founding document of the world communist movement, the Communist Manifesto, he showed how the rising capitalist class destroyed the old feudal society and took over the world with the utmost brutality. In a famous passage, he wrote:

"[Capitalism] has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, brutal exploitation."

This was the era of pre-monopoly capitalism when the rising capitalist powers, headed by the British, were forcing pre-capitalist civilizations, such as India, North Africa, China and even parts of Europe, to accept their cheap manufactured goods. Whole cultures of peasants and artisans were wiped out.

Thus free trade was always connected with "brutal exploitation," as Marx put it. But in today's world of monopoly capitalism—that is, imperialism—there is no such thing as free trade.

The so-called WTO is an organization of capitalist states (with the exception of Cuba and China if it joins in the near future) that is dominated by the great imperialist powers. Each one of them fights to open up every market possible for its own multinationals and to close out any harmful competition. The U.S., Europe and Japan will demand "free trade" only in areas where they have advantages. Otherwise, they will fight to the death.

The WTO ruled against Europe in its "banana war" with the U.S. The European capitalists have refused to abide by the agreement. The U.S. has used "national security" as an excuse to keep Japan from selling ships to its merchant marine. Washington has brought suit against Brazil, Japan and Russia for exporting steel to the U.S., but has also brought suit against India demanding that it drop vital import quotas necessary to protect its balance of payments and its ability to pay debts.

No equality in an imperialist world

The very idea that imperialism would apply an equal standard to the oppressed countries only facilitates world inequality. The Group of Seven (G-7)—the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada—had a gross national product of close to \$20 trillion in 1997. That is 64 percent of the world's production coming from countries with only 11.8 percent of the world's population.

Of the top 500 corporations in the world, only six are from countries outside the U.S., Europe, Canada or Japan. Of the 100 largest banks in the world, all are from the imperialist countries. As of 1997 the imperialist countries exported close to \$5 trillion and imported a similar amount—controlling the vast majority of world trade. In the same year, the oppressed countries were in debt to the tune of \$2.2 trillion to the imperialist banks and governments of the world.

The underdeveloped countries are truly prisoners in the WTO. The WTO processes are carried out behind closed doors among the rulers of the organization, whose proposals are brought to the General Council. The governments of the Third World basically sit outside waiting to hear what the G-7 proposes.

Decisions are made not by vote but by consensus—that is, by backroom arm-twisting. And when the U.S. or European trade ministers cannot prevail, they call their government offices. They promptly get on the phone to the governments of the recalcitrant trade officials from underdeveloped countries and force them to change their position.

The dispute process is run by a panel of three, who are lobbied by the big capitalist governments. The appeals process is long and drawn out. The extraordinary expense of participating in WTO processes is a burden on the poorer countries and puts them at an extreme disadvantage.

The G-7 can field massive delegations of lawyers, researchers and industry experts backed by the multinationals with privileged technological and industrial knowledge. The entire WTO process is utterly the opposite of free. It is one in the many processes by which the monopolies domi-

nate the globe.

Using the WTO as a pressure point for workers' rights and a symbol of protest against corporate greed and environmental destruction is a great step forward for the movement. But it must be understood that, in the final analysis, the evils being perpetrated against the masses and the planet are being carried out by the multinational corporations and the imperialist governments that represent them.

The fight must be carried by each working class to its own government and its own exploiters. They are the ones who must be stopped. The WTO is just a shell. The ruling classes of the imperialist countries have the cops, the courts, the prisons and the laws to enforce the right of corporations to set up sweat shops, to employ child labor, to circumvent unions and to destroy the environment.

Trade inequities flow from capitalist ownership

Most importantly, all the inequities of the world trade system flow from the system of capitalism itself. Inequalities of distribution or trade flow from inequalities in the ownership of the instruments of production, transportation and communication. The one cannot be eradicated without the destruction of the other.

A tiny handful of billionaires owns and controls the factories, offices, mines and services. They operate them for profit. All the contradictions of trade surfacing in Seattle flow from this fundamental fact.

Child labor, low wages and harsh and inhuman working conditions must be fought

against. But they are the inevitable product of the system of wage slavery—the system of exploitation itself. As long as workers have to sell their labor power to the bosses and the bosses control the surplus they create, such evils will be perpetuated.

As the Seattle conference approached, much ink was spilled over whether "globalization" is good or bad, inevitable or a reversible policy, etc. But globalization cannot be discussed outside the framework of a class analysis.

To the bourgeoisie, globalization is a process of expanding their ability to accumulate profits on a wider and wider scale, through setting up factories, selling commodities and financial plunder.

But from a working-class point of view, the bourgeoisie's role in history has been to carry out the socialization of production on an extended scale by bringing more and more workers into a process of cooperative labor. This opens the way for greater collaboration and international solidarity in the struggle against capital.

The international working-class movement must fight every attempt by the bosses to use globalization to their advantage. But in the long run, the only real solution to the plague of hardships brought on by capitalist imperialism is to change the form of appropriation of the trillions of dollars worth of goods created by the workers.

The struggle will be resolved only with the establishment of socialism—a system in which instead of private appropriation by a handful of billionaires, the wealth created will become the social property of all the workers and oppressed.

Battle of Seattle

Continued from page 1

in solidarity with the WTO protests.

ILWU President Brian McWilliams addressed a pre-march rally in the packed stadium telling the crowd, "There will be no business as usual today... demonstrating to the corporate CEOs that the global economy will not run without the consent of the workers everywhere.... The interests of working people transcend international boundaries."

McWilliams said labor was there "to tell the agents of global capital that we will not sit quietly by while they meet behind closed doors to carve up our world."

The rally was also addressed by the new general secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, Velizima Vavi. "I come from that country that has enjoyed its freedom only for a few years after many decades of slavery. I want to tell you that freedom is under a new threat today, the threat of corporate greed, corporate tyranny, a new form of terrorism led by the WTO itself, a new form of colonialism led by globalization.... Those greedy corporations are involved in a desperate attempt to throw a new wedge between workers of the developed and workers of the developing countries. Today we want to tell them that their endeavors are not going to succeed."

Labor delegations from 120 countries marched, including a large participation from Canada.

Cops step up repression

As soon as the labor march left the downtown area, the police began to take a harder line, firing more pepper gas and then plastic bullets. Police denied the use of the plastic bullets, but this writer was struck with

one. Protesters gathered them up off the ground to show the media.

