

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Communists in Britain discuss imperialism's war at home
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Palestinians resist U.S. blackmail

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Palestinian officials rejected demands by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell that they call an end to armed resistance to Israeli occupation forces and for the surrender of men trapped in the Palestinian Authority headquarters by Israeli military forces, in return for inclusion in so-called "peace talks" promised by Washington.

From the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem where dozens of fighters held off Israeli military forces, to the streets of Palestinian towns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian people refused to bow to the imperialist pressure and military onslaught by colonial-settler Israel during Powell's mission.

"The situation on the ground is that Secretary Powell leaves the situation worse than when he came," stated Saeb Erekat, a senior Palestinian official, shortly before Powell departed the area after holding a second meeting with Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat at his besieged Ramallah offices.

Despite some mild criticism of Israel's ongoing military operations in West Bank towns, the main focus of Powell's trip was to bring maximum pressure to bear upon Arafat to clamp down on Palestinian fighters leading the resistance. "You're on a dangerous path and you need to make a change," the U.S. secretary of state warned Arafat during one of their face-to-face meetings. Powell also floated the idea of holding a Middle East peace conference without Arafat, fitting in nicely with Sharon's stance that the Palestinian leader be excluded from such a gathering.

In the end, Powell went back to Washington empty-handed.

The Israeli rulers didn't pause for a moment in their military assault against Palestinians living in the West Bank the entire 10 days the U.S. delegation was in the Middle East. Israeli troops have occupied and laid

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Aircraft workers walk out in Quebec

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

MONTREAL—At a mass meeting at Olympic Stadium here workers at three Bombardier Aerospace plants rejected a second contract offer, voted 91.5 percent in favor of a strike, and set up picket lines April 15. Some 75 percent of the 7,500 members of International Association of Machinists Local 712 attended the strike authorization meeting.

Bombardier is the world's third largest manufacturer of civil aircraft and the largest for rail transportation equipment. This is the first strike at the Quebec plants in 25 years.

The bosses' second contract offer, which was rejected by 60 percent of voting members, included a 3.25 percent a year wage increase over a four-year contract and a \$1,000 signing bonus. The union is demanding a 5 percent yearly wage increase over a three-year contract, as well as an improved pension plan.

Previous to the latest vote, the workers

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Workers in Venezuela foil U.S.-backed coup

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Working-class mobilizations foiled a pro-imperialist military coup in Venezuela April 13, restoring the government of Hugo Chávez to power two days after he was jailed. In the face of Washington's immediate backing of the short-lived regime and the support of a wing of the military, tens of thousands of people poured into downtown Caracas from neighborhoods across the city in response to the anti-worker actions of the new regime.

"Caracas became the scene of an extraordinary social conflict with sharp overtones of class struggle," the *Los Angeles Times* reported April 13 from that city, Venezuela's capital. "Gunshots rang out in the Catia slum, a Chávez bastion, as police tried unsuccessfully to contain the protests. Many poor residents marched and rode motorcycles toward the center of the capital city, angrily calling for Chávez's reinstatement." Press reports indicate some 30 people were killed and hundreds wounded opposing the coup.

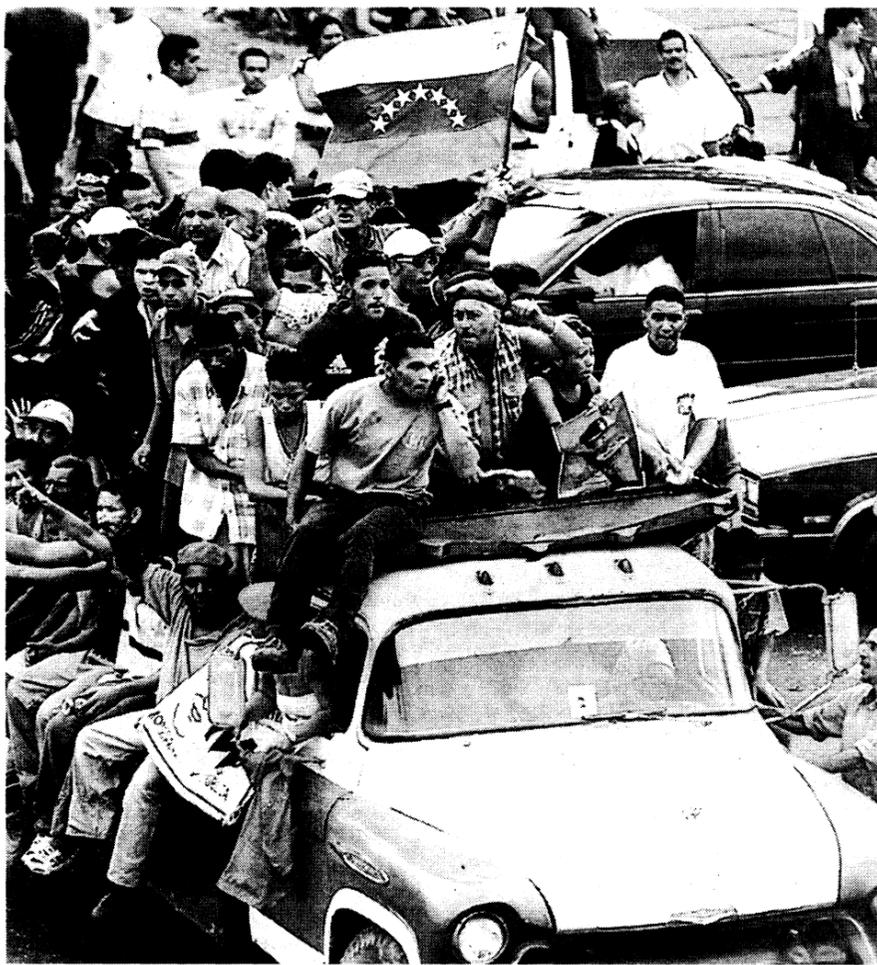
"Here there are two Venezuelas," Luis Alfonso Godoy, a retired soldier, told the *Los Angeles Times* reporter. "Chávez was the first president to speak for the poor."

The article noted: "Two days earlier it was thousands of mostly middle-class Venezuelans who joined an anti-Chávez rally."

Working people battled to take back the presidential palace, the state-run television station, and military garrisons from the U.S.-backed coup plotters.

"You can't take someone who is democratically elected by the people, and then put in a dictatorship of convenience," said Carlos Duque, a participant in the demon-

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Tens of thousands of working people, facing police repression, took to the streets of Caracas April 13 in opposition to the imperialist-backed coup.

Book tour visits six cities in central Cuba

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

MANICARAGUA, Cuba—"This book is about the Cuban Revolution," Victor Dreke told an audience of 200 that packed the hall used by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. "It is a book not only for the combatants, but especially for the new generation."

Dreke was addressing a public meeting held February 18 in the city of Sagua la Grande. It was the first of more than half a dozen similar events across central Cuba in mid-February launching Pathfinder Press's newly released title *From the Escambray to*

the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution.

In the book, Dreke recounts how as a teenager he joined the revolutionary movement that led Cuba's workers and farmers to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. The book also tells the story of the struggle to wipe out the U.S.-directed counterrevolutionary bands operating in the Escambray mountains in the first half of the 1960s, in which Dreke played a leading role; and of the internationalist mission to the Congo in 1965 led by Ernesto

Che Guevara. Dreke was second in command of that effort to aid anti-imperialist forces there.

Hosted by the Communist Party of Cuba, the provincial governments of Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus, and the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, book presentations were also held in Santa Clara, Placetas, Sancti Spiritus, Trinidad, and Manicaragua. Each of these cities was the scene of important events recounted in the book.

At each stop the local hosts went out of their way to welcome their Cuban and international guests, including Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder president and editor of

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In Washington, women press fight for coal miners' black lung benefits

BY CINDY JAQUITH

WASHINGTON—Linda Chapman and Phyllis Tipton concluded their 525-mile walk for black lung benefits here April 16. They had begun their journey in Charleston, West Virginia, March 15, determined to walk from the coalfields of West Virginia and Pennsylvania to the nation's capital to demand justice for coal miners afflicted with black lung and their widows.

Black lung is a preventable disease caused by the inhalation of coal dust. A massive struggle by coal miners in the late 1960s led to federal legislation providing benefits for miners suffering from the disease. Their widows were also entitled to benefits under the legislation.

Under the law there was a presumption of the existence of black lung if the miner had been in an underground mine for at least

15 years and had evidence of total disability from respiratory or pulmonary problems.

In 1981 the law was amended. The changes substantially weakened its provisions, to the benefit of the coal companies. For miners filing claims after 1981, it was no longer sufficient to prove 15 years' employment and respiratory or pulmonary illness to qualify for benefits. The 1981 amendments also stipulated that if a miner already receiving black lung benefits died after Jan. 1, 1982, the spouse would have to apply for benefits anew.

Linda Chapman's husband Carson died of black lung in 2001. He never won benefits and Chapman continues today to struggle for approval of her claim as his widow. Phyllis Tipton's husband Dick is a member of the United Mine Workers of

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Young Socialists leader speaks to 200 on Minnesota tour

BY KAREN RAY
AND FRANCISCO PICADO

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—"The Young Socialists is helping to build an international anti-imperialist movement today and you can join us," said Arrin Hawkins to meetings here. During her two-day tour the YS leader addressed some 200 people at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Normandale Community College, and Roosevelt High School.

Hawkins, 26, had just returned from a month in Cuba with a team of socialist workers and YS members who helped run the Pathfinder Press booth at the Havana International Book Fair. She and others traveled to several cities after the fair to take part in presentations of Pathfinder's new book, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke, a leader of the revolution for more than four decades. (See articles page 8.)

Hawkins was also a YS delegate to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Algiers, Algeria, last summer. The YS leader is one of the illegally terminated workers at American Meat Packing Corporation and a participant in the workers' struggle for severance pay and other benefits owed them when the packing house shut down.

"We go to Cuba to learn the hard-fought lessons of that revolution in order to better join the fight to make a revolution in the United States," Hawkins said. "We have two choices. One is the road carved out by the Cuban Revolution, based on solidarity and the struggle to place human needs first. The other is capitalism, a decaying system which offers nothing but unemployment, racism, war, and the threat of fascism."

Hawkins explained the case of the five Cuban revolutionaries who were framed up by the U.S. government and are now in jail on sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life term. In taking on the assignment of gathering information on the activities of counterrevolutionary organizations in the United States with a history of violent attacks on Cuba, "the five were defend-

ing the sovereignty of Cuba and their revolution," she said.

'Agree about making a revolution'

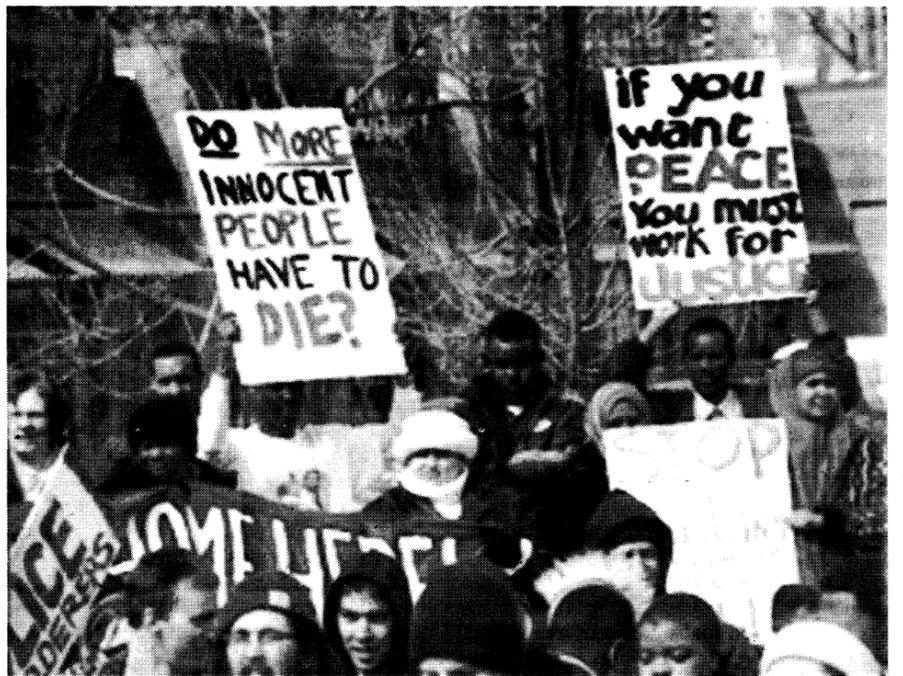
The discussion period at each meeting involved a lively exchange about the revolutionary perspectives of the YS.

"I agree that we need to make a revolution," said Nimo Farh, a Roosevelt High School student and leader of the Somali Student Association. "But the government tries to intimidate us through cop killings and deportations." Farh was one of the high school students who held a meeting with Hawkins at a local McDonald's after their school administrators refused to allow them to organize the event at Roosevelt. The students had participated in the recent protests against the police murder of Somali working-class youth Kassim Jeilani in Minneapolis.

"The U.S. lets us into the country," stated Farh, "but if we speak up about injustice, we get deported or shot." Other young Somali students related personal experiences of harassment and jail time at the hands of the Minneapolis police.

The students had described the role the cops play in a capitalist society, said Hawkins. The police are organized to protect the interest of the ruling class and to intimidate workers and people who speak out and act against the capitalist system.

Standing up and mobilizing as many people as possible to demand the prosecution of the killer cops, she said, puts the police and city government on notice that such brutality will not go unanswered. At the end of their two-hour meeting, all the Somali students signed up for more infor-



Participants in recent demonstrations in support of the Palestinian struggle and against cop killing of Somali youth attended meetings during tour of YS leader Arrin Hawkins in the Twin Cities. Hawkins spoke to some 200 people during her two-day visit.

mation on the YS.

At Normandale Community College student Douglas Belton asked: "What is the alternative to an industrial capitalist society?"

"Industry is not the problem," said Hawkins, "but what capitalism does with it. When capitalism first appeared it moved humanity forward by abolishing the feudal system. Now it is no longer progressive. Technology under capitalism is used against working people around the world. Capitalism holds back our capacity to meet human needs, violates workers' rights, and causes war, racism, and underdevelopment."

At Minneapolis Community and Technical College a Russian-born student related his parents' experiences under the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia, and asked: "Would you justify the murder of middle-class people by workers who are oppressed as they are on their way to overthrow the gov-

ernment?"

"The working-class movement is not the source of violence," Hawkins said. "But we are not going to let this system take us down with it and we are for the right to self-defense. If you study history, you will see that every ruling class in the world has used violence against the oppressed to maintain their power. We live under the dictatorship of the capitalist class. It is the most powerful and brutal ruling class that the world has ever known, and we will have to defend ourselves. The stronger and bigger our movement is, the more we will be able to minimize the casualties inflicted by the capitalists and their repressive forces." Other students joined the discussion to back up Hawkins' point of view.

Karen Ray is a garment worker and Francisco Picado is a meat packer in St. Paul.

Denver bookstore scores rights victory

BY GREG McCARTAN

The Tattered Cover, a bookstore in Denver, won an important victory for the Bill of Rights when the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that it did not have to turn over records

to the police of who purchased books on the construction and operation of drug laboratories.

In a unanimous decision April 8, the court found that both the First Amendment and the state constitution "protect an individual's fundamental right to purchase books anonymously, free from governmental interference" and added that the use of a search warrant to learn which books a customer has purchased "implicates fundamental rights."

Since a raid on a trailer home in March 2000, police have tried to force the bookstore to turn over receipts for the purchase of the books. Cops say they found an envelope from the bookstore outside the trailer, which they said was being used as a methamphetamine laboratory.

"[W]e believe the Court's opinion sets an important precedent for readers, booksellers, and library patrons throughout the country, who can now look to Colorado for guidance when the First Amendment rights of readers collide with the desires of law en-

forcement," said Joyce Meskis, owner of the Tattered Cover, after the court ruling was handed down.

Chris Finan, president of the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, said the decision "strongly affirms the fact that protecting the privacy of bookstore records is essential to preserve free speech." The foundation has supported the Tattered Cover's fight both financially and with amicus briefs.

This victory will have an impact on future battles against the U.S. government, which under the USA Patriot Act authorized the FBI to obtain an order from a "spy court" to force a bookstore to turn over records, documents, and other items. The act also prohibits anyone associated with the store from telling others they have received the order.

In a November 7 letter to American Booksellers Association members, Finan said the foundation is "deeply concerned by the potential chilling effort of court orders issued to booksellers under this new law."

THE MILITANT

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Editor: GREG McCARTAN

Business Manager: JACK WILLEY

Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Martín Koppel, Jack Willey, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ROMINA GREEN

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Mortgage defaults on workers rise sharply

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In a rapidly growing disaster, thousands of working people with low-to-medium incomes in New York are facing foreclosure on their home loans, according to recent statistics from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

The defaults are concentrated among working people with federally guaranteed loans under the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). As bosses have cut jobs and hours since the onset of the economic recession, many who borrowed during the 1990s "boom" years can no longer keep up with payments. Racist discrimination in lending policies has also played a role, since many Blacks are denied bank loans and must pay sharply inflated interest rates to even less scrupulous lenders.

The rate of default across the country on federally insured loans has doubled in the last decade. A default is defined as being more than 90 days behind on monthly mortgage payments. In the New York area the mortgage default rate so far this year is three times the national average, reaching nearly 12 percent in the metropolitan region. The rate has steadily climbed from just over 2 percent in 1994.

"It looks to me like the American dream is, for some people, becoming the American nightmare," said Dolores Martin, a home ownership counselor for Jamaica Housing Improvement Inc., a nonprofit agency in Queens, New York. Martin said the agency's offices have been barraged by working people who are trying to forestall foreclosures on their home loans.

One of Martin's clients is a flight attendant who lost her job after September 11. She is married to a cabdriver whose income also plummeted after the attack on the World Trade Center.

Pamela Sah, an attorney with the Foreclosure Prevention Project of South Brooklyn Legal Services, said her caseload has doubled among clients holding FHA loans. "Beginning late last year, we started getting slammed," she said.

