

'FREE MUMIA'

From Seattle to Spain 3

WORKERS WORLD



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THE POWER OF PROTEST

People win Round 1 in Vieques vs. U.S. Navy

By Monica Somocurcio

Tensions have been mounting across Puerto Rico for weeks. Everyone on the island sensed that a showdown with the Pentagon over the fate of the island municipality of Vieques was on the horizon.

The USS Eisenhower was cruising toward Vieques, preparing for combined military exercises. Helicopters were buzzing over scores of Puerto Ricans who had set up encampments on the military training grounds.

Units of the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team were in Puerto Rico, evaluating the possibility of an attack on the encampments.

But on Dec. 3, the people of Puerto Rico won an important victory. The USS Eisenhower was ordered to return from its initial course toward Vieques. With sheer solidarity and popular activism, the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico as a whole had succeeded in turning back the Pentagon.

The people of Puerto Rico, including hundreds of displaced Viequenses, have been protesting the U.S. Navy's use of Vieques for decades. Residents charge that the military exercises have damaged the environment and the landscape, caused greater rates of cancer

among the local population, and destroyed fishing—the main source of income for the population.

But the protests became a united demand of the entire Puerto Rican nation after David Sanes, a civilian, was killed by a runaway bomb on April 19. Every sector of the Puerto Rican population—from unions to the Chamber of Commerce, from pro-annexation politicians to independentistas—united around the demand: "¡Fuera la marina de Vieques!"—U.S. Navy out of Vieques!

A temporary victory

Turning back the Eisenhower is a tremendous achievement, the first concrete sign that the U.S. government is on the defensive. This victory, however, is temporary. The Pentagon still refuses to pull out of Vieques immediately.

At the same time that he ordered the Eisenhower to change course, President Bill Clinton announced that the Navy would remain in Vieques for another five years. He also threatened to resume bombing practices in March.

Clinton also dangled a promise of \$40 million in financial aid for cleaning up Vieques—if the population agrees to the resumption of exercises.

Far from softening the Puerto Rican peo-

Continued on page 8



Seattle, Dec. 3

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

U.S. global agenda comes unglued in Seattle

By Richard Becker
Seattle

It took Charlene Barshefsky, chief U.S. trade representative, all day to travel the one block from her hotel to the Seattle Convention Center. And when she finally made it to the opening day of the World Trade Organization's meeting, Barshefsky was shocked to find that the world had changed.

Barshefsky, her immediate superior President Bill Clinton, and their big-business bosses had long expected this WTO meeting to be a victory parade signaling the triumph of U.S. capitalism in extending its worldwide economic domination.

Instead, the meeting ended in total disaster for the Clintonites and their corporate sponsors. After three days of bitter internal fighting, it adjourned without being able to agree on even the most vaguely worded closing communique.

Why? How could all of their calculations have turned out so wrong?

The Dec. 4 Seattle Post-Intelligencer, the local morning newspaper, highlighted the answer in a headline: "WTO Meeting Collapses—Protests Continue."

As the whole world now knows, more than 50,000 demonstrators converged on Seattle on Nov. 30. At least 10,000 of them took part in direct action protests, endured tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets in a courageous and determined effort to achieve their goal: shut down the WTO.

More than 40,000 people joined in a very spirited march to the convention area, organized by the AFL-CIO. Many of those marchers, rather than returning to the march staging area, stayed downtown and joined the direct-action protesters.

The demonstrators' determination

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REPORT ON
STREET BATTLES

STRUGGLE
CONTINUES: FREE
ALL PRISONERS

CONTRASTING
CHICAGO '68
& SEATTLE '99

was exemplary. The first day, the protesters' numbers and militancy overwhelmed the police. The opening ceremony of the WTO had to be canceled.

It was not until late afternoon—and even then with very few delegates in the hall—that it was possible to begin the first plenary session.

From the evening of Nov. 30 through the next two days, the cops expended immense amounts of gas and rounds of rubber bullets in their attempt to crush the protests.

But the protesters, mostly young people, refused to be intimidated. Thousands were repeatedly tear-gassed and pepper-sprayed. They were hit with police batons and rubber bullets.

More than 500 were jailed.

But as the Seattle paper's headline reported, the protests were still going after the WTO talks had collapsed.

The protests, moreover, were the key element in causing the WTO meeting to fail. The WTO's basic agenda is imperialist globalization: tearing down any barriers to the penetration and domi-

Continued on page 6

CUBANS MASS IN STREETS

Will U.S.
release child?

10

LET IRAQ LIVE

New challenge
to U.S. sanctions

9

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There is a new Web site where books and videos from the International Action Center can be purchased on the Internet. Leftbooks.com is a place where progressive books, videos and gifts can be ordered.

Leftbooks.com is a Web site that, like some of the most well-known on-line books stores, can accept credit cards for payment.

"Now progressive people can go to leftbooks.com and purchase the books they want at a discount without waiting six or more weeks," said Deirdre Sinnott, the web site's creator. The big book sellers on the Internet like amazon.com, bn.com and borders.com refuse to stock these titles and when they do sell them they make customers wait as long as two months or more to receive their order.

"The IAC book 'NATO in the Balkans: Voices of Opposition' was the only book that explained the history of U.S. and German intervention in Yugoslavia and the root causes of the civil war that has devastated so much of Yugoslavia. But you couldn't buy that book from Barnes and Noble while Amazon and Borders refuse to stock it, making you wait six weeks for delivery. Now that book, and many others, can be ordered with the click of a mouse and delivery is right away," Sinnott said.

"Every week we are adding new materials that can be used as tools for the struggle. Right now we are

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Mumia Abu-Jamal

ready to ship the books that the IAC has published. Plus we have videos that have told the world the truth about the U.S. bombing of the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in the Sudan or the terrible price of the U.S./UN sanctions against Iraq," continued Sinnott.

"If there is anyone who hasn't gotten these materials or if you want to give a friend or family member some thing progressive to help them understand some of the most important issues of the day, come to leftbooks.com."

Two new books—"A Voice from Harper's Ferry" by Osborne P. Anderson, a Black revolutionary who was there and "Market Elections: How Democracy Serves the Rich"—are both available to purchase at leftbooks.com. "All orders will be shipped out in 48 hours and we can even gift wrap and send the book, video, or Peace for Cuba Calendar 2000 wherever you want. We can even handle international orders," said Sinnott.

"People have asked me if the name leftbooks.com stands for 'left-wing.' I say, you're damn right it does."

WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Sat., Dec. 18

"Save a Generation, Lift 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 Shehadeh, Gloria La Riva. Award-winning video: "Genocide by Sanctions." Co-sponsored by Fellowship of Reconciliation 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.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., Dec. 11

Mass rally to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Oakland Federal Building, 14th Street (between Jefferson and Clay) at BART 12th Station, Oakland. For info phone the National People's Campaign at (415) 821-6545 or on the Web at www.actionsf.org.

Sat., Dec. 11

Fundraiser for the Native Cultural Exchange to Cuba. Speakers: AIM leader Dennis Banks, Aurora Mamea, Blackfeet Jingle Dancer, Tori Nakai, Ute and Dine Jingle Dancer, a revolutionary Native rap group, Native drummers and others. Donation \$10 to \$25. 7 p.m. At Mission Cultural Center between 24 and 25th Streets. For info phone International Peace for Cuba Appeal at (415) 821-7575.

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.

Big firms get rich, GI's die

I'm not really positive, but when I read the story of the air base being constructed in Kosovo, I mentally flagged the name of Brown and Root. If my memory serves correctly, that was the construction company which my brother spoke about when he returned from serving in Vietnam.

The rumor had it that the construction company, which was thriving by building structures in Da Nang so they could be blown up by VC, had a celebrity principal in the corporation, namely Lady Bird Johnson, the "first lady" at the time.

My brother, being one to freely engage in spreading rumors and dissension, particularly when he perceived an injustice, which he did often while serving in the Marine Corps in Vietnam, got in disfavor of his superiors and was sent to a "brown zone" for detail for no apparent strategical reason other than getting rid of dissenters. A brown zone was a remote area where a unit would almost certainly be hit by "Charlie."

His unit was in fact hit. He was the platoon sergeant. He woke up in the hospital to find that he and one other of his men were the only survivors of the attack. I'll reserve the right to tell the rest of my brother's story at some future period.

My brother died last month after twenty-five years of struggling with PTSD, addiction exacerbated by the terrors of war, serious physical problems from wounds, and just plain horrible haunting memories. He was forty-nine years old.

The United States may never fight another "war" like Vietnam because of the unpopularity of having loved ones treated the way my brother was treated. I'm certain, however, that until the system is changed drastically, the United States will continue to fight wars ("good" ones, of course) to help line the pockets of the stockholders of such companies as Brown and Root.

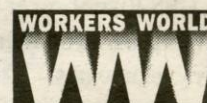
Thank you for your efforts to stem the tide of oligarchical greed. My heart is with you, my friends, in Seattle, Kosovo, prisons, and anywhere else the fight for justice is being fought.

Brigid Lenfest
via E-mail

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S

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This week ...



★ National

U.S. global agenda comes unglued in Seattle	1
Announcing leftbooks.com	2
Mumia support from Seattle to Spain	3
Justice for Max Antoine	3
Protesters tell NYC mayor, 'Hands off homeless'	3
On the picket line	4
Immigrant worker's death protested	4
Struggle to free Seattle activists	6
From Chicago '68 to Seattle '99	6
Seattle, what a police state looks like	7

★ International

Round 1 victory in Vieques	1
Cuba: 'We must defend the poor'	5
World AIDS Day	8
Iraq Sanctions Challenge III	9
Kuwait vs. women	9
Cuba demands U.S. return kidnapped child	10
Workers around the world	11
Bhopal survivors protest	11

★ Editorials & columns

Mars means war	10
Talkin' about a revolution	10

★ Noticias En Español

Haitianos y Dominicanos	12
De muerte de inmigrante	12

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Mumia support from Seattle to Spain

By Leslie Feinberg

Wherever the fight against injustice and inequality is joined, the demand to "Free Mumia!" is heard. That was true during the Battle of Seattle.

Photos and footage of protesters who were standing up to systematic police violence held aloft banners and placards demanding justice for the African American political prisoner. So many, in fact, that National Public Radio broadcast an entire segment on how the demand to win justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal was interwoven into the Seattle struggle.

Abu-Jamal was facing execution by lethal injection on Dec. 2—the 140th anniversary of the execution of John Brown for leading a rebellion against slavery. As word of the death warrant spread, the tide of outrage and activism rose. On Oct. 26—13 days after Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge signed the warrant—a federal judge stayed the execution.

Abu-Jamal's supporters are using the grace period of a temporary stay of execution to bring his case to wider layers of the population here and around the world.

As the smoke cleared in Seattle, the struggle on behalf of Abu-Jamal flared up in Philadelphia. The Fraternal Order of Police in that city has waged a campaign of intimidation against supporters of Abu-Jamal.

Unable to stop a Philadelphia concert by the wildly popular rock band Rage Against



PHOTO: PVN

the Machine—who have courageously and consistently supported Abu-Jamal—the FOP resorted to distributing leaflets attacking the political prisoner and promoting their

anti-Abu-Jamal web site.

The concert by Rage Against the Machine filled the huge Spectrum arena on Dec. 6. The audience—predominantly young, white and male—cheered the anti-racist message of struggle to stand up in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The band donated the proceeds of the concert to Abu-Jamal's defense.

"Let's make it clear," band-member Zack de la Rocha told the audience, "we don't support any kind of killers, especially killer cops, but we do support innocent brothers and sisters framed and put on death row, including Mumia Abu-Jamal."