Many live media reports ended abruptly as reporters suddenly began gagging and coughing from the pepper spray and tear-gas.

The pretext for the "state of emergency" was a series of minor incidents much earlier in the day. Windows in McDonalds and several stores, including a number of overpriced Starbucks cafes, were broken and a recycling dumpster set on fire. The incidents were replayed over and over on television, as if to justify police attacks that began pushing peaceful protesters out of downtown block by block. Without warning, police assaulted large groups with teargas, plastic bullets and concussion grenades.

Protesters were jubilant, however, over the reported closing of the WTO. As of Dec. 1, some were still occupying a number of key intersections around the Convention Center area, many on streets already closed by the police.

Protesters kicked or threw the canisters back as they played a dissonant version of the national anthem over a sound system through the teargas clouds. Police rode around standing on running boards attached to the sides and back of armored cars. But the protesters retreated only as far as they had to as police advanced through the downtown office buildings and across the interstate highway. At midnight police were still assaulting people and making arrests in the neighborhoods above downtown.

Protests are expected to continue as thousands of youth have become radicalized by the police violence.

Cuban law

How workers deal with crime

Following are excerpts from a talk and answers to questions given by Ruben Remigio Ferro, president of Cuba's Supreme Court. Ruben Remigio was a featured speaker at a public forum in San Francisco in mid-October. His remarks were translated by Mark Silverman and Nancy Charaya.

The event, titled "Crime and Justice in Cuba," was hosted by the International Peace for Cuba Appeal. Also featured was Mayda Goite, former assistant attorney general of Santiago province. The two Cuban jurists visited San Francisco as guests of the National Lawyers Guild national convention.

There are of course profound differences between the justice system of Cuba and the judicial system of the United States. In the first place, their origins are distinct. But most of all, it's based on the perception of how things should be organized in the judicial system.

In Cuba we don't think of justice as apart from and above the interests of the people. Justice is above all a service that should be given to the people. It is a concept of justice that corresponds to the people's interests. The people's expectation of justice guarantees equality and justice.

In revolutionary Cuba, justice is administered by the people. It's not just a slogan. In Cuba, the idea of an impersonal judge doesn't exist. All the courts are composed of various judges, among them professional judges and lay judges.

Lay judges are peasants, workers, professionals, housewives, university students, who form part of the panels along with the professional judges. They have the same rights to make decisions on the cases that are submitted to the courts.

The lay judges are elected by neighbors, by trade unions, and by other mass organizations, and they serve for 30-day terms. Their presence on the court assures that justice is not just administered technically but that it reflects popular will and sentiment.

The professional judges are also elected by assemblies that represent the population.

That is how a person like me, son of peasants of very humble background, and someone who is Black, can be selected to be President of the Cuban Supreme Court.

We do not have cases of racial discrimination or discrimination within the judicial system based on religion or sex or social background.

There are judges who are not members of the Communist Party, and there are judges who are religious. There are, I'm sure, gay judges, there are women and Black judges.

Certainly, in the beginning of the Revolution, for sexist reasons... we witnessed attitudes against the rights of homosexuals. But it has been many years since that situation existed, and today in terms of justice, if a gay person receives a sentence, it's not because he or she is gay but because they committed a crime.

I can't answer if there are gay judges in Cuba, because no one has to declare their sexual orientation to be a judge. The most that I can say is that the President of the Supreme Court is not gay. If I were, I would tell you very openly. It's not something that needs to be hidden and people don't hide it in Cuba. I do know some distinguished, famous people in Cuba who are gay and they make it known because they want to affirm publicly that they're gay.

Being gay in Cuba is not a condition that results in being discriminated against.

However, although in a general sense there isn't racial discrimination or discrimination against women or gays, that doesn't mean that there aren't people who are racist, or prejudiced against women and gays. But luckily, these people are a minority.

Prisoners: Salaries & home visits

The privation of liberty is given only to the most serious crimes. Within alternative punishment is included economic fines. Also, a person may be sentenced to work in a certain social project. Of course they are paid in the corresponding salary of that job. These are some of the alternative sanctions that exist.

When someone is imprisoned for even the most serious crimes, we operate on the notion that those who are being punished are human beings.

A Cuban prison is not organized as a warehouse for people who are shunned by society. Prisons are organized on the principle of rehabilitating the man or woman who has lost their way in terms of social conduct.

That's why one of the fundamental principles of the prison system is that the prisoners work and study so that they can prepare and learn skills that will be useful to them when they're incorporated back into society.

The person who enters prison joins a system of progressive steps of rehabilitation. In the beginning the imprisonment rules are rigid, and little by little, person is given more contact with his family and society.

For the work they perform while detained, the prisoner receives a corresponding salary. Periodically they receive permission to get visits from the family because it's part of the basic idea that the family plays a key role in helping prisoners re-integrate into society.

I'm not going to portray Cuban prisons as a paradise. Prison is of course a necessary evil. There are people who have committed crimes and they need to receive a sanction or punishment for their crimes.

And yet, whenever it is possible to avoid incarcerating someone in court, the tribunal looks for any alternative other than imprisonment.

You cannot go through judicial proceedings if you're less than 16 years old. And a long-standing policy is that if someone is less than 20 years old, the offense has to be extremely serious for the person to be sentenced to prison.

There is no comparison between what the Cuban government dedicates to education and what it allocates to prison. We have a relatively small number of people in the penal system.

With education, the Revolution dedicates all the resources it can, because the future of the country depends on the education of the country. And education is free. It's the most important conquest of the Revolution.

A legal career is in very high demand among students. To satisfy this demand, in addition to the regular law schools with year-round courses, we've also set up a system where someone can take a correspondence course and take the law exam.

The enemies of the Revolution try to say that Cuba is practically an entire prison, that prisoners are tortured and starved, that it's practically hell on earth. That has nothing to do with reality.

In fact, it is important to know: our country in the 1990s went through a very hard economic situation. It was extremely difficult to guarantee to the citizens the food and basic needs of life. But even in that situation, the state made sure that prisoners were guaranteed basic food necessities and items they needed to live.

Death penalty: extremely rare

The death penalty is included among the criminal penalties. It wasn't the Revolution that introduced the death penalty, it existed before the Revolution.

The death penalty in the Cuban Revolution is applied in extremely rare instances. As the Cuban Revolution continues developing in the perfecting of our society, the application of this penalty has become less and less necessary. It is applied infinitesimally less than in the United States.

