

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The Cuban Revolution from
the Escambray to today

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75,000 rally in U.S. to back Palestinian struggle

Actions on both coasts condemn U.S. backing of Israel

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Some 75,000 people converged on the U.S. capitol here April 20 to back the Palestinian struggle against the colonial-settler Israeli regime, the largest such action in U.S. history. Some 20,000 more from across the West Coast mobilized in San Francisco, waving thousands of Palestinian flags in a march that took four hours to cover the two-mile route.

At both actions tens of thousands of mostly young Palestinians, Arab Americans, and immigrants from the Middle East turned out. In Washington, they led the march. Placards and banners could be seen throughout the demonstration that read: "End the occupation!" "Free Palestine!" and "We are all Palestinians!"

Hundreds of buses came from across the eastern part of the country, including areas with large Palestinian and Arab communities such as Detroit, Cleveland, northern New Jersey, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. Many saw the demonstration as an opportunity to respond to the brutal Israeli military offensive in the West Bank, as Palestinian and Arab organizations, student groups, and mosques across the country threw their support behind the action in the final weeks.

"This is the least we can do to make our voices heard and also express opposition to the U.S. aid to Israel," said Safa Muhanna, a 17-year-old high school student born in Ramallah, West Bank, who came on a bus with her relatives from Fairview, New Jersey. "Bush has restricted all Palestinian organizations from sending funds to Palestine."

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Militant photos: top, Ruth Nebbia; bottom, Peter Buch
Tens of thousands of protesters marched April 20 in Washington (top), and in San Francisco (bottom) against Israeli military assault on Palestinians in West Bank.

Participants in protests snap up the 'Militant'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON—Sales of the *Militant* are sizzling as the partisans of the socialist press kicked off one of the hottest starts in the first week of the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* international circulation campaign. The drive received a boost from socialist workers and young socialists who sold nearly 600 copies of the *Militant* and 59 *Militant* subscriptions while participating in the demonstrations held on the east and west coasts protesting Tel Aviv's brutal war against the Palestinian people and Washington's military intervention in Afghanistan.

As the chart shows, the subscription drive is well ahead of schedule, with 166 *Militant* subscriptions sold. The campaign has also won 42 new readers to *PM* and 50 people have purchased copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. A target week for organizing special sales teams, and stepped up sales on the job and in working-class districts is scheduled for May 4-12. As our initial results show, world events and the continued resistance by working people to the assaults and brutalities of imperialism are leading many workers and youth to want to read socialist periodicals and books.

Based on goals adopted in local areas, the *Militant* has set an international goal of selling 1,050 *Militant* subscriptions, 460 *PM* subscriptions, and 625 copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. Results at the demonstrations and other political activities show the opportunities to win new forces to the communist movement. A student in Texas who recently became a member of the Young Socialists in Brownsville, has joined the circulation effort (see article on page 5).

At the protest in Washington, partisans of the sales drive sold 434 copies of the *Militant*, 52 *Militant* subscriptions, 3 subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*, more than 50 copies of *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*, and 12 copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. At a similar action in San Francisco they sold 90 copies of the *Militant* and 3 subscriptions to the paper. Another two subscriptions and 31 *Militants* were sold in Seattle, and participants in a rally in Boulder, Colorado, bought 2 *Militant* subscriptions and 15 papers.

The demonstration in Washington was marked by the large numbers of Palestinians who came on buses organized by mosques in cities throughout the eastern part of the United States. A significant number of college students drove in vans to participate in the actions.

"A few of us in the New York Garment District traveled to the rally on a bus organized by the Queens College Muslim Students Association," said Maggie Trowe, a garment worker. "The bus also included high school and middle school students, and

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'Wins boss stole our money,' say garment workers at Bay Area picket

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD
AND BILL KALMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Chanting "No compensation, no justice! No back wages, no peace!" in Chinese and English, 200 garment workers and supporters rallied outside of the federal building here April 15.

Carrying signs in Chinese and English that read, "Wins Boss Stole Our Money," the workers, most of whom are Cantonese-speaking women, demanded that the federal government force bankrupt Wins Industries to make good on the more than \$1.3 million in back pay owed to them. The protesters also demanded that the owner of Wins, Anna Wong, be jailed for pocketing their wages.

The Chinese workers were employed by three related San Francisco garment shops: Wins of California, Win Fashions, and Win

Industries of America, all owned by Wong, along with her sister Jenny and her husband Toha Quan.

The family owns eight family homes, rental properties, an upscale restaurant, and other properties in San Francisco. Wong stopped paying the workers in their plants last April while still producing goods for Sears, J.C. Penney, T.J. Maxx, Kmart, Wal-Mart, Tommy Hilfiger, The Gap, Sam's Club, and the U.S. Army/Air Force Exchange. By the end of last summer all three plants were closed for bankruptcy proceedings. Two of Wong's factories had operated illegally, without a license, and were ordered shut down by the California labor commissioner. During early summer of last year Wins of California had revenues of \$1.2 million.

The workers' protest, organized by the

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Fed up with main parties, many workers stay away in French poll

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In the first round of voting for the French presidency, the ultrarightist National Front candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen came in second to incumbent president Jacques Chirac, the candidate of the conservative Gaullist Rally for the French Republic (RPR). Le Pen edged out Lionel Jospin, the Socialist Party candidate and current prime minister. Chirac and Le Pen will now face each other in a May 5 runoff.

Many working people who have faced years of assault by the government saw little difference between the two major candidates and simply stayed away from the polls. Some 28 percent of voters stayed away, the highest level of abstention in French history. Chirac came out ahead with just under 20 percent of the vote, the lowest tally of a front-runner since the foundation of the Fifth Republic in 1958. Le Pen slipped by Jospin by some 230,000 votes.

Repudiating Le Pen and his stridently nationalist and anti-immigrant policies, tens

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School bus drivers in Los Angeles strike for wage increase

BY ELIZABETH LARISCY

LOS ANGELES—Hundreds of school bus drivers employed by Laidlaw Education Services—the largest school bus company contracted by Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and one of the largest national school bus contractors—have been on strike here since April 3.

The drivers, who had been working without a contract since August, are demanding a pay raise and an improved benefit package. The 842 striking workers are members of Teamsters Local 572. Laidlaw employ-

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U.S. rulers seek to disrupt north-south talks in Korea

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON
AND STEVE CLARK

PYONGYANG, North Korea—Determined to maintain the division of Korea, Washington is escalating steps to disrupt efforts by the government of north Korea to improve relations with the government in the south under an agreement signed in June 2000.

The agreement between the two governments states that "the north and south agree to solve the question of the country's reunification independently by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation." Issued at the conclusion of the first summit meeting between the heads of state of north and south Korea since the forced division of the country in 1945, the joint declaration includes provisions for family, cultural, athletic, health, and other exchanges between the two governments.

The June 2000 North-South Joint declaration was a product of the refusal of either the people in north Korea or hundreds of thousands of workers, students, and others in south Korea to back off their fight to advance national reunification, despite the large U.S. military presence in the south.

Currently, 37,000 U.S. troops are stationed in south Korea, including many along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The DMZ occupies the area on the 38th parallel where the U.S. imperialist rulers, with the complicity of the government of the Soviet Union, partitioned Korea at the end of World War II.

North-South railways to reopen

Despite Washington's disruptions, the governments of north and south Korea met here April 3-5 to discuss further measures to improve relations. In a joint press release issued April 6, Kim Yong Sun of the Workers Party of Korea and Rim Tong Won, special adviser to south Korean president Kim Dae Jung, announced plans to reconnect the Sinuiju-Seoul railway and roads on the east coast of Korea, as well as the Kaesong-Munsan road in the west.

The Sinuiju-Seoul railway is the main

artery connecting the two halves of the peninsula. Land mines will have to be removed from the roadbed and surroundings, a fact the U.S. and south Korean governments had previously pointed to as a rationalization for keeping the railway closed.

The joint press release also announced plans for a meeting of families separated by the division of the country as well as further steps to develop joint tourism at Mount Kumgang in north Korea. A second round of talks is scheduled for May 7-10 in Seoul.

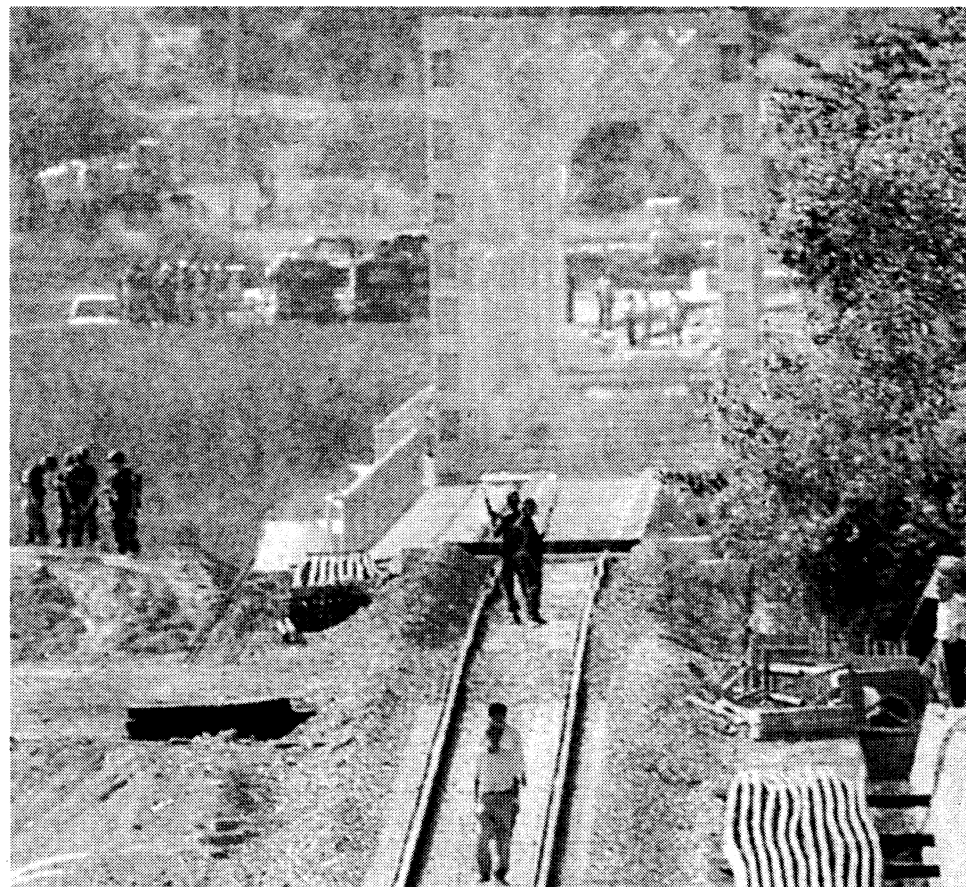
Washington's provocations

The recent renewal by Seoul of talks with Pyongyang follows several months of increasingly aggressive threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) by Washington, which has maintained close political and military ties with the government of south Korea for the last 57 years.

During his State of the Union address in January of this year, U.S. president George Bush fingered north Korea as part of a worldwide "axis of evil" along with Iran and Iraq.

Then, in March, the Pentagon's recent Nuclear Posture Review was "leaked," naming north Korea as one of seven countries that are potential targets of Washington's nuclear arsenal. A spokesman for the foreign ministry of the DPRK responded March 13 to the "leak" by pointing out that the Pentagon document "shows that the U.S. disregards every kind of international agreement and pursues a policy of world domination by force, and that if it sees any nation as an obstacle in the implementation of its policy, it tries to breach bilateral agreements."

An article in the March 23 issue of the English-language *Pyongyang Times* called on the U.S. government to "apologize for defining the DPRK as part of an 'axis of evil' and demanding it change its system." It noted that the "south Korean authorities are making every possible effort to strengthen the 'close military cooperation' with the United States, perpetuate the presence of U.S. troops



South Korean soldiers guard a bridge over the Sinuiju-Seoul railway, the main artery connecting the two halves of the Korean peninsula. Government officials in south and north Korea have announced plans to reconnect this rail line as part of the efforts to improve relations. Washington is seeking to disrupt this process.

in the south of Korea, and support the aggressive policy of the U.S. toward Korea."

Washington and Seoul conducted joint military exercises near the DMZ on the south Korean side March 21-27. These exercises, which were the first such operations since 1993 and the largest since the 1950-53 Korean War, involved 37,000 U.S. troops currently stationed in south Korea, 650,000 south Korean troops, and U.S. troops stationed in Japan and Guam.

Imperial arrogance

In addition, Washington continues its eight-year pattern of refusing to comply with the 1994 Agreed Framework it signed with the government of north Korea. Under this accord, Washington, Japan, south Korea, and other countries promised to provide \$4 billion for the construction of two nuclear power reactors in north Korea, in exchange for an agreement by Pyongyang to freeze any efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

Under Article 3, Section 1, of the Agreed Framework, Washington also offered "formal assurances against the threat of use of nuclear weapons by the United States" against the DPRK.

As of this moment, however, not a drop of cement has been poured to begin work on either of the two reactors, which were supposed to be completed by 2003 and are needed to meet the country's pressing energy demands. U.S. officials now say the reactors will be constructed by 2008 at the earliest.

The Japanese government is also intensifying its aggressive stance against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Having already suspended food assistance to the DPRK last year, Tokyo says that any steps toward improving relations with the north Korean government depend on settling the issue of 11 Japanese citizens allegedly kidnapped in recent decades and

being held in north Korea.

In response to these accusations, a DPRK delegate addressed the United Nations Commission on Human Rights March 22. He noted that Tokyo has turned reality upside down, since it was the Japanese government, during its nearly half-century-long colonial occupation of Korea until 1945 that "forcibly conscript[ed] six million young and middle-aged Koreans for forced service or labor, killing more than one million of them, and forcing nearly 200,000 Korean women to serve as sexual slaves for the Japanese army in war zones."

By the end of World War II some 12 percent of the Korean population was living either in Japan or in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, the vast majority against their will.

An article in the April 6 issue of the *Pyongyang Times* explained that "Japan's crimes did not end here." During the 1950-53 Korean War launched by Washington, the article said, Tokyo "offered its military bases to U.S. forces and directly dispatched soldiers of its defeated Imperial Army and police forces into the front line."

The authors are currently in Pyongyang as members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists leadership delegation there. Jack Willey is the third member of the delegation.

THE MILITANT

Support bus drivers' strike in Los Angeles

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Coal boss Murray attacks UMWA miners

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—The stakes have been raised in the fight by union coal miners against coal boss Robert Murray, owner of Maple Creek mine in Bentleyville, Pennsylvania. In yet another attack on the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), union members going into work April 14 were told that the company would begin "permanent layoffs of its workforce, effective June 16, 2002." The information given to the miners is in accordance with the "Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification Act (WARN)." The company says the reason for the notification is the depletion of coal reserves. There are about 375 union workers at the mine organized by UMWA Local 1248.

The following day the UMWA released a press statement in response to Murray's latest antiunion move. The 60-day notice to shut the mine down is a "Trojan Horse," said UMWA secretary-treasurer, Carlo Tarley. The union official said Murray is playing a "cruel game with the workers' emotions [to] pressure the union into agreeing to contract concessions sought by the employer."

Before the shift change on April 16, company officials gave miners copies of a press statement released that day titled, "United Mine Workers' Actions and Statements a Dishonest Scam," along with two letters from Robert Murray to UMWA president Cecil Roberts and a copy of an amended version of the recently approved union contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators of America (BCOA).

Murray is the largest independent, family-held coal producer in the United States. His coal holdings include mines in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Illinois, Ohio, and West Virginia. There are reports that Murray plans to open mines in Utah. Murray-owned mines produced more than 20 million tons of coal in 2000.

In 1995 when the mine reopened, the union agreed to a seven-year contract that now pays about \$3 an hour less than miners earn under the BCOA contract. Miners at Murray are united in demanding that the wage gap, which weakens the entire UMWA, be closed. The seven-year contract expires at the end of the year.

Concessions demanded

Wages are not the only issue at Maple Creek, as became clear when miners read Murray's proposed amendments and deletions to the contract, which is now tabled. For example, the section on panel rights is deleted, and substantial deletions are made to the employer's contributions to the pension plan. One \$600 lump-sum payment is eliminated.

The contract also carries over the "Consolidated Memorandum of Understanding" from the previous seven-year agreement. This MOU is not liked because it contains several provisions that weaken the union, including a provision against "any strikes, walkouts, slowdowns, sympathy strikes...picketing or other unprotected concerted activities;" a draconian absentee program; and a contracting-out of work provision.

It is not too difficult to see why Murray wants the section on panel rights expunged from the amended BCOA agreement. In Ohio, Murray violated the contract he signed with UMWA Local 1810, which represents miners at Powhatan No. 6, by refusing to hire miners laid off from three North American mines he owns. Murray filed a charge with the NLRB in Cleveland, Ohio, arguing that these workers had no panel rights. The board dismissed this charge last fall and concluded that "panel rights and their application are nondiscriminatory and not violative of the [National Labor Relations] Act."

For the past three months, union negotiators have been working to arrive at a new labor agreement. The company has been offered the recently negotiated National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement, the same pact that the union is presenting to all other independent coal operators. U.S. Steel Corp. and Drummond Company, and RAG American Holding Co., Inc., signed the agreement in March and April respectively. The pact will cover UMWA members working at the latter company's Cumberland and Emerald mines in Pennsylvania.

The UMWA's position is that if "Murray wants an early agreement before the current contract expires, the 2002 agreement is what is on the table—without modifications."

