

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL

Introduction to 'From the Escambray to the Congo'

— PAGES 8-11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 66/NO. 02 JANUARY 14, 2002

Bush: U.S. will keep bombing Afghanistan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Stating what has been the intent of the U.S. rulers from the start of their war against Afghanistan, President George Bush made clear at a news conference at his ranch in Texas December 28 that U.S. troops will remain in that country for "quite a long period of time."

Since October 7 Washington has dropped 12,000 bombs throughout Afghanistan, killing thousands of civilians. A convoy of Pashtun tribal elders traveling to Kabul to attend the December 22 inauguration of Hamid Karzai as the leader of the newly appointed Afghan government, became one of Washington's bombing targets. About 65 people were killed in the attack, which the Pentagon insists was a Taliban convoy.

The new Afghan defense minister, Gen. Mohammed Fahim, asked in an interview December 28 for Washington to end its bombing raids in Afghanistan. Bush promptly dismissed this request and the Afghan Defense Ministry December 30 backed down from objections to the U.S. bombings.

Three days later Reuters reported that a U.S. air strike killed more than 100 civilians, many of them women and children, in the village of Qalaye Niazi in Pakhtia prov-

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Garment strikers say, 'We'll keep fighting'

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN
AND NATHAN CECCKIN

MONTREAL—Despite colder weather and a two-week holiday plant shutdown, striking garment workers here continued to walk picket lines they set up December 14. Of the 3,000 union members who struck some two dozen men's garment shops in Quebec, two-thirds work in four big plants here: Golden Brand, Jack Victor, SFI, and Samuelsohn.

The strike by members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) began after garment workers narrowly rejected for the second time a contract offer by the Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association (MCMA). The second proposal improved by a nickel the initial wage hike of 40 cents an hour over a three-year contract. Most workers earn between \$7.25 and \$8.40 an hour (Can\$1=US 63 cents). In previous negotiations, the MCMA

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Political explosion spreads as Argentine crisis grows

Workers, students take to streets; four presidents resign

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL,
CHRISTIAN CATALÁN,
AND ROMINA GREEN

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—An eruption of mass protests across the country, including the capital city of Buenos Aires, forced President Fernando de la Rúa to resign halfway into his four-year term. In face of continuing street mobilizations, his replacement, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, stepped

Firsthand report from team in Argentina

down barely a week later. On New Year's Day, hours after the Argentine Congress appointed Peronist leader Eduardo Duhalde as president—the fifth in 12 days, thousands of protesters were once again in the streets, chanting, "I didn't vote for him!"

On December 20, with tens of thousands of angry demonstrators in front of the presidential house defying a newly imposed state of siege and chanting "Out with him!" de la Rúa announced his resignation, climbed to the roof of the building, and took off in a helicopter.

The protests by working people, as well as by middle-class layers, were a response

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Militant/Romina Green

Thousands march to presidential house on evening of January 1 to protest congressional appointment of Peronist leader Eduardo Duhalde as president of Argentina.

'World events make production of revolutionary books more important'

Meeting celebrates progress of work crews helping to reorganize Pathfinder's printshop

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

A public meeting held in the Pathfinder printshop on December 23 celebrated a "major turning point in the work of the international communist movement," said Jack Barnes, the chairperson, in his introductory remarks. He was referring to the ongoing work by volunteers from across the country and Canada to reorganize the printshop, and in the months to come, the offices of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder.

Held under the banner, "The place of Pathfinder books in building the international communist movement," the meeting, which drew 90 people, was the second in a series of such events. The first, which featured *New International* editor Mary-Alice

Waters, was held eight days earlier, on December 15. In the course of the week between the two celebrations, work crews had transformed the meeting location from a largely empty area into a freshly painted space ready for installation of sheetfed presses on which all Pathfinder books and pamphlets are produced.

Barnes, the Socialist Workers Party national secretary, opened the meeting pointing to other steps forward by members and supporters of the communist movement. In

December, he reported, volunteers in the Pathfinder Reprint Project had prepared nine books from Pathfinder's catalog for reprinting. The figure registered the increasing pace of the international work to convert Pathfinder's 350-plus titles to digital files, which can be easily turned into plates for the printing presses.

Two days earlier, he said, socialist workers in Upper Manhattan held the first Militant Labor Forum at their new Washington

Continued on Page 3

War tensions grow between India and Pakistan; U.S. backs New Delhi

BY RÓGER CALERO

Facing a massive military mobilization by the government of India and severe diplomatic pressure from Washington, Pakistani president Gen. Pervez Musharraf announced January 1 that his government will cut off all support to "nonindigenous" groups fighting India's occupation of Kashmir. Among other measures, Musharraf ordered the section of military intelligence that provided training and military support to the groups to be closed down.

Continuing a military escalation aimed at Pakistan that has brought the region to the brink of war, New Delhi insists that the government in Islamabad extend its crackdown on Islamic groups accused by India of carrying out an armed attack on the Indian parliament December 13. The five attackers killed eight people outside the parliament, most of them guards, before being gunned down.

Borrowing from the imperialist rhetoric used by Washington to justify its war moves against Afghanistan and other countries in the region, Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said December 30 that India's "objective is to put an end to Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country." Seizing on the opportunity provided by the armed attack on the Indian parliament, New Delhi seeks to deal a decisive blow to the Kashmir independence movement, and gain ground over its neighbor and capitalist rival in the region.

"Lowering the level of insurgency is not too high a price to pay for protecting the country" against attack from India, whose conventional forces far outnumber Pakistan's, said Musharraf on January 2.

The Pakistani regime had earlier moved

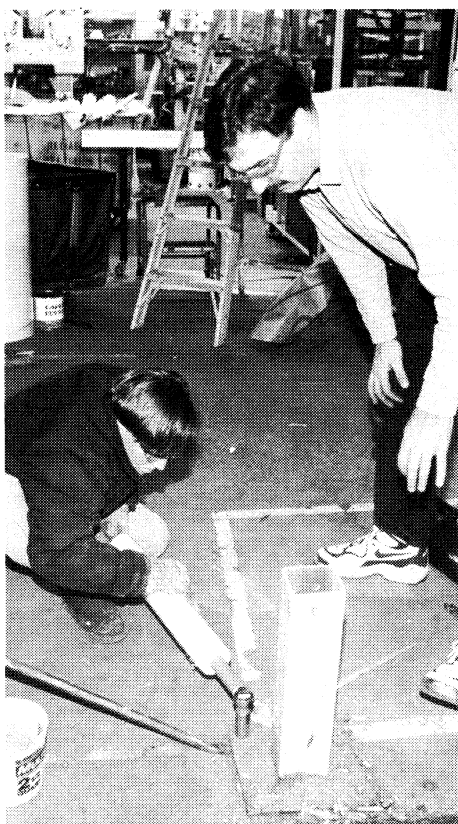
Continued on Page 4

Coming February 1 from Pathfinder

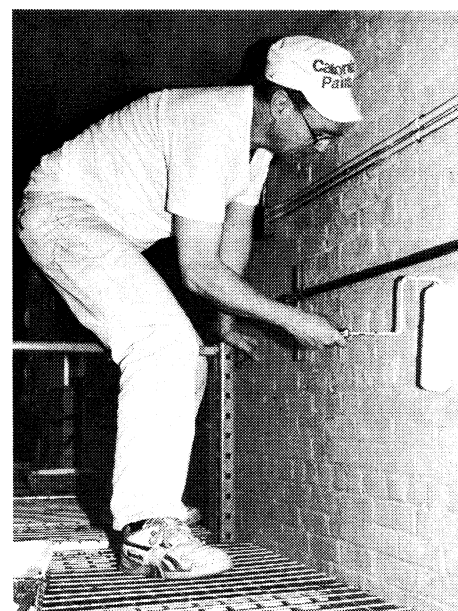
From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution

- ❖ Interview with Víctor Dreke, leading participant in Cuba's revolutionary movement. See advertisement page 9.
- ❖ Read the introduction and first chapter of the Spanish-language edition in the January issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Support grows for fight of fired garment worker — pages 4-5



Volunteer crews help reorganize printshop

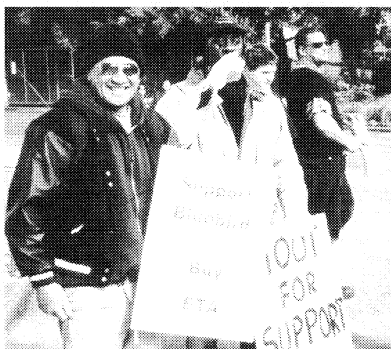


Photographers: Brian Williams, Hilda Cuzco, and Romina Green

THE MILITANT

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On December 22-23 more than 80 volunteers joined crews in the Pathfinder building on Manhattan's westside to continue the work of reorganizing the publisher's printshop. Volunteers also took part in an auction of bound volumes of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, disused tools, and computer and other equipment that raised \$2,500. A dinner, meeting, and social event were organized December 23 (see article page 3).

The following week, a crew prepared the relocation of the two sheetfed presses to the refurbished factory area. The work included the dismantling of an enclosure around the presses needed to maintain air quality.

Clockwise from top left: volunteers clear the debris left after a crew removed the press enclosure; a meeting to assess and organize the work; painting the factory walls and floor to turn the space into a press room; looking over sale items; taking down the walls around the sheetfed presses; restacking boxes of Pathfinder books moved to the first floor; and preparing photographic film of books to send the Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteers.

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'World events today make production of revolutionary books more important'

Continued from front page

Heights hall and bookstore. And SWP and Young Socialists members in Alabama are planning a grand opening at the end of January of their new hall in a workers district in Birmingham.

Building branches of the party and chapters of the Young Socialists; making Pathfinder books and the socialist press available to workers on the job, on street corners and plant gates, and from local Pathfinder bookstores; joining the resistance of working people; and carrying out the weekly effort to turn all of Pathfinder's titles into ready-to-print digital files are part of the same work being done by the volunteer work brigades to reorganize and make more efficient the production of the books at the Pathfinder Building in New York, he said.

Barnes painted a picture for those at the meeting of how the volunteer "Red Weekend" projects are aimed at finding out how to organize the printshop so it can be highly productive in printing Pathfinder as well as commercial jobs. At the same time, the printshop reorganization will strip down the shop to only what is needed to run a three-press operation. Organizing for just-in-time paper inventories and smaller and more frequent press runs of Pathfinder books, and turning paper files into digital records stored on the printshop and publishing houses' computer network data bases, are two examples of work being organized to cut down the amount of space needed by the shop, Pathfinder, and the *Militant*. So far this approach has made it possible to consolidate the shop onto one floor, where it previously occupied three floors of the building.

Through this work, Barnes said, the movement will know what kind of space is needed for the shop and have the confidence that it can be run efficiently to meet the rigors and competition of commercial printing in New York.

A similar process is still ahead in the *Militant* and Pathfinder, along with the party's national office, which Barnes described as an even bigger challenge for the movement.

Explosion in Argentina

Barnes noted that in a certain sense, "if you look at economics, there is no difference between Argentina and Brazil." The Brazilian government tried to keep its currency at a value that was not sustainable—it keeps transferring value to the imperialist countries no matter what it does—and it finally, after a great deal of warnings, devalued its currency. The Brazilian rulers did it early enough so that there were no mass actions that spread around the country, and they did it with the blessing of the imperialist powers.

"From an economic point of view there is nothing different today in Argentina—they are going through a massive devaluation of the peso," Barnes said. But it is ending with a social explosion "because of the way it was done, because of the myth that you could hold any currency in a semicolonial country in parity with the American dollar, in a deflationary period."

"The government thought they could continue to kid the Argentine people by telling them, 'just a little bit longer; just a little more denial; just a little more tightening your belt and we will have everything stabilized in the next decade,'" Barnes said. Instead, before there was any preparation—and in a total surprise to the imperialist world—an explosion broke out.

"Politics is the business we're in," the SWP leader said. "Economics is important because it affects politics. But politics is how all the questions of humanity are resolved in one way or another. The super-wealthy rulers cannot anticipate political explosions," he said, "because they have no ultimate feel for what is too much. And so political explosions take place. And the entire world in the coming period will be marked by these kind of political explosions."

Events such as these open up the possibility for building an international leadership against imperialism made up of youth and of toilers. It involves learning the lessons of past struggles of working people and communist workers being with the toilers and with the vanguard when these explosions happen, he noted.

Only by going through such experiences can a leadership be built and converge toward the kind of forces where revolutionary organizations can start having a real objective impact, such as they did during the Cuban Revolution.

Bush on 2002: a 'war year'

Barnes pointed to the December 21 statement by U.S. president George Bush, who, in response to a question about what the New Year will bring, responded: "Next year will be a war year." Bush added that "our war on terrorism extends way beyond Afghanistan."

The SWP leader recalled a talk he presented a few months after the inauguration of William Clinton in 1993, where he said that "Clinton is a war president. That includes international economic and financial wars that will end up destabilizing capitalism and threatening real wars, as they always have throughout the history of capitalism. It will include the cold-blooded use of assaults against oppressed and exploited peoples and nations, in order to further advance Washington's dominant position in the imperialist feeding chain."

What we couldn't see then, he said, was the degree to which the preparations for what is happening now were hidden for a period of time because of the crisis in Clinton's administration, and how they set up what is happening today more than we ever guessed at the time.

What has marked Washington's war against Afghanistan is how much the U.S. rulers held off their imperialist "allies" from much of any role—save for a distant second place for London. Now, Washington has allowed a British-German-French-dominated international force to carry out a "housekeeping" security task in Afghanistan.

The U.S. rulers' "thanks" to the regime in Pakistan for its support to Washington's assault has been to back the Indian government's demand that Pakistan crack down on Kashmiri independence forces based on its soil. India and Pakistan, nuclear-armed countries of 1 billion and 145 million people respectively, are "close to the brink of a major war," he said. The U.S. rulers' ability to foster India as an ally is "probably the biggest plus for Washington of the relative weakening of Russian power," he said.

"These events," Barnes said, "and how they happen, give substantially more importance to the end product of everything we are doing here this weekend."

Each celebration like this, he said, will greet somebody returning from, and send off someone else heading out to, important political openings in the world. Of the three speakers who addressed the December 23 meeting, two—Jack Willey and Olympia Newton—had just returned from overseas, and one—Martin Koppel—was preparing to lead a *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* reporting team to Argentina.



Martin Koppel, who is leading a *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* reporting team to Argentina, speaks at December 23 event.

Koppel, who edits *Perspectiva Mundial* and is an editor for Pathfinder, described the massive protests that forced the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa on December 21 (see article on page 1.).

Pathfinder books help explain the deep roots of the crisis and the revolutionary answer to capitalist depression, brutality, and war, Koppel said. The last reporting team to Argentina in 1997 took with them the new Spanish edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*. Titles published in both English



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Jack Barnes speaks at December 23 public meeting. The SWP leader discussed the ongoing work by volunteers to reorganize printshop and, over the coming months, the offices of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder. Inset: Participants in the meeting, which took place in newly painted and cleaned factory and warehouse area.

and Spanish since include *Capitalism's World Disorder*; the issue of *Nueva Internacional* containing the article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War;" *Che Guevara Talks to Young People: Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*; and *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*.

International youth meeting

SWP leader Jack Willey had just returned with other representatives of the Young Socialists from a meeting of the General Council of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Athens. Participants in the meeting discussed an evaluation of the World Festival of Youth and Students held in Algeria last August. Meeting participants gave the festival a "positive evaluation," he said. Many agreed that the festival, which attracted 6,500 participants and was held in Africa for the first time, marked a step toward the reconstruction of a "real anti-imperialist youth movement." A delegate from Namibia, for example, explained the need for development because of the exploitative and brutal role of imperialism in Africa in the post-colonial period.

There are several ongoing discussions among WFDY members about how to build an anti-imperialist youth movement that can more quickly and decisively respond to new imperialist assaults around the world. These include holding anti-imperialist youth festivals more frequently.

The meeting decided to hold the next general assembly in Havana in February 2003, Willey reported. The assembly will elect organizations to the general council and officers to serve in WFDY's headquarters in Budapest. It will likely decide when and where the next festival will be held. Many delegates projected holding the next gathering in a semicolonial country, most likely in Asia.

Fusion of communist movement

Young Socialists and SWP leader Olympia Newton joined the platform of the meeting having just returned from Sweden. Newton had taken part in recent meetings in Stockholm, Sweden, in which Young Socialists members joined together with veteran socialist workers in each country to prepare to join their two organizations in a common communist party over the coming months. A fusion congress is planned for mid-January in Sweden, she said. Simultaneously, communists there are organizing to set up a branch in the city of Gothenburg.

The founding convention of the Communist League in Iceland is planned for March, said Newton. It will coincide with the publication in Icelandic of the English-language *New International* no. 11, with the feature article "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." "Communists in Sweden and Iceland are studying Pathfinder titles such as *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* and *In Defense of Marxism*," she said, emphasizing that "Pathfinder books are central to these advances in Europe."

