

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban generals speak  
about Bay of Pigs

— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## 200,000 attend Havana book fair

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
AND OLYMPIA NEWTON

HAVANA—"I need these books to learn about the world and about its history," said Manuel Antonio Ramirez, 20, an art student at the Academy of San Alejandro who was browsing through the Pathfinder booth at the Havana International Book Fair, held here February 2-10. "If you don't know what's happening in the world, you can't work to change it."

The student purchased a copy of the Spanish-language edition of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* and *Capitalism's World Disorder*, both by Jack Barnes.

Ramirez's hunger for books and interest in working-class politics was common among many of the thousands of people who visited the Pathfinder booth during the nine-day book fair.

A record 200,000 people attended the 10th Havana International Book Fair, reported Jorge Luna, general director of the fair, at the closing ceremony. In response to the high demand for books, the fair, which was previously held every two years, was made an annual event as of this year. People poured into the fairgrounds by the tens of thousands on weekends especially, as well as after work. To ease travel to the event, city authorities set up a special shuttle bus service from different points in the city as well as increased ferry service across the Havana Bay to San Carlos de la Cabaña, the old colonial fortress where the literary festival was held.

More than 110 publishers were represented at the Havana book fair, almost half of which were from 25 other countries, es-

Continued on Page 9

## Railroad engineers strike over work hours

BY BOB KELLER

SAN FRANCISCO—On January 26 more than 8,000 engineers struck Union Pacific (UP), the largest freight railroad in the United States, for several hours before a federal judge issued a restraining order. The engineers, members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), stopped rail traffic on the UP in 23 states covering more than 38,000 miles of track.

BLE international president Edward Dubroski said the strike was "something we were forced to do. Union Pacific chose to unilaterally impose new working conditions on locomotive engineers, in defiance of federal law." Though the new policy affected engineers in four of UP's six districts, engineers struck system-wide. During the strike the BLE directed its members to let passenger rail service continue uninterrupted, both on the commuter trains in Chicago run by the UP and on Amtrak trains that run on

Continued on Page 7

## 'End the bombing and sanctions against Iraq!'

Socialist candidate demands U.S. end 10-year assault

The following statement was issued by Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Los Angeles. Lyons spoke at a protest of 60 people February 17 at the federal building in Los Angeles.

The Socialist Workers campaign condemns the latest bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British military aircraft that resulted in two people being killed and 20 injured. We

See news article  
on page 11

urge working people and others to join us in protesting this brutal imperialist assault by holding demonstrations and teach-ins as a way of making clear that these attacks are neither supported by nor in the interests of working people. Instead, they serve the interests of the tiny class of multibillionaire families who run this country.

Washington's decade-long aggression  
Continued on Page 14



U.S. missile attack January 20 destroyed houses in Samawa, in southern Iraq, killing six workers at a veterinary clinic. Since end of 1998, the Iraqi government says 323 civilians have been killed and 960 wounded by U.S. and British bombing campaign.

## Farmers discuss crisis, discrimination lawsuit

BY BILL ARTH  
AND KARL BUTTS

ALBANY, Georgia—More than 100 people attended the Georgia Farmers, Marketing, and Trade Show Conference sponsored by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund February 9-10. Farmers from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and North and South Carolina were among those attending.

The conference included reports on the production and marketing of peanuts, mus-

cadine grapes, goats, cotton, and vegetables. Panel discussions were held on the crisis facing farmers and on the 2002 federal farm bill. There were also speeches by politicians and representatives of government agencies.

Randi Roth, the independent monitor in *Pigford v. Glickman*, the class-action lawsuit by Black farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for long-standing systematic discriminatory practices, reported on the latest developments in the implementation of the consent decree

that settled the suit.

Roth said a court order issued February 7 addressed two issues of concern to farmers. One was on the 400 to 500 "noncredit" claims concerning discrimination in government assistance, such as disaster relief. For these outstanding claims, the ruling mandated a flat \$3,000 cash payment be made to farmers, he said. The court also specified that debt forgiveness for Farm Service Agency (FSA) loans will be limited to date

Continued on Page 15

East Coast meeting March 11 in New York City to celebrate

The 40th anniversary of U.S. imperialism's first defeat in the Americas, the victory of the Cuban people at the Bay of Pigs, in defense of their socialist revolution.

A public launching of Pathfinder's campaign to sell *Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*; as well as *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*

The program will feature:

**MARY-ALICE WATERS**, Pathfinder president and editor of *Making History* and of *Fertile Ground*, launched at the February 2001 Havana book fair

**JACK BARNES**, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, author of introduction to *Bay of Pigs*

**STEVE CLARK**, an editor, *Bay of Pigs*

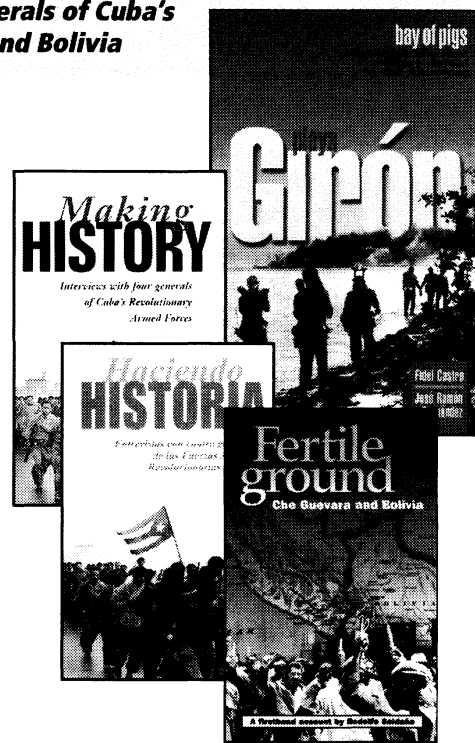
**MARTÍN KOPPEL**, editor, *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, organizer of Books for Cuba Fund, and chair of Havana book fair meeting to donate 300 copies of *Haciendo historia*, the Spanish edition of *Making History*, to the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution

**OLYMPIA NEWTON**, member, Young Socialists National Leadership Council and *Militant* reporter at Havana book fair

**NATALIE STAKE-DOUCET**, YS leader from Canada

The meeting will culminate a March 10-11 meeting of the YS National Leadership Council; feature efforts by SWP supporters to produce and sell Pathfinder books; and celebrate two successful Red Weekends of volunteer work at the Pathfinder Building in New York, and the new headquarters of the Brooklyn SWP branch in Sunset Park.

Hosted by the Brooklyn, Garment District, Newark, and Upper Manhattan branches of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. For more information call: 212-695-7358, 212-740-4611, 718-398-7850, or 973-643-3341



Israeli government presses assault on Palestinians — page 6

# Meat packers reject Fletcher's contract

BY STEVE PENNER  
AND DERRICK O'KEEFE

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—At a mass meeting of 400 workers here February 18, meat packers locked out by Fletcher's Fine Foods rejected the company's latest antiunion contract proposals. The bosses are seeking a deal to buy out senior workers and replace them with workers at much lower rates of pay.

The membership meeting of Local 1518 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) was called to discuss a letter the company had sent to each locked-out worker. The letter outlined a buyout package, gave a figure of how much each member would receive, and asked workers to reply by February 23 as to whether or not they would accept the offer. The buyout, which amounts to less than \$1,000 a year for senior workers, would be paid in three installments over three years only after workers had returned to the job for six months.

Workers also received a letter from Ross Bremner, executive vice president of the union, telling them that "the reason for the concept of a buyout is an effort to create room for new employees to come in at the new second tier rate of pay. If there are enough people that take the offer of a buyout this will assist in protecting the current rates of pay for those employees who do not take the buyout and return to work."

Many workers objected to the company going around the union by contacting workers individually about the buyout. Others pointed out that the company has said nothing about proposed pay rates or benefits under a new contract. Some workers also opposed the company's proposal to establish a permanent two-tiered wage structure. Under the old contract workers' starting pay was \$8.00 an hour, roughly half of what they earn after three years of steady employment. The company wants to deny workers hired under the new contract the possibility of ever getting close to the top rate.

"I'd rather see this place close down than have new people working for half of what we were making," said Tony. "I don't want to see this place turned into slave jobs. It can have a domino effect. It can affect our

children. This concession stuff will be knocking on our door in our future jobs."

Nancy Darlington, who works on the wiener line, was concerned that a permanent two-tier wage structure would create divisions among the workers and in the union. "No one wants to work beside someone who is getting much more for the same job. Its not fair. The company proposal is garbage!"

Workers said the company has so far refused to pay for holidays that workers had not taken before they were locked out. The union officials say they have negotiated an agreement for the company to pay for outstanding holidays from 1999 through March 9, 2001.

One worker, Coconut, was skeptical of the company's promise on holiday pay. "Let's wait and see, because they have told us many lies. They said before we would have it by the end of 2000, but it's already February" he explained.

After the meeting several workers talked to the *Militant* about ways they can strengthen their fight against the company's antiunion drive.

Andy Woellman, a meat cutter, urged the union to resume its boycott campaign and to start leafleting at supermarkets again, asking people not to buy products produced by Fletcher's or Superior Poultry. Workers at Superior Poultry, who are also members of



Militant/John Steele

UFCW Local 1518 picket line at Fletcher's in British Columbia, October 28.

UFCW Local 1518, have been on strike since July fighting for a first contract and union recognition.

The union had suspended the leafleting campaign during negotiations at the request of the two companies, the British Columbia (B.C.) government-appointed mediator in the Fletcher's dispute, and the B.C. Labour Relations Board, which is intervening in the Superior Poultry strike.

Woellman also pointed to the example of a recent rally held by nurses in British Columbia to bring pressure to bear in their contract negotiations. In addition, "all the [meatpacking] workers across Canada should stick together" to defeat the companies drive for wage cuts and other concessions, he said.

Shop steward Ian McLean encouraged fellow union members to have "a much stronger presence on the picket lines with people wearing signs and carrying banners. We should also go to other workplaces like Grimm's and Britco when they're going in and out on shift changes" and tell workers about our fight, McLean proposed. Grimm's Fine Foods, which is owned by Fletcher's, is the other UFCW-organized meatpacking plant in the Vancouver area. Britco Export Packers is a nonunion meatpacking plant where a number of locked-out Fletcher's workers have found jobs.

Steve Penner is a meat packer at Britco. Derrick O'Keefe works at Grimm's and is a member of UFCW Local 2000.

## Bilingual education battle brews in New York

BY HILDA CUZCO

The 26-year-old bilingual education program in New York State schools is facing attacks on several fronts. The *Daily News* reports that New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani is considering a lawsuit against the 1974 consent decree mandating bilingual programs and instruction in the English language.

"Regardless of whether you think bilingual education is failing or working, it doesn't make any sense for the school system to be run by the courts rather than the chancellor," said Deputy Mayor Tony Coles, Giuliani's top education adviser. One out of six of New York State's 1.1

million school children are enrolled in bilingual education programs—half in bilingual classes and half in English as a Second Language programs.

The *News* also announced that millionaire Ron Unz from California is conducting a campaign to roll back bilingual education in New York as he successfully did in California two years ago and in Arizona last November. "We are talking with attorneys, and we're talking with individuals who might be willing to act as plaintiffs," said Unz, according to the *News*. He is pursuing similar challenges in Massachusetts and Colorado.

These announcements surround a debate over proposals from a mayor's task force that are now before the New York City Board of Education. The measure calls for ending automatic assignment of students with limited English skills to bilingual classes. The task force proposals include limiting participation in bilingual education courses to three years and setting up what are touted as "English immersion" classes where a student must ask three times what the teacher means before he or she is told the answer in their native language.

The mayor and Schools Chancellor Harold Levy are packaging their attack on bilingual education in terms of helping children learn English more quickly. "The thing we should do is make certain that bilingual education has some finite temporary part, because what we should be doing is making sure that the children that graduate from

our schools are fluent in English so they have a better chance at success," Giuliani told reporters at a press conference at City Hall last December.

A study commissioned by the Board of Education complained that some students stay enrolled in the bilingual program for as long as nine years instead of the recommended three, and that the 4,000 bilingual teachers are neither enough nor adequately trained.

Removing automatic assignment to bilingual education, wrote Luis Reyes, an assistant professor at Brooklyn College, is taking away the "right" that was won in 1974. Dr. Reyes, a former member of the Board of Education, and former deputy director of Aspira, a Latino community group, said if the measure is adopted there may be legal challenges to it.

Aspira, along with the Puerto Rican Educational and Defense Fund, brought a suit in 1972 against the state board of education. A consent decree in 1974 recognized the right of Spanish-speaking children to an education and mandated the board to identify children in need of bilingual education and to provide them with the teaching of reading, science, mathematics, and social studies in their native language, as well as intensive instruction in English. The decision said the board must train teachers to be fluent in a second language and to recruit bilingual teachers as part of an affirmative action program.

## THE MILITANT

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# Castro comments on crisis facing Argentina

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

At a February 3 news conference in Havana Cuban president Fidel Castro said the U.S. government has been seeking a government in Latin America willing to sponsor a motion condemning human rights violations in Cuba at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Switzerland. "They are trying to use Argentina for these adventures," he asserted. "They have sent envoys to several Latin American countries in an effort to recruit someone to present the motion against Cuba."

The UN meetings have been a regular arena for Washington to try to advance its campaign of slander and assault against the Cuban revolution.

Castro pointed to the economic crisis in Argentina and said Argentine foreign minister Adalberto Rodriguez was visiting Washington that week to "implore U.S. government aid in exchange for a vote against Cuba in Geneva." The regime, which voted for a similar motion last year, recently signed a deal with the U.S.-based International Monetary Fund for a \$40 billion bailout loan.

"Under those circumstances it is impossible for a government to hold up dignity and respect," said Castro. "Now they need \$40 billion more—that is tantamount to licking the boots of the Yankees."

The Cuban president noted that Argentina's foreign debt, which at one point was \$61 billion, has ballooned to more than \$123 billion. Last fall, as Argentina was edging close to defaulting on payments of its foreign debt, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other imperialist financial institutions packaged nearly \$40 billion in "emergency aid" in order for Argentina to pay interest on its debt to U.S. and other international banks. The IMF loans were conditioned on the government imposing "fiscal reforms" that included cuts to pensions and wages.

The Argentine government responded to



Thousands marched in Buenos Aires last May against austerity measures announced by Argentinian government. Living standard of millions of workers has deteriorated.

Castro's remarks by recalling its ambassador to Cuba, Oscar Torres, and canceling a planned trade delegation to Cuba.

Cuban foreign minister Felipe Roque said Cuba was not recalling its ambassador to Argentina. Roque said Rodriguez was responsible for escalating tensions between the two countries "not only because last year he instructed his diplomatic representation in Geneva to join the U.S. maneuver against Cuba, but because this year evidently he is preparing conditions to repeat the Argentine vote against Cuba," which he said helps in "legitimizing [Washington's] blockade against Cuba."

Argentina's stagnating economy, the third largest in Latin America, is stoking nervous-

ness among capitalists in the United States and elsewhere. "Investors remain wary that a deteriorating political landscape in Argentina could unravel the country's economic reform program and with it, the country's economic recovery," wrote Thomas Catán for the *Financial Times*. Washington and other imperialists worry that the "fractious political environment" confronting the regime of Fernando de la Rúa is an obstacle to mustering solid governmental support for pressing through austerity measures, he wrote.

Meanwhile, huge layers of the middle class have been socked by the country's economic crisis. "Hard Times Squeeze Millions of Argentines Out of the Middle Class," read

a February 1 headline in the *Wall Street Journal*. The article noted that some 4 million people, or more than 10 percent of the population, "have fallen from the middle into severe financial distress."

The *Journal* article pointed to the "accumulated frustrations" that "have bred a growing middle-class militancy," and described an incident at the home of a small factory owner who rounded up a group of 100 friends and neighbors to chase off bank officials when they came to repossess his property. "Such debtor-activist groups are flourishing," the *Journal* warned.

In addition to these actions, protests by jobless workers have erupted throughout the country. The General Federation of Labor (CGT) has called for a 36-hour national general strike March 1-2 to oppose the regime's austerity policies.

## Thousands of jobs eliminated

Argentina's economy has been mired in a recession for more than two and a half years with an unemployment rate of around 15 percent. The poverty rate has soared and now 25 percent of the residents in Buenos Aires are classified as poor. The government's austerity measures, which included cuts in entitlement programs and doubling the rates for basic services, has had a deep impact on working people. The sell-off of the state-owned electricity, telephone, and health systems has eliminated thousands of government jobs.

In 1991, the administration of former president Carlos Menem tied the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar on a one-to-one ratio, resulting in higher prices and devastation of workers' living standards. Since that time the U.S. Federal Reserve Board has in effect controlled Argentina's monetary policy.

As the dollar increased in value relative to other currencies—which devalued in Asia, Europe, and Latin America—the high value of the peso became an albatross for the regime. Many businesses in Argentina crumbled under the weight of the overpriced peso, which reduced their exports. Small businesses have been hammered by the recession with some 35,000 companies shut down over the past decade. Homelessness has visibly increased, while the number of golf courses in the country expanded by 40 percent, the *Wall Street Journal* pointed out.

Meanwhile, the government is engulfed in a money-laundering scandal involving allegations that Central Bank president Pedro Pou lied about information concerning \$10 billion worth of illegal transactions. Leading members of Congress and other politicians have called for Pou's ouster, which has sparked jitters among Wall Street investors.

"There is enough information out there to warrant strong doubts about Pou," the *Washington Post* opined February 14. "But [the government] wants to avoid the risk of provoking another financial crisis by removing the Central Bank president at a difficult time for the economy."

## Washington turns over Cuban funds to families of rightists shot down in 1996

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In one of his final actions as president, Williams Clinton signed an executive order January 19 releasing \$96.7 million in frozen Cuban funds to the families of three rightists who were killed when their planes were shot down in 1996 for deliberately violating Cuban air space.

Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill February 12 authorized Chase Manhattan Bank to transfer the funds. The bank transfer includes \$58 million in compensatory damages for the relatives of three of the pilots, \$35 million in court-imposed sanctions against the Cuban government, and \$3.7 million in interest charges.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, described this decision as "very grave." He said that Washington's action "absolutely negates the possibility of any Cuban commercial transactions in [the United States]." He stated, "The United States does not have the right to use something it doesn't own.... By diverting the frozen funds, [Washington] not only strips Cuba of its legitimate funds but also materially supports the elements involved in terrorist actions against this country."

"To make things worse," Alarcón added, "The American government with that authorization encourages future terrorist acts and provocations."

As part of its economic war against the Cuban revolution, Washington had frozen more than \$120 million in payments due to Cuba's telephone company for bilateral telecom services provided between 1966 and 1994.

In response to increased provocations by

Brothers to the Rescue, which had repeatedly violated Cuban air space despite numerous warnings by the Cuban government and with the full knowledge of U.S. government authorities, Cuban forces shot down two of their planes. Under a suit filed in U.S. courts, the pilots' families in 1997 were granted a \$187 million judgment against the Cuban government.

Shortly after the shootdown, Clinton signed into law the Helms-Burton Act, which further tightened the four-decade-long U.S. embargo against Cuba. That same year, the U.S. government passed the so-called Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which allows U.S. citizens to

go to U.S. courts to seize frozen assets of nations targeted by Washington.

Under a "Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act," which Congress passed last October, the U.S. Treasury could seize frozen assets of governments Washington claims are terrorist, including Iran, Libya, and Cuba, and award these funds to plaintiffs who file lawsuits against these governments.

In response to this move, the Cuban government adopted a decree on October 23 imposing a 10 percent tax on all phone calls between the two countries. In December, Havana cut direct telephone service with the United States after Washington refused to pay the tax.

## Meat packer joins 'Militant' and 'PM' staff

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Róger Calero has joined the staff of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, the *Militant's* sister publication issued monthly in Spanish.

Calero, 31, lived in the Midwest for the past year, working in the cutting department at the IBP hog slaughterhouse in Perry, Iowa, and more recently on the kill floor at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has been part of the effort to organize the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union at Dakota Premium, a beef cut-and-kill plant where workers voted 112-71 to affiliate with UFCW Local 789 last July. Workers subsequently beat back Dakota's challenge to the victory before the National Labor Relations Board and are currently fighting for a contract.

Calero was part of a delegation of UFCW members who traveled to Bloomer, Wisconsin, on the Labor Day weekend last year to support dairy farmers carrying out a "milk dump" to protest the below-cost prices they receive for their product, and he went to Omaha, Nebraska, to talk with meatpacking workers carrying out a union organizing drive at Nebraska Beef.

Calero was born in Nicaragua, where through an anticapitalist revolution work-

ers and farmers overthrew the U.S.-backed dictator in 1979. His experience as a young participant in the revolutionary process, including his efforts to understand its decline when the leadership turned away from advancing the revolutionary conquests, left him searching for a scientific understanding of what had happened, Calero said. When he met members of the Socialist Workers Party in Los Angeles in the early 1990s, he was immediately attracted to the explanation given by socialists of the importance of the revolution and the lessons of its decline, which is contained in *Nueva Internacional* no. 3.

As he became active in the socialist movement, Calero participated in struggles against Proposition 187, an anti-immigrant measure on the California in 1994. He was a founding member of the Young Socialists in 1994 and remained a member until released in 1995 to take on greater responsibilities in the SWP.

Calero did a stint as a volunteer in Pathfinder's printshop from 1995 through 1999, where he worked in the bindery and on the printing press. He has been a volunteer for *PM* over the

years, translating articles after work for the magazine. He is currently assisting Pathfinder Press in translating material for the forthcoming book, *Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*.



Róger Calero speaking at Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, July 2000.

Militant/Linda Joyce

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# New Jersey printers strike over takebacks

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

NORTH BRUNSWICK, New Jersey—More than 250 workers at Webcraft, Inc., walked off the job here after contract negotiations stalled. "They want us to work 12-hour days at straight time and on holidays and weekends also at straight time," said Lord Pittman, explaining why he voted to strike.

The workers, members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE), went on strike February 4 after the company's final contract offer was presented to them. The strike vote was 243-13.

Only two workers have crossed the line to date. Some 20 workers are also on strike at another Webcraft plant in Newark.

The bosses seek to impose "alternate work schedules;" cutbacks in overtime premium pay for Saturday, Sunday, and holidays; and gut seniority rights, explained picket captain Ken Zsorey. "We are already working eight hours a day, seven days a week," he said. The company also wants to subcontract out some jobs, he pointed out. Several strikers say the company needs to

hire more workers.

"Any employee with 12 years or less can be forced into the alternate work schedule," said J.R. Friedland, an 18-year veteran at the plant. "For the last three years the company said they're not making any money and that this is necessary for their clients. It's not our fault if they make bad business decisions. There's no limit to what they want and if you don't like it, they say 'hit the door.'"

Webcraft, a direct-mail company with about 2,000 employees worldwide, is a subsidiary of Vertis, a \$2-billion conglomerate with 10,000 workers at 141 facilities around the world. Webcraft has annual sales of \$475 million.

This strike is the first in the 32-year history of the company, which prints and packs direct mail.

Many of the workers are skilled web press operators and others are packers of the material printed.

James Duffy, an operator with 19 years at the company and a member of the union negotiating committee, described the process that led up to the strike. "In 1992 we



Militant/Kari Sachs

**Morale is high among members of Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Union (PACE) on strike against Webcraft in North Brunswick, New Jersey. Company seeks to impose "alternative work schedules" and cutbacks in overtime pay.**

gave back 5 percent in the form of four sick days and one paid holiday a year. Now, they want to take away even more. They want us to give back six sick days. They want to make this a nonunion shop. I am proud of my fellow workers. We stuck together and surprised the company."

Friedland said the company imposed a two-tier contract in 1992 after they brought in consultants, fired some management personnel, and threatened to close down a building and lay off 67 workers. "They laid off the workers anyway," he said.

Workers say the company is operating the plant with scabs and supervisors, although only four or five out of 14 presses are working.

Webcraft is seeking an injunction against the strike, claiming that it is "illegal" because the union did not give the company prior notification that they were intending to walk out.

Company spokeswoman Dawn Landers Ey was quoted in the *Newark Star-Ledger* February 9 as saying, "We are hopeful the illegal work stoppage will end.... Our agreement with the negotiating committee called for modification to payroll and assignments which would allow flexible schedules that could lead to a reduction in the amount of overtime."

Morale among the strikers on the picket line is high. Honking horns in solidarity with the strike resound from the many cars passing by the plant, which is located on busy Route 1. Strikers report that different unions and individuals have stopped by with food and coffee. "We're definitely going to win," said picket captain Ken Zsorey. "They're hurting."

*Nancy Rosenstock is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 506 in Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Maurice Williams contributed to this article.*

## Japanese protest U.S. sinking of fishing boat

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Outcry is growing in Japan over the February 9 sinking of the Japanese fishing vessel *Ehime Maru* by a U.S. nuclear submarine. Officers on the U.S. boat were entertaining wealthy U.S. citizens by allowing them to sit at the submarine's controls while carrying out a rapid surfacing exercise in heavily traveled waters off Honolulu.

The collision immediately sank the 191-foot fishing vessel, killing nine Japanese, including three crew members, four students, and two teachers. The students were being trained in commercial fishing.

The sinking occurred on the same day that Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Earl Hailston met with local officials from the island of Okinawa to apologize for calling them "nuts and a bunch of wimps" in an e-mail to Marine commanders. The note expressed Hailston's reaction to local anger about an incident in which a Marine allegedly lifted the skirt of a young Japanese girl to photograph her underwear. Of the 47,000 U.S. military forces stationed on 39 bases in Japan, 26,000 are located on Okinawa, 1,000 miles southwest of Tokyo.

The *USS Greeneville*, a 362-foot nuclear-powered attack submarine, was carrying out a maneuver called an emergency main ballast blow, described in the *Washington Post* as a "super-rapid ascent from hundreds of feet below the ocean surface" which "sends the submarine rocketing through the water and then breaching like a whale." There were 15 civilian guests on board at the time, two of them at control positions.

When the sub reached the surface, it collided with the *Ehime Maru* with the force of a torpedo, tearing open the engine room and causing fuel to spill out. The ship sank in 10 minutes.

The *Greeneville*'s crew did nothing to

save the survivors, according to Hisao Onishi, the Japanese ship's captain, and rescue work did not start until the Coast Guard arrived about an hour later. "I expected the crew to drop a lifeboat, but they just watched," Onishi said.

A U.S. Navy spokesperson, Lt. Cmdr. Conrad Chun, said the submarine crew "was unable to take survivors on board due to the hazardous sea conditions," which were described as six- to eight-foot waves.

Captain Onishi, however, said the waves did not even breach the life rafts that he and other survivors were using. Japanese prime minister Yoshiro Mori told the U.S. ambassador that the Japanese people have a "deep distrust" of the Navy's account.

As the facts emerged about the presence of civilian guests at the controls of the ship, Japanese defense minister Toshitsugu Saito said their presence was "outrageous" and called the Navy "slack." President George Bush stated publicly that the Defense Department should review the policy of routinely inviting civilian "opinion leaders" to witness or participate in military exercises.

The visit of some of the civilians on the *Greeneville* was arranged by Adm. Richard Macke, who was forced to retire in 1995 because of anger in Japan at remarks he made about the conviction of three U.S. servicemen for the rape of a Japanese schoolgirl in Okinawa. Macke said the whole matter could have been avoided if the men had paid a prostitute instead. "For the price they paid to rent the car" they were driving, he told reporters, "they could have had a girl."

Last July, a Marine stationed in Okinawa was arrested for entering an unlocked apartment and sexually molesting a 14-year-old girl while she was sleeping, and an Air Force sergeant was accused of a hit-and-run crime against a pedestrian on the island. The fol-

lowing month another Marine was convicted of raping a local woman.

During the annual summit meeting of the world's leading capitalist industrial powers on Okinawa last July, 27,000 Okinawans surrounded the Kadena Air Base in protest of the presence of U.S. troops there. On February 15 an assembly in the town of Chatan, Okinawa, unanimously called for the withdrawal of all U.S. Marines from the island and the resignation of General Hailston for his insulting remarks. The Okinawa City assembly had called for Hailston's dismissal a week earlier.

In addition, the Chatan assembly demanded the U.S. military hand over a Marine suspected in a series of arson attacks, which the Pentagon at first refused, and then agreed to February 16. Working people in Okinawa have opposed the U.S. bases since they were built following World War II.

The debate in Japan about the sinking of the trawler and the presence of the U.S. military in Okinawa takes place as the Bush administration is pressing Tokyo to cooperate in building the antimissile shield the new administration is promoting.

## Reprint volunteers raise funds

BY RUTH CHENEY

OAKLAND, California—Since its inception three years ago, the international effort to digitize and keep in print books published by Pathfinder Press has been self-financing. The more than 200 volunteers around the world who work on this project are proud of this accomplishment.

Each volunteer provides his or her own computer, Internet access, and software programs. In addition, there are fairly substantial expenses every month for which the project as a whole takes responsibility, such as \$500 for the database and \$600 for graphics. These regular expenses are more than covered by a monthly pledge base that is now \$1,728 with contributions of \$5 to \$30 a month coming from 93 volunteers. In all, more than \$32,000 has been contributed to the reprint project.

The long-standing debts the volunteers had for database rental fees and for graphics work are now completely paid off. We are now working to pay off the debt to Pathfinder Press for books that have been distributed to volunteers over the past few years for scanning, proofreading, graphics reproduction, and other use, which comes to \$10,000. The current surplus of income over expenses means that \$228 a month can now be set aside for this debt repayment. Our goal is to raise our monthly pledge base so the debt can be paid off at a faster rate.

The many changes the project has gone through recently—from the expansion of the graphics and formatting production teams, the institution of additional quality checks, the production of new books, and producing the ads in *New International*—have also

been financed by the volunteers. We spent \$900 for two new printers, ink, and photo-quality paper so that volunteers in graphics can produce proof prints of the covers on 11x17 paper. We've also bought several fonts, font reference books, and software for graphics volunteers, who check the final files to make sure they will work perfectly on the press.

The steering committee of the volunteers is also urging those active in the Pathfinder Reprint Project to become qualified Pathfinder sales representatives and to participate in selling the books we produce to libraries and bookstores around the world, starting with the cities we live in. This will complement the work of creating the books: there aren't many who would be better at explaining the value of a book than someone who has proofread, formatted, indexed, or created the cover or photo signature for it.

Contributions to the project's work can be mailed to: The Reprint Project, 3542 Fruitvale Ave., #245, Oakland, CA 94602-2327.

If you would like to participate in the effort to digitize the books, please contact Ruth Cheney at RuthChen@pacbell.net.



**Japanese protesters surround U.S. air base in Okinawa, July 2000. Anger over Washington's military presence on island and sinking of Japanese vessel is growing.**

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# Clinton's pardon of Rich sparks controversy

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Over the past few weeks a major controversy has erupted in U.S. politics over William Clinton's decision in his last day as president to pardon billionaire fugitive commodities trader Marc Rich. Prosecutors in the U.S. attorney's office in New York have opened a criminal investigation into the pardon. High profile hearings are taking place in both houses of Congress. And Clinton himself, in a highly unusual move right after stepping down from the presidency, released a major Op-Ed column for the *New York Times* in defense of his pardon decisions.

The debate around this pardon with its increasingly strident tone has become the latest flash point in the factional disputes in bourgeois politics in the United States. Clinton, who remains the central figure in the Democratic Party even though his presidency is over, has been sharply criticized by liberal Democrats for the pardons. Many Republicans and rightists are taking advantage of the Rich pardon to hypocritically paint themselves as the bearers of morals and ethics as opposed to liberals.

The criminal investigation was initiated by Mary Jo White, the United States attorney in New York and head of the office that indicted Rich in 1983. Grand jury subpoenas will be issued for bank records and other documents in an effort to show that the pardon was issued in exchange for a bribe in the form of huge contributions by Rich's ex-wife Denise of \$1.1 million to the Democratic Party and \$450,000 to the Clinton Presidential Library Fund.

## Congressional hearings

The House Government Reform Committee has scheduled its second hearing for March 1 with several of Clinton's former advisers scheduled to testify, which may include Bush administration official Lewis Libby, vice president Richard Cheney's chief of staff and formerly a lawyer for Rich. Citing her constitutional right against self-incrimination, Denise Rich has refused to answer questions before the congressional committee.

Meanwhile, Sen. Arlen Specter, a Republican from Pennsylvania, suggested that the Senate Judiciary Committee might ask Clinton to testify about the pardons.

Rich and his business associate Pincus Green, who was also pardoned, fled to Switzerland in 1983 after conducting what the *Washington Post* said was "the largest tax evasion scheme in U.S. history." Federal prosecutors in New York accused them of 50 counts of racketeering, and fraud, and evading \$48 million in taxes. The Belgian-born Rich, who grew up in the United States and has since renounced his U.S. citizenship, holds Israeli and Spanish citizenship.

Rich set up his own foundation in Israel and over the past 20 years has donated around \$100 million to Israeli hospitals, museums, and other charitable efforts. According to the *New York Times*, he also worked closely with Mossad, the Israeli secret police. Among those sending letters backing Rich's pardon was Shabtai Shavit, who was chief of Mossad from 1989 to 1996.

In pardoning Rich, Clinton failed to follow the normal procedure of fully consulting with the Justice Department prior to granting a pardon. According to a Justice Department figure testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, the department was not even informed of the impending pardon until shortly after midnight on January 20.

Clinton's pardon of Rich was one of 140 he issued January 20, along with 36 commuted sentences. Many of these individuals had political and personal connections to the White House, and themselves became quite wealthy through embezzling clients, tax evasion, and bribery. One not included on the list despite an active campaign by his supporters for clemency was Leonard Peltier, a Native American rights fighter who was convicted in 1975 on the frame-up charge of killing two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. During his eight years in office Clinton granted approximately 450 pardons and commutations.

A president's pardon authority is unreviewable. In fact, it's been a common practice for governors and presidents to issue pardons to their friends, and other well-to-do people convicted of various crimes.

Bush cabinet appointees, former governors Christine Whitman from New Jersey and Thomas Thompson from Wisconsin, each issued a raft of pardons for well-placed and well-to-do people before leaving office. Clinton in his Op-Ed column pointed to Gerald Ford's pardon of former president Richard Nixon, and former president George Bush's pardon in the early 1990s of former defense secretary Caspar Weinberger, among others.

At the congressional inquiry several Republican congressmen backed the initiation of a criminal investigation of Clinton's action. A number of Democrats, including long-time backers of the former president, also jumped ship and joined in sharp criticism of Clinton's pardon of Rich.

A column in the *National Review*, signed by "Democrat X," said Democrats who jumped ship, no longer seeing any political advantage in defending a now former president, include many "who most reflexively defended Clinton's past ethical lapses, most notably the Lewinsky scandal."

The column said that "there is something else going on here, at least on the left wing of the Democratic party: a desire to separate Democrats from both Clinton's personal failings and from his distinctive policy orientation—to 'get over' both Clinton and Clintonism." This wing of the Democratic Party came out of the elections looking to "the future, and the claim that a Gore-style [populist] message—some whisper, with a better messenger—is a sure winner in 2004."

Sen. Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York, said, "The pardoning of fugitives stands our criminal justice system on its head and makes a mockery of it."

William Daley, who was secretary of commerce in the Clinton administration and also chairman of Albert Gore's presidential campaign, described the pardon as, "terrible, devastating, and it's rather appalling." He added, "Bush ran on bringing dignity back, and I think the actions by Clinton of the last couple of weeks are giving him a pretty good platform."

