

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

How Cuban revolutionists organized in the cities, 1952–58
—PAGES 6–7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 67/NO. 44 DECEMBER 15, 2003

Medicare bill shifts more costs of health care onto retirees

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—In a bipartisan vote, the U.S. Congress approved a Medicare “reform” bill November 25 that, in the guise of offering coverage for prescription drugs and in the name of reducing costs, shifts more of the burden of health care for retirees onto them and their families.

The program, established in 1965, provides medical benefits for those who are disabled or over the age of 65.

Medicare was a by-product of the gains of the mass civil rights struggles of the 1950s and ’60s. It was an extension of the Social
Continued on Page 4

U.S. occupiers step up use of devastating firepower in central Iraq

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Over the last half of November, U.S. forces occupying Iraq dealt military blows to remnants of the Saddam Hussein regime and others resisting the imperialist occupation, as they pressed ahead with an accelerated offensive. Their “Operation Iron Hammer” has included ratcheting up use of devastating firepower, resulting in indiscriminate killings of Iraqis. November was the bloodiest month for U.S. forces since Washington launched its assault on Iraq in March, with 81 GIs killed in combat there.

A pattern has simultaneously emerged in the tactics of those resisting the occupation. These forces are targeting the personnel of U.S. allies in Iraq including soldiers, diplomats, and businessmen. They are also
Continued on Page 5

Salt Lake rally boosts striking Co-Op miners

Backers of union organizing struggle picket Kingston business

BY MARCO ANTONIO RIVERA

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah—Striking coal miners fighting to organize a union at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, received a boost from a solidarity action held here November 29.

A group of strikers drove up from Huntington, about 140 miles southeast of here, to take part in the picket line. Joining them were students from the University of Utah, oil workers in the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE), and other workers and representatives of the AFL-CIO.

The protest was called by the newly formed Co-Op Miners’ Solidarity Committee, which is sponsored by the Salt Lake chapter of Utah Jobs with Justice. Unionists and students had laid the groundwork for the solidarity committee in October and November.

The picket line was held in the suburb of Taylorsville outside Family Stores, a general merchandise store owned by the Kingstons, the Co-Op owners.

The labor battle broke out in public on September 22 when the miners walked out to protest unsafe working conditions and the suspension of a co-worker for union activ-
Continued on Page 5



Militant/Lisa Rottach

OMAHA, Nebraska—United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271 members at Swift factory here take plant-gate collection for Utah miners November 26. Unionists had distributed flyer inside packing plant beforehand on coal miners’ union organizing struggle. Solidarity with this labor battle is beginning to spread beyond Utah.

Protesters in New Jersey demand release of jailed Palestinian militant Farouk Abdel-Muhti

BY ABBY TILSNER

NEWARK, New Jersey—Chanting “Free Farouk, Free all the detainees!” 75 people marched through downtown Newark November 29 to demand the release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian revolutionist who has been jailed under threat of deportation since April of last year.

Demonstrators who came from New York and New Jersey distributed leaflets to bystanders on the busy street and carried placards that read: “582 days jailed by INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] and BICE [Bureau of Immigration Cus-

toms and Enforcement]; 253 days in solitary: why?” and “Stop racial profiling by the INS police.”

The protest was called by the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti. Immigration authorities say they will hold him until they can carry out a 1995 deportation order. Abdel-Muhti’s supporters say that the government must release him since he is stateless, having been born in Palestine.

Before his jailing Abdel-Muhti had repeatedly spoken out in defense of Palestinian self-determination, as he has continued to do since.

In the week leading up to the protest, the committee campaigned to draw attention to a November 19 assault on the Palestinian by guards at the Bergen County jail in Hackensack, New Jersey. The prison cops confiscated reading material and medicines as they kicked Abdel-Muhti to the ground, punched him, and told him to “shut the f— up” and to “go back to Palestine.” Among the seized publications were the *Militant*, the *Revolutionary Worker*, the *Northstar Compass*, and pamphlets by the Partisan Defense Committee.

On November 25 the prison authorities moved Abdel-Muhti into solitary confinement, where he has been kept for most of his time in jail in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
Continued on Page 10



Militant/Róger Calero

Backers of Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian revolutionary jailed in the United States under threat of deportation, march November 29 in Newark, New Jersey, to demand his release.

Save the dates!

December 13–14 New York City

Saturday, December 13: RED SATURDAY

A full day of work to begin building the new national headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party, an expanded New York Pathfinder bookstore, and offices of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*—all in the same location.