Between last October and mid-March this year both banks, and big or small-time capitalist operations that line up loans at even higher interest rates, filed nearly 500 more foreclosure claims against people in Brooklyn and Queens than in the same period a year earlier—an increase of more than 20 percent.

Racist lending policies

Working people who are Black are routinely denied loans and credit from conventional banks and financial institutions. The results of a recent survey of some 200,000 home loan applications "suggested that racial discrimination continues to be a factor in the way banks issue loans," said a politely understated article in the *New York Times*.

The "suggestion" of racist practices by the banks comes in a study commissioned by New York senator Charles Schumer. The results show that banks reject loan applications from Blacks at nearly twice the rate for whites, even when they have similar in-

comes. Overall, 28 percent of Black people who applied for loans were turned down compared with 15 percent of whites. Where Blacks earned a higher income than whites, they were still rejected more often for loans. For example, 26 percent of Blacks with incomes above \$67,440 were denied loans, compared with 19 percent of whites earning less than \$45,000.

As a result of these racist lending policies, many Black working people turn to predatory "subprime" lenders who charge high interest rates and hefty fees. Some have arranged FHA mortgages, charging inflated fees, and then have profited again when the buyer was forced to default. Schumer's study showed that in 2000, loan sharks dominated the market in Black neighborhoods, providing 43 percent of the home loans there compared with only 9 percent of these loans in white neighborhoods.

An analysis of the loan applications by residents of Laurelton, Queens, a Black neighborhood with an average income of \$63,527, revealed that banks rejected 30 percent of loan requests and subprime lenders provided 36 percent of the loans. In a comparable white neighborhood in Queens, Bayside, with an average income of \$57,212, banks rejected only 12 percent of the loan applications, and subprime lenders provided 8 percent of the loans.

Senator Schumer said that "after years of mistrust, years of discrimination, many Black homeowners simply do not want to risk the humiliation of having their loan applications turned down. As a result," he said, "many Black homeowners who are more than qualified to receive low-interest loans from conventional lenders don't even apply."

Unionists in Italy hold one-day strike to oppose antilabor laws



Thousands demonstrated April 16 at the Piazza San Carlo in Turin, Italy, as part of a one-day general strike to protest plans by Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi to alter the country's labor laws. Union officials estimated that some 13 million workers joined the strike, and more than 2 million participated in demonstrations across the country. Berlusconi asserted that he would not back down from the proposed legislation, which allows smaller companies to dismiss any new employees without having to prove just cause in court. The legislation is seen by the unions as a first step by the Italian bosses and the government in their drive to undermine the unions and workers' rights.

Court upholds public housing evictions

BY BILL KALMAN

OAKLAND, California—On March 26 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld four separate evictions from public housing of elderly Blacks because relatives or visitors had been arrested on drug charges. The court ruled that government housing officials have the legal right to evict entire households from public housing if anyone in the family is arrested for drug possession, or if guests in the apartment are caught with drugs, whether or not the tenants knew about the drugs.

The ruling upholds the so-called one-strike policy for federal subsidized housing operated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as local housing agencies.

The unanimous ruling affects about 3 million residents of public housing units nationally. The Supreme Court was reviewing four eviction notices issued by the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA), which administers more than 11,000 Section 8 tenants and an additional 3,300 public housing units.

The OHA estimates that 79 percent of its tenants are Black. Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote in the court's opinion, "strict liability maximizes deterrence and eases enforcement difficulties." HUD spokeswoman Nancy Segerdahl hailed the court decision as "a great victory for families in public housing." The OHA also applauded the ruling. Spokeswoman Lily Toney said, "Now that we have the Supreme Court to back us up, we will be able to use every tool available to evict people who vio-

late the law and make it unsafe for families."

All four OHA tenants threatened with eviction under this draconian policy are elderly Blacks. Pearlle Rucker, 63 years old, first challenged the policy in 1996 after the OHA tried to evict her because her mentally-disabled daughter was arrested on drug charges three blocks away. Even though the housing authority dismissed the case against her in 1998, the Supreme Court still upheld their right to carry through the eviction.

Plaintiffs Willie Lee, 71, and Barbara Hill, 63, had grandsons allegedly caught with marijuana in the building's parking lot. Both of those cases have also been "satisfactorily resolved," according to the OHA. "I'm very glad," Hill said. "I'm not going to take my grandson off the lease because that would be saying I'm guilty and I'm not."

Herman Walker, who is 75 and confined to a wheelchair, was ordered evicted because his caretaker allegedly came to work one day in possession of cocaine. OHA executive director Jon Gresley stated, "The authority believes that Mr. Walker's continued occupancy of an apartment in a building housing other seniors poses a threat to the other residents of the building."

OHA tenants renew their lease every year and are required to sign a one-page legal document about the one-strike policy. OHA attorney Gary Lafayette defended this intrusion into tenants' private lives by explaining, "Maybe only once in 10 years will you catch them red-handed, but for 10 years

we've been watching them, and they've been getting away with it."

'I don't trust the police'

The ruling has sparked a debate here on the fight for decent, affordable public housing, and the increasing number of incidents of harassment by housing cops.

At a protest in Oakland on April 1, Bakari Olatunji pointed out, "President Bush lives in public housing and his daughters have used drugs. Is he on the streets?" One public housing tenant who asked not to be identified told the *Oakland Tribune*, "It's not fair. Someone who doesn't like you can plant drugs and call the police, and I don't trust the police."

Jessica Oliver, who is 20 and lives in a low-income development in Oakland, agreed. "They wouldn't do this to people living in the [Oakland] hills. If I could afford to live where there aren't drugs I would. If you're in low-income housing it's because you can't afford anything else. Most likely you have nowhere else to go."

Housing cop Nick Jones attended the protest with his dog "Stash" to defend the ruling. He complained to the press about tenants rights. "[Last year] it took us six months to get the person out after we found the drugs," he said of a raid on Section 8 housing.

Bill Kalman is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120 in San Lorenzo, California.

Pennsylvania residents fight sewage sludge dumping

BY TOM MAILER

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—In a series of meetings over a three-week period, residents of townships and boroughs throughout southern Schuylkill County have begun to take on one of the local millionaire coal operators over questions of health and the environment. Reading Anthracite, Gilberton Coal Company, and Waste Management Processors, Inc. (WMPI), have all applied for permission to dump sewage sludge—called biosolids by the water treatment industry—for fertilizer on thousands of acres of strip mine land.

Nine local governments in the targeted areas have passed resolutions stating their opposition to these plans, or have established ordinances that could make dumping prohibitive. WMPI is one of the John Rich family companies along with Gilberton

Coal and Reading Anthracite.

New Castle Township is the most recent to take action, joining West Mahanoy, Conyngham, Mt. Carmel, and Butler townships, and the boroughs of Ashland, Mt. Carmel, Girardville, and Shenandoah. These municipalities are spread throughout an area that has long been dominated by coal interests who for decades sucked out hundreds of millions of dollars of profits, leaving mountains of waste material, called culm banks, towering over the remaining towns.

Under the proposal, the water treatment authority in Philadelphia would pay WMPI \$37.50 per ton of sludge accepted for dumping. The coal company says it plans to dump 60 dry tons on each acre of mine land it wants to reclaim, mixing it with the topsoil and spraying grass seed on top. A one-year contract would net the Rich family \$1.5

million for hauling away 40,000 tons of sludge.

At a March 26 meeting in Girardville, attended by representatives of 11 local governments, Roseanne Weinrich of the Mahanoy Creek Watershed Association opposed the proposal. She clarified some of the facts, pointing out that dry sludge is sludge that has been incinerated. But what the companies plan to ship to the area is sludge that has been centrifuged and has some water remaining. The 60 dry tons will actually weigh up to 240 tons per acre. She noted there is little or no topsoil in a strip mine. "Strip mine cover is coarse, and has no water-holding capacity. It's anywhere from 25 percent to 95 percent rock and is subject to high erosion," Weinrich said. Rain water would simply drain through the sludge

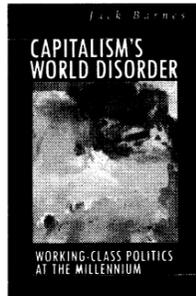
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from Pathfinder

Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

BY 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."



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Meat packers' battles are becoming part of a social movement

BY DON REED
AND RACHELE FRUIT

CHICAGO—"We are in the middle of a social movement," said Joel Britton, describing the participation of socialist workers in a fight being waged by union members who were illegally terminated by the American Meatpacking Corporation (AMPAC) in Chicago. Britton presented the opening report at a meeting held here April 6-7 of meat packers who are members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists, and of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union.

The meeting took place during the Midwest Socialist Conference, and participants in the meat packers' meeting attended an afternoon reception and evening meeting featuring presentations by leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (see last week's *Militant*). Packinghouse workers from around the country were able to meet workers who are part of struggles in the Chicago area, and who are interested in the socialist movement, as well as young socialists from several cities who traveled to the conference to learn more about the SWP and YS.

AMPAC, Chicago's last hog slaughterhouse, closed its doors in November with no advance notice, with devastating consequences for many workers and their families. Since December those workers have been battling for lost pay and benefits. Britton, who worked at the plant, explained the experiences and leadership lessons that communist workers are drawing as they participate in this fight with their former AMPAC brothers and sisters, most of whom are longtime UFCW members.

In a series of meetings, these workers "have charted a course that has resulted in the boss class paying a price for the shutdown," said Britton. At a Christmas Eve protest in front of the plant, workers carried signs in Spanish, English, and Polish, showing the unity that has been built among workers of different backgrounds. They have developed relations with La Unión Latina, an organizing center for temporary workers in the Chicago area.

Britton reported on plans for an April 17 press conference and protest at the Federal Building in downtown Chicago to announce a lawsuit against the company. The civil suit seeks to penalize AMPAC for violating the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Act (WARN), which requires that 60 days' notice be given to workers in advance of plant closings.

Participants in the meeting of socialist meat packers discussed how they can build support for this fight among other meat

packers around the country.

'Elements of a structured leadership'

"Elements of a structured leadership have developed," said Britton. "Two to three dozen workers have taken on responsibilities between the larger mass meetings to ensure that their decisions get carried out and to organize delegations to meet with union officials and attorneys." The meetings function with a "rough and ready workers democracy" and have a lot of authority, Britton noted. "Gaps between word and deed are not popular. Every worker has a say, and is urged to say it. As one leader says, 'Anybody that's got ideas can talk.'"

Communist workers have been part of the workforce at AMPAC for years. During this time, supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have sold the communist publications outside the plant gate. These sales have had an impact, Britton said. At the first workers' meeting he attended after being terminated, along with Arrin Hawkins, a fellow AMPAC worker and a leader of the Young Socialists, "we were urged to involve 'those people who sold the papers outside the plant.'"

Some of the socialist workers and Young Socialists participated in the December 24 protest and have set up literature tables outside the halls where the AMPAC workers' meetings were taking place. One time, when the weather was especially cold, workers insisted that the table be moved inside, close to where the meeting was taking place.

A central question in the AMPAC workers' fight revolves around the claim by the company that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the government agency that inspects meat production, forced the plant to close. By denying their responsibility for the closure, the owners are claiming exemption from the WARN Act.

The workers explain that the company ignored numerous USDA warnings, taking no actions over violations for unsanitary conditions cited by the government agency. *¡Exito!*, a Spanish language weekly newspaper in Chicago, reported on January 10 that "officials of the USDA said that at no time did the government order the closing of the plant." The article was a direct result of the workers' public protest, said Britton.

Proletarianizing the party's work

Involvement in the AMPAC workers' fight has helped the SWP's branch in Chicago take steps to proletarianize its functioning and strengthen its revolutionary centralism, in turn contributing to the effectiveness of branch members involved in the fight.

dustries, particularly motor manufacturers, fear the U.S. would respond to EU sanctions by retaliating against their exports," stated an April 12 *Financial Times* article.

The Japanese government has also called on Washington to withdraw its steel tariffs. In a meeting with Robert Zoellick, the U.S. trade representative, Japanese trade minister Takeo Hiranuma warned, "We would like you to give us a positive response on compensation steps. If not, we may need to prepare retaliatory steps."

On April 10 Zoellick also issued a sharp warning against China joining forces with what he called the "running dogs of European imperialism" in opposing the U.S. steel tariffs. According to a *Times* article, "Chinese trade officials said Mr. Zoellick's arguments had failed to sway them from their intention to challenge the tariffs in the World Trade Organization."

During a recent visit to Beijing, Chris Patten, the EU external affairs commissioner, pledged to work with the Chinese government in mapping out some joint plans to oppose the U.S. steel tariffs.

Despite some tough talk, the Chinese government is hoping to attract \$50 billion in foreign investment this year and to boost its exports to the United States, making Beijing "reluctant to take overt retaliatory measures," against Washington, noted the *Times*.



Workers at ConAgra in Omaha, Nebraska, rallied in September 2000 as part of their fight for a union. At a meeting in Chicago, socialist workers who are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union recounted a number of examples of involvement in union-organizing drives and developing social movements.

The examples include a concentrated effort to reconstitute a fraction of party members in the meat packing industry here. The branch has carried out more consistent political activity in workers districts in the city where the party is seeking to develop a base. The next step will be to find a suitable meeting hall and bookstore in an area where meat packers live and work.

Participants in the meeting recounted a number of examples of involvement in union organizing drives and developing social movements.

A socialist meat packer in Omaha, Nebraska, described the ongoing organizing drive among thousands of meat packers there. At ConAgra, members of the Workers Committee meet weekly, take responsibility for deepening support for the organizing work, defend co-workers, and put out *La Neta*, Spanish slang for "the truth," a newsletter that responds to company attacks on workers and the union.

While building support for the union in the plants, many workers have taken an interest in other workers' struggles and in the broader perspective that they have found in Pathfinder books and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

On March 13, after a meeting of the ConAgra Workers Committee, eight workers met with Michael Italie, the socialist candidate for Mayor of Miami who was fired for his political views from Goodwill Industries in Miami where he worked as a sewing machine operator. The ConAgra workers had a wide-ranging discussion with Italie and presented him with a petition signed by 28 workers at two plants.

Paul Pederson, a meat packer at a plant in Long Island, New York, reported that he and a meat packer he had worked with at another plant joined the "widows' walk" for black lung benefits for a day. Two women—the widow of a coal miner who died of black lung and the wife of a retired coal miner who suffers from the disease—have walked 525 miles from Charleston, West Virginia, to Washington, D.C., to put the spotlight on the fact that most coal miners with the ailment cannot get the health care they need. Nor do their spouses receive their due benefits. The widows' walk is part of an incipient social movement linked to decades of struggles in the coalfields.

Importance of plant gate sales

Pederson pointed to consistent plant-gate sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books as crucial for maintaining contact with the worker who joined him on the walk. The plant-gate sale helped to draw him to support other workers' struggles and to regular attendance at Militant Labor Forums, and, in the process, to bring him closer to the communist movement.

Ernie Mailhot from Seattle noted in his report that "we get a good response among workers everywhere we do plant-gate sales." Several meeting participants said that such sales are not regularly organized at the plants where they work. The meeting decided to work with other supporters of these publications to rectify this during the course of the subscription drive for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, running from April 13 through June 9.

Distribution of Pathfinder books among co-workers and other meat packers will be

an important part of the sales drive. "We are in the final months of the Pathfinder Press campaign to sell \$500,000 in books in the 18-month period between January 2001 and July 1, 2002," said Mailhot.

From St. Paul, Minnesota, Tom Fiske reported that co-workers have bought 20 Pathfinder books over the last two months. "These sales come out of attacks by the companies, the imposition of new work rules, and the layoff of 42 workers. The instability of our situation prompts workers to seek answers and lessons from previous struggles."

Since February 1, the members of the national UFCW fraction have sold 47 copies of the new Pathfinder book, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke. The fraction adopted goals for the upcoming drive of selling 50 subscriptions to each of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 50 copies of Pathfinder's *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. "That title teaches not only about the Cuban revolution but also mainly about the class struggle in the U.S. It is an excellent recruitment tool," said Mailhot.

"The book can also help us in our work to defend the five Cuban revolutionaries who have been framed up and imprisoned by the U.S. government," he said. The socialists explain that the jailed revolutionaries were on an international mission to defend their country and revolution from attacks by the U.S. government and Cuban counterrevolutionary forces based in the United States.

"When we explain who they are and how they have spent their lives," Mailhot said, "many of our co-workers will be extremely impressed with people who rise to that level of commitment and will be interested in learning more about the Cuban revolution."

Mailhot also pointed to the weekly Militant Labor Forum as an institution that workers use and respect. Meat packers who have been involved in strikes and organizing drives have recently spoken alongside other workers at these forums in Boston, Seattle, Chicago, and Des Moines, he said.

Several meat packers at the meeting pointed to the usefulness of going back to the *Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Unions* by Jack Barnes. This book explains that communist workers in the unions function simultaneously on three different levels: as members of the revolutionary party, as workers seeking to involve other workers in political activity, and as union activists with a revolutionary perspective for the unions.

Rachele Fruit is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1625 in Tampa, Florida. Don Reed is a meat packer in Omaha, Nebraska.

EU divisions emerge over steel tariffs

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

As European Union-member (EU) governments discuss plans to retaliate against the imposition of up to 30 percent tariffs on steel imported into the United States, leading employers' groups in Germany and the United Kingdom have announced their opposition to such a move.

The European Commission is demanding that Washington compensate EU countries for lost steel sales resulting from the U.S. trade restrictions. It has drawn up a list of \$2.2 billion worth of U.S. exports on which to impose retaliatory sanctions if the World Trade Organization rules against Washington's steel tariffs, a decision not expected until mid-2003. However, the Commission is recommending that member states put sanctions on some U.S. products as early as June 18 of this year.

In a letter to the United Kingdom Department of Trade and Industry, the Confederation of British Industry described the Commission's plans as a "dangerous step down the road to escalating this dispute. It will solve nothing and risk dragging other sectors into the dispute.... If implemented, it risks a cycle of tit-for-tat actions whose outcome can only be negative for British business interests."