Sen. Paul Wellstone from Minnesota, stated, "It puts back into sharp focus all the questions about values and ethics in relation to the Clinton administration." Sen. Joseph Biden from Delaware added, "I just think it's totally indefensible."

In his Op-ed column, which appeared February 18, the former president wrote that there were substantial "legal and foreign policy reasons" for the Rich pardon,

## U.S. officials challenge Brazil's AIDS program

BY MAGGIE TROWE

U.S. trade representatives, acting on behalf of the pharmaceutical giants, are challenging Brazilian laws that allow the production of low-cost pharmaceuticals to be used in the treatment of people with HIV/AIDS.

U.S. officials, responding to complaints from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, claim in a challenge before the World Trade Organization that Brazil is violating intellectual property rights.

In 1997, the Brazilian government waived patent rights on HIV/AIDS drugs and began permitting local companies to produce inexpensive versions of the same triple therapy cocktail that has resulted in better survival rates in the United States.

Now nearly all Brazilians with AIDS get the cocktail free of charge, and as a result, the death rate has dropped by 50 percent. Brazil has a public health law that requires patent holders of essential medications to either produce drugs locally at a controlled price or allow a local company to do so.

### Prices 'beyond the realm of this world'

Brazilian national health program director Paulo Teixeira called the prices charged by the pharmaceutical houses "beyond the realm of this world." Teixeira said that his country plans to manufacture the two AIDS treatment drugs—efavirenz and nelfinavir—while the U.S. challenge is being discussed in the WTO. Health officials in Brazil say that efavirenz can be produced there for less than half of the \$4,800 a year wholesale price that New Jersey-based Merck & Co. charges.

William Amaral, secretary general of the

## Kurdish refugees demand asylum



Two hundred Kurdish refugees being held in a military camp in southern France held a sit-down strike February 19, blocking the camp's gate to demand political asylum and better conditions. They were among 900 ethnic Kurds from Iraq and Turkey, including 300 children, who were abandoned when the ship they were on ran aground off the French Riviera (above). While the French government debates whether to deport them en masse, local residents have come by the camp to drop off baked goods, clothes, and toys.

and that this decision, "was in the best interests of justice." He pointed out, "I am accustomed to the rough and tumble of politics, but the accusations made against me in this case have been particularly painful.... I made [this decision] on the merits as I saw them, and I take full responsibility for it"

Far from ending the dispute, Clinton's column led to a new round of criticisms. New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who as a U.S. attorney in 1983 prosecuted Rich, denounced Clinton's written defense, saying it "raises more questions than it answers." He said that Clinton "talked just to one side, got their view and totally ignored the view of even his own Justice Department"

The *New York Times* editors the following day wrote, "The story of this pardon begins and ends with money and the access afforded by money."

Calling Rich "an unsuitable candidate" for a pardon, they said, "Mr. Rich has defied the courts for years, and now he has been rewarded in a way that undermines respect for the law."

Conservative columnist William Safire described Rich's pardon as "the most flagrant abuse of the presidential pardon power in U.S. history." He wrote, "Having applauded [Clinton's] shamelessness through eight years, only hypocrites among his steadfast supporters can complain about his shaming the presidency on his way out."

A February 13 *Wall Street Journal* editorial entitled "Prisoners of Bill," sought to play up the criticisms of Clinton by other Democrats. The editors wrote, "Will the torment never cease? It's been three long weeks since Bill Clinton left the White House, and still the wails of agony, the cries of outrage and the shouts of denunciation continue. And that's from the former President's friends."

The *Journal* editors added, "The first step toward liberation from the Clintons is for Democrats to recognize the terms of their self-imprisonment. The only way to break free is for someone prominent to stand up and speak the truth about the Clintons' tawdry moral legacy and the party's complicity in it."

Rio de Janeiro Grupo Pela Vidda, an AIDS support group, said if Brazilian companies are not permitted to manufacture the drugs, "the prices are just going to continue to be exorbitant, which means people are going to die over a purely economic question."

The U.S. trade officials deny their challenge will prevent Brazil from producing generic drugs. They claim Washington's only concern is the "protectionist" aspect of Brazil's law that would, U.S. officials allege, force international companies to produce the medications in Brazil.

South Africa has also come in conflict with Washington on this issue. In March, some 40 pharmaceutical companies will go to court challenging a 1997 South African law that allows the government to import low-cost drugs. The architect of the law, former South African president Nelson Mandela, defends South Africa's right to buy the less costly drugs to provide treatment for the 4 million people who suffer from AIDS in that country.

The Indian company Cipla, one of the largest producers of generic drugs, recently offered to work with the French group Doctors Without Borders to make the triple-therapy cocktail available to African governments for \$600 per year per patient. This would be \$400 lower than the lowest price charged by major Western pharmaceutical companies under their "philanthropic price discounts," which are negotiated on a product-by-product and country-by-country basis. These companies charge \$10,000-\$15,000 per person for a year's medication in the United States.

Last year Glaxo-Wellcome threatened to sue Cipla when it attempted to sell a generic version of Glaxo's anti-AIDS drug Combivir

in Ghana. The threat apparently had a chilling effect on Cipla because the company stopped selling the drug even after the head examiner for the African regional patent authority ruled against Glaxo.

Companies in Brazil and Thailand also produce a generic version of the drug fluconazole, which is important in combating meningitis, for \$100 a year for a course of treatment, in contrast with the \$3,000 a year the patented drug costs.

In general, Washington uses the threat of trade sanctions to protect world markets for U.S. companies. For example, U.S. trade officials recently told 16 countries, including India, Egypt, the Dominican Republic, and Thailand, to protect U.S. companies' patents or face trade reprisals.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, this could include withdrawal of trade preferences for textile exports, resulting in the loss of 200,000 jobs.

In the United States, the Center for Disease Control recently announced that AIDS is on the increase among U.S. Blacks.

According to a CDC study conducted in six cities—Baltimore, Dallas, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Seattle—from 1998 to 2000, the infection rate is now 30 percent among men in their 20s who are Black and gay. This is up from 14 percent in 1994-1998.

While Blacks make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, more than half of the people newly infected with HIV are Black.

The disease now infects one in every 50 Black men, and is the leading cause of death among African-Americans between 25 and 44 years old. Blacks are 10 times more likely than whites to be diagnosed with AIDS, and 10 times more likely to die from it.

# Sharon seeks 'unity government,' presses assault on Palestinians

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Talks between Israeli prime minister-elect Ariel Sharon and the Labor Party led by Ehud Barak to form a joint "unity" government reportedly stalled as of February 20. Just days earlier Barak said he would take up the post of defense minister in Sharon's Likud Party government, which would also include a number of other Labor leaders in key cabinet positions. Barak claimed that "the current reality demands national unity." Opposition from within Labor put the deal on hold, however.

In the two weeks following Sharon's victory over Barak in prime ministerial elections, Tel Aviv's military siege of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has been met by a flareup of Palestinian protests. The unrest within the occupied territories and Israel has an impact throughout the Middle East. The instability in the region was augmented by the bombing raids on Iraqi targets carried out February 16 by Washington and London.

Sharon and Barak commenced negotiations several days after the February 6 election, in which the Likud leader won with close to 60 percent of the vote and a 25-point margin over Barak.

Barak owed his defeat in large part to his failure to deliver on the promise of a comprehensive settlement with the Palestinian leadership—a promise that had helped take him to a landslide victory over Likud prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu less than two years earlier. Since late September, his government has cracked down on unrest in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip while continuing talks with Palestinian officials.

## Failure of negotiations

In the most recent negotiations sponsored by Washington, Barak and then-U.S. president William Clinton tried to pressure Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat into signing a long-term deal. This would have increased the territory administered by the Palestinian National Authority, while not challenging Tel Aviv's military domination of the area or its sovereignty over Jerusalem.

In the wake of the failure of these talks, and against a backdrop of continuing unrest, Barak's electoral base fell apart. While he received a narrow majority of the votes cast in Tel Aviv, the capital, he was trounced in Jerusalem and in the settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

Sharon is regarded as a hero among right-wing Israelis, who are disproportionately strong in the settlements, both for his military past and his record in government. Sharon earned the nickname "Bulldozer" when, as a cabinet minister in the 1977 government of Menachem Begin, he supervised the rapid and far-flung construction of new settlements.

The election turnout was the lowest in the history of Israel, underscoring the polarization that marks politics today. Less than 60 percent of the electorate voted, compared with the usual turnout of around 80 percent. Among Palestinians living inside Israel, who traditionally form a large part of Labor's electoral base, the decline was even more dramatic, with a turnout of no more than 25 percent, compared with 75 percent in 1998.

Sharon's insistence that new talks with Palestinian leaders focus on "interim arrangements" rather than a longer-term settlement met with Barak's agreement but proved controversial among other Labor leaders. "If we give up on a final status arrangement...we will also be lending a hand to a situation of diplomatic and violent deterioration in our region," said the departing justice minister, Yossi Beilin.

Entering the negotiations, Sharon had noted the schisms that weakened both parties. "It's not only that the parties are splintered between each other," he said, "but now they are splintered from inside."

The real source of the violence was illustrated on February 13 in the northern Gaza Strip, when two helicopter gunships of the Israeli Defense Force fired missiles at a car driven by Massoud Ayyad, a 53-year-old Palestinian security officer. Ayyad was killed instantly. Barak sent congratulations to the

army and security services, boasting that "the long arm of the Israeli Defense Forces will reach [those who would attack Israel.]" Israeli officials claimed that Ayyad had collaborated with the Lebanese organization Hezbollah in planning attacks on Israeli targets. Clashes frequently occur on Israel's border with southern Lebanon.

Six days later Israeli snipers gunned down Mahmoud Madani, a member of the Hamas nationalist Muslim movement, as he left a mosque in the West Bank town of Nablus. He was 25. Palestinian sources say at least 12 prominent figures in the occupied territories have been assassinated under Tel Aviv's orders.

The deaths have sparked outrage among Palestinians. Ayyad's assassination was followed by protests and by exchanges of fire, including a major gun battle near Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip, which ended with dozens of Palestinians wounded.

## Palestinian resistance

Other confrontations between Israeli forces and Palestinian working people have received less publicity but show just as vividly the deep roots of the resistance. One incident that came to light thanks to the Israeli peace organization, Gush Shalom, occurred in the Mawasi enclave of houses and farms in southwestern Gaza. The area is home to about 500 people and is completely surrounded by Israeli settlements.

Gush Shalom's February 12 newsletter reported that three days earlier, "four Israeli military jeeps arrived at the Mawasi." The officer in charge announced that for "security reasons," the Palestinian homes would be demolished on the coming Sunday. "Destruction of the Mawasi houses is a longstanding demand of the settlers towards the military authorities," explained the newsletter.

The inhabitants, however, decided to defy the order, and won support in the surrounding area and from as far away as Bethlehem and Israeli West Jerusalem. "On Sunday morning," reported Gush Shalom, the "area was sealed by the army, and bulldozers arrived accompanied by a large military force; but the bulldozers were withdrawn after several hours of a tense stand-off with no demolitions carried out."

While some 330 Palestinians have died since late September, fatalities among Israelis are also climbing, now standing at more than 60. Seven Israeli soldiers and one civilian died February 14 when a Palestinian bus driver drove his vehicle, used for taking Palestinian laborers in and out of Israel each day, into a crowd at a bus stop south of Tel Aviv.

In the Israeli media much was made of the fact that the driver, 35-year-old Khalili Abu Elba from Gaza, had received a security clearance for his work. "If we can't trust people like him every Palestinian can be a threat," said a government official.

## Siege is strengthened

Following the incident, Tel Aviv canceled all work and entry permits recently issued to Palestinians during a partial lifting of the restrictions on workers traveling to their jobs in Israel, and set up roadblocks around the major cities in the West Bank and Gaza. The Dehanyeh Airport in Gaza was closed, and border crossings from the occupied territories into Egypt and Jordan were shut down for most travelers.

Israeli forces also closed Gaza's only port for an "unlimited" period. Incoming ships are barred from docking there, and fishing boats cannot leave their berths.

The clampdown coincided with a ruling by the Israeli High Court making it legal for Shin Bet interrogators to deprive a suspect of sleep as long "as the intention is to advance an investigation and not to exhaust the suspect or break his or her spirit," according to *Ha'aretz*. "Shin Bet [has been] complaining its interrogator toolbox is empty," wrote Amir Oren in the February 15 issue of the Israeli newspaper.

In a February 14 telephone call to Barak, U.S. president George Bush mixed his condemnation of the bus driver's action with



Palestinian stands in way of bulldozer destroying homes on February 12

an appeal to "all parties to do their utmost to end the violence." He spoke of the "cycle of violent action and reaction between Israel and the Palestinians." The statement stood in contrast to the record of the Clinton administration, which consistently sided with Tel Aviv and placed the onus for ending the unrest on the Palestinians.

"Israel's responses...cannot be compared to Palestinian terror," protested Barak in reply.

The Bush administration has an eye on the investments and interests of U.S. imperialism in the wider region, in addition to its longstanding alliance with Tel Aviv against the Palestinian national struggle. Its stance has met with praise from Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the Palestinian parliament, who said she was encouraged that Bush was "reassessing the last eight years, which have been absolutely tragic for the Palestinians."

United Nations Middle East envoy Terje Rod-Larsen expressed the depth of the im-

perialist powers' concern about the situation in the occupied territories in a February 14 interview. "There is a series of interlinked crises leading to a disaster here," he said. "And that is the fiscal crisis, the living condition crisis and the cultural crisis. People have lost faith...in any dialogue with Israel."

Rod-Larsen called for immediate aid to the Palestinian Authority to prevent its collapse. According to a United Nations report, 32 percent of the population in the West Bank and Gaza live in poverty, a 50 percent increase since the crisis accelerated from late September. The UN says that some 250,000 Palestinians, or 38 percent, are unemployed, compared with 11 percent for the first nine months of last year.

"Much of the authority's problems are brought about because in the recent months of violence, Israel has begun to withhold value-added tax and customs revenues that it agreed to give the Palestinians," reported the *New York Times*.

## Longshore unionists at teach-in explain fight against frame-up

BY DEAN HAZLEWOOD

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—About 140 people, the majority students, attended a Labor Teach-In at the College of Charleston campus here February 8. The main topic was the impending trial of five members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) indicted on felony charges by the state government.

The charges stem from a Jan. 20, 2000, battle in which union members resisted an attack by 600 heavily armed riot police who used shock grenades, smoke bombs, dogs, and tear gas against an ILA picket line. The union was holding its fourth informational picket to protest the use of a nonunion stevedore outfit by the Nordana Lines shipping company. A number of workers were injured by the police assault. At one point the longshoremen's president, Kenneth Riley, sought to mediate but received a baton blow to the head, which required 12 stitches.

After charges against nine workers were thrown out of court, the state attorney general got a grand jury to indict the five unionists on charges of criminal conspiracy, riot, and assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature. These felony charges carry penalties of up to 10 years in prison.

The five who are now facing trial cannot leave their homes at night unless going to work or a union meeting and cannot leave the state. The nonunion contractor that the longshoremen were picketing has also filed suit against the union—ILA Local 1422—and 27 of its members. This is despite the fact that by last May the union had negotiated an agreement with the shipping company.

Union members have been winning solidarity for this fight across the country and internationally. For example, Riley reported to the teach-in that he had just returned from a meeting of the International Dockworkers Council in Barcelona, Spain. In a letter addressed to South Carolina attorney general Charles Condon, that organization promised to back the workers from Charleston "to the fullest legal extent possible." Meanwhile, as more people around the country find out about the case, unionists and others are planning actions on the day the trial begins.

Armond Derfner, a civil rights attorney representing the ILA, pointed out at the teach-in that the membership of the local is overwhelmingly Black and said that the case "is the most important civil rights case in the South today."



# Florida forum: Blacks were denied voting rights in last election

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI—Denial of voting rights for Haitian-Americans and for former prisoners was highlighted at a February 16 Militant Labor Forum here. The program was a panel of speakers addressing issues posed by the Nov. 7, 2000, presidential elections.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a class-action lawsuit against Florida state officials in the wake of the elections, charging that "thousands of black citizens were denied registration, wrongly purged from voter rolls, and denied the opportunity to vote in that election." The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held a hearing here February 16 on the violations of voting rights.

At the Militant Labor Forum, Marleine Bastien, from Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami (Haitian Women of Miami), reported that an estimated 37,000 Haitian-Americans in Miami-Dade County registered to vote in 2000 for the first time. She told the audience that her organization received numerous complaints from Haitian-Americans about problems they encountered trying to cast a ballot. Some who had registered were told they were not on the voting list. Some were sent to a second polling place, and still not allowed to vote, she said. Others were turned away because they did not bring their voter card with them, although the card is not legally required.

Many Haitian-American voters, whose native language is Creole, needed translation at the polls and did not receive it. Bastien reported that volunteers offering to translate into Creole for voters were turned away from polling places by officials. Alessandra Soler, public education director of the American Civil Liberties Union, reported further on violations of voting rights on election day.

Earnest Thomas, director of A New Start, spoke on the fight of former prisoners to regain their right to vote. Thomas's organization recently cosponsored a public meeting on this issue in Liberty City, a working-class community in Miami that is predominantly Black. Two hundred people showed up.

Thomas said that until 1974, those released from prison in Florida had their voting rights restored more or less routinely. But in 1974 the law was changed to require the governor's approval. Few of those previously incarcerated are able to receive gubernatorial approval. Thomas said that State Sen. Kendrick Meek submitted a list of 175 people requesting restoration of their right to vote and only nine were approved.