The FOP, which opposes Abu-Jamal's efforts to get a new trial, calls him a "cop killer." But witnesses who testified against

him in his original trial have since recanted and say they identified Abu-Jamal as the shooter of Officer Daniel Faulkner only because of extreme police pressure.

Organizing to get Abu-Jamal off death row and win him a new trial is gearing up across the U.S. and in other countries around the world.

On Nov. 26, the Portuguese Parliament unanimously approved a resolution demanding that the U.S. government overturn the conviction against Abu-Jamal and approve a new trial.

From Nov. 27 to Dec. 4, activists in Leipzig, Germany, held solidarity events, distributed information and collected money for Abu-Jamal's case.

The day Abu-Jamal was slated for execution—Dec. 2—was built as European Struggle Day in Solidarity with Mumia Abu-Jamal. Demonstrations were held in cities in Brazil, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Spain.

In Italy, between Dec. 1 and Dec. 10, actions in support of Abu-Jamal will take place in Firenze, Cesena, Rome, Bologna, Ravenna and La Spezia. Upcoming activities are also being planned in Pisa, Fano, Perugia, Catania and other cities.

A Dec. 10 French initiative is in the works.

Regional protests Dec. 11

In the United States, regional protests on behalf of Abu-Jamal will take place on Dec. 11 in Philadelphia, San Francisco and Chicago.

"Educators for Mumia" are collecting names and donations for a full-page ad

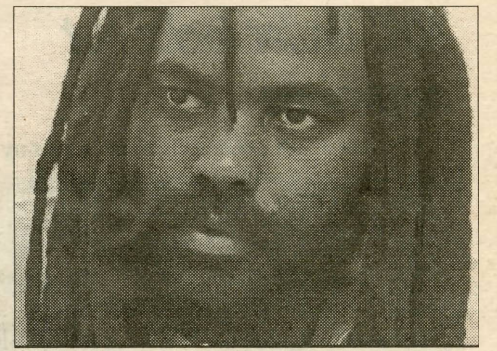


PHOTO: PVN

in the New York Times. The initial appeal came from Toni Morrison, Cornel West, Angela Davis, Leslie Marmon Silko, Rudolfo Anaya, Marty Hittelman, Jonathan Kozol, Frances Fox Piven and Noam Chomsky.

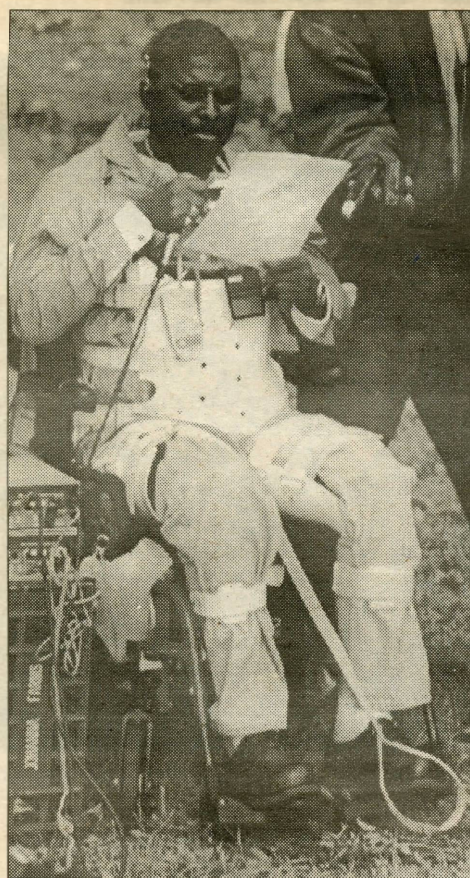
For more information on how to get involved in this historic struggle to save Abu-Jamal's life and to strike a blow against racism and state repression, contact organizers in New York at (212) 633-6646; in San Francisco at (415) 821-6545; in Philadelphia at (215) 476-8812; or email npcnyc@peoplescampaign.org.

On the Web, visit www.mumia.org and www.peoplescampaign.org.



PHOTO: PVN

Demand to free Mumia Abu-Jamal seen everywhere in Seattle protests.



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

'Justice for Max Antoine!'

By Johnnie Stevens
Irvington, N.J.

It was a victory for Max Antoine, who has been confined to a wheelchair since a brutal police beating on June 2, 1996.

A hundred people gathered outside the police station here on Dec. 4 and chanted "Justice for Max Antoine" and "Whose streets? Our streets." The last time they rallied, they were forced into a nearby park. But this time they were able to hold their ground.

Antoine is a Haitian immigrant who the police charged with resisting arrest and obstruction after he came to his sister's defense when police burst into her home

during her birthday party. Dragged down a flight of stairs and thrown against a steel door, he is now blind in one eye and paralyzed from the waist down.

Speaking up on his behalf at the rally outside the police station was Father Jeanmaire Fitz Legonde of St. Patrick's church, who said that what happened to this former accountant showed that anyone could become a victim of police brutality. Antoine, his wife and their two children now must live on a meager disability check.

Jury selection began in the police case against him on Dec. 7 at the Essex County courthouse. One of the first people called as a potential juror was Philip Rucker, one

of the three officers who Antoine says assaulted him. "The entire courtroom was in shock when Rucker was presented as a juror," Antoine told Workers World. "With the exception of myself, I was no longer surprised after five of my lawyer's motions were dismissed by Judge Fullover."

Rucker was rejected as a juror, but two other people with possible bias against Antoine were empaneled. One juror is a cousin of a captain in the Irvington Police Department. The other admitted under questioning by Antoine's lawyer that she has been speaking to Rucker about this case.

The Justice for Max Antoine Committee can be contacted at 201-487-3748 or Justice4Max@hotmail.com.

Protesters tell mayor, cops:..

'Hands off the homeless'

By G. Dunkel
New York

"If the baby Jesus had been born in Bethlehem under Giuliani's reign, he would have been put in foster care," is how the Rev. Al Sharpton summed up New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's attack on homeless families.

More than 2,000 people came out to historic Union Square Dec. 5 on a fine Sunday afternoon to protest the new rules requiring homeless people to work for their cots—which they will only get for 90 days.

The heads of families who can't work, or refuse to, will have their children seized

and placed into foster care.

Two busloads of homeless people came from Philadelphia to show their solidarity with the struggle for justice in New York.

Speakers made the point that they not only need shelter, but also decent jobs and the right to live with dignity.

A homeless Vietnam vet who works, but doesn't make enough to pay New York rents, said, "Giuliani wants you to lose your job so you can work for your bed." He went on to say, "Soon the largest shelter in New York will be Rikers Island." Rikers is the city prison.

Cops have arrested over 200 homeless

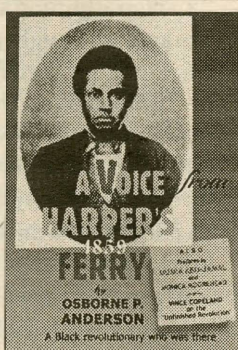
people, often roughing them up. But then New York cops are notorious for their insensitivity and their racist, sexist, anti-gay and anti-poor attitudes.

Joseph Camp is a retired teacher who worked in France and Africa and lives in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood in Manhattan. Camp volunteers as a tutor in a homeless project. He said: "Most of the kids want to learn and work. But it's a hard environment for anybody to learn in."

About 100 to 200 people, including a number of families, undertook an all-night vigil in Union Square as an extended form of protest.

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ON THE PICKET LINE

By MARY OWEN

NYC Ballet locks out musicians

Getting a live orchestra to accompany "The Nutcracker" has become a tough nut to crack since management at the New York City Ballet forced musicians to hit the bricks Nov. 23. The lockout began when the union rejected management demands for givebacks on rehearsal and performance attendance. The musicians refused to play while talks continued, so the oh-so-refined management booted them out.

Musicians set up picket lines outside Lincoln Center—and forced the ballet's opening-night to be canceled. Since then, dancers have had to pirouette to canned music while talks continue.

"For tapes to be used in Lincoln Center is shameful," said Federation of Musicians spokesperson Judy West. "This is a place where the audience is a live music audience."

The ballet season lasts only part of the year, so musicians must depend on other engagements to support themselves.

When these gigs come during ballet season, they need the flexibility to hire substitutes for rehearsals and performances.

The musicians' current contract does not specify how many rehearsals or per-

formances they must attend. Management proposed a two-tiered system that would require a set number of appearances from newly hired musicians but not from veterans. The workers rejected that.

Private hospital interns can organize

In a three-to-two decision, the National Labor Relations Board ruled Nov. 29 that interns and residents at privately owned hospitals have the right to form unions under federal law. The ruling opens the door to organizing an estimated 100,000 interns and residents nationwide.

Hospital bosses attacked the decision—undoubtedly because union representation for these doctors could end the notoriously long hours they are forced to work. But reduced hours are likely to improve patient care. Labor leaders predicted interns and residents at the country's 400 teaching hospitals would now push for shorter hours and more reasonable work loads.

Interns and residents at public hospitals are not covered by the ruling.

But most already have the right to unionize under state law. The decision comes at a time when the American

Medical Association and many unions are stepping up organizing among tens of thousands of salaried physicians.

Organizing.com at Amazon

As the tear gas settles on Seattle streets outside Amazon.com, employees inside are engaged in an organizing campaign that has gone on for much of the past year. The campaign is being led by a cluster of Amazon workers—many of them young, women and workers of color—in conjunction with WashTech.

Last year WashTech published a damning report entitled "Holiday in Amazonia" that described bleak working conditions at the giant Internet bookstore's customer-service centers. These conditions include workers jammed four to a cubicle, low wages that make regular overtime necessary, and top-down management. Customer-service workers compose about 500 of Amazon's estimated 5,000 workers—or 10 percent of its work force.

"The rocketing growth of Amazon.com has left some employees ... looking for the pod bay door," the report concluded. Meanwhile, a survey on working conditions emailed to service representatives

last summer brought threatening responses from inside Amazon.

"They would say stuff like, 'We're going to find you and get you.' This was a classic, by-the-book anti-union campaign fight out of the 1930s," said Gretchen Wilson, 24, of WashTech. Wilson says WashTech is working to help Amazon employees—who are doing most of the organizing—have a voice on the job.

One former Amazon employee, Richard Howard, wrote an article called "How I Escaped From Amazon.Cult" after his brief stint at the company. If the Internet is supposed to be revolutionizing how business is done, Amazon.com falls far short, he noted.

"We basically did drone work and had people breathing down our necks all day," Howard said. "How revolutionary is that? The only difference is that a lot of the supervisors had pierced ears and wore leather."

AFL-CIO Policy Director David Smith says, "The attention paid to 28-year-old tech tycoons has created the illusion that they're ubiquitous."

But most tech workers are like those at Amazon.com—single apartment dwellers in their 20s, working in low-paying front-line service positions. And as Amazon.com employees are showing, these workers are ready for union organizing.

Brooklyn coalition demands safety

Immigrant worker's death protested

By Mary Owen
New York

A coalition of community, labor, religious and immigrant-rights activists gathered Dec. 2 in the South Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, N.Y., for a vigil to demand safe jobs. The event was held at the site where construction laborer Eduardo Daniel was killed and 10 other immigrants injured when a building they were working on collapsed Nov. 23.

Chants of "the people united will never be defeated" rang out in English and Spanish as vigil participants stood holding candles on the dark, deserted block of half-completed buildings. Most were Latino and Latina workers, some with children in strollers.

Organizers condemned the criminal negligence of construction contractors who run unsafe operations with no regard for the life or well-being of immigrant day laborers. "Contractors often seek out undocumented workers, believing that their immigration status makes them vulnerable and unlikely to complain of abuses," one said.

The contractor in this case, who has a history of violations and has since fled the country, failed to properly support the upper floors of the residential structure.