The company's objectives are also very clear. In Ohio, Murray was successful in

opening Century Mine as a nonunion operation not far from Powhatan No. 6, a UMWA-organized mine also owned by Murray. In a similar effort, the company was planning to open High Quality Mine near the Maple Creek portal. For more than a year, construction crews have been working on installing a slope entrance. A few workers say that the work is near completion. Maple Creek officials now say that work was halted on the new mine two months ago. In contrast to the Century Mine experience, the union is determined to keep High Quality in the union and represented by Local 1248.

Years of battle by the union

For several years, union miners have been locked in battle with Murray. In the fall of 1999, the union struck Maple Creek for three days over antiunion moves by the company. In December 2000 the Maple Creek local rejected a proposed contract by a vote of 335 to 10. The contract proposed an annual 30-cent-an-hour wage increase. Miners demanded that they be paid the same as BCOA miners. After the December vote, Murray was quoted in the Uniontown *Herald-Standard* as saying that union members "got greedy" and that "there are 500 people who will be in the unemployment line."

Last summer the union called "Memorial Days" to protest Murray's opening of a nonunion mine in Ohio and his "abuse of hundreds of coal miners who have accepted frozen wages and made other sacrifices to keep the company's operations afloat," according to a UMWA press release.

Many skirmishes have occurred over health and safety issues, violations of work rules, and unjust firings. Almost every day the company is hit with state and federal violations. Several times the mine, or sections of it, have been ordered shut down. There have been several dangerous incidents of unacceptable levels of methane gas reported in the mine. Maple Creek has one of the highest lost-time injury rates in the industry.

Workers were also fed up with the so-called company "awareness" meetings. In these bathhouse meetings, it was common for Murray to insult miners to their faces, as well as to hear countless slanders against the union. Murray's unbecoming behavior has become widely known. The Pennsylvania regional office of the NLRB issued a formal complaint last October against Murray and Maple Creek president D. Lynn Shank for "threatening and vilifying Maple Creek miners' representative, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and its officers."

Miners, their families, and working people

Hundreds of prisoners in Afghanistan are severely malnourished, seriously ill



The International Red Cross stepped in this past week to begin feeding some of the 3,000 prisoners in a jail in Shibarghan, Afghanistan, saying the men are suffering from severe malnutrition and other diseases. Many have tuberculosis, severe diarrhea, respiratory infections, and other afflictions from not being fed for weeks. The Red Cross said an emergency feeding program similar to that given to famine victims in Africa is needed for almost 100 of the worst-off cases. Some 50 men have already died. Washington claims no responsibility for the prison, even though the men were captured as part of the U.S. war there. Gen Jura Bek, who runs the camp, said, "the food is enough for them."

in the coal fields were also bombarded for several months with full-page advertisements and highway billboards against the union. Ads appeared in all the major newspapers in southwestern Pennsylvania and southeastern Ohio. The union responded with its own full-page ads and wrote letters to counter the crude lies in Murray's campaign.

On top of this, Murray has filed numerous defamation lawsuits with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) against the union and leading union officials. Most have been dismissed by the courts. Last fall the NLRB ruled against Murray who charged that the "Memorial Days" taken by miners were illegal. According to a UMWA summary, the federal board investigation "disclosed substantial evidence to support the Union's assertion that it has significant disputes with Maple Creek...which are primary in nature" and that there was "a reasonable basis for the union to question whether Maple Creek intended to honor its commitment as to the High Quality Mine."

In January, U.S. District Judge William Standish dismissed a defamation lawsuit

against UMWA officer Carlo Tarley, saying that he and the union "were acting for an arguably job-related reason to publicize issues regarding the 'terms' and 'conditions' of employment...in the context of a heated and ongoing labor dispute." Another federal judge dismissed a defamation lawsuit in February, saying that Tarley's statements to the public about Murray's treatment of his workers "typify the freewheeling debate intended to be protected and encouraged by federal labor law."

The latest assault on the union is one of the most serious, but Maple Creek miners are not intimidated. They have come to expect it and are preparing for more attacks ahead, including the likelihood of being laid off. In a recent letter to the membership Tarley said, "The union is committed to doing whatever we must to provide you with the best contract possible, but it appears that we will have to dig in and fight for it. So be it."

Frank Forrestal and Tony Lane are members of UMWA Local 1248 in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Italie wraps up tour for workers' rights

BY JACK PARKER

KEMMERER, Wyoming—"You are Mike Italie. I'm glad to meet you. I've heard about your case," a coal miner told the socialist worker who had taken his campaign to the portal of the Kemmerer mine here. The miner said he had learned of Italie's fight to defend workers' rights when a co-worker posted literature on the case at the mine.

During his election campaign last fall as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, Italie was fired by Goodwill Industries where he had been a sewing machine operator. This occurred a few days after he participated in a televised candidates' debate where he spoke against Washington's brutal military assault on Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Italie wrapped up a nationwide tour to win support for his fight and to organize other working people in defense of workers' rights by visiting Washington, D.C., and western Colorado and Wyoming, and Massachusetts this past week. During the course of the campaign thousands of people have participated in meetings, and signed petitions or sent letters to Miami's mayor urging the city government to demand Goodwill reinstate Italie.

The conversation at the Kemmerer portal was one of many that Italie had with coal miners and students during a three-day tour here. In addition to distributing the *Militant* newspaper and literature on his case at the plant gate at Kemmerer, Italie had a meeting with a member of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) there and another at the Deserado mine near Rangely, Colorado.

"I want to thank you for joining me in my fight," Italie said to Ed Hinkle, a member of UMWA Local 1984 at the Deserado

mine. Hinkle sent a letter to Miami mayor Joseph Carollo protesting Italie's firing. "It was letters like yours and thousands of other petitions that forced Goodwill to back down from its efforts to challenge my unemployment benefits," he said of a recent move by the bosses.

Cuban Revolution

Italie showed Hinkle a videotape of news coverage about his firing, which led to a discussion about the Cuba Revolution. The news clip includes an interview with Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana, who states that Italie's presence in the plant would be a "stain" on the American flag because he opposes "private ownership of property" and "supports the Cuban government."

Hinkle said that at the time of the revolution he was a Navy seaman. "We didn't like Batista. We knew what was going on between the U.S. and Cuba. Many of us supported Castro and getting rid of the dictator. When they announced they were communists, that really hurt them. They lost my and many others' support for the revolution."

The coal miner then added that today he admires "what Cuba has done for its people" and that he and others were influenced by the anti-communist propaganda of the time. "I never did like McCarthyism," Hinkle explained, referring to the antilabor witch-hunt led by U.S. senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s. "That was one of the reasons I wrote the letter on your case."

At Mesa State College Italie participated in a sales team that set up a Pathfinder literature table at a cultural event sponsored by the Black Student Alliance. Following the event the head of the Black Student Alliance

purchased a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, after Italie discussed his case with him.

Twenty-one people participated in an April 16 meeting featuring Italie in Washington, held at the Mt. Pleasant Library. Rahed Ghuma, an Arab student from Oman and a member of the Young Socialists from the University of Maryland at Baltimore County, spoke on the impact of the Palestinian struggle on him.

Bosses' laws

Italie said during his talk that he will not be getting his job back at Goodwill Industries. "This fight has scored important victories," he said. "It was the thousands of signatures and letters to the company and the city administration protesting my firing that forced Goodwill to back down from its attempts to deny me unemployment benefits. And over the last months, thousands of people have learned the class nature of justice under capitalism and the need to organize independently of the Democrats and Republicans in order to rid the world of injustice, racism, and economic oppression."

Tom Headley, an Amtrak railroad worker attending the meeting, organized to get more than 100 of his co-workers to sign petitions on Italie's behalf. He explained that this free speech fight "has been a very useful thing. I have been able to get into all kinds of discussions on the job with co-workers on the Cuban Revolution, the U.S. war in Afghanistan, and the right of workers to join unions."

Glova Scott, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, contributed to this article from Washington.

Low turnout of workers marks France poll

Continued from front page

of thousands of people, including high school and college students and young workers, greeted the results by organizing daily demonstrations in many cities. Immigrants have been prominent among the protesters. Police have attacked demonstrations in Paris with tear gas.

Opinion polls had predicted that Jospin and Chirac would be neck and neck in the voting. "I assume full responsibility for this defeat," said Jospin. "I will be retiring from politics."

The vote for the SP leader fell from 23 percent in 1995, when he was defeated by Chirac in the runoff, to a shade over 16 percent. His electoral support among unionists, indebted farmers, and other working people has declined as he and his party have helped to lead the assault by the capitalist class in France on health and education services, democratic rights, and other social conquests of working people.

Workers have taken to the streets in their tens of thousands in response to the government and employer offensive. In February 2001 some 300,000 workers mobilized to oppose the demands of the employers' federation to push back the retirement age. Two months later more than 10,000 farmers marched in 78 towns throughout France to "save cattle raising and the rural world," and demanded the government release aid it had promised to help cattle raisers. In May thousands of workers struck rail and bus lines to oppose layoffs, plant closures, and threats of privatization of public industries.

These protests took place one week after municipal elections across the country. In a harbinger of the national vote this year, large numbers of workers either abstained from voting or cast their ballots for small centrist groups that have the image of being more combative than the government's Plural Left coalition, which is led by the Socialist Party, with the French Communist Party as a junior partner. In the municipal elections the vote for the French CP plummeted as workers became increasingly dissatisfied with the policies of the government. The official unemployment rate, which Jospin pledged to cut substantially, is currently at 8.8 percent, and stands at 25 percent for immigrant workers.

Government soaks working people with cigarette taxes

BY GREG McCARTAN

NEW YORK—You can see many working people grimace slightly as they fork over \$6 for a pack for smokes at the corner store these days. And statements by New York attorney general Eliot Spitzer April 14 really rubbed it in the face of the working class.

In a *New York Times* article titled, "State Receiving Tobacco Millions," Spitzer praised a "huge influx" of \$681 million paid to the state under a settlement with tobacco companies, supposedly to cover smoking-related public health costs. The money "will help reduce the amount of taxes that New Yorkers will have to pay in the future," Spitzer claimed.

What is unstated is that the "tobacco millions" are simply part of the profits raked in by the big cigarette monopolies after they jacked up the price of a pack. At the time of the settlement the tobacco companies openly said they would pay New York and other states by raising the price they charge for cigarettes, making the \$681 million infusion into the state's general funds simply an indirect tax on working people.

In welcoming the funds, there is not even a pretense by state officials that this money will be used to care for workers and farmers with smoking-related illnesses, or on programs to help people quit the highly addictive habit.

Moreover, many states, faced with budget shortfalls in wake of the economic recession, are increasing taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products, making working people pay a double fee to fatten the treasury of the capitalist state.

Three days after Spitzer's statement, New York mayor Michael Bloomberg laid out his plans for cutting the budget and one tax hike he hopes to push through: an increase of \$1.42 for each pack of cigarettes bought in the city.



Students demonstrated in Paris April 22 against ultrarightist Jean-Marie Le Pen

In contrast to the hostility he has aroused among many unionists, working farmers, and other working people, Jospin has won plaudits from capitalist politicians and commentators. "Jospin has been, on the whole, a rather good capitalist prime minister," wrote *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne Jr. in an April 23 opinion piece.

Candidates identifying themselves as Trotskyist scored a total of 14 percent of the votes. The *New York Times* editors described this result as "the other shocking aspect of Sunday's protest vote."

CP leader Robert Hue joined SP figures in urging working people to vote for the right-wing Chirac against Le Pen in the May 5 runoff. SP leader Dominique Strauss-Kahn said it is the "honor of our country that is at stake" in the vote to defeat Le Pen.

Anti-immigrant demagoguery

Le Pen scored well in the north and east of the country, where unemployment is high. He also maintained his traditional base in the wealthy resort areas in southern France. According to commentators, the rightist politician picked up support among a number of workers who have traditionally voted for the pro-Moscow Stalinist Communist Party. CP candidate Hue received less than

3.4 percent of the tally.

Throughout the campaign, Le Pen pounded away at his anti-immigrant, nationalist themes, and was bolstered by Chirac placing "law and order" at the center of his political message. In the first round, reported the *New York Times*, "the immigrant crime issue was addressed euphemistically as the 'security problem,' but it nonetheless dominated the debate."

Le Pen calls for the creation of 200,000 new prison beds and for expanded powers to the police. To demands for the deportation of illegal immigrants and a separate medical benefits system for foreigners, he adds a barely-veiled call for violence. "Immigration is the most fundamental problem for France," he said in January of last year, claiming that there is a "formidable feeling of hatred within the French population."

At the same time, the fascist Le Pen poses as a champion of the little man against a corrupt political elite and of the "French nation."

"Don't be afraid to dream, you little people, the foot soldiers, the excluded, you the miners, the steelworkers, the workers of all those industries ruined by the Euro-globalization of Maastricht," said Le Pen April 21, referring to the treaty setting up a

common currency and central bank in the European Union (EU). Le Pen called on the "French of all races, religions, and social conditions to rally round this historic chance for a national recovery."

Le Pen has vowed to take France out of the EU and to reconsider Paris's commitment to the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. The latter, he says, is "the problem of the Americans.... Personally, I want France to sweep in front of its own door, solve its own problems at home, rather than give advice abroad."

The rightist politician also takes aim at women, calling for the outlawing of abortion, the development of programs to increase the birth rate, and financial incentives for women to stay at home.

The setback for the Socialist Party fits in with electoral results recorded in Italy, Norway, Denmark, and Portugal, where governments of or including social democratic parties have recently been voted out of office after leading the ruling-class attacks on workers and farmers.

Rightist figures have also built support in a number of countries, from Austria to Italy to the Netherlands, by scapegoating immigrant workers for unemployment and other aspects of the capitalist crisis.

Workers at meatpacking plant in Australia protest immigration arrests of co-workers

BY JOANNE KUNIAWSKY

SYDNEY, Australia—Workers at Primo, a large meatpacking plant in western Sydney, reacted angrily to raids by immigration cops there April 10 and 11. Somewhere between 18 and 28 workers were arrested and taken to the Villawood Immigration Detention Centre.

There are around 500 workers at Primo and the big majority are immigrants from all over the world. Discussion had erupted in the plant several weeks earlier when cops from the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) had taken away four or five workers on afternoon shift.

This time the immigration cops had a list of names that workers believe was acquired by going through company employment files. Supervisors called those DIMA wanted to arrest into the office and then went and cleared out their lockers.

Workers who were arrested reported that DIMA brought two vans to the factory on day shift but only filled one. A number of workers had gotten news of the afternoon shift raid and didn't come to work.

In the sausage department two workers had tried to go home sick after hearing about the raid, but their boss ordered them back to work. When they were later summoned to the office they refused to go. The cops then caught one of the two men on the factory floor while the other was able to get away.

The immediate and overwhelming reaction throughout the factory to the raids was anger, both at the bosses and at the govern-

ment. Workers wanted to know why the company did not warn everyone that a raid was being planned. Many opposed the way the Australian government treats workers, like criminals simply for working and trying to survive. One Tongan worker who was arrested has been in Australia for 22 years. Another has been in the country for 30 years. Most were newer immigrants without working papers.

On April 10 Sam Dua, originally from Ghana, began to lead an organized response to the raid. He spoke at both lunch breaks, in two of the main canteens, located on the cooked meat and raw meat sides of the factory, encouraging everyone to visit the detention center together the following day. "We need to show solidarity with our brothers and sisters locked up at Villawood," he declared. By the end of the day carpools had been organized and a number of workers who could not go gave money to buy food and cigarettes for the prisoners.

At the designated time, around 20 Primo workers stood in line at the detention center waiting to visit workmates inside. Just like the inmates, the visitors included a wide range of nationalities. Even without placards the group visit had a protest quality to it.

The latest figures released by DIMA state that 14,369 people who had overstayed or breached their visas were arrested in 1999-2000. Of these, 2,519 were apprehended at work, indicating that there were hundreds of factory raids. DIMA estimated that a total of around 58,000 people were living in

Australia without proper papers, and that half of these were working.

Seeing the tall fences at Villawood, surrounded by razor wire, reinforced the outrage many workers had at the way their co-workers were being treated. The delegation, which arrived 30 minutes prior to visiting hours, had to wait for two hours in the hot sun to be processed. A few of the group did not have ID to verify their address and for this reason were denied entry.

The visiting area is a large grassy enclosure. As workers walked through the heavy metal doors, two or three at a time, their jailed workmates called out, very happy to see so much support.

Over the last year the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union (AMIEU) has signed up members at Primo, although there is no Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) negotiated with the company. Pay is the minimum award rate for meat workers. The company weakens union representation by keeping most workers as "casual" for an indefinite time.

Workers are now discussing going as a group to the May Day rally with some placards opposing factory immigration raids such as the one at Primo. This year the Sydney May Day march is focused on opposition to the government's treatment of refugees.

Joanne Kuniansky is a member of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union at Primo.

Sales drive gets hot start in first week

Continued from front page
a number of workers."

Trowe said she and Dan Fein set up a literature table near the rally site to talk to people streaming in for the event. "Many who passed by agreed with our sign that read, 'End U.S. aid to Israel.' In our discussions with participants we connected Washington's support for the failed coup in Venezuela to its role in opposing the Arab revolution. We had a number of discussions on the meaning of our backing of the fight to replace the colonial-settler Israeli state with a democratic, secular Palestine. By the end of the day we had sold 16 introductory subscriptions to the *Militant*, 51 copies of the paper, and 38 of *Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation*."