There is a long list of reasons the governor can cite to reject a request, including failure to pay child support, a traffic violation, owing the state of Florida money, and allegations of drug or alcohol abuse. "The only people who seem to be able to get approval are those who have some money," Thomas wryly noted.

Thomas also described his own case. While in prison in 1979, he applied for parole, but was rejected. The state said it had discovered a previous conviction when Thomas was a teenager. When he got records of the "conviction," Thomas learned that the person convicted attended Edison High School, which at that time was a segregated, whites-only school. Thomas is Black. Although he submitted proof that he was obviously not the person named in the records, the parole board turned him down. He served another 20 years in prison before his release in 2000.

Thomas spoke about the civil rights struggles in the 1960s that led to winning voting rights for Blacks. He described the violence fighters like himself met at the hands of segregationist forces in Georgia and the importance of the movement for achieving victory at that time.

Mary Ann Schmidt, a supporter of James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president in 2000, also spoke on the role of the civil rights movement in winning the vote for Blacks. She stressed that winning

## Protest in Detroit condemns killing



Militant/Ilona Gersh

**DETROIT—Eighty people picketed in front of Kroger supermarket February 18 to demand justice for the killing of a Black man, Travis Shelton, who suffocated at the hands of store security guards for allegedly shoplifting a \$3.19 piece of meat. Shelton died February 8 in front of the suburban Royal Oak Township grocery market, screaming he could not breathe while a guard sat on his back. He is the second Black Detroit resident killed by suburban store guards. Last June, Frederick Finley was killed by Dearborn's Lord & Taylor guards who accused a family member of shoplifting. A second demonstration at the store is scheduled for February 22.**

—OSBORNE HART

and defending democratic rights can only be done through the independent mobilization of working people.

Schmidt also said the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Albert Gore "was a demagogic one," claiming that Black votes were stolen from him, while the White

House turned a deaf ear to demands by the NAACP for an investigation into voting rights violations in the state. Gore "tried to steal the election," she asserted, noting that he asked for vote recounts only in heavily Democratic counties where he expected to increase his share of the overall vote total.

## Workers at Dakota Premium win pay raise

BY BOBBI NEGRÓN  
AND ROSE ANA BERBEO

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Workers fighting for a contract at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse here will get a 50-cent raise, the company has announced.

"It's about time that we receive something in return from the company for all the hard work we put in," said Noelia Ramos, a packaging worker with one year in the plant. Ramos is also a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789's Communications Committee.

Workers at Dakota voted 112-71 last July to join Local 789 after a seven-week organizing drive that began with a sit-down strike to protest conditions in the plant, especially the increase in line speed. The company has so far refused to negotiate with the union, even though the National Labor Relations Board dismissed its objections to the elec-

tion and certified the union representation vote.

In a letter posted the second week of February, Dakota, which is owned by Rosen's Diversified Inc., said the 50-cent raise would cost them \$250,000 this year. Rosen's sales were more than \$600 million in 1999.

Local 789 union representative Francisco Picado told the *Militant* that the local got a letter from Rosen's saying it wanted to inform the local of the 50-cent raise, while at the same time reserving the right to not recognize the union's representation of workers at Dakota. Local 789 president Bill Pearson wrote back, Picado reported, saying the union "celebrated" the raise and hoped that negotiations were the next step.

Some workers with several years in the plant have received no raise at all. Celia Grande, for example, reports she is still making \$8.50 an hour after three years in

the packaging department. Workers also report that those who are late or miss work during the week are deducted a dollar an hour from their weekly paycheck, which adds up to a substantial sum if a worker has put in a lot of overtime. The company calls this an "attendance incentive."

At Long Prairie Packing, another slaughterhouse in Minnesota owned by Rosen's, workers who are members of Local 789 earn \$1 to \$2 an hour more on the average for doing the same jobs as workers at Dakota. Dakota workers learned of the different pay scales when Local 789's Communications Committee passed out copies of the Long Prairie union contract at a union meeting in December.

"The company is scared," said Miguel Olvera, a leader of the Communications Committee. "The company has the illusion that the 50-cent raise will help convince us that we do not need the union."

Boning, packaging, and kill floor workers have taken action in recent weeks to confront management about working conditions and abuses by supervisors. For example, a group of seven kill floor workers, led by Obdulia Flores, went together to the plant manager's office February 5 to demand that he do something about a supervisor who constantly screams at workers, including Flores's daughter. The next day, Flores reported, the supervisor not only didn't yell, but he didn't even talk or make eye contact with workers.

As part of its campaign against the union, workers report, the company now publishes a newsletter called *Bull Notes*. The newsletter, which tries to compete with the union's *Workers' Voice*, claims it champions the rights of Dakota workers.

Samuel Farley, a boning worker and leader of the union's Communications Committee, says that the company has also formed its own Communications Committee, inviting workers it selects to participate in meetings. Minutes of the meetings are published in the *Bull Notes*.

"The company is trying to make workers believe we are all one family," Farley said. "The company claims that if you have a problem they can solve it and that a worker doesn't need an 'outside agency' such as the union."

"The *Bull Notes* and the company Communications Committee don't talk about the real problems, like the line speed and workers not getting their full pay," said Lawrence Mikes, a boning worker and member of the union's Communications Committee.

## Union Pacific engineers strike over safety

Continued from front page  
UP track.

The walkout was a response by engineers to UP's attempts to force rail workers to work longer hours. Railroads, which operate around the clock, have one of the most grueling work schedules in industry. This is often at the heart of the constant tug of war between the rail bosses and labor over control of working conditions. Getting enough rest, that is, hours off the job, is essential for safely performing the work. While the federal "Hours of Service" law restricts a workday in rail to 12 hours, there are no restrictions on how many consecutive days a rail worker can be forced to work.

The *Locomotive Engineer* newsletter explains that "many locomotive engineers are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are often required to work shifts for more than 12 consecutive hours, although train operation beyond 12 hours is forbidden by federal law. Thus, guaranteed rest days provide a key countermeasure to fatigue." The BLE points to three actions by the rail bosses that "increase the potential for fatigue-related accidents, injuries, and fatalities."

First, UP has reduced the number of slots on "extra boards," the pool of workers who are on call to replace someone working a regular job. This means getting called out more frequently while the company makes it more difficult to obtain days off. Secondly,

the carrier is eliminating "7&3" extra boards, which automatically grant engineers three days of rest following seven consecutive days of work. And third, the company unilaterally imposed new restrictions on taking personal leave days. It was this last action that forced the walkout.

Rather than simply being on call for 150 days a year to receive personal leave days, UP decided engineers must now work 150 days, before getting a personal day off. Brian Bernhardt, an engineer from Council Bluffs, Iowa, told the *Omaha World-Herald*, "You wear a phone for all 24 hours. I never know if I had the day off until the clock strikes 12."

The question of safety on UP's property has been hotly contested for the last several years. In 1996, UP experienced a safety-meltdown in which 11 workers were killed in 15 main line accidents. This occurred following UP's takeover of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad and the Southern Pacific.

The Federal Railroad Administration was forced to fine the carrier and impose inspections, revise safety guidelines, and set up an office in Omaha, where UP has its headquarters.

With a slowdown in economic growth underway, the railroads, which haul coal, automobiles, chemicals, foodstuffs, and other commodities, are seeing a decline in rail traffic. Several freight railroads have already announced layoffs and rail bosses

are seeking ways to make union members work harder and longer hours.

BLE members struck the carrier at 11:00 p.m. Friday, January 26. By 2:20 a.m. Saturday morning Senior U.S. District Court Judge Lyle Strom in Omaha had issued a temporary restraining order forcing the engineers back to work. The judge called the questions of safety that precipitated the strike "minor."

Under the antiunion Railway Labor Act, rail workers are not allowed by federal law to strike over "minor" issues when a contract has not expired. Later that afternoon, Strom extended his order until a February 7 hearing. That hearing was postponed, and no new one has yet been set.

Company spokesman John Bromley said, "It [the strike] could have been a major problem for the national economy had it been allowed to continue."

On February 12 rail workers demonstrated in Omaha to support state legislation that would allow rail workers up to 72 hours off after seven consecutive days of work. The rally, sponsored by the United Transportation Union (UTU), was joined by BLE members, sheet metal workers, members of the International Association of Machinists, and others to support bills addressing fatigue relief measures and mandating two-person crews on all freight trains.

Bob Keller is a meat packer.

# Cuban generals speak about Bay of Pigs

## Revolutionary mobilization of the people made the difference in historic victory

BY SARA LOBMAN

From the time of the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion onward, Washington "knew the Cuban people were willing to fight," Div. Gen. Néstor López Cuba of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces explains in *Making History*. "The top U.S. leadership is well aware of the price of an invasion of Cuba. That is what has saved us from drastic measures by them."

López Cuba was referring to the invasion of Cuba's southern coast at the Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, by some 1,500 Cuban mercenaries. The counterrevolutionaries—trained, financed, and deployed by Washington—aimed to hold a tiny slice of Cuban territory long enough to declare a provisional government that could appeal for direct military intervention by Washington and several of its client regimes in Latin America.

The invaders were defeated within 72 hours by Cuba's militia and Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last units of

an invasion of Cuba would have the support of the entire people.... Instead, from the moment the mercenaries landed, they were met by machine-gun fire that lasted right up until the invasion was crushed 72 hours later."

"It was the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people that made the difference," López Cuba says. He notes that the tank crews, artillery men, and antiaircraft units were still in training, since the revolutionary government in Cuba—just a little more than two years old at the time—had only recently obtained such equipment for its defense. The only planes the air force had available were a handful left behind by the Batista dictatorship.

"Our brigades were made up not only of troops, but also of volunteers who just showed up," he said, commenting that often those who had learned to use a weapon in the morning would be teaching others that same afternoon.

It was Carreras who, following the victory of the revolution in January 1959, had

ties in the first 10 days alone. Faced with this fact, and its political consequences, the Kennedy administration decided not to invade.

### Victory in Escambray

Fernández was the commander of the main column of Cuban militia and army forces at the Bay of Pigs, working directly under Fidel Castro.

In *Making History*, he points to the massive mobilizations in Cuba in December 1960 and January 1961.

The Cuban revolutionary leadership saw the transition period between the outgoing Republican administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower and the new Democratic administration of John F. Kennedy as one where there was a heightened danger of a U.S.-organized invasion.

And with good reason. An official White House memo, cited in Pathfinder's forthcoming *Bay of Pigs*, reports Eisenhower saying, in a meeting with his advisors in early January 1961, that he would like to move against Castro before relinquishing the presidency if he were provided a really good excuse by the Cubans. If that didn't happen, he said, perhaps the United States "could think of manufacturing something that would be generally acceptable."

In response to these threats, the Cuban government ordered a general mobilization of the militias.

Tens of thousands of workers and peasants were put on active duty and mass meetings and demonstrations of workers were held throughout the country. The striking photo on the cover of *Making History* and *Haciendo historia* shows a militia mobilization during this period along Havana's seafloor drive, the Malecón.

"If they attack us, they will not find our people sleeping, but awake and in the trenches," Castro told a mass rally in Havana on January 20, the day Kennedy was inaugurated president.

The prospect of not carrying out the planned invasion was a political problem for both Kennedy and Eisenhower, Fernández explains. "It was a political problem because of what those invading forces of Cubans armed, trained, and organized by the CIA represented and what they signified in Congress and in different spheres of U.S. political life. It was evident that one sector of the government and the CIA supported the invasion, but it was also clear that an invasion would have had a high political cost because of the number of casualties that the U.S. armed forces could suffer."

Fernández himself was part of the mobilizations during this period in the Escambray mountains, near the Bay of Pigs. Washington, he explains, made a special effort to promote counterrevolutionary groups in this area in the months leading up to the invasion. The area "was to serve as a base of support, creating a zone that could be dominated by the invading brigade and by enemy forces in general," he says.

But some 40,000 volunteers mobilized to eliminate the bands in early 1961. "As a result," Fernández says, "during the battle at Girón, in our rearguard, there was not a single enemy action.... And that allowed us to conduct actions...with great confidence."

### Workers fight on two fronts

Many workers in the ceramics factory went to fight during the Bay of Pigs, Harry Villegas explains in the interview with him in *Making History*.

"All those who were members of militia battalions and sub-battalions were sent to Girón," Villegas said. However, "every Cuban, every worker, wanted to go." Villegas, who had only recently left Che Guevara's personal staff, explains how he himself re-

ported to Guevara, ready to participate in the battle.

"Stay in the factory," Guevara told him, "You must remain at the helm, organizing the defense, the security of the factory, and maintaining production." Villegas, in turn, had to convince the workers in the factory that some of them had to remain there and produce.

"It was a challenge," he remembers, "because every time the tanks went by, or the transport vehicles filled with men went by, everyone wanted to come out."

Forty years after the defeat of U.S. imperialism at the Bay of Pigs, support for the revolution by workers and farmers in Cuba is still the base of its defense, Fernández explains in *Making History*.

"I don't mean by this that there are no discontented people in Cuba, or people who disagree with socialism," he added. "There have to be. We have shortages, privations, difficulties.... There are people who perhaps, consciously or unconsciously, place a shirt, a pair of pants, or a car above the country's sovereignty or above social justice, and these people are clearly not enthusiastic about the revolution. That's one thing. But it's something completely different for there to be a sector of the population that has taken organizational form, or that can be given organizational form, that is represented by grouplets such as I described" in the Escambray.

"For almost 40 years we have been navigating along the edge of a possible attack, firmly defending our sovereignty, the revolution, and socialism," Fernández said. "And we have maintained a course that has proved capable of defending our principles while avoiding a war."

To order copies of *Making History* and *Haciendo historia*, or to place advance orders for *Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, write to Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY, 10014.



Granma

**Cuban militia members head into battle at Bay of Pigs, April 1961. Washington's biggest mistake, explain generals interviewed in *Making History*, was inability to take into account the deep support for the revolution among Cuba's workers and peasants.**

the U.S.-organized Brigade 2506 surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón beach), which is the name the Cubans use to designate the battle. Over the following days many others who had fled into the woods and swampland were captured.

López Cuba is one of four Cuban generals interviewed in the book, which is one of Pathfinder's featured titles in the months leading up to the 40th anniversary of the battle. A Spanish-language edition, *Haciendo historia*, was published by Pathfinder in January.

López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, and José Ramón Fernández were among the leaders of the Cuban militia and armed forces during the invasion.

The fourth general interviewed, Harry Villegas, was helping to manage a newly nationalized ceramics enterprise at the time, and he explains the response to the invasion by the workers at that factory.

Together, the four interviews make invaluable reading for workers and others around the world who want to understand the importance of this first military defeat of U.S. imperialism in the Americas. They are a useful companion to Pathfinder's forthcoming book—in English and Spanish—entitled *The Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*. The book contains a firsthand account of the battle by Fernández along with excerpts from three speeches given by Cuban leader Fidel Castro in the period immediately before and after the battle.

### Support for the revolution

The causes of the U.S. defeat were not mistakes of military tactics and planning often pointed to in later rationalizations by figures in the bourgeois government, media, and universities. The biggest error Washington made in planning the invasion, López Cuba explains, was its inability to take into account the deep support for the revolution among Cuba's workers and peasants.

"The propaganda campaign in the United States," he notes, "created an impression that

been responsible for training a corps of pilots. He himself had learned to fly in the United States during and after World War II.

The U.S.-organized counterrevolutionaries had staged a surprise air assault on three Cuban air bases just two days prior to the invasion, he explains. Alerted by their attack, the young Cuban air force pilots began sleeping under the wings of their planes, always at the ready.

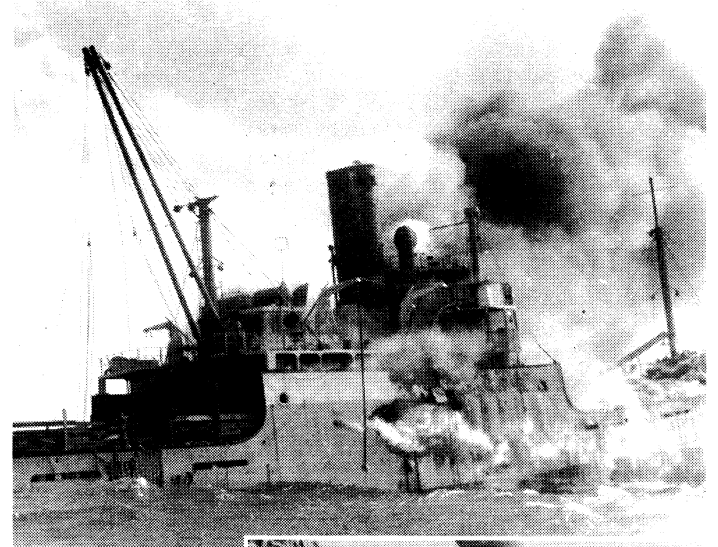
When the invasion began, Carreras was among the first called. He and the other Cuban pilots—with just 10 planes among them—succeeded in bringing down eight of the B-26 bombers flown by the counterrevolutionaries and U.S. pilots and sinking two supply ships, as well as hounding the mercenaries on the ground. Carreras himself sank the two freighters and shot down two aircraft; the fighter plane he was flying was hit twice by enemy fire.

Two Cuban pilots and several crew members were killed in the battle, Carreras explains in the book.

The so-called Cuban Missile Crisis a year and a half later was "a continuation of the U.S. fiasco" at the Bay of Pigs, Carreras notes. In October 1962 Washington ordered a naval blockade and placed U.S. armed forces on alert to demand removal from the island of a Soviet-supplied nuclear missile defense. The missiles had been installed following a mutual defense agreement between Cuba and the Soviet Union in face of Washington's preparations to launch another invasion of Cuba.

"The defeat they suffered [at the Bay of Pigs] led them to risk an atomic war," Carreras says. "Girón was like a bone sticking in their throats, something they don't accept to this day."