The workers plunged four stories to the basement in an avalanche of wet cement and metal.

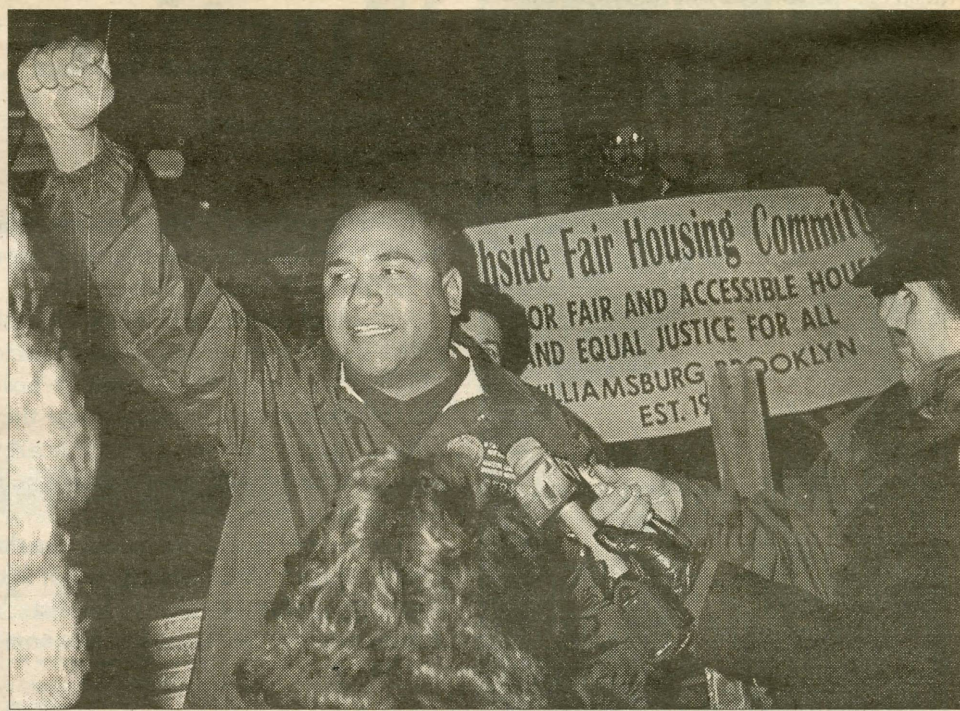
Daniel was crushed to death by concrete building blocks, metal reinforcing rods and other material as the floors above caved in.

Other workers were rushed to Bellevue Hospital Center for treatment, including surgery. Some were in critical or serious condition.

This was the second building collapse on the same block since August.

Safe jobs are a right

At the vigil, representatives of the Laborers union, the Coalition for Human Rights of Immigrants, the South Side Fair Housing Coalition, the Mexican American Workers Association, New York Jobs with Justice, the New York Labor-Religion Coalition, and the Mt. Sinai Occupational Health Clinics spoke out in memory of Daniel. Many other groups endorsed the event.



WW PHOTO: MARY OWEN

Brooklyn, N.Y., Dec. 2.

U.S. Rep. Nydia Velázquez said violations or criminal charges would be brought against unscrupulous contractors who exploit immigrant workers.

Luis Montalvo, organizing director of Laborers Local 79, stressed: "We need a general amnesty for undocumented immigrants. Otherwise we have to work for less money and that allows for exploitation, as with compañero Daniel."

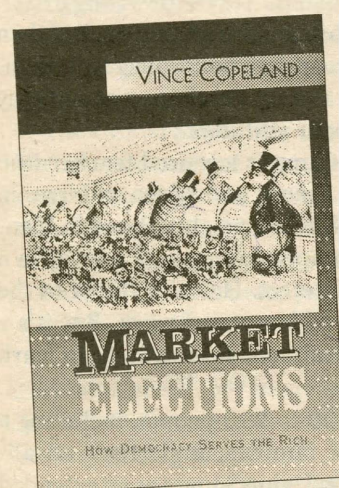
"As long as we don't have amnesty, situations like this will continue."

Members of the South Side Fair Housing Committee, represented by a group of Latinas, said the New York City Buildings Department has done nothing to correct construction problems in the area. They vowed to speak out when Mayor Rudolph Giuliani holds a Dec. 9 "town hall meet-

ing" in the community.

Activists are demanding that the Nov. 23 collapse be thoroughly investigated, that workers who might testify against the contractor be protected, that Daniel's family be compensated, that injured workers' medical costs be covered. And they demand that a city plan be developed to prevent future accidents, and that more public funds be allocated for health-and-safety inspections and worker safety education.

They also called for immediate measures to ensure that all workers—regardless of immigration status or national origin—are guaranteed basic rights, including the right to organize and the right to a healthy and safe work environment.



MARKET ELECTIONS

HOW DEMOCRACY SERVES THE RICH
BY VINCE COPELAND

324 pp., index, footnotes, bibliography, photographs

Every four years, big money chooses the presidential candidates. Their war chests filled to the brim, they are then packaged by the media as 'the people's choice.'

It's U.S.-style democracy—of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich.

But how do these chosen politicians win the votes of the millions as well as the millionaires?

Cuban foreign minister in Seattle

'We must defend the poor of the planet'

By Gloria La Riva
Seattle

Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque spoke to a capacity crowd of 900 at Mt. Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Seattle Dec. 3 as the World Trade Organization conference wound up its last day.

This energetic young leader is not a typical foreign minister. As a representative of Cuba's revolutionary government, he gave a resounding call for true justice in the world and unrelenting struggle to achieve it.

Perez Roque came to Seattle to head Cuba's finance and trade delegation to the WTO conference. He was also sent to represent Cuban President Fidel Castro, who had originally planned to attend the WTO. For reasons of his security and the refusal of the U.S. government to guarantee him a visa, President Castro decided not to attend.

Castro said in a public communique, "It would soon be evident that the U.S. government was opposed to my presence at the meeting in Seattle. I was certain that the State Department would not grant me a visa. Therefore, I did not even bother to apply. I did not wish to be subjected to this humiliation."

"Therefore, we have decided to send a delegation headed by our young and combative foreign minister, engineer Felipe Perez Roque, who has worked with me for over seven years, and is profoundly familiar with and fully shares my views and ideas on the current international situation and its potential evolution."

Felipe Perez Roque is 34 years old—the youngest foreign minister in the world.

Before his nomination this year, he had already made his mark as an exemplary revolutionary. At the age of 21 he became president of the Federation of University Students.

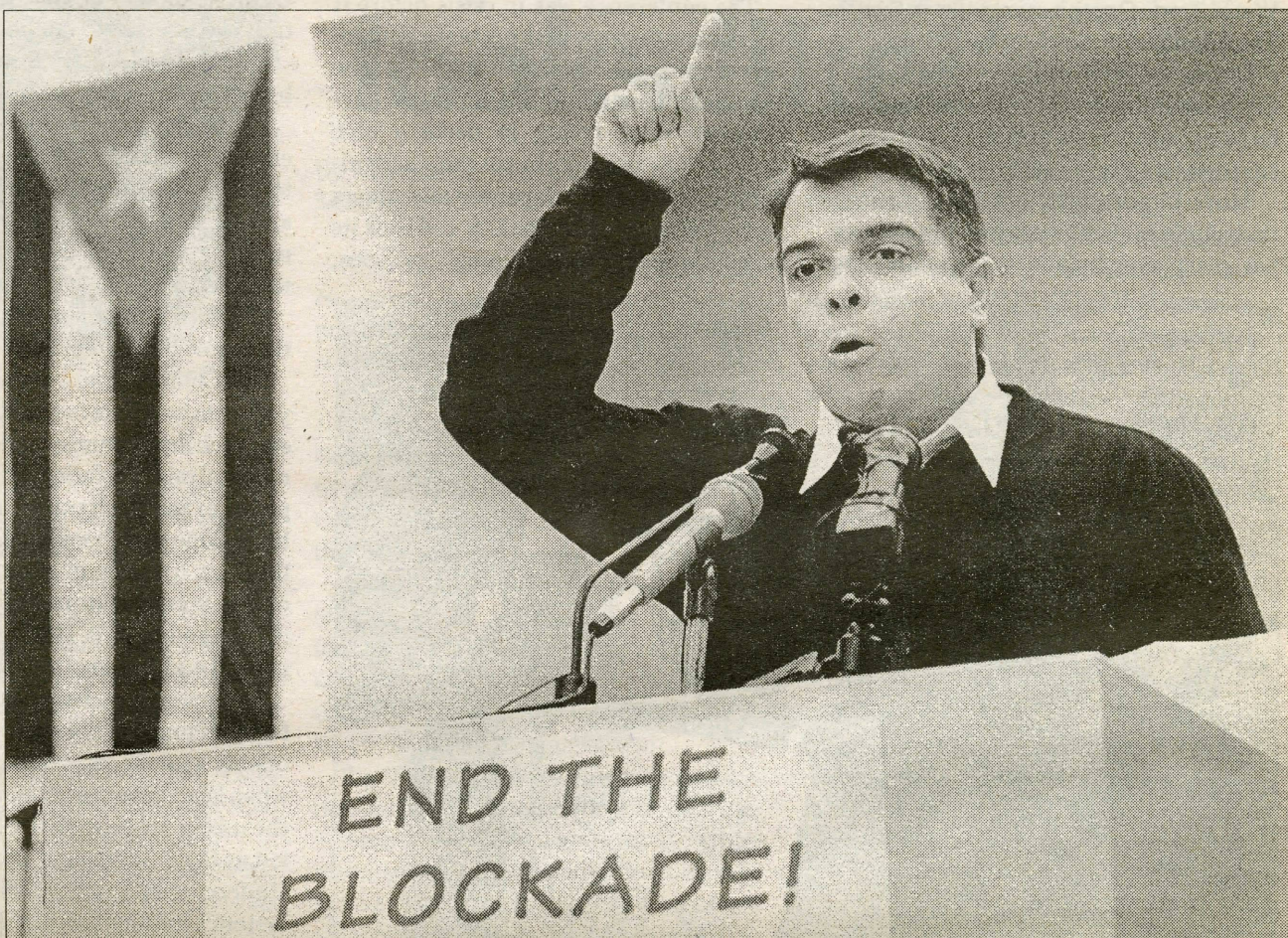
While the age for admittance to the Cuban Communist Party is 30, Perez Roque was in the party's Central Committee and the government's Council of State at age 26.

Perez gave a dynamic speech here about "the rights of all the inhabitants of the planet" and the urgent need for profound change to eliminate hunger, unemployment and poverty.

He made it clear that Cuba's position in the WTO debates was on the side of the oppressed.

"Not only have struggles taken place in the streets, there has also been a big bat-

Felipe Perez Roque blamed the world's problems on the profit system. "Cuba's opinion is that the current economic, financial and commercial system on an international level is profoundly unjust."



WWPHOTO:
BILL HACKWELL

tle inside the Convention Center. And the Cuban delegation has been participating ... in each and every one of the battles that have taken place. We have raised our voice there, defending the rights and aspirations of the peoples of the Third World, the aspirations of the poor and dispossessed of the planet."

To sustained applause, he read two brief statements, one by the trade ministers of the African countries in the WTO, the other by Caribbean trade officials. Both rejected the WTO deliberations as unfair and dominated by the larger powers. They refused to sign any consensus forced on them by the machinations of those same forces.

'International system is profoundly unjust'

The immense gulf between the rich and the poor was the center point of Perez's talk. His denunciation of the obscene concentration of wealth among a handful of billionaires found an enthusiastic reception from the multinational audience of 900 people, young and old, unionists and students, veterans in the struggle and new activists.

He laid the blame for the world's problems on the profit system.