"Keep your minds open. The political trajectory elsewhere is the same as in Sweden and Iceland—we are heading toward a fusion," said Jack Barnes. "Whatever the forms it takes, we are confronted by a universal opportunity" as resistance by working people deepens and young fighters knock on the door of the communist movement.

Work crews mobilize

Many of the participants in the meeting, Barnes noted, had taken part in the intensive voluntary work efforts of the previous nine days. At the high point of participation, some 80 people, from cities along the northeast coast, and from Miami, San Francisco, Houston, and from Canada, were involved.

Among the crews were those led by Dennis Richter, a textile worker in North Carolina, and Sarah Katz, a San Francisco garment worker, which painted the factory floor and walls; Ilona Gersh, an auto parts worker in Detroit, headed the network wiring crew; Don Mackle, a meat packer from Detroit, supervised the team that moved boxes of books from the third floor of the Pathfinder building, along with their shelving, and restacked them in the first floor factory; crews led by Stu Singer, a meat packer in Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh garment worker Chris Remple took on important construction and plumbing tasks.

Eva Braiman, a meat packer in Cleveland, organized the volunteers who cut down Pathfinder's last sheets of photographic film, used by the publisher until its adoption of digital techniques in the late 1990s. The film contained Pathfinder's Russian-language publications, including the *Bulletin of the Opposition*, and Leon Trotsky's *My Life* and *The History of the Russian Revolution*. The film will be used by the Reprint Project vol-

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You are invited to attend another Red Weekend special event

Sat., January 5

Dinner: 6:00 p.m.

Program: 7:00 p.m.

at the Pathfinder Building,
165 Charles St. (one block north
of 10th @ West St.)

Tensions grow between India and Pakistan

Continued from front page

to comply with India's demands to freeze the assets and arrest leaders of Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Pure) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (Army of the Prophet), the two groups that India alleges carried out the December 13 attack. More than 80 people associated with the two organizations have been detained by the Pakistani military in the last two weeks. New Delhi has also insisted that the leaders of the two groups be handed over for trial.

On December 29 White House spokesman Scott McClellan informed the press that U.S. president Bush had called Musharraf and had told him "to take additional strong and decisive measures to eliminate the extremists who seek to harm India, undermine Pakistan, provoke a war."

Calling the attack on the Indian parliament a "strike against democracy," Bush made a pledge to Vajpayee to work together against terrorism. The Bush administration has added Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad to the State Department list of "terrorist" organizations.

While welcoming the latest measures, the New Delhi government announced that it will not withdraw the hundreds of thousands of troops, short-range ballistic missile batteries, and hundreds of combat aircraft it has massed along its 2000-mile border with Pakistan. "It's too short a time to think of de-escalating now," said an Indian defense ministry official. Instead, India has pressed its demand that Pakistan arrest and hand over for trial 20 people it accuses of being "terrorists" who have committed crimes in

India.

Along with its military moves, India has closed its international airspace to Pakistani airliners. On December 27 New Delhi ordered Islamabad to withdraw half its diplomatic staff and confined the remaining representatives to the capital.

Pakistan has responded to India's military threat by moving several army divisions and heavy arms equipment to its border, including medium-range ballistic missiles, and has declared that it will consider any attack on its territory an act of war.

The arsenal wielded by India's vastly superior and larger army of 1 million—compared to the 600,000-strong Pakistani force—includes some 75 Prithvi ballistic missiles that could be launched from any of its 14 Russian-made nuclear-capable bombers, as

well as from any of its several hundred MiG-27, MiG-29, and Su-30 fighter planes. U.S. intelligence services estimate that India has about 60 nuclear weapons in its war chest. India's military mobilization includes a naval task force—incorporating its only aircraft carrier, six other ships, and two submarines—deployed off Pakistan in the Arabian Sea within striking distance of Karachi.

Seeking to exploit its growing ties to Washington, the government of India is encouraging Bush to keep up the pressure. "Pakistan cannot continue to support these groups for even one day if the American government puts enough pressure on because Pakistan is so vulnerable economically," said a senior Indian minister. The Pakistani regime has for decades been U.S. imperialism's key ally in the region, and it quickly opened its military bases for Washington to use in its assault on neighboring Afghanistan. In the period following independence in 1947 India had closer ties with the Soviet Union.

India has a population of more than 1 billion people, and a Gross Domestic Product in 1996 of \$1.54 trillion, compared with Pakistan's population of 145 million and GDP of \$296.5 billion. Close to one-fifth of India's export and 10 percent of its import trade is with the United States.

Both the Clinton and Bush administrations have pressed for closer ties with India. This past November Bush hosted India's prime minister for talks, declaring his administration to be "committed to developing a fundamentally different relationship with India."

Commenting on the turn of events over the past few weeks, an aide to Gen. Musharraf said December 29 that "moving against Lashkar and Jaish was never an 'if,' it was only a 'when,'" adding that until India "threatened war over the issue, the Americans accepted that we should have to move carefully on any issue involving Kashmir. But the attack in New Delhi accelerated the agenda. Something that might have been accomplished in weeks suddenly had to be tackled in days."

British division of Indian subcontinent

India and Pakistan have fought three wars, two of them ignited by their dispute over Kashmir. The roots of the conflict date back to the partition of colonial India in 1947 by the British imperialists. The colonial masters of the subcontinent, facing a rising anticolonial struggle after World War II in which masses of working people staged strikes and demonstrations, carved up the region in an attempt to split up the people, breaking bonds of unity being forged among the Indian masses.

London utilized religious divisions in its attempt to perpetuate imperialist domination of the Indian subcontinent, claiming to be

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Garment strikers say, 'We'll keep fighting'

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offer has added up to 75 cents an hour over three years, although not without a fight.

The latest offer, which had been recommended by the union leadership, also contained concession clauses around vacations. The bosses are pushing to calculate vacation pay, which had formerly been based on both weekly earnings and seniority, as a percentage of gross earnings. Many workers fear that shorter workweeks, which are becoming increasingly common with the slowdown of the economy in North America, could significantly reduce vacation earnings, something that had been fought for in earlier struggles.

Another clause opposed by the union members would allow bosses to force workers who extend their vacations without authorization to be rehired as new employees. In most shops, such authorizations are extended to a select few workers. As a result, it has become common practice for many workers, particularly immigrants, to take extra time during a two-week summer shutdown in order to travel more cheaply on weekday flights to their country of origin.

Past contracts allowed bosses to impose a hefty monetary penalty, paid with deductions from a worker's paycheck, for unauthorized extensions. This much-hated policy was removed from the bosses' latest contract offer, but workers fear the companies will now use the remaining clause to fire or take away seniority from whomever they choose.

Although morale remains high, many strikers express concern that some companies in the bosses' association will attempt to sign separate agreements—breaking in fact what has been a tradition of single negotiation for the many thousands of workers in this section of the industry in Quebec. This has both meant the full power of this section of garment workers could be brought to bear in strike action and has helped to maintain similar wages and working conditions at union plants, especially through the massive and successful strikes of 1975, 1986–87, and 1998.

During the 1998 strike, the MCMA broke apart when the bosses at Jack Victor bolted from the association and settled with the local union. Then the other shops in the association quickly settled with the same offer, a significant step back from their initial demand for major concessions. That strike lasted two weeks, with the exception of Samuelsohn, where workers stayed out for one more week.

This time around the bosses at a small firm that subcontracts for the bigger plants, left the MCMA, and struck a separate four-year agreement with the local union. Unconfirmed reports say that workers at three other plants have settled as well. The contents of these contracts are not known to the strikers.

Under the impact of these reports, and the way in which the last negotiations ended, some workers at Jack Victor have begun circulating a petition on the picket line and in the union hall calling on the bosses at Jack Victor to leave the association and negotiate separately with the local union. Although many strikers have signed the petition, others have refused, reflecting a disagreement that already existed at the beginning of the strike.

Those who signed the petition said that the strike wasn't going anywhere and that given the slowdown in the economy the



Members of UNITE picket outside Golden Brand garment plant. Strikers are demanding a decent pay hike and oppose anti-immigrant proposals by the bosses.

bosses wouldn't offer any more. A heated discussion continues to take place on the picket line and in the union hall.

"We have to stick together. It's the only power we have," said Christian Allendes, a cutting-room worker on strike at Jack Victor. "This society makes us act as individuals, but we need to be more conscious that when we do that it only helps the capitalists to divide and weaken us."

"I first signed the petition because I didn't realize what it meant," said a presser at Jack Victor who didn't want to be named, "but afterwards, I changed my mind. Now that we

have been on strike for two weeks, we have to go all the way. We have to keep fighting."

Discussions on all the picket lines have continued to deepen as union members have sought to maintain and strengthen their unity in face of the MCMA refusal to negotiate a better wage offer or to withdraw any concession demands.

Sylvie Charbin is a sewing machine operator and Nathan Cecckin is a presser. Both are members of UNITE on strike at Jack Victor.

At world youth event, leaders back fight of Miami garment worker fired for his political views

BY JACK WILLEY

ATHENS, Greece—Youth leaders from 15 organizations around the world endorsed the Committee to Defend Free Speech and the Bill of Rights, which is campaigning to win the reinstatement of Michael Italie, who is fighting against a political firing from his job as a sewing machine operator at Goodwill Industries in Miami. The new supporters learned about the case from representatives of the Young Socialists during a General Council meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), held here December 18-20.

"All young people around the world must support this case. It's part of fighting the domination of U.S. imperialism; part of opposing the American invasion of Afghanistan," said Tran Dac Loi, of the Vietnam Youth Federation, after deciding to become an endorser of the fight. Loi was also the coordinator of the International Organizing Committee for the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Algiers last August.

Italie, who ran for mayor of Miami on the Socialist Workers Party ticket, was fired October 22 after speaking out against the U.S. war in Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution during a televised candidates' debate. Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana told the *Miami Herald* that he dis-

missed Italie because "we cannot have anyone who is attempting to subvert the United States of America" work at the plant. Goodwill did not contest Italie's firing for unemployment benefits, and the State of Florida Unemployment Compensation Program stated in awarding Italie's benefits that the "claimant was discharged because of political views. No information has been submitted which substantiates misconduct."

Another new endorser of Italie's fight at the meeting here was Juan Carlos Frometa, representative of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba at WFDY's headquarters in Budapest, Hungary.

"For us in Cuba," the UJC leader said, "this case is very important. It shows the hypocrisy of the U.S. government when it speaks as a defender of freedom and democracy. There is very limited freedom to express your view if you are a worker."

Kathrin Schmidt, representing the Free German Youth (FDJ) based in Berlin, Germany, explained when endorsing the Miami committee that there has been a growing number of similar violations of democratic rights in Germany during the last few months.

Others who signed endorser cards are: Mohammed Mohiartini, of the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students; Elmami Ibrahim, a representative in Spain of

the Western Sahara liberation youth organization UJSARIO; Irina Jukova, a member of Komsomol of the Russian Federation; Adriano Augusto, from the October 8 Revolutionary Youth of Brazil; Kazuki Kondo, of the Japan League of Socialist Youth; Mauricio Rodriguez, a leader of the Communist Youth of Colombia; and two representatives of the Communist Youth of Finland.

Earlier in December, cadres of the fight to shut down the U.S. naval base in Vieques, Puerto Rico, joined the expanding list of endorsers during the São Paulo Forum held in Havana, Cuba. Carlos Zenón, president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association, and Ismael Guadalupe, a spokesperson for the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, both endorsed Italie's fight.

The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights is organizing a national speaking tour for Michael Italie to win further support for his campaign. Plans are now under way for Italie to speak at the end of January in Tampa, Florida, and in Valdosta, Georgia.

For more information or to offer assistance in this campaign, contact the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights at P.O. Box 510127, Miami, FL 33151-0127. Tel: (305) 724-5965. E-mail: DefendFreeSpeech@yahoo.com.

Support grows for Italie's fight to be reinstated to his job

'An act of persecution' says civil rights leader Fred Shuttlesworth

The following interview with civil rights leader, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, of the Greater New Light Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, was conducted by Pamela Vossen, from Detroit. Vossen is the chair, at-large local, of the National Writers Union/UAW Local 1981. For the basic facts of the case, see article on page 4.

Vossen: Do you agree that the firing of Michael Italie was legal?

Shuttlesworth: Not only was the firing of Michael Italie illegal but it was also an act of persecution; a further continuation of the witch-hunt that almost ruined America during the McCarthy era.

People who would do that now at a time like this, after September 11, when we need to be united, make themselves unworthy to call themselves a good American. Not to mention, a good businessman.

America hasn't gone too far in the struggle for civil rights and civil liberties, but it has certainly gone further than allowing such injustices to prevail. It is time for all people to demonstrate and speak against these attacks and also to bring lawsuits so injustices like these can be done away with.

Vossen: What Supreme Court cases exist barring discrimination based on one's political views?

Shuttlesworth: The Dombroski case, generated by officials demanding lists of names, bears directly on the harassment of people for their beliefs and for interfering with their freedom of association. The right of Michael Italie to express his beliefs and keep his job is legally protected by the Dombroski decision.

Vossen: Taking into consideration the

events of September 11 and the items produced at Goodwill Industries, i.e., U.S. flags and military uniforms, do you think they had just cause to fire Italie?

Shuttlesworth: The firing of Michael Italie was not only unjust, but it was a shame—to harm a person's living condition because of what someone else perceives to be their beliefs. Goodwill Industries obviously is forgetting that in America a person is free to think what they like and to speak their mind. Without these freedoms, the essence of America is far less than what we claim it is and want it to be.

Freedom-loving people should join together and jump on any company that practices racism, sexism, and McCarthyism especially at a time like this: a time when we are trying to get rid of violence, trying to address the meanness, hatred, and bigotry in society.

What we need now more than ever is to define terrorism as the mistreatment of any human being without a just cause. Now that is terror.

And so as President Bush leads the drive to stamp out terrorism in the world, he needs to redefine what terrorism is, so that Americans can get along with a variety of people and beliefs in their own country and in the rest of the world better than we do at the moment.

Vossen: Do you view the firing of Michael Italie as an attack on constitutional rights, in particular, the First Amendment Right of Freedom of Speech?

Shuttlesworth: Well, the firing of Michael Italie is a direct, blatant, and open attack on the constitutional process in this country. No mistake about that. People are blind who

'Fired for expressing his views,' reports column in Cuban paper

The following article entitled "Fired for his views" is from the Cuban daily *Juventud Rebelde*, published by the Union of Young Communists.

BY CHARO MARTÍN

It barely made the local news: Michael Italie, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, has just been fired from his job at the Goodwill company, which manufactures uniforms for the U.S. army, because he supports the Cuban Revolution and opposes the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan.

The announcement of Italie's firing, which he received October 22, came after he issued a series of documents expressing his views, sparking an intolerant "patriotic" reaction from Dennis Pastrana, the company's director. Pastrana regarded the mayoral candidate as "subversive" because his "communist" political inclinations "are an assault on private enterprise in America," [Mexican news agency] Notimex reported.

Of course, Michael Italie has gone to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to condemn this discriminatory treatment for expressing his views. The organization is supposed to look into the case.

It's almost obvious to say that Pastrana is of Cuban origin, and is convinced he faces no problems because the firing is legally justified by his employee's political views, an action he could not have taken on grounds of race, sex, or religion.

The Cuban-American boss must feel protected by his godfather George W. Bush, who a few days ago signed a Patriot Act that restricts many U.S. civil liberties and will give the ACLU a lot of work to do.

Police powers have been expanded on an institutional level, and Mr. Pastrana, by his own account, has assumed the role of enforcer.

The action in Miami has a reflection in Managua. What a coincidence! The Nicaraguan foreign ministry announced that its advisor on border affairs, Augusto Zamora, has been dismissed because he criticized the U.S. war in a local paper.

This extreme measure only reinforced the argument made by Zamora, an attorney, whose article, entitled "Terminator," states, "Terrorism threatens all of humanity. The terror of being the next ones. Of being singled out. Of being targeted by the Great Terminator's aircraft carriers and missiles. Of being pushed back to the Stone Age."

can't see that.

Vossen: As a member of the Socialist Workers Party, Michael Italie has fought to keep affirmative action alive in Atlanta, where he also worked as a garment worker, and is part of the fight in Miami and Tallahassee, Florida as well. What connection do you see between the attack on Italie's right to express his beliefs and the current attacks on affirmative action?

Shuttlesworth: I congratulate people of whatever race for speaking out against any injustice in America, from north to south, and I further congratulate people who are willing to suffer for the cause of getting rid of racism in this country. They are the true heroes just as much as those fighting on battlefields.

We must be united on what this country stands for. Since September 11, when more

folk have been praying to God than before, we see that we must work together and bring an end to the causes of discrimination and violations of human rights.

Unity must mean that we can stand and speak for each other's rights and privileges.

Vossen: Given your experience in the fight for civil rights, what do you believe is the role of civil liberties in such fights?