In response to the U.S. aggression during the missile crisis, millions of Cuban workers and farmers mobilized to defend the revolution, in effect saving the world from nuclear war. Assessing this mass-based military readiness, the Pentagon informed the White House that an invasion of Cuba would cost the U.S. military 18,000 casual-



Top, Sergio Canales, bottom Granma

**Top, Houston, supply ship of the counterrevolutionary forces, burns at Playa Girón. Below, Enrique Carreras with Cuban air force Sea Fury around 1961. With 10 planes Cuban pilots shot down eight B-26s and sank two freighters.**



# Havana fair shows thirst for books, politics

Continued from front page  
pecially from Spain, the guest of honor this year.

Many fair goers expressed satisfaction that, compared to previous years, a noticeably larger number of books were available in Cuban pesos as opposed to dollars. This year some 1,400 titles by Cuban publishers on a wide range of topics were on display. In 1994, during the depth of the economic crisis that marked the 1990s in Cuba, only 588 such titles were available, Luna reported.

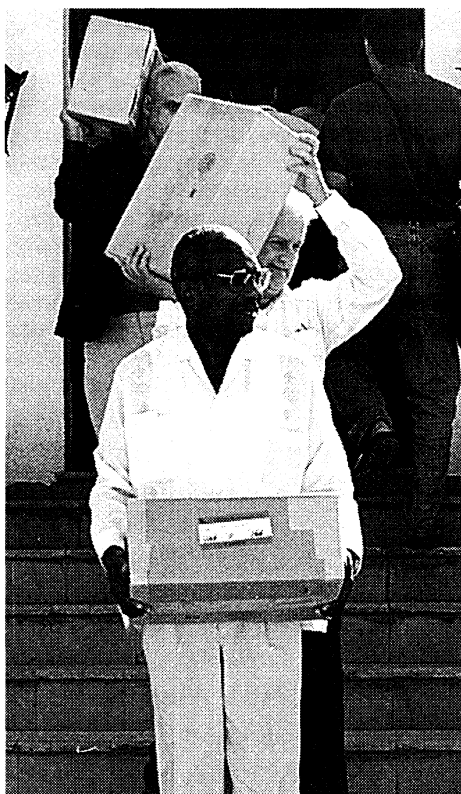
One major literary publishing house, Ediciones Letras Cubanas, presented 48 new titles at the fair this year, registering significant expansion over the past few years.

Titles on sale at the book fair covered a wide cultural and political spectrum. They included classics such as a special edition of *Don Quixote*, new editions of writings by Cuban poet José Martí, and works by Mark Twain. More contemporary titles ranged from essays by Cuban writer Roberto Fernández Retamar, who was the honored guest this year, to suspense novels by Dick Francis and other U.S. authors.

Books on a variety of social questions were also featured, from several titles on religious questions, to a new book by Cuban publisher Nuevo Milenio on Blacks in Cuba today and confronting the legacy of racial discrimination, to a Mexican book on lesbians and the fight for gay rights. A substantial number of titles by new Cuban authors were available.

Among the dozens of books presented at special events throughout the fair, several covered aspects of Cuban history, including a campaign diary of Cuban independence hero Antonio Maceo; a testimony about the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner near Barbados by U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary terrorists; a book about the 1980 wave of emigration to the United States through the Cuban port of Mariel; and an account of Operation Peter Pan, a campaign led by the Catholic church hierarchy following the victory of the Cuban revolution to whip up anticommunist hysteria and convince parents to send their children to the United States.

A number of literary awards were announced during the book fair. A well-attended meeting was held to honor promi-



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

**Leaders of Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution carry off boxes with 300 copies of *Haciendo historia* donated to their organization through contributions by working people and youth in U.S. and elsewhere to Books for Cuba Fund.**

nent Cuban essayist and poet Antón Arrufat, who was given the prestigious National Literary Award. Many in the audience considered the tribute to Arrufat particularly significant and welcome because his works had remained unpublished throughout the 1970s and early 1980s—a period, often referred to in Cuba as the Gray Years, when the weight of Soviet bureaucratic policies on art and other questions were especially influential in Cuba. Several guests at the ceremony honoring Arrufat commented that the award was an expression of the fact that the Cuban revolution was stronger today in confronting imperialism, not weakened by the decline of such influences.

In the midst of this literary ferment and celebration, the Pathfinder booth was a scene of constant political discussion from the opening to the end of the fair. Almost 400 Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold.

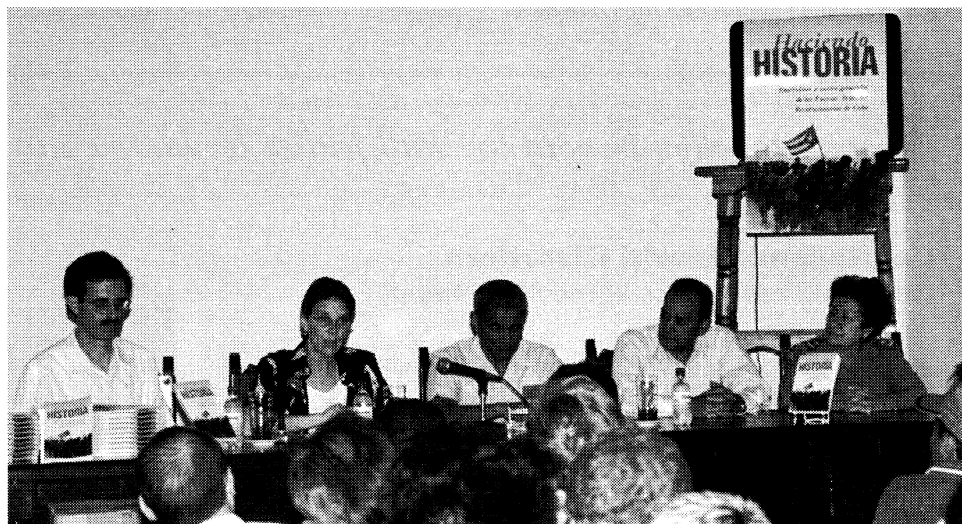
All titles by Malcolm X sold out. Other titles in demand were books on the fight for women's liberation, Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, and titles by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, on working-class politics and building a revolutionary workers party in the United States today.

José Cancio, an electrician from Havana, was a return visitor from last year's book fair.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

**Pathfinder booth at Havana Book Fair was a center of political discussions. Top sellers included titles by Malcolm X, on women's liberation, and working-class politics in the United States. "I need these books to learn about the world and its history," one student said. "If you don't know what's happening in the world, you can't work to change it."**



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

**Among special events held at the Havana book fair was a meeting where a donation of 300 copies of Pathfinder's Spanish-language edition of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* was presented to the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. From left: Militant and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel; Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters; Brig. Gens. Harry Villegas, Sergio Pérez Lezcano, and Delsa Esther Puebla, all leaders of the Association.**

This year he bought a copy of *Nueva Internacional* no. 5 featuring the article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla*, *Making History*, and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* in Spanish. Last year he had bought Guevara's *Bolivian Diary*.

Cancio said his son, a garment worker in Miami, buys Pathfinder books there. Each of them reads the books they obtain, and when they visit each other they trade books.

Idelfonso Montalvo, an engineer who repairs ship engines, said he had already read *Capitalism's World Disorder* and *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks) from a previous fair. "I didn't know about working-class struggles in the United States before reading these books. It was good to know that it's not true everyone lives well there," he said, pointing to working people in the United States as potential allies of the Cuban people. Returning for some more, he purchased the Spanish-language *Nueva Internacional* issue titled "The Opening Guns of World War III."

Marcos Orozco said he was just starting to realize that many in Cuba were as interested in reading Trotsky as he is. "He is the

second most important leader of the Russian Revolution after Lenin. For that alone he should be read," he remarked.

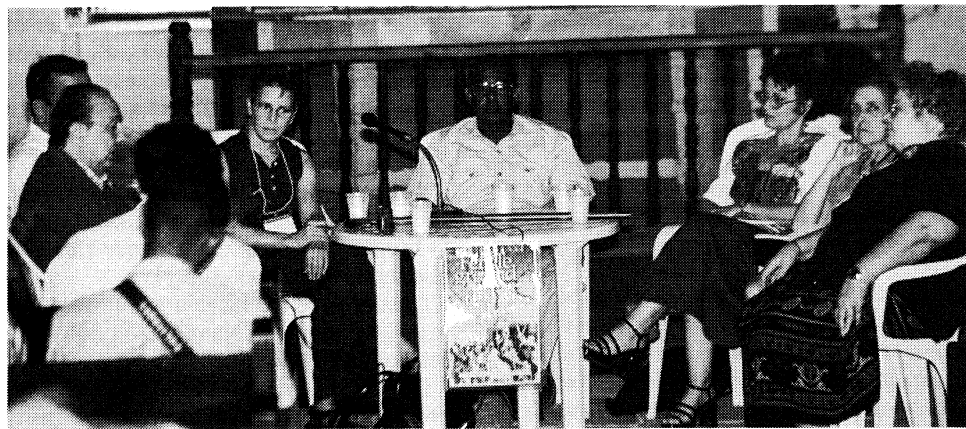
Ricardo Castillo, a 32-year-old hotel bartender, commented on conditions in Cuba today. "Tourism has had positive and negative effects," he said. As a source of much-needed hard currency, "It has allowed us to maintain our high levels of services for health care and education, but it has also introduced differences between those who have access to dollars and those who don't. Socialism is based on man," he added, indicating that the social differentiation had to be combated. He returned to the booth to buy *Nueva Internacional* no. 5 and *Making History* in Spanish.

Sergilis Josten was one of a group of Haitian students who came to the stand and bought all the French-language titles on display, including *Nouvelle Internationale* magazine, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, and a collection of speeches by African communist leader Thomas Sankara. "I came to the Pathfinder stand because I'm looking for a Marxist explanation of the capitalist system today," Josten said.



Militant/Rafik Benali

**A record 200,000 people attended the 10th Havana International Book Fair, where more than 110 publishers from 25 countries were represented. Hunger for books and political ideas seen at the cultural festival was an expression of strength of the Cuban revolution.**



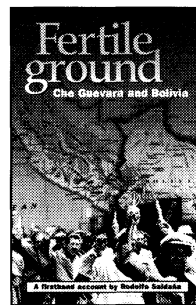
Militant/Rafik Benali

**A highlight of the Havana Book Fair was the meeting to launch the new Pathfinder book *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*, an interview with Bolivian communist Rodolfo Saldaña. Above, from left, Juan Carretero, president of the Organization of Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; Andrés Pineda (partly hidden), of the Americas Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party; Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters, Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas; Eneida Markov, from the office of Interior Minister Abelardo Colomé Ibarra; Gladys Brizuela, Saldaña's widow; and Iraida Aguirrechu, of Editora Política publishing house.**

## 20% discount on these new Pathfinder titles

Through April 1 for members of Pathfinder Readers Club

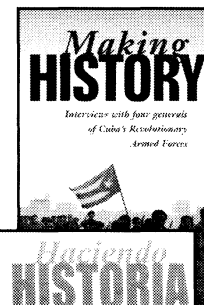
**Fertile Ground**  
**CHE GUEVARA AND BOLIVIA**  
A firsthand account by Rodolfo Saldaña



Rodolfo Saldaña was one of the Bolivians who joined ranks in 1966-67 with Ernesto Che Guevara to forge a revolutionary movement of workers, peasants, and young people to overturn the military dictatorship in Bolivia and open the road to socialist revolution in South America. Here, Saldaña talks about the unresolved battles of the tin miners, peasants, and indigenous peoples of his country that created "fertile ground" for Guevara's revolutionary course and mark out the future of Bolivia and the Americas.

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**Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.**

## 'Cuba has done much for the peoples of Africa'

As part of celebrating Black History Month, the *Militant* is reprinting the excerpt below, taken from a speech given in 1991 by Nelson Mandela at a rally of tens of thousands in Matanzas, Cuba. The entire talk is printed in *How Far We Slaves Have Come!* by Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro. Copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY NELSON MANDELA

Today this is revolutionary Cuba, internationalist Cuba, the country that has done so much for the peoples of Africa. We have

long wanted to visit your country and express the many feelings that we have about the Cuban revolution, about the role of Cuba in Africa, southern Africa, and the world.

The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa. The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character.

From its earliest days the Cuban revolution has itself been a source of inspiration to all freedom-loving people.

We admire the sacrifices of the Cuban people in maintaining their independence

and sovereignty in the face of a vicious imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the impressive gains made in the Cuban revolution.

We too want to control our own destiny. We are determined that the people of South Africa will make their future and that they will continue to exercise their full democratic rights after liberation from apartheid. We do not want popular participation to cease at the moment when apartheid goes. We want to have the moment of liberation open the way to ever-deepening democracy.

We admire the achievements of the Cuban revolution in the sphere of social wel-

fare. We note the transformation from a country of imposed backwardness to universal literacy. We acknowledge your advances in the fields of health, education, and science.

There are many things we learn from your experience. In particular we are moved by your affirmation of the historical connection to the continent and people of Africa. Your consistent commitment to the systematic eradication of racism is unparalleled.

But the most important lesson that you have for us is that no matter what the odds, no matter under what difficulties, you have had to struggle. There can be no surrender! It is a case of freedom or death!

I know that your country is experiencing many difficulties now, but we have confidence that the resilient people of Cuba will overcome these as they have helped other countries overcome theirs.

We know that the revolutionary spirit of today was started long ago and that its spirit was kindled by many early fighters for Cuban freedom, and indeed for freedom of all suffering under imperialist domination....

### The life of Che Guevara is inspiration

We also honor the great Che Guevara, whose revolutionary exploits, including on our own continent, were too powerful for any prison censors to hide from us. The life of Che is an inspiration to all human beings who cherish freedom. We will always honor his memory.

We come here with great humility. We come here with great emotion. We come here with a sense of a great debt that is owed to the people of Cuba. What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations with Africa?

How many countries of the world benefit from Cuban health workers or educationists? How many of these are in Africa?

Where is the country that has sought Cuban help and has had it refused?

How many countries under threat from imperialism or struggling for national liberation have been able to count on Cuban support?

It was in prison when I first heard of the massive assistance that the Cuban internationalist forces provided to the people of Angola, on such a scale that one hesitated to believe, when the Angolans came under combined attack of South African, CIA-financed FNLA, mercenary, UNITA, and Zairean troops in 1975.<sup>1</sup>

We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us.

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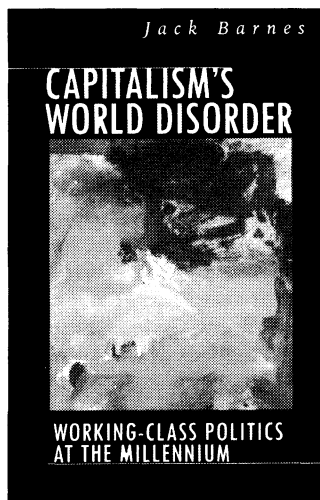
1. Shortly before Angola's independence from Portuguese colonial rule was to be formally celebrated on Nov. 11, 1975, the country's new government—led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)—was attacked by South African and Zairean troops. The invading forces were allied with the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA) and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

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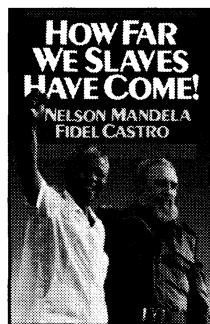
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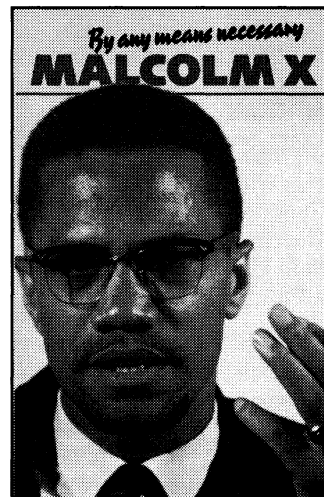
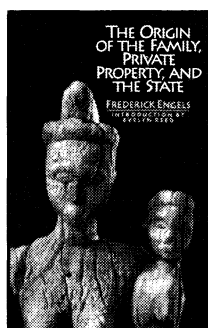
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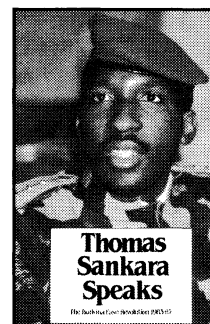
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# Bush orders bombing of Iraq, vows to keep enforcing 'no-fly' zone

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In his first major military action as U.S. President, George Bush ordered a bombing attack February 16 on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq's capital city.

The assault, the largest against Iraq in two years, involved 80 U.S. and British warplanes, including 24 strike aircraft, which flew out of air bases in the region and off the aircraft carrier *Harry S. Truman*, stationed in the Persian Gulf. It was timed to begin Friday evening after 8:00 p.m., when many people were milling about the streets of Baghdad. An Iraqi government official said that two people were killed and 20 injured in the nearly two-and-a-half hour bombardment.

Bush, who was on a one-day visit to Mexico at the time, described the raid as "routine." At a news conference the president stated, "Our intention is to make sure that the world is as peaceful as possible." He emphasized, "We will continue to enforce the 'no fly' zone until the world is told otherwise."

In a flagrant violation of Iraqi sovereignty and the right to control the air space over their country, Washington imposed "no-fly" zones in northern Iraq in mid-1991 and in the south in August 1992, covering the majority of the country.

Since 1998 the Iraqi regime has ordered its antiaircraft units to try to shoot down U.S. and British planes patrolling this area. Washington has responded with sometimes daily air strikes, allegedly against radar and antiaircraft installations within the "no-fly" zone areas. Over the past two years, these bombing attacks have killed an average of one Iraqi civilian about every other day.