Officials from the BDI, the bosses' federation in Germany, "say many German in-

Order revolutionary books on the Internet!

pathfinderpress.com

'Militant' sales drive gets off to a good start

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Participants in the campaign to expand the readership of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Pathfinder* titles are off to a strong start after the first days of the campaign. Reports that have come in from around the country indicate wide interest in revolutionary literature on the job and from those joining demonstrations defending the Palestinian struggle against Israeli military occupation, workers and youth coming to Militant Labor Forums in working-class neighborhoods, and students on campuses.

Socialist workers and young socialists will be getting on buses from around the country to participate in the April 20 march and rally to "Stop the War, at Home and Abroad!" that will be held in Washington, D.C. A similar action is planned in San Francisco. Selling copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, as well as subscriptions to the *Militant* and *PM* to young people and others at send-off events, on the buses, and off literature tables at the demonstrations will provide a boost to the sales campaign.

One area that has gotten a jump off the starting blocks is Miami, where Chris Hoepfner reports, "For the past few weeks there have been demonstrations here in solidarity with Palestinians where we've been selling all kinds of books and around \$100 worth of *Pathfinder* titles each week." He said they sold two *Militant* subscriptions to Palestinians they met at the demonstrations. One of them also bought a copy of *The Jewish Question*, a book that provides a scientific explanation of why the capitalist rulers incite Jew hatred.

"We also sold three *Militant* subscriptions during our efforts to build a Militant Labor Forum on the class struggle in Haiti. We went from store to store posting flyers in the area where the *Pathfinder* bookstore is located. We spent a little time explaining the forum to the barber who works in the shop on the first floor beneath our headquarters.

He told others about the event, including one Haitian who brought his son to the forum. This man bought a *Militant* subscription and \$60 worth of *Pathfinder* literature, including *Thomas Sankara Speaks*."

Rachele Fruit, a meat packer in Tampa, Florida, told the *Militant*, "We had a tremendous time this week. We set up a literature table at the University of South Florida and two students walked up and asked, 'How can I subscribe to this paper?' We also sold out of our papers at demonstrations defending the rights of Palestinians in Tampa and Orlando."

Socialist workers in Tampa held their second Militant Labor Forum in the city, featuring a talk on the struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine, said Fruit. "Twenty-four people came, including a young woman we met at the University of South Florida who is active in a Muslim women's group on campus. She has been reading the *Militant* for a while and decided to buy a subscription at the forum."

"That evening we launched a fund to raise money for the headquarters we are planning to move into and afterwards took some people over to the location. A Palestinian guy who came to the forum offered to help us get some of the equipment we will need to hold forums, sell *Pathfinder* titles, and organize other political activity to build the communist movement there."

Socialist workers in New York's Garment District sold six *Militant* subscriptions and one copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* in the first three days of the circulation drive, reported Laura Anderson. "We set up a sales table at Union Square where a demonstration demanding an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine was held," she said. "Our table was a center for debate, involving participants in the rally and a few Zionists. People were interested in reading literature that points to the overthrow of the Israeli regime as the only solution for opening the road to peace in Pales-



Militant/Greg Rosenberg
Militant staff writer Róger Calero (left) selling revolutionary literature at March 30 demonstration in Washington in defense of Palestinian land rights.

time. We sold two *Militant* subscriptions, 20 copies of the paper, and a few *Pathfinder* titles on the history of struggles in the Middle East.

"Wong Dowling, a young Black man who came to our Militant Labor Forum on police brutality, purchased a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and a subscription to the *Militant*," she wrote. "He told me, 'I bought the paper so I wouldn't feel so comatose, not able to know what's going on in the world around me. I'm also interested in Cuba.'"

Meat packers hold rally for union rights

BY SAMUEL FARLEY

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—"The company is now beginning to increase the line speed, we can feel it as we work harder," stated Miguel Olvera at a spirited April 4 rally of 250 people in front of Dakota Premium Foods. Olvera, who works as a boner and is a central leader of the struggle for union recognition at the plant, said the company treats "us like we are not humans. But we will not give up our struggle, and in the end we will win a contract."

Working under brutal conditions and pushed to the limit by the bosses, workers in the Dakota plant, a beef slaughterhouse, staged a sit-down strike in June 2000, shutting down production. They refused to return to the line until the bosses addressed their demands. After holding out for more than seven hours, concessions were won from the company. A little more than a month later workers voted 112-71 to join United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789.

The company has so far refused to enter into negotiations with the union or to recognize the UFCW as the workers' bargaining agent. The bosses have also tried to tie up and wear down the meat packers' struggle through multiple appeals to the National Labor Relations Board.

AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka was a featured speaker at the rally. He noted the other unions present and said, "the fight by the Dakota workers is the fight of Local 17, is the fight of AFSCME (American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees), it is the fight of all labor. We all must stand together." Local 17 is part of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, which has waged several struggles in the area.

The action had the backing of the St. Paul AFL-CIO and was attended by members of a number of other unions. Part of a national day of student labor action, the demonstration attracted youth from campuses in the state. Aside from Trumka, speakers at the event were Shar Knutson, president of the St. Paul AFL-CIO; Avi Lyon from the Jew-



Militant/Francisco Picado
Meat packers and supporter at April 4 rally in front of Dakota Premium Foods plant in St. Paul, Minnesota. Workers continue to press for contract with bosses.

ish Labor Committee; and William Pearson, president of UFCW Local 789.

A few days later workers at the plant scored a victory when the National Labor Relations Board ruled for the third time against the appeal by Dakota Premium Foods contesting the results of the union election. The NLRB decision ruled that the company now had to start negotiations with the UFCW.

However, the company can appeal the final NLRB decision to a federal appeals court. "This [ruling] is just a procedural step so that we can get before the courts of this land for the first time, and that's probably what we will be doing," Kelly Berens, an attorney working for Dakota Premium, told the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*.

The company's appeals are widely seen by workers in the plant and by union offi-

cial as an attempt to stall the process of negotiating with the union and to weaken the determination of the workers.

On Friday, April 12, copies of *The Workers' Voice*, the in-plant newsletter of the organizing campaign, carried the information about the NLRB ruling. "Workers in the boning department read the news with enthusiasm," said Olvera. "I think the ruling shows the company's weakness. The company hopes we are weakening. But the workers are not."

Samuel Farley is a worker in the boning department at Dakota Premium Foods.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 13-June 23

Country	Militant Goal	PM Goal	Book Goal
Australia	20	4	12
Canada			
Montreal	15	5	16
Toronto	25	6	15
Vancouver	30	6	20
Canada Total	70	17	51
Iceland	6	1	4
New Zealand			
Auckland	10	1	5
Christchurch	7		
NZ Total	17	1	5
Sweden			
Gothenberg	12	2	8
Stockholm	8	3	5
Sweden Total	20	5	13
United Kingdom	30	10	15
United States			
Allentown	15	5	10
Atlanta	35	15	30
Birmingham	20	8	10
Boston	30	15	20
Brooklyn	45	35	35
Charlotte	18	7	10
Chicago	34	15	25
Cleveland	25	5	20
Des Moines	40	25	21
Detroit	35	10	20
Houston	30	12	20
Los Angeles	30	15	10
Miami	30	15	15
Newark	55	25	35
NY Garment Dist	80	40	50
Omaha	9	15	10
Philadelphia	25	10	15
Pittsburgh	42	5	20
San Francisco	30	18	15
Seattle	30	12	16
Tampa	16	6	12
Tucson	5	1	
Twin Cities	50	25	25
Upper Manhattan	75	50	40
Washington	20	12	15
Western Colorado	18	8	12
U.S. Total	842	409	511
International Total	1005	442	598
International Goal	900	450	600

Resistance by Palestinians

Continued from front page

siege to almost every major Palestinian population center on the West Bank, killing hundreds and arresting at least 5,000 people. Many of those picked up in sweeps are being sent to a newly reopened prison camp in the Negev Desert.

Israeli prime minister Sharon has stated that the Israeli dragnet is far from over. While announcing plans to pull out of some towns like Jenin and Nablus soon, other areas have been reinvaded and Israeli troops are maintaining a tight military encirclement around all these areas. The Israeli military has made clear that they have no intention of pulling out of Bethlehem or Ramallah any time soon.

However, the resistance of the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli's military might and the outpouring of solidarity they're winning throughout the Mideast region and around the world is creating deeper political problems for the capitalist rulers in Israel and their imperialist allies in Washington.

In recent days new facts have come out of how for 10 days groups of determined Palestinian fighters held off the drive by the Israeli army to destroy and take control of the Palestinian refugee camp in Jenin on the West Bank.

At least 200 Palestinians were killed in the camp, according to some relief agencies, although the actual number buried under the rubble of buildings destroyed by Israeli bulldozers and tanks is still unknown. Through the course of the fighting in Jenin, a town of 25,000 inhabitants, and the adjacent densely populated refugee camp where 15,000 people live, the Palestinians succeeded in killing 23 Israeli soldiers.

An article in the April 11 Toronto *Globe and Mail* told the story of several Palestinians who survived the assault on the Jenin camp. Their statements show why the Israeli rulers and their U.S. imperialist allies cannot crush the Palestinian resistance de-

spite their military strength.

"The fighting, they said, was not led by any central command," the article stated. "The Palestinian Authority led the fight against an earlier Israeli incursion, but this time, much of the population took up weapons." Mohammad, a 26-year-old man, his head swathed in bandages, stated, "They are very strong people, who said, 'This is my home, my land, my camp, and even though I have only primitive weapons, I am willing to die in the camp.'"

'Do not leave your land at any cost'

Hussein, a farmer, pointed out, "The Israelis are not fighting with a very strong belief. We are defending our beliefs and our honor and our land." A man named Ahmed added, "We learned from our parents and grandparents who left their land [after being driven off by the Israeli army] in 1948 and 1967. We learned: Do not leave your land at any cost."

The assault by the Israeli forces, in which an army has been transformed into a repressive military police, has taken aim at the most basic government infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority. Among the offices ransacked by Israeli troops was the Ministry of Education in Ramallah. As part of this operation Israeli soldiers blasted open a safe, reported an April 16 *New York Times* article, that "had been used to keep all school test records since 1960." Also removed was about \$8,500 in cash. "This is an administrative massacre, and this will lead to chaos," stated Palestinian minister of information Yasir Abed Rabbo.

Photographs of the massive destruction resulting from the Israeli military assault have begun appearing in the capitalist media. Abdel Ghaani Awadeh, 76, spoke to reporters in a street in Nablus beside a car flattened by an Israeli tank. "I was here for the war with the British in 1936, the Germans in World War II," he said, and "in 1948 and the 1967 war" by the Israeli rulers. "And I

have never seen bloodshed like this. They had an appetite for killing."

The Israeli soldiers used Palestinian civilians as shields, ordering them to open the doors of the houses that the soldiers would then search and ransack. In Jenin, Naifeh Masharkeh, 42, who succeeded in sneaking out of the camp alive, described how Israeli soldiers pounded on the door of her neighbor's house, then detonated an explosive to force open the door, just as the neighbor reached it, killing her.

The Israeli daily *Haaretz* quoted some Israeli officers expressing reservations about the widespread destruction in the camp. "When the world sees the pictures of what we have done there, it will do us immense damage," one was quoted as saying.

250 missiles in 24 hours

According to reports received by the Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights, "Israeli forces, including tanks, armored personnel carriers and bulldozers and backed by seven Apache helicopters, had fired 250 missiles and tank shells into the one square kilometre camp in 24 hours," reported a *Financial Times* article [1 kilometer = .62 miles].

In Rumaneh, Ahmed Amjad Khazem, a 35-year-old television engineer, spoke to reporters about his ordeal after being taken into custody by Israeli soldiers, an experience similar to that of thousands of other Palestinian men. He was "held for four days blindfolded and naked except for undershorts," stated an April 12 *Times* article.



"During this time, he was beaten repeatedly by Israeli troops. The marks of plastic handcuffs which have bitten into his wrists are still raw."

In Ramallah, the entire city remains under curfew; no one is allowed outside his or her house except for five hours on Monday and Thursday. Prior to Powell's visit with Arafat in this city, Israeli authorities temporarily restored water to the Palestinian leaders compound, allowing toilets to flush and the place to be spruced up a bit. After the secretary's visit, they cut off the water supply once again.

As Powell made his way out of the compound after his second and final visit of his 10-day Mideast mission, Arafat could be heard by reporters saying, "Is it acceptable that I can't go out of the door?" A CNN dispatch describing this incident reported no response by Powell to the question.

Resistance in Jordan

In neighboring Jordan, whose population is majority Palestinian, there is strong support for the resistance by Palestinians living on the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Israeli assault. As many of the young men and women in Jordan take to the streets in protests and seek ways to aid their brothers and sisters across the border, they find themselves coming up against the capitalist rulers of Jordan as well.

Reporting from Amman, a *Financial Times* article noted, "The dream of the young men here is for the borders to be flung open so volunteers from the camp can join in." One young fighter named Ahmad told the London-based capitalist daily, "But we know we'd be killed by Jordanians before we get to the border and get killed by the Israelis."

Actions in Europe, U.S., condemn Israeli war

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"We came here to stop the Israeli war against the Palestinian people and to support our brothers in struggle," said Youssef Ravat from Walsall in Britain's West Midlands as he marched on April 13. Ravat joined up to 30,000 others in London for a national demonstration in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

The protest, which was called by the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB), was one of a number organized over the past week in cities in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere. Immigrant workers and their families have mobilized for these actions, helping to give them a militant pro-Palestinian stance.

Working people from the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East, and North Africa were prominent at the London protest. They came from a number of different cities. *Militant* correspondents taking part noted buses from Glasgow—which reportedly brought 600 people—Birmingham, Sheffield, and Leicester.

Many protesters held hand-printed placards. A group of men carried a mock coffin with a sign attached that read, "Victims of UK-U.S. aid to Israel."

Speakers at the rally included an MAB representative, the former Labour Party member of parliament (MP) Anthony Benn, current Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn, and Michel Massih, chairman of the Palestinian community in the United Kingdom. Palestinian youth draped Nelson's Column, an historical monument to British imperialism, in Palestinian flags and led chants of "Down, down Israel" after each speaker.

"This demonstration reflects the fact that right across the religious divide there is widespread support for the Palestinian cause," said Massih, referring to the participation of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

On the same day some 20,000 people demonstrated in Berlin, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and other German cities, demanding "an end to Israeli state terror."

'We are all Palestinians'

On April 10 a similar number gathered outside the Greek parliament in the central square of Athens for a Palestinian solidarity rally and benefit concert sponsored by the General Confederation of Greek Work-

ers, the country's main trade union federation.

The previous Saturday some 50,000 people had marched in 15 French cities to oppose the Israeli occupation. The nationwide mobilization was called by a coalition of 50 organizations, including solidarity groups, trade unions, and parties with links to the working class. The governing Socialist Party did not endorse the action.

More than 30,000 people turned out in Paris, carrying placards such as "Sharon, you're finished, the intifada will continue," and "We are all Palestinians." The Association of North African Workers in France and the Union of French Jews for Peace, both of which had sponsored the action, were represented by large contingents in Paris, Marseille, and Strasbourg.

U.S. demonstrations

Supporters of the Palestinian struggle in New York have continued to mobilize. In the largest action to date, some 8,000 people gathered April 12 in Times Square in Manhattan chanting, "End U.S. aid to Israel." The protest had been energetically promoted at local mosques.

An Algerian immigrant told *Militant* reporters that as a child he had supported the national independence war. "The French would say that we were terrorists because we would blow up their cafes," he said. "We would say, 'give us your guns and tanks so we can fight you, and we won't blow up your cafes any more.' So I know that the Palestinians are not terrorists."

Soupeh Widdi, one of three Palestinian students from Fort Hamilton High School who participated in the action, told the *Militant* that politicians and the media "keep focusing on suicide bombers when sewers are being turned into mass graves for Palestinians. I'm in touch with my family in Ramallah. They have seen the graves and heard the bombs. They have a shortage of food, water, and are without electricity."

Many participants took leaflets advertising two upcoming protests in Washington. At 11:00 a.m. on April 20 people will gather at the Ellipse, south side of the White House, under the banner, "All Out for Palestine!" The protest will demand an end to all U.S. aid to the Israeli regime. Mosques and other

organizations are organizing buses from New York.

Two days later Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, on a visit to Washington, and U.S. president George Bush will address the American Israel Public Affairs Committee at the Washington Hilton. Al-Awda and other organizations have called a protest outside the venue for 5:30 p.m.

Jonathan Silberman in London, Georges Mehrabian in Athens, Claude Bleton in Paris, and Laura Anderson in New York contributed to this article.

Palestinian activist describes daily protests inside Israel

BY DOUG COOPER

Diaa Hadid, an activist with Ittijah, an umbrella group for Arab community-based organizations, told the *Militant* in an April 14 telephone interview from Haifa that protests among Palestinians living inside Israel are continuing. "They are not being reported," she said. "There are daily protests in all the main towns inside the Green Line with large Palestinian populations, like Nazareth. They can be 5,000 people."

The Green Line refers to the borders of Israel prior to its occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and other areas as a result of the 1967 war. Today more than 1 million of Israel's people, or 20 percent of the population, are Palestinians. Many are engaging in protests for the first time in response to the rising brutality of the Israeli occupation. One protest on March 31 in Nazareth involved 30,000, Hadid said.

On April 3, Israeli cops attacked peaceful protesters at the Qalandia checkpoint near the West Bank town of Ramallah, using batons and throwing tear gas indiscriminately into crowds. Around 30 people were injured. Three Palestinian members of the Israeli Knesset, or parliament, including Ahmad Tibi and Mohammad Barakeh, were among those hurt, Hadid said.

Hadid described another peaceful protest on April 4. "Police beat protesters with bat-

tons and sticks, claiming the Palestinian flag was provoking them." Half a dozen needed immediate medical attention. Two were denied treatment and were arrested. Twenty more had less serious injuries, she reported.