Shuttlesworth: There can be no civil rights without civil liberties. It was my part in the struggle to not only fight for civil rights but to combine the two. A violation of either is a violation of a person's human rights. Without civil liberties there can be no civil rights.

Vossen: Do you think the Italie case is one of many attacks we are seeing today on civil liberties?

Shuttlesworth: Any persecution of any people for use of any freedom they have is not only terror but also a dereliction of duty. I commend the people who keep this issue alive by speaking about it and I intend to speak out on it wherever possible. I will speak about it during my January visit to St. Petersburg, Florida.

Vossen: With the recent passing of the USA Patriot's law, the government has new freedoms to perform surveillance on its citizens, pave the way for military tribunals, and eavesdrop on conversations between lawyers and imprisoned clients. With a law that essentially makes attacks on civil liberties legal, do you think that in addition to the Italie case, there will be many others whose constitutional rights will be violated?

Shuttlesworth: Out of fear we are passing laws that impinge on people's freedom. We should be raising a big cry about that. No one has the right to snoop on what a person says or writes. If government becomes a big brother, it will become a big terror.

We can't judge one people, one class, or one religion as better than another. For example, it was a white American who blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City and we didn't suddenly become suspicious of white Americans.

America must be a melting pot or it will cease to be America. We must be vigilant; we must be ready to fight all evil, all terror.

Art student, a native of Lebanon, framed for having a plastic utility knife at airport

BY LARRY QUINN

PITTSBURGH—Salam El Zaatari, a 21-year-old art student whose name was added to Attorney General John Ashcroft's "terrorist list," pled guilty December 12 in federal court to the charge of attempting to knowingly have a concealed dangerous weapon accessible to him during a flight.

El Zaatari, a native of Lebanon, was returning home October 28 when he was arrested at Pittsburgh International Airport. The "dangerous concealed weapon" was a disposable pen-sized plastic utility knife among his art supplies inside a laptop computer. The U.S. Attorney's office offered no evidence linking El Zaatari with any terrorist incidents or groups.

A dozen supporters and friends of El Zaatari attended the court hearing where Judge Donetta Ambrose said the penalty for the crime could include fines, three years supervised release, and a jail sentence of not more than 10 years. She accepted a guilty plea bargain from El Zaatari and sentenced him to time served, immediate deportation, a \$100 assessment fee, and "debriefing" by FBI agents.

El Zaatari's attorney, Anthony Mariani, said that "his client had agreed to depart at his own expense without the need for a deportation order and will remain eligible for a visa to return to the United States."

Since his arrest, the Lebanese student has been held without bail in Allegheny County Jail, locked down 23 hours a day in a cramped "protective custody" cell, and faced death threats from other prisoners. A friend and supporter of El Zaatari said the student couldn't take it any more in the jail and asked his lawyer to make a deal so he could return home.



Michael Italie, former Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami, with supporter outside Goodwill Industries garment plant shortly after being fired in October for expressing his views in support of the Cuban Revolution and union rights.

Minnesota UFCW leader 'appalled' by firing

December 12, 2001
Mayor Joseph Carollo
City Hall
3500 Pan American Drive
Miami, FL 33133
Dear Mayor Carollo:

I was appalled to hear of the termination of Mr. Michael Italie from his position at Goodwill Industries. Of most concern is the reasons given for his termination. It was not for poor work performance or a poor attitude at the workplace, but for his views expressed as a candidate for public office in Miami.

I do not agree with Mr. Italie's position

regarding his opposition to the United States policy in either Afghanistan or Cuba. In addition, I disagree with much of the stated policies of the Socialist Workers Party. However, to deprive one's ability to provide for himself and family by taking away his job is simply not right.

As a candidate for mayor, I believe it was his duty to make known his views on any and all issues discussed. It would have been dishonest for him to withhold his views and say the "right" things in an attempt to win support. The democratic process is for voters to hear the views of all candidates and judge which candidate most closely mirror

their views. In this case, the obvious method to stop him would be not to vote for him and encourage others to do the same.

In reality, his boss, Mr. Pastrana appears to be displaying his personal displeasure of Mr. Italie's views and with his power of being boss, decided to deliver his own punishment on someone whose views he didn't like. Again, the more effective means of stopping Mr. Italie was not to terminate him, but simply not vote for him.

Sincerely,
Howard Kern
Union Representative
UFCW Local 789, St. Paul, Minnesota

Political explosion in Argentina spreads

Continued from front page

to increasingly unbearable economic conditions, together with outrage at de la Rúa's declaration of a state of siege and the unleashing of police violence. Some 30 people were killed in cities around the country December 19-20, many of them fatally shot by police.

Since the fall of the de la Rúa government, many protesting workers and young people have expressed a sense of increased confidence that they can have an impact on the course of events. "What do I feel? A wonderful anger!" said Carolina, 25, demonstrating in the Plaza de Mayo, site of the Casa Rosada (Pink House), as the presidential residence is known here. De la Rúa, she declared, "wasn't removed by the military or the cops. We were the ones who got rid of him."

'People have lost their fear'

"People have lost their fear," remarked Esteban Soria, 51, a laid-off train conductor staffing a protest tent organized by a group of rail unionists in front of the Congress building.

Streets protests have continued daily, from rallies by public employees against cutbacks to demonstrations against police brutality in working-class neighborhoods.

Argentina has been ravaged by a four-year-long depression. One out of five workers is jobless, and even higher numbers are underemployed, such as the growing numbers of cartoneros—workers who scratch out a living by selling cardboard, pieces of aluminum, and other discarded items.

This South American nation is being squeezed by a foreign debt to U.S. and other international banks that surpasses \$132 billion. The government has been unable to keep up with the massive interest payments that drain Argentina's wealth.

To meet the relentless demands of the imperialist creditors, de la Rúa's regime, a coalition led by the bourgeois Radical Party, carried out economic measures that have hit working people the hardest, such as slashing public employees' wages and pensions by 13 percent, hiking taxes, and undermining union rights. The cuts have been particularly devastating in the provinces, where wages are lower and unemployment higher. The administration continued the drastic social cutbacks initiated by his predecessor, Carlos Menem of the Peronist party, who sold off most state-owned industries, leading to layoffs of hundreds of thousands of workers over the past decade.

Since the Menem administration, the government has pegged the Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar in the name of monetary stability. Prices of many consumer goods in Buenos Aires today are not much below those in New York, although wages are substantially lower. High school teachers, for example, typically earn about \$400-450 a month; many retired workers must survive on monthly pensions of \$150.

While there have been numerous social eruptions in the provinces and seven general strikes since de la Rúa took office in 1999, public protests accelerated in mid-December as working people reacted to the tightening grip of the capitalist economic crisis and government austerity measures. On December 12 unemployed workers blocked roads and held rallies across the

country, while rail workers and teachers held actions to demand payment of back wages. The next day a general strike by the unions shut down the country to protest the government's economic policies.

Small businessmen and other middle-class layers of the population joined the marches and *cacerolazos*, or pot-banging protests. Already squeezed by debt and high interest rates, they reacted with outrage to a government decree limiting bank withdrawals to \$1,000 a month to prevent a run on deposits. Many workers, especially in the provinces, were not directly affected by this measure simply because they have no bank accounts.

State of siege backfires

In cities across the country, large crowds of pauperized working people—men, women, and children—began to storm supermarkets, taking food and clothing. The daily *Clarín* reported that hundreds of stores had been sacked by December 19.

That day de la Rúa announced the "resignation" of the hated economy minister Domingo Cavallo, associated with the austerity measures. He also decreed a state of siege—a political miscalculation that precipitated his downfall.

"Within minutes of his speech, there were *cacerolazos* in neighborhoods throughout the city," Christian Laffratta, a Buenos Aires schoolteacher, told the *Militant*. "Thousands of people were banging pots and pans from their windows. People poured out of their houses and into the streets and began to head to the Plaza de Mayo. I was leaving the school around 10 p.m.—a little early because there were rumors that something might happen—and I saw the first streets being blocked." Entire families marched downtown with their kettles, whistles, horns, and other noisemakers.

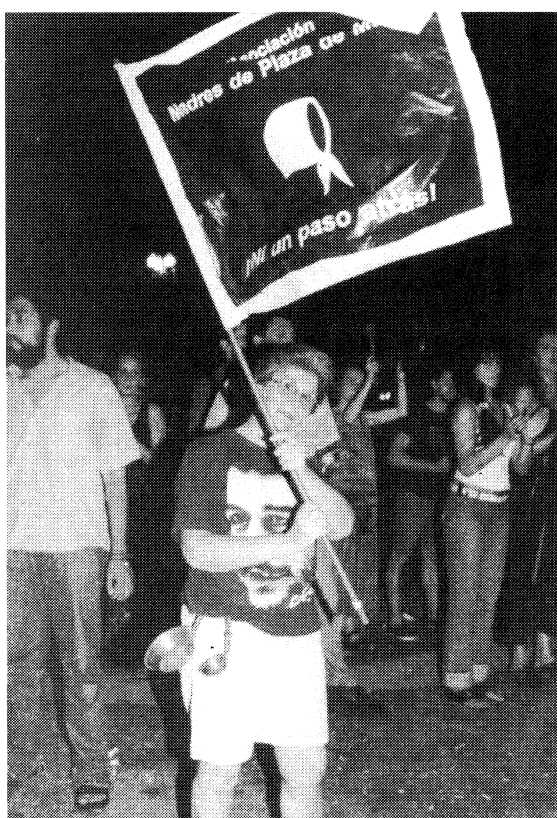
"I saw 10 blocks of people marching through my neighborhood from the west," said Ezequiel García, who lives in the northern district of Floresta. "I'd never seen anything like this before," added García, 25, who works as a messenger.

The huge crowd in the Plaza de Mayo called for lifting the state of siege and demanded of de la Rúa, "*Que se vaya!*" (Out with him!). It included workers, housewives, men in business suits, students, and others.

There was a large middle-class participation in this action, "but most of the demonstrators were workers," said Gabriel Calvo, 26, an active member of the Independent Union of Messengers and Couriers (SIMECA).

Rulers seek to play on fears to divide

The ruling class sought to undercut the protests by contrasting the "peaceful" middle-class protesters with the "violent" workers who had sacked supermarkets. The police and big-business media spread false rumors in middle-class and working-class neighborhoods that mobs were heading from the shantytown suburbs known as *vilas miseria* (povertyvilles) to loot private homes. Some panicked residents boarded up



Militant/Romina Green
Participant in Buenos Aires march on January 1 holds banner of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

their windows and came onto the streets with weapons to drive back the supposed looters, but these never materialized, reported Marina Gironde, 28, who is active in the human rights group HIJOS.

Tens of thousands of people filled the Plaza de Mayo the night of December 19. "In the middle of the night, the police began to repress people without provocation," Laffratta reported. Mounted police charged the demonstrators, clubbing and tear-gassing even members of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo—mostly working-class women, today in their 70s and 80s, who for decades have fought to demand justice for their sons and daughters, "disappeared" by the U.S.-backed military dictatorship that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983.

The following day, a noisy crowd of demonstrators gathered in front of the Casa Rosada calling on de la Rúa to resign. "All kinds of people were there—workers and the middle classes, political tendencies from the left to the right," said Gironde. This even included, she said, a small but visible presence of supporters of Mohamed Ali Seineldín, a fascist-minded former military officer who uses radical, nationalist rhetoric such as advocating the cancellation of Argentina's foreign debt. Seineldín remains in prison for leading a failed military revolt in 1990.

As the crowd grew, it was brutally attacked by the cops. Downtown Buenos Aires became a battlefield for more than seven hours. Cops drove protesters out of the Plaza de Mayo but the crowd kept surging back into the square. The *Buenos Aires Herald* reported, "The scene was repeated time and again. The greater the repression, the more people returned. Later on, it spread all across the city center." Cops fired waves of tear gas, rubber bullets, and water cannon, as smoke clouded the sun. "Protesters and passersby noisily cheered the dozens who were ar-

rested as if they were martyrs."

The police killed five demonstrators in the Plaza de Mayo that day; about 30 were killed and several thousand arrested nationwide.

"We picked up people wounded with lead bullets," Carlos Arca, an ambulance driver who works at the Argerich hospital, told the *Militant* at a December 30 public employees' rally.

Union of messengers and couriers

"Two *motoqueros* [couriers on motorcycle] were killed by the police and another two were wounded," said SIMECA union member Calvo. Many young messengers took part in the demonstration. They also helped to rescue protesters being assaulted by the police and take the wounded to the hospital.

SIMECA, established a year ago and not yet recognized by the Ministry of Labor, organizes messengers and others such as pizza delivery workers—mostly workers in their teens and early 20s who face low wages, no benefits, and employer abuse. Calvo emphasized, "Unlike most unions today, we have no full-time officers—all our members work. The decisions are made at regular membership meetings, not by paid functionaries." The distrust of the officialdom of the CGT (General Workers Confederation) and other established unions by the messengers was echoed by many of the youth and workers at the mass demonstrations, where the organized labor movement was largely absent.

When de la Rúa resigned, some of the couriers rode their motorcycles down Avenida de Mayo spreading the news to clusters of demonstrators who would burst into cheers.

De la Rúa was briefly replaced by the Senate president, Rodríguez Saá, the Peronist governor of San Luis province, was then chosen by the Congress to serve until elections projected for March. Rodríguez Saá got off to a rocky start, however. "When asked by a reporter whether 'the priority will be the [foreign] debt or the people,' he replied 'the debt,' but quickly corrected himself and said, 'the people,'" the December 21 *Clarín* reported.

Seeking to demobilize the mass protests, Rodríguez Saá announced a temporary moratorium on debt payments and promised to create 1 million new jobs. In practice, the de la Rúa government, virtually bankrupt, had already defaulted on debt payments after the International Monetary Fund refused to release \$1.3 billion of a previously approved \$22 billion loan.

Rodríguez Saá also announced that a third currency, the *argentino*, would be issued. The new currency would be used to pay back wages and other domestic debts. But many working people interviewed have remarked that the plan basically amounts to printing more money and that the currency—like the one-year bonds already used in the provinces to pay public employees—would be increasingly worthless. They are already affected by the de facto devaluation of the peso.

Two measures, however, sparked further outrage. The Supreme Court ratified the continuation of the partial freeze on bank withdrawals, a measure known here as the *corralito*, or small corral. And the president appointed former Buenos Aires mayor Carlos Grosso, notorious for his corruption, to head the new cabinet.

'Cacerolazo' protest

The night of December 28, a *cacerolazo* spread through neighborhoods—both working-class and middle-class—across the capital. "I heard the *cacerolazo* and I joined the marchers in my slippers," said Celia Ascheri, a schoolteacher. "The boulevard from the Congress to the Plaza de Mayo was filled with tens of thousands of protesters." Many chanted slogans against both major parties, the Peronists and the Radicals, and demanded the resignation of the Supreme Court as well. Some chanted, "They should all leave" and "Criminals! Thieves!" attributing the economic crisis to corruption by establishment politicians. Graffiti painted near the legislature declares, "There's helicopters for everyone," inviting members of Congress to follow de la Rúa's example.

While several of the small left-wing parties were present in this and other demonstrations, those organizations too are widely discredited, especially among newly radicalizing youth.

Help fund *Militant*/PM reporting trips to Argentina and Cuba

A team of workers correspondents that includes *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel is in Argentina to bring readers of the *Militant* and *PM* firsthand coverage on developments there including the revolt that has erupted against soaring unemployment and brutal cutbacks in living standards imposed by the capitalist government, social polarization the crisis engenders, and discussion among working people on how to confront the capitalist collapse.

Another reporting team is schedule to leave in early February for the Havana International Book Fair and related events.

Your contribution makes reporting trips such as these possible. Please make checks or money orders payable to the *Militant*, earmarked Travel Fund, and send to: The *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



Militant/Romina Green
Laid-off rail worker Esteban Soria tells *Militant* reporter Martín Koppel December 30 of workers' demand for recall of 200 conductors who lost jobs with rail privatization.

Ascheri said the police fired volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets at the demonstrators, who fought back and sent 11 cops to the hospital. A group of youth made their way into the congress building and began to throw sofas, chairs, and busts of politicians down the steps, setting fires inside until they were evicted.

Members of HIJOS, the organization of the children of the disappeared, said they were convinced the government used police provocateurs to encourage incidents such as the vandalization of the Congress building in order to smear opponents of the government and justify the police violence. At a January 1 press conference, HIJOS representatives disassociated themselves from fake leaflets that have been circulating with the name of their organization and provocative slogans such as "Let's take the Government House" and "We must avenge the bloodshed."

In the wake of the December 28 outpouring and continuing protests, Rodríguez Saá announced his resignation after only a week in office. For almost a day there was no head of state. After a fourth president came and went, Congress, on New Year's Day, appointed Duhalde, a Peronist and former governor of Buenos Aires province who had lost to de la Rúa in the 1999 elections. Both Radical and Peronist legislators voted to support him.