And in the very few and exceptional cases where it was applied, it was for very grave crimes: for multiple murders, or for someone who has murdered time and time again, or others who have committed acts against the stability of the nation.

I'm not talking about ideological acts, but acts of violence and sabotage. But again, I'd reiterate, only under exceptional circumstances.

I think the fact that the death penalty still exists under the Cuban penal system is because it is considered by a great number of people as a necessary evil under the present circumstances.

Cuba is blockaded, subjected to an implacable war, a propaganda, economic, ideological war, as you all know. Therefore Cuba can't disarm against such a dangerous enemy at this moment.

But because of the profoundly humanist nature of the Revolution, in my opinion, in the future when these conditions and this threat disappears, the death penalty will also disappear.

CUBA 2000

Here's a gift for the new millennium. International Peace for Cuba Appeal has issued a beautiful black and white calendar. Each page features a full-size photo taken by well-known documentary photographer Bill Hackwell, who has traveled widely in Cuba. The calendar includes images of the famous carnival in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba's sugar industry, its schools and hospitals and celebrations of revolutionary holidays. Proceeds from calendar sales will support the upcoming Cuba Native Trip.



Calendar \$10 (add \$3 s&h). Make check payable to and order from: Peace for Cuba, 2489 Mission St., No. 28, San Francisco, CA 94110. Call 415 821-7575.

Vieques protests mount

Is Clinton set to announce bombing again?

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

As of Nov. 29, President Bill Clinton had yet to make public his final decision on resuming the U.S. Navy bombings of Vieques, Puerto Rico. For two weeks his office has been telling the Puerto Rican people that an announcement will come soon. During that same time he has been in constant communication with Puerto Rican Gov. Pedro Roselló.

The content of these exchanges has not been made public. Clinton fears that an announcement that bombing will resume will produce massive outrage in Vieques and throughout Puerto Rico. He is right.

The battleship USS Eisenhower is already heading south to Vieques to practice with live ammunition. The Pentagon plans to send the Eisenhower battle group to the Persian Gulf next February to continue its genocidal mission against Iraq. It wants its military personnel to practice in Vieques so they can be ready for war.

The generals and admirals want to start the practices in early December. But unless they remove the activists now camp-

ing in the restricted bombing area, they cannot move an inch.

After many years of demonstrations and militant actions in Vieques forced the U.S. government to conduct senatorial hearings on the Vieques issue, the United States and Puerto Rico signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" in 1983. This agreement requires the U.S. government to give at least 15 days notice to the Puerto Rican government before it starts military maneuvers.

According to this memo then, Washington will have to notify Puerto Rico in the next few days if it wants to resume bombing by mid-December.

Activists in Vieques expect the president's announcement to be followed in a few hours by arrests of the activists in the encampment area. Already the activists report noticing more military movement of personnel and vehicles in the Observation Post close to the encampments, where the bombs killed David Sanes. They think the U.S. military is moving closer to facilitate making arrests as soon as the president's decision is known.

Organizers are preparing for the as-

sault, as are people all over Puerto Rico.

In Vieques last Nov. 18 they formed an umbrella group called the Coordinating Group for Justice and Peace in Vieques. This grouping, which includes the leading Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques and the Vieques Women's Alliance, will bring together individuals and organizations that have been mobilizing for the ousting of the Navy.

Their main task will be to coordinate the communication and the mobilization of the people in the event of arrests.

Activists have already promised to block all traffic at the entrances of the U.S. Naval base as soon as the first person is arrested. Meanwhile in Puerto Rico, the Coordinating Group All Puerto Rico with Vieques and other organizations are also making similar plans.

In an interview with several students of the University of Puerto Rico's General Student Council, Rafael Ortiz, the Council vice-president, told Workers World that the group's membership had voted overwhelmingly for a general student strike of 24-48 hours if arrests are made.

"We will march to the entrance of Fort Buchanan," said Ortiz.

They chose this U.S. base, according to Ortiz, because it comprises all the U.S. military branches, and is the site of the U.S. Southern Command, newly moved from Panamá.

Even the local police in Vieques have pledged not to interfere. Puerto Rican Police Chief Pedro Toledo told the Puerto Rican daily newspaper "El Nuevo Día" that his "officers will not help the U.S. Navy clear out protesters camped out in Vieques nor cooperate with federal authorities or lend them boats and helicopters to help with the arrests."

This obviously is not the result of a progressive sentiment on the part of the police, who have worked closely with U.S. federal agents in the past against Puerto Rican political activists. But it underscores the power that the resolve of the people in Vieques and Puerto Rico have shown in their defiance of the most powerful military in the globe.

U.S. Navy out of Vieques now!

Haitians protest expulsions from Dominican Republic

By Oscar Ovalles and G. Dunkel
New York

The expulsion of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian origin from the Dominican Republic has slowed to a trickle as November ended. Sonia Pierre of the Movement of Haitian-Dominican Women (MUDHA) attributes this slowdown to the annual African, Pacific and Caribbean conference held then in Santo Domingo.

A Haitian who has lived in Brooklyn, N.Y., for 15 years summed up the demonstration of 300 people outside the Dominican Consulate on Times Square Nov. 20: "To see Haitians and Dominicans in the same struggle against imperialism warms the heart."

He also charged that "the Macoutes and the FRAPH don't really oppose the Dominican actions," speaking of right-wing Haitian groups.

For the first three weeks of November, the Dominican government sent its army into the streets to grab any Haitians or Haitian Dominicans, whether or not they had documents. The troops threw their targets onto a truck, drove them to the Haitian border, and expelled them at gunpoint without allowing them time to care for children or take property.

The Dominican government claims that only 4,000 people have been expelled, but MUDHA observers, who have been on the border, feel that the real number is over 20,000.

The FRAPH is the paramilitary organization the Haitian army set up during the 1991-1994 coup against elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Its object was to carry out vicious anti-popular acts the army didn't want to be blamed for.

Washington granted asylum to FRAPH leader Toto Constant after Aristide returned to Haiti. Constant now lives in Queens, New York, where he runs a string of dry cleaners. Wilson Spencer, a Dominican activist,

said, "Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the same island, the island of Hispaniola. We need to come out from the control of U.S. imperialism. It is in both our interests if we struggle together."

He pointed out that the Dominican bourgeoisie gained an advantage by deflecting popular anger over raging inflation and rising unemployment. Workers had held a general strike at the end of October that shut the Dominican Republic down for a few days. There was a wave of arrests then and some people were killed.