According to a news release issued by the U.S. Central Command and the U.S. European Command, U.S. and British aircraft bombed Iraq on 111 different days in 1999, 85 days in 2000, and 9 days through mid-February of this year. These figures are understated, the military brass reported, since from April 1999 to March 2000 they do not include attacks in the southern "no-fly" zone. As of last June, U.S. forces had flown 50,000 sorties in the northern sector and 230,000 in the southern zone since 1991.

U.S. defense department officials said the February 16 attacks were aimed at five Iraqi radar facilities around Baghdad. U.S. Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold, described the purpose of the bombardment as being "to degrade [and], disrupt the ability of the Iraqi air defenses to coordinate attacks against our aircraft."

Several days after the raid, a *New York Times* article reported that "Chinese workers were helping the Iraqi military build a fiber-optic network linked to radar stations and the targets attacked by American and British warplanes." State Department spokesman Philip Reeker, stated, "We are obviously concerned about reports that the Chinese have provided assistance to the Iraqis." A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said February 20 that it had no knowledge of the project.

## Washington sends message

While striking at Iraq, Washington's military attack was also designed to send a powerful message to its imperialist rivals in the European Union (EU) involved in putting together their own rapid reaction strike force. The U.S. rulers know the strike will remind the EU nations about Washington's overwhelmingly superior military power, ability to deploy it around the world, and willingness to use it to advance their interests—despite protests over the sanctions and the bombings.

The bombing attack received expressions of sympathy from the governments of Poland and Germany, while authorities in France and Turkey were skeptical.

"This appears to be a political signal, a sign of determination, a degree of toughness on the part of the new administration," remarked a senior German official. According to the *Washington Post*, "The German and French foreign ministers were about to sit down to dinner Friday night when the news [of the bombing] caught them unaware.... But the Germans were not overly

perturbed."

German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said his foreign minister, who is on his way to Washington for talks, would discuss how to prevent "solidarization of the Arab masses."

French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine complained that there was "no legal basis for this type of bombardment." He added, "This action as far as I am aware, is approved by hardly anyone. Only Canada and Poland, but I don't know why. All other countries have expressed their disapproval, criticism, doubt, and disquiet as we have done, because we do not see the point of this action."

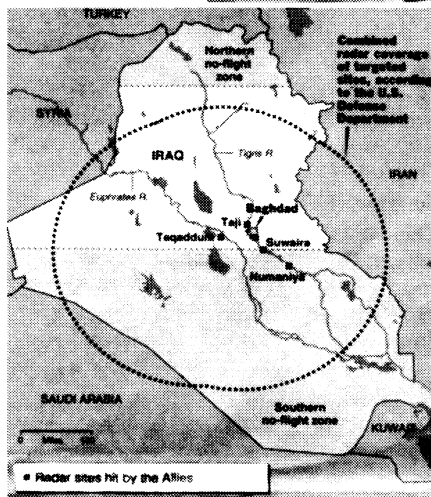
The government of Turkey, which allows U.S. and British planes to use its bases to patrol the southern "no-fly" zone, complained about not having advance notice from Washington about the most recent military strikes.

The bombing drew sharp condemnation from the Arab League, including Egypt and Syria, Washington's former allies in the Gulf War. Russian and Chinese authorities also opposed it.

Protests were held in Baghdad, where the ruling Baath party organized a march of some 20,000 people February 18 and 19. Actions also took place in Jordan and in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## 'Long series of criminal actions'

Cuba's revolutionary government, the only voice on the UN Security Council during the brutal 1990-91 imperialist assault to expose Washington's aims and answer its rationalizations for its aggression, again sharply condemned the bombing attack. A statement issued February 16 by the foreign ministry labeled the murderous bombing raid "the most recent in a long series of criminal and hostile actions that various U.S.



Militant/Francisco Cipriano

Above, nearly 60 people demonstrated in front of the federal building in Westwood, Los Angeles, February 17 to condemn the U.S. and British bombing of Iraq the previous day. They also demanded the end of sanctions. Left, shaded areas in map show 'no-fly zones' in north and south of Iraq.

administrations have been carrying out against Iraqi territory for the past 10 years. This assault, Cuba said, "was carried out under the cynical pretext of self-defense by the U.S. and British air forces, which have been brazenly violating Iraqi airspace." For the past decade, the Cuban foreign ministry stated, the U.S.-sponsored trade sanctions against Iraq "have inflicted tens of thousands of victims and incalculable material losses" on the Iraqi people.

The statement concluded by condemning "the genocidal policy by the U.S. government against the Iraqi people." The revolutionary government reiterated its "full solidarity with the people of Iraq and demands the immediate lifting of this regime of sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council."

The sanctions, initiated by Washington in 1990 and imposed ever since, have begun to unravel in recent months. A number of countries have resumed direct flights to Baghdad, and European firms are stepping up their efforts to do business in Iraq. TotalfinaElf, a French company, is negotiating for rights to Iraq's huge Majnoon and Bin Umar oil fields. At the Baghdad international trade fair in November, firms from Germany, France, and Spain were promoting their products, along with hundreds of other companies from the Arab world and

Russia.

Iraq, which is currently the third-largest oil producer in the world and the six-largest supplier of oil to the U.S. market, recently reopened an oil pipeline through Syria to the Mediterranean port of Banias, allowing it to pump as much as \$3 million worth of petroleum a day.

## Shift in approach

Center for Security Policy president Frank Gaffney, Jr., urged in a February 21 column published in the *National Review* that the strikes be used by the Bush administration to "help reestablish regional confidence in American leadership provided they are represented as they should be—namely as an integral part of a larger, systematic, and sustained U.S. effort to discredit Saddam Hussein and assist in the liberation of Iraq from his regime's predations." Gaffney details a number of proposals to pursue such a shift made to the Clinton administration by high-ranking Republicans and officials who are now part of the Bush administration.

These include setting up a provisional government, prohibiting any Iraqi military forces on land or air in areas now marked as the "no-fly" zones, and turning Iraqi assets over to the U.S.-backed opposition. He writes the "new strategy should be explicitly aimed at ending Saddam's misrule and the threat it poses to his own long-suffering people and others beyond his borders."

# Clarence Thomas speaks on 'cultural war'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL AND HILDA CUZCO

"Though the war in which we are engaged is cultural, not civil," said Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas in a February 13 speech, "it tests whether this 'nation: conceived in liberty...can long endure.'"

Speaking at the annual dinner and award ceremony of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI), a conservative "think tank," Thomas urged his audience to vigorously promote views such as those that have brought him to prominence in the judicial and political arenas. The audience of several hundred people formed a virtual who's who of Republican Party conservatives.

"Today, as in the past," he said, "we will need a brave 'civic virtue' not a timid civility, to keep our republic. So, this evening, I leave you with the simple exhortation: 'Be not afraid!'"

Among the major newspapers covering the event was the business-oriented and pro-Republican daily the *Wall Street Journal*, which published excerpts from Thomas's speech on its op-ed page.

Vice President Richard Cheney and a number of members of President George Bush's cabinet were among those attending the February 13 dinner, along with Lynne Cheney, a prominent conservative activist on social and educational questions; Republican Party lawyer and Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr; Republican campaign strategist Karl Rove; and Dick Armey, a Congressman from Texas.

Thomas was the recipient of the AEI's annual Francis Boyer Award. Last year's winner and current AEI president Christopher DeMuth, who served as an official of President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to

1984, presented Thomas with a bust of Abraham Lincoln. The award is given to "an eminent thinker who has made notable intellectual or practical contributions to improved public policy and social welfare," according to the AEI.

The Supreme Court justice, who is Black, joined a list of other conservative personalities who have received the award since its inception in 1977. They include Richard Cheney; Republican presidents Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford; former cabinet members Henry Kissinger and Jeanne Kirkpatrick—one of only two women; current chairman of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan; and a number of bourgeois journalists, economists, businesspeople, and jurists.

The 1984 award winner Robert Bork introduced Thomas. Bork came to national

attention in 1987, when his nomination by then-president Reagan for the Supreme Court went down to defeat in the face of widespread reaction against his right-wing views. During confirmation hearings in the senate, Bork had argued against abortion rights, affirmative action measures, and free-speech protections.

Four years later, when Thomas, a nominee with similar views, came before the Senate Judiciary Committee, he and his supporters in the administration of George Bush took a different tack. Thomas dodged most questions on his reactionary political positions during five days of hearings.

## Thomas 'offends the right people'

In his introduction, Bork said Thomas "offends...just the right people" and referred

Continued on Page 14

# French bosses back down on retirement

## Continued from Page 16

Confederation of French Workers, and the smallest federation, the Christian Confederation of French Workers, ended up signing the agreement. The other three federations, including the largest union force among industrial workers, the General Confederation of Labor, Workers Force, and the General Confederation of Administrative and Technical Employees (CGC), while saluting the bosses' concession in resuming payments into the current retirement system for another two years, refused to sign the call for "retirement reform."

This was the first time ever the white-collar workers' union, the CGC, has refused to sign an agreement on supplementary retirements with the employers. CGC president

Jean-Luc Cazes publicly called some of the MEDEF proposals "idiotic." White-collar workers had formed significant contingents in the January 25 actions, a fact widely noted in the bourgeois media.

The Socialist Party, the main political force in the current governmental coalition, as well as the main right-wing parties, supported the agreement, while the Communist Party of France and the Green Party—both government coalition members—criticized it. MEDEF promptly announced plans to begin negotiations with the unions in March on reform of the national health-care system.

Derek Jeffers is a member of the CGT and an assembly line worker at the Peugeot auto plant in Poissy.

# Thousands visit controversial exhibit at Brooklyn museum

BY JANET POST

BROOKLYN, New York—Thousands of people have visited the opening week of a photography display at the Brooklyn Museum of Art called "Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers." It consists of works from 94 photographers who are Black and working in the United States and will run through April 29.

The initial outpouring is in part due to the attention drawn to one of the photos by New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani who called it "disgusting," "outrageous," and "anti-Catholic."

The photo under fire from Giuliani is a five-panel display by Renée Cox entitled "Yo Mama's Last Supper." Using a setting similar to Leonardo di Vinci's "Last Supper" painting, the photographer uses a nude photo of herself as the figure of Christ. The "apostles" depicted are Blacks with the exception of Judas.

In Giuliani's weekly radio address on WABC, he said Cox's work, "is an expression of prejudice, it's an expression of bigotry, and it's an expression of hatred." On February 15, Giuliani declared there was a "pattern of anti-Catholicism at the Brooklyn Museum" and said he would form a "task force or a commission" to "set decency standards for those institutions that are using your money, the taxpayers' money."

Giuliani also said he is "going to look at what kind of penalties are available for this." If the city "had had decency standards," the mayor said, "I'd submit that this photograph would never be exhibited in a building funded by the taxpayers." Standards applied by the panel could include "showing decency and respect for religion, for ethnicity, for race," he continued. Giuliani said that "decency people" would serve on the commission.

Some other administration politicians criticized the mayor's proposal, notably Bronx borough president Fernando Ferrer, a candidate in this year's mayoral race. Ferrer cast the mayor's response as that of a fascist, saying it "sounds like Berlin in 1939." City Council speaker Peter Vallone, another mayoral candidate, stated, "It's not the role of government to play culture cop," but made clear he was also offended by the photo.

## Mayor threatens lawsuit

Giuliani, who has not seen the current exhibit, said he is considering filing a suit against the museum, basing his argument on the 1998 Supreme Court ruling *NEA v. Finley*. In this ruling, the court did not overturn "decency standards" that were applied by Congress in 1990 to the dispersal of funds by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA). These standards were established after complaints that so-called controversial artists like Robert Mapplethorpe had received funds from the NEA.

The court's ruling upheld the Congressional act stating that the NEA must "take into consideration general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American people" when awarding grants. But it also stated in the 8-1 decision that the government may not "leverage its power to award subsidies...into a penalty on disfavored viewpoints" under the First Amendment.

At the museum, however, the response by visitors well aware of the swirling controversy is overwhelming in favor of supporting the new exhibit and democratic rights. "How people respond is a personal thing," said Neal Mitchell, a 31-year-old worker from Brooklyn. "It would be arrogant of me to decide what other people witness or observe. Giuliani and others want to use their

own criteria to take away the power of choice," he continued.

At the door of the exhibit is a guest book where one woman from Brooklyn signed, "I'm so glad the mayor told us all about this extraordinary exhibit."

As people file by the Cox photo, many express their opinions aloud. "There's so much more to the picture," said one woman. "Well, he [Giuliani] is a politician. He knows nothing." Colyn, a food service worker from Harlem, wondered whether there would be the same controversy if the artist were not a woman. He also said, "I am Catholic, but I do not view this as anti-Catholic. It is an expression of art. My idea of a 'Last Supper' is not by portraying Jesus as a white man with blond hair, either."

Craig McQueen, a 13-year-old student from the Bronx, said, "Artists should be able to express what they feel and have the freedom to show what they believe in." His mother, Norma McQueen, from Puerto Rico, said she had brought Craig to the exhibit "so he could see for himself some of our culture and not be influenced by stereotypes, but to have an open mind."

But not everyone agrees. Bishop Thomas Daily of Brooklyn said, "Why another vulgar display of anti-Christian sentiment? Is publicity more important than respect for religious belief?" The *New York Post* quotes Angela Balzano, a worker from Brooklyn, on the photo, "It shouldn't be in a museum, it should be in the garbage. It's a slap in the face to all Christians."

While the exhibit has not formerly been announced as part of Black History Month, some visitors noted that connection. The photos include Martin Luther King, Jr. being confronted by police at Medgar Evers's funeral; the 1968 sanitation workers' strike in Memphis, Tennessee; Fidel Castro speaking in Harlem in 1995; and musicians such as Billie Holiday and Charlie Parker.

Cox, 43 years old, has a masters degree in fine arts from the New York School of Visual Arts and received a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts. In response to the mayor's remarks, the artist is quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "Get over it. I don't produce work that nec-



Viewers gather at the exhibit "Yo Mama's Last Supper" at the Brooklyn Museum

essarily looks good over somebody's couch."

Unfortunately, Cox has taken the low road of criticizing Giuliani's personal life as immoral. And Cox, who was once Catholic, was reported in the *New York Daily News* as saying, "Catholics had no interest in the abolition of slavery" and claimed that 40 percent of American slave owners were Catholic, a statement which Giuliani, who is Catholic, jumped to dispute.

In presenting the display, museum director Arnold Lehman wrote, "The photographs in this exhibition represent varied subject matter, with images ranging from explorations of identity and personal philosophy to documents of the Civil Rights struggle to reflections of African American daily life, culture and cultural heroes."

Lehman and the museum were also assailed in 1999 when the Giuliani administration attempted to eliminate public funding for the institution for hosting an exhibition containing the painting "Holy Virgin Mary" by Nigerian-born British artist Chris Ofili. It depicted a Black Madonna and used the medium of elephant dung to highlight various aspects of the work.

Giuliani went on a virulent attack against the painting and Ofili, denouncing the work as "sick," antireligious, and an example of "Catholic bashing."

Due to backing the museum and the artists received from defenders of democratic rights, the city government was defeated in its campaign against the museum. A U.S. District Judge later ordered the city to restore funding to the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

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## CALENDAR

### BRITAIN

#### London

**Socialist School.** Classes and discussion on the historic change in the family structure and coming social battles; the Jewish question and the fight against anti-Semitism. Sat., March 17, 11 a.m. Sun., March 18, 10 a.m. Sponsored by the Communist League. Location: 47, The Cut. For further information, call (020) 928-7993.



# How scandalmongering benefits ultrarightists

Printed below is an excerpt from "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," a report by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes that was adopted by the party's August 1994 national convention. The entire text of the talk can be found in *New International no. 10*. Copyright © 1994 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

The workers movement can and must fight to defend and extend democratic rights when they come under attack by rightist movements and by the capitalist govern-

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

ment. Doing so, and drawing broad layers of the population into the fight, is part of the process of mobilizing opposition to rising fascist currents and building a communist vanguard of the working class.

During periods like we live in today—when a capitalist social crisis is deepening but a communist leadership is not yet growing out of rising mass workers struggles—demagogues get a hearing not only in the middle class but also in the labor movement. If no solutions are being advanced on any mass level to the burning problems created by the decline of capitalism and liberal democracy, then growing numbers reach out for radical, "decisive," and "popular" answers, regardless of their scientific value and ultimate class implications. Growing numbers become susceptible to crank ideas, conspiracy theories, and a variety of reactionary explanations of why society is gripped in a deepening crisis and what can be done to "restore order."

It is from this vantage point that communist workers must judge how we respond to and politically explain the interlaced sexual and financial scandals involving ruling-class figures in many of the imperialist countries. Headlines are being grabbed by exposés involving President Clinton and Hillary Clinton in the United States, Prince Charles and members of Parliament and cabinet ministers in the United Kingdom, prominent bourgeois politicians in Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries.

The reason that political figures seem more vulnerable to scandals today is not that such conduct is something new in ruling circles over the history of capitalism or class society. Whatever the facts about Clinton's libido, lechery, and all-around offensive behavior, he is certainly not unique among U.S. presidents—including hallowed liberal icons like Franklin Roosevelt, let alone John Kennedy. Nothing that comes out about the current royal family in the United Kingdom can approach King Henry VIII more than four hundred years ago and many of both sexes who followed him. The greater *vulnerability* to scandals today is a reflection of the instability of the world imperialist order and the growing lack of confidence in this system and its leading personnel expressed both by its beneficiaries and by millions of others.

Of course, most workers justly despise the hypocrisy, the pretenses, the sanctimonious sermonizing of bourgeois politicians in both parties. We despise the "humane"



Militant/Monica Jones

**Protest in Vancouver, British Columbia, Jan. 11, 2000, against rightist stabbing of Garson Romalis, a doctor who provided abortion services. Pornographication of politics and culture war emboldens reactionary assaults on advances for women's equality. Workers must defend these rights when they come under attack.**

excuses they give for degrading social brutality and racist abuse. We detest the way hired scribblers of the parasitic classes write off entire layers of our class as lazy or self-indulgent. We're sickened by their gall in demagogically railing against "the greed of the eighties," while they themselves have actively engaged in and profited handily from the same greed-inspired conduct.