Hadid joined a protest of 300 in front of the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv on April 12 to mark the arrival of U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell. The demonstration was organized by Tayush, a joint Palestinian-Jewish group whose name translates as coexistence, and Gush Shalom, an organization of Jews opposed to the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

"Some Palestinian protesters formed a tight circle and then a man stood on the shoulders of some of them and raised the Palestinian flag," Hadid said. "Raising the Palestinian flag is illegal here," she explained, "because the Israeli government doesn't recognize it as the flag of a people but of an organization they have banned."

Hadid also joined an April 13 solidarity march of 3,000 from the village of Salem to a military checkpoint near Jenin. The peaceful protest accompanied 31 trucks and cars taking food and other aid to Palestinians in the besieged town. The caravan succeeded in passing the checkpoint. The protesters decided to stop short of it, Hadid explained, so as not to give the Israeli forces a pretext to prevent the aid getting through.

Communists in Britain discuss fight against imperialism's assault on working people

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—The fight against the British rulers' war on working people at home and abroad, and the task of building the communist movement within that fight, was the theme of a March 30–31 socialist conference here attended by 40 people.

"All British troops should be immediately withdrawn from Afghanistan," said Tony Hunt, a leader of the Communist League, which together with the Young Socialists sponsored the gathering. Hunt, one of a panel of speakers, said the decision of the Labour government of Anthony Blair to send 1,700 combat troops to join the continuing war effort led by U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan involves "the largest deployment of British combat troops since the Gulf War."

"Along with Washington, the Blair government is threatening Iraq with military action," Hunt said. Geoffrey Hoon, minister of defense, recently stated that the government would be prepared to use nuclear weapons in a conflict with Iraq. London directly associated itself with U.S. president George Bush's threats against the people of Iran, Iraq, and north Korea.

"Such moves have a long pedigree in the United Kingdom," Hunt said. Today they are part of the British imperialist rulers' desperate attempt to make up for London's decline as a world power by wielding their armed forces and grabbing hold of Washington's coattails. "Twenty years ago the government of Margaret Thatcher, with bipartisan support, launched the Malvinas-Falklands war," an act of aggression across the Atlantic that was only possible because of Washington's massive logistical support, Hunt said. He noted London's bloody record over the decades of wars of conquest and colonial subjugation from the Indian subcontinent, to the Mideast, to Korea.

Royal's death and war moves

The death of the mother of the queen of England, said Hunt, would be used by the capitalist class as an occasion to try to "unite the nation" behind their war moves. "They will talk up World War II and other historical events, and try to persuade us that she was 'one of us,'" he said. "In fact, she was one of 'them'—a member of the ruling class. Communist workers have a special responsibility and opportunity to not only set the historical record straight but also to explain the connection of this history to the present war moves of the Labour government."

The conference was the first held by the Communist League and YS since last August, when they moved to become more integrated in the emerging vanguard of workers and working farmers by organizing to get jobs in the meatpacking and garment industries and by expanding their geographic spread through the establishment of a new organizing committee of the League in Dundee, Scotland. The CL and YS have also worked to establish a base in a workers district close to the Pathfinder Bookshop by setting up regular tables of revolutionary literature and building Militant Labour Forums.

Participants in the conference came from London, Manchester, and Dundee in the United Kingdom; and from Paris, Brussels, and New York. For seven participants the socialist conference was their first such event. They took advantage of the opportunity for many hours of informal discussion to learn more about the program and activities of the two communist organizations. Over the weekend socialists employed in the meat industry organized their first national meeting to discuss their work.

"The government's foreign policy is an extension of its domestic policy" said Julie Crawford, another panelist. Crawford is the Communist League candidate in the East Walworth Ward in the London borough of Southwark for the May 2 elections. Like Hunt, Crawford is a meat processing worker. "My campaign is part of the resistance to

the offensive being waged against workers and working farmers. It gives a voice to struggles, such as those by rail and postal workers currently engaged in industrial action."

Crawford recently joined postal workers in a demonstration against moves by the bosses to cut up to 40,000 jobs, an assault that goes hand in hand with the government's announcement of plans to sell off the industry to capitalist investors. The candidate recently traveled to Derry, Northern Ireland, to participate in the annual dem-



Militant/Jim Spaul
Communist League candidate Julie Crawford (right) said at the meeting that one of the attacks on workers' rights by the British rulers has involved moves by the cops to shut down communist literature tables.

onstration to commemorate the Bloody Sunday massacre of 14 Irish civil rights marchers by the British army. This year's march, which marked the 30th anniversary of the massacre, attracted thousands of protesters.

"For years the British rulers used the war in Ireland as a pretext to curtail workers' rights in both Ireland and Britain," Crawford said. "Now they are using the so-called war on terrorism, along with a major campaign against 'crime,' to make further inroads into workers' rights."

Defending right to distribute literature

One attack, said Crawford, has involved moves by the cops to shut down literature tables set up by Communist League and Young Socialists members in a shopping center near the Pathfinder Bookshop and the election campaign offices. "We are campaigning for the right of the Communist League and YS to get out revolutionary literature and of working people in Southwark to get access to the books and pamphlets they want," she said. "Such literature will be a feature of my campaign."

Conference participants watched a two-minute clip of a TV program called "Crimefighters" in which the cop who shut down the stall on two consecutive Saturdays said that he was taking action against "the Militant mob" who have "some very, very anti-British posters."

"The posters he was referring to called for equal rights for immigrants, British troops out of Ireland, and defense of Cuba's socialist revolution," Crawford said. "Along with the books, they help us explain that what is needed here is a socialist revolution to establish a government of workers and farmers that can join the worldwide fight for socialism."

Land question in Scotland

Anne Harte, the organizer of the Dundee organizing committee, described how the move to Scotland has put the League in a stronger position to connect with resistance by working farmers. Throughout the United Kingdom working farmers face the deepest crisis since the 1930s, she said. The income of dairy and cattle farmers fell 75 percent during the 1990s and pig farmers are operating at a loss. "In Scotland, the situation is sharper, with the net income of dairy farm-

ers collapsing by 95 percent," Harte said.

Protests against these conditions by farmers in Scotland, and the pressure building on the government to address the issue of land reform, have put these questions at the center of politics in the country. "All such issues and struggles of working people in Scotland inevitably intertwine with the growing sentiment for Scottish independence," Harte said. "The national question adds a broader social dynamic to such struggles."

In the discussion period a number of par-

ticipants raised questions about the class struggle in Scotland. A participant from Belgium asked about the treatment received by workers who are Scottish when they move to England. Another participant asked about the structure of land ownership in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

Harte described the vanguard role of Scottish workers in the labor movement in Britain and said it is a result of the relatively abrupt and brutal development of capitalism, which provoked a sharp political response from the toilers. "The establishment of the Dundee organizing committee is helping the communist movement as a whole get a better understanding of politics in Britain and to integrate us into the vanguard emerging out of today's battles," she noted.

Coming out of the conference three participants volunteered to participate in a weeklong sales and reporting team that will reach out to meatpacking workers and farmers in Scotland. The team will also visit North Wales, where members of the Transport and General Workers' Union at Friction Dynamics have maintained a 24-hour picket line in defense of their union for nearly one year. They also plan to visit workers in the Yorkshire coalfield where a few months ago miners at Rossington colliery concluded a strike—the first official all-out strike action since the end of the 1984–85 national miners' strike.

Cuban Revolution

The other speakers on the panel were Martín Koppel, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, and Yonatan Mosquera, a leader of the Young Socialists in London. Both participated in the recent international book fair in Havana, Cuba.

Following the fair, Koppel took part in a number of meetings to present the recently published Pathfinder title by Victor Dreke, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*. While on tour, Koppel said, he had the opportunity to learn more about how working people in Cuba made their revolution in 1959 and defended their country against imperialist attack, and how today they are being led to bring their weight to bear as the revolution confronts the challenges of the 21st century. He spoke on the lessons of all this for build-

ing a revolutionary leadership in the United States and around the world.

Many conference participants took the opportunity of breaks in the formal discussion to view the attractive display on the Havana International Book Fair and post-book fair tour. They responded generously to an appeal for the Havana Book Fair Fund established by the London Pathfinder Bookshop by contributing £1,000, helping to meet the Pathfinder supporters' goal of £1,500 (£1 = US\$1.44).

Mosquera reported on a series of discussions he had with a book fair participant who daily visited the Pathfinder stand. "He told me the Cubans have shown they have the ability to withstand imperialist aggression for over 40 years. What they need is for us to make a revolution here," he said. "That's what the Young Socialists is about." The YS leader encouraged others to join the communist youth organization.

Other young socialists were eager buyers of Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Two bought a number of titles on Palestine after discussion at the opening panel presentations on the deepening struggle of the Palestinian people. Two first-time participants picked up copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, the topic of a Sunday morning conference class.

Altogether Pathfinder titles worth some £400 were sold over the weekend, bringing the sales of the Pathfinder Bookshop in London to £1,267 for March and £2,716 for the year. During the weekend socialist workers set up literature tables in the workers district and at a demonstration against the Labour government's war moves.

Washington presses to send more troops to the Philippines

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The U.S. imperialists are pressing to increase the number of troops they have stationed in the Philippines, and to indefinitely extend their six-month stay.

The 660 soldiers began arriving earlier this year under a program to train Philippine troops in the pursuit of guerrillas in the Abu Sayyaf organization. The deployment, heralded as a "second front" in the "war on terror," placed U.S. military personnel on Philippine soil for the first time since massive U.S. air and naval bases were closed in the early 1990s after facing years of protests. Helicopters are ferrying in tons of supplies and equipment, as the troops reinforce their military outpost of Camp Uno on Basilan Island.

U.S. and Philippine government officials announced in late March that they expect the U.S. deployment to last beyond the six months announced in February when the operation began. "We're looking at prolonged training," said a Bush administration spokesperson.

Adm. Dennis Blair, commander of U.S. military forces in the Pacific, is pressing for 300 more troops to be sent to the island. Blair claims that the soldiers are needed to construct helicopter landing zones for Philippine troops, along with other projects.

The proposal "is meeting some resistance from Manila," reported the April 11 *Wall Street Journal*. According to the big-business paper, Philippines president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo "is concerned that adding more troops...might spark additional protests from Filipino Muslims who make up about 8 percent of the country's 80 million people. Earlier this week Philippine police fired into the air to disperse demonstrators protesting the U.S. military intervention."

"The large number of U.S. troops," added the *Journal*, "would likely give added fuel to Muslim critics in the Philippines and Indonesia who have maintained that the U.S. wants to use Mindanao as a base for military operations across the region."

Book tour visits six cities in ce

'From the Escambray to the Congo' is for the new generations of revolu

Continued from front page
the book, and Iraida Aguirrechu, who organized editorial collaboration on the book in Cuba. Leaders of the party, government, and Combatants Association joined the speakers on the platform at every event.

The meeting in Sagua had particular significance because it is Dreke's home town and he is a well-known, much respected figure there. As a 15-year-old rebel, he became involved in political activity in Sagua when he and other youth took to the streets to oppose the March 1952 U.S.-backed coup of Fulgencio Batista.

One of those who joined Dreke on the tour through Villa Clara was Roberto Sacerio, a lifelong comrade-in-arms who like Dreke began his political activity in March 1952 in the streets of Sagua, fighting the Batista dictatorship.

There are 30,000 members of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution in Villa Clara, Sacerio reported. It is the highest number of any province because of the large participation of working people both in the battle of Santa Clara in the final days of 1958—which under the leadership of Rebel Army commander Che Guevara dealt a mortal blow to the Batista dictatorship—and in the fight against the counterrevolutionary bands between 1960 and 1965. The Association's membership is made up of several generations of Cubans who have taken part in revolutionary battles in Cuba and internationalist missions abroad.

Accompanying Dreke at the speakers platform under a banner that declared "To read is to grow"—the theme of this year's expanded Cuba-wide book fair—were Waters and Aguirrechu as well as Angel Soris, first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party in Sagua; Ernesto Rodríguez, president of the local Combatants Association; and Israel Perera, president of the municipal assembly, People's Power.

The atmosphere in the meeting hall was electric as Dreke spoke about the importance of publishing a book that tells the story of the ordinary men and women who made the Cuban Revolution and referred to some of the high points and leading participants in Sagua's rich revolutionary history.

Addressing his fellow combatants who had turned out in force, Dreke said, "There are those here who can write about the history of revolutionary struggle in Sagua." Some, like himself, find it difficult to write, he noted, especially about themselves. But they had an obligation to the new genera-

Next week the *Militant* will feature the remarks made by Víctor Dreke at the meeting in Trinidad. New subscribers this week can receive upon request the next issue in order to read the second part of this series.

tions taking on leadership responsibilities in Cuba today to record the lessons they had learned.

When the program ended, dozens lined up to buy the book from the international team of Young Socialists and communist workers from the United States, Britain, and Sweden who were part of the group accompanying Dreke on the tour. Most then joined a long line to get their books autographed by the author, chatting with *Militant* reporters as they patiently waited. Among them were Angel Delgado, who had led rail workers in revolutionary activities against the Batista dictatorship, and Wilfredo Casanova

some of the experiences and lessons of the fight to crush the counterrevolutionary bands, commonly known in Cuba as the *Lucha Contra Bandidos*, or Struggle against the Bandits. (Dreke's talk will be published in next week's issue of the *Militant*.)

As the Cuban Revolution deepened in the early years, the former capitalists and landlords organized counterrevolutionary gangs—armed, supplied, and directed by Washington—as part of their drive to overthrow the revolution. Centered in the Escambray mountains, over a period of some six years nearly 4,000 bandits, organized in 299 bands, murdered literacy vol-

revolutionary war, in the Lucha Contra Bandidos, and had joined with Guevara and Dreke in the 1965 internationalist mission to the Congo, as well as serving later in the Republic of Guinea and Angola.

Dreke, responding with enthusiasm to the presence of many young people in the audience, described how he had become involved in the revolutionary movement, initially as a teenager rebelling against injustice, then as a combatant in the revolutionary war.

"When we began the guerrilla struggle, we had never been guerrillas before," he pointed out. "No one is born with that. It's learned. How is it learned? Not in a school



Militant photos by Daniel Ahl
Top left: 200 packed meeting hall in Sagua la Grande, Cuba, to hear Víctor Dreke present *From the Escambray to the Congo*. Top right: after the meeting, participants lined up to buy the book. Bottom: junior high school students attend book launch in city of Trinidad.

Alfonso, who as a 17-year-old high school student had joined the April 9, 1958, revolutionary strike called by the July 26 Movement, patrolling the streets in a jeep.

"Here we are never going back to the exploitation of the past," Ciro Morales, president of a neighborhood branch of the Combatants Association, told the *Militant*. "And, please, put that in your newspaper."

Struggle against the Bandits

The book presentations were of a similar character everywhere. At the meeting in Trinidad, for example, Dreke focused on

unteers, burned villages and sugarcane fields, and terrorized the population. The revolutionary leadership organized tens of thousands of workers and farmers into volunteer militias, which by 1965 had wiped out the last groups of bandits.

The Trinidad presentation of *From the Escambray to the Congo* was held February 21 in the auditorium of the National Museum of the Lucha Contra Bandidos. The well-organized displays there depict that decisive chapter of Cuba's history with an abundance of rare photos, maps, charts, and explanatory material. In the morning, museum workers enthusiastically volunteered to help prepare an attractive display in the hallways and courtyard, using blow-ups of book covers and a sizable spread of Pathfinder books and pamphlets to publicize the event all day.

The audience of 120 at the evening meeting included both combatants and their relatives as well as dozens of junior high school students. A number of TV and radio reporters taking part in a regional conference in the city were also present.

Joining the speakers who were on tour was Félix Pérez Zúñiga, first secretary of the Cuban Communist Party in the city of Trinidad. Also on the platform were Manuel Albolay, president of the local Combatants Association; museum director Héctor Manuel Vieras, who had personally given the visitors a tour of the city; Aurelio Gutiérrez, author of *La defensa de Polo Viejo* (The defense of Polo Viejo), an account of a 1963 battle against a counterrevolutionary assault in the Escambray, and Golbán Marín Valdivia, known by his nom de guerre Wasiri. Marín had fought in the

for cadets.... It's learned in struggle."

Like the revolutionary war, the struggle to wipe out the counterrevolutionary bandits was also a source of political lessons, Dreke noted.

The bandits and their imperialist backers thought that by launching guerrilla warfare in the Escambray mountains, they could spark enough opposition that the revolutionary government could be overthrown, just as the Batista dictatorship had been brought down, Dreke said. But they were wrong because of the caliber of the leadership and the fact that workers and farmers were in power. "First," he said, "Fidel Castro was not Batista, and second, the Rebel Army was not Batista's army. Thirdly, a counterrevolution can never be successfully carried out against the people."

He explained how working people were able to organize themselves to crush the counterrevolutionary bands. Sometimes, to flush out groups of bandits that remained hidden in the difficult terrain of the Escambray, the militias would carry out what they called a "proletarian combing operation, where the combatants were shoulder to shoulder"—despite the risk of accidentally shooting a fellow combatant when advancing in such close formation.

Key to their success, Dreke added, was the fact that the leadership was always in the front lines together with the ranks. "When those combing operations were carried out, almost all of us who held positions of command accompanied our comrades," he emphasized.

Iraida Aguirrechu, current affairs editor of *Editora Política*, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Commu-

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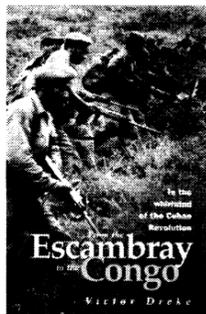
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Central Cuba

Young revolutionary youth, says Víctor Dreke

...nist Party of Cuba, who chaired the meeting, spoke about the collective efforts of many in Cuba to assure the accuracy and quality of the book. She introduced Waters, noting that she is not only the president of Pathfinder Press but a member of the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, "a revolutionary party in the United States that supports our revolution."