The Dominican capitalists and the U.S. imperialists make huge profits in the Dominican Republic. The Vicini family, one of the wealthiest there, and Gulf+Western, a U.S.-based corporation, have made vast profits in the sugar industry. All sugar workers in the cane fields and mills, who do the hard, heavy and dangerous work, are either Haitians or Dominicans of Haitian ancestry.

Another Dominican, Hector Gerardo, who was proudly carrying a Haitian flag, said he came to the demonstration "to stop the Dominican government's racist repression against the Haitian people."

Demonstration in Santo Domingo

Organizers called the Times Square action to oppose a rally called by the party of former Dominican President Joaquin Balaguer and by Cardinal Nicolas de Jesus Lopez Rodriguez, head of the Dominican Catholic Church. The organizers said this rally supported the expulsion of Haitians to "preserve Dominican culture, citizenship and territorial integrity."

Balaguer has been a tool of U.S. imperialism ever since he returned to Santo Domingo during the 1965 U.S. invasion and ran for president. Cardinal Lopez Rodriguez is not only a "prince of the Church" but also one of the wealthiest individuals in the country.

Balaguer was vice president in the 1960s under Hector Trujillo, brother of the dicta-

tor Gen. Rafael Trujillo, who held effective power. It was Gen. Trujillo who ordered the massacre in 1937 of 30,000 to 35,000 Haitian sugar can workers. The Haitians were singled out because their skin was dark and they didn't speak proper Spanish.

The Dominican army used these same criteria this November to single out people for expulsion.

Progressive observers in Santo Domingo said less than 600 people came out to the rally in Santo Domingo. To disguise their march's reactionary purpose, some of them held signs reading, "Haiti is the responsibility of the international community" and "USA: 40 percent are overweight; Haiti: 40 percent are malnourished."

They complained that Haitians were a "burden" on the Dominican Republic, ignoring the fact that their labor has brought tremendous profits to the sugar barons, and that they do jobs that no Dominican has taken for decades.

The small turnout, some Dominican activists feel, might reflect a popular rejection of this racist campaign.

Sonia Pierre told Hait-Progres, "We deeply thank the New York communities for their demonstrations, because it has a big impact here. It has made the Dominicans think twice."

Threat of a Dominican invasion

When Jean-Bertrand Aristide returned to Haiti in 1994, one of his first acts was to dissolve the army. While this helped defend Haiti from a coup, it also makes it difficult to defend against an invasion. Haiti has only 6,000 police to oppose the 100,000



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

New York, Times Square, Nov. 20.

U.S. trained and equipped Dominican army, one of the largest in Latin America.

Ben Dupuy, secretary general of the Popular National Party (PPN) which is one of the strongest mass organizations in Haiti, was at the Times Square demonstration. "The PPN feels," he said, "that this move by the Dominican military is an attempt to influence both the elections in Haiti and those in the Dominican Republic."

The elections for Haiti's parliament are scheduled for March. The Dominican elections are scheduled a few months later. Then in the fall, elections for Haiti's president will be held. Aristide is universally expected to win.

Even though USAID, an agency of the U.S. State Department, is controlling how voters are registered and identified in Haiti, voters could still fail to elect an anti-Aristide parliament. If this happens, the Haitian bourgeoisie and its backers in Washington would want to overturn the elections. Washington would prefer to use the Dominican proxy, Dupuy feels, than to overthrow the Haitian government itself.

The Justice Committee for Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans in the Dominican Republic has called another demonstration for Dec. 10 at the United Nations in New York. Readers can call (718) 284-0889 for more information.

editorial

Be there for Mumia Dec. 11

The media would have us believe that people around the world, when they think of the United States, see it as a land of liberty where the streets are paved with gold.

So why has Mumia Abu-Jamal's case aroused such worldwide attention? Why have there been demonstrations calling for a new trial from Paris to Volta Redonda, Brazil, site of the largest steel plant in Latin America?

The struggle of this Black political prisoner for justice has struck a chord around the world precisely because it confirms what so many already know: that, despite the powerful propaganda machine here churning out spectacular fantasy about life in the United States, the reality is something far different. For Black, Latino, Native and other oppressed peoples, it can be a living hell. The brutal repression of demonstrators in Seattle that has just shocked the world is a daily occurrence in the poor communities. Oppressed people here are not only beaten and maced, but they are murdered by police in growing numbers and at ever younger ages.

That's why Mumia's name, like those of Native warrior Leonard Peltier and the former and present Puerto Rican political prisoners, are being raised with ever more insistence by those around the world fighting against U.S. imperialism's encroachments in their own countries.

Mumia has been on Death Row for 17 years. The strength of support he has generated with his passionate and honest voice on behalf of all the oppressed has prevented the racist Pennsylvania authorities from executing him. But the legal threads on which his life hangs are thin and few. His petition of habeas corpus now before Federal District Judge William H. Yohn, Jr., asserts 29 claims of constitutional violations in his original trial, sentencing and post-conviction proceedings. This alone, plus the proven racism of the Philadelphia cops and courts, should win him a new trial and eventual freedom. But in truth, only a mighty movement can save Mumia and what he stands for, because the same reactionary ruling class that put him behind bars still calls the shots.

Everyone will have the opportunity to show support for this courageous fighter against oppression on Dec. 11 at regional protests in Philadelphia, Chicago and Oakland. For more information on the Dec. 11 event nearest to you, contact organizers in New York at (212) 633-6646; in San Francisco at (415) 821-6545; in Philadelphia at (215) 476-8812; or email npcn@peoplescampaign.org. On the Web, visit www.mumia.org and www.peoplescampaign.org.

Clinton set to use food as weapon in Sudan

By Johnnie Stevens

The Clinton administration announced Nov. 28 that it was considering taking advantage of a small part of a spending bill just passed in Congress to give food to support one side of a 16-year-old civil war in Sudan. Washington will back the so-called Sudanese Rebels' Peoples Liberation Army against the government in Khartoum. The new U.S. law overrides previous legislation that forbade U.S. government food aid to combatants.

While this tactic may seem relatively harmless, it is really another variant of the U.S. cruise-missile attack on the Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, Sudan, in August 1998. Even non-governmental organizations like Care USA—a group that donates food to both sides of the civil war—find the new U.S. policy dangerous. And Nils Kastberg of UNICEF said, "There will be greater risk for everyone involved."