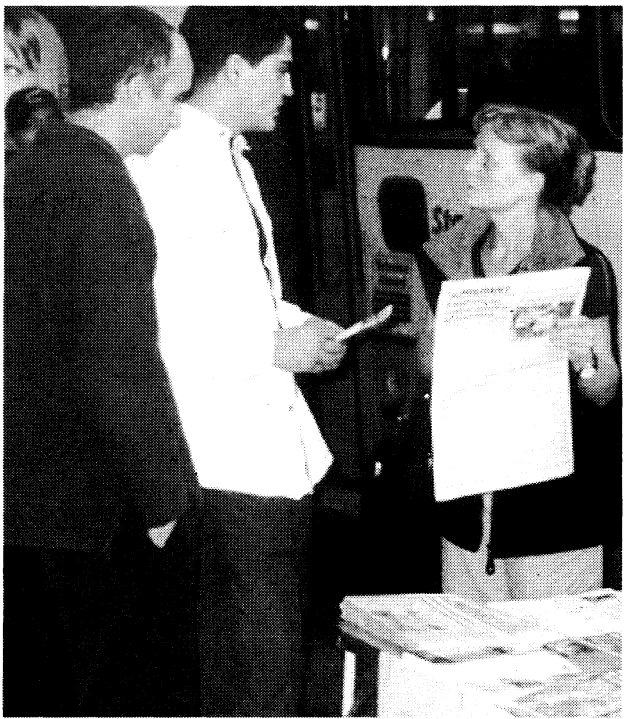
Sara Lobman, a meat packer from Brooklyn, said she found out about the bus she ended up on while staffing a table in the workers district at Sunset Park. "The Palestinian family who owns the deli we were selling in front of told us about the buses being organized at the Islamic Center in Bay Ridge and suggested we sign up."

"The bus was great," said Lobman. "Most of the people on the bus were Arab and the main language used was Arabic. They translated for the handful of us who do not understand the language. Most of the people on the bus we talked to live and work in the area around the mosque. We sold three *Militant* subscriptions and several copies of the paper on the bus. And just recently after the demonstration, one of the individuals who bought a paper on the bus stopped by the table we set up on 39th Street."

Youth interested in revolution

The demonstrations reflected the many young people who are interested in revolutionary politics and are developing anticapitalist ideas. Some expressed interest in learning more about the Young Socialists and gave their phone numbers and e-mail addresses to YS members in order to keep in touch.

"I'm looking for a different kind of party because the Democrats and Republicans are backed by those with big money who are the ones running the government," said



Militant/Janet Roth

Supporters sell *Militant* and Pathfinder books outside U.S. consulate in Auckland, New Zealand, April 9 at rally to oppose Israeli aggression against Palestinian people.

YS member in Texas joins sales effort

BY STEPHANIE TAYLOR

BROWNSVILLE, Texas—With the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* subscription drive in full swing, prospects are looking good here. In the past three weeks, I have managed to sell five *Militant* subscriptions on the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC) campus. Professors and students alike are taking advantage of the special offer for new readers as well as purchasing several Pathfinder books.

Many of those who bought the subscriptions were not familiar with the *Militant*, the Socialist Workers Party, or the Young Socialists. However, they were eager to learn more about the working-class perspective on politics the newspaper has to offer.

With the help of the Houston branch of the Socialist Workers Party as well as other YS members, we plan to organize a sale at the plant gate of the two Levi's plants in Brownsville and San Benito, which are scheduled to shut down soon. This will be a great opportunity to get *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant* into the hands of working people of the Rio Grande Valley.

It was a little over a year ago that I received my first copy of the *Militant* in the mail. My aunt had bought me a subscription and sent me a copy of James P. Cannon's *Socialism on Trial* when she found out I was writing a paper on socialism for my American Political Parties class at UTB/TSC.

Emily Sprouse, a 24-year-old student at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. Sprouse said she is "becoming anticapitalist" and thinks a revolution is needed in the United States. In order to learn more about communism, she bought a copy of the *Militant* and *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

Laura Anderson from New York said that she met two young women at the demonstration who were in the Peace Corps "who told me they were getting demoralized with their work. They bought a *Militant* subscription based on the coverage of the workers defeat of the coup attempt in Venezuela. At first they said they had too many papers, but with more discussion they decide to purchase the subscription. They had already bought a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* earlier in the day."

Anderson said she rode on the bus back to New York with John Gilbert, a Black Vietnam War veteran who told her that upon hearing about the Israeli assault on Jenin in the West Bank, "I knew there had to be a massacre with Apache helicopters, Gatlin guns, and F-16s pounding on the village, then the bulldozers. I was infuriated. I had to go to Washington." Gilbert purchased a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

Socialist workers and YS members in Seattle bolstered their sales by setting up socialist literature tables and showing the periodicals around on the job. John Naubert in Seattle said members of the Socialist Workers Party and the chapter of the Young Socialists got off to a good start in the subscription drive, selling eight *Militant* subscriptions, two *PM* subscriptions, and three copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

"On the first day of the drive we went door-to-door near the Pathfinder bookstore, working as a team that included a member of the Young Socialists, netting two *Militant* subs and a *PM* subscription. During the week we sold a *PM* subscription and the *Cuba* title to an activist involved in a coalition that defends the Cuban Revolution."

Naubert said one member of the Young Socialists made a sign that read, "Stop Israel's war against the Palestinians." It attracted attention when they used it with a literature table on a college campus. "From this we found that students are increasingly critical of the Israeli regime and becoming more supportive of the Palestinian cause," he said. "Our sales efforts at Seattle Central Community College and at the University of Washington resulted in two more *Militant* subscriptions and a copy of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*."

I was amazed at how different the *Militant* was from any other newspaper I had read. It contained articles about working-class struggles from around the world, something I did not have access to here in Brownsville. When my subscription expired, I found myself on the *Militant* web site twice a week.

I finally decided to get involved in the socialist movement and contacted the Houston SWP. After exchanging a few letters by e-mail, I was on my way to my first *Militant* Labor Forum there, and about three weeks later, I joined the Young Socialists. Since then I have been collaborating with the Houston branch and was able to attend the Southeast Regional Socialist Conference in Atlanta where I went to my first YS meeting. Members of the Houston branch and I have been able to set up three literature tables this semester at UTB/TSC.

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Association; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textiles Employees



Militant

Participants check out *Militant* at April 20 demonstration in San Francisco protesting Israeli military assault on Palestinian people and U.S. aid to the regime in Tel Aviv.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Subscription Drive April 13–June 23

Country	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden							
Gothenberg	12	4	33%	2		8	5
Stockholm	10	1	10%	3		5	1
Sweden Total	22	5	23%	5		13	6
New Zealand							
Christchurch	8	2	25%	1		3	
Auckland	10	1	10%	1		5	
N.Z. total	18	3	17%	2		8	
United Kingdom	35	6	17%	12	1	20	4
United States							
Allentown	15	6	40%	5	1	10	1
Washington	25	10	40%	12	2	15	3
NY Garment Dist.	80	30	38%	40	4	50	4
Detroit	35	13	37%	10	3	20	2
Miami	30	10	33%	15	1	15	1
Seattle	30	8	27%	12	2	16	3
Tampa	16	4	25%	6		12	
Twin Cities	50	9	18%	25	4	25	
Brooklyn	45	8	18%	35	5	35	2
Birmingham	20	3	15%	8	1	10	
Newark	55	8	15%	25	3	35	4
Houston	30	4	13%	12	1	20	3
Upper Manhattan	75	10	13%	50	3	40	2
Philadelphia	25	3	12%	10		15	
Pittsburgh	42	5	12%	5		20	
Omaha	9	1	11%	15		10	
Western Colorado	18	2	11%	8		12	
Chicago	35	2	6%	20	2	25	
Los Angeles	35	2	6%	15		10	
Charlotte	18	1	6%	7		10	1
Atlanta	40	2	5%	15	2	30	3
Cleveland	25	1	4%	5		20	4
Boston	30	1	3%	15	2	20	
San Francisco	30	1	3%	18		15	1
Des Moines	40	1	3%	25	4	21	1
Brownsville	4		0%	3			
Tucson	5		0%	1			
U.S. total	862	145	17%	417	40	511	35
Canada							
Toronto	25	5	20%	6		15	1
Montreal	15	1	7%	5	1	16	2
Vancouver	30	1	3%	6		20	2
Canada total	70	7	10%	17	1	51	5
Australia	20		0%	4		12	
Iceland	6		0%	1		4	
Int'l totals	1033	166	16%	458	42	619	50
Goal/Should be	1050	105	10%	460	46	625	62
IN THE UNIONS							
	Militant			PM		Book	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Canada							
UFCW	15	3	20%	1		4	
UNITE	3		0%	2		3	
Total	18	3	17%	3		7	
United States							
UNITE	50	3	6%	45	2	50	
UFCW	50		0%	50		50	
UMWA	15		0%	2		10	
Total	120	3	3%	97	2	110	2
New Zealand							
NDU	1		0%			1	1
MWU	2		0%				
Total	3		0%			1	1
Australia							
AMIEU	3		0%			3	
MUA	2		0%			3	
Total	5		0%			6	

Palestinian official calls Israeli pullout from towns a sham

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Palestinian officials called Israel's partial pullback of its tanks and troops from several towns in the West Bank a sham, as Washington kept up its pressure on Yasir Arafat to do more to clamp down on Palestinian resistance.

After thoroughly devastating major Palestinian population centers on the West Bank, Israeli forces announced they were "withdrawing" from Jenin, Nablus, and parts of Ramallah, though their troops remain stationed on the outskirts of these areas and have imposed blockades around these towns.

The announced Israeli withdrawals are a "big deception," stated Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator.

Israeli troops remain stationed around the main compound of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, in effect cutting the city in half. They also surround the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem where dozens of Palestinian fighters, who are standing up to the Israeli ultimatum to either surrender or go into exile, have been holed up, along with some 200 other people, for the past three weeks. Israeli soldiers in tanks and armored personnel carriers continue to enforce a round-the-clock curfew on this city of 100,000 people.

Secretary of State Colin Powell praised what amounts to Israel's redeployment of its troops in the West Bank and at the same time issued a stern public warning to Palestinian Authority president Arafat. "Now is the time for you to make a choice," Powell stated on a Fox News appearance April 21. "I'm not interested in statements. We'll be looking at actions in the weeks ahead... we've been disappointed many times in the past." Arafat remains under siege by Israeli soldiers stationed outside his compound in Ramallah, much of which has already been destroyed by Israeli firepower.

'He met the timetable'

President George Bush April 18 called Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon a "man of peace." When asked by reporters about the Israeli government's defiance of his April 4 call for a withdrawal "without delay," Bush said, "History will show that they responded. [Sharon] gave me a timetable and he's met the timetable."

While declaring "this stage" of its offensive at an end, Sharon for his part made clear that the assault by the Israeli colonial-settler state against the Palestinians is far from over. Israeli tanks and soldiers remain stationed on Palestinian territory and attacks against Palestinian resistance fighters are continuing.

Just over the past few days, for example, an elite undercover Israeli unit moved into the Kalandia refugee camp on the edge of Ramallah, arresting 13 Palestinians. Another 35 were seized in predawn raids on the outskirts of Bethlehem and Ramallah. The Israeli military sent its tanks and troops into the Gaza Strip, near the town of Rafah, April 19 where they battled Palestinian fighters, killing at least three civilians and wounding six others. Tel Aviv's policy of targeting Palestinians for assassination resumed April 22, with the helicopter-launched missile incinerating the car driven by Marwan Zaloum.

Over the course of their three-week military occupation of virtually every Palestinian town on the West Bank, Israeli forces arrested 1,500 people, detained nearly 3,000 others, killed at least 250 Palestinians, and

left thousands homeless. Palestinian resistance fighters in Jenin succeeded in killing 23 Israelis soldiers and wounding 75. Another six were killed in fighting elsewhere.

Photographs depicting the devastation wrought by Israeli forces in the Jenin refugee camp and Nablus have begun appearing in the capitalist media. As Israeli troops pulled their tanks out of these cities, Palestinians who had been subjected to 24-hour curfews for all but a few hours over the past three weeks began telling their stories. Many described outright thievery and vandalism to which their homes and businesses were subjected by the occupying Israeli forces.

At the Ministry of Public Works in Ramallah, Israeli soldiers blew up the building from the inside, leaving the offices in shambles. According to an article in the April 22 *Washington Post*, "Office managers said computer equipment had been stolen. Shop owners said their businesses had been vandalized. Residents alleged that soldiers had taken money or valuables from their homes. Attempts were made to break open the safes at a bank."

Abdul Jawal Salah, a former city official in Ramallah, said that residents of many of the houses entered by Israeli forces "say they are missing gold, jewelry, or money." A dress shop owner, Qusay Abu Hommos, told the *Post* reporter that Israeli "troops forced 21 members of his extended family into two bedrooms while they used the rest of their residence as a post. He added that the soldiers took a mobile phone, about \$200 in change, some antiques, and his son's GameBoy."

In Jenin, residents began returning to areas where their houses were obliterated by Israeli tanks and bulldozers to search for



The center of Jenin refugee camp, reduced to rubble by Israeli invasion and bombardment. Palestinians are now combing the debris in search of bodies.

their belongings and for remains of family members and friends. So "this is the civilization of the 21st century," commented 36-year-old Abu Ala, upon returning to the site of his father's house.

The Sharon government is now stepping up its effort to set up "buffer zones" along the West Bank, using fences, electronic surveillance equipment, and patrols in an effort to stop Palestinians from entering Israel.

Assaults on Iraq

Meanwhile, Washington is keeping up its military pressure on Iraq. In mid-April U.S. aircraft patrolling the U.S.-imposed "no-fly" zones in the northern and southern parts of the country launched two bombing attacks, the first since February. Further U.S. attacks are in the works, as the Pentagon announced that the Iraqi military has recently moved surface-to-air missiles into both of the "no-fly" zone areas.

Prominent columnists and capitalist politicians in the United States urged Bush to renew the drive to launch a military attack on Iraq. The *Wall Street Journal* editors are urging the Bush administration to get on with this assault. "We believe the best chance for

peace in Palestine, and for stability throughout the entire Middle East, goes through Baghdad," they wrote, adding, "The advice Mr. Bush is now getting, to throw himself into the middle of the Palestinian-Israeli war is a counsel of paralysis."

The editors of the *National Review* expressed similar laments. In an article titled, "Lost. A disastrous policy," the editors wrote in their May 6 issue that the "Bush administration's three-week foray into peace-processing...has only made the prospect of an Iraqi invasion seem all the more distant."

They added that on "some days recently, it has been possible to imagine the unthinkable: that the war on terrorism might have already seen its greatest success and will gradually peter out in a series of far-flung military-advising missions (the Philippines, Georgia, etc.), while the main event—transforming the Middle East—founders on Arab opposition."

Urging the Bush administration to make "a clean break from its current path," the article says, will make it possible for Washington to "concentrate again on a benefit to the region that it actually has the power to deliver—the fall of the Baathist regime in Iraq."

75,000 rally to back Palestinian struggle

Continued from front page

calling them terrorist organizations, while the U.S. government continues to send military equipment to the Israelis."

She noted the massive devastation wrought by the recent Israeli military offensive with U.S.-made warplanes and tanks, saying how one of her relatives had been slain a couple of days before the protest. "Palestinians are being killed every day, but all we hear about is suicide bombings and Jews dying because the media is so one-sided."

The serious, organized and disciplined participation of the Palestinians set the tone for the march and rally, which also attracted layers of workers and thousands of high school and college students. Many of the students drove here in cars and vans. Daniel Keller, a 15-year-old at Roper High School in the Detroit area, said he and his classmate, 15-year-old Laurel Parker, and other students were unsuccessful in getting his school to sponsor a bus so they came in a van.

"I'm against the 'war on terrorism' and the bombing of Afghanistan," he said. "I'm Jewish but I'm not a Zionist. I don't think what the Israeli government is doing will solve the problem."

Since it had been announced, the capitalist press and police had violence-baited the action, putting the entire police department on alert here and recruiting cops from nearby jurisdictions in Maryland and Virginia for the weekend. The city's police chief, Charles Ramsey, conceded, "The organizers did an outstanding job."

The day began with a feeder march and rally in support of the Palestinian fight. That action was called to protest the decision of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee to give a leadership award to Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon. The pro-Israeli lobby group held a conference here over the weekend.

Following a three-mile march participants in the feeder action were cheered enthusiastically as they joined the tens of thousands already gathered at the Ellipse just behind the White House.

"I am so happy today," said 22-year-old

Shara Amal, who came with a caravan of 30 buses organized by mosques from Detroit, and the surrounding area. "For the first time we have come together by the thousands to speak out against what is happening to us in Palestine and in this country," he said. "This demonstration lets the world know we will not be silent."

End the occupation

Thirteen-year-old Mohomad Shahin said he came to "oppose the genocide against our people in Palestine." There can't be peace until Israel ends the occupation and stops the murders," he added. Shahin said that seven busloads had come from the Patterson, New Jersey, area. They were organized by the Islamic Center of Passaic County.

"America calls us terrorists because of the suicide bombings. But the Israelis have jet bombers, tanks, and other weapons paid for by America," Shahin explained. "Suicide bombers are the weapons of the poor. We fight with what we have."

Many demonstrators came from northern Virginia where just weeks before FBI agents had carried out a raid on several Islamic research, educational, and charity organizations. With sealed warrants the cops also raided some homes. In one case a mother and her daughter were held in handcuffs for five hours while the cops searched their home. Correspondence, financial records, and computers were taken but no charges or arrests were made.