Stay the week to help with construction!

Sunday, December 14: PUBLIC MEETING

The Bipartisan War Party, Working-Class Resistance, and Building the Communist Movement

Speakers include **Jack Barnes**, SWP national secretary, and **Mary-Alice Waters**, president of Pathfinder Press. Others will report on efforts to upgrade and expand Pathfinder bookstores in London and Toronto; renovate the national center in London of the Communist League in the United Kingdom; and strengthen the regional center in Toronto of the Communist League in Canada. An early afternoon meeting.

BIGGEST BOOKSALE OF THE DECADE!

For time, location, and program, check www.themilitant.com

Sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and Young Socialists.
For further information call 212-695-7358 or see directory on page 8.

Also Inside:

Standoff at FTAA summit in Miami over U.S. gov’t goals 2

Ottawa plans to deport Syrian jailed on ‘secret evidence’ 3

UN agency adopts inspections of Iran’s nuclear facilities 5

Striking grocery workers in California shut down distribution centers 10

New York event celebrates 75 years of the ‘Militant’ 11

Miami FTAA summit is marked by standoff over U.S. gov’t goals

BY STEVE WOLF

MIAMI—A summit meeting of representatives of the U.S. government and of 34 governments in Latin America and the Caribbean ended here November 20, a day earlier than planned, without registering much progress in discussions on establishing a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The conference drew anti-FTAA protests marked by American protectionism.

The FTAA is a proposal promoted by Washington for a U.S.-dominated trade bloc. The U.S. rulers seek to use such a pact to beat down trade and investment barriers of semicolonial countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, while strengthening their edge over Washington’s European imperialist rivals.

Since the first such summit was held in Miami in 1994, the one government in the Americas that has been excluded is Cuba, which has vigorously campaigned against the FTAA, arguing that it will be used to increase the plunder of Latin America by U.S. capitalists.

In Miami, Washington had pushed for the main priorities of the U.S. employers: lowering tariffs on manufactured U.S. goods exported to Latin America and the Caribbean, recognizing and enforcing U.S. patents, and more protections for U.S. investment. But many governments, especially Brazil, the most developed semicolonial country in Latin America, chafed at Washington’s plan.

The Brazilian government wanted Washington to end subsidies to U.S. agricultural products and lower tariffs on others like oranges and sugar. The two biggest producers of orange juice in the world are the United States and Brazil. High tariffs on the import of oranges and concentrate from Brazil insure that U.S. capitalist growers have a big competitive advantage within the United States.

Washington’s position was that the question of agricultural subsidies and tariffs should be taken up in the World Trade Organization not the FTAA.

U.S. trade negotiator Robert B. Zoellick wrote in a column in the *Wall Street Journal*, “We need action by the two biggest subsidizers, Europe and Japan. We will not ‘unilaterally disarm’ in the FTAA.” In other words, FTAA or no FTAA, Washington does not plan to end subsidies to U.S. sugar companies or other agribusiness as a trade weapon against its rivals. But at the same time, Zoellick said, the U.S. government is pushing for Latin American and Caribbean nations to “buy more from us.”

Even without the FTAA the U.S. government has pushed for eliminating tariffs on its goods. For example, one of the conditions Washington imposed on Haiti in 1994 was the elimination of tariffs on rice and chicken. As a result, Haiti’s poultry industry was virtually wiped out, as was rice growing. Now Haiti imports chicken and rice from the United States.

The draft agreement “allows an individual country to ignore the strictures of the FTAA that it doesn’t like,” the *Miami Herald* reported. At the same time it “sets a deadline of Sept. 30, 2004, to finalize negotiations on tariffs, but doesn’t give dates for dealing with any other issues under the FTAA’s guidance.”

Unable to reach agreement on any real changes at the FTAA talks in Miami, U.S. officials announced that Washington would pursue bilateral talks to press its priorities with individual governments.

Business groups in the United States that backed Washington’s position viewed the draft accord as the best that could be achieved at the moment, with the goal of continuing to press for more concessions. “Today’s decision has avoided having the door slam shut and gives us a chance for what can still be a very high quality agreement,” said Frank Vargo, vice president for international economic affairs at the National Association of Manufacturers.

Protectionist protests

Demonstrations against the FTAA were held throughout the Miami summit, drawing thousands of protesters from around



Police fire rubber bullets November 20 at demonstrators in Miami protesting meeting for Free Trade Area of Americas. Some 2,500 cops were mobilized during meeting.

the country, as well as delegations from some Latin American countries. The union officials and other U.S.-based forces, however, largely opposed the trade pact from a protectionist standpoint.