The food offensive is clearly a continuation of U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Sudan.

John Pendergast, special advisor to Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice, told the Nov. 29 New York Times that the food aid would enable the rebels to maintain positions in the parched territory where they are fighting the government's Northern Army and the government-backed militias. Rice wants Sudan's government isolated and punished as much as possible, according to the Times.

This latest maneuver recalls the Bush administration's food program in Somalia in the early 1990s. That was Washington's way of sending troops to the Horn of Africa, aimed then at gaining another base from which to control the oil rich fields of the Middle East. There is also oil in the southern part of Sudan where the United States has been supporting the PLA against the Khartoum government of the north.

The U.S. government has applied sanctions to starve millions of people for countries it demonizes like Iraq and Sudan. Now it plans to use a new weapon to achieve its geopolitical aims: giving food away.

France, Britain, Canada and Saudi Arabia, U.S. allies that formerly joined the United States in applying sanctions against Sudan, now seek rapprochement with Sudan. These governments hope to gain in oil trade and investment, especially in Sudan's south.

The Clinton administration is also undoubtedly very angry about China's investment in the Sudan oil industry. The administration is considering this new aggressive step to counter the Sudan government's

escape from isolation.

Clinton also apparently wants his food bill to be a way to keep the war going between the northern and southern parts of Sudan.

In October, during a visit to Kenya, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright met with the leader of the anti-Khartoum Sudanese rebels, John Garang. Many suggested she back a plan by Egypt and Libya to end the fighting.

Instead of doing that, Albright supported seeking peace through the brokerage of seven East African nations under the umbrella of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development. This IGAD initiative had been getting nowhere and was considered a dead end.

The IGAD nations are Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti, Sudan and Eritrea. The foreign policy of many of these governments is now largely under the influence of the International Monetary Fund and the Pentagon. IGAD was founded in the 1980s primarily for the purpose of defeating the then-progressive governments of Somalia and Ethiopia.

IGAD used divide-and-conquer methods—pitting ethnic groups against each other—and bribery to promote its policy of destruction. They are disguised as "peacekeepers," but are designed to overthrow those countries targeted by the U.S. This was to Albright's liking.

Rice and Pendergast seem to differ from Albright regarding tactics. They take a superficially much harder line—advocating direct military intervention against Sudan and offering food to the PLA. Pendergast acknowledged that there is an internal battle in the administration over whether to implement the food bill legislation.

There is no division, however, on whether to drop sanctions—the weapon of choice against Sudan, Iraq, north Korea, Cuba and Yugoslavia.

Another tactical division in the State Department exposed some U.S. crimes. The Oct. 27 New York Times printed a full-page debate between Albright and Rice. Each pointed a finger at the other about the bombing of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the subsequent bombing of the Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant.

There have been increasing exposures that the U.S. accusation that the Al Shifa factory was involved in the production of chemical weapons was just a big lie—and that the administration knew it was a lie. These accusations were the excuse given for bombing the pharmaceutical plant.



WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD

By Andy McInerney

PANAMA

Solidarity with Vieques

The fight to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques, an island belonging to Puerto Rico, has spread beyond the island to Latin America. Pickets went up at the U.S. embassy in Panama City on Nov. 26. Protesters called for the United States to get out of Vieques and for the Pentagon to pay the costs of cleaning the island.

Until April, the Pentagon used Vieques as a bombing range and as a site for military maneuvers. When a Navy bomb killed a Puerto Rican worker, mass protests against the Pentagon presence on the island erupted across all political sectors. Because Washington was afraid the Puerto Rican people's anger would turn against the entire Pentagon presence on the island—it recently became home to the Southern Army of the U.S. Southern Command, the most important arm of U.S. intervention in Latin America—the military exercises were suspended.

The Panama protest was organized by the National Sovereignty Movement, a

group that is fighting to make sure that the United States lives up to its promise to turn over the Panama Canal to Panamanian authorities in December. There are growing indications that Washington plans to renege on those promises.

Puerto Rico has been a colony of U.S. imperialism since the United States invaded in 1898. The struggle against the U.S. military there will surely generate solidarity from a continent that has suffered from U.S. intervention and exploitation for the entire 20th century.

BASQUE COUNTRY

ETA to end cease-fire

After a 14-month cease-fire, the Basque liberation movement Basque Homeland and Freedom (ETA) announced Nov. 28 that it would end the cease-fire on Dec. 3. The group had called the cease-fire as a good-faith effort to promote a political solution to the Basque national-liberation struggle in the Basque Country, located in north-eastern Spain and southwestern France.

In a statement sent to the pro-Basque independence newspaper Gara, the ETA said that the peace process was "rotting."

"Over the past year ... Spain and France have continued their domination, their occupation, and their repressive attacks," the statement said.

"From Dec. 3, 1999, ETA will let its operational commandos know when to recommence their actions."

Dozens of ETA members, as well as leaders of the militant political Basque opposition group Herri Batasuna, have been arrested since the September 1998 cease-fire announcement.

FRANCE, SWITZERLAND

WTO protests

The prospect of watching representatives of the world's biggest and most predatory imperialist powers trying to improve the terms of their plunder at the Seattle "Millennium Round" of the World Trade Organization is bringing tens of thousands of workers and activists into motion.

On Nov. 27, an estimated 15,000 marched in Paris behind a banner reading "Against the WTO: The world is not for sale." Unions that have been waging a campaign for a 35-hour work week joined with farmers, students, and politi-

cal parties to protest the impact of "globalization" on the world's working people.

Globalization has come to be understood as the policies of tearing down protective trade barriers and intensifying intervention by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in domestic economic affairs. In the exploited countries of the world, these policies are known as "neo-liberalism."

Protests also took place in the French cities of Marseille, Lyon, Strasbourg, and Lille.

Thousands also converged on the headquarters of the WTO in Geneva, Switzerland, on Nov. 27 and 28. That protest was headed up by a delegation of about 1,000 small farmers, and brought together unionists, environmentalists, leftist political groups and religious activists.

The Geneva protesters issued a call for a moratorium on recommending trade liberalization, whether through the WTO or other world economic forums. They also called for the WTO to issue an accounting of the impact of the liberalization on the peoples of the world, especially the poorer countries.

Protests are set for around the world during the week of the WTO meeting, which opened on Nov. 30.