The congressional announcement that Duhalde would serve till 2003 rather than quickly organizing new elections, however, sparked yet another street mobilization that night of several thousand people, mostly young workers, students, and low-paid professionals. One marcher, Julia, a 23-year-old University of Buenos Aires student who asked that her last name not be used, said, "We demand the right to a popular vote to elect the president."

Diego, 26, a musician who walked two hours from Buenos Aires province to join the protest, said he was against both Radicals and Peronists but was not sure what he was in favor of—a common response by many of the marchers interviewed.

The next day, as Duhalde was sworn in, counterposed demonstrations of Peronist organizations and opponents of the new president took place. Duhalde is a leader of a wing of the Peronists that has maintained a more "populist" posture than the Menem



Dyn/Leo la Valle

Buenos Aires, December 20: police detain youth wounded by rubber bullets fired by security forces. Cops also used water cannons and fired tear gas and lead bullets at protesters. Residents of working-class neighborhoods have protested police brutality.

wing of the party, which is associated with austerity measures.

Protests against cop brutality

Meanwhile, other social protests continue to bubble. In Floresta, a working-class neighborhood, a security guard who is a retired cop shot to death three youths who had argued with him over the previous week's police repression in the Plaza de Mayo. In response, hundreds of local residents took to the streets, demanding the killer be prosecuted. The hatred for the police and their brutality has become increasingly vocal among working people, and demonstrations against cop "impunity" sometimes become intertwined with the long-standing campaign by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo to bring to justice those responsible for the torture and murder of their children. Members of HIJOS, who

work together with the Mothers, took part in the Floresta rallies.

City employees have been protesting as well. They held a rally December 30 in front of the municipal legislature to oppose moves to pay them in bonds, reduce medical coverage, and extend working hours.

In an indication of the growing social tensions, angry passengers burned down nine rail cars December 28 after a labor dispute temporarily stopped service on a commuter line. The 3,000 workers, members of the Railway Union, were demanding payment of back wages. While the focus of the passengers' vandalism was not the workers but the company, the company used the incident to fire 150 unionists.

In yet another action, 200 laid-off railroad conductors have maintained a protest tent in front of Congress since they lost their jobs two years ago after the privatization of the

Belgrano line. Esteban Soria noted that 100,000 rail workers were left jobless in the 1990s as a result of the Menem government's sell-off of the state-owned railroads.

"Conductors are now working 12-hour shifts," Soria said. "In fact, many other workers in Argentina are working 12-hour days today because of the government's 'labor flexibility' laws."

'Now it's happening in Buenos Aires

Soria noted the changing attitudes among working people here. "People in the provinces were the first to lose their fear because conditions there were the worst and we had nothing to lose," he said, pointing to the 1993 working-class rebellion in his province, Santiago del Estero. Then the revolts spread to other provinces, he said.

"Now we see the same change in moods in Buenos Aires. That's new."

Several workers remarked in interviews that the U.S. government and other imperialist powers are concerned about the social explosions in this country. Diana Fasoli, a city employee who works at the Colón Theater, one of the demonstrators in front of the city legislature, said Washington recently conducted joint military maneuvers in northern Argentina, which has been a focal point of protests by jobless workers. "And my sister, who lives in Tolhuin, Tierra del Fuego, says there are reports that the U.S. government wants to establish a military base there." The target of the U.S. military, she noted, was not "terrorism" but working-class unrest.

On December 20, the U.S. Senate approved the so-called Andean Initiative. This expands the previous "Plan Colombia" that, under the cover of "fighting drug trafficking," is aimed at expanding the U.S. military presence in Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, and other South American countries.

NY laundry workers strike for contract and recognition of union

BY BILL ESTRADA
AND JOHN HAWKINS

NEW YORK—"We're on strike because we want a union that will defend our rights as workers. We want better working conditions, a more just salary, and respect from the company," said Maritza Córdoba, a presser for 10 years, at a spirited picket line outside Flex-O-Tex Laundry in the south Bronx, New York.

Workers went on strike December 5 after Flex-O-Tex owner Gabriel Blau refused to negotiate with UNITE, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. "The owner does not want to negotiate with us," UNITE organizer Alfredo Mises said. "He says he doesn't have the resources to meet the contract proposal."

The union's proposed contract includes medical insurance, paid sick days, paid personal days, the establishment of a union health and safety committee, and recognition of UNITE as the sole representative of the workers. It also includes a substantial wage increase—75 percent the first year, 45 percent the second year, and 40 percent the third year of the proposed three-year agreement.

The wage increases and other demands would bring conditions at Flex-O-Tex into line with those at other laundries in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut area where UNITE won a number of organizing victories and contracts last year. Workers at Princeton Laundry across the street from Flex-O-Tex are covered by the agreement. Currently workers at Flex-O-Tex make minimum wage or slightly above it regardless of the amount of time they've been on the job.

All 52 of the workers at the plant signed the petition to join the union and it was pre-

sented to the company October 30. About half walked off the job December 5. Another worker, Juana Gonzalez, explained, "The workers still working inside are working only because they are intimidated by the boss. He threatened to fire them if they joined the picket line. We want a real union for all of us—for those still inside and for us out here on the picket line."

Workers at Flex-O-Tex decided to join UNITE after their previous union, the Teamsters, failed repeatedly to help them wage a fight for wage increases and benefits.

"The company wants us to have no benefits but that's not right," said Herlinda Martinez, a presser for nine years. "I have unpaid bills from the hospital and I can't possibly pay them. We have no insurance and I make less than \$7 an hour. We are not asking for the world. We only want what is fair."

In an article in the Spanish language daily newspaper *El Diario*, Blau stated, "These people don't understand what is happening with the company. We have had to make bank loans to keep the business operating. Now members of UNITE are sending letters to my clients and we have lost our best contract."

Flex-O-Tex services hotels and nursing homes in New York City. Marino Morel, another UNITE organizer at the picket line, reported that one of the hotels that has stopped doing business with Flex-O-Tex is the Helmsley Hotel. Morel also said they are mounting a campaign to inform the surrounding community of what the union is fighting for, contacting the company's clients to let them know the stakes in the fight, and taking the issues in the fight to the media, as well as planning activities to build solidarity for the strike.

The workers at Flex-O-Tex are from various Latin American countries, including the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. Maritza Córdoba, a leader of the strike, explained how the boss "thinks that because many of us don't speak enough English, he can treat us like animals and deny us our rights." She added, "He signs or closes down. We all work or nobody works."

Bill Estrada and John Hawkins are meat packers and members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 174.

Staff changes on the 'Militant'

BY JACK WILLEY

As the front-page story from Argentina reports, *Militant* editor Martin Koppel is heading up an international reporting team in the South American country. And in early February Koppel will also join a *Militant* reporting team to Cuba to cover the Havana International Book Fair and other events there.

In addition to editing the monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, Koppel has growing editorial responsibilities for Pathfinder's Spanish-language publishing program. Pathfinder has expanded its titles in Spanish, and in the coming months plans to release the Spanish-language editions of *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke; *The History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Cannon; and *Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today* by Jack Barnes. Koppel will remain an active member of the

Militant staff, in addition to continuing to edit *Perspectiva Mundial*.

To facilitate these ambitious plans the *Militant* has agreed to release Koppel from his assignment as editor, and has appointed Greg McCartan to replace him. McCartan has twice served as editor of the paper and has shared substantial editorial responsibilities with Koppel over the past year.

Staff writer Maggie Trowe will be leaving the paper with this issue to help build the communist movement in New York, where she is a leader of the Garment District branch of the SWP. Trowe, the Socialist Workers Party vice-presidential candidate in 2000, joined the staff with the conclusion of the campaign in December of that year. For the past six months she has been on leave of absence from the *Militant* at the request of Pathfinder's printshop, where she has been part of efforts to reorganize work there.

'From the Escambray to the Cor

In the Whirlwind of the Cuban

Introduction to new Pathfinder book, an interview with revolutic

Reprinted below is the introduction to the new Pathfinder book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, an interview with Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke.

Dreke fought in the Cuban revolutionary war, led by the Rebel Army, that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. In the early 1960s, he was a commander of the volunteer battalions that fought the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba. In 1965 he was second in command of the column of Cuban internationalist volunteers, headed by Ernesto Che Guevara, that joined with national liberation fighters in the Congo. He subsequently carried out numerous internationalist missions in Africa.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, and Luis Madrid, a Pathfinder editor, conducted the first session of the interview with Dreke in Havana on Oct. 26, 1999. Pathfinder editor Michael Taber and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martin Koppel, together with Waters, conducted a second interview session on Dec. 2, 2001.

This book is scheduled to be released in February, with simultaneous editions in English and Spanish. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

"When I was young, my father used to tell me, 'Don't get involved in anything,'" Víctor Dreke recalls.

"My father wasn't for Batista, he was against Batista. But he didn't believe in anyone. 'Don't join anything,' he'd say. 'Things will always stay the same. One side wins now, the other side wins later, and the



Above: Courtesy Víctor Dreke; Inset: Mil Fotos Cuba
Members of Youth Movement of the Third Regional Workers Federation hold rally on May 8, 1956, in town of Sagua la Grande on anniversary of 1935 assassination of anti-imperialist leader Antonio Guiteras (inset). Dreke (kneeling at left) was 19 at the time. Thousands of workers, peasants, and students simply began fighting for a more just world as they resisted U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. "We were ready to die, to oust Batista" said Dreke, "but we didn't know the first thing about revolution."

"Fortunately, I didn't listen."

The whirlwind events of the early years of the Cuban Revolution, along with men and women whose actions changed the course of history, come alive in these pages

street vendors, most still in their teens and early twenties—simply began fighting for a more just world following the March 10, 1952, military coup that installed the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Batista's regime quickly became one of the most brutal tyrannies Latin America had yet seen. "We were ready to die" to bring down Batista, Dreke says, "but we didn't know the first thing about revolution."

In his account of how easy it became after the 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution to "take down the rope" that for decades had segregated blacks from whites at dances in the town squares, yet how enormous was the battle to transform the social relations underlying this and all the other "ropes"—inherited from colonialism, capitalism, and Yankee domination—Dreke captures the historical challenge of our epoch. At the heart of this book lies the willingness, determination, and creative joy with which Cuba's working people, for over forty years, have defended their revolutionary course when confronted by the imperialist empire to the north, a power whose vital interests the world over are threatened by the outreaching dynamic and ongoing example of the new class order in Cuba.

As the Batista dictatorship crumbled on January 1, 1959, in face of a rising tide of mass

popular resistance and the military advances of the small Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro, the U.S. government accelerated efforts to defend the property and privileges of Cuba's ruling class along with the vast landed estates and industrial monopolies held by American corporations and wealthy families. To Washington's amazement, the young revo-

lutionary government could neither be intimidated nor bought off. Every act of Yankee aggression was met by growing millions of determined toilers of city and countryside who swelled the ranks of the revolution and pushed it forward, transforming themselves in the process.

The first free territory of the Americas was born.

Decades later, Washington can still neither forgive nor forget. It continues to turn every effort to destroy the living example of Cuba's workers and farmers. It looks for every opportunity to punish them for the audacity of having thrown off the imperialist boot and making a socialist revolution on Washington's doorstep. For the audacity of neither bowing to the empire nor accepting its rules and definitions.

On July 26, 1953, when 160 mostly young, determined opponents of the Batista dictatorship simultaneously attacked the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba and the Carlos Manuel de Céspedes garrison in nearby Bayamo, they were, like Víctor Dreke, still far from being the conscious communists they became in the course of struggles to come. "We learned Marxism from books, but above all we learned it from life," Cuban President Fidel Castro said twelve years later at a mass rally in Santa Clara.

What were we on July 26, he asked? "Among the books they seized from us after the attack on the Moncada barracks were books of Martí and Lenin," Castro noted, but he and his compañeros were not Marxists or Leninists. "We still had much to learn, much to understand. We understood some of the essential principles of Marxism, the reality of class society divided into exploited and exploiters. We understood the role of the masses in history. But we had not yet deepened our consciousness and our revolutionary education enough to understand, in all its profundity and magnitude, the phenomenon of imperialism.... That we learned about in our own flesh."

Through Dreke's eyes and experiences we see the history-shaping class battles unfold. Following the lines of his story, we come to understand how millions like him were transformed from inexperienced if unflinchingly courageous revolutionary youth into seasoned proletarian leaders of a people who have proven themselves capable of defying the demands and multifaceted aggressions of the Yankee rulers for nearly half a century.

And we see both the shape and the scope of the revolutionary class battles still to come across the Americas and around the globe.



From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution opens a window on one of the chapters of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba that is neither well known nor understood outside that country. It tells a piece of the story of the more than six-year-long battle to eliminate the CIA-backed counterrevolutionary bands—"bandits," as Cubans across the island came to call them. Although the bandits operated from one end of the country to the other, their actions were concentrated in the Escambray mountains of Las Villas province in central Cuba.

During the opening years of the Cuban Revolution, nearly 4,000 bandits organized in 299 groups were armed, trained, supported, and financed by the U.S. government. They were instruments of a policy of sabotage and terror designed to drain the resources and demoralize the supporters of the revolution.

The first counterrevolutionary band appeared in 1959 in the westernmost province of Pinar del Río. The last group of bandits was eliminated in the central prov-



Granma

The main columns of the Rebel Army, commanded by Fidel Castro, enter Havana victoriously on Jan. 8, 1959. As the revolution deepened and workers and farmers advanced their interests, the U.S. government responded with deep hostility. "To Washington's amazement, the young revolutionary government could neither be intimidated nor bought off. Every act of Yankee aggression was met by growing millions of determined toilers who swelled the ranks of the revolution and pushed it forward."

ones with money will always be in power. Study and get an education and don't mess with strikes or any of that. It won't get you anywhere. Besides, that stuff's not for blacks."

"That was my father's way of looking at things. And I think this was how many blacks in Cuba looked at things. Until the victory of the revolution.

through the rich detail of Dreke's account, providing evidence that *si se puede*. Things need not "always stay the same."

Rebel-minded young people the world over will find it easy to identify with Víctor Dreke and the way he responded to conditions around him. He tells how he and thousands of men and women like him—workers, farmers, students, shopkeepers and

Igo: Revolution'

inary combatant Víctor Dreke

ince of Camagüey in 1965. But more than half of those counterrevolutionary forces operated in the Escambray, where over 2,000 were killed or captured, and 295 defenders of the revolution—nearly double the number of those who fell at Playa Girón—lost their lives in the struggle against them.

Victor Dreke was commander in the Escambray region of the special Lucha Contra Bandidos (LCB) [struggle against the bandits] battalions of workers and peasants established in mid-1962 by the Revolutionary Armed Forces. He was second in command of the LCB overall.

Located in the middle of the island, the Escambray is a large mountainous region in which communications are difficult. More decisive than geographical considerations, however, were the political factors that led Washington to choose the Escambray as the base for counterrevolutionary operations.

Revolutions develop unevenly. Inequalities between city and countryside, as well as social, economic, and other historically established differentiations from one region to another—and unique combinations of all these inheritances—are a legacy of capitalist relations and imperialist exploitation. How well a leadership wields state power to begin redressing such unevenness is a decisive test. As Cuban President Fidel Castro explained in a speech in Matanzas on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the 1961 defeat of the U.S.-organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs, the enemy picked the Escambray because “the Escambray was politically weak.”

The counterrevolutionary bands there “had some help from the campesinos,” from the peasants and rural toilers, Castro noted—“a minority of them, but support nevertheless—10, 15, or 20 percent, nobody could say exactly. But the war had developed in a different way there than in



Granma

Literacy volunteer teaches family of fishermen to read and write. As the new revolutionary power organized working people to defend their interests, some 100,000 youth from the cities mobilized to the countryside in a nationwide literacy campaign. Through this effort, concluded in 1961, 1 million Cubans learned to read and write.

forces. I won't call them cowards. There can be people who are mistaken and even very mistaken who are personally brave but not personally moral. One must never underestimate the enemy.

“But they were the opposite of us in the Sierra Maestra. In the Sierra Maestra we were always on the offensive, organizing ambushes, organizing strikes, and those people in the Escambray were always running away from the revolutionary troops.” They were “waiting for the U.S. invasion,” Castro said.

In late 1960, as Dreke relates, the whole world knew a landing of U.S.-trained forces was coming sooner rather than later. The revolutionary leadership decided to carry out what became known as the first *limpia*, the first cleanup operation to eliminate the counterrevolutionary bands that were being prepared as a fifth column.

“The revolutionary army mobilized the militias, encircled the entire Escambray and stationed a squad of militiamen in each house,” Castro told an April 19, 1965, rally. The militiamen “went there with primers to teach the peasants to read and write. And they went there not only with the willingness to fight, but many of them put themselves to work there to help the peasants. The revolution mobilized 50,000 men.... We eliminated [the centers of the counterrevolution] before the invasion at Girón.”