On November 19 a “People’s Gala” against the FTAA was attended by several thousand people. Among the trade union contingents there were Teamsters; teachers; members of UNITE from Eden, North Carolina, who worked at the Pillowtex textile company there until it closed earlier this year; and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union. Also participating were supporters of the Green Party, Communist Party USA, and several anarchist groups. One of the largest organizations present was the Steelworkers union, with members at the protests from around the country. Many high school and college students from the Miami area were also present.

The largest anti-FTAA protest was organized by the AFL-CIO the next day with a “Save American Jobs” theme. The action drew several thousand people.

Union officials peddled an anti-Bush theme, despite the fact that the FTAA is a bipartisan initiative that was launched by the Clinton administration in 1994. AFL-CIO president John Sweeney told the crowd the union federation’s strategy is “to radically rewrite the Bush Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement, or stop it cold.”

“Since the Bush regime took power, we’ve lost 3 million jobs, 2.5 million of them in manufacturing,” Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO said. “It’s time, it’s time, it’s way past time for George W. Bush to go down.”

Cop violence

In the weeks leading up to the protests, Miami city officials violence-baited the anti-FTAA protesters. During the summit, more than 2,500 cops, many in riot gear, were deployed in downtown Miami, including cops from more than 40 local, state, and federal police agencies. Checkpoints were set up around the area.

The cops had pepper-spray balls, rub-

ber bullets, and tear gas at the ready, along with armored personnel carriers and water cannons. It was announced that for weeks the police had practiced “crowd control” techniques. According to the *Miami Herald*, they also spied on the Internet communications of protesters.

Cops stationed outside the Bayside Amphitheater, where the AFL-CIO action started and ended, decided who was and wasn’t allowed into the rally. Thousands were turned away by the cops and forced to remain outside the amphitheater.

As the rally was ending, cops shot tear gas and rubber bullets at demonstrators who had moved toward the fence at the nearby Intercontinental Hotel where the FTAA ministerial meeting was taking place. Several demonstrators were beaten and dozens arrested, including many who had nothing to do with the action near the fence.

About 220 people were arrested by the end of the week of activity.

In some cases cops took the belongings, including backpacks and purses, of those they were arresting and just dumped the contents on the street and drove off with their prisoners.

Leo Gerard, international president of the Steelworkers union, protested the police conduct in a letter to Congress. “The obvious purpose of the repressive police presence in Miami was, at a minimum,” he said, “to intimidate us and limit the exercise of our rights. Phalanxes of police in riot gear stretched for blocks, as did police cars buttressed bumper to bumper.”

He said the \$8.5 million in federal funding for Miami’s “security” was used for “homeland repression.”

THE MILITANT

Farmers fight to defend livelihoods

Hundreds of dairy farmers in the United Kingdom have joined protests against the price squeeze by the monopoly milk processors and big grocery chains. Read the ‘Militant’ to follow this and other struggles by working farmers. Don’t miss a single issue!



Farmers for Action

Dairy farmers blockade milk processor to demand price increase, Nuneaton, England, October 31.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
152 WEST 36TH ST., #401 NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$20 • United Kingdom, £8 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Continental Europe, £12 • France, 20 Euros • Iceland, Kr1,800 • New Zealand, NZ\$20 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 67/No. 44

Closing news date: December 2, 2003

Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
Business Manager: MICHAEL ITALIE
Washington Bureau Chief: SAM MANUEL
Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Michael Italie, Martin Koppel, Sam Manuel, and Paul Pederson.
Published weekly except for one week in January, July, September and December.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 594-1014; Fax (212) 594-1018.
E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The Militant **website** is: www.themilitant.com
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80.

Asia: Send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 1237 Jean-Talon est, Montréal, QC. Postal Code: H2R 1W1.

United Kingdom: £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LF, England.

Southern Ireland and Continental Europe: £70 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address. **France:** Send 115 euros for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U.

Iceland: Send 6,500 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik.

Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 550 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$90 to P.O. Box 164, Campsie, Haymarket, NSW 2194, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant's* views. These are expressed in editorials.

Ottawa seeks to deport Syrian jailed on ‘secret evidence’

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO—Officials of the Canadian government’s Department of Citizenship and Immigration have announced that they plan to deport Hassan Almrei, a Syrian-born refugee living in Canada, back to Syria in mid-December. They allege on the basis of “secret evidence” that the 29-year-old man—who recently conducted a six-week hunger strike to protest his treatment at the hands of Canadian authorities—is a candidate for “terrorism” and a sympathizer of Osama Bin Laden.