"With a leadership worthy of them, men and women whose existence is often not even recognized by the rich and arrogant are capable of taking on the most powerful empire the world has ever known. And winning," Waters noted in her remarks. That is the main lesson of the Cuban Revolution, evident throughout the pages of *From the Escambray to the Congo*, she emphasized. That is why the book is a political weapon for working people in the United States and around the world.

Dreke's story underlines an additional fact, she noted. "Whatever its imperfections, only socialist Cuba provides an example of how the legacy of centuries of African slavery and the racist discrimination that still permeates all aspects of social and economic relations in the United States—and elsewhere in the Americas—can be eliminated."

Waters pointed out that "in the economic, social, and political crisis exploding in Argentina today, we see the future capitalism has in store for us all." She explained some of the changes taking place within the United States itself, including the sharpening offensive against working people by the employers—who have used the September 11 events to accelerate their long-planned assaults. She described concrete examples of the resistance by working people to them, facts about the class struggle in the United States that are generally little known in Cuba.

Waters explained how communists and young socialists in the United States and other countries are using books such as *From the Escambray to the Congo* to reach workers, farmers, and youth on picket lines, in plants, in working-class communities, and on high school and college campuses, and to win them to the communist movement. (The full text of Waters's remarks at the February 9 launching of this title at the Havana International Book Fair appeared in the February 25 *Militant*.)

Winning youth to revolution

Addressing the meeting at the conclusion of Dreke's remarks, Pérez Zúñiga pointed to the political impact that leaders such as Víctor Dreke have had on him and others of the generations born after the victory of the Cuban Revolution. The example of Dreke's life as a revolutionary fighter is especially important today in the political education of young people, he said.

It is part of the "Battle of Ideas," he noted, referring to the campaign by the Cuban leadership to advance the proletarian course of the revolution. This is a political battle to win new generations of youth to help lead the struggle to deepen the revolution and to confront the imperialist ideological drive that promotes capitalism and its individualistic, dog-eat-dog values.

Speaking about Cuba's place in today's world, Pérez Zúñiga referred to some of the points made by Waters and expanded on them.

"Our country today is prepared for what's coming, because the Special Period has taught us a lot," he said, referring to the economic and political crisis Cuba faced as the regimes and ruling parties of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union crumbled. "When many were advising our country's leadership to lower our socialist banners, to submit to policies that had nothing to do with our principles," Cuba refused, declaring that "it would never return to capitalism."

Today the disastrous alternative can be seen in Argentina, Pérez Zúñiga said, and in the imperialist moves to establish the

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) as a trade bloc to allow the U.S. rulers to plunder more freely Latin America's wealth and labor.

He added that "the September 11 events accelerated the world economic crisis. They didn't spark the crisis; it had been developing for several years. But those events handed the imperialist enemy a pretext on a silver platter to launch their war."

After the meeting, many in the audience rushed to the tables in the museum hallway to purchase *From the Escambray to the Congo* and other Pathfinder literature. Many of the high school youth, lacking money for the book, grabbed copies of the Spanish-language socialist magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*, which reprinted a chapter of Dreke's account, and eagerly asked him to autograph them.

'Need to tell full history'

As he spoke to audiences throughout the tour, Dreke elaborated on several themes. One thread that ran throughout his talks was the need to present historical events accurately, without trying to simplify or evade the contradictions and complexities.

"Other countries, including those that previously aided us, have cut off the roots of their real history," he said at a community meeting held in a working-class neighborhood of Placetás. "But we have to tell



Militant/Brian Taylor

Víctor Dreke speaks in Manicaragua. Other speakers, from left to right: Iraida Aguirrechu, who organized editorial collaboration on book in Cuba, Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters, and José Alberto Hurtado, Cuban Communist Party first secretary in city.

Movement of the Third Regional Workers Federation. After the July 26 Movement was formed in 1955, he joined an underground cell in Sagua.

Within the workers youth movement in

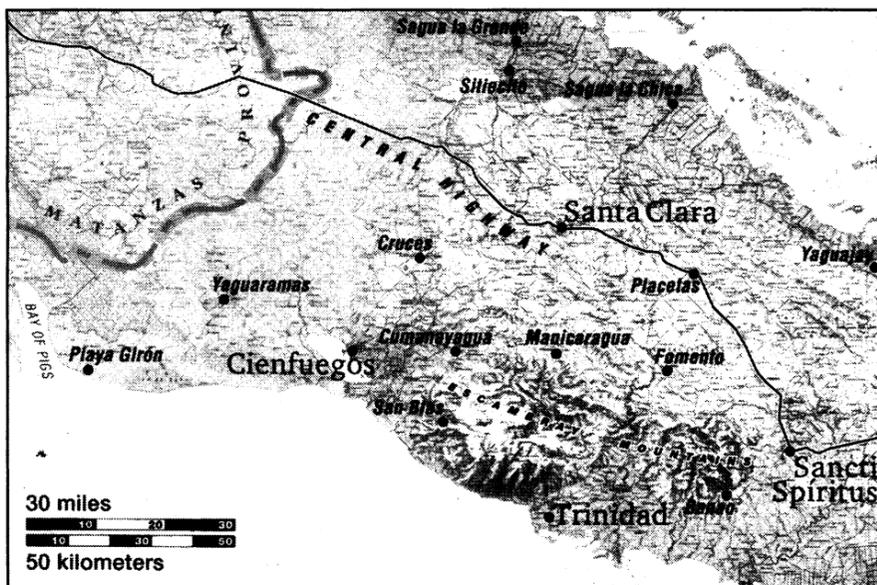
struggle. I was among those who believed Batista had to be overthrown."

Forced to leave Sagua after being targeted by the dictatorship's repressive forces, he joined the guerrilla front of the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate in the Escambray mountains in early 1958.

Speaking in Sagua, Dreke described how the revolutionary leadership helped forge unity among all revolutionary forces—a process that began during the fight to overthrow the Batista dictatorship and continued after the January 1959 victory. In Sagua, he reminded his audience, "in the early days we had difficulties because there were divisions among the revolutionaries." These came to a head when complaints erupted that certain officers at the local Rebel Army garrison were being abusive and no action was being taken. Rebel Army commander Camilo Cienfuegos came to Sagua, where he gave a speech taking to task the local leadership for their factionalism and decisively changing the command of the garrison.

Dreke also explained how workers and farmers had organized to crush the U.S.-backed bandits in the Escambray. He noted that the counterrevolutionaries did not all come from the big landlords and supporters of the former Batista regime. Some came out of the groups that had been part of a struggle against the dictatorship. This included the armed group that claimed the name Second National Front of the Escambray, led by power-seeking adventurers who had been expelled from the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate for abusive

Continued on page 10



Book presentations were held in Sagua la Grande, Placetás, Santa Clara, Sancti Spiritus, Trinidad, and Manicaragua, where important events described in book took place. The cities are in what are now the central provinces of Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus.

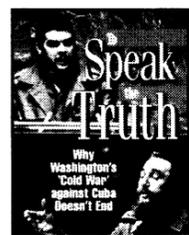
the full history, not just part of it."

In a number of meetings Dreke described what youth like himself rebelled against as they became involved in political activity. Some older people, including his father, he noted, advised him not to get involved in politics because to challenge the status quo was not only dangerous but futile. That was the attitude of many Blacks, especially among Cubans who were Black, he noted at the meeting in Manicaragua, "while the big majority were not supporters of the dictatorship, a few even defended Batista arguing that he was Black" and was discriminated against by the white ruling-class families who wouldn't let him into their private social clubs. Under his regime, therefore, Black people would be better off, some argued. When they were picked up and harassed by cops who were dark-skinned, Dreke noted, "They would taunt us, 'Who ever heard of Black revolutionaries?'"

Dreke pointed out that while the revolutionary war was launched by the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army, there were several organizations and currents in the anti-Batista movement, including the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, the Popular Socialist Party, and others. As a high school student, Dreke joined the Youth

that city, "there were two tendencies," he said at the meeting in Santa Clara. "One favored the electoral road. The other, in which Roberto Sacerio was among the leaders, was more radical—it was for armed

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Continued from Page 9

conduct against the local population.

In several cities Dreke pointed to the example set by revolutionary fighters widely known in Cuba for their courage and integrity—such as Tony Santiago in Placetas and Alberto Delgado in the Trinidad area, both of whom worked for Cuba's counterintelligence service in the early 1960s and died in the line of duty. "Tony Santiago is a hero of the revolution," he said at a meeting held in the main cultural center in Placetas. "He was killed while carrying out a mission infiltrating counterrevolutionary bands."

New generation of revolutionary youth

One of Dreke's main themes was the role of the new generation in leading the Cuban Revolution forward. "We combatants consolidated the victory of the revolution," he said in Manicaragua. "Today we need to consolidate socialism." He reminded those who sometimes "think the youth today are 'too young to be leaders' of how young the leaders of the struggle against Batista and the counterrevolutionary bands had been. "We as combatants must support the youth—to help them be better than us."

He added, "I was very happy in Trinidad yesterday to see how many youth were at the meeting, and how many of them, when they couldn't afford to buy the book, bought the magazine [*Perspectiva Mundial*]. That fact was more important than all the books that other people bought."

While the book presentations were the main reason for the five-day tour in central Cuba, the hosts in each city organized numerous other activities in response to the interest expressed by the international team of Pathfinder volunteers and *Militant* correspondents in learning more about Cuba's revolutionary history and about conditions

other imperialist countries.

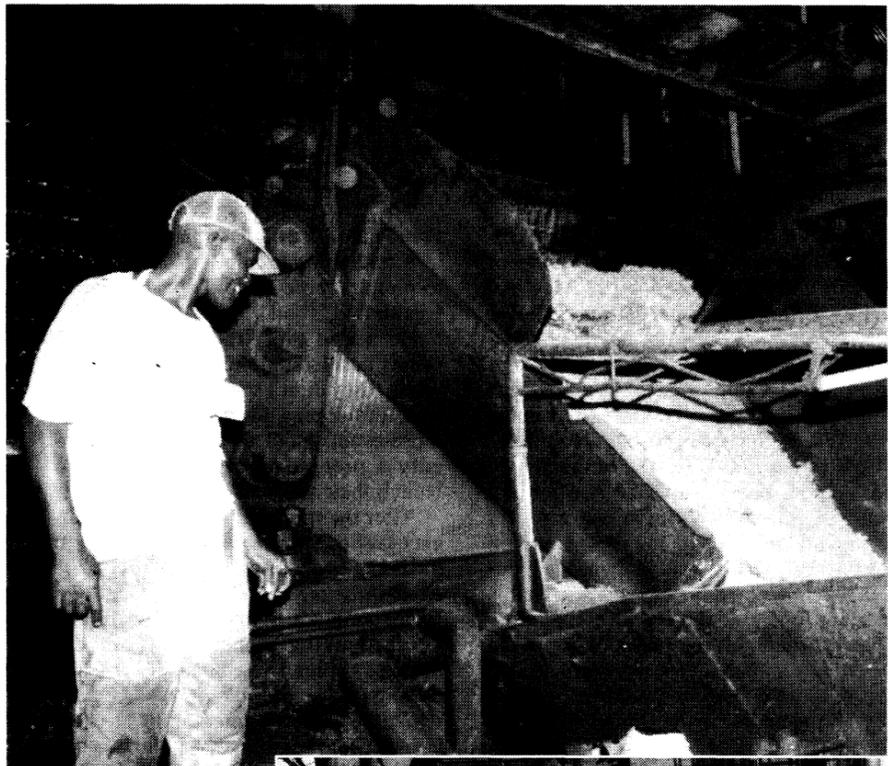
One visit, near Sagua la Grande, was to the Héctor Rodríguez sugar mill, where, with the sugar harvest in full swing, the 600 workers were working three shifts around the clock as they strove to reach their production goals.

Workers proudly pointed out that in Villa Clara province the directors of two sugar production enterprises are women. They also noted that three of the five presidents of the municipal People's Power assemblies in the major cities in the province are women, underscoring the steady progress Cuba has made since the worst years of the economic crisis of the 1990s, when many women were so overwhelmed with the material difficulties of everyday life and meeting the needs of their families that they pulled back from broader leadership responsibilities for a while.

Expansion of education programs

Among the places the international team was able to visit in Santa Clara were not only the monument and museum dedicated to revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, the big "Landing of the *Granma*" textile plant (see article in the March 25 *Militant*), and the school for revolutionary social workers, but also one of the new "popular libraries." These small but well equipped neighborhood libraries—part of a pilot project in 12 cities that will soon be extended nationwide—are but one of the programs that are part of the Battle of Ideas campaign to expand working-class access to culture in the broadest sense of the term, including the classics of Cuban and world literature.

After the public meeting in nearby Placetas, party first secretary René Peña Carrazana and People's Power president Marisol García Cabrera, both former teachers, responded to the visitors' questions



Militant/Daniel Ahl

Above, worker at Héctor Rodríguez sugar mill, near Sagua la Grande, during harvest-time production. Right: teachers at Santa Clara school for revolutionary social workers.



museum, with a group of students and teachers from a "school for rounded education," who explained enthusiastically how this was part of a program launched last October for getting

high school dropouts—including many who are teenage single mothers or young people who have served time for various infractions—back to school and work by paying them to study. The other was a community meeting of about 50 local residents, many of them retirees, who engaged in a lively exchange with Dreke and the international guests well into the night.

From a public library in Sancti Spiritus, to a nature reserve and physical therapy center in Topes de Collantes—in the heights of the Escambray mountains—to a meeting with famous Cuban outfielder Victor Mesa at the Santa Clara baseball stadium, it was an intensely packed educational tour.

In almost every city there were valuable visits to museums depicting the revolutionary history of that area. At the Museum of the Revolution in his hometown of Sagua, Dreke took advantage of the occasion to contribute one of his uniforms from the

early days of the struggle, as well as the 9 mm pistol he had used during the 1965 Congo mission. The pistol was given to him by Fidel Castro as the contingent of revolutionary combatants was preparing to depart for Africa.

Throughout the five-day tour of central Cuba, hundreds of people purchased copies of *From the Escambray to the Congo*, as well as dozens of copies of other Pathfinder titles, and of *Perspectiva Mundial*, all of which were on sale in Cuban pesos. In addition, several libraries, museums, and other institutions received book donations. Altogether, from the opening of the Havana International Book Fair through the eight other presentations that took place in the city of Havana, Villa Clara, and Sancti Spiritus provinces, some 1,010 copies of *From the Escambray to the Congo* were sold and distributed in Cuba as part of this revolutionary endeavor.



Militant/Brian Taylor

Students and teachers in Placetas, Cuba, explain to international guests how new "school for rounded education" has helped get youth who left high school, including many who are teenage single mothers, back to school and study.

today. Equally important, the activities were an opportunity for many Cubans to meet and talk, often for the first time, with communists who are on the front lines of the class struggle in the United States and

about the transformation of the educational system that is part of the Battle of Ideas by organizing two additional gatherings in a matter of hours.

One was a meeting, held at the history

Fund aids distribution of Pathfinder books in Cuba

BY GREG McCARTAN

Generous contributions by hundreds of working people are helping the communist movement in the United States make available to workers and youth in Cuba hundreds of books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press.

From the first of this year when the *Militant* began making appeals for the Books for Cuba Fund, supporters of the revolutionary publishing house have contributed \$3,802. At meetings over the past two months in New York, Atlanta, and Chicago, thousands more have been pledged to the fund. At the Midwest Socialist Conference held in Chicago April 6-7, nearly \$2,500 was pledged or contributed by the 146 participants.

The *Militant* is encouraging everyone who made a pledge to send in the funds as soon as possible, or to send in a contribution if you haven't already had a chance to do so.

The *Militant* sponsors the Books for Cuba Fund, which makes it possible for books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press to be sent to organizations and institutions in revolutionary Cuba, and to be sold at affordable prices at book fairs

and other book-related events.

The meetings described in the article above were part of a month-long series of events in Cuba that included the Havana International Book Fair. On the final day of the fair Pathfinder made every title in its booth available to fairgoers in Cuban pesos. The table, reported Pathfinder supporters, was virtually picked clean by noon.

Over the course of 10 days more than 225 different Pathfinder titles were sold at the fair, including nearly every one in French to Haitian students and other French-speaking visitors to the fair.

Dozens of copies of *From the Escambray to the Congo*; *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*; Thomas Sankara's *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*; and *Playa Giron/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* were donated to various organizations in Cuba for use in libraries and elsewhere across the island.

Please send in your pledge or contribution, earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund," to the *Militant* at 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

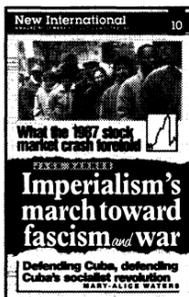
CUBA and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes

There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba — Fidel Castro, March 1961

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. In English, Spanish, and French. \$13.00

In *New International* no. 10

- **Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War** by Jack Barnes
- **What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold**
- **Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution** by Mary-Alice Waters
- **The Curve of Capitalist Development** by Leon Trotsky \$14.00



FROM *Pathfinder*

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Please include \$3 for shipping and handling.

Workers in Venezuela foil U.S.-backed coup

Continued from front page

stration. "We want to get back the president of the republic."

Desiree Santos, a Chávez supporter and member of the National Assembly, said she and other officials who had been forced into hiding maintained contact with each other and reached out to supporters, trying to organize protests. As the battle against the coup gained momentum, "we decided, with the people, to then take Miraflores," the presidential palace, she added.

Despite detailed news coverage and photographs of reactionary rallies leading up to the coup, few newspapers reported on the mobilizations that swept the U.S.-backed military regime away. Anywhere from tens of thousands to 200,000 people marched on the presidential palace, according to various sources, as the military divided and officials of the deposed government contradicted the military's assertion that Chávez had resigned.

At a press conference April 12 in Havana, Cuba's foreign minister explained that Venezuela's attorney general had told the press that "no document of president Chávez's resignation has been shown to the public." Similar statements were made by Chávez's wife, who told CNN that he stated that he would resign only before the National Assembly as required by the country's constitution. She called for international solidarity to defend the Chavez government.