"Cuba's opinion is that the current economic, financial and commercial system on an international level is profoundly unjust," said Perez.

"Such a system, which extends poverty instead of education, inequality instead of access to health, which maximizes profits but can't guarantee employment, and which destroys the environment, has no future whatsoever. ... The richest 20 percent of the world's population, according to the UN, controls 86 percent of the world's economy, 82 percent of the world's markets, 68 percent of direct foreign investment.

"In this conference there have been debates about Internet commerce. In the U.S. and European countries, with 600 telephone lines per 1,000 inhabitants, it makes sense. But what meaning does it have for Chad, where there is only one telephone for every 1,000 inhabitants? What meaning does it have for African countries torn by the scourge of AIDS, where today, to the shame of our species, 23 million African people are infected with AIDS, who are not getting treatment

because it costs \$12,000 per year?"

"Will this conference address such issues? Will their interests be considered? Or will their representatives become spectators in a game in which they're not allowed to participate?"

"Cuba believes it is impossible for such a system to survive, in which the fortune of the 200 richest people is greater than the income of 41 percent of the world's population. If a tax were leveled on only 1 percent of the wealth of these 200 richest people, there would be enough money to educate all the children of the planet."

The Cuban foreign minister spoke of the need for the people to resist and struggle. "Are we idealists? Yes, we are deeply so. We have the right to struggle in order to give our children a better world. Cuba believes it is possible if the available technologies and resources are used to the benefit of everybody."

The U.S. blockade against Cuba makes a mockery of its talk about "free trade." Perez described the severity of this 40-year-old crime against Cuba's people. But he countered the enormous difficulties they face with an optimism that they will prevail.

"I should say the blockade against Cuba has deprived us of food and medicine. It has deprived us of access to equipment and technologies, it has created difficulties for us.

"But it has not been able to kill our hope. It has not been able to take our joy away from us. Today we are more optimistic than ever, we are more certain than ever that we are right, that time is on our side.

"Now more than ever before, solidarity with Cuba is growing in the United States and throughout the world. Millions of men and women around the world understand our struggle. They support our dreams and they express it to us daily in demanding our right to be free and independent, to build a country as Cuba wishes. The blockade against Cuba must end!"

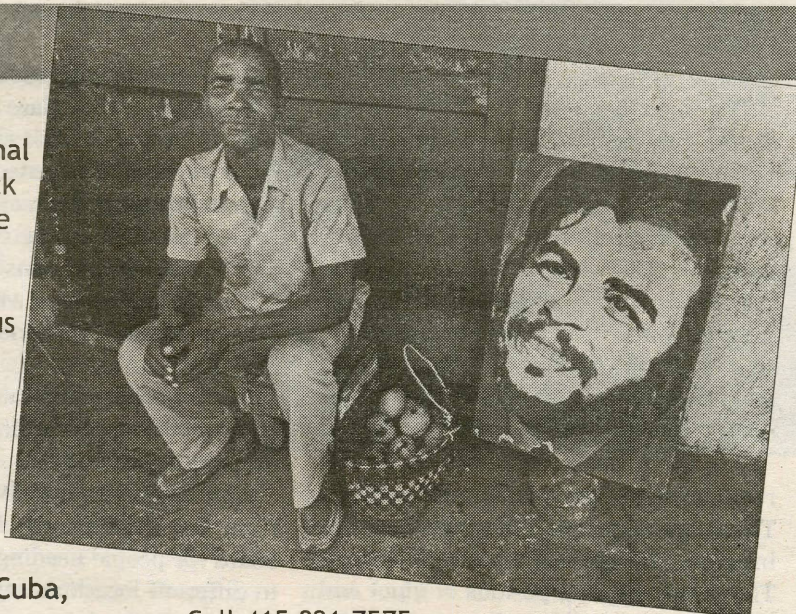
For the next two days, the National Network on Cuba—sponsors of the rally—held a national conference in Seattle to increase solidarity work with Cuba.

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

Similar but not the same

From Chicago '68 to Seattle '99

By Fred Goldstein

The U.S. government has suffered a humiliating defeat with the collapse of the World Trade Organization talks in Seattle. The humiliation came on two fronts.

Inside the halls of the convention, the Clinton administration was unable to cow its imperialist rivals and the Third World countries into bowing to its agenda.

More importantly, out on the streets thousands of demonstrators braved pepper gas, plastic bullets, tear gas and con-

cussion grenades to stand up against multinational corporate greed, environmental destruction, and the dictatorial arrogance of the rulers of the WTO.

The conference was in crisis before it ever began because of the intense antagonisms among the imperialist powers. The European Union and the Japanese government were trying to make a bloc against U.S. attempts to cut their agricultural subsidies. The Japanese and others were demanding that the U.S. roll back its protectionist "anti-dumping" policies.



Dec. 3 labor march of 15,000 against WTO called by the Seattle Central Labor Council.

WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

U.S. global agenda unglued

Continued from page 1

nation of capital, particularly U.S. capital.

The United States, when it was a rising capitalist country, depended on tariffs to protect its young industries from being overwhelmed by technologically superior English manufacturing. But now the United States is the imperialist top dog, and has declared that all developing countries must dismantle any protections and allow U.S. banks and industries free access to their markets, resources, and labor.

The freedom of capital is the only freedom the U.S. ruling class really cares about.

From the point of view of the U.S. capitalist class, nothing—including environmental protections and labor laws—can be allowed to stand in the way of maximizing profits. The Seattle WTO meeting was supposed to demolish the remaining barriers to capitalist penetration at the expense of the developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The militant street protests against the WTO had strong anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist elements. In the bigger, labor-led rally, the biggest response from the crowd was to militant and anti-corporate speeches.

The question "Whose world?" was on many placards and signs. Many banners and posters bore anti-capitalist slogans like "Capitalism kills all life."

The Seattle protests were interpreted in many developing countries like Brazil, Egypt, Cuba and elsewhere as taking a stand with the oppressed countries against the U.S., European and Japanese imperialists.

Beyond any doubt, the Seattle street protests emboldened and invigorated the opposition to capitalist destruction and imperialist exploitation all over the world.

And the demonstrations' success strengthened the hand of these governments—even some which have been very

much under the thumb of the United States—to resist the demands of the "Great Powers" in the WTO.

This led to a stalemate and then the collapse of the WTO meeting.

What the ruling class miscalculated

The failure of the WTO talks was a stunning blow, not only to the Clinton administration, as the New York Times reported in its lead story on Dec. 5, but to the U.S. ruling class as a whole.

How did the U.S. ruling class and its paid staff—the government officialdom—fail to anticipate what was coming in Seattle? Because in their calculations—as Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, often pointed out—they usually ignore the most critical element: the intervention of the masses.

The U.S. ruling class has been riding high in recent years, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Engorged with record profits, they have had seeming impunity to unleash state terror on Iraq, Yugoslavia and other countries which in any way try to resist the new U.S. order.

They had been feeling quite strong, maybe even immortal, as a class.

The great Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro once remarked, "Every ruling class thinks itself invincible until history teaches it otherwise."

Instead of being invincible, the U.S. ruling class found itself unable to control the street actions and unable to conduct one of the most important international gatherings to be held in recent years.

The great demonstrations in Seattle reaffirmed the most basic reality of all: The masses of people, especially the working class, are the real makers of history. There may be long periods of quiet and "class peace," but when the masses move, there is no more powerful force on earth.

The U.S. wanted to eliminate all taxation on Internet services, while the Japanese denounced Washington for protecting the "Microsoft economy." And, of course, the U.S. antagonized all the oppressed countries over so-called "fair labor standards."

All the heads of state, except Clinton, boycotted the meeting.

At the eleventh hour before the conference, Clinton had made frantic phone calls to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan and the head of the European Union, Romano Prodi, to get a last-minute agreement. They both turned him down flat.

Once the demonstrations broke out, the whole thing collapsed.

The Clinton administration and U.S. imperialism have become drunk with power—and such drunkenness lends itself to monumental miscalculation. That is what happened in Seattle. It wasn't the demonstrations alone that shook up the capitalist authorities. It was the militant determination of the demonstrators to physically shut down the hated WTO by standing their ground and defying the police.

The bosses also have to think about the fact that many of the demonstrators were openly against capitalism, at a moment when Wall Street is breaking records and the media are touting the capitalist market as the guiding light of all civilization. Undercurrents of hatred for the profit system's inhumanity are spreading to diverse sectors of the movement. In the streets of Seattle, they converged and broke through to the surface.

These demonstrations showed that global reaction inevitably breeds resistance, even in the midst of a great capitalist boom.

1968 and 1999—similarities and differences

Among the many militant chants of the demonstrators was "the whole world is watching"—the chant of the demonstrators at the 1968 Chicago Democratic Party Convention. Thousands of youth opposed to the Vietnam War battled the police after being attacked outside the convention center.

WTO over, strug

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

World Trade Organization delegates and corporation representatives have now left this city. But militant anti-WTO activists continue the struggle. They have vowed not to leave until all those arrested at the week-long demonstrations are released.

As of Dec. 5, hundreds of young people have occupied the plaza in front of the King County Jail—the site from which most of the 570 arrested are being released. For three days, activists have occupied the jail plaza throughout the nights, despite cold rainstorms.

The plaza is covered with plastic tarps. Many protesters are bundled up in sleeping bags.

Supporters bring donations of soup and other food to a makeshift kitchen with a propane stove.

Anti-capitalist, anti-WTO signs hang from the cement walls. There is a ride board for people needing transportation to different locations across the United States and Canada.

Members of the National Lawyers

There are many similarities between the two demonstrations. But some of the differences are very important.

The 1968 battle in Chicago came after thousands of anti-war demonstrations. It represented a new high level for a movement already fully in progress.

The movement that came together in Seattle has also had many direct-action demonstrations: for the environment, against sweat-shops and racism, for international solidarity and many other important causes. But this is its first united action.

One of the most important differences is that in 1968 the political movement against the war and the labor movement were far apart and suspicious of each other. The AFL-CIO head was George Meany, a super-patriotic reactionary who actually organized pro-war demonstrations and assaults upon anti-war demonstrators. Cold War politics still dominated the hierarchy of the labor movement.

The youth, who were the cutting edge of the anti-war movement, were oblivious to the exploitation of the working class because the labor leadership—with the notable exception of a few unions having progressive leaders—not only refused to participate in the anti-war struggle but showed open hostility to it.

Today the strategists of U.S. capitalism have to concern themselves with the fact that, while the youths were battling the police in the streets against corporate greed, tens of thousands of workers were marching under essentially the same slogans, animated by the same anti-corporate spirit. Many groups of workers joined the street demonstrations, including members of the Teamsters, International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and Steel Workers, among others. The ILWU shut down West Coast ports from San Diego to Vancouver for two hours as part of the protest against the WTO—something highly underplayed by the big business press.

As in Chicago in 1968, many activists, including workers, got a major lesson in how capitalist democracy works when you

Guild staff a table where they document testimony about the police brutality people have suffered.

On Dec. 6, members of religious and labor groups came to the jail for a support rally for the political prisoners inside. The lesbian, gay, bi and trans community is holding meetings to protest the massive police brutality and to win the release of all the activists still being held.

Activists set up a small stage by the front door in order to make announcements and read international statements of support to the crowd.

A cheer goes up whenever another prisoner is released out the front door.

All but 40 have now been released, but people are not leaving until all are freed. Those still being held include people charged with serious felonies and people from other countries who risk losing their green cards or being deported.

'Like the epicenter of an earthquake'

Many of the anti-WTO political prisoners were arrested on Dec. 1. They were put on buses and hauled out to a naval station where they remained for up to 15 hours without food or water.

SEATTLE

'This is what a police state looks like!'