The officials’ action demonstrates Ottawa’s involvement in the U.S.-led “war on terrorism,” including attacks on workers’ and democratic rights. It also spotlights the two governments’ practice of sending prisoners to third countries to face interrogators whose methods include the routine and more or less open use of physical torture. Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian citizen also smeared with the “terrorism” charge, helped to expose this recently when he described weeks of beatings and electric shock treatment in a Syrian jail over the previous year.

On November 27, a Toronto judge ordered a stay of Almrei’s deportation order while the courts review the case.

For more than two years Almrei has been held without charges in solitary confinement on the basis of a “security certificate” issued by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), which was given the power to issue such certificates under the 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

“The certificate gives Ottawa sweeping powers of detention,” Reuters reported November 27. CSIS agents allege that Almrei espouses “Islamic extremist” views, was involved in passport forgery, and provided passports for men linked to al-Qaeda.

Brandishing such a “security certificate,” officials are not obliged to reveal charges to the accused at the special hearing that is convened, nor to present him or her with their evidence for the accusations. They can then impose an indefinite jail sentence.

In September, Almrei went on a 39-day hunger strike to protest the lack of heating in his jail cell, citing the cold temperatures he had endured over the previous two winters. He ended the strike after finally being given adequate heat. Five guards had testified in his support at a hearing held on the issue.

The proposal for Almrei’s deportation came in an October 23 report by Citizenship and Immigration official Debra Marmoyale. She wrote that after reviewing the CSIS “evidence,” she had concluded that “Mr Almrei’s presence in Canada poses a direct danger to the lives of Canadians, the lives of citizens of Canada’s allies and international security as a whole.”

Marmoyale said that in her opinion, the Syrian-born man would not face a significant risk of torture on being delivered to the Syrian authorities. “The totality of evidence before me... is inconclusive as to Syria’s treatment of persons suspected of involvement in terrorism,” she wrote.

Maher Arar is one who has a different judgment. On November 25 he issued a statement that read: “Given my experience, and what I lived through, and what I heard happening to other people in prison in Syria, I believe Mr. Almrei would face the same ordeal, if not worse.”

Arar, a Canadian citizen, was arrested at New York’s Kennedy Airport in September 2002. After being denied access to a lawyer or a telephone, and undergoing five days of interrogation, he was deported by U.S. authorities to Syria, where he was jailed for

With shot to head, Houston cop kills youth, 14

BY TONY DUTROW

HOUSTON—People driving by honked their horns and rolled down their windows to cheer, as about 75 people gathered in front of Burnham Woods Apartment complex November 24 for a candlelight vigil and picket near the spot where Eli Escobar, 14, had been killed by a police bullet three days earlier.

On their placards and in discussions with the *Militant*, protesters noted that Escobar was the second Latino teenager to die at the hands of the Houston Police Department in the space of three weeks. The other was Jose Vargas, 15, shot dead on October 31.

Escobar died instantly at 5:30 p.m. after being blasted in the head by Houston cop Arthur Carbonneau. Together with his fellow cop, Ronald Olivo, Carbonneau had chased the youth and pinned his legs to the ground.

Houston Police Officers’ Union lawyer Aaron Suder rallied to Carbonneau’s defense, saying that the gun fired accidentally after Escobar kicked the cop’s hand. “If you can’t get a suspect’s hands under control and you think they might be trying to gain access to a weapon, you have every justification in drawing your weapon,” he said. Carbonneau has been relieved of duty at full pay

“It was so unnecessary,” eyewitness Jesse Rodriguez told the November 25 *Houston Chronicle*. Rodriguez had accompanied the cops to the scene after reporting that another youth had punched his son. “They ignored me when I was telling them who had assaulted my son,” he said. “They were too busy roughing up Eli, who didn’t have anything to do with the assault.”

Rodriguez said that as the cops seized Escobar, “he was saying, ‘Help me! Help me! I didn’t do anything. What did I do?’ They had no mercy on him, no compassion.”

Another witness, 14-year-old Jose Salmoron, told the *Chronicle*, “There was no need to pull out a gun. It was two full-grown men against a kid.”

“They’re killing our children,” added Diane Bossom of Copwatch, an anti-police brutality organization. “Everybody in Houston should be demanding justice for this.”

The November 24 action was led by family members and most of the protesters were residents of this working-class Latino area, which includes several large apartment complexes. Many youth took part, some of whom knew Escobar. A shrine with candles and pictures marked the spot where he died. Among the participating organizations were the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, La Resistencia, and Copwatch.