Several signs and banners in the march read, "Israel Out of the Occupied Territories! U.S. Out of Vieques!" Nahbi Reality, a young Puerto Rican from Bronx, New York, said, "What is happening to the Palestinians is just like in Vieques. Israel must withdraw from Palestine and the U.S. must end its occupation and bombing of Vieques."

The U.S. government maintains a naval base on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques where it also conducts military exercises. There were widespread protests on the island demanding an end to the exercises after two U.S. Navy warplanes on a training mission for Washington's 1999 bombing campaign against Yugoslavia dropped 500-

pound bombs on a lookout post that killed David Sanes, a Vieques resident employed by the Navy as a security guard.

Opposition to attacks on workers' rights

Initially called to "Stop the War at Home and Abroad," the march and rally also drew large contingents carrying banners that read, "Defend civil liberties! No to the Patriot Act!" "Stop the attacks on immigrants! and end racial profiling!" read others.

Many carried banners opposing U.S. policy in Colombia and throughout Latin America. About 2,000 participants attended a rally at the Washington Monument the following day.

There were also several protests at a meeting of officials of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The march and rally capped a week of activities, including teach-ins on area campuses.

At the San Francisco action as well, many participants had been organizing against the U.S. government attacks on civil liberties and workers' rights after the September 11 events. Erlinda Valencia, an airport worker and member of the Service Employees International Union, set up a table in support of the 1,200 airport security screeners who will lose their job after new federal legislation requiring screeners to be U.S. citizens takes effect.

Ralph Santos, a student at California State University at Long Beach, and member of a chapter of the Bayan International movement, called for the United States to withdraw its troops from the Philippines. The U.S. government announced the previous week they were sending additional troops to the country as part of the "war on terror."

Jessica Fitzgerald of San Diego came to the San Francisco march to back the fight for Palestinian liberation. She carried an Irish flag with a message written over it that equated the Palestinian struggle with the Irish struggle, and pointed out that in both places people are fighting against a military occupation and for their liberation.

Emily Paul and Rollande Girard contributed to this article from San Francisco.

FROM PATHFINDER

Israel and the Arab Revolution

Fundamental Principles of Revolutionary Marxism

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Israel and the Arab Revolution

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Socialists discuss work in garment industry

BY MARY MARTIN

LOS ANGELES—Socialist workers employed in the garment and textile industries held a national meeting here April 13–14 to assess progress in their work and to chart a course to strengthen the impact of the communist movement among their co-workers and in the union.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists at the meeting belong to the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) or are collaborating with co-workers to take steps toward a union in plants and factories where there is not yet one recognized by the bosses. Many at the meeting hold jobs as sewing machine operators in garment shops from Miami to Seattle and from New York to Los Angeles. Others are machine operators in textile mills in Alabama, Georgia, Massachusetts, and North Carolina.

The downtown Los Angeles El Centro area where the meeting was held is one of a number of major garment manufacturing centers in this country. Tens of thousands of skilled sewers and other workers are employed in hundreds of garment shops here, generating profits for the garment bosses and the big clothing companies that contract work out to those operations. A majority of the workers are foreign-born and bring to the U.S. working class their political and class-struggle experiences in Latin America, Asia, and elsewhere.

Impact of world political events

One feature of the meeting was how the struggles of garment workers for better wages and conditions on the job is intertwined with political discussions and debate among garment workers on developments in world politics, flowing from immigration and the penetration of the tentacles of U.S. imperialism throughout the world. From the failed U.S.-backed military coup in Venezuela to the Palestinian struggle, participants in the meeting explained the opportunities to talk socialism on the job; introduce co-workers to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and revolutionary books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder; and bring co-workers to Militant Labor Forums, political events, and strikes and actions by other unionists.

The decades-long offensive by the bosses against garment workers has taken a heavy toll in Los Angeles, where only a handful of garment shops are unionized. The continued weakening of unions in the United States as a result of the class-collaborationist policies of the union officialdom means many workers in the industry earn low wages and receive few benefits. Many workers make ends meet by putting in well over 40 hours a week on the job.

In the morning prior to the meeting, three teams of socialist workers fanned out in El Centro and set up socialist literature tables in order to meet and discuss politics with dozens of garment workers and others at bus stops and street corners in the area. The garment bosses regularly schedule a half day of work on Saturday.

Ned Measel, a textile worker from Atlanta, said dozens of garment workers stopped at the table on their way to work. Two workers bought copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* and another spent 30 minutes look-

ing through *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. Socialists on the early morning teams sold a subscription each to the *Militant* and *PM*, 15 single copies of the two periodicals, and two titles published by Pathfinder Press.

Lessons of meat packers' struggle

A political centerpiece of the fraction meeting was a report given by SWP leader Joel Britton, one of 200 meatpacking workers in Chicago who were illegally fired from their jobs by bosses at the American Meatpacking Corporation (AMPAC) last November.

Since then, the Black, Latino, Polish, and other workers have joined together and reached out for support from working people in Chicago, demanding the company pay back wages and severance benefits, along with extended medical coverage. They have held support meetings as well as a picket line at the plant gate, and are pursuing a legal challenge to the company's actions.

Britton explained how communist workers at the plant, together with other fighting workers, are part of a broader social movement that is resisting the assaults by the employers and their government. By relying on themselves and seeking support from other workers and working-class organizations, the fired workers have raised the political price the bosses have to pay for denying them rights and benefits. Some of these fighting workers who don't yet think of themselves as communists are attracted to the working-class explanations provided by members of the SWP and Young Socialists. (A full report on Britton's presentation is available in last week's *Militant*, "Meat packers' battles are becoming part of a social movement.")

Involvement in the AMPAC workers' fight has helped the SWP 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.

Britton noted that the experience in Chicago is one that communist workers in the garment industry and UNITE can look forward to as their collective political work and experiences take root among that section of the working class.

Fight at Win Fashions

In the discussion Rolande Girard from San Francisco, who works in a pants factory as a label sewer, explained the fight by workers formerly employed at Win Fash-

ions companies. The garment workers were cheated out of thousands of dollars in wages before the company closed its doors. In response, the workers have organized protests to demand back pay and to expose the company's practices. She noted that historically the bosses have tried to isolate workers whose first language is Chinese from non-Chinese workers. Nevertheless, their fight is receiving some support from other garment workers.

Girard has also been part of discussions

Continued on Page 12

New York teachers demand contract as city prepares more cuts



Teachers in New York picketed April 15 as part of citywide protests demanding a contract. Inset: United Federation of Teachers members hold placards at April 16 press conference where union leaders announced their claim for a 22.7 percent wage increase. City authorities are offering 16.6 percent. Teachers and other city employees, along with high school students, have begun protests against Mayor Michael Bloomberg's proposals to overcome budget deficit by implementing some \$1.3 billion worth of wage reductions and service cuts.

Meatpacking workers in Chicago file class action lawsuit against AMPAC

BY PATRICIA THOMAS

CHICAGO—"In November we lost our jobs. They just threw us out without any kind of benefits," said meat packer Rufino Peña. "We deserved better than that. I urge everyone to support our class action law suit, which we just filed."

Peña worked at the American Meat Packing Corporation (AMPAC) hog slaughterhouse for 27 years until the owner shut the plant without notice. He was speaking at an April 17 news conference here to announce the filing of a suit against the company in Federal District Court.

Fifty of the illegally terminated AMPAC workers who have been at the center of the fight to protest the closure joined Peña and other named plaintiffs at the press conference. Along with attorney Jorge Sánchez, they had just returned from filing the legal papers. WBBM-AM News Radio and Spanish television channel 66 reported on the

news conference.

In their suit, the workers, most of whom are longtime members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), charge AMPAC with violating the Workers Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN), which requires that workers be given at least 60 days notice of plant closings. The suit also charges that AMPAC violated the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act and breached the collective bargaining agreement with the UFCW. Many workers are owed wages, vacation pay, and other compensation.

UFCW Local 1546 vice-president Javier Ramírez joined José Landaverde, executive director of the Latino Union, and Father Brendan Curran of St. Pius Catholic Church, in a show of support at the news conference.

The officers and staff of UFCW Local 789 in South St. Paul, Minnesota, forwarded a message of solidarity from two dozen meat packers at Dakota Premium Foods, a packing plant in the area. The message declared, "An attack on one is an attack on all!"

Some 35 workers at ConAgra Beef in Omaha, Nebraska, sent their support and reported that "we are having an election May 3 to win UFCW representation in our plant and we hope to come out victorious in our fight. We wish you victory as well."

Rymer workers join fight

Also attending the press conference to demonstrate their support for the AMPAC workers were UFCW steward Marguerite Martínez and five other workers from Rymer Foods, which closed down in February with no notice to its workers.

Martínez explained how the Rymer workers are fighting for compensation, inspired by the AMPAC workers' struggle. The Rymer workers were called at their homes, she said, and told that they no longer had jobs. This is "totally unacceptable, we have rights as workers, as human beings. We are not animals. We are looking for something better than this," Martínez said.

Gladys Reyes, who worked at Rymer for 12 years, held a sign in Spanish that said,

"They threw us out like garbage, without rights or respect for the years served."

The Rymer workers told the *Militant* that the company stopped paying medical insurance premiums a month before they were terminated, so nothing has been paid on medical bills they had submitted, leading to harassment from bill collectors.

Ana Rosa Solís, who worked at Rymer for 15 years, pointed to their signs saying that in 25 years, the minimum wage has only increased by \$3.05. She explained that with the price of everything going up, workers have actually suffered years of pay cuts. "We all have to fight this too," she said.

Former AMPAC workers carried signs in Polish and Spanish as well as English. C.D. Quinn, a Black meat packer who hired into AMPAC in 1954, carried a Polish sign. Quinn told the *Militant* that due to an accident he missed work the day AMPAC closed last November. When he came back the next day, he said, "The personnel manager said, 'Just throw that doctor's note in the garbage.' In all those years, nothing has ever happened like this."

Another former AMPAC worker, Lupe Peña, has been through a long struggle to get adequate compensation since he lost his hand in a machine at the plant in 1972. After he was fitted with a prosthesis he was placed in the sanitation department, but after 29 years was only receiving \$8.70 an hour. He told the *Militant*, "When they shut the plant down, they threw the workers out like we were flies."

Joel Britton, who had worked in AMPAC's Upper Kill floor, chaired the news conference and told reporters that the owner's claim to have shut down because of actions by government inspectors is bogus. "The fights by the AMPAC and Rymer workers, and their families and friends, in opposition to the devastating losses of jobs, pensions, medical and other benefits, have set an example for others to follow, whatever the outcome may be in Judge Carrillo's courtroom across the street."

The company has several weeks to reply to the suit of the AMPAC workers.

Hundreds in New Zealand condemn Israeli aggression against Palestinians

BY FIONA WILLIAMS

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Four protest actions, involving hundreds of people, have been held here over the past two weeks to oppose Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. The actions have been overwhelmingly composed of people of Middle Eastern and Arab descent, including many young men and women who have led the chants and spoken at the rallies.

On April 6, 400 people marched down Auckland's main street to the U.S. consulate and back in pouring rain, chanting, "Free, free Palestine" and "One, two, three, four, occupation no more!" On both April 9 and 12, around 200 people rallied outside the consulate in the early evening, drawing interest from a number of passersby on their way home from work. On April 20, 400 people again marched and rallied in the central city.

Protests have also been held in the capital, Wellington. Some 200 people attended a rally in the city center April 9.

Fighters for the rights of Maori, an oppressed nationality in New Zealand, have joined some of the protests. Peter Love, of the Te Atiawa tribe, told the Wellington rally, "Maori stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people. We understand what it is all about to lose your land. We understand how big the loss is. We're here to help in any way we can."

Supporters of the *Militant* have found keen interest in the paper's coverage of the Palestinian struggle. Around 50 copies of the paper have been sold at the Auckland actions, and a number of people have asked to be called back about a subscription.

Christine Beresford in Wellington contributed to this article.

From fight against Batista to 'E' Víctor Dreke speaks on the Cul

The following are remarks by Víctor Dreke at the February 21 public meeting in Trinidad, Cuba, to celebrate the publication of *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*.

Dreke, the author of the new title from Pathfinder Press, joined the struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the 1950s as a high school student. He was a cadre of the July 26 Movement and then the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate and a combatant in the Rebel Army. After the 1959 workers and peasants victory, Dreke commanded the volunteer battalions that defeated the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba. He later joined the internationalist column led by Ernesto Che Guevara to aid anti-imperialist forces in the Congo and then commanded the Cuban military mission in Guinea Bissau that aided the national liberation forces there fighting for independence from Portugal. For several decades he has been a representative of the Cuban Revolution throughout Africa, and is currently the director of construction projects in Africa of the Havana-based National Union of Caribbean Construction Enterprises (UNECA).

The Trinidad meeting was one of more than half a dozen such events held across central Cuba in mid-February. Hundreds of people, from high school students to veterans of the revolutionary war, participated in book presentations in Sagua la Grande, Santa Clara, Placetas, Sancti Spiritus, Trinidad, and Manicaragua (see article "Book tour visits six cities in central Cuba" in the April 29 *Militant*).

The meetings in central Cuba were 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. 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. Among those who accompanied Dreke on the tour and spoke at presentations of the book were Iraidia Aguirrechu, the current affairs editor of *Editora Política*, who organized editorial work on the book in Cuba, and Mary-Alice Waters, the president of Pathfinder Press, editor of *From the Escambray to the Congo*, and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

The Trinidad meeting was held at the city's National Museum of the Lucha Contra Bandidos (the fight against the counterrevolutionary bandits). Museum workers helped to prepare an attractive display in the hallways and the courtyard of the building to publicize the event, using blowups of book covers and a spread of Pathfinder books and pamphlets. In addition to Dreke, the speakers included Waters; Félix Pérez Zúñiga, first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba in Trinidad; Aurelio Gutiérrez, a Trinidadian writer and historian; and Aguirrechu, who chaired the meeting.



Top and right: Militant/Jonathan Silberman; bottom left: courtesy of Víctor Dreke
Top: Panel of speakers in Trinidad, Cuba, at presentation of *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*. The meeting was one of six held in cities in central Cuba during February. On the platform, left to right: Golbán Marín Valdivia, Félix Pérez Zúñiga, Mary-Alice Waters, Dreke, Iraidia Aguirrechu, and Aurelio Gutiérrez. Dreke, who has a record of five decades of revolutionary activity, speaks at bottom left at a 1959 meeting sponsored by Revolutionary Directorate in Sagua la Grande, 11 months after the triumph of the revolutionary struggle. Bottom right: at the book presentation at the Havana International Book Fair in February.

Also on the platform were Manuel Albolay, the president of the local Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution; museum director Héctor Manuel Vieras; and Golbán Marín Valdivia, known by his nom-de-guerre Wasiri. Marín fought under Dreke's command both in the Escambray struggle against the U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary bands, and in the 1965 Cuban internationalist mission to the Congo.

The tour followed three presentations of the book in Havana: one, attended by more than 200 people, was a feature event at the February 7-17 Havana International Book Fair; the others were organized February 8 at a UNECA workers assembly of some 70 people, and at a February 17 gathering of more than 100 people in the Nautico neighborhood. Altogether, from the opening of Pathfinder's stand at the book fair through the nine presentations, some 1,010 copies of *From the Escambray to the Congo* were distributed and sold in Cuba.

BY VÍCTOR DREKE

It is a source of great joy and enthusiasm for me to launch this book here in Trinidad, and especially here at the Museum of the Lucha Contra Bandidos. For a number of years I have participated in events you've hosted and the *compañeros* here have more than once urged me to write and speak about that fight.

This book is intimately linked to Trinidad. Among other things, the final touches on it were done here in this town. The *compañeros* in Trinidad recall that a few months ago we were here. And in the midst of our activities we were receiving calls—calls from the publishing house in New York to *compañera* Iraidia in Havana, and from Iraidia to Ana [Morales, Dreke's wife]. They would call me and say: Such-and-such a fact is missing in the book. What does this mean? Who is the Mayaguara Horse? Who is so-and-so? What is the Loma del Puerto? Many questions. And with the "Chief of Staff" at home—Ana—I had to respond; I had no choice.

But I did it with pleasure, and I credit the efforts the *compañeros* made to publish this book. They managed to ease my reluctance somewhat, because it's difficult

for me to talk about myself.

Two days ago, when we were launching the book in Santa Clara, an older gentleman, the historian of Santa Clara, approached me. He gave me a warm embrace and told me, "Before dying I would like to write your biography. You have to help me." I made a commitment to him. It's a commitment we're going to have to fulfill, because it was that *compañero's* wish. He is someone who knows a lot, perhaps more than I can remember—he told me two or three things that I didn't even remember and he did.

From rebel to revolutionary

Today we're launching this book at a historic place for the Cuban Revolution, and one that is part of my own life as a revolutionary.

In its opening pages, the book takes up how I joined the revolutionary movement. I became involved in Sagua la Grande on March 10, 1952, when Fulgencio Batista carried out his coup d'état. I turned 15 that same day.

But I didn't become involved as a revolutionary. I went into the streets with the students, shouting, "Down with Batista! Down with the coup!" We threw rocks. Perhaps I said, "Long live the 1940 constitution!" And I may have even said, "Long live Pío!"

We were fighting against someone who had carried out a coup against the constitution. One of the few things they taught us in school—although it was meant to tame us—was the respect one was supposed to have for the law and the constitution. They taught us about it from the standpoint of their own interests. They told us the 1940 constitution declared that "all citizens are free" and that "we all enjoy the same rights." And we responded to that.