After the crushing defeat of the mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, the Kennedy administration organized once again to build up the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray. The bandits were able to win support from a layer of peasants because in that region actions carried out in the name of the revolution were in fact contrary to national policies being implemented elsewhere, a reflection of a broader political challenge within the revolution. Under the guise of carrying

out the agrarian reform and eliminating support to the counterrevolution by a layer of rich farmers in the region, some leaders of the new government and Rebel Army in areas of Las Villas and neighboring Matanzas province confiscated crops and illegally expropriated farms.

These actions were “completely at variance with revolutionary law,” said Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, at that time head of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, known as INRA, in a report published in the May 1963 issue of *Cuba Socialista*. Rodríguez explained that resistance to these policies by small and middle farmers in 1961 led to a “perceptible drop in the planting and marketing of farm produce that was felt throughout 1962.” After Playa Girón, he noted, “the CIA and its agents tried to strengthen the counterrevolutionary bands that had already been dealt a decisive blow by the beating they took in the Escambray.” In response, he said, the revolutionary government “decreed the expropriation of the land of all farmers giving direct aid to the counterrevolution and of those holding land areas of 15 to 30 caballerías [500-1,000 acres] who gave them indirect aid or in some manner promoted counterrevolutionary positions.” Rodríguez continued:

But when Fidel laid out this policy adopted by the National Leadership, he made it very clear that all those measures had to be taken with the participation and consideration of the small and middle farmers, in meetings of ANAP [National Association of Small Farmers], and without harming that section, encompassing a substantial percentage of the farmers. Nevertheless, it is well known that serious errors were committed, particularly in Matanzas province. Revo-

Continued on page 10



Bohemia

Militia members in Escambray mountains of central Cuba conduct a sweep against U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary bands, which conducted sabotage and terror against working people. By 1965, workers and peasants had successfully crushed these “bandits,” as they became known in Cuba.

As Dreke describes, the revolutionary struggle against the Batista dictatorship came late to the Escambray, a region long scarred by petty tyranny, corruption, and banditry. The guerrilla column established by the student-based March 13 Revolutionary Directorate began operations in February 1958, more than a year after the revolutionary war against the Batista dictatorship was already under way in the eastern Sierra Maestra mountains. The Rebel Army column headed by Ernesto Che Guevara arrived in Las Villas in mid-October, barely ten weeks before the fall of the tyranny, and unified, under Guevara's command, the revolutionary forces in the area. In the rebel-held territories, Guevara's November 8 Military Order no. 1 initiated agrarian reform in Las Villas, but there was little time to extend it, or to broaden revolutionary political work with the peasants of the region prior to the January 1 victory.

Complicating the political challenges in the Escambray was the existence of another armed group that presented itself as part of the forces fighting the dictatorship. Initially set up by the Revolutionary Directorate, and known as the Second National Front of the Escambray, it became an assortment largely of self-serving adventurers and ambitious power-seekers who turned the peasants against them by confiscating animals and crops, robbing families of supplies, raping women, and terrorizing those who resisted. After being expelled by the Revolutionary Directorate, the Second National Front continued operations in the region.

the Sierra Maestra. There was never the intense political work that had been done in the eastern provinces, and some of the groups in those areas had even committed abuses.”

At the high point prior to the victory at Playa Girón, Castro pointed out, the counterrevolution “had 1,000 armed men in the Escambray who were experts in evading our

NEW FROM *Pathfinder*

From the Escambray to the Congo

IN THE WHIRLWIND OF
THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

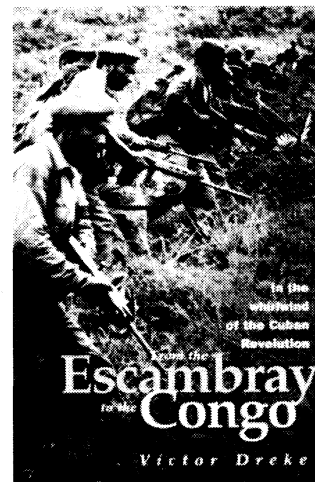
“We were ready to die to bring down the Batista dictatorship,” says Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke, “but we didn't know the first thing about revolution.”

In his account of how easy it became after the 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution to “take down the rope” that for decades had segregated blacks from whites at dances in town squares, yet how enormous was the battle to transform the social relations underlying this and all

the other “ropes” inherited from colonialism, capitalism, and Yankee domination, Víctor Dreke captures the historical challenge of our epoch.

At the heart of this book lies the willingness, determination, and creative joy with which Cuba's working people have, for more than forty years, defended their revolutionary course against the imperialist bastion to the north.

Víctor Dreke has been a leading participant in Cuba's revolutionary movement for half a century: as high school student activist, July 26 Movement member and cadre of



the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, Rebel Army fighter, a commander of the volunteer battalions that defeated the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba, internationalist combatant at the side of Che Guevara in the Congo, political

leader and educator, and representative of the Cuban Revolution throughout Africa.

In English and Spanish, \$17.00

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lutionary law was not respected. Poor and rich were hit indiscriminately, without taking into consideration all the circumstances in each case. Instead of discussing with the farmers themselves in order to decide what measures to take, in many places it was primarily agricultural workers who were called together. Carried only by their class feelings, they always tended towards expropriation.

Until the leading cadres responsible for the policy abuses were removed in early 1962, and the policies of the revolutionary government aimed at strengthening the worker-farmer alliance reinstituted, the disaffection among sizable layers of the peasantry gave political space to the counter-revolutionary bands.

"The enemy takes advantage of our weaknesses," Castro told an April 1962 leadership meeting, in a speech published the following month in *Cuba Socialista*. "But no enemy radio, no enemy campaign will prosper where it does not have a base to prosper, where there are not many people aggrieved, discontented, disgusted—no longer with the injustice that has been done to them, but with the injustice they've seen done to someone else, and that they think tomorrow could be done to them."

The revolutionary leadership corrected course and strengthened political work throughout the Escambray, as Dreke describes in some detail in these pages. On the military front, Castro explained at an April 19, 1965, rally, "we adopted another tactic" after the victory at Playa Girón. Instead of mobilizing tens of thousands of militia troops from across the country as was done for the first cleanup operation—which had to be done rapidly because of the impending invasion—the revolution organized the Lucha Contra Bandidos battalions. Made up of peasants and workers from the area, the LCB battalions "practically swept [the bandits] off the map. They hunted them in the caves where they hid themselves, in camouflaged areas, in holes. And they put them out of action."

With the successful conclusion of the battle to eradicate the counterrevolutionary bands in Cuba, "imperialism received a lesson no less important than it received at Playa Girón," Castro told a cheering throng a few months later in Santa Clara on July 26, 1965, celebrating the capture of the last groups of bandits. Washington learned that counterrevolutionary guerrilla forces could not prevail against the workers and peasants of Cuba, mobilized to defend a revolutionary course that strengthened the worker-farmer alliance, and with a communist leadership who by its actions had won the confidence of the masses of toilers. It was not primarily a question of military tactics, but of revolutionary class politics in the imperialist epoch. "The imperialists probably ask themselves," Castro said,



Courtesy Aleida March

From left to right, Victor Dreke with Cuban doctor Rafael Zerquera (Kumi) and Ernesto Che Guevara in the Congo in 1965. That year, a column of 128 Cuban internationalist combatants led by Guevara went to the Congo to aid the national liberation struggle there. Dreke was deputy commander of the column under Che.

How is this possible with the millions of dollars that were spent, with the thousands and thousands of weapons they sent and brought into the country? How can it be possible that without mobilizing any more fighters than those from the mountainous regions of Las Villas, their counterrevolutionary bands were annihilated?

Guerrilla warfare is a formidable weapon, but it's a revolutionary weapon. Guerrilla warfare is a formidable weapon when fighting against exploitation, against colonialism, against imperialism. But guerrilla warfare will never be an adequate or useful instrument for counterrevolution, for the imperialists to fight against the exploited, to fight against the people. We hope they have learned this lesson well....

In case they have not learned the lesson, however, we are keeping our Lucha Contra Bandidos battalions organized!... And the peasants in the Escambray are organized into mountain companies just like the peasants of Oriente province. They are trained and armed. So for the enemy our mountains now constitute impenetrable bastions of the revolution.



From the Escambray to the Congo also opens a window on another chapter of the Cuban Revolution about which little has been written until recently—the 1965 internationalist mission of 128 Cuban volunteers, headed by Argentine-born Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, to aid the national liberation struggle in the Congo.

In April 1999 Guevara's assessment of that mission, written some thirty-three years earlier, was published for the first time. In writing *Episodes of the Revolutionary War: Congo*, Che drew on the campaign diary he had maintained throughout the mission. Che "subjected his notes on the struggle to a deep critical analysis," Aleida Guevara March wrote in the 1998 foreword to her father's book. She emphasized that "Che is critical and direct in the hope that his document will make it possible to analyze the errors and ensure that they are not made again."

Release of the full text as edited by Che involved "a major obligation to history" for another reason, Aleida Guevara said, since major excerpts of other versions "corresponding to Che's first transcriptions" had already appeared in print in Mexico and France.

The column of Cuban volunteers went to the Congo in 1965 at the request of leaders of that country's national liberation movement and with the agreement of numerous African governments. Its aim was to provide military training to, and to fight alongside, the uneasy alliance of forces who were part of the movement that had supported slain Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba. They were struggling to prevent the consolidation of a semicolonial regime supported by the country's murderous former colonial master, Belgium, and the U.S. imperialist government. White mercenary forces from South Africa and Rhodesia had been brought in to do much of the fighting.

Victor Dreke was the deputy commander of Che's column in the Congo. As he says in this interview, which took place in Havana a few months after publication of Guevara's book, "helping to tell this story is a responsibility I have, a historic duty." Unlike Che, who died in Bolivia less than two years after the Congo mission, Victor Dreke is able to place the experience in a much longer historical perspective.

Guevara's preface to *Episodes of the Revolutionary War: Congo* (published in English under the inaccurate title, *The African Dream: The Diaries of the Revolutionary War in the Congo*) begins with the statement, "This is the history of a failure." Any importance the story might have, Che wrote, "lies in the fact that it allows the experiences to be extracted for the use of

other revolutionary movements."

Guevara was unflinching and unambiguous in his judgment, Dreke notes. And it's not that Che was wrong at the time. "Every word Che wrote, absolutely every letter, without changing so much as a comma, happened the way Che said." But "he left the door open so that later others could give their opinion, and it could be analyzed with the passage of time and events."

Che "would make a different assessment if he were doing it now," Dreke insists. "I'm absolutely sure of that. He'd continue to say we should've won, that we were fighting to win and didn't. But there are things you'll see in the book that Che blames himself for, and when you analyze the situation you'll see they weren't Che's fault at all.... One hundred and twenty-eight men can't change the characteristics of an African country."

Simultaneous with the volunteer mission led by Guevara, another column of Cuban internationalists—led by Jorge Risquet and Rolando Kindelán—was hundreds of miles to the west in Congo-Brazzaville aiding popular militia units in that country and helping to train and equip combatants of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. The MPLA, as it was known, had recently opened a new front against the Portuguese colonizers, who still ruled vast stretches of southern Africa. Dreke, like Aleida Guevara in her foreword to *Episodes of the Revolutionary War: Congo*, explains that the lessons learned from these initial internationalist missions in sub-Saharan Africa laid the foundations on which successful volunteer efforts were carried out over the next twenty-five years in Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.

Most decisive of all was the mission to Angola that began ten years later, in November 1975, when the white-supremacist regime in South Africa, with de facto backing from Washington, invaded that country in an attempt to block the Angolan people from realizing the fruits of their hard-won independence from Portugal, the last European power maintaining colonies on the continent. The operation ended some thirteen years later—after more than 300,000 Cuban volunteers had participated in the struggle—when the South African government was forced to withdraw its troops. That withdrawal followed a crushing defeat of the armed forces of the apartheid regime at the southern Angolan city of Cuito Cuanavale by the combined forces of the Cuban volunteers, the Angolan army, and Namibia's SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organisation). In subsequent negotiations, South Africa ceded independence to Namibia as well, and the death knell of apartheid itself was sounded in February 1990 by the unbanning of the African National Congress and release of Nelson Mandela after twenty-seven years of imprisonment.

As Mandela told a mass rally in Cuba's Matanzas province in July 1991, "The defeat of the apartheid army was an inspiration to the struggling people inside South Africa! Without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organizations would not have been unbanned! The defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale has made it possible for me to be here today!... Cuito Cuanavale has been a turning point in the struggle to free the continent and our country from the scourge of apartheid!"

In November 1985, in a ceremony marking the twentieth anniversary of the two columns that served in the Congo and Congo-Brazzaville, Cuban Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro told the assembled volunteers that the participation of hundreds of thousands of Cubans in internationalist missions to Angola over the preceding decade

is highly revealing, not only about the historical significance of the mission entrusted to you twenty years ago, but also about how much the relationship of forces on a world scale has evolved in favor of the causes of national liberation and social progress, and how much our internationalist consciousness has matured.

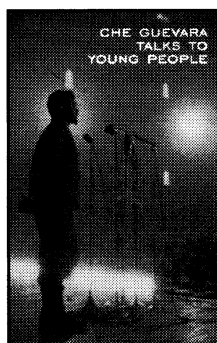
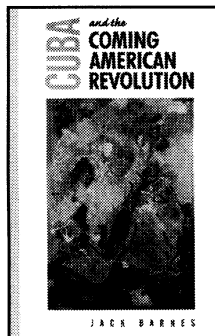
Two decades ago more than three hundred men made up the two columns we are honoring. The highest praise we can pay to that campaign,

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which was a precursor, is to be able to say that every one of you has been multiplied a thousandfold in your noble pledge to pay back with your very lives, if necessary, our debt of gratitude to humanity.

Today, responding not as suffering victims but as a fighting humanity determined to resist the rapidly accelerating ravages of imperialist domination, new winds of struggle are stirring throughout Africa. This was registered in Algiers in the summer of 2001 at the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, where young people from across broad stretches of the continent came searching hungrily for speeches and writings by African Marxist leaders such as Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, proletarian internationalists such as Ernesto Che Guevara, and other leaders of the modern working-class movement from its founding by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels 150 years ago to today.

Surprisingly large crowds, young and old, are pressing into theaters in the United States and elsewhere around the world to see the film *Lumumba*, trying to learn the truth about such deliberately distorted chapters in the history of our common struggles.

It is a world in which the internationalism of the Cuban Revolution, as represented by people such as Che Guevara and Víctor Dreke, will be studied and learned from with growing interest and in which the true historic measure of the Congo mission they

of the United Nations General Assembly, declaring, "The war in Afghanistan must be stopped." The U.S. government must halt its "unjustifiable bombing campaign against that people," which "has targeted children, the civilian population and International Red Cross hospitals and facilities as enemies. As to its methods, no honest voice would rise in this hall to defend an endless slaughter—with the most sophisticated weaponry—of a dispossessed, starving, helpless people.... Those responsible for it will one day be judged by history." Pérez Roque went on, in the name of the Cuban government, to strongly condemn the terrorist attacks of September 11.

Attempting to blunt the force of Cuba's unequivocal stand, John Negroponte, chief U.S. representative to the United Nations, told the *New York Times* that he welcomed the "almost universal" condemnation of terrorism and support for Washington's murderous course expressed by the representatives of governments who had spoken from the General Assembly's marble rostrum. The Cuban declaration, however, was "outlandish" and "totally unwarranted," he said. Even Iraq's "negative statement," Negroponte proclaimed, "was not as strident and vitriolic" as Cuba's.

Cuba's decades-long internationalism and revolutionary intransigence, however, are neither "strident" nor "vitriolic," let alone "unwarranted." To the contrary, for politically conscious workers, farmers, and youth the world over, the Cuban



Militant/Martin Koppel

From left to right: Mary-Alice Waters and Michael Taber from Pathfinder with Víctor Dreke in Havana, December 2001, preparing final work on interview.

ing the glossary is due to Commander Faure Chomón, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, who commanded the forces of the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate in the Escambray in 1958, and to Col. Armando Martínez, a combatant of the July 26 Movement's urban underground, a veteran of internationalist missions, and former deputy head of the Political Directorate of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba.

Aleida March, director of Che's Personal Archive, provided several photos, including the one of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Víctor Dreke that appears on the back cover, taken on the eve of Guevara's and Dreke's departure for the 1965 international mission to the Congo.

The Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Humanity authorized use of a number of the historic photos in its collection. Carmen Ibáñez of *Granma*, Manuel Martínez of *Bohemia*, and Dixie López of *Verde Olivo* searched the archives of those publications to locate many of the other photos that appear in these pages, and offered other assistance.

Hermes Caballero, veteran of the November 30, 1956, uprising in Santiago de Cuba, assumed responsibility for innumerable research tasks.