“How can a 14-year-old kid be a threat to the cops?” Jennifer Yañez, 17, told the *Militant*. “They are supposed to protect you. Now I have zero respect for the cops.”

Yañez said she had just pulled out of the apartment complex parking lot early the evening of Escobar’s death when the cop car came screeching in. Later that night she heard about the killing, she said. Ann Marie Tesche said that her daughter Cynthia, also at the protest, was a classmate of Escobar at Black Middle School. “They need to put these cops on trial like any other criminals, and convict them,” she said. Participants carried hand-lettered signs reading, “Stop Killing Our Kids”; “Jail the Killer Cops”; “Justice Now!” and “Cruising = HPD [Houston Police Department] Death Penalty.” The latter was a specific reference to the killing of Jose Vargas on October 31.

The youth had been driving his car lawfully through the parking lot of the local AMC cinema complex when he was ordered to stop by Richard Butler, an off-duty cop. Butler pulled out his revolver and stuck it through the SUV’s open window. He claims that the weapon discharged when the vehicle lurched forward. Vargas was pronounced dead at Ben Taub Hospital.

On November 19 Vargas’s family members and supporters rallied at the theater parking lot to call for the investigation and prosecution of Butler, who remains on duty.

In a November 25 editorial titled, “Cause for Alarm: Deaths of teens in clashes with police outrageous,” the *Chronicle* sent a warning to city authorities that the police had gone too far in the highly publicized shootings. Fearing the consequences of the brazen killings, the editors stated that, “Only

Hoover workers resist plant closing in Scotland



Militant/Hugh Robertson

CAMBUSLANG, Scotland—More than 150 workers marched through the main street of this town near Glasgow November 22 and rallied in front of the Hoover vacuum cleaner plant here to protest the company’s proposal to close the factory and lay off more than 200 workers. Hoover workers hit the streets on successive Saturdays to collect 4,000 signatures on a petition in support of their fight. Trade unionists from the local steel works and a shipyard in Govan, Glasgow, brought their banners. Hoover says it will move the work to plants in China and Wales. Leaders of Amicus, the workers’ union, are pressing government agencies to subsidize Hoover to keep some of the operation open and retain some of the jobs Hoover plans to cut. David Lang, who has worked at the plant for 20 years, said, “We have to show the ownership that we’re not going to sit here and take it.”

a year. He reported that he had been subject to beatings and torture with electric cables for weeks. He described his cell as having “no light. It was three feet wide. It was six feet deep. It was seven feet high. It had a metal door, with a small opening in the door, which did not let in light.... I spent 10 months and 10 days in that grave.”

Under such duress, Arar says he made a false confession about visiting Afghanistan. His lawyer has stated that CSIS agents visited Syrian authorities after the latter had obtained this “confession.”

U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft and Canadian solicitor-general Wayne Easter discussed Arar’s case at a November 19 meeting, according to the *Globe and Mail*. The next day, reported the Toronto daily, Ashcroft claimed that the “Bush administration received—and believed—assurances from Syria that it would not torture Maher

Arar before deporting the Ottawa man.”

Ashcroft’s statement was at odds with official U.S. government statements that torture is a routine interrogation tool in Syria. An article in the November 5 *Washington Post* reported that officials “said that the Arar case fits the profile of a covert CIA ‘extraordinary rendition’—the practice of turning over low-level, suspected terrorists to foreign intelligence services, some of which are known to torture prisoners.”

The *Globe and Mail* noted that in a recent report on Syria, the U.S. State Department stated that “torture is common.”

Meanwhile, the Canadian government has deported Manzoor Joyia to Pakistan. Joyia was the last man still in jail of the immigrants arrested in August—20 from Pakistan, and one from India—on suspicion of links to “terrorism.” Two men were deported to Pakistan who had been jailed since May. None of the men were ever charged with any crime in Canada.

Ten of the men have now been deported. Three of those sent back to Pakistan are known to have been arrested there. According to a statement by Project Threadbare, a coalition formed to defend the immigrants, three of those deported underwent 16 hours of interrogation in Pakistan before being released on bail.

The 13 men who were released still face possible deportation. All have applied for refugee status in Canada.

strong leadership can prevent a breakdown of trust between citizens and police”

That evening, a public memorial mass for Escobar drew 100 people. A noon rally against police brutality was held in downtown Houston the next day.

Brian Williams contributed to this article.