So when I went into the streets on March 10, 1952, I didn't do so as a revolutionary, but simply as a young person protesting against what had happened. And if at that time Pío's army had provided us with arms, perhaps we would have died defending that government instead of the revolution.

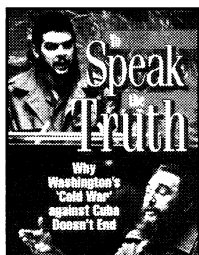
So that's how I became involved. We participated in the underground struggle: in the July 26 Movement and later in the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate. I had to flee Sagua clandestinely. The army found out about us. They took one of our *compañeros* prisoner. They tortured him, and he talked and gave the names of the members of his revolutionary cell. Of course, he revealed that I was the head of that group. The army set out to capture me.

There was one *compañero*—Eduardo Oropesa, who lives in Sagua—who managed to escape and reached the house where I was living with my mother; my father had already died. Eduardo told me so-and-so had been arrested, and it appeared that he had talked because they had already grabbed a number of *compañeros*. I concluded from what he said that practically the entire revolutionary cell had been captured and that they were torturing the *compañeros*.

At that moment I decided to escape and fled the house on bicycle. I went to the neighborhood where I had been born. The army arrived looking for me but I had already managed to flee. They hid me in vari-

The 1940 constitution, marked by the legacy of the 1933 revolutionary upsurge that toppled the U.S.-backed Machado dictatorship, provided for land reform and other democratic measures, although these remained a dead letter under successive pro-imperialist regimes. After seizing power Batista abrogated the constitution, and the forces fighting the dictatorship demanded its restitution. President Carlos Prío Socarrás was overthrown by Batista, and was a leader of the bourgeois opposition to the dictatorship. After the 1959 revolutionary victory he left Cuba for the United States.

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attle of Ideas: an Revolution

ous locations. The army sealed off all roads in and out of the city.

The compañeros of the July 26 Movement decided to get me out of Sagua. To do this they snuck me out by putting me inside a cabinet and took me to another location in the city. I mention this because these are the kinds of things people still talk about—the famous cabinet. Today there must about 10,000 people in Sagua who say they helped get me out!

In the revolutionary war

From that point on I had to go underground. I went to Havana and then came back, to the Escambray mountains. When I arrived, there was already a small group of compañeros in the Escambray.

In the camp there were the combatants led by Commander Víctor Bordón Machado, of the July 26 Movement, the movement to which I belonged and which had led me up to the mountains. In addition there was another group of combatants, from the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, which had opened a guerrilla front called the Second Front of the Escambray.²

There was a division in the Directorate's

had been designated by the March 13 leadership to go up to the mountains to prepare for Faure Chomón's arrival in Cuba in an expedition that landed Feb. 8, 1958. Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo betrayed his organization, the Revolutionary Directorate, and he took the name Second Front.

I wanted to clarify these facts, because later, when we speak about the bandits, it helps explain why the Escambray was chosen by the bandits and CIA to try to make it a counterrevolutionary stronghold. But I'm not trying to explain everything here. If I do that you won't read the book. What I'm saying now adds to what's in the book.

Che's arrival in the Escambray

All of you know about the struggle in the Escambray, about the various guerrilla fronts that existed until the arrival of the forces led by our Commander Ernesto Che Guevara, who came with specific instructions from Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro to unite all the revolutionary forces in the Escambray. All the genuine revolutionaries in Cuba, regardless of the color, the words, or the numbers appearing on their armbands, recognized Fidel Castro as the central leader of the revolution and the



Courtesy of Victor Dreke

Víctor Dreke, at right, in the Republic of Guinea. In the center is a wounded fighter from the Guinea Bissau liberation movement. After serving as second in command to Che Guevara in the column of Cuban volunteers that fought in the Congo in 1965, Dreke commanded the Cuban military mission in Guinea Bissau that aided the national liberation forces fighting for independence from Portugal.

Second Front, due to the betrayal by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo, who was expelled from this student organization. But he and his group continued to use the name Second Front of the Escambray. Later the people labeled them the *comevacas* (the cow-eaters) of the Escambray.³

I say this because sometimes history is not properly explained, so young people do not know the details of what happened. Sometimes it's said that the Second Front began things in the Escambray, but that's mistaken. It was the Revolutionary Directorate that began the struggle in the Escambray. And Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo was not the head of the Second Front; he didn't have an organization of his own. He

armed struggle.

Che's column arrived after a long march and many difficulties along the way. But some of those who called themselves the Second Front attempted to prevent Che from entering the Escambray. I say "some of them" because in order to be true to history—and we must always be truthful—there were individuals in that organization who continued to act as honest, honorable, and revolutionary persons, and who remain so today. Some are members of our Communist Party today and I know they would give their lives for the Cuban Revolution, at the side of Fidel. Here in Trinidad, especially, I want this to be clear.

On Dec. 1, 1958, the Pedrero Pact was signed by the Directorate and the July 26 Movement. This act took place under heavy bombardment by Batista's army, which prevented some from reaching Pedrero.

Personally I believe that the first expression of revolutionary unity in Las Villas province—between the Directorate and the July 26 Movement led by Che in the Escambray—actually took place before the Pedrero Pact. Why do I say before? Because on Nov. 22, 1958, combined forces of the March 13 Directorate and the July 26 Movement—one force led by compañero Commander Angel Frias Roblejo, who died after the triumph of the revolution in an

⁴Rebel Army commanders Raúl Castro and Juan Almeida led, respectively, the Second Eastern Front in the Sierra Maestra mountains, near Santiago de Cuba, and the Third Front in the easternmost part of Cuba.



Militant/Brian Taylor

Participants in book presentation in Manicaragua, in the Escambray, above, included many who had fought in the revolutionary war, in the struggle against the counterrevolutionary bandits in the Escambray mountains, or on internationalist missions.

accident, and the other led by Mr. Rolando Cubela, who later betrayed the revolution—carried out the first combined attack on the tyranny's garrison at Caracusey, a place very close to here.

So the Pedrero Pact established in writing the revolutionary unity that became reality with Che's arrival in the Escambray.

The war unfolded. Other battles took place. And Trinidad was taken on Dec. 28, 1958, led by compañero Faure Chomón. At the same time the attack on Santa Clara was taking place, led by Commander Ernesto Guevara. And finally on Jan. 1, 1959, the tyranny fell and the country was liberated.

At the time, a lot of tall tales and outrageous things were told about the taking of Trinidad and the attitude of the heroic people of that city. I say this to the young people. As the enemies of the revolution attempted to make this region a bastion of the counterrevolution, things that happened were blamed on Trinidad. Every time there was a problem some would speak badly of the people of Trinidad.

Why the Escambray?

After the revolutionary victory, the enemies of the revolution—those who had betrayed it and been expelled by the Directorate, and others who had previously fought with the Directorate, such as the bandit Osvaldo Ramírez—attempted to seize the Escambray as a stronghold of the counterrevolution.

That's why, when you speak of the history of the revolutionary war and the fight against the bandits in the Escambray, you have to go back to the guerrilla struggle there prior to the arrival of Commander

Ernesto Guevara. If you don't, you're afraid to face up to history while some of us who were part of it are still alive.

That was the reality. And it's the answer to the journalists and to everyone who asks us: Why were the bandits able to make their base in the Escambray and not the Sierra Maestra? Because in the Sierra Maestra there was Fidel Castro. Why not in the Third Front? Because the leader there was Juan Almeida. Why not in the Second Eastern Front? Because the leader there was Raúl Castro.⁴

So why the Escambray? Because in the Escambray a deep division took place. In addition to a genuinely revolutionary group, there was a small group—fortunately quite small—who were not revolutionaries, and some of them managed to grab official posts and take advantage of them. The book tells about some of these things, so you can read about them in greater detail.

Why did the counterrevolutionary bandits take up arms in the mountains? Because the Rebel Army had come down from the mountains, having fought for many months after Fidel established the guerrilla fronts, and these people believed they could repeat the same history—that one day they would enter the streets of Havana, with or without beards.

But three things were different. First, Fidel Castro was not Batista, and second, the Rebel Army was not Batista's army. Thirdly, a revolution can be carried out with the people, but a counterrevolution can never be successfully carried out against the people.

The people have shown this. All the militia members who came from other prov-

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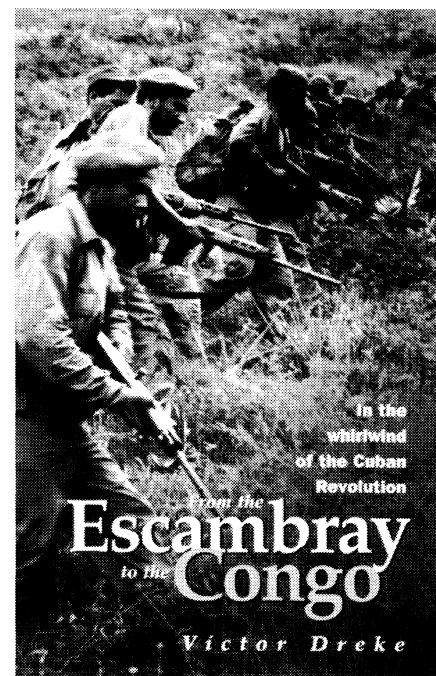
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Continued from Page 9

inces heroically mobilized to combat the counterrevolutionary bandits. Workers, peasants, and students mobilized, and there are many of you here who took part in that struggle. Here with us are Golbán and other compañeros who mobilized to defend the revolution. They showed then that they were revolutionaries and that Trinidad was not a mafia of bandits.

At the beginning of the fight against the counterrevolutionary bands, in November 1960, compañero Commander Piti Fajardo was killed near here. You all know the story of Piti—a doctor and Rebel Army combatant who was the first head of the struggle against the counterrevolutionary bands. At that time there were already thousands of bandits who moved about in formations of 40, 50, or 100. They believed that “freedom” was fast approaching, that they would soon once again take away our schools, take away our racial equality, take away everything the revolution had achieved.

There were other attacks, including the one explained quite well by compañero Aurelio, the attempted landing by Trujillo's troops in Trinidad.⁵ The Dominican dictator Trujillo wanted to take this city in order to turn it over to the capitalists again. And the counterrevolutionaries were captured in an operation personally led by our commander-in-chief Fidel, along with Camilo [Cienfuegos], Celia [Sánchez], and other compañeros. In that way the first group of mercenaries that came to drive the revolution from power were defeated.

Then the great cleanup of the Escambray took place, with 50,000 compañeros taking part, and the enemy was defeated before the mercenary invasion on April 17, 1961, at Playa Girón.⁶



Héctor Manuel Vieras, director of the National Museum of the Lucha Contra Bandidos, uses a museum map to show the areas of concentration of the counterrevolutionaries in the early 1960s. The bandits, says Dreke, “believed that they would soon take away our schools, take away our racial equality, take away everything the revolution had achieved.”

‘Proletarian combing operations’

Today a compañero visiting here expressed an opinion about the book's cover photo, which depicts a combing operation in the Escambray. The compañero, who said he had been part of the struggle against the bandits, saw the cover and said combing operations weren't done that way. The

compañero thought—I don't know if he's here or not—that the photo must have been posed.

First, I have to say that he's partly correct. Combing operations were not supposed to be done like that, with the soldiers practically on top of each other. There were supposed to be five to ten meters separating them.

But who would say it never happened like this, with one on top of another? Sometimes one group advanced faster than another and someone in back could mistakenly shoot someone in front.

[A woman in the audience says: “That's how they wounded Angelito.”]

She says that's how Angelito was wounded. Yes, and others as well. So this is a photo of an actual combing operation. I don't honestly know where this picture was taken, or who took this picture, which has surprised many people and is very striking. But it shows what a combing operation is.

This depicts a proletarian combing operation. Do you remember what we called a “proletarian combing operation?” It was when three or four battalions advanced together and the distance between the men was similar to how you're seated in this hall.

Yes, it wasn't the “correct” way. But why was it done? Because there were times when the bandits—two, three, or four men—remained hidden on the ground. And we would pass over them time and again without finding them. That's when we carried out the proletarian combing operations, where the combatants were shoulder to shoulder.

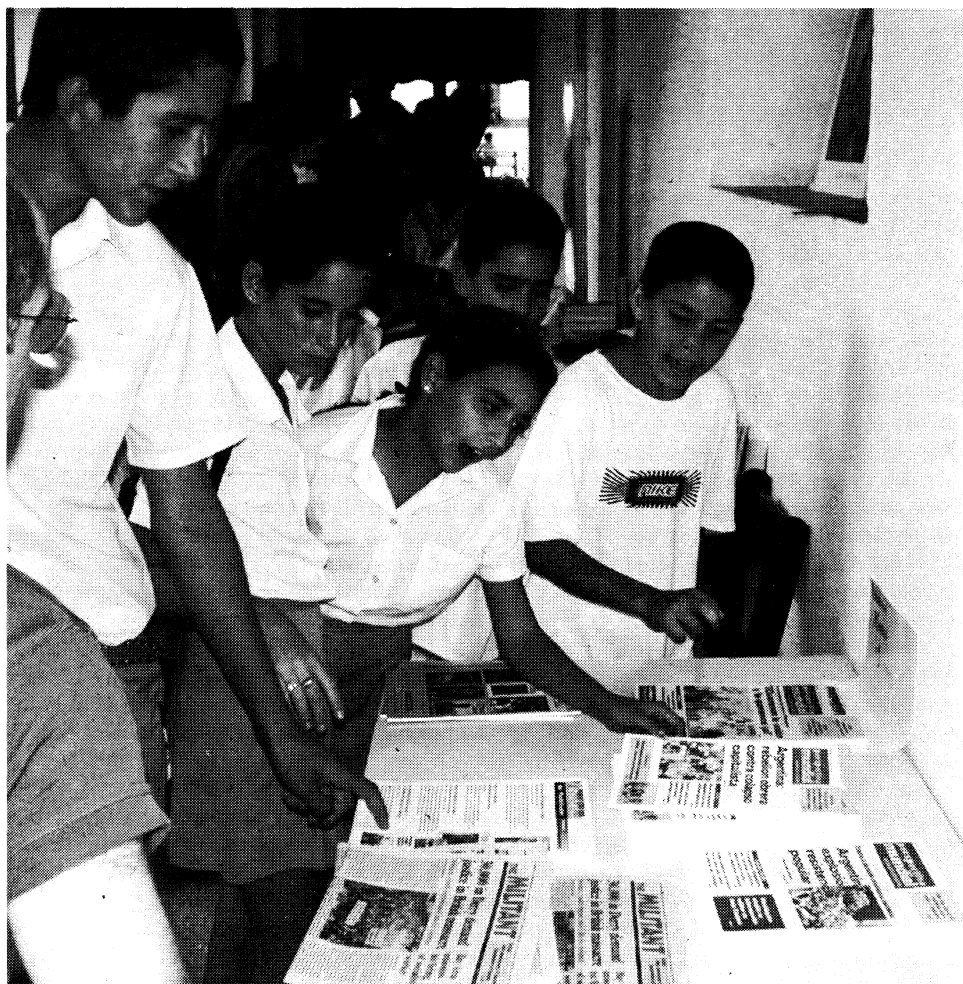
When those combing operations were carried out, almost all of us who held positions of command accompanied our compañeros in those proletarian combing operations.

That's how Piti Fajardo lost his life and that's how others of our commanders here nearly died: because they were on the front lines together with the combatants, as our commander-in-chief taught us.⁷ He was the first to comb these mountains, rifle in hand, against the bandits, acting with courage, as Fidel has always done.

The combing operation portrayed in the photo was carried out by an infantry battalion from Oriente. How do we know that? Because the only battalion here armed with FAL rifles was that one,

which was led at that time by Captain Manuel “Tito” Herrera, who later became head of the *Lucha Contra Bandidos* units here.

They came from Oriente to help us. A huge combing operation was carried out—Golbán and the other older compañeros in this room will remember—where we utilized



Militant/Brian Taylor

After the book presentation, secondary school students in Trinidad crowd around a table of revolutionary literature to buy *Perspectiva Mundial*, which carried a chapter of *From the Escambray to the Congo*. “I was very happy in Trinidad to see how many youth were at the meeting,” Dreke said at book launch the next day in Manicaragua.

all the Lucha Contra Bandidos battalions from the Escambray, Camagüey, Havana, Oriente, and from all the provinces, on the Topes de Collantes highway. That whole plain and all of those dense mountains were combed to flush out the bandits.

But that combing operation had another purpose too. When the Oriente compañeros arrived, some of them at first had the idea that those who hadn't participated in the fight in Oriente during the revolutionary war didn't know how to fight like them. So a certain division between Lucha Contra Bandidos compañeros who had just arrived and those who were already here was arising. We're talking about 1963 not 1970; the

revolutionary victory was still new.

So we said: we're going to solve this problem. We gathered all the LCB battalions from here and from the other provinces and we launched a combing operation. It was a devastating operation. To carry it out, we chose the leaders who had proven in Las Villas how to fight. We put the Mayaguara Horse in charge of one battalion, and Olacocha in charge of another, and the same with other leaders. Tito Herrera and I were at the head of these five or six battalions.⁸

It was practically impossible to carry out



Courtesy of Victor Dreke

Dreke cutting sugar cane as part of voluntary mobilizations in 1970.

⁵In August 1959, a plane carrying Cuban and other counterrevolutionaries, organized by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, was captured after landing at the Trinidad airport.

⁶From December 1960 through the opening months of 1961, tens of thousands of militia members from throughout Cuba were mobilized in what became known as a “cleanup” operation to wipe out the counterrevolutionary bands.