Luis Madrid, a staff editor of Pathfinder Press, participated in the first interview session with Víctor Dreke and was responsible for editing the text in Spanish. He was

assisted by Martín Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, who took part in the second session.

Editing of the English translation as well as preparation of the annotation and glossary were the work of Pathfinder editor Michael Taber, who also participated in the second interview session.

A large team of volunteers around the world made possible the production of the book, which is being published simultaneously in both English and Spanish. Transcription and translation of the interview were the work of Marty Anderson, Eva Chertov, Paul Coltrin, Carlos Cornejo, Sabás Herrera, Ruth Nebbia, Andrés Pérez, Alejandra Rincón, Aaron Ruby, Mirta Vidal, and Matilde Zimmermann.

Eric Simpson designed the photo pages, and together with Mike Shur, prepared the maps. Eva Braiman designed the cover and text.

The Pathfinder Reprint Project volunteers copyedited, formatted, and proofread the text, assuring that it is print-ready and substantially free of typographical errors.

The combined labors of all made possible this contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the Cuban Revolution and its place in the modern history of working people the world over who are fighting against exploitation and racism and for national liberation and socialist revolution—the only future for humanity.

December 2001



Militant/T.J. Figueroa

Cuban volunteer doctors working in South Africa's Mpumalanga and Free State provinces, 2000. For politically conscious workers, farmers, and youth the world over, Cuba's decades-long internationalism and revolutionary intransigence remains living proof that in the tumultuous anti-imperialist battles and revolutionary class struggles to come in the 21st century, there are good reasons today to join the fight to change the world in the interests of the toiling majority.

took part in will be taken.

"Our country, the only socialist bastion at the gates of Yankee imperialism, sends its soldiers to fight and die in a foreign land, on a distant continent, and assumes full public responsibility for its actions," wrote Che Guevara in his account of the Congo mission. "This challenge, this clear position with regard to the great contemporary issue of relentless struggle against Yankee imperialism, defines the heroic significance of our participation in the struggle of the Congo."

For more than forty years, the working people of Cuba and their leadership have remained an unbending source of clarity—and decisive action—"with regard to the great contemporary issue of relentless struggle against Yankee imperialism."

In September 1990, when Washington sought cover from the fifteen-member United Nations Security Council for the murderous bombardment and invasion of Iraq being prepared by the imperialist powers, the Cuban delegation—which held one of the ten revolving seats on the Council at that time—voted against the U.S.-initiated resolution. "Cuba voted against it, the only country to do so!" said Fidel Castro in a speech to the Cuban people soon afterwards. "We had the honor and glory of being the only country to vote 'No!'"

A decade later, in November 2001, Cuban foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque began his remarks to the opening session

Revolution's course—as related in these pages by Víctor Dreke—remains living proof that in the tumultuous anti-imperialist battles and revolutionary class struggles to come in the twenty-first century, there are very good reasons today to "join something" and "take sides." Things will *not* always stay the same.



The interview with Víctor Dreke took place in Havana, October 26, 1999, with a second session on December 2, 2001. The interview was arranged with the encouragement and support of the leadership of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, especially Division General Néstor López Cuba, vice president of its Executive Secretariat at the time of his death on October 15, 1999.

Víctor Dreke himself, with great good humor, devoted many hours to reviewing the manuscript, explaining details, and securing maps, photos, and documents.

Ana Morales Varela and Iraida Aguirrechu helped clarify and expand the contents of the interview; their knowledge and animated interest kept us all going. Each of them also provided considerable editorial help through a close read of the manuscript and assistance in locating photos, maps, biographical information, and other materials that make the book more accurate, accessible, and enjoyable to all.

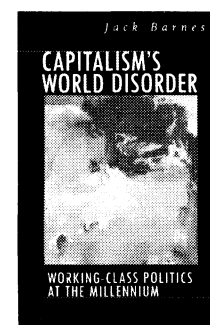
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From Pathfinder

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JACK BARNES

"The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. They offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future." Also available in French and Spanish. \$23.95



Making HISTORY

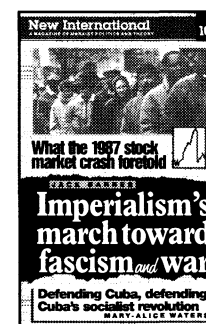
Interviews with four generals
of Cuba's Revolutionary
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Interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces

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U.S. in Afghanistan

Continued from front page

ince, which borders Pakistan.

While much of the intensive U.S. bombing of Afghanistan has stopped, U.S. warplanes continue to fly 50 to 70 daily sorties over the country "ready to attack targets of opportunity," stated a defense department spokesman. B-1B bombers and B-52 bombers flying from the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia rotate sorties so that bombers are in the air and on call for missions in Afghanistan 24 hours a day.

With thousands of U.S. troops currently operating inside Afghanistan, along with massive firepower positioned in Central Asia, the Gulf state region, and on U.S. warships in the North Arabian Sea, Washington is digging in for the longterm to prop up and defend its imperialist interests in this part of the world. Despite the installation of a new regime in Kabul, U.S. forces operate at will across the country, including deciding where to bomb and deploy new forces.

Paving the way for a more permanent military presence, the Pentagon has sent soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division to replace the more than 1,000 marines who had set up a U.S. military base and POW camp at the Kandahar airport in southern Afghanistan. While the soldiers from the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units will return to amphibious assault ships in the north Arabian Sea, they will remain in the region on call "to do other things," according to a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command. A third Marine Expeditionary Unit with 2,200 troops on board is set to arrive in the Arabian Sea by mid-January.

To assist Washington in maintaining order—and to carry out housekeeping chores as the pecking order of the imperialist powers dictates—a British-led occupation force of up to 5,000 troops began arriving in Kabul, the nation's capital. Agreed to by the new Afghan government after some hesitation, and with blessings from the United Nations Security Council, the troops will be based near the Kabul airport while conducting military patrols in the surrounding areas. Britain has announced plans to contribute at least 1,500 troops. Others sending soldiers include France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Jordan, and possibly Malaysia.

The UN-sanctioned force will, however, be under the overall command of Gen. Thomas Franks, the leader of the United States Central Command, responsible for the ongoing U.S. military operations in Afghanistan. While participating in the operation, the German government has expressed objections to the force having to report to a U.S. general.

Preparing to use military tribunals

Washington is also moving ahead with plans to start using military tribunals against noncitizens. The Bush administration has backed off for now in deciding to haul people residing in the United States before these "courts," and instead says it will use them against captured Taliban and al Qaeda fighters captured and now incarcerated in Afghanistan.

Bush authorized the tribunals in a November 13 military edict but they created divisions in U.S. ruling circles. Conservative columnist William Safire labeled them "kangaroo courts" and others in both the Democratic and Republican parties pushed the administration to recraft the proposal. The tribunals were given wide authority to introduce hearsay as evidence, conduct much of their proceedings in secret, and order executions short of a unanimous agreement of the "judges."

Under pressure, the administration leaked some changes in the draft rules for the tribunals. According to the *New York Times*, measures under consideration "would allow tribunals to be open to the public and the news media, would grant defendants the presumption of innocence and allow them to have military lawyers and their own civilian lawyers and would require a unanimous verdict for imposition of the death penalty." The tribunals will still allow cir-

cumstantial evidence and testimony from witnesses who can remain anonymous.

In response to these leaked changes, Safire hailed the administration's planned changes. "Cooler heads are prevailing," he wrote in a December 13 column. "What we are likely to get, if Bush is wise enough to ask for it, is Congressional approval of overseas trials of terrorist leaders by military courts adhering to basic standards of U.S. military justice. Most civil libertarians as well as Ashcroft zealots would express a degree of satisfaction with this, just as they have with the trial of the accused conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui in a regular criminal court in Alexandria, Va."

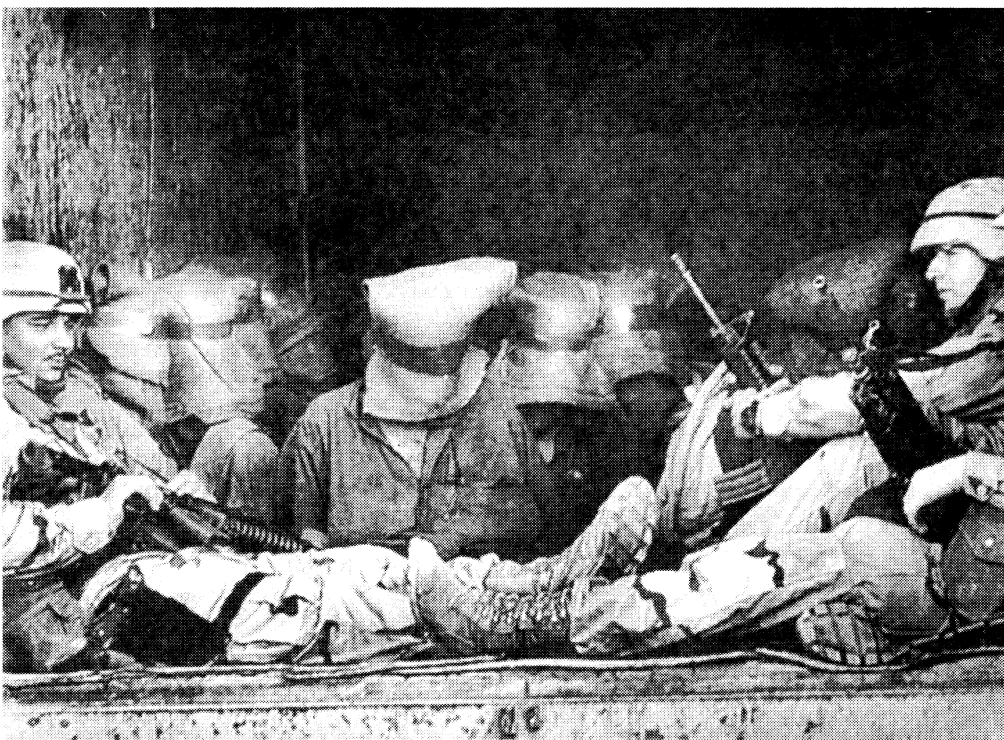
The panel of uniformed officers conducting these trials will be making their recommendations to the secretary of defense, and the final verdict and sentence will be up to the president. The Bush administration maintains that it has the authority to proceed with these tribunals without Congressional approval.

Washington has so far refused to classify the Taliban fighters it has incarcerated as "prisoners of war," which under the Geneva Conventions would guarantee them a court-martial, as well as various rights in detention. Instead the Bush administration has described them as "detainees" or "unlawful combatants."

Nearly 7,000 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters are being held by the new Afghan government and interrogated by the U.S. military and various police and spy agencies. This includes some 3,500 fighters held in abysmal conditions at the Shibarghan prison in northern Afghanistan, who are crammed into cells built to house 800 people, and hundreds of others being held by the Pakistani government.

Many of those taken into direct custody by Washington—numbering 150 so far and growing—have been taken to the U.S. base at the Kandahar airport, where they are bound, blindfolded, and separated from each other by concertina wire. These prisoners face even more intensive military interrogation. The U.S. military is holding eight others, including U.S. citizen John Walker aboard an amphibious assault ship in the Arabian Sea, and at least a couple at the Bagram air base north of Kabul.

In a brazen affront to the sovereignty of Cuba, U.S. officials announced plans December 27 to transfer within the next few weeks the prisoners being taken into U.S.



Some of the 3,500 prisoners held by U.S. troops in a jail built for 800 with heads covered.

custody to the U.S. navy base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

Renewed calls for U.S. assault on Iraq

Meanwhile, a number of bourgeois commentators, reflecting a wing of the U.S. ruling class, are pressing forward their call for a renewed U.S. military assault on Iraq. They argue that Washington's "Afghan strategy," which includes backing an opposition proxy force on the ground, the deployment

of special operations units, and a massive U.S. bombing assault, should now be directed against Iraq.

"Old Strategy on Iraq Sparks New Debate: Backers Say Plan Proven in Afghanistan," read the headline of a December 27 article in the *Washington Post*. "The U.S. Must Strike at Saddam Hussein," was the title of a *New York Times* column appearing the following day by Richard Perle, the assistant secretary of defense from 1981 to 1987.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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Back the Palestinian Struggle. Speakers: Samera Sood, president, Palestinian-American Women's Association of Southern California; Al Duncan, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Celebrate 43 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Nan Bailey, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 4229 S. Central Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 389-7181.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Social and Economic Crisis in Argentina—Workers and Farmers Rebel against Capitalist Collapse. Speaker: Nancy Rosenstock, Socialist Workers Party, member, Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Fri., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd

Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

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Celebrate 43 Years of the Cuban Revolution—Example for Toilers around the World. Speaker: Pat Hunter, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

India-Pakistan Tensions Escalate; Washington Backs Drive against Kashmir Independence Groups. Fri., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

Celebrate 43 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Alm Kolis, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 4, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

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CALENDAR

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Celebrate the Grand Opening of the Pathfinder Bookstore in Its New Location. Sun., Jan. 27, 3:00 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

Truly a great society—In California's Orange County, the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) rents two buses to bring homeless children warehoused



Harry Ring

in motels to school. This also frees parents to hold down jobs when they can get them. But the YWCA may have to scrap the program for lack of funding. They've tried tugging at

the hearts of corporate "givers," but can't seem to raise the necessary annual \$72,000 budget.

No medical leave?—A Duke University prof arbitrarily rejected lab-job applications by three Pakistani students. Then, responding to protests, he explained he was shook up by September 11 and "headed in a paranoid direction."

Dinosaur? No way!—"It is completely baffling to me why the Ontario government wants to support private religious schools with tax credits. I was principal of a private religious school for three years and learned a great deal about what

could not be taught to their students. For example, since the existence of dinosaurs was not compatible with the school's religious beliefs regarding the age of the planet, any references to dinosaurs in science books or literature were blacked out with felt pen or otherwise obscured."—Letter to *The Globe and Mail* published in Toronto.

Snip, snip—In December, American Express acknowledged it would take a \$280 million loss for the last quarter, and would chop 6,500 more workers from the payroll. The *L.A. Times* ran it as an "In Brief" item headlined: "American Express to Trim Payroll Further."

Dollars and scents—Some members of the Blockbuster chain will do a trial run on scented VCRs, like, maybe, gun smoke on action films. (Please, send further suggestions to Blockbuster.)

Easy living—"Road kill program helps feed the needy. Alaskan troopers salvage meat from moose killed by cars, trains each year."—AP headline from Anchorage, Alaska.

Unity building in Tennessee—In Memphis, a new sculpture at the downtown library features quotes from Shakespeare, the Constitution, the Bible, and, from the *Communist*

Manifesto, "Workers of the World Unite!" The art commission is hunting for a substitute for the unity call.

A bit like a traffic ticket—Two British engineering firms admitted they had ignored safety precautions and, as a result, four workers plunged from a bridge to their deaths. Both firms were fined \$375,000. In the *Times* of London, it was a two-inch news item.

Gee—A Denver cop was fined \$500, plus costs, for clubbing a young curfew violator on the head with his flashlight. Also, the court ordered him to write a letter of apology.

Meat packers protest closure of Chicago hog plant

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Meat packers laid off in an antiunion attack when American Meat Packing Corporation closed its doors November 16 are demanding back pay and extended medical coverage from the company.

On December 24, 50 workers picketed the company chanting in English and Spanish, "Si, se puede" and "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!" Among the signs, with demands in Polish, Spanish, and English carried by the union members, one said, "AMPAC: Scrooge of the Year." There was some coverage of the picketing, mostly in the local Spanish-language media.

By claiming the decision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to suspend inspections at the plant forced them to shut down, the American Meat Packing Corporation (AMPAC) avoided regulations under the Workers Adjustment and Retraining Act, which states companies must give a 60-day notice of a plant closing. After being laid off "temporarily" as of November 8, workers were sent a letter dated November 16 stating that as of that day their employment was "permanently terminated."

The plant of 400 was organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) and was the last hog slaughterhouse in Chicago.

AMPAC, a division of the Pinnacle Food Group, had already begun to farm out work to the company's nonunion plants. Workers received a letter from Pinnacle officials offering them jobs starting as "new hires" at the company's nonunion plant in Des Moines. Pinnacle offered \$250 in "relocation expenses" and another \$250 loan—to be repaid out of the workers' first 10 paychecks—to anyone who decided to move.

"Our demands are very simple," said Shawn Robinson, one of those at the December 24 action. "We want an extension of our medical benefits for three months and severance pay. We demand the truth about what really happened with the closing of the plant. It is the least they can give us." Robinson explained that while the company had previously said they were bankrupt, they never gave warning to the workers that the plant would close. "They robbed our families of both Thanksgiving and Christmas," he said. "It is unfair to the people who worked for them for so many years."

Henri Korszlak, a worker originally from



Holding signs in English, Spanish, and Polish, workers picket hog plant December 24.

Poland who has 16 years at the plant, added, "We have no jobs, insurance, or anything."