Death penalty issued in D.C. ‘sniper’ case

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—One week after delivering a guilty verdict against John Allen Muhammad in the so-called sniper trial, jurors in a Virginia courtroom sentenced the 42-year-old man to death November 24. The sentence will be reviewed by Judge LeRoy Millette in early February 2004. In theory, he has the power to commute it to life imprisonment without hope of parole.

Holding the trial at Virginia Beach, Virginia, the government prosecuted Muhammad under the state’s antiterrorism act rather than as a regular murder prosecution, making it a test case for the new legislation. The act was passed amidst a raft of other legislative moves against democratic protections and workers rights, including the October 2001 Patriot Act. The hunt for the sniper also fit into the post-September 11 probes at using military forces inside United States territory.

The law defines an act of “terrorism” as a crime committed “with the intent to intimidate the civilian population at large or influence the conduct or activities of the government of the United States, a state or locality through intimidation.”

Under this law the prosecution did not have to prove that Muhammad pulled the trigger to call for the death penalty—the burden of proof normally required for a death sentence to be applied in standard murder prosecutions. The fact that prosecutors presented no evidence that Muhammad fired the rifle in any of the shootings was a key point in the defense case.

The trial of Muhammad’s alleged ac-

complice, Lee Boyd Malvo, 18, is taking place in Chesapeake, Virginia. Malvo’s age is the reason the prosecution is being undertaken in that state. Unlike other areas where people were allegedly killed by the two, Virginia state law allows his prosecution as an adult—meaning that he, too, will be eligible for the death penalty.

Back in November of last year, as state and federal authorities wrestled over the location of the trials, an Associated Press reporter noted, “The overriding concern among federal officials is to ensure their legal options include the death penalty.”

U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft said, “It is imperative that the ultimate sanction be available for those who have committed these crimes.”

In the course of the manhunt sparked by the murders, the U.S. government deployed military surveillance aircraft above Washington, where most of the killings took place. Requests for this military assistance from the FBI and local cops allowed Washington to skirt the bar on the use of the armed forces on U.S. territory spelled out in the Posse Comitatus Act.

Muhammad, who is Black, was convicted by a jury of 11 whites and one Black on two counts of murder, conspiracy to commit murder, and “use or display” of a firearm in the commission of a felony. As the jury was being chosen, local media was filled with coverage rehashing the three-week episode of October 2002. One television network went so far as to carry a fictionalized dramatization of the event featuring actors who resemble the defendants.

Attack on Medicare

Continued from front page

Security Act, itself the product of the working-class battles of the 1930s.

Big-business promoters of the new legislation have hailed it as the biggest expansion of health-care coverage since Medicare was enacted. The Congressional approval of the bill was warmly welcomed by the owners of insurance companies, hospitals, and other health-care businesses, which expect the measure to line their pockets. Decisive to its passage was the support of the American Association of Retired People (AARP), a lobby group for retirees that also happens to receive millions of dollars in royalties for insurance marketed under its name.

President George Bush, who is expected to sign the bill soon, seeks to claim credit for a health-care measure supposedly benefiting retired workers and to score points against his Democratic opponents, who have posed as defenders of Medicare.

The House version of the bill passed 220 to 215, with 16 Democrats in favor. The Senate vote was 59 to 44, with 10 Democrats supporting the measure. “Give it a chance to work,” commented Democratic Senator Diane Feinstein after casting a vote in favor.

The legislation builds on initiatives by the Clinton administration, which set up a presidential-Congressional study commission on Medicare “reform.” Those initiatives touted drug benefits, increases in premiums, and incentives to force Medicare recipients into private “health-care management” businesses, or HMOs.

The bill’s sponsors say the changes are needed to preserve Medicare because it will supposedly go bankrupt with people living longer and receiving benefits longer. In the name of “saving” Medicare, it is a step toward the bosses’ goal of dismantling it.

Much attention has been drawn to the previously unavailable drug benefit provisions in the bill. But the measure is a move toward forcing working people to rely more heavily on private health-care companies.

The bill requires the Medicare plan to compete with private health-care companies for patients on the basis of price. It includes a \$12 billion fund to give insurance companies subsidies as an “incentive.” For doctor visits and related services, Medicare recipients would have a choice of remaining in the plan or joining a private health-care program. Those remaining in the original plan would pay higher premiums if a private plan in their area is deemed to cost less.

Another provision introduces a means test, requiring those with incomes above \$80,000 to pay higher premiums for doctor visits. Starting in 2005, the annual deductible for doctor visits, at \$100 since 1991, would go up to \$110. It would also be tied to inflation rates for the following years.