⁷Manuel “Piti” Fajardo was the first head of the fight against the bandits. He was killed in combat against counterrevolutionary forces in the Escambray in November 1960.

⁸Gustavo Castellón, also known by his nom de guerre, the Mayaguara Horse, was a member of the Revolutionary Directorate column in the Escambray during the revolutionary war, and subsequently head of a special LCB unit. Catalino Olacocha served as a lieutenant in the Lucha Contra Bandidos and was a company commander in Che Guevara's column in the Congo.

⁹“Schools in the countryside” are part of Cuban high school education, in which study is combined with productive agricultural work in the countryside.

¹⁰Conrado Benítez, a 19-year-old literacy volunteer, was murdered by a counterrevolutionary band in the Escambray in January 1961. Literacy volunteer Manuel Ascunce, 16, and Pedro Lantigua, a peasant he was teaching to read and write, were murdered by counterrevolutionaries in November 1961.

¹¹In January 1963, a counterrevolutionary band attacked the small village of Polo Viejo, near El Condado in the Escambray. Although the bandits set the town on fire, the revolutionary militias fought off the attackers.

¹²In December 1963, at Loma del Puerto near Trinidad, the Pedro González gang attacked and set fire to a bus carrying paper workers from a nearby factory, killing some of the workers, and then ambushed an army vehicle, murdering its occupants.

¹³Tatawí is the name of a mystical figure in Cuban folklore that disappears mysteriously and then keeps reappearing.

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

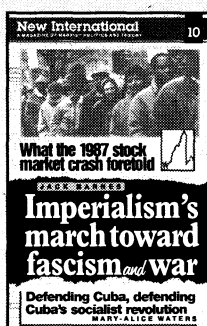
In *New International* no. 10

• **Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War** by Jack Barnes

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Continued from Page 10

hike and you're about to fall, and they grab you and help you up. Those are your best friends. That's really how the unity of the Lucha Contra Bandidos in the Escambray was created.

Counterrevolutionary murderers

We should also talk about the murders. We intend to publish a book about the fight against the bandits, with the help of other compañeros. Because we don't want it to be Victor Dreke's book, but that of all the compañeros of the Lucha Contra Bandidos.

What's happened? Unfortunately the most knowledgeable among the LCB troops have written little. Thus there are parts of the fight against the bandits we haven't talked about. Sometimes we read a book and it mentions the Mayagüera Horse—a hero of this region—or Víctor Dreke or two or three other compañeros, and that's it.

However the fight against the bandits involved practically the entire population, and here in the Escambray there were a lot of heroes and martyrs of that struggle.

The end of Pedro González's band

The bandits committed many murders in this area including Conrado Benítez, Manuel Ascunce, Pedro Lantigua.¹⁰ You can read in this book about the crimes of the murderer, Pedro González.

Compañero Golbán's brother was murdered by Pedro González and his gang. They were watching Golbán and his family, waiting to kill them—he was a militia member, in an LCB unit. When they at-

tacked, he ran out of the house in his birthday suit! Maybe he'll tell us now, "I grabbed a towel and covered myself," but no, he didn't have time to put on anything. He had to run just like that. Otherwise, they would have killed him and he wouldn't be sitting here with us. Afterward Golbán took up arms with the rest in the fight against the bandits.

What happened was similar to the combat of the heroic fighters who defended Polo Viejo and prevented the bandits from taking the militia post.¹¹ Those compañeros are heroes of this revolution, above all of this region, which is now the province of Sancti Spiritus, but then part of the old province of Las Villas.

This bandit murdered countless people—the compañeros of Loma del Puerto, those in the bus that was passing by, the compañeros of the tank unit who died without being able to defend themselves.¹²

One day a bandit belonging to his band was caught, and due to a mix-up it was said that Pedro González had been captured. Later it was discovered that it wasn't him. So some people declared that the revolutionary forces were lying, that he wasn't dead. People gave him many different names—"the guy who disappears," "the Tatawí," "the invincible one."¹³ Some people were saying that no one could catch him. They were becoming superstitious, acting as if he had magical powers.



Working people of Trinidad join funeral procession for paper workers murdered by counterrevolutionaries on their way home from work, December 1963. If the bandits ever return, said Dreke, "we would mobilize to wipe them out once again."

Pedro González had a tactic of attacking a place, abandoning his troops, and escaping alone to save his life. So when we would capture the band, he was the only one missing.

But finally, on a rainy Sunday, he was cornered out there in the Tage lagoon. He died in the encounter.

We decided to bring in his body to

Trinidad so people could see he was dead. And we posted a guard to prevent anyone from doing anything to his body. Because we have always respected prisoners, the wounded, and we respect those who die in combat. That's the respect the revolution shows everyone. But this was necessary, and I take responsibility for that decision. Because if we hadn't done so, there would still be people saying Pedro González is alive!

A book for the new generation

This was the situation at that time. What's the situation in Cuba now? Today in Cuba we find ourselves in a great "Battle of Ideas," in which Trinidad is not separate and apart. We feel happy because we see what a great advance has been made in Trinidad and in the whole region from a revolutionary point of view.

It gives us great pleasure to see the Rebel Army fighters, militia members, Lucha Contra Bandidos combatants, literacy bri-

Continued on Page 14

Omaha workers back Cuban revolutionaries framed up and imprisoned by U.S. gov't

BY LIZBETH ROBINO

OMAHA, Nebraska—"It's not right what they are doing to them. They are violating their rights, and supposedly we live in a free country." This was the response by a meat packer, a leader of the Workers Committee at the ConAgra plant here, when he learned of the frame-up and convictions of five Cuban revolutionaries by the United States government.

The Workers Committee is organizing a fight for union representation by meat packers at ConAgra Northern States Beef plant.

On April 14 some of the committee leaders attended the union meeting of mechanics in the plant, who voted in the United Food and Commercial Workers union in November 2000. In a ballot at the same time production workers lost the union vote. The workers were invited to the meeting to discuss ways in which the mechanics can support the new organizing drive among their co-workers in production departments.

After the meeting four of the production workers got together to look through *Perspectiva Mundial*, and began to discuss the case of the Cuban revolutionaries. After seeing the prison addresses of the five listed in the *Militant*, which encourages readers to write to the framed-up Cuban patriots, the meat packers decided that it was important to support them.

"They are fighting even harder than us to fix their situation," said Eulalio Robles, 62, a 12-year veteran of the kill floor. "Receiving letters of support can give them encouragement to keep on fighting. This way they know there are people who support them even though they're alone in prison."

Juan Valadez said workers "already did a letter of support for our fired co-worker and it had a positive impact." Valadez was referring to a Workers Committee-organized petition signed by 140 workers a few months ago to back Tiberio Chávez, a union mechanic framed up and dismissed by the company. "They need to know they are not alone, that there are people outside the prison that are fighting with them. With this letter we hope to show them solidarity. As we're learning in our fight, *Si se puede!* [Yes, we can!]"



The following is a letter by four meat packers at ConAgra Northern States Beef and two at Nebraska Beef. The letter was written in Spanish. Translation is by the *Militant*.

Dear René, Antonio, Gerardo, Fernando,

and Ramón,

We learned about your case. We are a small group fighting for our rights. We are meat packers in Omaha. We are fighting for solidarity. We are fighting to get a union. We are going to win!

We are aware of your situation and want to show you our support. We support you

because you are fighting like us. We are in the boxing ring just like you.

Upward and forward! On to victory.

May 3 is our big day, which is the day of the election [at ConAgra] in order to win the union. We will send you another letter to let you know about our victory.

Remember—*Si se puede!*

'The future is one of justice, solidarity, and peace'

Printed below is an excerpt of a letter to the editors of *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant* from Antonio Guerrero, one of the five Cuban revolutionaries framed up and convicted last June in a federal court in the United States on a series of conspiracy charges. These included conspiracy to act as an unregistered agent of a foreign power, to commit espionage, and in one case, to commit murder. The other four prisoners are René González, Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, and Gerardo Hernández.

The five were given draconian sentences from the federal judge ranging from 15 years in prison to a double life sentence. Along with the Cuban government, the five explained they were carrying out a revolutionary mission to defend their country by gathering information on the activities of counterrevolutionary groups that operate on U.S. territory to launch violent attacks on Cuba. These groups have a long record of such activity and do so with complete knowledge and complicity of the U.S. government.

The addresses for the five are listed below. The U.S. government refused to recognize the names of Fernando González Llor and Ramón Labañino, so correspondence to them should be sent under the names Rubén Campa and Luis Medina respectively.



Florence, Colorado 81226

April 8, 2002

Dear Comrades,

For several months, week after week, I have received a number of letters that bring me the soft and pure light of a binding friendship, a light that inside these walls makes a tree grow, sprouts its flowers and germinates its fruit; the most beautiful tree in all the world: the tree of friendship, justice, and peace.

Friends, with great valor you help the just cause of the Cuban people and, within that honorable stance, demand our liberty. Day after day I wonder how to express thanks for so gallant and humane a ges-

ture, and with what words to express what is for me an immense source of encouragement and an inseparable part of my thoughts and deeds.

José Martí wrote in his book *The Golden Age*, dedicated to children: "In the world a certain amount of decency is necessary, just like a certain amount of light. If there are many men without this quality, there are those who have it in quantities sufficient for many men." I think and feel that you have within you the decency needed to defend and advance a just cause, "with the humble, through the humble, and for the humble." You have my greatest admiration. Because people like you exist, I am convinced that the future is one of justice, solidarity, and peace.

The articles in the *Militant* weekly and the magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* were of great interest to me. Both publications are voices of the truth in the midst of so many voices that today are dedicated to manipulating the news and turning many people into simple puppets of their rapacious interests. But, once more paraphrasing the

apostle, I say that "the platform of truth will always stand when other platforms fall." You are bulwarks of that platform. Thanks for adding us as subscribers; I hope there is no difficulty in our receiving any of the publications that you send us.

Perhaps you know that in the past the José Martí publishing house published a book with a selection of poems that I wrote during my imprisonment in the Federal Detention Center in Miami. I wanted to send you those poems and have asked my inseparable Maggie [Becker] to see to it. I don't know if she has a book available, but perhaps she can do it by e-mail. We have been working on an expanded edition with the same title: *From My Altitude* (Desde mi altura) and perhaps it will be this that she sends you. I hope the poems interest you and help us to know each other and reinforce our friendship.

On my behalf, and on behalf of my brothers René, Ramón, Fernando, and Gerardo, who share my sentiments, a strong embrace. A friend,

Antonio Guerrero

Write to the five Cuban revolutionaries

René González Schwerert, Reg. #58738-004, FCI McKean, P.O. Box 8000, Bradford, Pennsylvania 16701

Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Reg. #58741-004, USP Florence, P.O. Box 7500, Florence, Colorado 81226

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo (Manuel Viramontes), Reg. #58739-004, USP Lompoc, 3901 Klein Blvd., Lompoc, California 93436

Fernando González Llor (Rubén Campa), Reg. #58733-004, FCI Oxford, P.O. Box 1000, Oxford, Wisconsin 53952-0505

Ramón Labañino Salazar (Luis Medina), Reg. #58734-004, USP Beaumont, P.O. Box 26035, Beaumont, Texas 77720-6035

Socialists discuss work in garment industry

Continued from Page 7

at her workplace about the fight by immigrant workers against the state of California's requirement that people must have a valid Social Security number in order to apply for or renew a driver's license. There have been a number of demonstrations in the San Francisco area as part of that fight, which is one that objectively opposes the government's probes to establish a national ID card.

"The structure of the textile industry is changing," said James Harris, a textile worker from Atlanta. "The bosses have eliminated thousands of jobs in four or five states in the south. There has been a massive influx of immigrant labor that changed the character of the towns in the region as workers from Africa and Central America moved into the area. Now, because of the layoffs," he said, "more workers are returning to Mexico. We see an intersection of social questions being posed. It is to these co-workers that we can bring socialist literature." By working to reach these and other layers of textile workers, he said, "we can make our goals in the *Militant* and *PM* subscription campaign."

Carrying out political work on the job

Romina Green, a leader of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Free the Five Cuban Revolutionaries Held 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. 3926 Mission St., San Francisco. Donation: \$5. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

FLORIDA

Tampa

Free the Five Cuban Revolutionaries Held in U.S. Jails. Speaker: Rachele Fruit, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 1625. Sat., Apr. 27, 7:00 p.m. 1441 E. Fletcher Ave., 2nd floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (813) 558-0613.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

For a Democratic, Secular Palestine; Why Israel is a Death Trap for the Jews. Fri., April 26, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Labor Resistance and Growing Social Movements in the United States. Speaker: Sara Lobman, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 26, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

End the Israeli Occupation. For a Democratic, Secular Palestine. Fri., April 26, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue, 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

Miners Fight for Black Lung Benefits: the Significance of the Recent Widows' Walk. Fri., April. 26, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Iran: Why It Remains Part of Imperialism's "Axis of Evil." Sun., May 5, 4:00 p.m. 1st floor, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

CANADA

Toronto

Vancouver

The Meaning of the French Elections for Working People. Speaker: Natalie Seguin, Young Socialists. Fri., May 3, 7:30 p.m. 2645 East Hastings, 2nd Floor. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Havana-Miami: A Documentary about Migration between the United States and Cuba. Fri., May 3, 7:00 p.m. 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

in New York, presented a report to the meeting on the progress in building a fraction of communist workers in that city's garment districts. Fraction members have in their majority conquered enough sewing skills to make it harder for the bosses to shut them out of factories or not call them back from layoffs. Gaining these skills has marked the recent period in the development of the UNITE fraction, making it possible to now turn confidently to carrying out political work on the job and building the communist movement.

Green reported that all communists working in that city's garment industry are now organized into a local UNITE fraction, regardless of the skill level of each individual. She pointed to how this will help advance the political work they carry out on the job and in the workers districts, including meeting the goals in the subscription campaign for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Green described the international collaboration going on between communist organizations along these same lines. She recently worked with members of the Communist League and Young Socialists in Sweden and the United Kingdom to gain sewing skills in order for socialist workers there to build fractions in the garment and textile industries. The UNITE fraction leadership also sent a textile worker to Montreal in January to meet some of the 3,000 workers on strike against companies in the men's wear garment industry and to report on this important battle for the *Militant*.

Seth Galinsky, who works in a women's wear plant in New York City setting waistbands, said a discussion with a co-worker from South America, who is reading a copy of the *New International* on "Washington's Assault on Iraq: The Opening Guns of World War III," is one example of the openings to carry out communist work in the industry. Galinsky said one discussion he had with his co-worker was on the military coup against the government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela being prepared at that time with backing from the U.S. government.

Pointing to the political opportunities to deepen communist work within sections of the industrial working class, Lisa Potash, a sewing machine operator in Chicago, initiated a discussion on the importance of weekly sales of socialist literature at plant gates.

She said the regular sales by party and YS members in Chicago to workers at the

AMPAC plant gate built up a layer of workers who read the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* over a number of years and reinforced the work of socialists at the plant.

Once the fight began against the company's unannounced closing of the meatpacking plant, workers asked that "those people who sold the paper outside" be involved in the first meeting organized by the union members.

In order to establish weekly plant gate sales at a major garment shop in the city, the party branch decided they would organize the sale when the most workers were going into the plant instead of around the individual preferences of team members. They also discussed how to overcome some minor tactical and logistical problems at the plant gate that in the past had an impact on the time the sale was done.

Potash explained that the party units in each city can concretely back up the work of the UNITE fraction through this kind of weekly plant gate team. The teams can help fraction members meet workers in their workplaces.

Over the course of the weekend, socialist garment workers in each local discussed and adopted goals for the international subscription drive of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva*

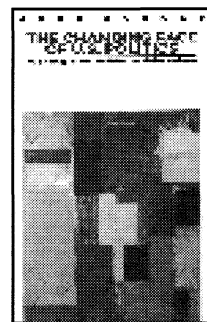
Mundial, and for copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. In addition to sales on the job, fraction members said they plan to reach out to laundry workers on strike in New York and Highwood, north of Chicago, and other places where garment and textile workers are engaged in struggles, as well as to social protest actions.

A dinner and forum were held Saturday night at a hall in the neighborhood where the Pathfinder bookstore in Los Angeles is located. Some 70 people attended, including four young people who are working with the Young Socialists organization in Los Angeles.

Socialist Workers Party leader Norton Sandler presented a talk on world politics that took up the reactionary military coup that had just been carried out in Venezuela, the resistance of Palestinian people to Israel's assault, the labor resistance in the United States, and the weakening of the Catholic Church resulting from the gains of the women's movement. A lively discussion ensued. After the program discussions continued into the night at a social event held at the Pathfinder bookstore.

Mary Martin is a garment factory worker in Iowa.

—from Pathfinder



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Bed and board?—"Ellsworth, Kansas—More than 40 employees lost their jobs when Century Manufacturing closed its acrylics plant and

the company up on its offer to transfer to the prison or to an entry level job in Wichita."—News report.

They need new school property?—A California supreme court judge nullified state regulations permitting the dumping of "low grade" radioactive waste in ordinary landfills. A news report said: "The court ruling rebuffed state health officials who formulated a rule last year to make it easier and cheaper for companies and institutions to get rid of some nuclear waste."

Is nothing sacred?—"Organic labels on food do not necessarily mean that the items are healthier, or more nutritious than conventional products, *Which?* magazine

says. Some shoppers could pay up to 40 percent more for organic products with more fat, salt, and sugar."—*The Times*. London.

Pacesetter for Swedish unions—The king of Sweden has called on the government to grant him a \$10 million raise to cover increases in the cost of living and the payroll he has to meet.