Silvia Contreras, one of the few women who worked in the upper kill department, explained she wanted to be part of the rally because of the "injustice" of AMPAC's closing. "The company gave nothing to the poor people who worked hard for them a lot of years," she said. "We have to fight for our rights, for the rights of everybody."

Many workers at the rally had been unable to find a new job, and face a cutoff in their medical insurance. A number of the laid-off union members are in the middle of expensive medical treatments and one came to the rally on crutches. What will happen to company pensions is also a major concern for those present.

UFCW Local 1546100A vice president Javier Ramirez and La Unión Latina de Chicago (Latino Union of Chicago) director Jose Landaverde both spoke at the event.

The protest was initiated by laid-off AMPAC workers and built by La Unión Latina, which organizes day laborers and temporary workers in the area. Days before the action, an ad hoc group of 25 former AMPAC workers gathered at La Unión Latina to discuss their demands and issued a call for the rally.

One of the leaders of the action, Rufino Peña, said among those in the fight today are

leaders of a strike in 1985. That walkout was a hard-fought 15-month battle, where 60 workers among the 350 at the plant stayed out the entire time. "Most of those you see today were those who stayed out with us. We kept our word. When we said we were going on strike, we went on strike." The strikers were not recalled to work until positions opened up in the plant. The union later won a lawsuit for lost wages against the company for unfair labor practices.

Many workers do not believe the

company's claims that it shut down involuntarily. They point to the fact that last fall the bosses relocated part of the ham line of the boning department to Illinois Meat, a sister nonunion plant a few blocks away. Workers on the ham line were offered a position at the nonunion plant, but would have lost their union membership and taken a cut in pay. No worker accepted this offer. Later, management received three warnings from USDA inspectors to improve the conditions in the plant, which included rat droppings and condensation on ceilings. While routine cleanings were done each day, these warnings went largely unheeded.

Workers have organized several delegations to meet with union officials about their demands. The officials agreed to file a Freedom of Information Act claim with the USDA seeking inspectors reports leading up to the closing in order to learn more about the company's claims.

After the meeting Sunday, Peña said the company "thinks they can use us. They want us to keep our mouth shut and let them take advantage of us. From this experience, I learned that we have been cheated. I didn't know that there were people who would cheat you like this after you give your entire life to them and leave you with nothing. I gave so much to make those guys rich, now I have nothing. I hope that we get our rights. We have to fight for them."

Arrin Hawkins is laid off from American Meat Packing Corporation.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 14, 1977

CHICAGO—FBI agent-provocateur William O'Neal—the key witness in the Fred Hampton/Mark Clark trial here—is trying to turn the tables by "remembering" only what he wants to about his infiltration of the Black Panther party.

BPP members Hampton and Clark were murdered in their sleep in December 1969 when Chicago cops shot their way into a West Side apartment.

The \$47.7 million lawsuit was filed by the families of the two slain Panthers and by survivors of the murderous raid. It charges an unconstitutional conspiracy by the FBI and Chicago cops in planning and carrying out the assault.

As part of the FBI's Cointelpro operations against the Panthers, O'Neal had worked himself up to "captain of security." He was responsible for protecting BPP leaders.

When pressed, he admitted in court to delivering a floor plan of the murder scene to the FBI. He is also believed to have drugged Hampton the night of his death to ensure the BPP leader would be in a coma during the raid. He can't "recall" if he did it.

According to the plaintiffs' attorney Jeffrey Haas, O'Neal has had to be pressured to "remember" anything about his traitorous role.

At first he couldn't recall if he passed along the layout of the Panthers' apartment to the FBI. He also didn't remember that his FBI control agent Roy Mitchell paid his bail several times and bought several cars for him. Documents submitted prove these events occurred.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

January 14, 1952

The Big Money and its Big Press have announced their choice of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, life-long professional militarist, as the man they prefer for Republican presidential candidate. Their decision to back Eisenhower, in preference to Taft, is based on the dominant issue of war.

"The 'president-makers' of the Republican Party have chosen Eisenhower because he is firmly committed to Wall Street's war policy and has been working on its preparation by rearming Western Europe and constructing U.S. bases there," stated Farrell Dobbs, the 1948 presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party and its likely choice to head this year's ticket.

That the war issue is decisive and conclusive is frankly admitted by the *N.Y. Times*, a mouthpiece of the House of Morgan, [which] declared editorially on Jan. 7 its "enthusiastic" support of Eisenhower if he should be nominated by the Republicans.

In three out of five of the last presidential elections it supported the Democrats, the *Times* said, "essentially because we were reluctant to trust the Republican party on issues of foreign policy...the decisive issues of the campaign."

By running Eisenhower, Big Business hopes to eliminate this "towering" issue from the election debate. Eisenhower tells us he intends to keep his mouth shut on everything; while Truman pointedly emphasized in his State of the Union Message on Jan. 10 that "we can find plenty of things to differ about without...abandoning our bipartisan foreign policy."

Ferry workers win reduced hours

Continued from Page 16

negotiations over pay and conditions should have been settled last April.

"We do an average of 56 hours a week, but only get overtime rates after 44 hours," explained a picket at the Gourcock pier head. "At the end of the day we should be like most other workers and get overtime rates after 39 hours."

"I don't think anyone else in the public sector is working a 44 hour week," said union leader Steve Todd. In newspaper ads slandering the strikers, the company is claiming the issue is the union's refusal to accept a 3.5 percent pay raise, but the pickets insist the real issues are the long hours and their demand for the extra hours they work to be reflected in their basic pay rates. They point out that wages for ferry workers with the same company sailing to the Western Isles are consolidated. "It's divide and rule. We have to work 400 hours more a year to get the same wages," one of the pickets explained.

Advertisements placed by the company in Scottish papers explain the bosses can make concessions to the strikers, but any improvements have to be "self-financing," meaning the strikers have to give something up in return.

The ads also claim that significant numbers of strikers want to return to work. One of the pickets at Gourcock challenged this, pointing out that he was not one of the 95 who originally voted for the walkout but now, like most others, is united behind the fight. In response to company statements seeking a "no-strike" deal with the union, several pickets said such a move would take away "our fundamental tool—the right to strike."

The pickets' anger at these misrepresentations of the issues by the state-run company also extends to the role of the Scottish executive, the parliamentary governing body of this country. "The Scottish executive says they won't interfere in a company-union issue, but they own it!" protested a picket at Gourcock.

Washington's 'year of war'

U.S. president George Bush's statement that 2002 will be a "war year" is a serious warning to working people around the world. The capitalist rulers and their government plan more aggression abroad, further attempts to restrict workers' rights, and more attacks on our conditions of life, including assaults on the social wage, police brutality, use of the death penalty, and growing economic hardship.

Bush's warlike policies are not a departure from those of other U.S. administrations of the last decade. In fact, on a wide range of issues, from attacks on immigrant rights to proposals to privatize social security, it was the Clinton White House that laid the groundwork for the accelerated attacks of the last four months.

The workers and farmers of Central Asia, thousands of whom have been killed by U.S. bombs, continue to suffer the consequences of U.S. aggression. In recent exchanges with the imperialist-installed government in Kabul, Washington asserted its unilateral "right" to bomb where and when it pleases, and to send its troops anywhere in the country that it deems necessary.

The big-business media reports the open discussion in ruling circles about whether and when to attack Iraq, in pursuit of the aim of establishing a Kabul-like protectorate. Other countries, from Somalia to the Philippines to Colombia, are also being targeted in the so-called "war on terror." Through the "Andean Initiative," Washington is deepening its intervention in Latin America.

Promote new Pathfinder book

"When I was young, my father used to tell me, 'Don't get involved in anything'.... Fortunately, I didn't listen."

So opens the introduction to the forthcoming book, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, by Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke. The book's introduction, published in this issue, whets the reader's appetite for the richness of political questions that Dreke covers in the interviews—from his participation in the Cuban revolutionary war, to the fight to eliminate counterrevolutionary bandits during the half decade following the triumph of the revolution, to his experience as part of the international mission led by Ernesto Che Guevara to aid the national liberation struggle in the Congo.

The *Militant* welcomes this new title by Pathfinder and encourages everyone to read, study, and help distribute it. This book will find wide interest, especially among industrial workers and trade unionists, Black youth that socialists meet on street tables or protests against police brutality, and the growing thousands of Africans who are immigrating to the U.S. and joining the American working class.

The book helps show how ordinary working people and youth can resist, organize, become political, and build revolutionary organizations capable of leading masses of people to change the world.

The book opens a window on one of the chapters of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba that is not well known or understood outside that country—the more than six-year battle following the triumph of the revolution to eliminate the CIA-backed counterrevolutionary bands, described by Waters in her introduction, as well as the 1965 international mission by 128 Cuban volunteers to aid the national liberation struggle in the Congo. This mission helped lay

the foundation for successful volunteer efforts to back liberation and revolutionary struggles carried out over the next 25 years across the African continent.

Another war danger centers on the India-Pakistan border. Washington, standing in opposition to the Kashmir struggle and intent on establishing closer military, political, and economic ties with the Indian government, has backed Delhi's demand on the Pakistan government to crack down on the independence forces.

On U.S. soil, the rulers have gone into overdrive to try to accustom workers to the militarization of life and other infringements on fundamental rights—attacks designed to restrict our capacity to fight for our own class interests as a unified force. They initially come down hardest on specific sections of the working class, whether they be immigrants from Latin America, Muslims, or other oppressed groups. The ultimate target, however, is the entire working class and our capacity to organize and resist.

The capitalist rulers have nothing to offer except war and the threat of war, and economic breakdowns and social catastrophes, from Afghanistan to Argentina, and from Palestine to the Philippines. As the economic situation approaches an even deeper crisis, workers and farmers in the imperialist countries will be drawn into a common fate with their class brothers and sisters in the semicolonial world.

The answer to this rotten system is to link up with the deepening resistance engendered by capitalist crisis and brutality. Only the international working class, in alliance with working farmers and all the oppressed, can through revolutionary action carve a road for humanity out of this brutal system and the bleak future it offers.

From the Escambray to the Congo demonstrates the deep ties forged over four decades between the Cuban Revolution and the progressive struggles of the peoples of Africa. Today, new forces are entering into politics throughout Africa, determined to resist the rapidly accelerating ravages of imperialist domination. One expression of this was the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algiers, where youth from across the continent came searching for writings of revolutionary and communist leaders.

The January issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* includes the introduction and the chapter, "'Lucha Contra Bandidos': Fighting the Counterrevolution in the Escambray" from the forthcoming book. The *Militant* will also serialize this chapter in upcoming issues. Supporters of the two periodicals are encouraged to show the *PM* around to coworkers and talk to people at communist literature tables on street corners to build interest in the new book. This can be used alongside the book *Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla*, also printed by Pathfinder.

Political explosions like we see today in Argentina will mark the opening years of the 21st Century as growing numbers of workers, farmers, and youth the world over search for ways to resist the onslaught of capitalist exploitation and oppression. The Cuban Revolution's course—as related in the pages of *From the Escambray to the Congo*—remains living proof that in the anti-imperialist battles and revolutionary class struggles to come, there are very good reasons to "join something" and "take sides." This is what the new book has to offer.

will be presented at the annual book event: *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke; *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández; and *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara. The three titles are among those that have been published in Spanish by Pathfinder in the last year. Presentations of *From the Escambray to the Congo* are also planned for other Cuban cities, including Trinidad, Santa Clara, and Dreke's hometown of Sangua la Grande.

Help fund reporting teams

The *Militant* encourages all readers to consider making a generous contribution to help cover the costs of the reporting team bringing firsthand coverage of political developments unfolding in Argentina, including the eruption of protests that led to the resignation of five presidents in two weeks. The front-page article from Buenos Aires in this issue is certainly confirmation of the timeliness of the team and the wealth of information not covered in the big-business press.

With unemployment soaring to nearly 20 percent and some 15 million people living below the country's official poverty line, the Argentine capitalist class has sought to squeeze more out of the hides of workers and farmers to pay U.S. banks and other international creditors. In this and subsequent issues of the *Militant*, workers and farmers will be able to read what Argentine toilers say about the capitalist collapse in that country, why they refuse to place paying off superwealthy bond holders above the needs of working people, and how a new generation of workers and youth are responding to the crisis.

Firsthand coverage by the *Militant's* worker-correspondents provide a working-class view of what's unfolding in Argentina and the consequences for workers and peasants throughout Latin America. This gives class-conscious toilers a better understanding of imperialism and the importance of building working-class leadership.

Another *Militant* and *PM* reporting team will leave in early February to cover the February 7-17 Havana International Book Fair, as well as other political and economic developments in Cuba. Three of Pathfinder's newest titles

Red Weekend project meeting

Continued from Page 3

unteers to prepare new editions of these titles.

In his talk Barnes pointed to the four filing boxes set up on the stage that contained packages of the photographic film of covers for some 80 titles and the text for books including the Russian-language publications described above. Pathfinder's editorial staff had originally proposed to archive this material off-site. "But Pathfinder must have working files based on what is needed to produce books," said Barnes, and will make space for files that are needed. "We're not going to send anything out for temporary storage or to be archived somewhere," he stated. Instead, he said, the crews will help organize what needs to be kept for current and future uses of the movement.

The 'bubble' comes down

In the week and a half following the December 23 meeting, volunteers worked intensively to prepare the transfer of the two sheetfed presses from their location near the web press to the newly prepared factory area. On Sunday, December 30, about 10 people helped to dismantle a frame and clear plastic "bubble" enclosure designed to keep dust away from the high-quality four-color presses. Among the 10 or so volunteers were present-day sheet-fed press operators, and workers who had helped to build the original enclosure.

Following the transfer of the sheetfed presses to their new press room, volunteers are organizing another Red Weekend January 5-6. They plan to clean up and paint the opened up space after the removal of the two presses, then reinforce the floor so it can support rolls of paper used on the web press. A public meeting will be held on Saturday January 5 in the space where the sheetfed presses were located.

To volunteer to join a Red Weekend crew, contact the SWP and Young Socialists at the address nearest you, listed on page 12.

India, Pakistan

Continued from Page 4

creating two countries along religious lines. India was to be Hindu and Pakistan was to be Muslim. Following the 1947 partition, London's criminal policies sparked vast migrations and religious riots, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and the creation of millions of refugees.

The British rulers played another card, "allowing" the heads of the princely states—essentially British military bases—which ruled over a third of the British colony, to decide which country they would become part of. In Kashmir, where a predominantly Muslim population was ruled by a Hindu aristocracy, the ruler, fearing rebellion by the Muslim population, remained undecided, despite pressure from India.

Three months after independence Pakistan moved to claim the province. Indian troops occupied the Kashmiri capital of Srinagar. Fierce battles resulted in a stalemate, and the United States was called to establish a ceasefire line that to this date has marked Kashmir's division.

Two other major wars were fought, in 1965 and 1971, although the battle in Kashmir has raged on and off for decades. As late as 1999 Musharraf organized a major offensive in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir against Indian forces, claiming the disguised army troops were independence fighters. India is now fortifying the border in Kashmir with a wide fence of barbed wire and concertina wire patrolled by troops.

The Kashmir region has an estimated population of 14 million, overwhelmingly Muslim, including 1.5 million refugees in Pakistan. A long-standing movement for independence from both powers exists in the disputed area.

From Pathfinder

What Is To Be Done?

"The Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade-union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression..."

Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism

"I trust that this pamphlet will help the reader to understand the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism," Lenin wrote in 1917. "For unless this is studied, it will be impossible to understand and appraise modern war and modern politics. \$3.95

Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

by Jack Barnes

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, turmoil, and brutality of capitalism. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. \$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Roots of imperialism's militarization drive

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

NEW YORK—In recent months as the U.S. ruling class has carried out a military assault and occupation of Afghanistan, it has at the same time stepped up its assault on the rights of workers at home. These actions are justified by President George Bush as necessary steps in a "war against terrorism."

An explanation of the true roots of imperialism's current militarization drive can be found in the articles featured in the first issue of *Nueva Internacional*, the Spanish-language sister magazine of *New Internationalist*. The featured article "Los cañonazos iniciales de la tercera guerra mundial: el ataque de Washington contra Iraq," published as "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq" in English, provides a blistering condemnation of the brutality of the military force used by the U.S. government during the Gulf War. The article points out that Washington conducted the most intensive bombing assault in the history of warfare, provides an analysis of why U.S. imperialism is driven to launch such wars, and offers a line of march for working people in light of the consequences of the course of the propertied rulers.

The Gulf War "was the first war since the close of World War II that grew primarily out of the intensified competition and accelerating instability of the crises-ridden...imperialist world order," wrote Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party and author of the article.

The goal of the 1990-91 war drive and assault on Iraq, stated Barnes, was to "bolster U.S. dominance in the Arab-Persian Gulf region, which has some 65 percent of the world's known oil reserves."