These two provisions caused Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy, one of the main backers of the bill until days before the vote, to lead an attempt to block it by a filibuster. Twenty-two Democratic senators joined with Republicans to end the filibuster. Kennedy had been instrumental in winning enough Democrats to get easy approval of the earlier draft of the bill in the Senate.

In 2006 recipients of the drug benefit would pay a monthly premium of \$35, a \$250 annual deductible, and a 25 percent “co-payment” until total out-of-pocket costs reached \$2,250. After that amount comes the so-called doughnut or gap, where the recipient would have to pay all expenses out-of-pocket until the total reaches \$5,100. Beyond that, the government would cover 95 percent of drug costs.

The bill would maintain a ban on importing prescription drugs from Canada, except those certified as safe or “cost effective” by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—an obvious benefit to the U.S. drug monopolies.

In addition to giving subsidies to the health-care monopolies to compete with Medicare, the bill provides \$86 billion in payments and tax breaks over 10 years to private employers who continue to provide drug coverage to their retirees. Supporters of the bill argue that this is aimed at discouraging companies from dropping coverage for their retirees who would be eligible for the new Medicare drug benefits.

“Seniors with their own private coverage are likely to lose it,” warned Scott Holleran in the June 27 newsletter of the conservative Americans for Free Choice in Medicine. He cited a Congressional Budget Office esti-

mate that 37 percent of private employers were expected to drop drug coverage for their retirees.

Authors of the bill say that by increasing the role of private health-care companies in Medicare, it will lower costs and improve quality of services. But a study by the Urban Institute that compared costs by private health-care companies to those of Medicare for comparable services between 1970 and 2000, concluded that the costs under private plans were 20 percent higher.

Another provision is the tax breaks to employers who establish “employee health savings accounts.” Workers would be able to use the savings to pay for medical expenses. A supposed benefit is that if they change employers they would be able to transfer funds in the account. In order to qualify for the accounts, employees would be required to participate in company-sponsored health-care plans that often have high deductibles.

Proponents of the “health savings accounts” argue that they would reduce costs by forcing workers to “conserve” on medical care because they’ll be paying the bill. “It gives the individual the right incentives to be a wise consumer,” declared Devon Herrick from a capitalist think tank in Dallas called the National Center for Policy Analysis. The argument reveals the real “choice” offered millions of working people in the name of saving Medicare: pay more or get less medical care.

N.Y. meeting marks 75 years of ‘Militant’

Continued from Page 11

Militant ran extensive coverage of the Cuban Revolution. The fact that the revolution “was being analyzed in the *Militant* by American comrades who had traveled to Cuba, and they were writing articles explaining the firmness of the revolution,” reaffirmed the conviction of the Casa Cuba members about the important place of the Cuban Revolution in the world.

Miranda also underscored the importance of the *Militant* for political prisoners. He recalled that in the 1970s he had received requests for copies of the *Militant* from Rafael Cancel Miranda, the Puerto Rican independence fighter who spent 27 years in U.S. prisons. He said Cancel Miranda used the paper as part of the political work he carried out in the prison. “We now have five comrades in prison who are accused of terrorism—right here in this terrorist state,” Miranda said—referring to five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in this country on false espionage charges. Recently one of them had commented to him that he counted on regularly receiving the *Militant* in the prison.

Messages were also sent to the meeting by Rafael Cancel Miranda and Luis Rosa, another former Puerto Rican political prisoner, and by Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti, currently locked up in a New Jersey jail (see greetings on page 11).

Olga Rodríguez, a longtime member of the Socialist Workers Party and worker-correspondent for the *Militant*, spoke about how she and thousands of other radicalizing youth in the 1970s first came into contact with the *Militant* as they protested Washington’s war against the Vietnamese people, and how it helped convince her to join the socialist movement for the duration. She took up the irreplaceable role the paper played in analyzing developments in the rise of Chicano nationalism, including the establishment of the Southwest Bureau of the *Militant* to cover these developments.

Naomi Craine, a socialist worker in New York who served on the *Militant* staff through most of the 1990s and was the editor for several years, spoke about the *Militant*’s proud tradition of defending all class-war prisoners, regardless of their political views—from the 18 Teamsters and Socialist Workers Party leaders jailed during World War II; to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed on frame-up charges of espionage in 1953; to Black rights fighter Robert F. Williams; Native American militant Leonard Peltier; and the five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in the United States today.