'Immigrant workers always on capitalism's hit list'

William Gates III, founder of Microsoft Corporation and the richest person in the world, is worth \$90 billion. That means he makes roughly \$23 million an hour.

Compare this to the Thai workers discovered four years ago in Los Angeles. Living behind barbed wire, some had been held captive for over five years. They worked 84 hours a week in a garment sweatshop, earning \$1.60 an hour—wages they often did not even see.

Now consider the enormous technological advances of this decade. High-speed computers have opened up vast new worlds, allowing people to explore a universe they had never thought possible.

Yet a poor woman on welfare can't even get an ATM card. And many workers in agribusiness throughout this country don't have access to toilets.

Doesn't this gross inequality and obscene disparity in access to wealth and technology expose the capitalist system? Doesn't this show that capitalism is an outdated, inferior and subordinate system that must be abolished?

Immigrant workers are a sector of the working class always on capitalism's hit list.

Our party is paying attention to this important phenomenon. As we enter the next millennium, the case of immigrant workers utterly exposes the capitalist system as a decaying, filthy system that cannot provide for the masses of people.

How else can it be that in 1999 there are work-place conditions reminiscent of the 19th century? For no other reason than

that capitalism thrives on exploitation, that profit is the guiding force in this economy.

Today's immigrant work force is composed mainly of Latino, African, Asian and Caribbean people.

About 5 million undocumented workers currently live in the United States. California is the leading state of residence, followed by Texas and New York.

Most undocumented workers come from Mexico—about 2.7 million. Over 80 percent of all undocumented are from the Western Hemisphere.

Those who come from Mexico are not all Mexican. A large number are Indigenous and have their own languages and history. But because of the particular oppression of Native people, they get lumped in with the dominant culture.

As Leninists we must always be alert to the particularities of the national question, even in a country like Mexico that is oppressed by imperialism.

Most people in this country would be surprised to know that 120,000 Canadians a year remain in the United States without documents—surprised because the U.S. government's immigration policy is thoroughly racist.

The U.S./Canadian border is not patrolled and militarized like a war zone. That's not where the Immigration and Naturalization Service assigns 5,000 armed troops—the hated La Migra—to patrol the border.

The INS says that last year it carried out 104,448 apprehensions.

That means gestapo-like raids at the work places and in the communities of immigrant workers. Mothers and fa-

thers were separated from their children. The bosses pocketed their unpaid wages.

Just like the NYPD or the LAPD, La Migra serves as a state-sanctioned, repressive, occupying force with only one objective—to terrorize immigrants of color.

That's why we demand that the INS get out of our communities. That they be disarmed, disbanded and abolished.

Imperialism now has tentacles all over the globe. The IMF demands structural adjustment policies and privatization, forcing millions to leave their homelands in search of jobs.

The AFL-CIO estimates that over 100 million people in the world have left their countries of origin in search of economic relief.

Immigrant workers are on the move. They are organizing unions in this country at an unprecedented rate. That is why Clinton and Wall Street send INS goons to work places—to break up union drives.

They did this at the Holiday Inn in Minneapolis, at the IBP meatpacking plant in Nebraska, at the Stemilt Fruit Co. in Washington state, and at Waste Management in San Leandro, Calif.

The workers have little choice but to fight back. Their struggles are changing the labor movement forever.

Karl Marx wrote over 100 years ago that the ruling class would create its own gravediggers. In October, 20,000 immigrants and their supporters marched in



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Washington to demand amnesty and an end to INS raids and deportations. Throughout the demonstration, workers recognized the vital importance they played in society. They tapped in to the fact that without their labor the capitalist system would come to a screeching halt.

Without them, the food could not be picked, delivered or put on the table, the grocery stores would not be staffed, the meat would not be packaged, the buildings would not get constructed.

So this is our message to Bill Gates and all the other dot com billionaires: While you surf the web, immigrant workers at the Omaha Packing Plant do not get bathroom breaks. They have been forced to relieve themselves in their clothes. This is a humiliation that cannot be tolerated.

You, the capitalist pigs who control society today, can do no better than this. We created the wealth. Now we want it back.

Tomorrow, the workers will run society in a just and humane manner.

'What changed U.S. policy toward Yugoslavia, Iraq?'

Ten years ago, neither Yugoslavia nor Iraq would have seemed likely targets of U.S. military attack. Both were key countries in strategic regions. Yugoslavia was a socialist workers' state and more developed industrially. Iraq was capitalist with a large state-owned sector, extensive social programs and rich oil resources.

While the U.S. had been fiercely hostile to both after their respective revolutions—1945 in Yugoslavia, 1958 in Iraq—that had seemed to change over the years. Ten years ago, the official U.S. policy was somewhat "friendly" toward both countries.

In 1990-91, however, all this "friendliness" suddenly evaporated. The benign mask dropped away, revealing the true face of U.S. policy. The U.S. rulers and their bought media proceeded to first demonize and then devastate both countries, tearing one to pieces and inflicting on the other a human-made famine and deadly epidemic.

Both the Yugoslav and Iraqi peoples have suffered immense human, productive and cultural losses. Both have been subjected to nearly a decade of war, sanctions and subversion. Today the official policy of the U.S. government toward both countries is called "regime change." The imperialists are continuing their vicious aggression against both countries.

What happened to bring about such cataclysmic change? Was there a dramatic change in the government in either coun-

try? No, the leaders today are the same as in 1989. Did they change their basic orientation? No, not at all. Did either menace the U.S.? No, and it would be ridiculous to think so.

The real change was not inside either Iraq or Yugoslavia. What happened was a sharp change in the balance of forces in the world, brought about by the disintegration and collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc in Europe in the period of 1989 to 1991. Both Yugoslavia and Iraq were prominent in the Non-Aligned Movement, and the leaders of both countries had for many years steered a course between the two basic class camps in the world.

Both governments maintained the pretension that they were independent of and above the global class struggle, able to be "friends" with both sides while retaining their "independence." And the U.S. had worked to bring both into its orbit, encouraging Iraq to attack Iran in 1980, providing military aid, and trying to pull Iraq away from the Soviet Union, with which it had signed a friendship and mutual defense treaty in 1972.

After the split between the USSR and Yugoslavia, the U.S. gave massive economic aid and credits to the Yugoslav government in the 1950s. In exchange, Yugoslavia became a de facto member of the anti-Soviet military alliance. So important was it to Washington to enlist Yugoslavia against the socialist camp that it was willing to do something that seems unthink-

able: help finance that country's socialist construction—and it was *socialist* construction.