But the working-class vanguard must not fall into the trap of thinking that simply "exposing" the dissoluteness and corruption of bourgeois politicians helps the workers movement. It's barking up the wrong tree. The problem with the capitalists and their political representatives is not that they are immoral, hypocritical people as individuals. The scandalmongering is an effort—organized from within bourgeois politics, largely by its ultraright wing—to exacerbate and profit from middle-class panic and to drag workers along with the declining class itself down into the pit of resentment and salacious envy.

### 'Pornographication of politics'

This "pornographication of politics," as we might call it, is part of the politics of resentment that benefits the ultraright, not the working class. It is demagogues like the Buchanans who raise the banner of "the culture war" and "the religious war" and rail against the degeneracy of "the elite" who set a bad example for the working class. This became a stock-in-trade of the Nazis in the 1920s and early 1930s as they decried the "filth" and "degeneracy" of the Weimar Republic and its dominant bourgeois parties, politicians, and moneyed beneficiaries. This was how the Nazis explained Germany's increasingly desperate economic and social conditions to small shopkeepers and other petty-bourgeois sectors, to housewives and women in the countryside, and to layers of workers as well.

From the standpoint of the working class, it's much better when every worker could

care less about the sex life of Clinton, or Kennedy, or Prince Charles—or of any other public figure. It's an enervating diversion, one that gets swept aside in times of ascending class battles.

What the working class needs is not exposés of bourgeois politicians and their personal weaknesses. We need to be able to explain politically why the working class has no common interests with the class these bourgeois politicians speak for. We need to spotlight every form of abuse of power by them, individual or corporate, including the so-called "Whitewater" revelations of how Bill and Hillary Clinton used the Arkansas state house to enrich themselves and promote big-business interests at the expense of working people and the unions—and then used the White House to cover up those earlier abuses. We need to advance a class understanding of politics and help our class forge an independent proletarian political organization that can lead a fight for a social and political program to advance the interests of the oppressed and exploited.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



March 5, 1976

NEW YORK—"If I had the authority, I would close down Indian Point Plant No. 2 at once—it's almost an accident waiting to happen."

With this charge, Robert Pollard announced his resignation as safety overseer for the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission at the Indian Point nuclear reactors on February 9.

The three nuclear plants are located on the Hudson River less than thirty miles north of New York City.

Pollard's announcement came just a week after three General Electric engineers quit that company's nuclear reactor division and volunteered to work for the movement seeking to block nuclear power plants in California.

Pollard's attack focused on a power tunnel in Indian Point Plant No. 2. Both the normal and emergency back-up power cables run through the same tunnel, so an accident there could knock out both.

"The Indian Point plants have been badly designed and constructed and are susceptible to accidents that could cause large-scale loss of life and other radiation injuries, such as cancers and birth defects," Pollard said.

He added, "The magnitude of the hazards associated with these plants has been suppressed by the government because the release of such information might cause great public opposition to their operation."

Until resistance grows to the point that workers begin generalizing lessons stimulated by sharp struggles and swelling the ranks of a communist party, the ideology of the ruling class—including its unctuous and hypocritical official moralism—will continue to shape the ideas and values of all but a small vanguard of the working class. But communists and other thinking workers must always fight for our class and its organizations to take the moral high ground and chart our own course independent of the bourgeoisie, its opinion makers, and the middle-class layers they set into motion. The workers movement strives to develop our own values, *collectively*, out of working-class *political practice*.

Deepening political polarization is inevitable in today's world. This does not mean, however, that the gains our class has won through decades of struggle are destined to be reversed. The workers movement must take the lead in defending every inch of ground our class and its allies have conquered.

Vanguard workers, for example, welcome the historic fact that anti-Semitism in the United States has declined and continues to decline among workers, of all skin colors. At the same time, we recognize that growing rightist movements, in the course of broader class confrontations, can initiate relatively sudden surges of anti-Semitic activity that have an impact on bourgeois public opinion and reinforce Jew-hatred in sections of a more and more resentful middle class and in the broader population. That underlines the importance of communist workers explaining to co-workers why anti-Semitism is a deadly trap for the working class. We must explain that anti-Semitism is based on gross and unjust falsehoods and why the labor movement must not only oppose it but also take the lead in mobilizing opposition to every manifestation of such bigotry, whatever its source.

The workers movement must stand at the head of the fight to defend affirmative action gains, abortion rights and other advances for women's equality, school desegregation, and a broad range of democratic rights and freedoms. The liberals and middle-class radicals, of all political stripes and all nationalities, shrink in fear from the reality of what growing fascist movements will do. Despite their democratic pretensions, they are utterly incapable of defending democratic rights. But none of the assaults by the right need succeed if the working-class movement resists effectively and strengthens a communist leadership in the process.



March 5, 1951

NEW YORK, Feb. 25—The refusal of the grand jury to indict the killer cops who murdered the Negro ex-GI, John Derrick, was protested this afternoon at a Harlem mass meeting. The meeting was held at the Golden Gate Ballroom under the auspices of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

An independent investigation conducted by Wilfred N. Mayes, counsel to the NAACP, has established beyond any doubt that Palumbo and Minakakis, the cops who shot Derrick last Dec. 7, are guilty of murder and grand larceny. In the light of his investigation, the handling of the case by District Attorney Hogan and the grand jury stands exposed as a criminal conspiracy to suppress evidence and thwart justice.

Despite a justifiable fear of police reprisals, Mayes secured eight eye-witnesses who swore under oath that Derrick was shot in cold blood as he stood unarmed, with his hands above his head. Other witnesses testified that five minutes before the killing Derrick had more than two thousand dollars on his person. From the moment of the killing until it arrived at the morgue, nobody had access to the corpse except the two cops. A search of the body at the morgue revealed the money was gone.

This whitewash of murder by Hogan and the grand jury comes as a surprise to no one familiar with their record.

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by Jack Barnes

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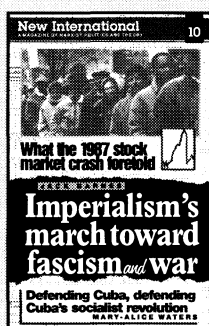
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# U.S. troops out of Japan

The recent sinking of a Japanese fishing boat by a U.S. submarine whose officers were carrying out a dangerous rapid surfacing “exercise” in the highly traveled waters off Honolulu should evoke an outcry from working people in the United States. So should the fact that the collision took place while the submarine’s officers were entertaining wealthy civilian guests by permitting them to sit at the controls, and the refusal of the submarine’s captain to aid the rescue of those in the water struggling for survival.

This callous disregard for the lives of working people, both in and out of uniform, is what marks U.S. imperialism and the officer corps of its military forces. The killing of the Japanese workers and youth training to be fishermen is the latest outrage in decades of “accidents,” massacres, bombings, and wars by the military machine that serves to defend the interests and prerogatives of a tiny handful of superwealthy ruling families in the United States.

The apology issued the same day of the boat sinking by Lt. Gen. Earl Hailston, the top-ranking Marine on the Japanese island of Okinawa, for referring to the Okinawans as “wimps” and “nuts” because of their objections to a U.S. soldier molesting a young girl, was not unrelated. Hailston’s arrogant message, meant for a select audience of the military brass, was that Okinawans should just get used to the brutality of the American boot on their necks. It was similar to the 1995 remarks of Adm. Richard Macke that the rape of a Japanese girl by soldiers was unnecessary, since for the price of renting a car that night, “they could have had a girl” and avoided the rape charges.

The imperialists’ contemptuous treatment of the Japanese people includes the incarceration of thousands of Japanese Americans in California during World War II and the confiscation of their land, businesses, and money;

the bombing of Japan, including unleashing nuclear weapons against the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945; and the postwar U.S. military occupation of the country.

Opposition is growing to the military bases the U.S. government continues to impose on Japan. Incidents of rape, arson, and hit-and-run car accidents, not to mention insulting language like Hailston’s comments, have given rise to protests by the people of Okinawa. The town of Chatan, Okinawa, pointed to the solution to the never-ending abuse when its council unanimously called for all U.S. Marines to leave and for Hailston to resign.

The ruling capitalist families in the United States need a powerful navy based in Asia and the Pacific to back up their exploitation of the workers and farmers and the resources of the countries in the region. They need to keep the upper hand against their ally and competitor, Japan. That is why 100,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Okinawa and the rest of Japan, south Korea, and on warships throughout the Pacific.

This military might aids those who profit from the labor of workers and farmers in the United States and around the world. But they are not invincible.

Japanese working people have fought for their government to apologize for the brutality of the Japanese imperialist occupation of China and Korea, including use of “comfort women” as sexual servants of the Japanese army during World War II. Working people in the United States should follow their lead and demand the withdrawal of all U.S. military forces from Japan. Washington should tell the entire truth about the sinking of the Japanese fishing boat, punish the officers responsible, and fully compensate the families of those killed by the reckless and antiworker actions of its military forces.

# Defend freedom of speech

The proposals by New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani to censor a photo exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art and statements that he will pursue legal action against the institution should be denounced by all defenders of democratic rights. His attempt to portray the exhibit as an “expression of prejudice” and as “anti-Catholic” is simply an assault on freedom of expression.

Working people don’t need politicians from either of the two big business parties to set up commissions to define “decency standards.” The Democrats and Republicans who run City Hall preside over a city with rising homelessness, a police force with an established record of brutality, a record of intrusions on democratic rights, antiunion attacks, and other assaults on the rights of working people. This bipartisan offensive—organized by the liberal wings of the Democratic and Republican parties—is what propels Giuliani’s moves, not fascist-like censorship proposals of a Republican mayor, as Democratic mayoral hopeful Fernando Ferrer asserts.

Deciding whether to go see an art exhibit and judging

whether it is offensive is an individual decision that should be defended by all working people. Ceding to the bourgeois government decisions over what art work can be displayed, what books libraries can carry, or what magazines or videos a store can sell is not only a direct attack on democratic rights. It also opens the door to further intrusions on the unions and other organizations of working people, as well on as the right to privacy.

More than a year ago Giuliani denounced another exhibit at the Brooklyn museum as antireligious “Catholic bashing.” This attempt at censorship was pushed back by protests organized to defend democratic rights and public funding of the arts. The lesson from that victory is that rallies, public forums, and other discussions in defense of free speech are needed to protect democratic rights when they come under attack.

The labor movement and all supporters of democratic rights can raise a unified voice in this controversy to say: Uphold freedom of expression! Defend the First Amendment!

# End bombing, sanctions against Iraq

Continued from front page

against the people of Iraq—including its embargo, invasion, and repeated bombings—has several goals. One is to remove the regime of Saddam Hussein and replace it with a protectorate that will defend imperialist interests in that part of the world. Another aim is to deal blows to its imperialist competitors through the use of military might, asserting U.S. imperialism’s domination of the region and its resources against France, Germany, and Japan. It seeks to remind those powers of its military superiority and its irreplaceable role in policing the world for imperialism.

As the Bush administration pushes forward on the U.S. rulers’ goal of building an antimissile system to secure a nuclear first-strike capability, especially targeting the workers states of China and Russia, the assault on Iraq serves to further the military pressure against Russia by U.S. imperialism. Washington’s military assault also targets working people in the region who have waged mighty struggles over the decades to free themselves from the imperial yoke, assert national sovereignty, and advance their own interests against the capitalist rulers.

This brutal imperialist foreign policy is an extension of the attack being waged at home against unions, the social wage, and democratic rights. Washington’s “anti-terrorism” campaign, for example, including the trial currently under way in New York around the bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa, aims to whittle away at hard-won demo-

cratic rights and justify roundups, frame-ups, mandatory prison sentences, and erosion of Bill of Rights protections. Washington is now collaborating with London and Berlin, who have recently arrested more than a dozen people accused of being “Islamic radicals.”

The continued violations of Iraqi sovereignty by Washington and London have had devastating consequences for working people in Iraq. According to a 1998 UN report, some 250 people die every day there due to the effects of the bombing, war, and sanctions. The total killed of more than 1.2 million people includes 750,000 children. The Iraqi people are also suffering from increased cases of leukemia and cancer linked to depleted uranium shells and warheads fired by U.S. and British tanks and warplanes during the 1991 bombing and invasion, which involved the slaughter of tens of thousands of workers and farmers.

President George Bush and other administration officials cynically called the bombing of another country a “routine” operation, hoping to inure working people to U.S. military aggression abroad. Turning reality on its head, they labeled the Iraqis the “aggressors” for trying to defend their country. Bush won bipartisan backing for the attack, which simply continues eight years of bombings and sanctions by the Clinton administration. But working people, farmers, and youth opposed to the assault can together demand:

U.S. and British imperialism: Hands off Iraq!  
End the sanctions and the bombings now!

# Thomas on ‘cultural war’

Continued from page 11

to the December 12 Supreme Court decision that brought last year’s closely contested presidential election to a conclusion. “The mood in Washington these days is ugly,” he said of the debate surrounding the outcome of the election. While the ruling by the majority of the court has “major problems,” he said, “the concurring opinion by three justices, Clarence Thomas among them, rests upon solid ground.” Joining Thomas in that opinion were justices Antonin Scalia, who attended the award dinner, and William Rehnquist.

Thomas had also appeared in the public eye two weeks before the AEI dinner, when he presided over a swearing-in ceremony for Attorney General John Ashcroft, another right winger who downplayed his views in Senatorial confirmation hearings.

Thomas noted he and other “active citizens” are “often subject to truly vile attacks; they are branded as mean-spirited, racist, Uncle Tom, homophobic, sexist, etc.,” such as when he spoke out in December 1980 against “affirmative action, welfare, school busing—policies that I felt were not well serving their intended beneficiaries.”

Thomas attributed these responses to “brutes,” rather than the fact that progressive changes in laws have been won as a by-product of mass social movements—including the battles to forge the industrial union movement, for Black and women’s rights, and for expansion of democratic rights. These gains are not easily pushed back as the assaults upon them meet resistance from working people.

To justify Supreme Court decisions that erode gains won in earlier struggles, Thomas said he strictly interprets the constitution when issuing a judicial opinion. “The Constitution means what the delegates of the Philadelphia Convention and of the state ratifying conventions understood it to mean,” he said. Pretending the court stands above the class struggle and the relationship of forces between the wealthy rulers and working people, he claimed judges should be “impartial referees who defend constitutional principles from attempts by particular interests (or even the people as a whole) to overwhelm them.”

Thomas briefly turned to themes of “family values” and patriotism, saying, “It takes no education and no great intellect to know that it is best for children to be raised in two parent families.”

“Duty, honor, country! There was a time when all was to be set aside for these,” he said. “Too many show timidity today precisely when courage is required.” Warning of an “overemphasis on civility” in public debates, he stated, “It does no good to argue ideas with those who will respond as brutes.”

Thomas reiterated his description of his political opponents as “brutes” elsewhere in his speech, as he encouraged the audience to more energetically pursue their “cultural war” against the social advances won by working people.

## Correction

The first sentence in the article “Volunteers win Pathfinder orders in Canada,” which appeared in the February 26 issue, should read “Pathfinder Press Distribution in Canada received orders in January for \$1,410 worth of books and pamphlets.”

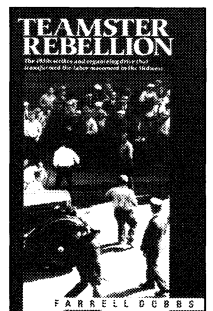
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# Greens aid assault on workers in Germany

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Leaders of Germany's Green Party, junior partners in the ruling coalition, are taking increasing responsibility for advancing the anti-working-class program and imperialist foreign policy of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) administration of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Green Party leaders have prodded Schröder to move faster on several fronts to better meet the expectations of Germany's capitalist class.

While the overall direction of the Social Democratic-Green coalition government continues on a course of helping the German rulers wrest concessions from the workers and farmers, recent moves by Schröder have strained the coalition and exposed differences and hesitations on how far to push anti-worker measures.

The two parties formed a coalition government in 1998 when they gained a narrow plurality with 298 SDP and 47 Greens in parliament.

The Green Party, which fused with the Bündnis 90 alliance of civil rights movements in eastern Germany in 1993, was formed in 1980 by diverse forces including activists in the antinuclear movement, the peace movement, and opponents of the antidemocratic measures of the ruling parties. The party's platform in the 1998 federal elections called for "ecological and social renewal" and included planks on "global responsibility"; pension cutting reforms; "environmentally friendly agriculture"; along with demanding "No to nuclear power" and "women's self-determination."

The Greens' platform cloaks their proposals for flexible work time and part-time jobs as a way to advance women's equality, saying it leads to "fair distribution of...housework, child-rearing, and nursing care to allow women and men to share in paid work sufficient to support themselves and their families."

On their web site, the Greens explain they orient toward younger people and that "Green voters tend to have a relatively high level of education." The Green Youth, they say, has more than 5,000 members between 14 and 28.

The governing coalition has helped the German rulers hold down wages of German workers in relation to contracts won by workers in Norway and Finland who struck for their demands. Schröder's government also succeeded in passing a tax cut bill last July that boosts profits and improves the international competitiveness of German capitalists.

Last fall the Social Democrats, whose membership base includes the trade unions, began slowing down their moves to cut pensions and took steps to strengthen the workplace councils, committees of workers' delegates that represent nearly half the country's workers and act to safeguard workers' interests in the plants. The councils represent 98 percent of workers in factories of more than 1,000 employees. These steps drew an angry reaction from the country's main industry groups, and opposition from the Green leaders. The Cologne Institute for Business Research said this month that the plan to reinforce the works councils "goes fundamentally in the wrong direction," and the capitalist press has expressed alarm.