That same day Chavez sent a faxed message from the Turiamo naval base where he was held, declaring, "I, Hugo Chávez Frias have not relinquished the power legitimately given to me by the people."

According to news reports, a faction of 10 generals led the April 11 ouster of Chávez and the next day installed an "interim administration" headed by Pedro Carmona, a wealthy oil man and head of the bosses' federation Fedecámaras. On April 12 Carmona "announced his programme to an audience of business leaders who seemed to have come directly from the country club," the *Financial Times* reported April 15. He stated that elections for a new president would be held next year.

Excluded from the meeting were officials of the Venezuelan Workers Federation (CTV) who had played a major role in giving protests and "strikes" organized by Fedecámaras the cover of a "popular" opposition to the government.

The new regime revoked 49 laws that were passed by the government over the last year, many of which included limited social measures that benefited Venezuelan toilers. The coup leaders threw out the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, fired the supreme court, and dismissed all state governors and mayors.

The country was renamed the Republic of Venezuela, deleting the "Bolivarian" designation established under Chávez in reference to the 19th Century revolutionary hero of Latin America.

Reflecting the class divisions in the country and racism of the capitalist rulers, one Venezuelan general told the *Wall Street Journal* that among the new cabinet members, aides, and others gathered to celebrate the swearing-in ceremony, "There were only white people."

Repressive measures

The new administration arrested some Chávez government officials and forced others into hiding as police and security forces raided their homes. "I had to hide, my family had to hide," said Chávez's vice president, Diosdado Cabello. "I just kept moving with different people. I slept in the homes of friends, people who supported

what we were doing."

Chávez's interior minister, Ramón Chacín, was hauled off to jail and nearly lynched by anti-Chávez mobs. Security forces loyal to Carmona searched homes of members of the Bolivarian Circles, neighborhood groups that were formed by the Chávez government. They were accused by the interim regime of shooting down antigovernment protesters. The coup leaders' repression, including the raids, were broadcast live by television stations sympathetic to the new regime.

With actions such as these the regime signed its own death warrant. The military divided, support from union officials waned, and government officials deserted the "democratic" charade. Some of the generals who participated in the coup began criticizing the new regime.

Gen. Efraim Vasquez, head of the army, said the military "demands respect for the constitution" and would defend Carmona only if he agreed to bring back the National Assembly. The commander of the air base in Maracay announced his decision to side with Chávez supporters. Many of Venezuela's F-16 fighter jets are based there.

In the end, the 3,000 members of the National Honor Guard that protects the presidential palace went into action and forced Carmona to scamper across town to army headquarters at Fort Tiuna.

"The presidential guard remained loyal to Chávez because they saw Carmona and the oligarchs come in here and begin pouring out whisky," said Nicolás Maduro, a pro-Chávez legislator. "The guards hated that."

The mobilization marked the first time that an elected head of state in Latin America had been overthrown by a right-wing military coup and then returned to power by a popular uprising. Referring to opinion polls regularly announced in the capitalist media that showed sharply declining support for Chávez in Venezuela, the *Financial Times* dryly noted after he was restored to power: "Popular support for the president has proved to be of a kind that limits the value of conventional opinion poll analysis."

Campaign of lies and distortions

From the moment the coup plotters arrested the Venezuelan president the capitalist press has carried out a campaign of lies and distortion. For example, one headline in the April 12 *New York Times* announcing

U.S. rulers' role in Venezuela partly exposed

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As soon as the military seized power in Caracas, Washington backed the toppling of Chávez and refused to call the Venezuelan bosses' coup a coup. "The actions encouraged by the Chávez government provoked a crisis," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer. "The results of these events are now that President Chávez has resigned the presidency."

State Department spokesperson Philip Reeker said, "We wish to express our solidarity with the Venezuelan people and look forward to working with all democratic forces in Venezuela to ensure the full exercise of democratic rights."

During the middle-class pot-banging protests, bosses "strikes," and calls by military officials for Chávez to step down over the past months, the U.S. government tried to keep hidden its role in helping to prepare the coup. But in the aftermath of the events, the lid has been lifted a little on how the destabilization campaign to overthrow Chávez was long planned and born in the USA.

"Senior members of the Bush administration met several times in recent months with leaders of a coalition that ousted the Venezuelan president," the *New York Times* reported April 15, "and agreed with them that he should be removed from office, administration officials said."

In fact, the assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere affairs, Otto Reich, spoke on the phone with Pedro Carmona Estanga, who the *Times* in an April 17 article described as the "incoming president," the day military officials took Chávez into custody at an army base, the White House admitted April 16. Officials say Reich pleaded with Carmona to not dissolve the National Assembly on the grounds that it would be "a stupid thing to do."

The rulers in Venezuela and their imperialist backers in Washington were aided in



"Generals Revolt in Venezuela" carried a subheadline reporting "President Is Said to Flee." Two days later the paper reported on a CNN interview with Carmona who claimed "in the next few hours [Chavez] will leave the country in accordance with his wishes."

The privately owned news media in Venezuela refused to cover the protests defending Chávez, although broad coverage was given to the actions demanding his resignation. The president of Venezuela's telecommunications agency, Jesse Chacon, said the TV stations that failed to cover the protests against the coup would be investigated. He condemned them for trying to depict a calm Venezuela after the coup to help the military regime.

Since returning to power, Chávez has offered a conciliatory stance toward the imperialists and his opponents in Venezuela. All the members of the interim regime have been released from custody, although Carmona was placed under house arrest. The government is also holding up to 80 soldiers and officers.

After the coup was put down, some government officials said that it was the military who shot Chávez supporters during the April 11 antigovernment protests, instead of Chávez backers shooting unarmed workers,

which was how the story was widely portrayed in the media.

Chávez later told reporters April 15 that he didn't "deny it—it would be false to say that there was no gunfire from our side to theirs" and said firing may have occurred from both sides. Troops were also sent to patrol working-class districts and Chávez announced the board of directors he had appointed to run the state oil company, a move that met stiff opposition from the bosses of the company, had resigned.

The conflict is far from over, however. The U.S. State Department has issued a travel warning to U.S. citizens. The U.S. embassy has offered its staff members and dependents airfare to return home, calling the situation "volatile and unpredictable," indicating Washington's intentions to continue pressing for the overthrow of the Venezuelan government.

Condoleezza Rice, national security adviser for the Bush administration, responded to Chávez's return by saying he "needs to respect constitutional processes," and added that "we do hope that Chávez recognizes that the whole world is watching and that he takes advantage of this opportunity to right his own ship, which has been moving, frankly, in the wrong direction for quite a long time."

their efforts by the officials of the Venezuelan Workers Federation (CTV), who had called out the workers on strikes to bolster the bosses' reactionary drive. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Washington "had opened up contact with" CTV chief Carlos Ortega, who visited the United States in February "to meet U.S. lawmakers, State Department officials, and representatives of the AFL-CIO."

Despite their platitudes about democracy and elections, the U.S. rulers had become increasingly annoyed with the Chávez government's refusal to grovel before imperialist dictators. "Legitimacy is something that is conferred not just by a majority of the voters," scoffed Fleischer.

Some of the positions taken by Chávez that infuriated the imperialists in the north include his refusal to allow U.S. warplanes to fly over Venezuelan airspace, supposedly to gathering "intelligence on drug operations," and his denunciations of the U.S. bombing raids on Afghanistan.

Laws on oil production

Venezuela provides the United States with about 15 percent of its oil, the third largest supplier behind Saudi Arabia and Canada. As a way to gain more control over the country's patrimony, the Chávez government lowered oil production in order to raise prices and also increased royalty rates on oil production from the foreign-owned oil companies. Laws passed by the government mandated the PDVSA to hold a majority interest in all joint ventures with foreign investors.

The Chávez government has also maintained friendly relations with Havana and has defended Cuba at international gatherings, another source of friction with the U.S. empire. Venezuela has been supplying Cuba with 53,000 barrels of oil a day at reduced prices in exchange for the services of Cu-

ban doctors, paramedics, teachers, workers, and other technicians who volunteered to participate in internationalist missions.

When Chávez was jailed, Carmona, a wealthy part owner of an oil company, ordered oil deliveries to Cuba halted.

The Cuban government, for its part, condemned the coup. Cuban foreign minister Felipe Roque noted at a press conference April 12 that Venezuela's attorney general explained that Chávez "was unjustly arrested, that he had not signed any resignation," and that even if the president and vice president of the country had resigned, "the responsibility for taking control of the country, according to the Constitution, lies with the Speaker of the Venezuelan National Assembly."

The Cuban government called the press conference in Havana as part of an international campaign to defend its embassy personnel in Caracas, who were under attack by a right-wing mob, led by counterrevolutionary Cubans who live in Venezuela. The gangs had cut off electricity and water supplies and some privately owned television stations were issuing calls to storm the embassy. Roque explained that Cuban diplomats "have instructions to not allow any illegal entry into our embassy," and that "if any of that violent mob does get into the embassy...our diplomats will not hesitate to defend our embassy, even if it costs them their lives."

Since the defeat of the coup Washington has launched a slander campaign aided by the bourgeois media against the Cuban volunteers in Venezuela. A *New York Times* article reported April 17 that Reich claimed the Bush administration "received reports that 'foreign paramilitary forces'—suspected to be Cubans—were involved in the bloody suppression of anti-Chávez demonstrators, in which at least 14 people were killed." Neither Reich nor the *Times* presented any evidence to support this assertion.

May Day mobilization

Labor rights for all workers and legalization for undocumented immigrants

Wed., May 1, 3:30 p.m.

National speak-out for justice for immigrants in front of Capitol building, Washington, D.C.

National Legalization Movement
Includes Farm Labor Organizing Committee, Service Employees International Union, National Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty for Undocumented Immigrants

Tel: (419) 243-3456, ext. 5

Black lung benefits

Continued from front page

America (UMWA) who suffers black lung. He accompanied the 525-mile walk in a support vehicle.

Coal miners and other activists in the fight for black lung benefits gathered here to welcome Chapman and Tipton. They came from many chapters of the Black Lung Association (BLA) in Alabama, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Many of the leaders of these BLA chapters are retired or disabled members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Representatives of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) were also present.

Peggy Coleman, whose husband died of black lung, has had her federal claim for benefits denied 13 times. She came with a BLA-organized delegation from southern West Virginia. "A man can be hit by a car, and they'll say, 'The car killed him,'" she said. "But try being a widow of a miner and proving your husband died of black lung."

Kathryn South was also present. Her husband Mike South was a longtime president of the national BLA. After a long battle, he died of black lung last summer. The changes to the original black lung law, she said, represent "discrimination against women—they were trying to wipe women totally out of this."

UMWA District 31 in northern West Virginia was represented by a delegation of around 15 people, most of whom are retired UMWA members. Mike Ayers, the International Executive Board member in the district, said that when black lung legislation was first enacted in 1969, more than 60 percent of miners in the district received benefits. Today, he estimated the number whose claims are approved at a mere 4 percent.

LeMarce Moore came from Birmingham, Alabama. "I worked as a miner at Jim Walters No. 3 mine for six years," she said,

"and I now get black lung benefits. What is sad is to see miners who worked for 30 years who can't get their benefits." Moore was sent by the Birmingham BLA chapter, of which she is vice president. She is also vice president of the national association.

Al Danel is another miner who managed to get black lung benefits. Today he is president of the Pennsylvania BLA. He came with his wife Jo and 10 other activists, mostly from the Johnstown area. "We came for the ones who aren't getting their benefits," said Jo Danel. "We know what it meant for us to get them."

Pennsylvania miners have the highest approval rate for black lung claims in the nation, said Al Danel. Yet most still do not succeed. The coal companies use their right to appeal the miner's claim, he said, and "few lawyers will touch these cases."

Danel described the procedure for filing a claim. If a miner believes he or she has black lung, he said, they must first visit a doctor approved by the Department of Labor. If that doctor finds the miner has black lung, the company can appeal, forcing the miner to go to a doctor of the company's choosing. If that doctor claims the miner does not have black lung, the miner can visit two doctors of his or her own choosing. The miner will have to pay \$800-1,000 for the tests each of these doctors will perform.

Coal companies have been known to require a miner to see 10 company doctors, with predictable results. Danel explained that this intimidating procedure discourages many miners from even trying to apply for benefits.

Rose Ceja and Katherine Garcia flew in from Denver, Colorado. They heard about the event at a BLA meeting. Ceja works with miners applying for black lung benefits. The two said there are efforts to open a black lung clinic in Denver.



Militant/Diana Newberry
At April 16 rally in Washington LeMarce Moore (on left) presented Linda Chapman with a check from the Black Lung Association chapter in Alabama.

Lewis Fitch, the National BLA president, drove to Washington from Illinois with two other activists. The widows' walk, he said, "has brought the issue of black lung to life. So many people didn't know the real truth, that most miners get no compensation."

Chapman and Tipton held a news conference attended by 70 people at the Capitol with U.S. Rep. Nicholas Rahall, a Democrat from West Virginia. UMWA president Cecil Roberts joined the press conference, along with several other members of Congress. Rahall said that he is introducing a bill into Congress that would eliminate the clause requiring widows to reapply for benefits. The bill also extends the presumption of existence of black lung to claims filed past 1981.

At the news conference Linda Chapman recalled that near his death her husband told her, "I'm not tired of living; I'm tired of dying." The widows of miners who have died from the disease, she declared, "are tired of being beaten up, beaten down, and beaten back. I refuse to give up."

At the conclusion of the press conference, LeMarce Moore presented Chapman with a check for \$500 from the BLA chapter in Alabama.

Cindy Jaquith is a sewing machine operator in southwestern Pennsylvania and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Aircraft workers strike Bombardier in Quebec

Continued from front page

held a one-day strike April 1 and carried out an overtime ban for between three weeks and two months depending on departments. On April 11, the day the second offer was handed out, workers at all plants walked off the job in protest.

Some workers going into the meeting carried signs saying "Stop contracting out," reflecting concerns over recent job losses. The last contract, a five-year pact, expired at the end of November 2001.

Sylvie Charbin is a garment worker and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Montreal. Joanna Holowchak, a striking member of IAM Local 712, contributed to this article.



MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

In Celebration of Mayday: the Stakes for the Labor Movement to Unite All Workers to Defend Our Rights. Speaker: Rollande Girard, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 26, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Free the Five Cuban Revolutionaries Imprisoned in U.S. Jails! Speaker: Bill Kalman, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120. Fri., May 3, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 3926 Mission St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

U.S.-Backed Coup in Venezuela Overturned by Workers and Peasants. Speaker: Stu Singer, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 19, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Behind the Failed Coup in Venezuela. Speaker: Mark Gilsdorf, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 19, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

Behind the Failed Coup in Venezuela. Speaker: Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 19, 7:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. dinner.

Upper Manhattan

U.S.-Backed Coup in Venezuela Overturned by Workers and Peasants. Fri., April 19, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

TEXAS

Houston

Crisis in Health Care. Speaker: Tom Leonard, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 619 W. 8th St. Tel: (713) 869-6550.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Coal Miners and the Fight for Black Lung Benefits. Speaker: Cecelia Moriarity, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 26, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. Donation: \$5. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

'From the Escambray to the Congo': Report

from the Havana International Book Fair. Build the World Communist Movement.

Speakers: Hassan Ali, Communist League in New Zealand; Linda Harris, Communist League, member, Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union. Sun., April 27, 4:00 p.m. 1st floor, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3437 14th St. NW Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 387-1590. E-mail: dc-swp@starpower.net

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St.,

Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240. Tel: (02) 9718 9698.

E-mail: cl_australia@bigpond.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL.

Tel: 020-7928-7993.

E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 1237 Jean Talon E. Montréal, QC. Postal code: H2R 1W1. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: Librpath@sympatico.ca

Toronto: 2761 Dundas St. West, Postal code: M6P 1Y4. Tel: (416) 767-3705. E-mail: milpathtoronto@sympatico.ca

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FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Skolavordustig 6B. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milph@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885.

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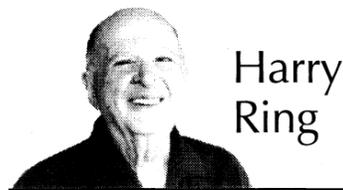
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SWEDEN

Stockholm: Domargränd 16, S-129 47, Hägersten. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

Excuse the length, it's worth it—Steve Madden, who designed the popular shoe that bears his name, and who heads the company



Harry Ring

that markets it, is packing his toothbrush for 41 months in jail. He will also pay an \$80,000 fine. And he also agreed to part with some very modest compensation for the New York securities firm whose buyers lost about \$100 million as a result

of the fraud put over by two company tops in collusion with Madden.

Madden's guilty plea was the fruit of two separate, but similar scams, one in Manhattan, and one in Brooklyn. They worked out two concurrent 41-month jail terms. Plea bargain legalisms barred the good judge from giving Madden an even shorter sentence.

Also, he will pay about \$3 million in civil penalties. During his jail term, the shoe company will pay Madden wages of \$700,000 a year.

Like getting caught?—"I am guilty of stupidity, arrogance, and greed. I deeply regret all the things I have done."—Steve Madden

A few no-no's—Illinois public health officials have warned that the following categories of people should not eat sports fish caught in the state more than once a week: children under 15, pregnant women, women of child-bearing or nursing age. Studies confirmed that mercury in Illinois water is more toxic than previously reported.

Deportations even worse—The Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture scored the Swiss government for its abusive, inhumane treatment of undocumented immigrants being held for deportation.

It seemed natural—Students at Washington University in Kansas

City, Missouri, called on the college to weigh the credentials of James Talent who is using his \$90,000 salary to finance his aspiration to win the Republican nomination for U.S. Congress. He teaches a course titled, "Thinking like a congressman." What with our aged eyeballs, we read it initially as "Taking like a congressman."

Have fun—In Sarasota County, Florida, people are concerned that lead from a gun club's shooting range may be leaching into the water supply. The shooters aim into a mound of sand, but in a recent test, it was found that a well for drinking water behind the range contained lead twice the "normal" level for lead. The club may not get re-

newal of the lease that it has had for more than 30 years.