But imperialism's "friendliness" lasted exactly as long as the socialist camp's existence.

As soon as the Eastern European regimes were subverted and overturned in the summer and fall of 1989, the knives came out for Yugoslavia. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 sealed the decision. First the newly reunified Germany, and subsequently Britain, France, Italy and, above all, the United States set out to carve up the socialist federation, fanning the flames of chauvinism while arming the most reactionary nationalist elements.

The destruction of Yugoslavia, with its extremely diverse and inter-mingled population, required a bloody civil war. The imperialists were only too glad to oblige, doing everything they could to make the civil war as atrocious and brutal as possible.

Many, including some in the anti-war and left movement, were deluded into thinking that the demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact would usher in a new era of peace and demilitarization. Those who held these hopes did not understand that imperialism is imperialism, and that the imperialist leaders saw the changed relationship of forces as a new opportunity to secure domination over key markets, labor



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RICHARD BECKER

and resources. Instead of more peaceful, they became even more aggressive.

In March 1992, the CIA leaked a document to which our party paid a great deal of attention. It has recently resurfaced during the Yugoslavia war. It is called the Defense Planning Guidance document.

It states forthrightly that the top U.S. aim should be to prevent any potential rival from even considering the possibility of trying to achieve competitive balance with the U.S. It laid out a perspective on how the U.S. could retain its status as imperialist top dog, primarily by virtue of maintaining absolute military superiority over friends as well as foes.

This explains why, despite the lack of any real threat, U.S. imperialism has not reduced its military budget. Just the opposite. Today, the U.S. spends more on its arsenal of mass terror than the rest of the UN Security Council combined, and is planning to vastly increase this spending in the coming years.

Marina fija enfrentamiento para diciembre

Lucha en pie para sacar al Pentágono del Vieques

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci
Vieques, Puerto Rico

El Pentágono quiere que a comienzos de diciembre, el grupo acorazado Eisenhower USS reasuma sus prácticas con municiones reales en el municipio de la isla de Vieques. Pero los planes del ejército más poderoso del mundo han sido interrumpidos por el pequeño pueblo de Vieques y sus partidarios en Puerto Rico y otras partes.

La lucha por expulsar a la Marina Norteamericana de Vieques está alcanzando su punto crítico. Hasta ahora, todos los comités gubernamentales que fueron formados para estudiar este punto—tanto en Puerto Rico como en los Estados Unidos—han publicados la mayoría de sus resultados.

La Marina y el Pentágono han dado un ultimátum. Los militares Norteamericanos están listos para resumir sus bombardeos en Vieques. El pueblo de Puerto Rico y de Vieques dicen: “Ni una bomba más.”

El gobierno Norteamericano apoya al Pentágono. Y aunque el gobierno de Puerto Rico ha demostrado que quiere favorecer al Pentágono, se ha enfrentado a la gran resistencia del pueblo puertorriqueño. La decisión del Presidente Clinton ha sido anunciada informalmente. En lugar de que la Marina permanezca en Vieques 5 años más, recomendado por un panel presidencial en Octubre, Clinton ahora propone un límite de tres años para que la Marina se retire de Vieques. Además, dijo que la Marina solamente va a bombardear 90 días al año con municiones inertes en lugar de municiones reales.

Clinton también hizo una vaga promesa de compensación económica. El Presidente sugirió un referéndum de sí o no a la oferta, la cual fue aceptada inmediatamente por el gobernador Pedro Roselló. Pero la mayoría del pueblo de Vieques rechazó la idea por ser innecesaria, ya que ellos ya han decidido lo que hacer: La Marina se tiene que retirar inmediatamente de la isla y esto no está sujeto a ningún debate.

Enfrentado con esta resistencia, Clinton ha pospuesto su mensaje televisivo al pueblo de Puerto Rico. Por su parte, el Gobernador Roselló abandonó Puerto Rico por una semana de ‘vacaciones’ a los Estados Unidos.

Inminente amenaza norteamericana a los manifestantes

El 21 de Abril, dos misiles lanzados desde un F-18 de combate mató a David Sanes e hirió a otros cuatro civiles. Este incidente ha incitado protestas en Vieques y en todo Puerto Rico. Manifestantes han ocupado puntos estratégicos del Pentágono. Ahora el pueblo de Vieques se está preparando debido a la inminente amenaza de que la Marina va a comenzar a llevarse de los campamentos a los manifestantes, para así poder comenzar con el bombardeo.

Uno de los periódicos burgueses de Puerto Rico reveló que la Marina planea sacar a los manifestantes con la ayuda del Departamento de Justicia Norteamericano, mariscales federales, los guardacostas y la policía paramilitar de la Marina.

Cuatro agencias federales para desalojar algunos manifestantes pareciera un poco exagerado. Interessantemente, los reportes de los medios de comunicación no mencionan la policía de Puerto Rico. Durante las protestas por el bombardeo de Abril 21, el comandante de la policía dijo públicamente

que no estaba seguro si la policía de Puerto Rico iba a intervenir en el conflicto.

El Comité para el Rescate del Desarrollo de Vieques pidió que todos aquellos que puedan viajar a la isla lo hagan para aumentar la resistencia durante este tiempo crítico.

Un gran evento estaba anunciado para noviembre 19 en Vieques, en Aniversario de la invasión de Cristóbal Colón a Puerto Rico. La acción iba a comenzar con una reunión en frente de los campamentos para aumentar el número de personas y luego los activistas planeaban moverse hacia la zona civil para una manifestación en frente de la entrada del Campamento García, la parte este de la base donde tienen lugar las prácticas militares. Pero debido a la amenaza del Huracán Lenny, de categoría 4, los planes tuvieron que ser cambiados en pocas horas, mostrando así la increíble flexibilidad y la capacidad de organización de este pueblo.

Fuertes mareas interrumpieron la transportación al área restringida e hizo muy difícil los viajes desde la isla grande de Puerto Rico a la isla de Vieques. Así y todo, muchos activistas lograron llegar. A pesar del mal tiempo, el 20 de noviembre, 160 personas llegaron al campamento. Estudiantes, profesores, historiadores, artistas, trabajadores y activistas de diferentes sectores llegaron y muchos de ellos se quedaron toda la noche.

A la mañana siguiente, antes del amanecer, un grupo se dirigió al puesto de observación donde David Sane fue asesinado y removieron la tan odiada bandera Norteamericana, reemplazándola por la bandera de Puerto Rico.