Washington hoped to establish a regime in Baghdad that would be politically subservient to the U.S. rulers and give them an advantage over their imperialist competitors in Europe and Asia. But instead Washington "broke its teeth on the war," Barnes said, setting into motion uncontrollable social forces and opening up new conflicts and struggles throughout the region.

"As the political consequences of Washington's military 'victory' in the Gulf continue to unfold, we need to recognize that this is not primarily a *postwar* period, but a *prewar* period," he wrote. "It is in this context that we say that the slaughter in the

Gulf is the first in a number of conflicts and wars that will be initiated by the U.S. rulers in the 1990s, and the opening of a new stage of accelerating imperialist preparations—at home and abroad—for those wars."

Line of march of working class

Barnes explains that working-class resistance will also mark the coming period. "Intertwined with the historic war logic of the imperialist rulers, however, is the class logic, the historic line of march of the working class: to resist and react, to fight and in the process become revolutionary, to organize independently of the exploiters and identify as a part of a worldwide class, and to wrest the war-making powers out of the hands of the exploiters and oppressors."

Nueva Internacional is available at a 25 percent discount to members of the Pathfinder Readers Club and at 60 percent off to local Pathfinder bookstores. The titles are republished with newly formatted pages with more readable type, and with improved graphics and photographs.

A second featured Pathfinder title this month, *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party*, contains the minutes and resolutions of the first two national conventions of the SWP held in 1938 and 1939. Today, new generations of workers and farmers beginning to resist imperialism will find this book to be especially timely.

At the SWP's founding convention, veteran communists who were determined to build on the Bolshevik continuity of the Russian Revolution, and who rejected the course of the Stalinized U.S. Communist Party, joined newer members who had been recruited out of the class battles of the 1930s to form the new party. They discussed and adopted resolutions that addressed the "opening guns of World War II"—the civil war in Spain and Japan's invasion and occupation of China. They charted a course to fight against the bosses at home; drew lessons for workers on the victory of fascism in Europe and how to effectively fight it; the need to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack; the right of Blacks to self-determination; the struggle against Jew-hatred and anti-Semitism; support for the independence of Puerto Rico; and the organizational principles of a revolutionary party.

"Since war is inevitably bred by capital-



The Abrams M-1A1 tank utilized by U.S. military in their ground assault against Iraq during 1991 Arab-Persian Gulf War. The newly republished issue of *Nueva Internacional* on the war is essential reading for workers and youth fighting imperialism today.

ist society, the only genuine struggle against war is precisely the struggle against the social system which breeds it, the struggle against capitalism and for socialism," stated the resolution adopted on the fast-approaching war. "Only through the elimination of the causes for war will war itself be done away with. Through socialism alone can mankind establish the foundations for enduring peace."

Peace is possible only under socialism

"The SWP is against every imperialist war, and opposes all wars fought by any and all imperialist states, whether fascist or democratic, since such wars can only be reactionary in character and counter to the interests of the masses and of the revolution. In the imperialist United States, the SWP fights against war preparations and militarization; but at the same time always makes clear that war cannot be permanently prevented unless the imperialist government of the United States is overthrown and its place taken by a workers state, that lasting peace is possible only under socialism."

FBI on Trial, Pathfinder's third featured book of the month, contains the decision handed down in favor of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance suit against the FBI and the CIA, charging them with "illegal acts of blacklisting, harassment, electronic surveillance, burglary, mail tampering, and terrorism." The book also contains portions of testimony of SWP leaders Farrell Dobbs and Jack Barnes. It will be a valuable tool for anyone interested

in defending workers' rights today.

The final featured book this month is *To Speak the Truth; Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*. It contains four speeches given before bodies of the United Nations over a 20-year span by Cuban revolutionary leaders Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara. As resistance deepens on a world scale to Washington's assaults, from Afghanistan to the United States, the place of Cuba's more than four decades of resistance to imperialism will grow in importance on a world scale.

While U.S. president George Bush may claim that he is fighting "terrorism," workers and farmers will be able to more clearly understand Washington's real aims by reading the speeches by Castro and Guevara.

Speaking before the United Nations General Assembly in 1960, Fidel Castro explained, "The government of the United States cannot be on the side of peasants because it is an ally of the landowners. It cannot be on the side of workers anywhere in the world who demand better living conditions because it is an ally of the monopolies. It cannot be on the side of colonies that want to free themselves because it is an ally of the colonizing powers."

Four years later Che Guevara told the United Nations, Cuba "is one of the trenches of freedom in the world, situated a few steps away from United States imperialism, showing by its actions, its daily example, that in the present conditions of humanity the peoples can liberate themselves and keep themselves free."

LETTERS

Glass workers' strike

I am a new *Militant* subscriber. In the December 17 issue I especially enjoyed Maurice Williams' article, "Striking New Jersey teachers defy court order," and Louis Turner's article, "Protesters condemn political firing in N. Carolina."

However, I would like some clarification regarding a statement in Jerry Ulman and Joel Britton's article, "Glass workers fight union-busting attacks in Indiana." The statement reads: "The hired thugs, younger Black and Latino men, glared at many of the men and women on strike, most of whom were white."

Why is an issue made of the races of the security officers vs. the race of the strikers? This statement could certainly be read in a racist sense. I certainly hope this was not the intention.

David Palmer
Chicago, Illinois

Editor's note: The statement was included in the article to draw attention to the fact that, as in a number of strikes over the past decade, the bosses try to create or deepen divisions between whites, Blacks, and Latinos to weaken the walkout. Often, after following discriminatory hiring practices to keep minorities out of a plant, a company will hire a union-busting outfit to put guards who are Black and Latino at the gates. This has been followed on several occasions by

the company hiring Blacks and Latinos as replacement workers to break the strike. With these moves the companies aim to get strikers to blame someone else other than the bosses, and to block off support for the walkout from Black and Latino organizations and working people.

Clarity and focus

Please accept this \$6 for a six-month prisoner subscription.

I have been faithfully passing the *Militant* around and many of the men here have commented on the excellence of your reporting on W's war and the decaying of the world economy. There are 20 to 25 men who read each issue!

I spend an increasing amount of time discussing the collapse of the world capitalist system. Your paper provides clarity and focus on these issues for us. We just wish there was more we could do. Keep up the good work!

Joseph Barrett
Unadilla, Georgia

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

January BOOKS OF THE MONTH

★ ★ ★ ★ Pathfinder Readers Club SPECIALS 25% DISCOUNT

The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party

JAMES P. CANNON AND OTHERS

At conventions and leadership meetings in 1938-39, revolutionists in the U.S. codified 20 years of experience in building a communist party. Taking the name Socialist Workers Party, they reaffirmed the Marxist approach in the fight against the coming imperialist war, the spread of fascism across Europe, and attacks by the bosses at home. \$24.95, special price: \$19.00

Nueva Internacional No. 1

❖ Los cañonazos iniciales de la tercera guerra mundial: el ataque de Washington contra Iraq JACK BARNES ❖ Una política comunista tanto para tiempos de guerra como para tiempos de paz MARY-ALICE WATERS ❖ Lecciones de la guerra Iran-Iraq SAMAD SHARIF. \$13.00, special price: \$11.00

FBI on Trial

The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying

EDITED BY MARGARET JAYCO

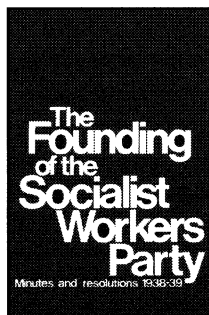
The victory in the 1973-87 case "expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases the confidence of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it's your right to do so and act upon them"—from the introduction. \$18.95, special price: \$14.00

To Speak the Truth

Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End

FIDEL CASTRO AND CHE GUEVARA

These speeches before the United Nations address the workers of the world, explaining why the U.S. government hates the example of the socialist revolution in Cuba and why Washington's effort to destroy it will fail. \$16.95, special price: \$13.00



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bookstores,
including those
listed in page 12

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New Zealand terror bill targets workers

BY JANET EDWARDS

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—A spokesperson for the New Zealand Tamil Society has expressed concern that Tamils living here could be accused of sending money to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and jailed under new “anti-terrorism” laws.

Society president George Arulanantham said that many Tamils regularly send money to Sri Lanka. “There is concern in the community,” he said, “that if we are going to send money through any organization, the organization may fall under the category as a terrorist organization.”

Tamils are an oppressed national minority in Sri Lanka and the government has brutally repressed their demands for independence. The regime has fought a seesaw war against the LTTE since the 1980s, and more than 60,000 people have died in the conflict.

Among the provisions of the government’s Terrorism (Bombings and Fi-

nancing) Bill, knowingly raising money for terrorist attacks will be a crime punishable by 14 years’ jail. “Recklessly” providing money to an organization that turns out to have terrorist links could earn a seven-year term. Prior to the bill becoming law, the government has introduced regulations to enable it to immediately use the bill’s sweeping new powers.

At this stage, the government has not listed all the organizations that will be outlawed, although Washington has put the Tamil Tigers on a banned list. Arulanantham called for the Tamil Tigers not to be categorized as terrorists. “We think there is a difference between terrorists and freedom fighters. We feel [the Tamil Tigers] are freedom fighters,” he told the *New Zealand Herald*.

The United Sri Lanka Association, which opposes Tamil self-determination, has called on the government to act against suspected LTTE members. The *Herald* reported that

“security agencies are investigating allegations that the Sri Lankan separatist movement, the Tamil Tigers, has links in New Zealand.”

Prying into workers’ lives

One indication that the concerns by the Tamil community over repressive government actions are not unique was a sensationalized *Herald* story about another “investigation,” this time of an airline employee that a headline claimed was the stepson of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. Complete with a large front-page photo, the paper featured an article stating that police security checks on airline employees in September came across an Air New Zealand engineer whose mother was supposedly a former wife of Hussein. Despite quoting government sources that the alert turned up nothing to investigate, and statements by the employee that the entire story was based on rumor, the paper’s editors used the opportunity to

call for employers and spy agencies to have the right to pry into workers’ private lives.

“There was a time when the security sweep which uncovered a man believed to be a stepson of Saddam Hussein working at Air New Zealand would have offended idealized perceptions of a free and open society,” the paper editorialized. “The September 11 terrorist assaults on the United States have changed all that. Now, as never before, the need for vigilance dictates a compromise between principle and national security imperatives....”

“Indeed, all those who apply for work in vulnerable industries should be in no doubt that they will be subject to strict vetting, sometimes by security agencies,” the editorial continued. “Civil libertarians may rail against what they consider intrusive questioning of applicants for particularly sensitive jobs. There may be queries, for example, about drinking or sexual habits. But that is because such habit can make people vulnerable.”

Despite these moves, the government was forced to back down on a libel law aimed at restricting free speech and freedom of the press. The proposed law would have made it a criminal offense to publish or broadcast in the month before an election an untrue statement that defamed a parliamentary candidate and was intended to influence votes. If convicted, the publisher or journalist would have faced a fine of up to \$5,000 or three months in jail.

Sharp divisions were expressed in ruling-class circles on the bill, with the major opposition parties in parliament and 15 news organizations speaking out against it.

The law would have reintroduced the offense of criminal libel, an anti-working-class law dropped in 1992. Criminal libel exposes people and publications to prosecution by the state, rather than by individuals who claim to have been defamed.

The capitalist government used the law as a weapon against workers’ rights in 1951 during a major union battle on the waterfront. Watersiders’ union leader Jock Barnes was convicted of criminal libel and jailed for comments he made about a cop.

More recently, current Labour Party prime minister Helen Clark used the criminal libel laws in 1991 against the doctor who is chairman of the General Practitioners’ Society, for comments he made about her in a pre-election leaflet.

In another development, Wellington moved ahead with its offer to supply special forces troops for the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan. The deployment was approved by a five-minister subcommittee, dubbed the “war cabinet,” which has been delegated the authority of the entire cabinet. Prime Minister Clark has also offered troops to be part of the imperialist occupation force in Afghanistan, as well as an aircraft to ferry “humanitarian aid.”

The military deployments have deepened rifts in the Alliance, the junior party in the governing coalition. One faction of the party continues to stand opposed to the party’s support for the deployment of troops, although the divisions have yet to lead to a split in the party.

Locked-out auto workers in Wales win union backing in 8-month fight

BY XERADO ARIAS AND RAPHAEL AYALA

CAERNAFON, Wales—Support is widening for workers locked out for eight months by car parts maker Friction Dynamics. Union members here have kept up picket lines at the company six days a week ever since last April as part of their fight against the union-busting drive of company owner Craig Smith.

Donations of food, honking of horns by passing motorists, and even the contribution of a caravan to help pickets keep warm during the winter are all signs of the solidarity the members of the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU) have earned through their struggle.

Recently four TGWU shop stewards from Ford Southampton visited, bringing with them a £3,500 donation, bringing the total given by Ford workers to more than £5,000 (£1 = US\$1.45). During two visits to fellow union members by picket leaders, a TGWU branch in London added £1,000 to the war chest and the union’s branch in Chorlton, Greater Manchester, kicked in another £500.

Plaid Cymru, the Welsh nationalist party, organized a benefit concert, with top Welsh artists donating their services, and all proceeds going into the union’s fund. John Davies, a leader of the picket, said, “But for the donations such as these, we’d be dead and buried long ago.”

On the picket line union members were packing donations of food to be distributed at a Christmas social for the locked-out workers and their families. In contrast, factory boss Smith held a Christmas party in Caernafon “where he lectured the scabs about the real meaning of Christmas for an hour and had to have a bodyguard and 16 other security staff at the event,” said Gerald Parry, one of the locked-out workers.

Through our discussion with these workers, some of whom have been employed by Friction Dynamics—formerly Ferodo—for as much as 40 years, we’ve learnt about the history of struggles by these trade unionists. As the social crisis in the local area continues, the locked-out workers see this dispute as an important struggle not only for their own livelihoods but for the community.

Glynn Jones, who was due to retire after 40 years at the factory but is sticking with his fellow unionists in this fight, explained that local job opportunities are limited in the area as the bosses have closed factories and mines and local shops have closed their doors.

Strike committee member Bernard Ellis said workers struck the company for five weeks in 1969 and four weeks in 1971 for



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Locked-out workers on picket line in Caernafon, North Wales. Sign in Welsh says, “Please help workers at Friction Dynamics in their stand for their rights.”

better pay and working conditions. These walkouts earned them a reputation for strength and resilience, of which they are proud.

Friction Dynamics, with a workforce of some 960 workers at one time, employed 150 people last April when Smith locked out the workers.

Smith, who bought the company in 1997, is “a union buster 100 percent,” said Adrian Roberts, the secretary of the strike committee. Ellis added that Smith “tried to destroy the union, but he has brought us closer together. We are stronger now than ever.”

“When Smith took over he didn’t speak to any of us for a year,” said Gerald Parry. “Then he held a meeting where he told us, ‘You Welsh people have got to change your culture.’ I didn’t think that I would have been here at the beginning of the year. It is quite an experience—not just for what you find out about yourself but for the solidarity that you experience from others.”

The locked-out workers are pursuing a claim for reinstatement to their jobs and campaigning to extend legal protections against sackings [firings] during the first eight weeks of a strike.

Young nonunion workers, who Smith has brought in as scabs, have themselves been subjected to pay cuts and have reportedly been told to expect a further 15 percent pay reduction in the next month. Injuries due to the substandard training and health and safety practices have been reported, such as a worker losing the fingers of one hand.

On the picket lines the workers express confidence in their fight. “It will not be easy to quench the fire that burns in the belly of the Welsh dragon,” Jones pointed out.

The workers plan to continue building support for their fight with a demonstration in Cardiff in the New Year outside the Welsh assembly when British prime minister Anthony Blair is due to visit. For more information about this, contact the TGWU at 17 Segontium Terrace, Caernafon, LL55 2PN.

Xerado Arias and Raphael Ayala are members of the Young Socialists. Paul Davies and Seamus Sheridan contributed to this article.

Scotland ferry strikers win round

BY PETE WILLSON

GOUROCK, Scotland—Ferry workers here have won a small but important reduction in their hours after a six-day strike that ended December 24.

During a visit to the picket line, one striker said 165 workers had mounted picket lines at four pier heads, bringing Caledonian MacBrayne’s ferry service to the southerly islands off Scotland’s west coast to a standstill. “Nothing’s been sailing on the Clyde,” reported another ferry worker at the pier head on the Clyde river estuary, west of Glasgow. “We’re totally solid,” said the picket, who declined to be named fearing company reprisals.

With the end of the strike the Glasgow *Herald* reported that the new tentative contract “gives Clyde pier staff a reduction of one hour in their workweek and gives the Clyde crews parity with their Western Isles counterparts in terms of pay and conditions.”

Ferry workers union leader Steve Todd told the *Herald* that the settlement “represents a significant victory for RMT [Rail, Maritime and Transport] members.” The ferry workers have returned to work and will vote on the agreement in early January.

The strikers’ union, has been pressing for the last year for a reduction in hours worked before overtime rates are triggered. These

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