If workers had been flexible—Last year, the two top dogs at the Charles Schwab brokerage house had their \$8.9 million pay check whittled down by 93 percent. Meanwhile, 6,000 employees had their wages cut 100 percent.

Before kissing your rump goodbye... (or: And put it on your credit card)—If you're among the 52,000 folks who live close to Alabama's two nuke plants, not to worry. On your way stop and belt down a shot of the 28,000 anti-radiation doses stored for an emergency. Planners say the supply is adequate.

Museum opens on 1945 U.S. firebombing of Tokyo

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Some of the facts about the 1945 U.S. firebombings of Tokyo are being forced into the light of day, in spite of decades of cover-up by the U.S. rulers, with the complicity of their counterparts in Japan. This progress has been made largely thanks to the persistent efforts of survivors of the raids, which killed many hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of working people.

Several survivors were guests of honor at the opening of the capital's first museum dedicated to recording this piece of history. The event took place March 9–10 to mark the 57th anniversary of the attack on Tokyo, which launched the bombing offensive. Since neither the U.S. nor Japanese governments have provided the necessary assistance, the museum was constructed using \$800,000 in private donations.

Hiroshi Hoshino was one of those who attended the event. According to the *New York Times*, the 71-year-old man has decided to devote "the rest of his life to preserving the memory of the people killed." He told the reporter, "Of course, everybody knows about the atomic bombings" of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, "but many people are not aware of the napalm attacks at all."

March 10 was the first of numerous petrol-bomb attacks by massed B-29 bombers on more than 60 Japanese cities over the spring and summer of 1945. The assault was aimed at an enemy that was already close to surrender. The loss of several key engagements, including the Battle of Midway in June 1942 and the Battle for Guadalcanal in early 1943, had sealed Japan's fate. The expulsion of Japanese forces from Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands in July 1944 brought U.S. bombers within range of Tokyo.

'Biggest firecracker'

Still in dispute were the terms of Tokyo's capitulation, as the Japanese rulers balked at Allied insistence on unconditional surrender, including the emperor's abdication. Cold-bloodedly targeting civilian populations in large Japanese cities, the U.S. command launched the firebombing raids and then, in August, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Two days before the March 10 assault, U.S. Gen. Curtis LeMay, chief of staff of the Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific, told U.S. air force bomber crews that they would be delivering "the biggest firecracker the Japanese have ever seen."

Planes bombed workers' neighborhoods

On the night of March 9 the U.S. command dispatched 300 bombers from U.S.-controlled airfields on several Pacific islands. Each plane dropped 180 oil-gel sticks on the close-built wooden houses in working-class neighborhoods. The sticks acted as accelerants for the inferno to come. More planes followed, dropping a total of 1,665 tons of napalm-filled bombs.

The planes flew so low that Katsumoto Saotome, now a professor at Chiba National University, could see the flames reflected in their fuselages. "They looked like tropical fish," he told the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in 1995.

The U.S. planes hunted down fleeing civilians to drop bombs on them, and napalmed the rivers to cut off escape routes, said Takae Fujiki, then a high school student of 15. "It was obvious they were trying to kill as many of us as possible," she told the *Review*.



Photo taken some years after repeated firebombing raids of Tokyo by U.S. Air Force shows devastation of one city block of the 51 miles that were laid waste.

Hiroshi Hoshino was 14 at the time of the attack. "My family survived because we ran and ran" reaching "an open lot near the river," he said. "Somehow the fire never reached us there." Bomber crews in the last stages of the attack said they could smell burning flesh.

More than 100,000 residents of Tokyo burned to death. A report filed at the time by the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey concluded that "probably more persons lost their lives by fire at Tokyo in a six-hour period than at any time in the history of man."

Area twice as big as Manhattan

This was only the beginning. As the ferocious raids on Tokyo and other cities continued apace, the *Militant* pieced together some of the facts from media sources. In the June 19, 1945, issue, Joseph Hansen reported that an area "twice as great as New York's Manhattan...has been burned out by fire bombs" in successive raids on Tokyo. "Other Japanese cities are being similarly obliterated and their inhabitants incinerated." "The press account of this slaughter," wrote Hansen, "reads like the routine report of a government agency on the extermination of vermin: 'The population concentration in that area runs, or rather ran, between 75,000 and 110,000 persons per square mile.... Thus, in the 51 miles burned to ashes there lived approximately 4,500,000 of Tokyo's 7,000,000 people. None of them could be living in that area now if the pictures tell the story.'"

It was not only Japanese cities that were targeted for the kind of intensive incendiary bombing that left much of Tokyo in ashes. Later the same month the *Militant* printed an article from a Swiss newspaper reporting the firebombing of the German city of Hamburg by British and U.S. planes. The concentrated bombing of "densely populated residential districts" creates a "blanket of fire, covering the entire area and rushing up to ever greater heights," in what is known as a firestorm, the article reported. "The sea of flames sucks in air from its surroundings."

The February 1945 destruction of Dresden, a city whose population was swelled by German refugees and had no

military significance, is the best known of all such attacks.

Media cover-up

Without the efforts of the survivors and others, the firebombing of Tokyo and other Japanese cities would have remained a largely untold story. "Those who died cannot talk, so I want to tell the facts about what really happened," said Saotome, adding, "I write about all this for future peace."

Japanese historian Shinichi Arai told the

Times that "until the San Francisco Treaty in 1952, Japan was under control of the [U.S.] occupation forces, and when they arrived, they applied media restrictions, saying that one should not report things which reflected negatively on the United States."

The firebombing attacks were brought to an end as the U.S. rulers rushed to unleash their newest weapon. According to one history, War Secretary Henry Stimson became "concerned that targets in Japan might become so bombed out by conventional raids that S-1 [the atom bomb] would have no 'fair background' to show its strength." On August 6 and 9 atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By Japanese estimates at least 220,000 people were killed.

With the use of its nightmarish new weapon, Washington had issued a clear warning to its imperialist rivals and an unmistakable threat to the Soviet government and the world's workers and peasants. Shortly afterwards, the U.S. command accepted Japanese surrender on terms that it had previously refused. U.S. insistence on the emperor's abdication was dropped. Meanwhile, the myth was propagated that the atomic bombing, like the firebombing campaign, was necessary to "save American lives" and bring the war to an end.

Joseph Hansen's conclusion to his June 1945 article serves as a fitting comment on the assault on Japan by its imperialist enemies, above all those in Washington and London. "All the horrors that have blotched the pages of human history," he wrote, "were amateur beginnings in brutishness compared to the planned burning of women, children and old men in Japan for the sake of imperialist profits and plunder."

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 29, 1977

Imperialist intervention to shore up the dictatorial government of Zaire continues to escalate.

On April 12 Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans admitted sending eighty military "advisers" to help Zairian President Mobutu Sese Seko defeat antigovernment forces in the mineral-rich Shaba Province.

On April 14 the West German government said it would fly in \$2.1 million worth of "humanitarian and medical aid" to Mobutu.

As reported in the *Militant* last week, the French government has airlifted 1,500 Moroccan troops into Shaba and announced that French military "instructors" have also been dispatched to Zaire. A second contingent of 1,500 Moroccan troops are on alert, ready to fly into Zaire if needed.

Following these war moves by Paris, Washington rushed in an additional \$13 million in "nonlethal aid" to Mobutu, boosting to \$15 million its total contribution since fighting in Shaba broke out in March.

There is also evidence of involvement by the white supremacist South African regime in coming to Mobutu's rescue. Citing "highly reliable sources" Robin Wright reported in the April 9 *Washington Post* that Zaire has negotiated with top South African officials to obtain emergency aid.



April 28, 1952

Over one million Japanese workers went out on a 24-hour strike on April 18 in protest against anti-"subversive" legislation introduced by the reactionary Yoshida government. Another two million workers who did not stop work held protest meetings against the proposed legislation. It was the biggest and most effective strike in Japan since before World War II.

The strike committee said the strike was at least 90% effective and that nearly 400 ships were immobilized. Coal and metal miners, auto workers, railwaymen and electric power workers participated in the walkout.

Since last fall the Yoshida cabinet has been trying to get the Diet to pass laws which would prohibit militant mass action after the U.S. occupation is formally ended on April 28. Up to now the occupation authorities have used their power to ban general and "political" strikes.

Demonstrations called a week before the April 18 walkout did not go off successfully because the government promised to make some changes in the law. But when the actual changes were disclosed to be meaningless, the response of the workers to the strike call was overwhelming.

Behind the U.S.-backed coup

The pro-imperialist military coup against President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, long planned by big-business forces there with Washington's backing, unraveled as working people poured into downtown Caracas by the tens of thousands to oppose it. They protested this brazen move by big business to overturn an elected president, impose an openly pro-boss regime, and crack down on their rights. The military divided, with some revolting against the coup leaders, who themselves ended up detained for a brief time.

The capitalists were betrayed by their own class arrogance. They thought they could pull off a "clean" coup and make their lies stick. They declared that Chávez had resigned and that the coup was not a coup; that more than a dozen opposition demonstrators had been shot dead by pro-Chávez snipers; that the top military brass decided to take over the government because they were outraged by this bloodshed. All these lies were repeated over and over by the capitalist press. But the wealthy coup plotters had left one actor out of their careful plans—the working class. Sensing that the coup against the Chávez government was fundamentally aimed at them, workers from the vast shantytowns of Caracas showed up to oppose it. The capitalist media turned off the cameras, trying to black out the facts. But with the demonstrations, rifts in the military, and growing criticism by other Latin American governments, the coup crumbled and some of the truth began to come out.

The failure of the coup has brought recriminations in Washington and exposed a little of the role of U.S. imperialism, which has tried to portray itself as an innocent spectator. Newspapers now report that top U.S. government officials had met with coup plotters beforehand, and were giving friendly advice to newly installed "president" Pedro Carmona as the events unfolded—and this, of course, is just the tip of the iceberg of Washington's actual role.

These events are a reminder that behind the imperialists' much-touted democracy is always the mailed fist of a CIA-backed coup if the exploiters feel their profit interests threatened by the struggles of workers and farmers.

The coup shows that as long as the capitalists remain the ruling class—with their control of the armed forces, police, and the rest of the capitalist state—they will never accept reconciliation with the needs of working people and the gains they have won. The mass working-class mobilizations against the coup show the potential—and the necessity—of workers and farmers organizing themselves to

defend their class interests and to make a revolution that takes power out of the hands of the capitalist minority. Above all, a communist working-class leadership is needed that can organize such a successful movement.

Venezuela is an example of the economic and social disaster that capitalism offers the workers and farmers of the world, especially in the semicolonial nations. Despite the country's vast oil wealth, 80 percent of the population lives below the official poverty line, while imperialist investors and domestic capitalists rake in massive profits.

This acute crisis has generated growing social instability and the discrediting of the traditional capitalist parties. The impasse led to the rise of Hugo Chávez as a figure viewed as outside the establishment, speaking in the name of the dispossessed, and promising to take strong executive action to address the crisis. His government has support among many workers and farmers because of his criticisms of the "oligarchy" and measures such as a modest land reform and higher oil exploration taxes to keep a little more of the national wealth in the country, together with taking some distance from Washington's imperialist foreign policy dictates. At the same time, the Chávez government has sought to convince working people to rely on the president's actions, not on their own mobilizations.

Meanwhile, the world capitalist economic crisis has worsened and the political polarization has sharpened. While they have no credible alternative to Chávez, dominant sections of capitalists are hostile to his government, fearful that his stance will raise the expectations of workers and farmers rather than stabilize capitalist rule. Even the most limited social measures have aroused the anger of the bosses in both Caracas and Washington.

The failed coup shows the weakness of the Venezuelan capitalists. But nothing is settled. The same opposing class forces remain in sharp conflict, the capitalist economic crisis keeps grinding away, and the political polarization continues. Washington today refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the Chávez government and, while put on the defensive, has not given up on its goal of overthrowing it.

There is only one force that can successfully stand up to imperialism and to the domestic exploiting classes—workers and farmers. The way forward is shown by the Cuban Revolution. April 19 marks the 41st anniversary of Cuba's crushing victory over a U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. That victory underscores how, by taking power and ending capitalist rule, Cuban workers and farmers have been able to defeat imperialist assaults and defend their sovereignty and social gains.

Washington's extraterritorial threats

Working people and all anti-imperialist fighters should condemn the summons issued by a U.S. Congressional committee demanding Gerry Adams to appear before it to explain Sinn Féin's relations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

Adams, the president of Sinn Féin, is the citizen of another country and an elected member of the British parliament. The U.S. politicians, serving the interests and expressing the attitude of the billionaire U.S. ruling class, went so far as to issue the date on which he was to appear before them — April 24.

The summons by the House International Relations Committee in the course of an investigation into so-called "terrorism," is the height of imperial arrogance and a violation of national sovereignty. The politicians' stance is reminiscent of the Caesars who ruled the Roman empire in its latter stages where the emperor's summons to his subjects superseded all other obligations and prerogatives.

The U.S. rulers' approach is no aberration, of course. It is consistent with their overall course of deepening the domination of U.S. imperialism around the world. Bent on defending their own class interests, the borders and laws of other nations become simply temporary nuisances

as they assert their "right" to extraterritorial fishing operations, arrests, prosecution.

Another example of this same approach is the stepped-up secret arrests of people in other countries by U.S. authorities who kidnap them to Egypt, Jordan, and elsewhere to be subjected to torture and interrogation methods officially not allowed in the United States.

A new outrage in Washington's four-decade war against the Cuban Revolution is the conviction of a citizen of another country in a U.S. court on charges of violating the U.S. Trading with the Enemy Act. The Canadian, employed by a U.S. subsidiary in Canada, sold water purification equipment to Cuba. The convicted man now faces the possibility of spending many years behind bars in a U.S. prison.

There are big stakes for working people in these developments. Washington's moves abroad go hand in hand with its attacks at home on workers' rights and on important legal and constitutional protections. Workers, farmers, young fighters, and all those who stand with the struggle against imperialism, whether conducted in Palestine, Ireland, Afghanistan, or wherever, should oppose the imperial summons and all such violations of national sovereignty.

Boycott anti-Native referendum

Working people should support the boycott of the provincial government of British Columbia's referendum on Native treaties being organized by Native organizations, labor unions, and other organizations.

The referendum is part of a decades-long racist campaign by the capitalist rulers of Canada to deny Native peoples their rights and to deny them full and equal employment, education, housing, and access to health care and other social benefits. This forced marginalization of indigenous peoples and portrayal of them as savages allowed the capitalist class to take control of and plunder the land and resources of the Native peoples.

The referendum, spearheaded by the British Columbia Liberal party, which controls the provincial government, is nothing more than an attempt to defend the second-class status of Native peoples and cover up the systematic oppression and discrimination they have faced since their lands were stolen by British and French colonialism.

The questions in the referendum seek to limit what Natives can negotiate when they make treaties, making the referendum itself a rejection of the right of Native

people to self-determination. The questions are posed as if the recognition of the rights of Native peoples is at the same time an abrogation of the rights of "all British Columbians."

But the widespread support for the boycott is a sign that these kind of divide-and-rule tactics are not finding fertile ground among working people, who face a sustained assault from the Liberal government. Many recognize that a rejection of the referendum would strengthen the capacity of all workers and farmers to fight back against the bosses and their government.

Fighting to defend the right to self-determination of Native people by joining the boycott campaign is a way to aid the fight of the Quebecois for their independence. Both the federal parliament under the Liberals and the courts have sought to dictate what a referendum for Quebec sovereignty must contain. But as with Native peoples, only the Quebecois have the right to decide on their future. It is by fighting along these lines that the unity of the working class will be forged on the road to a workers and farmers government.

U.S. harshens conditions at Guantánamo prison camp

BY RÓGER CALERO

The U.S. government is about to make life worse for the 300 prisoners it holds under already brutal conditions at its illegally occupied naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The men are being moved from Camp X-Ray, made up of open-air wire cages, to "Camp Delta," which consists of rows of 8 by 6 feet steel cells cut from shipping containers, providing them with even less room than they currently have.

A feature article in the Newark *Star Ledger* reports that some men have told the Muslim naval cleric assigned to the prison that they do not want to be moved because they will be cut off from contact with others incarcerated at the base. In the desert conditions at Guantánamo, all but a few of the steel cells will be cut off from the sea breeze, making them a living hell.

The KRT News Service reporter whose story the *Star Ledger* ran said that "some prisoners may come to pine for the chaotic and convivial Camp X-Ray instead of the new Camp Delta, which resembles an industrial park consisting of 408 steel and mesh cells that look like railroad boxcars."

Army Lt. Col. William Cline, the warden of the military prison, said the men will "probably be more restricted in terms of them talking." Navy Lt. Abuhena Saiful-Islam said the "tension may be that they can see each other right now; when they go to Camp Delta, they can't see each other as much." Each cell will have a metal bed welded to the floor, a wash basin, and a toilet.

The article says the construction of the new camp "is meant to make easier the work of the 600 or so soldiers and Marines" who guard the prisoners and who "have bristled under the duty of shackling prisoners hand and foot before shuffling them to latrines."

Even Camp Delta is a "temporary solution to what may emerge as a long-term problem—the indefinite incarceration of young warriors too dangerous to release to the world but unsuitable to face military tribunals." The reason they are unsuitable, the article says, is that "evidence to build cases has been scarce, in part because some prisoners are not cooperating with their interrogators."

So U.S. officials are now planning yet another facility "suitable for holding prisoners for life," the article says.

Meanwhile, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld said April 15 that the U.S. government "has every right" to hold without charges U.S. citizen Yasser Esam Hamdi at a military base in Norfolk, Virginia, after transferring him from the prison at Guantánamo where for weeks he had been telling officials he was born in the United States. Hamdi has neither been charged with a crime nor given access to legal representation since his arrest.

Rumsfeld said the "idea that he's being held indefinitely... of course is just silliness. We've had him a relatively short period of time."