El tiempo se está acercando para el enfrentamiento final. Esto estaba en la mente de todos. Se podía sentir la tensión y la rabia. Ambas administraciones, la Norteamericana y la administración títere de Puerto Rico están muy preocupadas por el fuerte nacionalismo y el amplio sentimiento anti norteamericano demostrado por las masas de Puerto Rico y tienen razón para preocuparse.

El pueblo de Puerto Rico va a arriesgar sus vidas si es necesario para hechar a la Marina de Vieques. Están esperando que suceda el primer arresto de un activista en el área restringida. Esa acción marcaría el inicio de una serie de eventos. Un grupo interreligioso prometió que por cada persona arrestada, van a traer a muchas más para continuar con los campamentos. Estudiantes se han pronunciado por una huelga general universitaria. Muchas organizaciones están planeando acciones de desobediencia civil en toda la isla, especialmente en frente de edificios federales.

Empujando los límites

Mientras tanto, la gente no está esperando con los brazos cruzados. Están haciendo todo lo que pueden, están organizando, ampliando y reconstruyendo los campamentos. Donde hace un mes había cinco campamentos, ahora hay siete. Las estructuras de los campamentos dan la imagen de que la lucha va a durar un largo tiempo. La escuela construida por los maestros está rodeada de carpas, una ducha y un baño. Fue construida otra habitación de madera cerca de la escuela, donde se ofrecen talleres de enseñanzas sobre tácticas de desobediencia civil.

Muchas otras carpas han sido agregadas, mas lejos del agua para evitar daños debido al clima. Se construyó un muelle en los cam-



FOTO: TERESA GUTIERREZ

Vieques, Puerto Rico—Manifestaciones como esta son las evitan que el Pentágono continúe bombardeando a la isla de Vieques.

pos de pescadores para facilitar la distribución de productos. El grupo puertorriqueño Adjuntas, que lucha por el medio ambiente, donó un generador solar a uno de los campamentos.

Voluntarios están reconstruyendo la capilla, que había sido destruida por el huracán Lenny. Pero la acción en Vieques no es sólo en las áreas restringidas. En la parte civil, la gente está muy ocupada, planeando y poniendo en acción muchas otras actividades. Una de ellas es la vigilia del sábado por la noche en frente del Campamento García. Estas son llamadas medias vigiliadas, ya que la gente se queda solamente hasta la medianoche. Pero la posibilidad de arrestos masivos hizo que la gente se quedara toda la noche el 20 de noviembre.

Estas vigiliadas son en gran parte el resultado del trabajo de la Alianza de Mujeres de Vieques. Este grupo de mujeres valientes está decidido a proteger sus tierras y las de sus familias, forzando a la Marina a retirarse. Llevan lemas escritos en hermosas camisetas que leen “Marina Fuera, porque Vieques es nuestro hogar.”

Durante la vigilia del 20 de Noviembre, Mundo Obrero entrevistó a Miriam Soba, Gladys Rivera y Norma Torres, organizadores del AMV.

Las mujeres le dijeron a Mundo Obrero que su organización comenzó en Mayo después de la muerte de Sane, en un esfuerzo por liberar la isla. Quieren paz, salud y seguridad, cosas que la Marina le ha negado al pueblo de Vieques.

Sus trabajos se enfocan en el impacto de la Marina sobre la vida diaria de todos los viequenses. Estas mujeres han expuesto la realidad de la presencia militar.

La Marina libera múltiples sustancias tóxicas a través de bombardeos, y esto ha incrementado el número de casos de cáncer en la isla.

Ellas dicen que las graduaciones se convierten en funerales, ya que en las graduaciones se puede observar las sillas vacías de jóvenes que mueren de cáncer. Cada mes hay por lo menos un muerto de cáncer. Cada familia tiene un miembro afectado por esta terrible enfermedad.

El tratamiento de quimioterapia y radiación, tiene que ser administrado en Puerto Rico. La Doctora Dulce María Albandó quien es parte de AMV, dijo que es cruel e inhumano. Ella explicó que el paciente, debilitado por la enfermedad y el tratamiento, tiene que ir y venir cada día a

la isla grande para poder recibir tratamiento.

Las tres explican como sus derechos como mujeres les son negados. “No tenemos el derecho de parir a nuestros hijos en nuestra propia tierra dice Rivera. Torres explica el porque. “La Marina no quiere más de 10,000 personas porque no pueden hacer sus prácticas con municiones reales en una población mayor que ese número. Estas mujeres están tratando de comenzar un programa de parteras, para que las mujeres puedan parir sus hijos en Vieques.

Afuera la marina criminal

Los mayoría de los aproximadamente 500 participantes de la vigilia del 20 de noviembre, eran en su mayoría de Vieques. Familias enteras con sus hijos estuvieron allí. Después de escuchar un grupo pequeño de oradores, formaron una línea. Porque eran demasiados para formar una sola línea, los jóvenes formaron otra línea y caminaron en dirección contraria. Luego formaron tres círculos concéntricos gritando lemas acompañados por el sonido de los tambores. ¡Vieques Si, Marina No!

Esta demanda se pudo escuchar no solo con fuertes voces pero también con la firme determinación del pueblo de Vieques de expulsar a la Marina. Muchos se quedaron en la vigilia hasta las 6 de la mañana y luego comenzaron a prepararse para las acciones del domingo. Ismael Guadalupe, el alma y corazón del CPRDV, esta casi en todas partes. Mientras esta escritora estaba tomando café el domingo por la mañana frente a una panadería, Guadalupe se fue al muelle, coordinó las caminatas desde los campamentos con un grupo voluntario de pescadores, aseguró la gasolina y comenzó a organizar una caravana de autos que comenzaría mas tarde.

Después de un grupo de discursos, la caravana se formó. Recorrió norte y sur, pasando por casi todos los vecindarios. Gente en la calle gritaba, Fuera, refiriéndose a la expulsión de la Marina. Estos ejercicios del fin de semana fueron en preparación para la hora final. La participación en las acciones del fin de semana, dieron a esta escritora una clara idea de un pueblo determinado a arriesgarlo todo por la paz y la libertad, no solo para Vieques y Puerto Rico pero para el mundo entero.

Pueblos amantes de la paz alrededor del mundo deberían unirse para proclamar: ¡La Marina Criminal, la tenemos que sacar!