By Key Martin
Seattle

After the WTO had to shut down because most delegates couldn't get through protests on Nov. 30, the demonstrations continued throughout the week.

Police carried out mass arrests on Dec. 1, jailing some 500 people. National Guard troops buttressed police lines used to blockade streets for blocks around the Convention Center and posh hotels like the Four Seasons.

Pointing toward their own protests, activists chanted, "This is what democracy looks like." Pointing toward the lines of troops and riot-clad cops, demonstrators chanted, "That is what a police state looks like."

Big "Free Mumia" banners were visible throughout the marches. Throughout the protests here there was evidence of the growing struggle to stop the execution of this well-known African American political prisoner and win him a new trial.

Many protesters—predominantly youths—joined a Steel Workers union march to the Seattle docks on Dec. 1. The spirit of unity showed, as did a growing sense of solidarity between the youths and the unionists of all ages.

When more than 1,000 youths later marched away from the docks toward downtown, chanting "No to WTO," they were still outside the "no protest zone." But police assaulted them anyway.

Cops jumped off armored vehicles, firing tear gas, percussion grenades, and plastic and wooden bullets.

Police also tear gassed those caught in rush-hour traffic, in stores, buses and on the streets. One 5-year-old child was in in-

tensive care after she was trampled by those fleeing the gas attack.

Doctors and other medical workers reported that police had trashed their equipment. And they added that no emergency medical crews were dispatched, even for an elderly man in a wheelchair who was severely gassed.

Police blocked Swedish Medical Center to prevent injured demonstrators from seeking treatment.

Police forced groups of young people down streets into "pincer" traps, then tear gassed and arrested them.

The head of the Central Labor Council, Ron Judd, was on the phone with City Hall for an hour seeking the release of 50 protesters. The activists had reportedly been gassed in police custody while they were forced to lie on the ground.

Despite mass arrests, protests continued late into the night, as people continued to join marchers headed to the Capital Hill district overlooking downtown.

Residents and shop owners—including many lesbian, gay, bi and trans people who live or work in the district—described what they called a "police riot." Witnesses said cops even beat residents who were taking out their garbage or parking their cars. They made any reporter who described their brutal work a target.

Capital Hill residents—gay and straight—marched together on Dec. 2 to protest this police violence.

On Dec. 3, a 10,000-strong labor march defied the "no protest zone."

On Dec. 7, Seattle Police Chief Norman Stamper announced his resignation following widespread denunciations of the use of violence against demonstrators by his police department.

Seattle police blocking Dec. 3 labor march from entering downtown area where WTO was meeting.

WW PHOTOS: BILL HACKWELL

challenge the ruling class.

Seattle was a coming together of a militantly anti-corporate, and to some extent consciously anti-capitalist, resistance movement with the workers' movement, forging solidarity in the streets.

Clinton's demagoguery on labor standards

President Bill Clinton went on television and showed "sympathy" with most of the demonstrators in order to derail and co-opt the movement, while of course violence-baiting a so-called tiny minority. In truth, it was the police who caused the violence after thousands of demonstrators held firm. In fact, the worst violence occurred the day Clinton was scheduled to speak in Seattle.

Even more deceptive were Clinton's statements to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and elsewhere demanding "fair labor standards" and threatening trade sanctions on countries that allow child labor and prison labor. This is the ultimate in demagoguery.

In the first place, this country has plenty of child labor—in the sweatshops and in the fields, orchards and vineyards of agribusiness. U.S. capitalists are subsidized by low wages, including child labor, prison labor and super-exploited immigrant labor, from

New York's Chinatown to Los Angeles to Texas and the maquiladoras on the border.

This country has the smallest percentage of unionized workers in the entire imperialist world. It has just gone through a 20-year anti-labor offensive. Millions of workers in government jobs are legally barred from organizing and the rights of labor are under attack every day. Many states have anti-strike laws. The Taft-Hartley law limits worker actions and hinders organizing and strike struggles.

If Clinton wants to concern himself with workers' rights, he has plenty to start with right here.

Bloc between Sweeney and Clinton

Even more problematical for the workers' movement is that the AFL-CIO leadership, headed by John Sweeney, has been pressing for the WTO to adopt standards tying trade to labor conditions and pressing for sanctions. He is in a bloc with Clinton on this question.

Has he forgotten that Clinton was the point man in pushing through NAFTA? That Clinton, as leader of the New Democrats, shunned the labor movement and turned to the right?

Clinton's demagoguery is meant to hold the AFL-CIO leadership on board for Al Gore's

Continued on page 9

Struggle to free activists continues

But spirits remained high. Activists "decorated" the buses and sang and danced through the night.

When they were finally removed from the buses, the police reportedly pepper sprayed and beat many of them. Many of the protesters continued to resist by refusing to give police their names or be fingerprinted.

The first protesters were not released until after the WTO meeting was over—late on Dec. 3.

But reports from the jail indicate that demonstrators are exuberant and defiant, despite their hardships.

Sarah Kerr said she was demonstrating more than a mile from the WTO conference on Dec. 1. Suddenly, she recalled, "The cops pushed us back and we were surrounded. All of a sudden tear gas, percussion grenades and rubber bullets were fired at us all at once. I got hit.

"And when you get hit by a rubber bullet you have a welt the size of a tennis ball on your body."

Carol Jackson was taking pictures for People for Fair Trade at the demonstrations. The cops swept her off the street and arrested her, along with other spectators.

She spent four days in jail.

"The cops weren't there to protect the people," Jackson explained. "They were there to protect the WTO. When you think there are children in sweatshops making rugs for pennies a day around the world, I'm not hurting bad.

"In fact, this struggle renews my faith in humanity!"

A woman speaking at the jail-plaza stage noted that one of the women who was gassed by the cops suffered a miscarriage. Because of this and other side effects from the gas, some demonstrators and an examining doctor believe there are highly dangerous additives in the cops' tear gas.

"Being in the anti-WTO protests was like being in the epicenter of an earthquake," said Peter Myhre. "I saw 17-year-old youths get hit by percussion grenades and they kept on fighting. Young people who had never seen tear gas before kept on demonstrating.

"This is building leaders into the next millenium. Agents for change. Things are going to change."

Youths here have become increasingly



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

politicized. They are talking like never before about what to do about capitalist sweatshop exploitation, attacks on the environment, and U.S. imperialist aggression.

They realize that while the WTO conference is over, the struggle continues.

Young demonstrator released after spending 4 days in jail. She was jubilantly received by a protest encampment at the doors of the jail.

World AIDS Day targets greed of U.S. drug giants

On Dec. 1, protesters in cities around the world marked World AIDS Day by targeting U.S. pharmaceuticals companies and the global push toward "free trade" as culprits in the spiraling AIDS pandemic. Demonstrators particularly focused on the World Trade Organization, joining those besieging the trade negotiators in Seattle and marching in solidarity elsewhere.

People took to the streets in Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa; Paris, London, New York, San Francisco, Wash-

ington and other cities. Everywhere their message was the same: Health care is a human right, and should not be a commodity sold for profit.

Jaime Balboa of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission said of both the Clinton/Gore administration and the WTO: "They have prioritized pharmaceutical lobbyists' concerns over public health. ... The United Nations' most recent statistics indicate that 50 million people now have HIV/AIDS. We must put saving lives before corporate profits."

Ninety percent of people with HIV and AIDS live in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. According to Balboa, big pharmaceutical concerns have used the Clinton administration, the WTO and any other tool to block oppressed countries from access to lower-priced HIV medicines.

"The U.S. has also bypassed the WTO, when necessary, and exerted bilateral pressure on countries like South Africa and Thailand to keep the life-saving medicine more expensive," Balboa said.

In New York, AIDS activists had reacted angrily when the NBC television network scheduled its annual Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree lighting for Dec. 1. They charged NBC executives with callousness in choosing to indulge in glitzy hoopla on a day that should be set aside to honor those struggling with HIV/AIDS. New York's World AIDS Day action targeted NBC.

—Shelley Ettinger

People win Round 1 in Vieques vs. U.S. Navy

Continued from page 1

ple's resistance, Clinton's announcement fueled further anger against the Navy. Many were especially insulted that Clinton did not deliver the announcement in person—instead issuing it through the hated Navy Secretary Richard Danzig.

"This fight is not yet over," Vieques fisher Carlos "Prieto" Ventura said in an emotional address on Dec. 3 to the media. "To those who thought that the Navy had good intentions, I hope this serves you as a lesson. Our people do not believe in them, never have and never will. Ever since they came they have lied, because they speak about human rights everywhere else but not in their own home."

Nilda Medina, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, the organization leading the fight in Vieques, stated that on that same evening—Dec. 3—protesters set up a permanent encampment in front of Camp Garcia, one of the military installations. She said they have blocked the front entrance since then.

"What we want to do with this action is to get a reaction from the Navy and to show that the people of Vieques are serious about their call for peace," said Medina.

The base doors have been blocked since then, and transit has been completely halted as of this writing. On Dec. 6, over 500 activists massed at the gates to prevent U.S. soldiers from leaving.

Ruben Berrios, a senator from the Puerto Rican Independence Party who has been camping out in Vieques for seven months, said that Clinton's decision was "shameful and unacceptable." He added: "Clinton knows that we are united and we are willing to go to jail if necessary to keep them from dropping one more bomb. We must keep up the fight."

Hector Pesquera, a leader of the Hostos National Congress, a pro-independence organization, said they also believe it is a victory to push back the war ship, but that the people must remain firm now more than ever.

"We totally reject Clinton's position," Jorge Farinacci, leader of Puerto Rico's Socialist Front, told Workers World. "We will intensify the struggle, we will strengthen our encampment and we will explain to the

people that this is imperialism."

Even Puerto Rico's pro-annexation Gov. Pedro Rosselló, flanked by his party's and opposition political figures, called the measure "unacceptable" because it "doesn't provide any assurances, it doesn't recognize the requirements that the people of Vieques have identified as fundamental."

Rosselló further said that "by not accepting this pronouncement, the process is still open" for further negotiations.

Behind Clinton's maneuver

While Clinton's decision has been universally rejected as too little by the people of Puerto Rico, some sectors of the U.S. ruling class also oppose the decision. Right-wing militarists insist that Vieques is "vital to national security." Others present the president's announcement as an electoral bid to help Hillary Rodham Clinton in her run for New York's Senate seat.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

When has Clinton, or any president for that matter, sided with the oppressed against the Pentagon? Whether it is war against the people of Iraq and Yugoslavia, or against the rights of gays and lesbians in the military, Clinton has proven that he will side with the brass at every turn.

So why has Clinton felt the need to make conciliatory gestures to the Puerto Rican people—first by releasing some of the Puerto Rican political prisoners in a limited clemency deal, and now by presenting himself as a moderate alternative to the Navy?

Clearly, Clinton hopes to buy time. By drawing out the standoff for months longer, the Pentagon clearly hopes to divide the Puerto Rican people and maintain its grip on Vieques.

There are deeper reasons as well. Puerto Rico has been a colony of U.S. imperialism since the United States invaded in 1898. But the Caribbean island has taken on new importance for the Pentagon.

Puerto Rico has taken on a critical strategic role in U.S. imperialism's hemispheric operations. Since the Southern Army of the U.S. Southern Command moved to the island this year, the U.S. ruling class must keep the Puerto Rican people in check. Their island has been made the practical headquarters of the U.S. Latin America op-



PHOTO: FRENTE SOCIALISTA/ANNELIESE SANCHEZ

The twin demands to oust the U.S. Navy from Vieques and to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners brought some 150,000 demonstrators onto the streets of San Juan.

erations.