Schröder has "become patently more wary of antagonizing his core supporters in the trade unions and on the left," complained Haig Simonian of the *Financial Times*, who praised the Green leaders, on the other hand, for being "particularly concerned by the recent gyrations over pensions reform." The Greens' budgetary spokesman, Oswald Metzger, remarked, "Obviously, the SPD can't win an election as the party of business, but you can't turn the clock back so far."

Fritz Kuhn, national Green co-chairman, said, "We must seek opportunities to emphasize our role as modernizers," code words for cutting back the social wage and measures that restrict business competitiveness. Dow Jones Newswires writer Jonathan Stearns reported that industry leaders are hoping the Green Party "might accept changes to the draft law" that the SPD won't.

While the Greens traditionally took a stronger position against nuclear power than the SPD, Kuhn urged party members last month not to demonstrate against the planned transport of nuclear waste to Germany from France, the first such shipment since 1998. At that time, concern with con-

tainer leaks led to a halt in the shipments. Previously, Germany's nuclear power industry shipped spent nuclear fuel to La Hague in France for reprocessing, after which it was shipped back. Green leader Kuhn said some transports are necessary and that Germany has a moral and legal obligation to take back the reprocessed fuel. The "No Nuke" Greens have now given their agreement to the government's deal last summer with the nuclear industry to take a slow-track approach in phasing out nuclear power over 20 years or more.

Meanwhile, the Schröder government has restricted asylum laws for immigrants and stepped up deportations. At the same time it is calling for a government ban of right-wing groups as a way to stop attacks on immigrants. Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who is also a Green Party leader, blamed the "silent majority" for aiding the attacks by not speaking out against them.

On foreign policy, Fischer is becoming a

point man for the administration, in which backing up Washington is increasingly a central theme. Earlier in February, the German foreign minister traveled to Moscow for talks with Russian president Vladimir Putin, and reported that the Russians were showing new flexibility on the U.S. missile shield plan. "In the end, I think Russia will accept negotiations" on the shield plan, Fischer told reporters, while denying that he was acting as an intermediary between Russia and the Bush administration.

The German daily *Die Welt* said that in discussion with Russian officials on the U.S. missile plan, "Fischer made it clear that...Germany basically stood on the side of the United States," stressing that Washington "is Germany's most important ally, and that would not change." The paper pointed out that by doing this "Fischer corrected the impression the Russians had gathered from the recent Moscow visit of Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping," an SPD

member who had made statements critical of the U.S. plan.

The February visit to Washington by the German foreign minister, taking place just days after U.S. and British planes bombed sites close to Baghdad, Iraq, marks another step in the evolution of the German Greens and the "Red-Green" alliance in this direction. The German government has maintained what the *Financial Times* called "a tactful silence" about the latest bombing.

Fischer's background as a radical youth in the 1960s gives a left cover to the regime. Opposition parties in the German parliament are trying to erode the coalition by calling for an investigation into Fischer's participation in a conference organized by the Palestine Liberation Organization in Algiers in 1969.

The Greens supported Schröder's decision to send German troops to occupy Yugoslavia along with military forces from the United States and other European powers.

## Korean workers protest Daewoo layoffs

BY RÓGER CALERO

Union members and riot police clashed at Daewoo Motor Co.'s main manufacturing plant in the industrial port city of Incheon, near Seoul, after several hundred workers and family members occupied the sprawling facility to protest mass layoffs.

Some 1,750 workers were fired last week as part of Daewoo's moves to eliminate 5,500 jobs in order to make the bankrupt car maker more attractive to a foreign buyer.

Union members began to gather their forces Saturday, February 10, after the company passed out dismissal notices the day before. Workers declared that they would occupy the plant until the company gave up its layoff plans and reinstated those already dismissed. Several hundred workers outside the plant were prevented by 1,000 cops from joining those inside.

"We will keep on striking until the government abolishes the layoff plan," Kim Il Sop, the president of the union representing the workers, said in an interview. "We have gathered the workers in small groups throughout the plant to fight" an expected police assault, he added.

During last-minute negotiations February 9 between the union and management, union officials proposed workers go on unpaid four month leaves to help save the company. Daewoo reaffirmed that the layoffs were essential to its recovery plans. General Motors Corp., the only potential bidder for the plant, has made it clear that the layoffs are necessary before they consider renewing their 1999 offer to buy Daewoo for \$6 billion. GM is now expected to offer \$3 billion or less for the company, which can produce up to a million cars a year.

On February 13, some 4,000 police officers in riot gear and armed with arrest warrants for 32 union leaders entered the plant in column formation to remove the workers who were defending themselves



Korean auto workers confront riot police storming Daewoo plant February 20

with steel pipes. Many unionists were injured, 50 workers were arrested, and others fled, including some of the leaders accused of leading the plant takeover.

Despite these protests, the South Korean regime has backed the layoffs and the selling of Daewoo and other conglomerates to pay off some of the tens of billions of dollars in debt owed to the central government. Daewoo, for example, has debts totaling more than \$10 billion.

The South Korean regime has also indicted 34 Daewoo executives on fraud charges. They are accused of overstating company assets to hide losses and ensure government loans.

Union leaders have blamed the collapse of the carmaker on collusion between government officials and business leaders. "For many years, there have been money connections among these people," said the union president. "Now the government wants to take care of the problem by selling Daewoo to General Motors," he added.

In response to the union's proposal to turn Daewoo into a state-owned firm, Lee Jong Dae, the chief executive officer appointed by Daewoo creditors, said, "Making Daewoo a public or national corporation will take a long time and I don't think creditors would wait."

## Farmers discuss crisis, discrimination lawsuit

Continued from front page

of the discriminatory act up to 1996.

Farmers had until last September to file late claims relating to the settlement. Since then the focus has been on Roth's office, which is responsible for reviewing appeals by farmers whose claims of discrimination were denied by the government. The monitor cannot overturn a denial, but can only recommend to government officials that the claim be reconsidered. Kenneth Saffold, a Minneapolis attorney working for the independent monitor's office, reported there are some 8,000 appeals to process which will take some months, he said.

Sylvester Harris III, a hog and tobacco farmer from Soperton, Georgia, is one of the farmers whose claim was denied. The government adjudicator said he had defaulted on loans prior to 1981 and on a loan in 1989. Harris has documentation, however, of a letter signed by the county supervisor showing he did not start farming until 1981 and that the 1989 loan was canceled. Unlike many farmers, Harris was able to find a similarly situated white farmer, a requirement for making a claim. The adjudicator said that it took Harris only five days more

than it took the white farmer to obtain a FSA loan, but Harris has proof that it took the white farmer 50 days to get a loan and it took him 180 days.

Harris appealed his claim in May 2000 and is still waiting for a response. "One of the biggest lessons I learned as a result of this fight is never to trust the U.S. government," he said.

Charles Dennard, a farmer from Pineview, Georgia, explained his experience with the settlement. Dennard received \$50,000 on his claim last August, two weeks after his farm had been sold on the courthouse steps. "Had I received the money in time, I wouldn't have lost the farm. I have seen some hard times," he said. To add insult to injury, most of the \$50,000 was taken by the bank, Dennard said.

A panel of Georgia farmers spoke at the conference on "The 2001 Farm Year—Problems and Pitfalls." Larry O'Neal, a farmer in Thomas County, said, "The problem is commodity prices are so low, and the things we buy are so high." He pointed out that peanut prices had declined from \$700 a ton a few years ago to \$613 a ton last year, while nitrogen went from \$90 a ton last year to

\$175 a ton this year.

Willie Adams, a poultry farmer from Greensboro, Georgia, explained the price squeeze he is experiencing. He said that a cold spell in December and January, coupled with a sharp increase in the price of gas for farm use, resulted in his expenses for fuel rising from \$800 last year to \$4,000 this year.

The bleak forecast for working farmers was alluded to in a talk by Nathan Smith, assistant professor of agriculture at the University of Georgia. Consecutive years of high production for southern staple crops—corn, cotton, and peanuts—coupled with little change in marketing opportunities, has resulted in low prices, Smith said. According to a 2001 University of Georgia report, "Low commodity prices and higher costs resulting from rising fuel prices resulted in a drop in net farm income in 2000 to \$40.4 billion...with USDA projections at \$34.4 billion for 2001."

Karl Butts is a farmer from Plant City, Florida. Arlene Rubinstein, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in Atlanta, contributed to this article.

## Canada presses trade war against Brazil

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Union members, farmers, and students in Brazil have taken to the streets to protest the February 2 decision by the Canadian government to ban imports of Brazilian beef on the trumped-up charge it could carry “mad cow disease.” Brazilian capitalists are also campaigning against the ban, encouraging an anti-Canadian and nationalist response to the trade pressures being exerted by the imperialist government in Ottawa.

The Canadian government action was followed by similar moves in both the United States and Mexico. Canada imports about Can\$10 million (Can\$1=US 65 cents) in canned Brazilian beef annually. Mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), is a degenerative and fatal brain disorder that has affected cows in Europe. It can also kill people who eat infected meat.

The action by Ottawa is another attack in a growing trade war against Brazil, stemming from a five-year dispute over government subsidies to jet manufacturers Embraer in Brazil and Bombardier Inc. in Canada. Ottawa has taken Brazil before the World Trade Organization (WTO) claiming Brazil's subsidies to Embraer have robbed Bombardier of sales of its regional jet planes.

The Union of Longshoremen of the Port of Santos, South America's largest port, protested the beef ban by delaying the unloading of containers coming from Canada. The Rural Brazilian Society said it was suspending its purchase of a potassium component used to make fertilizers. Society president Luis Hafers said meat producers had also voted to boycott Canadian cattle semen, used to breed livestock. The city council of São José dos Campos, home of Embraer, has established an “Anti-Canada Committee.” Its first measure was to declare Canada's prime minister, Jean Chretien, and Canadian diplomats *persona non grata*.

After 24-year-old Rodrigo Ranieri Araujo posted material on a web site that referred to Canada as an “evil empire” waging “economic war” against Brazil, and urged people to fight back, he received a threatening letter from the Federal Department of Public Works and Services in Canada warning him he had two “Canadian working days” to modify the site or face unspecified consequences.

The Brazilian congress unanimously passed a resolution that threatened to suspend all trade agreements with Canada until the beef ban is lifted. Aloizio Mercadante, sponsor of the resolution, said Brazil “must act to defend its economy and not passively accept the aggression being committed against it.”

Health Canada scientists, employees of the federal government, were reprimanded for stating publicly that the Brazilian beef ban was not based on science, but was “more a political move than a health one” tied to the fight over aerospace subsidies. Later Canadian officials admitted they have “no evidence” of mad cow disease in Brazil. In fact, Brazil's cattle herd, the largest in the world, is considered by some experts to be among the safest because it has been grass-fed since 1985. The disease is said to have spread to herds in Europe through bone meal feed contaminated with parts from infected cows.

### ‘Hypocritical first world imperialism’

Writing from São José Dos Campos in Brazil, *Globe and Mail* correspondent Mark Mackinnon stated that in Brazil Ottawa's actions smack of “hypocritical First World imperialism, of a developed nation trying to deny Brazil the tools it used to build up companies like Bombardier.”

Embraer has become the fourth-largest commercial aircraft producer in the world and the rival of Montreal-based Bombardier. The company employs about 10,000 workers and is a key component for Brazil's capitalist class in developing domestic industrial enterprises.

Brazil, a semicolonial country, is stagger-

ing under a \$226 billion foreign debt to the banks in imperialist countries like Canada. Five years ago, because of the unequal terms of trade imposed by the imperialist powers on Brazil and other semicolonial countries, the Brazilian government established Pro-ex, a program that offers cut-rate loans to buyers of Brazilian products. Embraer has taken advantage of this program.

At Ottawa's request the WTO originally declared Pro-ex illegal because it offered loans at below market rate. The decision gave Ottawa the go-ahead to slap Can\$2.3 billion in trade sanctions against Brazil over a seven-year period. Brazil claims to have met the WTO criteria, which Canada is now challenging. Then, last month Ottawa offered Bombardier financing on 75 percent of a \$2 billion jet order.

Henrique Rzezinski, Embraer's vice president of external relations, said: “The fact is that Canada is a mature economy, a stable economy, with social conditions we would love to see in Brazil. Canada no longer needs a Pro-ex.... The message being sent is that Canada exports airplanes, Brazil exports coffee beans, and that's the way it should stay. If Embraer was based in Copenhagen we would not be having the same kind of dispute.”

Under the pressure of the protests the editors of the *Globe and Mail* expressed nervousness over the situation. “What began as a battle for market share between Bombardier Inc. of Montreal and Embraer SA of Brazil, is on the brink of becoming a full-scale trade war, with major implications for the upcoming April summit [of the Americas in Quebec City] and for Canada's relations with the largest country in Latin America.”

Food inspectors from Canada, the United

## Prisoners' rebellion in Brazil exposes dismal conditions



Hundreds are lined up for a strip search at Carandiru prison in São Paulo February 19 after police ended a prisoners' uprising. The rebellion, which started at Carandiru, spread to 29 prisons across São Paulo. Prisoners exposed the dismal living conditions, including overcrowded cells and brutality by guards. Some 110,000 people, about half of Brazil's prison population, are incarcerated state-wide. Carandiru, the largest penitentiary in Latin America, was the site of a 1992 massacre where police killed 111 prisoners.

States and Brazil were scheduled to end a four-day visit to Brazil February 18 to determine if Brazil's cattle are a health threat.

John Steele is a meat packer and member the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

## ‘Lift the embargo against Brazil now’

The following statement was released February 19 by Michel Prairie, Communist League candidate in the upcoming by-election in the Quebec provincial riding (legislative district) of Mercier in Montreal.

Working people in Canada and around the world should join with workers, farmers, and students protesting in the streets of Brazil and demand that Ottawa immediately lift its February 2 embargo against importing Brazilian beef to Canada, drop all charges against Brazil in the dispute over aircraft production before the World Trade Organization, and cancel Brazil's debt to Canadian banks and other financial institutions.

As Ottawa's own scientists admitted, the banning of Brazilian beef imports to Canada has nothing to do with any health threat, and everything to do with the five-year trade assault by Montreal-based Bombardier against Brazil's Embraer, its main competitor worldwide in the lucrative regional jet market.

This is not a simple trade war between two groups of capitalist rivals, in which workers from both countries have no interest in taking sides. Brazil is a semicolonial country oppressed and dominated by imperialist countries, including Canada. Canadian imperialism is a major actor in the world system where a handful of countries dominated by super-rich capitalist families plunder the vast majority of humanity.

Along with the rest of Latin and Central America, Asia, and other underdeveloped regions of the world, Brazil has been struck hard by the deepening crisis of world capitalism at the beginning of the 21st century.

Its foreign debt to imperialist banks and other interests stands at US \$226 billion. International Monetary Fund-designed austerity measures have devastated the lives of millions of Brazil's workers and farmers. Its natural resources and national patrimony have been bought out at fire sale prices by imperialist interests. And it has been robbed on the world market by a system of unequal exchange aimed at keeping colonial and

semicolonial countries as producers of raw materials at very cheap prices and buyers of costly manufactured products.

Canada's ruling families have been part and parcel of this imperialist plunder of Brazil. Since 1997 three Canadian corporations alone—Nortel Networks, Bell Canada International and Têlèsystème Mobile International—have invested US \$1.5 billion in the country, including the purchase at low prices of state-owned telecommunication industries.

Ottawa's imperial arrogance and bullying are very familiar to the oppressed peoples of Canada, especially Native people and Quebecois.

Despite its noisy campaigns against “sweatshops” and “labor superexploitation” in third world countries, the trade union officialdom in Canada has remained strikingly silent in face of Ottawa's assault on

Brazil. This is also true of the wide array of “anti-globalization” petty-bourgeois forces mobilizing against the upcoming April 20-22 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. This summit will be attended by the head of states of the 34 countries of the Americas—with the exception of revolutionary Cuba, which is excluded from the event.

As working people, we need a different course—that of working-class unity and solidarity. This begins with the defense of the most oppressed and of those who are under attack by the bosses and their governments—here and internationally. From meat packers on strike or locked out in Vancouver to striking nickel miners in Sudbury, from debt-squeezed farmers in Saskatchewan to Quebecois and other victims of “Canadianism,” we should join with our brothers and sisters in Brazil and demand: “Ottawa, hands off Brazil now!”

## French bosses back down on retirement

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS—Two weeks after strikes and massive demonstrations of 300,000 workers throughout France, the employers federation in France agreed February 10 to again begin paying into supplementary retirement funds for another two years without the retirement age being raised.

Currently, private sector workers may retire at age 60 if they have worked or received unemployment benefits for 40 years. The Movement of French Enterprises (MEDEF) is seeking to raise this requirement to 45 years and to abolish retirement at age 60.

The massive January 25 actions, organized jointly by all five major union federations, demonstrated the determination of workers to push back the employers' attack. “We don't want to die on the assembly line!” said Lahcen Berdam, a 33-year-old Peugeot auto worker at the Paris demonstration. Bertrand Mann, 33, who also works at Peugeot, added, “The bosses are exagger-

ating a little. Already it's the workers who benefit the least from retirement. If they want to make us work 45 years before retiring, forget it.”

However, MEDEF scored a point in the agreement reached February 10 after a marathon 21-hour negotiating session with the union federations. The agreement calls on parliament to “reform” the retirement system before 2003, notably by “using the factor of the length of time worked in order to enjoy a full pension.” This was understood as a watered-down version of the employers' demand to push back the retirement age. The new agreement to continue financing supplementary pensions expires at the end of 2002. “The ground France has lost” in reforming retirement “handicaps its competitiveness,” declared MEDEF vice-president Denis Kessler. He pointed to Germany, which recently put through a reform of its system, as an example of the way forward.

Only two federations, the Democratic

Continued on Page 11