"I don't know any law, international or domestic, that allows you to hold people without charges, without bringing them before some kind of court, without any access to lawyers," said Michael Ratner, the president of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York.

Residents fight sludge dumping in Pennsylvania

Continued from Page 3

and into creeks and ground water.

Members of the Watershed group have been leading the fight by speaking out publicly on the potential health threats represented by the use of sewage sludge on mine lands. Seventy-five people attended the meeting in Girardville, and 60 the next night in Delano. Union and nonunion miners spoke out at the meetings in opposition to the plans.

According to a February 7 *New York Times* article, sewage sludge can contain salmonella, typhoid, dysentery, hepatitis, rotaviruses, cryptosporidium, and tapeworms. Weinrich further elaborated on this list, saying it can also contain PCBs, dioxin, predioxins, heavy metals, E. coli, and 60,000 other chemicals.

As an indication of the potential hazards, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines call for no foot traffic for a year following application, and 38 months before planting any root crops such as potatoes or carrots. Nevertheless, the EPA supports the use of sewage sludge for fertilizer. Exposure to sunlight and drying eventually kills off the bacteria, the agency says.

At both meetings, members of the Watershed Association pointed out the dangers posed while the bacteria and pathogens are still active. There are cases where deaths have been linked to exposure to fresh sludge. In Centre County, 11-year-old Tony Behun died from a staph infection contracted after he was covered in sludge from playing on recently treated mine land. Other deaths have been reported in Reading, Pennsylvania, and Greenfield, New Hampshire.

Lenin on meaning of the Kronstadt rebellion

Printed below is an excerpt from *Kronstadt* by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. The item quoted is from the chapter entitled "Appeal for proletarian solidarity," a speech made by Lenin to the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers on March 27, 1921. The Kronstadt naval base was the site of an uprising of sailors against the Bolshevik-led Soviet government during the first half of that month. The rebels demanded "Soviets without Communists" and opposed many of the stern measures the Bolsheviks were forced to take to safeguard the revolution during the civil war that gripped the country from 1918-20. The uprising was suppressed by the Soviet government. Copyright © 1979 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



Lenin and Trotsky, in Petrograd, at the center of a group of soldiers who had taken part in the suppression of the mutiny at the naval fortress of Kronstadt in March 1921.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY V.I. LENIN

One crucial event, one critical lesson of the past few weeks—the Kronstadt events—was like a flash of lightning which threw more of a glare upon reality than anything else.

There is now no country in Europe without some White Guard elements. Russian émigrés in Europe have been estimated to total about seven hundred thousand. These are fugitive capitalists and the mass of office workers who could not adapt themselves to Soviet rule. We see nothing of this third force; it has emigrated, but it lives and operates in alliance with the capitalists of the world, who are assisting it as they assisted [the tsarist and White Guard generals Alexander] Kolchak, [Nicolai] Yudenich, and [Piotr] Wrangel, with money and in other ways, because they have their international bonds. We all remember these people. You must have noticed the abundance of extracts from the White Guard press in our newspapers over the last few days, explaining the events in Kronstadt.

In the last few days, they have been described by [Vladimir] Burtsev, who puts out a newspaper in Paris, and have been ap-

praised by [Paul] Miliukov—you must have all read this. Why have our newspapers devoted so much attention to it? Was it right to do so? It was, because we must have a clear view of our enemy. Abroad, they are not so conspicuous, but you will find that they have not moved very far away, just a few thousand versts at most; and having moved that far, have taken cover. They are alive and kicking, and lying in wait. That is why we must keep a close watch on them, especially because they are more than just refugees. Indeed, they are the agents of world capital, who work with it hand in glove....

Although we are not waging our last battle but one of the last and decisive battles, the only correct answer to the question "Against whom shall we wage one of the decisive battles today?" is: "Against petty-bourgeois anarchy at home." (Applause.) As for the landowners and capitalists, we beat them in the first campaign, but only in the first one; the second is to be waged on an international scale. Modern capitalism cannot fight against us, even if it were a hundred times stronger, because over there, in the advanced countries, the workers dis-

rupted its war yesterday and will disrupt it even more effectively today, because over there the consequences of the war are beginning to tell more and more.

We have defeated the petty-bourgeois element at home, but it will make itself felt again. And that is taken into account by the landowners and the capitalists, particularly the clever ones, like Miliukov, who has told the monarchists: "Sit still, keep quiet, otherwise you will only strengthen the Soviet power." This has been proved by the general course of the revolutions in which the toilers, with temporary peasant support, set up short-lived dictatorships but had no consolidated power, so that after a brief period everything tended to slip back. This happened because the peasants, the toilers, the small proprietors, can have no policy of their own and must retreat after a period of vacillation. That was the case in the Great French Revolution, and, on a smaller scale, in all revolutions. And, of course, everyone has learned this lesson. Our White Guards crossed the frontier, rode off a distance of three days' journey, and, backed and supported by West European capital, are

lying in wait and watching. Such is the situation. It makes clear the tasks and duties of the proletariat.

Weariness and exhaustion produce a certain mood, and sometimes lead to desperation. As usual, this tends to breed anarchism among the revolutionary elements. That was the case in all capitalist countries, and that is what is taking place in our own country. The petty-bourgeois element is in the grip of a crisis because it has had it hard over the past few years: not as hard as the proletariat had it in 1919, but hard, nevertheless. The peasantry had to save the state by accepting the surplus-grain appropriations without remuneration, but it can no longer stand the strain. That is why there is confusion and vacillation in its midst, and this is being taken into account by the capitalist enemy, who says: "All it needs is a little push, and it will start snowballing." That is the meaning of the Kronstadt events in the light of the alignment of class forces in the whole of Russia and on the international scale. That is the meaning of one of our last and crucial battles, for we have not beaten this petty-bourgeois anarchist element, and the immediate fate of the revolution now depends on whether or not we succeed in doing so. If we do not, we shall slide down as the French revolution did. This is inevitable, and we must not let ourselves be misled by phrases and excuses. We must do all we can to alleviate the position of these masses and safeguard the proletarian leadership. If we do this, the growing movement of the communist revolution in Europe will be further reinforced. What has not yet taken place there today, may well take place tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, but in world history such periods, as between today and tomorrow, mean no less than a few years.

That is my answer to the question as to what we are now fighting for, in one of our last and crucial battles. That is my reading of recent events and the significance of the class struggle in Russia. It is now clear why it has become so acute and why we find it so hard to see that the chief enemy is not Yudenich, Kolchak, or Denikin, but our own conditions.

*A verst is the Russian unit equivalent to about two-thirds of a mile.

LETTERS

New Palestinian film

More than 500 people attended an evening of solidarity with the Palestinian struggle that featured the Greek premier of the film *Frontiers of Dreams and Fears* by award-winning Palestinian director Mai Masri.

The 56 minute documentary film portrays the life of two refugee children in the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut, Lebanon, and the Dheisha refugee camp near Bethlehem in the West Bank. The two girls become pen pals and share their experiences of exile and occupation.

With the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from south Lebanon in 2000 they meet at the barbed wire fence separating the two countries. The film ends with one of the women speaking at a rally in Washington, D.C., where she says of the Israeli occupiers: "They took my land, they took my dream, and they took my childhood. We will continue our struggle until we return to our villages."

The film has won several international awards, including first prize at the 2002 International Women's Film Festival in Italy and best Arab film by the Egyptian Film Critics Association. It is available through Nour Productions, P.O. Box 113/7324, Beirut, Lebanon.
Georges Mehrabian
Natasha Terlexis
Athens, Greece

Foreman or supervisor?

I was surprised to see the *Militant* use the word "foreman" in referring to the challenge of running Pathfinders' small printshop with a "working foreman." This is despite the fact that the "foreman" appears to be a woman, Angel Lariscy. She was introduced as "a member of the Brooklyn branch of the party and the daytime foreman in Pathfinder's printshop," according to an article in the February 11 issue.

Wouldn't it be better to use a gender-neutral word like "supervisor," "lead," or "team leader?" Also, it seems to be taking the worst

part of capitalist production methods along with the best.

Sally Goodman
Chicago, Illinois

Editor's note: We checked with the printshop on Goodman's questions. The printshop uses working foreman to indicate that Angel Lariscy both carries out production work in the shop and has full supervisory powers for running the operation. This is a norm in many small shops and on construction sites. Forewoman, while listed in Webster's, is a rarely used term. Neither "team leader" or "lead" indicate that Lariscy is in charge of running the shop, and supervisors rarely do production work. The lack of generalized use of a gender-neutral term, like the word "chairperson" has become, reflects the relatively small number of women in such positions as a result of discrimination practiced by the employers.

Justice for Palestinians

The suicide bombers are the only form of protest that gets the attention of Israel and the United States. They seem a fitting response to the daily murders of Palestinians by the State of Israel. Such acts will likely be occurring outside of Israel in the near future, sending a clear message that Israelis will not be safe anywhere in the world until their government leaves the West Bank and Gaza, dismantles all the settlements, and restores the rights of Palestinians in Israel.

A majority of Americans recognize and support the goals of the Palestinians, which can be described by one word: "Justice."

Francis Hughes
by E-mail

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.

April BOOKS OF THE MONTH

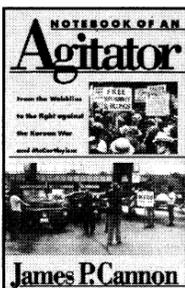
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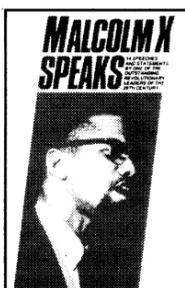
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Native groups boycott Canada vote

BY BEVERLY BROWN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Calling the British Columbia (B.C.) provincial government's referendum on negotiating treaties with Native peoples "a moral outrage and a mockery of democracy," leaders of the First Nations Summit and the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs launched a boycott of the ballot measure at a press conference here April 4. Representatives of 16 tribal councils symbolically burned some of the referendum ballots to show their opposition to the measure.

The Native organizations are urging people not to vote in the referendum and to send their ballots to one of several collection points throughout the province.

The referendum is part of the campaign led by the B.C. Liberal Party, headed by Gordon Campbell, against a 1998 treaty negotiated by the governments of Canada, British Columbia, and the Nisga'a Tribal Council. Campbell claims the treaty would grant special privileges to Native Indians. The wording of the referendum couches eight "yes" or "no" questions in the framework of the interests of "all British Columbians."

"Today was the first of many events where people from across the province will actively boycott the referendum," said Chief Stewart Philip, president of the B.C. Union of Indian Chiefs, at the press conference. "We are working with a growing coalition of political, labor, church, and concerned citizens who all agree that the referendum is immoral and unconscionable."

The accuracy of Philip's statement was confirmed April 8 when the B.C. Federation of Labor organized a press conference attended by representatives of many different unions and other organizations to announce that they were "joining forces with the B.C. First Nations" to urge people to abstain from voting in the referendum. "Only fair and honorable treaties with B.C.'s First Nations can provide the reconciliation, the social justice, and the economic opportunity our province so desperately seeks," read the declaration, whose signers included a range of labor unions and other organizations.

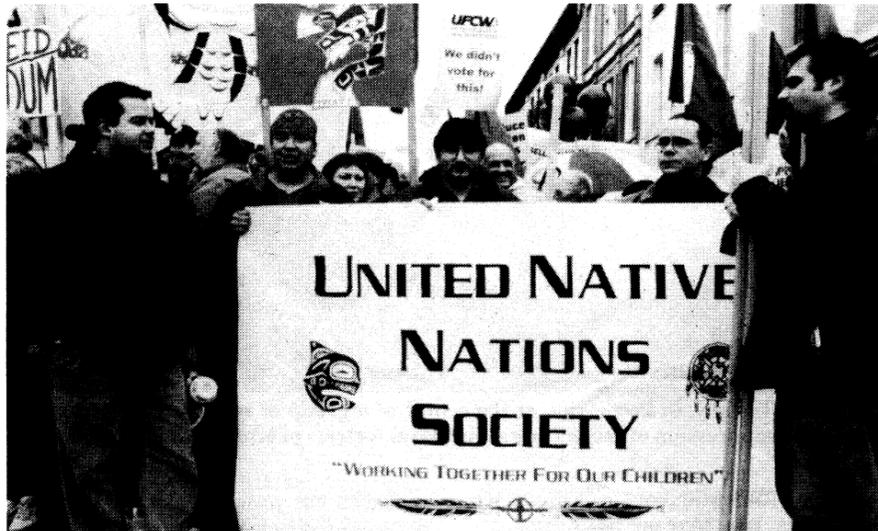
Teachers union backs fight

On April 12 the British Columbia Teachers federation, whose 45,000 members carried out a one-day illegal strike in January against an imposed contract settlement by the Campbell government, joined the boycott campaign. And Jennifer Kwan, one of two New Democratic Party (NDP) members of the legislature, has also announced her plans to participate in the boycott. The NDP is a social democratic labor party and was the majority party prior to the Liberals' election victory last year.

Natives and their organizations have been participating in the working-class fightback against the B.C. government's sweeping attacks on health care, education, and workers' rights. Many joined the February 23 union demonstration of 30,000 in Victoria and the March 23 march of 10,000 in Vancouver and distributed material explaining their opposition to the referendum and why non-Natives should also oppose it.

The Songhee First Nation on Vancouver Island prepared a brief for the Victoria Labor Council and a local of the Hospital Employees Union (HEU). The fact that many workers have been won to opposing the referendum is shown by the fact that when some 40 HEU workers in the laundry at the Vancouver General Hospital staged a wildcat strike against the contracting out of their jobs, several wore "referenDUMB" buttons.

The United Church of Canada, which has more than 300,000 nominal adherents in B.C., issued a letter April 10 urging its members to void their ballots and either drop them off or send them to the church's head office, which will then turn them over to the First Nations Summit. In addition, four bishops of the Anglican Church and Lazar Puhlo, an archbishop in the Canadian Orthodox Church, issued statements calling on their congregations to either vote "no" or to ab-



Militant/Monica Jones

Native contingent in 30,000-strong February 23 protest in Victoria, British Columbia, against government's attacks on social wage and workers' rights.

stain on all eight questions in the referendum.

Decades of struggle

The support for the boycott shows the impact of the decades-long fight by Natives for land claims, full realization of treaty rights, and sovereignty over their own affairs. Unlike in the rest of Canada, most of B.C.'s 140,000 Native inhabitants have never signed treaties with the government.

Far from enjoying the privileges alleged by Campbell, Native peoples in Canada have suffered from a system of racist oppression that has left them with deplorable living conditions. The unemployment rate among Native people approaches 70 percent, and their family income is barely half the Canadian average. Native life expectancy is eight years less and infant mortality is twice the Canadian averages. About 45 percent of Native

people are functionally illiterate with less than ninth grade schooling, compared with 17 percent among the population at large.

In 1993 the NDP government established the B.C. Treaty Commission. This action came in face of an increasing number of petitions, rallies, and road blockades by Native tribes fighting for their land. The commission's charge was to resolve the outstanding land claims. About two-thirds of Native organizations are currently involved in negotiations through the B.C. Treaty Commission, but no treaties have been signed. The Nisga'a negotiations were organized outside the process.

Nisga'a treaty

The Nisga'a voted by a 72 per cent majority in favor of the 1998 treaty. It agreed the Nisga'a could set up their own local

Machinists fight Lockheed's takeback demands

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

MARIETTA, Georgia—The strike by 2,700 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 709 against Lockheed Martin has passed the one-month mark. Strikers are fighting giveaways of their hard-won rights. The company, a major contractor for the Pentagon, is standing by its so-called "last, best and final offer."

Recent talks initiated by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services, the first since March 11 when the strike began, ended in a standoff. "They don't want to talk, they don't want to discuss. They just want to mess with us. It's been going on for years," explained Harold Jones, 53, who has worked at the plant for 22 years.

Like many strikers, Jones cites company outsourcing of work as the main issue in the strike. "If there's no protection against outsourcing, I'll stay out on strike," he said. "What have you got to lose? You're going to lose your job anyway. It's really disgusting to have your supervisor tell you to your face that the company is taking machines out and cutting them to pieces just to make sure you'll never work on them again."

Kathy Doyal, 48, has worked at Lockheed for 16 years. "But I've been laid off four times. When I came back after a five-year layoff from 1988-92, 10,000 jobs were gone." After two years on layoff this time around, Doyal was called back to work and four weeks later was on strike.

"Lockheed called some of us laid-off workers back in the hopes that we would vote against the strike," she said. "But the proposed contract language on job classifications jeopardizes hundreds of jobs. So I went down to the union hall and I told them 'For this we strike.'" Doyal works in the union hall kitchen and delivers coffee to the picket line.

The company is demanding the right to add or do away with a given job classification at any time. Job combinations will not



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

April 11 rally drew 150 supporters of strike by Machinists Local 709

only directly result in fewer jobs throughout the plant, but callback and seniority is weakened when a job classification no longer exists.

Layoffs by Lockheed are common and few workers have 20 years of uninterrupted employment. The intermittent layoffs benefit the company, which uses a formula to calculate retirement benefits that leaves many workers struggling to continue working just to qualify for a company pension. The right to a decent retirement is an issue in the strike.

An April 11 rally at the plant gate drew 150 people in support of the striking workers. "Our cause is just," explained Jimmy Farist, vice president of the local.

On the ride back to the union hall from the plant gate rally, several union members explained that under the provisions of the proposed contract, elementary worker-to-worker solidarity may be grounds for disci-

plinary action.

An amendment to the contract language on "Strikes and Lockouts" proposed by the company states that the union cannot "cause or engage in nor permit its members to cause or engage in, nor shall any employee covered by this Agreement take part in any strike, picketing, sympathy strike, slowdown or stoppage of work."

This provision would bar the IAM and its members from organizing the kind of in-plant walk-throughs and informational picketing the union staged to mobilize for the contract fight. Strikers members say the purpose of the vague language is also to prohibit the union from reaching out and expressing solidarity with other unions who are resisting attacks.

Arlene Rubinstein is a meat packer and a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1996 in Atlanta.