With the moving of the U.S. Southern Army from Panama to Puerto Rico, added to the many military installations in this small island, Puerto Rico is a key military center for the Pentagon in the hemisphere. With Latin America in turmoil—from Colombia to Venezuela to Ecuador—the security of this headquarters is paramount to the Pentagon's aims in the region.

Despite the claims of the most extreme militarists, Vieques is not the only site in the Western Hemisphere where the Pentagon can prepare its bloody wars. The mere fact that the Pentagon brass have sent the Eisenhower on without stopping at Vieques, combined with the offer to reduce the "necessary" training time on the island from 180 to 90 days per year, is proof of that.

The U.S. ruling class is most afraid that the spirited people's movement that has risen up in defense of Vieques could easily spread to the other installations on the main island. The students have already pledged a general student strike and to block the international airport if the protesters in Vieques are forcibly removed.

The movement could start challenging the presence of the U.S. military in general in all of Puerto Rico. This would be a disaster for imperialism.

Clinton's announcement also came while tens of thousands were in the streets in Seattle battling against the World Trade Organization. It's unlikely that Clinton would have wanted to face the people's wrath on two coasts at the same time. The real repressive nature of the state would be too plain to see.

A genuine national struggle

The struggle over Vieques has shown the world the true character of U.S. imperialism's relationship to Puerto Rico. The unrelenting demands of the oppressor nation have temporarily united all classes in the oppressed nation of Puerto Rico against U.S. imperialist arrogance.

Even the most reactionary sectors of Puerto Rican society—those that have traditionally advocated the closest relationship to U.S. imperialism—have been forced to stand in opposition to their U.S. masters. No one in Puerto Rico today can say a single word in support of the U.S. position on the Navy's occupation of Vieques and expect any respect.

The struggles to come will make it clearer who stands most firmly against U.S. domination of Puerto Rico. The question of which class can lead the struggle is being posed in its sharpest form.

Socialist Front leader Jorge Farinacci told WW: "This is the time to explain to our people that what they are experiencing now is imperialism. This is the time to show that we are in a colonial-imperialist relationship with the U.S."

Farinacci announced that the Socialist Front, together with the Hostos National Congress and other independentistas, would be staging a Dec. 11 protest at the Roosevelt Roads military base, the home of the Southern Army of the U.S. Southern Command.

One thing is clear. Clinton's announcement on Vieques will not dampen the struggle in Puerto Rico. A new phase in Puerto Rico's long fight for self-determination has begun.

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Iraq Sanctions Challenge III is coming in January

By Sarah Sloan

On Nov. 28, the U.S. carried out 18 bombing sorties over three northern provinces of Iraq. These are on top of the 10,000-plus combat and non-combat sorties tallied over the 10 months since the U.S. and Britain carried out a massive bombing campaign from Dec. 16 to 19, 1998.

This time, U.S. bombs hit a school in Mosul, injuring eight people, including children, as well as damaging the school building and cars parked in the surrounding area. This came less than a week after 10 civilians were wounded in another series of sorties. The bombing continued again the next week.

The bombing is coupled with over nine years of genocidal sanctions that have killed more than 1.7 million people—mostly children and the elderly. Washington enforces these sanctions with a vengeance even as it claims to champion “free trade” in the world.

All this accompanies a destabilization campaign aimed at overthrowing the gov-

ernment of Iraq and replacing it with a puppet regime that will do Washington’s bidding.

To draw public awareness to this continuing war, as well as to show solidarity with the Iraqi people, the third Iraq Sanctions Challenge will travel to Iraq from Jan. 14 to 21, 2000. The delegation will be led by Ramsey Clark and other prominent leaders and will include up to 100 anti-sanctions activists.

They will be in Baghdad on the ninth anniversary of the beginning of the Gulf War.

The group plans to visit the school in Mosul that was bombed and document the destruction. It plans to deliver supplies collected in the U.S. to this school. It has also collected donations to purchase medicines desperately needed in Iraq, and will visit several hospitals to witness the dire effect of the sanctions.

This delegation follows two previous Challenges: one last December and another the previous May. The May 1998 Iraq Sanctions Challenge took 85 activists—community and religious leaders, trade unionists

and students—from 30 states to Iraq with \$5 million worth of medicine that was donated to Iraq in defiance of the sanctions.

Many thousands of people across the U.S. and around the world have participated in this protest of the sanctions and bombing by helping to organize an Emergency Response Network, raising funds to buy medicine and medical supplies and helping to get local press coverage.

The call for the Iraq Sanctions Challenge III concludes: “We know that no amount of humanitarian aid can truly meet the needs of the Iraqi people. Only a complete lifting of the sanctions and allowing Iraq to resume normal trade relations can bring an end to the country’s catastrophic economic situation. In the spirit of the civil rights movement, we refuse to abide by unjust U.S. laws or UN resolutions that result in death and destruction for Iraqi children, women and men.

“We call upon all who are dedicated to justice to join with us in making the Iraq Sanctions Challenge a major step toward ending the blockade against the people of Iraq.”

So far, the delegation includes over 50

participants from states as diverse as Kentucky, Florida, New York, California and Michigan, as well as from Canada, Britain, Spain and Italy.

To make a contribution or to get involved with the Iraq Sanctions Challenge, contact the International Action Center at (212) 633-6646 or email iacenter@iacenter.org. Information about the Challenge can be found at www.iacenter.org.

Kuwait vs. women

Women have once again formally been denied political rights in the oil-rich statelet of Kuwait. On Nov. 30 the Parliament voted against a bill that would have allowed women to vote and run for office. Hundreds of men cheered after the vote was taken.

In neighboring Iraq, women have long played a prominent role in society. Women vote and work outside the home. Many doctors, teachers and government workers are women.

The Western media would have us believe that the problem in Kuwait is Islamic fundamentalism. But the people of Iraq come from the same religious background as the Kuwaitis. It’s not religion but imperialist politics that have reinforced extreme reaction in Kuwait.

It was the former colonial power, Britain, that divided the area into different countries. When it set up Kuwait, it made sure that the richest oil fields were under the control of a feudal family, the Al-Sabah dynasty, groomed to protect imperialist interests as well as its own. This dynasty enshrines male domination in Kuwait even today.

But Iraq had an anti-colonial revolution in 1958 that led to a secular state and the development of a modern infrastructure. Iraq’s refusal to knuckle under to U.S. and British imperialism is the real reason it is under sanctions today—sanctions that threaten to destroy the progress Iraqi women and men have made since the revolution.

—By Deirdre Griswold

From Chicago ‘68 to Seattle ‘99

Continued from page 7

election and create a new weapon against the oppressed countries. It has the effect of throwing sand in the eyes of workers.

All workers and progressive people are opposed to child labor and low wages. That goes without saying. But what Clinton and Sweeney are telling the workers is that they are losing their jobs because of low wages abroad. They are saying that the only way to get job security is to shut out goods produced by low-wage workers in other countries.

This formulation is wrong and deadly. True labor leaders tell it like it is: workers are losing their jobs not because of other workers but because of how the bosses set workers against one another, putting profits above all else. That is the reason, pure and simple.

If a boss lays off workers, saying he cannot compete with low-priced goods produced by low-wage labor abroad, the answer is to fight against layoffs and for the right to a job. Workers in Japan or Brazil or India need jobs, too. Instead of taking the side of the bosses in the U.S. against their competitors overseas, whether it’s in steel, textiles, autos or whatever, workers here must make “a job is a right” into a fighting slogan of the labor movement.

How to fight layoffs

The bosses are the ones responsible for laying us off, not workers in other countries. The labor movement must use all the power of mass mobilization to defend jobs, regardless of the problems the capitalists may be having with competition. That is their problem, not the problem of the workers who made them rich in the first place.

Do not call on the anti-working-class robbers who run the WTO from Wall Street, London, Paris, Bonn, Rome and Tokyo to stick up for workers. They have no intention of doing any such thing. To even imply they would is an ideological assault upon the working class. Without an independent working-class struggle, we will forever be fighting each other while the bosses laugh all the way to the bank.

But most importantly, to apply uniform global standards for wages and environmental protection is to play into the protec-

tionist hands of the bosses and alienate the populations in the oppressed countries.

It cannot be repeated too often that we live in a world dominated by imperialism—there are oppressed countries and oppressor countries. The problem of low wages in Brazil or India or Thailand is the end result of an entire historical process. The general level of wages in any country or the ability of a country to cope with environmental hazards is determined by the economic development of that country as a whole.

While the particular conditions can be altered by the class struggle inside a country, no country can transcend the ceiling set by the limitations of economic underdevelopment, even under the best of circumstances. Socialist countries, for example, can change the general distribution of goods and services vastly in favor of the masses once the capitalists are overthrown, but even they are constrained in wage levels and many other things by their economic base.

To demand that an oppressed country live up to the economic standards of the imperialist countries, without offering economic development that underlies the ability to meet those standards, is sheer demagoguery.

Start by canceling the debt!

If Clinton wants to raise the living standards in the oppressed world, he could start by demanding a cancellation of the \$26 trillion debt that keeps a big part of the wealth of the Third World flowing steadily into the banks of imperialism. But Clinton’s program has allowed the IMF to milk the oppressed countries and batter down all possibilities of national development.



WW CARTOON: PAUL WILCOX

If Clinton wants to clean up the environment, he can start right here. Then he could arrange for a transfer of the necessary technology and funding to get it done in the Third World. What really is needed is reparations to all the oppressed countries for hundreds of years of colonial underdevelopment—the root cause of low wages.

Of course, Marxists are for prosecuting the class struggle to the hilt in the oppressed countries. The decadent exploiting bourgeoisies in India, Brazil and elsewhere should be fought tooth and nail—not only to abolish child labor but to abolish capitalism. This is the true road to national independence and development.

Marxists are opposed to all forms of exploitation, particularly the most brutal forms like child labor. And the working class movements in the oppressed countries must fight relentlessly against their own national bourgeoisies and landlords, especially those who act as agents of imperialism. Labor leaders in the oppressor countries such as the U.S. should do all that is possible to assist in this effort.

Imagine if the labor movement here helped organize a world summit of labor for international solidarity to coordinate the global struggle against capital. The AFL-CIO leaders could consult and strategize

with the many progressive unions and their activist allies from Asia, Africa and Latin America over how to approach the question of labor standards, child labor, etc. Such methods are the surest way to build the necessary solidarity to fight against low wages abroad.

The activists on the streets of Seattle were driven by internationalist motives of solidarity. But international solidarity cannot be achieved by narrow protectionist methods, which ultimately are regarded as chauvinism in the oppressed countries. This breaks down solidarity, playing into the hands of the bosses.

The labor movement should expose this vicious, divisive maneuver, rather than lobby for it. The struggle has to be carried out in the larger context of the struggle of oppressed countries against imperialist domination and for self-determination, national development and sovereignty. This is precisely what the WTO was set up to destroy.

editorial

Mars means war

Imagine the hullabaloo if hundreds of millions of dollars earmarked for social services disappeared into thin air. Imagine a group of welfare workers and kindergarten teachers—who almost by definition would be mostly women—having to explain to Congress and the media why x amount of millions just can't be accounted for. Missing. Gone up in smoke. No trace.

They'd be pilloried, ridiculed and probably fired.

How restrained the establishment has been about the Mars probe fiasco. Not just one but two vehicles flopped. The first one blew up last summer after the engineers—by definition mostly if not all men—got confused between inches and centimeters! The second one has now disappeared without a trace just when it was supposed to land and send back information.

Why the "I feel your pain" attitude of the U.S. ruling class media toward the scientists and specialists involved? Why are they allowed to hitch up their belts and head back to the drawing board with nary a criticism? It's not just a passion for abstract science on the part of those at the top. Nor is it compassion for disappointed genius. It all has to do with the military domination of space science and U.S. global ambitions.

Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of progress—as long as that "progress" has something to do with enhancing the clout of the Pentagon. There are always millions more to be thrown after the trillions that have already gone down the rat hole of military spending.

After all, if this project bombs, aren't there billions more to be found in social security to finance the next one?

Mass rallies in Cuba demand U.S. return child

By Gloria La Riva

Millions of Cubans have taken to the streets of their country in protest. Yet, in the ultimate act of heartless cynicism against a child, the Cuban right wing in Miami has held 6-year-old Elián Gonzalez Broton hostage and refuse to return him to his father in Cuba. Elián's father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, is pleading for his son's return.

The boy made national U.S. news when he was rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard on Nov. 25, after surviving two days at sea by holding onto an inner tube.

Little Elián was the victim of unscrupulous smugglers who bring Cubans from the island to Florida illegally—by raft or boat—for thousands of dollars each. The child was with his mother and nine other adults—all of whom drowned.

Elián was found in international waters. According to the U.S.-Cuba Migratory Agreement of 1995, this means he must be returned to Cuba immediately.

International, U.S. and Cuban law all recognize the inviolable rights of the parent to their child. But the U.S. State Department—in violation of the migratory agreement and international law, has given up jurisdiction to the state of Florida, saying it will be up to a Florida judge to decide the boy's future.

Andres Gomez, director of the Antonio Maceo Brigade in Miami and longtime activist for normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations, said, "The right-wing in Miami has such repressive influence that no judge will do what's right and return him to his father. Also, the U.S. courts have absolutely no jurisdiction over this matter."

The U.S. is a signatory of the Hague Convention of 1981, which provides for children to be expeditiously returned to their place of habitual residence. Cuba is Elián's place of residence—it's his home. No one, not even the U.S. State Depart-



Fidel Castro, Elián's father Juan Miguel Gonzales and his maternal grandmother Eleodra Raguel Rodriguez.

ment contests this fact.

Under the Hague Convention terms, the State Department is obligated to intervene in the affairs of Florida on behalf of Elián in order to force the state's compliance and return the child home.

'Mass protests build in Cuba'

It is clear that it will take mass public pressure to free Elián from his captors.

The child's plight has already received international attention. An overwhelming sentiment of moral indignation has swept Cuba. Millions of Cubans are marching to demand Elián's immediate release to his father, his four grandparents, and his country.

The Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) issued an appeal "to all honest men and women of the world to protest by all available means against this infamous action and to demand the return of the boy Elián González to his father and his relatives."

On Dec. 5, Cuban President Fidel Castro issued a call for the formation of com-

mittees in the United States and around the world that would demand the freedom of Elián. It is clear that world opinion is with Cuba's demand. South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, for example, spoke out strongly for the child's return.

The intent of the 1995 U.S.-Cuba Migratory Agreement was to discourage illegal immigration and provide for an orderly entry of 25,000 Cubans per year to the U.S.

However a longstanding U.S. law—the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966—gives full encouragement to Cubans to come to the United States illegally by granting them immediate permanent residency upon arrival and assistance granted to no other immigrants. But to get the residency, they must reach U.S. soil.

Cuba's position is that Cubans may leave the island legally with an exit visa. But they must receive a U.S. visa to ensure a safe exit. The U.S. government has for years refused to issue sufficient visas. This encourages illegal and dangerous travel.

TALKIN' ABOUT A REVOLUTION

Memory & underdevelopment

By Deirdre Griswold

Quick: poison gas. What's the first word you think of?

Don't be surprised if your knee-jerk response is "Iraq." You've been programmed to blurt it out by countless articles, editorials, talk shows and the rest of the supposedly objective U.S. media for years now.

Maybe the image that pops into your mind is of Israelis wearing gas masks during "Desert Storm." All that publicity about a gas attack that NEVER HAPPENED. It was to keep us looking in the wrong direction as the U.S. Air Force bombed the hell out of Iraq, killing over 100,000 people while taking virtually no casualties.

Now think again. Poison gas. People dying by the thousands, coughing, gagging, choking, their bodies clogging the streets. Has the real thing ever happened?

Yes it has.

Fifteen years ago, on Dec. 3, 1984, a Union Carbide pesticide plant leaked poisonous gases into the city of Bhopal, India. This U.S.-based transnational corporation was responsible for the immediate

deaths of 15,000 people. Another 500,000 people were injured by the gases.

It was truly the worst industrial accident of the modern era. The survivors finally won a settlement of \$600 each from the company, which made sure that none of its executives could be prosecuted.

Bhopal should be burned into our memories. It should be taught to every young person in school as an example of where corporate greed and arrogance lead. But it's not.

One of the charges made by environmentalists demonstrating in Seattle last week was that the World Trade Organization is planning to dismantle health and safety regulations aimed at preventing similar accidents.

The problem with the WTO is not that it promotes world trade. It is that this supposed world body is dominated by the imperialist states and the super-wealthy corporations and banks that control them. Corporations like Union Carbide.

Since this column is about revolutions, how does Bhopal fit in?

Because it should help us understand

better what has driven the great revolutionary struggles in the Third World. The revolutions of this century have been at least as much anti-imperialist as anti-capitalist. This means that in the oppressed countries people of all classes have fought for national liberation. They knew they had to take back control of their own resources in order to develop their economies—the means of production.

They had inherited woeful underdevelopment because of colonialism, a regime of plunder and pillage that allowed the colonial masters to build up their own industrial infrastructure.

Bhopal was proof that the imperialist corporations would cut every corner in their drive to extract super-profits abroad. While the governments of the imperialist countries constantly talk about aiding development, that's all fluff. It's profits they're after. The "development" they bring is roads and ports to help them bring out the raw materials.

The super-exploitation of the Third World is a day in, day out occurrence. It's been going on for centuries. We hear of its

worst features only when a monumental crime like Bhopal occurs.

U.S. imperialism in particular is determined to try and keep Third World countries from controlling their own technology. It forces organizations like the WTO, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to bear down on any country that doesn't go along with its program of selling off state-owned industries to outside investors.

When people in a country like China see Bhopal, they say to themselves, "That can happen to us if we don't control our own development, our own technology."

Does this mean that accidents can't happen anywhere? They can. But next time you hear someone talk mindlessly about how Third World countries can't be trusted with high-tech, remind them that it was a U.S. firm, not an Indian or Chinese or Egyptian one, that was responsible for the worst chemical accident in the world.

Revolution for the vast majority of the people in the world means first of all getting the boot of the imperialist exploiters off their neck.



WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD

By Andy McInerney

SOUTH AFRICA

Farmers union supports socialism

One of South Africa's unions for farm workers, the South African Agricultural and Plantation and Allied Workers' Union, opened its annual conference on Nov. 29 with a call for a socialist economy. Saapawu spokesperson Bheki Ngubane explained that the call was "in line with the union's belief in socialism as the answer to South Africa's economic problems, an integral part of which is access to land resources by the majority."

The union, which represents some 40,000 workers, met in Bloemfontein to take up organizational questions. Union leaders also discussed plans for job creation, minimum wage proposals, land grants, and other issues affecting farm workers.

The WOZA news agency reported that South African Communist Party General Secretary Blade Nzimande, African National Party Deputy President Jacob Zuma, and several leaders of the Congress of South African Trade Unions would address the conference.

The ANC, together with their allies in the SACP and COSATU, led a broad political revolution against white apartheid rule that culminated in an ANC government in 1994. But the capitalist economy remains largely in the hands of the old white ruling class and their imperialist allies. Workers and farmers across South Africa are debating how to move forward toward continuing the revolution in a socialist direction.

IVORY COAST

Palm oil farmers cripple industry

Producers of palm oil in Ivory Coast marked their second week on strike on Dec. 1, with refineries across the West African country all but paralyzed. Independent farmers, who produce 60 percent of the industry's crude palm oil, are demanding higher prices for their product from the industry.

Planters have set up barricades across roads in the Ivory Coast to prevent refineries from transporting raw materials, according to a French News Agency report. "The situation is paralyzed," said the head of the Palm Afrique corporation. A spokesperson for another plant, CIPEF-CI, reported that "Our plants are operating at a minimum."

NAMIBIA

Fishers strike

Some 86 fishers in the port town of Luderitz, Namibia, went on strike against the Lalandii Whitefish Processing Company on Nov. 26. The Pan African News Agency PANA reported that the fishers were fighting for payments for four years of underpayment.

The fishers are represented by the Namibia Wholesale and Retail Workers Union. Union Secretary General Aloysius Yon traveled to Luderitz to press the workers' demands.

Company officials denied there was a strike, PANA reported. Nevertheless, company representatives met with Yon

to try to ensure a speedy resolution to the "non-strike."

RUSSIA

Dock workers, crew protest shipping thieves

Shipping companies have long taken advantage of the so-called "flag of convenience" system, where ships may avoid certain regulations by flying under the flag of a country that offers incentives to ship owners. The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has been fighting bosses' efforts to use these practices as part of schemes to avoid paying their workers.

In the Far Eastern port city of Vladivostok, the Russian crew of the MV Seabreeze stopped working, charging that the company owed them some \$35,000. Dock workers refused to service the Seabreeze in solidarity with the crew.

Although the Seabreeze is a Russian-owned ship, it flies under the flag of Belize, a Central American country. Its previous crew also went without payment. The crew are trying to gain their money in a legal suit.

"This case is a prime example of why the ITF so vigorously pursues its campaign against the flag of convenience system," said ITF official Stephen Cotton. "During this week of action we have received reports from all around the Asia/Pacific region of non-payment of wages, including one from New Zealand where some members of the crew aboard a fishing vessel were working for just food."

ROMANIA

Workers protest poverty

At least 5,000 workers marched through Bucharest on Nov. 23 protesting plummeting living standards. Members of the CNSLR-Fratia trade union chanted "Resignation!" and "You

thieves!" outside government buildings during the protest.

President Emil Constantinescu heads up a pro-capitalist government aimed at restoring capitalism in formerly socialist Romania. The socialist government there was toppled in a bloody 1989 coup. Efforts to reimpose capitalist property relations, mostly by entering into agreements with the International Monetary Fund, have generated widespread poverty.

The Associated Press reported that "over the past six weeks, tens of thousands of workers and students have taken to the streets in cities across Romania to voice their dissent against the government and to protest poverty."

INDIA

Residents, interns strike

Thousands of members of the Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors in India walked off the job on Nov. 22 demanding higher pay, according to a report posted on the Labor News Network. About 3,800 resident doctors and 1,000 interns shut down all but emergency medical care at public hospitals in

Bhopal survivors protest

Fifteen years after one of the world's worst industrial tragedies, hundreds of residents of Bhopal, India marched on Dec. 3 to demand justice from the U.S.-based Union Carbide Corporation. Up to 6,000 Bhopal residents were killed on Dec. 2, 1984, when poisonous gas leaked from the plant to the surrounding town. Tens of thousands were wounded.

"The plight of the gas victims is still persisting because of the slow pace of settling compensation suits and the absence of fool-proof medical treatment for the survivors," said spokesperson Abdul Jabbar. Jabbar is a representative of the Bhopal

Mumbai in the central state of Maharashtra.

The doctors charge that their salaries are the lowest of any state in India. They also claim that doctors working 24-hour shifts are paid less than doctors who work shorter shifts.

Health Ministry officials tried to defuse the job action by promising to look into the salary discrepancies. But the general union meeting voted overwhelmingly to carry on with the strike until the residents received concrete proposals to pay for the raises.