What would we do without experts?—In Maine, personal bankruptcies jumped 13 percent last year. This, a report stated, was due to increased debts, "experts said."

Didn't fit?—It's not easy to beat the *New York Times* in court, but Dr. Sheila Horn has won a significant

step in the fight to regain her job as in-house doctor at the paper. She was fired for trying to protect the rights and confidentiality of *Times* employees. She refused to lie about their work-related injuries. The state appeals court denied a *Times* motion to bar the suit from going forward. According to the rival *New York Post*, the *Times* did not report the court decision.

The truly great society—It was a small Los Angeles guide to senior services and looked useful. But we were taken back a bit by the list of "frequently requested" phone numbers: 1) Elder Abuse; 2) Suicide Prevention.

A rich life—Parking enforcement

officer Jim Mootz was nominated for the St. Paul Police Department civilian employee of the year. Police officials say his record is unbeatable. In 18 years as a parking enforcement officer, Mootz has issued 150,000 tickets that have put \$2.5 million in the city treasury."—News item.

'Labour' program—"Overcrowding on the London Underground will not start to reduce for at least two years after the part privatization, according to Metronet, the company due to take control of two-thirds of the lines. The three million passengers who use the network each day will not notice a substantial improvement in frequency until 2008 and sometimes will have to wait longer."—News dispatch



the owner began using inmates at the local prison to do the work. Now the owner says the former employees can have their jobs back, but with less pay, and they must work inside the prison. Century owner Jim Laubach said few people have taken

'Wins bosses stole our money,' say garment workers

Continued from front page

Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) and Operation Sweatshop Watch, was called for April 15 because the Internal Revenue Service, which is a creditor of Wins trying to collect back taxes, is claiming that it should be paid before any worker gets back pay. "We have not seen a penny since April," May Youn Fang told the rally. "We have to borrow money to pay the rent. They treat us like this because we are immigrants and considered low-income workers."

Repeated labor law violations

Repeated labor law violations by Wins have been long known by government officials. In the early 1990s Wins was forced to sign a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) because of repeat violations, and has been on the DOL target list of plants subject to more frequent inspections. The company has been sued twice by former employees.

Warren Mar of the Chinese Progressive Association told the rally that a small contingent of plant workers and CPA activists had just met with David Butler of the State Labor Commission. "He was reluctant to meet now," Mar said, "but will meet with a delegation next week."

The workers insist that the Labor Commission follow up on the lawsuit it finally filed against Wins on March 7 by going after the retailers who sold goods produced by the unpaid workers. The DOL has collected only \$400,000 from the retailers and brand-name manufacturers who bought goods from Wins after August 10, and put this money into a "lock box" to partially repay the workers. It is this "lock box" that the IRS, along with G.E. Capital (which financed Wins operations), wants to use to



Some 200 garment workers, in their majority Cantonese-speaking women, and supporters rallied April 15 to demand U.S. government force Wins to pay back wages.

collect their payments before the workers get anything. A hearing in bankruptcy court to sort through the claims is scheduled for June.

Last December the state-appointed bankruptcy trustee sold off \$140,000 of company property, not for paying back the workers but to reimburse lawyers and creditors. According to California state law, garment workers' claims for unpaid wages must be processed in four months. For most workers, it has been a year since their last paycheck.

Speaking through a translator, Li Qin Zhou, a single-needle operator, told the *Militant* that she had worked at Wins for eight years. She stopped working on August 2.

After four months, "I had no hope to get paid," she said. "The boss said that if you don't continue to work, you won't get paid at all. The owner said she didn't get the money from the buyers and told us to be

patient." Zhou said that the workers got no benefits, no vacations, were paid piece rate with no minimum wage guarantee, and no overtime pay, even though she worked up to 10 and 12 hours a day. "If work was good," she said, "I made about minimum wage but sometimes I made as low as \$2 an hour, even \$1.60 an hour."

Zhou was asked by the company to sign a letter saying that she was owed \$1,119.28, but Zhou said that what she is owed adds up to \$4,690. "I didn't sign," she said.

"We didn't get the justice we deserve. We work hard, the labor department is supposed to protect us. I will fight for my money," she added.

Besides the Wins workers who spoke, the rally was also addressed by speakers representing Chinese for Affirmative Action, Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Asian Pacific Labor Alliance, SEIU / Janitors for Justice, and the Socialist Workers Party. Other unions in attendance included the Teamsters, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2, and the National Parks Public Employees union.

Rollande Girard is a garment worker in San Francisco. Bill Kalman is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120 in San Lorenzo, California.

School bus drivers strike in L.A.

Continued from front page

ees transport 20,000 students each day in the Los Angeles district.

Laidlaw drivers are paid between \$8.75 and \$14.35 per hour, approximately half the wages of drivers employed directly by LAUSD. They receive no medical coverage for the first year of employment, and then must pay a medical premium of more than \$200 a month, which does not even include family coverage. "With wages so low it is impossible to afford medical coverage for my family," said one striker whose wife had joined him on the picket line.

The Teamsters are striking for wages comparable to district-employed school bus drivers, who earn from \$15 to \$24 an hour and are eligible for district health coverage and state pension plans.

On the picket line, strikers describe some of the many challenges they face on the job. Angela, with nine years as a driver, said, "It can be very difficult. Some drivers have handicapped children who need special assistance. None of this is taken into account by the company." Dora Coleman, who has been driving for 15 years, described the

stress and high degree of responsibility involved in transporting a bus full of students. "But," she added, "the children aren't the problem." In addition to low pay and few benefits "they treat us with abuse every day. I'm for staying out until we all get what we deserve."

The striking workers on April 15 overwhelmingly rejected Laidlaw's latest contract offer by a vote of 413-2. Teamsters officials had urged a no vote. The proposal increased the hourly pay but offered little improvement in benefits. Negotiations are being conducted under the auspices of a federal mediator.

In addition to the low wages, the company guarantees drivers only five hours pay per day. Because of the schedule of school and extracurricular activities drivers can be at work waiting for an assignment for several hours in the middle of the day. The union is asking for guaranteed pay for at least six hours a day.

The Los Angeles School Board claims that it's not responsible for conditions of employment provided by its contractors. The board has worked to break the strike by hiring other small contractors and using its own drivers and supervisory personnel to operate more of the district's buses. Picketers have also been involved in protesting the school board's antiunion stance.

Elizabeth Lariscy is a garment worker in Los Angeles

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



May 6, 1977

DETROIT—Nearly 2,000 women gathered here April 21–24 for the annual conference of the National Organization for Women. The conference celebrated NOW's tenth anniversary, and a debate over political perspectives for the second decade worked its way to the surface.

Many members of NOW had come to the conference concerned that victories for women won during NOW's first decade—the right to legal abortions, affirmative actions in hiring and promotions, child-care programs—were in danger of being lost.

Many of the 770 delegates and the 1,200 members (who had speaking but not voting rights) were in Detroit to discuss these problems, to exchange ideas, and to decide on a course to turn the tides against the enemies of women's rights.

On the first day of the conference, before any political discussion had taken place, outgoing president Karen DeCrow told reporters that "every NOW member agrees on political action." She went on to describe that action, which included working to elect "pro-ERA" Democrats in 1978, urging President Carter to set an ERA blitz campaign, and launching an economic boycott of unrattified states.

As early as February, more than eighty women from around the country had submitted a resolution for discussion at the conference that proposed a road for NOW in stark contrast to the one outlined by DeCrow.

This resolution would have NOW launch a drive, independent of the Democratic and Republican parties, to counter the right-wing attacks on women's rights with a massive educational and action campaign.



May 5, 1952

The swiftest steel shutdown in U.S. history proved last week that the steel workers are serious about their fight for higher pay and have been from the very beginning of the steel dispute almost six months ago. Within minutes after a federal judge in Washington signed an order telling the steel barons: "you are the boss," the owners of the industry found themselves with cooling furnaces and without workers to "boss." Angry steelworkers across the nation had full strike machinery in motion within eight hours after receiving word from their international union headquarters that the policy of the union was to cease work in the absence of a contract.

Meanwhile government officials, the federal courts, and the steel companies tangled in an ever thickening wrangle arising out of the "seizure" of the steel mills by the Federal government and the actions of the court one day "enjoining" the government and the next day "staying" the injunction.

Leading strategists of the capitalist class stewed over the problem of dealing with the great power of the American industrial unions to shut down basic production; a power which arises from the fact that all production depends upon the efforts of these workers, and from the further fact that these workers still retain the resolute determination to improve their condition that led them to organize into industrial unions in the Thirties.

The Truman administration thinks it has found a formula for holding the workers back by fake government "seizures" in which nothing gets seized and nothing is changed.

THE MILITANT
online
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Elections in France

The electoral success of Jean-Marie Le Pen is a by-product of the crisis of the traditional governing parties in France. To many workers, the record of the Socialist Party prime minister and candidate Lionel Jospin marked him as little different from President Jacques Chirac of the right-wing Gaullist party.

The Socialist Party—led government, in “cohabitation” with Chirac, has headed up wide-ranging attacks on working people, frequently sparking strikes and major protests. In foreign policy, too, there has been little to choose between them. Both supported the commitment of French forces to the imperialist war on and occupation of Afghanistan.

This anti-working class record explains the high abstention rate recorded in the elections. It also points to why some workers, especially those in the most crisis-ridden areas, cast their vote for the National Front. Le Pen’s success in winning the votes of some former Communist Party supporters should come as no surprise. The Stalinist misleaders of the working class, like the social democrats and the union officialdom, espouse nationalist policies that grease the skids for such fascist-minded politicians.

Le Pen is one of a number of rightist figures in the imperialist countries who have built a following by scapegoating immigrants for the ills and injustices of capitalism. They take as their starting point the brutal discrimination leveled at migrant workers by the established parties and their cops. Like other incipient fascists, Le Pen has also begun to etch out anti-Semitic rhetoric as part of

his anticapitalist, national socialist demagoguery.

Increasing levels of immigration and joint actions by workers of all nationalities have made progress in breaking down these divisions, however. The militant response to the election result by young workers and students, many of them the “non-French” so reviled by Le Pen and his ilk, is an encouraging sign of that fact.

Demagogues like Le Pen inevitably arise as the capitalist crisis appears, and become more important as it evolves. Driven by the laws of capitalist development, the imperialist powers push toward deeper assaults on working people, and toward more open conflicts with each other. As their assaults at home and abroad generate deeper and wider resistance, the capitalists will pour increasing resources into fascist organizations and figures as a battering ram for use against the labor movement and all those who pose a threat to their rule.

Workers and exploited farmers in France should not be drawn into the trap of supporting the Gaullist Chirac against Le Pen. Like all forms of electoral lesser-evils, this is a dead end. Rather, the most conscious workers must lead the way in building a political movement of working people and the oppressed that can take on the capitalist parties on every terrain.

That is the road to gain self-confidence and to build the kind of leadership and organization that will stand us in good stead for the confrontations that are coming, including the ultimate contest with the capitalist class for political power.

Build on sales drive momentum

The response by working people and youth to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* this past week helps highlight the opportunities to expand the readership of the revolutionary press. The massive outpourings in Washington and San Francisco in solidarity with the Palestinian people; resistance among workers such as the bus drivers’ strike in Los Angeles and protests in defense of immigrant rights; and opposition to the attacks by the government and employers on workers’ rights are examples of why there is growing interest in the socialist periodicals, Pathfinder books, and *New International*.

As they become more integrated into the initial social movements of working people in the United States, socialist workers and young socialists are finding workers and farmers who need the *Militant* every week because it helps make them more effective in their struggle and links them up with other fighters. In addition to the coverage of their own battles, many welcome the news, analysis, and feature articles and editorials on political and social questions and issues of world politics.

Many young people at the April 20 demonstrations were hungry for a working-class view of the Israeli assault on the Palestinian people and of how Washington’s backing for the regime in Tel Aviv is an extension of its drive against the rights, social wage, and union organization of working people at home. They were receptive to an explanation of why the Israeli state must be removed in the revolutionary battle for a democratic, secular Palestine.

The *Militant*’s coverage of the working-class mobilizations that foiled the pro-imperialist coup in Venezuela also caught the eye of many demonstrators. For weeks the paper pointed to the Venezuelan bosses’ destabilization campaign aimed at toppling the Chávez government. The hundreds of people who bought individual copies and

subscriptions to the *Militant* and *PM* appreciated the clear, scientific explanation of these important political developments.

Sales of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* put a spotlight on the growing interest in the Cuban Revolution as a living example of the one force—workers and farmers—that can stand up to the domestic exploiting classes as well as the world’s mightiest empire and defeat them in struggle. The book opens the window to seeing the social forces capable of overthrowing capitalist rule in the United States and replacing their dog-eat-dog profit-making system with one that places human needs and human solidarity above all.

Partisans of the subscription campaign can build on the momentum of the first week through stepped-up political discussions with co-workers on the job, in working-class neighborhoods, on college campuses, and at plant gates. Reading the *Militant*, *PM*, or a Pathfinder book is often one of the first ways workers and young people are introduced to the socialist movement, and the subscription drive is an excellent way to increase recruitment to the communist organizations. Organizing follow-up phone calls to people and building the weekly Militant Labor Forum are ways in which campaigners can discuss the fight for socialism and other political questions with new readers.

To complement the subscription drive the *Militant* and *PM* will be launching an eight-week fund drive to help finance the socialist press. The *Militant* is funded exclusively by working people whose contributions have, for 74 years, ensured the paper can continue to tell the truth and be a weapon in the struggles of the working class. We urge all supporters of the paper to begin thinking about how to make the most of the fund drive as we build on the initial momentum of the subscription campaign.

Uruguay suspends relations with Cuba

BY GREG McCARTAN

After becoming the sponsor of an annual resolution slandering Cuba as a violator of human rights at a United Nations meeting in Geneva, the government of Uruguay said April 22 that it was suspending diplomatic relations with Havana.

For the first time the government of Mexico voted in favor of the measure, which, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, urged “Cuba to better its human rights efforts.” The motion passed 23–21. The charade at the UN body is part of U.S. imperialism’s war on the Cuban Revolution, and Washington uses its economic and diplomatic muscle each year to squeeze governments to cast their vote in line with its wishes. In 2001 the U.S. government received its comeuppance when it failed for the first time since the 1947 founding of the United Nations to be elected to the UN Human Rights Commission. In addition to Cuba, Washington had regularly used the body to target China with its arrogant pronouncements.

The government of Uruguay had not announced any specific steps to implement the diplomatic break as of the *Militant*’s press time, but Cuban president Fidel Castro said the move would not affect Havana’s commitment to provide 800,000 meningitis vaccines to Uruguay, stating that his government would not allow children to die. “We are not helping governments but peoples,” Castro said, “and we will never feel disdain for the people of Uruguay.”

Following the passage of the U.S.-organized resolution,

Castro described the vote of Latin American governments in its favor as a “despicable betrayal.” On April 22 he held a widely reported press conference in Havana to respond to the decision by the Mexican government of Vicente Fox to back the anti-Cuba measure.

Castro released the transcript of a telephone conversation—and played the tape for reporters—in which the Mexican president urged him to quickly leave a UN-sponsored conference on financing development held in Monterrey, Mexico, so “that you won’t complicate my Friday,” which Fox had reserved to meet with U.S. president Bush. Fox had earlier said he never pressured Castro to cut short his participation in the gathering.

At the Monterrey conference the Cuban president said, “The existing world economic order constitutes a system of plunder and exploitation like no other in history. Thus, the peoples believe less and less in statements and promises.” He called on the “rich world [to] cancel [poor countries’] foreign-debt and grant them fresh soft loans to finance development.”

Following Castro’s release of the phone conversation with Fox, Mexican foreign minister Jorge Castañeda deepened the attack, calling the Cuban government an “anti-democratic regime” and adding that his government “no longer endorses the absence of democracy and of respect for human rights in Cuba.” He continued with a timeworn slander that the Cuban leadership is “creating an external threat when he is facing an internal difficulty.”

From Batista to Battle of Ideas

Continued from Page 11

gade veterans, teachers, doctors, all firmly defending the revolution, raising the banner of the courageous people of Trinidad. It confirms that yes, we had to launch this book in Trinidad.

It also pleases us to see here today a lot of young people, students. Everywhere we’ve launched this book, the combatants are almost always there, and this book is for them: to read, study, analyze, and help young people understand its contents.

But it’s also important that this book—like all books—be known to the new generation. So that they learn the historical truth from compañeros who participated in it, and of whom they can ask questions.

In other words, the book is from the Cuban combatants, and for the youth. It’s not Dreke’s book, nor does it belong to the compañeros that prepared it. It’s yours.

Therefore, compañeras and compañeros, I’m grateful to you, to the party, and to the municipal government, for having given us the chance to launch this book here.

Today we are sure that our compañeros’ blood has not been shed in vain. At this moment in the battle of ideas, when we’re fighting to bring back our five heroes who are prisoners of the Empire, we have to keep fighting.¹⁴ And this book is a weapon to fight for the freedom of those compañeros, to reaffirm, together with Fidel, that they will return. The new generation is fighting with us to do whatever is necessary to bring back our five heroes.

In this battle of ideas that is so important today, we’re no longer chasing down bandits—we know they won’t return. And if they did return, we would mobilize and wipe them out once again. We have no doubt about that. The enemy can be sure of it. And we can too.