PERU

Honorary citizenship for Kim Jong-Il

The Peruvian coastal town of Huacho, some 75 miles north of the capital city Lima, presented Democratic People's Republic of Korea President Kim Jong-Il with a certificate of honorary citizenship. Guillermo Aguero Reyebez, governor of the Huaura province, presented the certificate and a gold medal to the DPRK's ambassador on Nov. 26 to commemorate the eighth anniversary of Kim Jong-Il's election as Supreme Commander of the DPRK's army.

Gas-affected Women Workers' Organization.

Union Carbide gave the Indian government some \$470 million in 1989 for damages and injuries, but the criminal case against the chemical giant is still stalled in a Bhopal court. Survivors of the disaster filed suit against Union Carbide in a Manhattan court in November.

"The fight we started in 1984 is still on and it will not end until the people affected by the tragedy get justice and Union Carbide gets punishment," Jabbar said.

—By Andy McInerney

Haitianos y Dominicanos juntos protestan expulsiones de la D.R

Continuación de la página 12

rante la administración de Hector Trujillo, hermano del dictador, el General Rafael Trujillo, quien sostuvo el poder. Fue el General Trujillo quien ordenó la masacre en 1937 de 30.000 a 35.000 haitianos trabajadores de la caña de azúcar. Los haitianos se convirtieron en blanco debido a su color de piel y por no hablar un español propio.

El ejército dominicano usó el mismo criterio este noviembre para escoger a la gente y expulsarlos.

Observadores progresistas en Santo Domingo dijeron que menos de 600 personas asistieron al mitin en Santo Domingo. Para cubrir el propósito reaccionario de la marcha algunos participantes llevaban letreros que decían, "Haití es la responsabilidad de la comunidad internacional" y "E.U. 40% en sobrepeso; Haití: 40% malnutrido."

Ellos se quejaron de que los haitianos son una "sobrecarga" para la República Dominicana, ignorando el hecho de que su trabajo ha producido tremendas ganancias para los señores del azúcar y que hacen los trabajos que dominicanos no han hecho por décadas.

Algunos activistas creen que el tamaño del mitin refleja el rechazo popular de esta campaña racista.

Sonia Pierre dijo a Haiti-Progres, "Nosotros agradecemos profundamente a las comunidades neoyorquinas por sus manifestaciones porque tienen un gran impacto aquí. Ha hecho que los dominicanos piensen dos veces."

Amenaza de una invasión dominicana

Cuando Jean-Bertrand Aristide regresó a Haití en 1994, uno de sus primeros actos fue la de disolver al ejército. Y mientras que esto ayudó a defender a Haití de un golpe militar, esto también hizo difícil la defensa contra una invasión. Haití solo tiene 6.000 policías para oponerse al ejército dominicano de 100.000 soldados entrenados y equipados. Este es uno de los más grandes en América Latina.

Ben Dupuy, secretario general del Partido Nacional Popular (PNP), el cual es una de las organizaciones más fuertes en Haití, estuvo en la manifestación en Times Square. Dupuy dijo allí, "El PNP considera de que esta movida por el ejército domini-

cano es un atentado para influenciar tanto las elecciones en Haití como las elecciones en la República Dominicana."

Las elecciones para el parlamento de Haití están programadas para marzo. Las elecciones dominicanas están programadas para unos pocos meses después. Después en el otoño, se llevarán a cabo las elecciones para la presidencia de Haití. Se espera que Aristide gane globalmente.

Aunque la USAID, la agencia del Departamento del Estado de los Estados Unidos está controlando cómo los votantes están registrados e identificados en Haití, los votantes podrían aún así fallar en elegir un parlamento anti Aristide. Si esto pasa, la burguesía haitiana y sus respaldantes en Washington querrán desbancar las elecciones. Dupuy piensa que Washington preferiría usar al mandatario dominicano que derrocar al propio gobierno haitiano.

El Comité de Justicia para Haitiano y Dominicanos en la República Dominicana ha convocado otra manifestación para el 10 de diciembre frente a la sede de la ONU en Nueva York. Los lectores pueden llamar al (718) 284-0889 para más información.

Nueva York

Haitianos y Dominicanos juntos protestan expulsiones de la R.D.

Por Oscar Ovalles y G. Dunkel
Nueva York

La expulsión de haitianos y dominicanos de origen haitiano de la República Dominicana ha disminuido a fines de noviembre. Sonia Pierre del Movimiento de Mujeres Dominicanas-Haitianas (MMDH) atribuye esta disminución a la conferencia anual Africana Pacífica y Caribeña que se llevó a cabo en Santo Domingo.

Un haitiano que ha vivido en Brooklyn, N.Y. por más de 15 años dio una breve descripción de la manifestación de más 300 personas frente al Consulado Dominicano cerca a Times Square el 20 de noviembre en la ciudad de Nueva York: "Es grato ver a haitianos y dominicanos participando en la misma lucha contra el imperialismo".

Los manifestantes protestaban las más recientes acciones del gobierno de la República Dominicana contra los trabajadores haitianos y descendientes de estos que residen en el país.

Durante las tres primeras semanas de noviembre, el gobierno dominicano envió su ejército a las calles para apresar a cualquier haitiano o haitiano dominicano, no importa si tuviera documentos o no. Los efectivos forzaron a los víctimas en un camión, los llevaron a la frontera haitiana, y les expulsaron a punto de pistola sin siquiera darles la oportunidad de cuidar de sus hijos o su propiedad.

Mientras que el gobierno dominicano afirma que solo 4.000 personas han sido expulsadas, observadores del MMDH, quienes han estado en la frontera, alegan que la cifra real supera los 20.000.

El FRAPH es la organización paramilitar del ejército haitiano que fue organizado durante el golpe militar de 1991-1994 contra el entonces electo Presidente Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Su objetivo fue el de llevar a cabo los actos viciosos anti populares sobre los cuales el ejército no quería tener ninguna responsabilidad.

Washington concedió asilo al líder del FRAPH, Toto Constant, después de que Aristide regresara a Haití. Constant ahora vive en Queens, Nueva York, donde es propietario de una cadena de tintorerías.

Wilson Spencer, un activista dominicano, dijo, "Haití y la República Dominicana comparten la misma isla, la isla de la Española. Nosotros necesitamos liberarnos del control del imperialismo estadounidense. Es por nuestro propio interés común si luchamos juntos."

El señaló de que la burguesía dominicana obtuvo una ventaja al desviar la ira popular sobre la creciente inflación y el alza en el desempleo. Los trabajadores han tenido huelgas generales a finales de oc-

tubre que han paralizado a la República Dominicana por días. Entonces hubo una ola de arrestos y algunos murieron.

Los capitalistas dominicanos y los imperialistas estadounidenses sacan grandes ganancias de la República Dominicana. La familia Vicini, una de las más ricas allá, y la Gulf+Western, una corporación con base en los Estados Unidos, se han lucrado inmensamente de la industria del azúcar. Todos los trabajadores del azúcar en los campos y los molinos, quienes hacen el trabajo más pesado y peligroso, son haitianos o dominicanos de descendencia haitiana.

Otro dominicano, Héctor Gerardo, quien orgullosamente llevaba una bandera haitiana, dijo que el fue a la manifestación "para detener la represión racista del gobierno dominicano contra los haitianos."

Manifestación en Santo Domingo

Los organizadores hicieron el llamado a la manifestación en Times Square en oposición al mitin convocado por el ex presidente dominicano Joaquín Balaguer y el Cardenal Nicolás de Jesús López Rodríguez, cabecilla de la Iglesia Católica Dominicana. Los organizadores dijeron que

tal mitin daría apoyo a las expulsiones de los haitianos para "preservar la cultura dominicana, la ciudadanía y la integridad territorial."

Balaguer ha sido un instrumento del imperialismo estadounidense desde que regresó a Santo Domingo durante la invasión de 1965 por los Estados Unidos y se postuló para presidente. El Cardenal López Rodríguez no es sólo un "príncipe de la Iglesia" sino que uno de los individuos más ricos del país.

Balaguer fue vice presidente en 1960 du-

Continúa en página 11

Coalición exige trabajos seguros después de muerte de inmigrante

Por Mary Owen
Nueva York

Una coalición de activistas comunitarios de trabajo, religión y derechos pro inmigrantes se reunieron el 2 de diciembre en el barrio Williamsburg en el condado de Brooklyn para una vigilia y para demandar trabajos seguros. El evento tuvo lugar en el sitio donde el trabajador de construcción Eduardo Daniel de 22 años, perdió su vida y otros 10 trabajadores resultaron heridos después que el edificio en el que trabajaban se derrumbara el pasado 23 de noviembre.

"El pueblo unido jamás será vencido", este lema resonaba en inglés y en español conforme los participantes de la vigilia se alumbraban con candelas en la oscura y desierta cuadra de edificios incompletos. La mayoría de ellos eran latinos.

Los organizadores condenaban la negligencia criminal de los contratistas de la construcción quienes dirigen las operaciones de manera insegura sin respeto a la vida o el bienestar de los trabajadores inmigrantes. "Los contratistas siempre buscan a trabajadores indocumentados, creyendo que sus estatus migratorio les hace vulnerable e improbable de que se quejen de los abusos", afirmaron los manifestantes.

El contratista en este caso, quien tiene una larga historia de violaciones y quien desde el derrumbe ha huido del país, falló en soportar los pisos superiores de la estructura residencial. Los trabajadores cayeron desde una altura de cuatro pisos hasta el sótano en una avalancha de cemento aguado y metal. Este es el segundo edificio que se derrumba en la misma cuadra desde agosto.



Brooklyn, N.Y.,
2 de
diciembre.

FOTO: MARY OWEN

Daniel fue aplastado por bloques de cemento, barras de acero de refuerzo y otros materiales al caer los pisos superiores. Otros trabajadores fueron llevados de emergencia al hospital Bellevue Hospital Center para recibir tratamientos, incluyendo cirugía y algunos en condiciones serias y críticas.

Trabajos seguros son un derecho

En la vigilia, representantes de viarias organizaciones como: Laborers Union, la Coalition for Human Rights of Immigrants, la South Side Fair Housing Coalition, la Mexican American Workers Association, la New York Jobs with Justice, New York labor-Religion Coalition y la Mt. Sinai Occupational Health Clinics, hablaron en memoria de Daniel. Muchos otros grupos respaldaron el evento. Nydia Velázquez, miembro de la Cámara de Representantes y quien estuvo allí dijo que los contratistas que explotan a trabajadores inmigrantes recibirán cargos judiciales de violaciones o criminales.

"Nosotros necesitamos una amnistía general para los inmigrantes indocumentados. De otra manera tenemos que trabajar por menos dinero y eso permite la explotación, como con el compañero Daniel. Mientras no tengamos amnistía, situaciones como esta van a continuar,"

dijo Luis Montalvo, organizador de la Local 79 del sindicato Laborers

El comité South Side Fair Housing Committee, representado por un grupo de trabajadoras latinas, dijo que el Departamento de Edificios de la ciudad de Nueva York no ha hecho nada para corregir los problemas de la construcción en el área. Ellos prometieron protestar el 9 de diciembre cuando el Alcalde Rudy Giuliani tendrá una reunión pública en la comunidad.

Los activistas están demandando una investigación completa del colapso del 23 de noviembre, además la protección de los trabajadores quienes podrían testificar contra el contratista, compensación para la familia de Daniel y la cobertura de los costos incurridos por las heridas a los demás trabajadores, el desarrollo de un plan a nivel de ciudad para evitar futuros accidentes, y más fondos para tener inspecciones de seguridad y salubridad y para educación de los trabajadores sobre la seguridad en el trabajo.

Ellos también exigieron medidas inmediatas para asegurarse que todos los trabajadores—sin importar el estatus migratorio o su origen nacional—tengan garantizados sus derechos básicos, incluyendo el derecho a organizarse y el derecho a condiciones de trabajo seguras y saludables.

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