Who would wipe them out? Those who are 60 or 80 years old? No. We can still do a few things, but we now have trouble climbing the hills. We have confidence in the youth. We know that in each of our combatants a new Lizardo Proenza, a new Mayagüera Horse, a new Olacocha, a new Wasiri will emerge.¹⁵

When we began the struggle against the bandits, we weren’t experts in it. When we began the guerrilla struggle, we had never been guerrillas before. No one is born with that. It’s learned. How is it learned? Not in a school for cadets. Not in the U.S. schools or in any other school. It’s learned in struggle. It’s learned through your heart, when you have right on your side because you are fighting for a cause.

Finally, before the party secretary closes the meeting, I’m going to read one thing. The first launching of this book was February 8 at the place where I work, UNECA. We dedicated that launching to our five compañeros who are prisoners in the United States. We did this for two reasons. First, because we think this is a small contribution to the books they will have to read. And also because Magali Lloret, the mother of compañero Fernando [González Lloret], works there with me.

The dedication reads as follows:

“Dear heroes of our heroic homeland: I salute you for your firmness and valor. You are worthy representatives of the people of Martí, Maceo, Camilo, Che, and Fidel. I send you this book with all the warmth and respect that you deserve. The old oaks are proud of the new pines. Víctor Dreke.”

So here at this book launching we can once more say to our commander-in-chief Fidel: Trinidad stands with you, as always.

¡Patria o muerte!

¡Venceremos!

¹⁴Five Cuban revolutionaries—Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, and René González—were framed up by a U.S. federal court and convicted in 2001 on charges including “conspiracy to commit espionage” for the Cuban government and, in one case, “conspiracy to commit murder.” They were given sentences ranging from 15 years to life imprisonment. Their actual “crime” was infiltrating counterrevolutionary groups that, with Washington’s knowledge and complicity, have been responsible for countless violent attacks on Cuba.

¹⁵Lizardo Proenza, a Rebel Army fighter during the revolutionary war, was head of an LCB unit in Matanzas, and was in charge of all LCB operations in 1965.

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'Fascism is a product of crisis of capitalism'

Printed below is an excerpt from *Notebook of an Agitator* by James P. Cannon. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. The piece quoted, which originally appeared in the April 12, 1954, issue of the *Militant*, is titled "A New Declaration of Independence." It appears in a section of the book on "Fascism and the Workers' Movement." McCarthyism, which the article discusses, was an incipient fascist movement led by Joseph McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin who was a prominent spokesman for the anticommunist witch-hunt in the early 1950s. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Fascism is a product of the crisis of capi-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

talism and can be definitively disposed of only by a solution of this crisis. The fascist movement can make advances or be pushed back at one time or another in the course of this crisis; but it will always be there, in latent or active form, as long as the social causes which produce it have not been eradicated.

Looked at from this standpoint, the threat of American fascism is not a short-term problem, and by no means can it be eliminated at the next election—or, for that matter, at any other election. The American fascist movement, and the workers' struggle against it, will be a long drawn-out affair, from now to the final show down, which in the end can be nothing less than a show down between fascist capitalism and the workers' revolution.

If the default of the labor movement has given American fascism, in the incipient and preventive form represented by the McCarthy movement, an advantage at the start, it still represents nothing more than an episode in a long struggle which will have many ups and downs. The real movement of American fascism is now only in its pre-

liminary stages of formation, and the counter-movement of the workers against it is not even started yet.

At any rate, American fascism, in its McCarthyite form or under some other aegis, is bound to provoke a militant resistance from the workers as soon as it passes over from its present preoccupation with a hunt for spies and "subversives" to a direct assault on the labor movement. Thereafter, the fascist movement will not develop on a straight ascending line. There will be zig-zags on one side and the other, advances and set backs and periods of stalemate. In this protracted conflict the labor movement will have time to get a clearer picture of the real nature of the problem, and to mobilize its forces for an all-out struggle.

At the present time, the myopic policy of the liberals and the labor leaders is concentrated on the congressional elections next fall, and the presidential election to follow in 1956. A Democratic victory is counted on to deal a death blow to the McCarthy aberration. "McCarthyism is becoming a danger all right, and it begins to look like a fascist movement; but all we need is a general mobilization at the polls to put the Democrats back in power." Such are the arguments we already hear from the Democratic high command, the literary liberals, the labor leaders and—skulking in the rear of the caravan, with their tails between their legs—the Stalinists.

This would really be laughable if humor were in place where deadly serious matters are concerned. The Roosevelt New Deal, under far more favorable conditions, couldn't find a way to hold back the economic crisis without a war. A Stevensonian version of the same policy, under worse conditions, could only be expected to fail more miserably. A Democratic victory might arrest the hitherto unobstructed march of McCarthyism while it re-forms its ranks. It might even bring a temporary moderation of the fury of the witch-hunt. But that's all.

The fascist movement would begin to grow again with the growth of the crisis. It would probably take on an even more militant character, if it is pushed out of the administration and compelled to develop as an unofficial movement. Under conditions of a serious crisis, an unofficial fascist movement would grow all the more stormily, to the extent that the labor movement would

support the Democratic administration, and depend on it to restrain the fascists by police measures.

Such a policy, as the experience of Italy and Germany has already shown, would not only paralyze the active resistance of the workers themselves, while giving the fascist gangs a virtually free rein. Moreover, by remaining tied to the Democratic administration, the labor movement would take upon itself a large part of the responsibility for the economic crisis and feed the flames of fascist demagoguery around the question.

That would be something to see: The fascists howling about the crisis, and stirring up the hungry and desperate people with the most extravagant promises, while the labor leaders defend the administration. The official labor leaders are fully capable of such idiocy, as they demonstrated in the last presidential election. But with the best will in the world to help the democratic administration, they couldn't maintain such a position very long.

The workers will most probably accept the recommendation of the labor leaders to seek escape from the crisis by replacing Republican rascals by Democratic scoundrels in the next election. But when the latter become officially responsible for the administration, and prove powerless to cope with the crisis, the workers will certainly draw some conclusions from their unfortunate experiences. The deeper the crisis, and the more brutal the fascist aggression fed by the crisis, the more insistent will be the demand for a radical change of policy and a

more adequate leadership.

From all indications, the workers' discontent will be concentrated, at first, in the demand for a labor party of their own. This will most probably be realized. It will not yet signify the victory over fascism—not by a long shot—but it will represent the beginning of a counter-movement which will have every chance to end in victory.

The break with the Democratic Party will be an implicit recognition that the fight against fascism is fundamentally a fight against capitalism in the period of its agonizing crisis of disintegration and decay; and that there is no hope of victory for the workers in alliance with one of the parties of this same capitalism, and still less under its leadership, as at present. The formation of a labor party, based on the trade unions, will represent the American workers' Declaration of Independence. It will be a great turning point in American history. All developments will be speeded up after that.

It would be a great mistake, however, to speak of a prospective labor party as the solution of the problem of fascism. As in 1776, the new Declaration of Independence will signify not the end, but the beginning of the real struggle. The final outcome will depend on the program and the leadership. These will become the burning issues of an internal struggle for which the labor party will provide the main arena. It is from this point of view—clearly stated at all times—that we advocate the formation of a labor party and do all we can to hasten the day of its appearance.

Rally in Seattle protests harassment by USDA of Somali grocery stores



Militant/Cecelia Moriarity

Protesters in Seattle April 13 condemn decision by U.S. Department of Agriculture to disqualify three Somali grocers in Seattle from accepting food stamps.

BY JOHN NAUBERT

SEATTLE—More than 100 protesters rallied at the Towfiq Halal Meat and Deli April 13 to challenge a recent decision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to disqualify three Somali grocers in the Seattle area from accepting food stamps.

Opponents of the move say that 80 percent of Seattle's Somali community shops at the three halal grocers, which are practically the only stores in the area selling meat prepared in conformity with Islamic law. A large majority of the shoppers at the three stores use food stamps.

The protesters, young and old, men and women, a majority from eastern Africa, held handmade signs that read: "USDA violates the civil rights of this community" and "Stop scapegoating immigrants."

Since being disqualified from accepting food stamps, store owners of Madina Mini Mart, Towfiq Halal Meat and Deli, and Maka Mini Mart in southeast Seattle report a precipitous drop in business.

This attack on the Somali community follows on the heels of an assault by Treasury Department agents last November who shut down three Somali-owned businesses in Seattle, including Maka Mini Mart and Al Barakaat, Somalia's biggest money transfer company.

Rally speakers included the owner of the Towfiq Halal Meat and Deli, a group of Somali women referred to by other partici-

pants as "the mothers," Congressman James McDermott, State representative Sharon Tamiko Santos, and city council member Nicholas Lacata. All spoke in opposition to the USDA decision.

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

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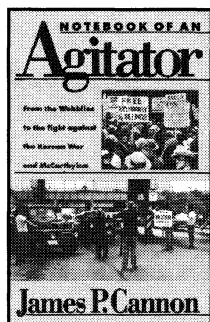
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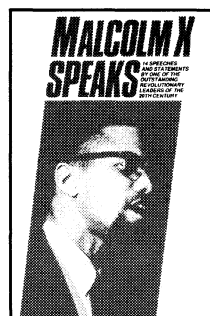
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U.S.-Canada lumber dispute flares up

BY JOE YATES

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—The U.S. Commerce Department has announced its intention to impose a 29 percent duty on softwood lumber from Canada in May. Forestry and related companies laid off about 21,000 people in British Columbia (B.C.) and Quebec last fall when Washington initially imposed duties on Canadian forest products.

According to Harvey Arcand, the national executive treasurer of the International Woodworkers of America (IWA), another 15,000 to 20,000 union members could be laid off if the duty is imposed. This would devastate the union's 35,000 members in B.C.

About 35 percent of lumber used in building homes in the United States comes from Canada. The value of the trade is \$10 billion dollars in Canadian money. A full 75 percent of the exports come from British Columbia and Quebec.

The big U.S. companies that dominate logging and lumber operations, along with their political representatives in Washington, are charging the Canadian government with unfairly subsidizing logging operations. For example, Montana senator Max Baucus, chairman of the Senate finance committee, denounced what he called B.C.'s "Soviet-style system," adding, "Free trade must be a two-way street to be viable and the United States is tired of being taken advantage of by Canada's forestry policy."

In Canada, the government charges companies "stumpage fees" for trees cut on crown (state) land. Critics say the fees are so low that they amount to a subsidy, giving the capitalist operations in Canada an unfair advantage over their rivals in the United States.

Representatives of different political parties in Canada have reacted more or less sharply to the threatened duty. International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew called the decision "obscene." Prime Minister Jean Chrétien complained, "It is not useful at all. We have a free trade agreement with them." One reason for caution from representatives of the Canadian government is the fact that Canada has a \$96 billion trade surplus with the United States.

The federal government in Ottawa is taking its case through procedures established under the North American Free Trade Agreement and in the World Trade Organization.

Ontario public workers protest cuts



More than 3,000 members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) rallied at the Ontario legislature April 5 to oppose the government's concession demands. More than 33,000 members of OPSEU who work in government offices went on strike March 13. The government is demanding cuts in benefits and pensions. The union is seeking higher wages, an end to contracting out union jobs, and that thousands of "temporary" and "casual" workers employed doing similar jobs on contract, often for years, be offered full-time jobs.

The government says it will offer an aid program to companies and workers involving retraining, work sharing, more research funds, and promoting sales in China. Government spokespeople say that no new money will be made available for these programs.

The rightist Canadian Alliance echoed a demand put forward by some of the companies calling for the federal government to cover the cost of the duties imposed on the companies.

B.C. forest minister Michael De Jong called the U.S. "a hostile foreign power." Joy McPhail, the leader of the New Democratic Party in British Columbia, called for aid to the forest companies. She also proposed that the federal government use the fact that a proposed natural gas pipeline from Alaska to the U.S. mainland must go through Canada as a means of applying pressure. The New Democratic Party is a social democratic party with ties to the unions.

The IWA is urging the Canadian government to retaliate by imposing a tariff on any logs exported to the U.S. followed by duties on oil, gas and hydroelectric exports. "Either they want to trade with us or they don't," union official Harvey Arcand said. "So far they are telling us that they don't."

The Canadian government's strong support for Washington's occupation of Afghanistan has not prevented the softwood trade war. This has led to some bitter reactions.

The Province, one of Vancouver's two dailies, featured an article on April 2 entitled, "Son risks life fighting terrorism while dad loses softwood work." The story is about Peter Beckhurst, who is stationed with the Canadian Army near Kandahar in Afghanistan. His father, Ray, recently lost his job working as a machinist in the softwood industry. "My son is risking his life for George Bush and Bush is paying me back by doing nothing about solving the lumber situation," Ray Beckhurst told the paper.

Inter-imperialist conflicts

Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League from Quebec, said in an interview that the layoffs and economic hardships working people face, the increasing trade conflicts between the imperialist powers, and the U.S.-led military assaults in Afghanistan and elsewhere are all a result of the crisis of capitalism. Washington is using its economic and military might to try to extend U.S. imperialism's domination of the world and deal blows to its imperialist "allies."

"Washington and Ottawa both seek to draw working people in their respective countries into nationalist support for capitalist companies in each country, whether it be in steel, forestry, or other industries," Prairie said, "while we point to a common fight by workers in both countries against our common exploiters."

"Communists in the United States are campaigning to demand the U.S. government end all tariffs and other obstacles to trade and travel erected by the U.S. rulers," he said. This includes the elimination of all 'anti-dumping,' 'fair labor,' 'environmental protection,' and other trade weapons wielded with often devastating consequences by the U.S. government under the banner of 'free trade.' Class-conscious workers should make the same demands of the government in Canada, which uses similar trade weapons against semicolonial countries and imperialist competitors around the world."

Burial of four soldiers

The burial of four soldiers from the Third Battalion, Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, killed by a bomb dropped on them by a U.S. warplane in Afghanistan, highlights the stakes for working people, Prairie said. "The capitalist rulers of Canada are dragging us into war against our brothers and sisters around the world to fight and die for the interests of our class enemies. At the same time workers and farmers are squeezed by the austerity drive spearheaded by the provincial governments, the workings of the capitalist system, and the results of the inter-imperialist conflicts."

Prairie said that big sections of the capitalist class in Canada are willing to bow down to Washington's tariffs to protect other export products. "Ottawa's promises of 'retaining' laid off workers are a sham," he said. "Instead, the government must launch a massive public works program to ensure jobs at a union scale; shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around; and to raise the minimum wage."

The ongoing working-class protests in British Columbia and elsewhere in the country—and the upcoming action in Vancouver May 25—against the rulers' anti-labor drive, he said, "are an example of the kind of determined fight needed to advance the interests of the working class today. Along this road we can unify workers and farmers and chart a road to put in power a government of workers and farmers, a revolutionary battle that our brothers and sisters in the United States will surely want to emulate."

IMF officials reject new loan for Argentina, protests by workers demand jobs, back pay

BY GREG McCARTAN

Workers are taking to the streets again in Argentina, demanding food, back payment of wages, and measures to address rising unemployment as the government of Eduardo Duhalde appears on the brink of collapse.

In the province of San Juan, near the border with Chile, state workers have taken over public buildings to demand three months' back wages. The provincial governor responded by saying he would print 50 million pesos worth of bonds, call *huarpes*, to pay workers, a step opposed by Washington and the International Monetary Fund which it controls. Police used tear gas and rubber bullets against the protesters on April 23.

Press reports indicate that in many provinces the peso is becoming rare, and governments are printing a variety of paper bonds to pay workers. In the province of La Riora transactions are carried out with bonds called *lecops*.

On April 23 1,000 people marched in Duhalde's hometown to demand the government give them food, and pickets blocked an important highway outside the northeast city of Santa Fe.

Demonstrations and clashes with police have taken place in the provinces of Chubut, Chaco, Córdoba, and Jujuy, and labor

unions say they are planning large-scale actions to demand wage increases in the coming weeks. In many provinces the government is the largest employer and the capitalist crisis in the country has led to severe layoffs and nonpayment of wages for tens of thousands of working people.

Duhalde, a leader of the Peronist party, had been counting on receiving renewed loans from the International Monetary Fund in order to keep the banking system afloat and relieve the breakdown in government finances. Argentina suspended payments on its \$141 billion foreign debt in December. Duhalde was appointed president by Argentina's congress January 1 after a nationwide eruption of protests forced the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa December 20.

IMF officials, however, rejected granting Argentina any further aid at a weekend meeting in Washington April 20-21, demanding that Buenos Aires carry out stark austerity measures. These include sharply reducing funds sent to the provinces, a measure government officials say would lead to the dismissal of 450,000 people from their jobs; amending a bankruptcy law that makes it hard for creditors to collect debts; and scrapping a measure from the 1970s which has been used by judges to "persecute" bankers.

In early April one U.S. official told the press that what is needed from the Duhalde government in implementing the IMF dictates is "action, not just words." For a decade leading up to the crisis which erupted late last year, Buenos Aires followed the advice of Washington and the IMF, pegging its currency to the dollar on a one-to-one basis, selling off state enterprises, and carrying out other measures. The government's approach was hailed as a model by the imperialist financial institutions.

Today, official unemployment stands at more than 20 percent and the buying power of working people and the middle class has been devastated with the decline of the peso by nearly 70 percent and inflation on the rise.

In a desperate attempt to stem the outflow of capital and the collapse of the banking system, Duhalde ordered an indefinite bank holiday April 19, preventing people from withdrawing money from accounts and halting all foreign exchange transactions. He also sent a measure to the Argentine Senate to turn \$12.5 billion of bank deposits into low-interest, long-term bonds. The Senate has refused to consider the legislation, leading to the resignation of Duhalde's economy minister. The government carried out a similar move in 1989 and the bonds quickly lost half their value.