Also speaking was Stu Singer, who worked in the 1960s with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, including in Lowndes County, Alabama where a big

California farm workers demand health insurance



Militant/Bernie Senter

Hundreds of vineyard workers and supporters marched through Santa Rosa, California, November 22 to demand health benefits for the workers at Gallo of Sonoma. Company president Matthew Gallo has refused to extend medical benefits to workers hired as contract employees—some 75 percent of the workforce—as part of ongoing company efforts to weaken the United Farm Workers (UFW) union, which represents the Gallo workers. The company, which sells \$1.7 billion of wine annually, campaigned this spring to oust the union by getting workers to sign decertification cards. The union charges that Gallo used fraud and intimidation to collect the signatures. The UFW is threatening to call for a boycott of the vintner to win its demands.

struggle developed over the right of Black workers and farmers to register to vote. He explained how the *Militant* helped organize a tour of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization—the only paper that covered the story of that civil rights fight at the time.

As a correspondent before and during a stint on the *Militant* staff, Singer helped cover the Steelworkers Fight Back campaign of Ed Sadlowski in the late 1970s to democratize the Steelworkers union and the 110-day strike by the United Mine Workers of America in 1978–79.

Carlos Samaniego, 25, a construction worker, explained that he first came into contact with the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* when he ran into a literature table at Union Square just before the U.S.-led war on Iraq. “The first issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* I read was the April issue,” he said. “The experience of reading an editorial rejecting the myth that France and Germany are promoters of peace had a big impact on me.” He explained that the socialist magazine’s perspective “fit right into the real world with ideas and revolutionary perspectives that spoke in defense of my class. The presence of everyone who is here at this meeting tonight is proof that the *Militant* is in the interests of the working class.”

The final speaker, Norton Sandler, had just participated in a celebration in London marking the 25th anniversary of Pathfinder Books at a central location in that capital

city. “There’s nothing more important than distributing our revolutionary program, which is a guide to action,” Sandler said. He pointed to work underway to secure space to house a larger Pathfinder bookstore in Manhattan, the national offices of the Socialist Workers Party, the headquarters branch of the Socialist Workers Party, and the editorial offices of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. “The goal,” Sandler said, “is to have an address in New York City that will become as well known as the address of Pathfinder Books in London is today.”

Nearly \$900 was raised in a collection to help cover volunteer expenses for the full-time search that is helping to secure the new space.

In the discussion that followed, Arthur Hughes, who served on the *Militant* staff as a copy editor in the 1980s, spoke about the importance the staff has always put on getting the facts right, and rigorously sourcing them, as crucial to producing a paper that serves working people. George Tselos recounted how as a student attracted to the revolution he traveled to Cuba after the triumph, and wrote about what he saw. Now, he said, he takes great satisfaction in the work he does as a volunteer for the *Militant* entering subscriptions into the database to ensure all subscribers get their weekly paper in a timely way.

Olga Rodriguez contributed to this article.

Cleveland ‘Militant’ event

Continued from Page 11

was editor of the *Militant*.

Helen Meyers, who has written for the *Militant* over the years, spoke about the history of the paper in building the socialist movement. She noted that on display were a number of pamphlets based on *Militant* articles. Among them was *Revolt in France*, on the May 1968 workers upsurge in France. A *Militant* reporting team interviewed workers and youth on the barricades in the streets of Paris and in the occupied factories. Two other such pamphlets were *Watts and Harlem: The Rising Revolt in the Black Ghetto* from articles in 1964–65, and *Portugal in Revolt*, on the 1974 popular upsurge in Portugal after the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship and events leading to the independence of Portugal’s African colonies.

Meyers recalled working in the 1960s with *Militant* business manager Carolyn Kerry, who explained to her that in the earliest days the supporters of the paper had to physically defend their right to sell it against Stalinist thug attacks. For example, selling on the docks to longshoreman and merchant marine sailors in California was

a priority. Several *Militant* distributors who were male had been attacked by members of the Communist Party. So female members of the Socialist Workers Party began to sell on the docks. Kerry said they assured their right to sell by always carrying very large and tall umbrellas over their arms.

Meyers described distributing the issue of the *Militant* in May 1970 that had an eyewitness account from Kent State University, where Ohio National Guardsmen had opened fire on students protesting the war in Vietnam and killed four people. “I was sitting on a bench at the entrance to the University of California in Berkeley,” she said. “I had a stack of 50 papers and was waiting for other members of the Young Socialist Alliance to join me in a sale. The papers sold out before they arrived.”

During the discussion period, Bob Laycock, a longtime *Militant* reader who currently works on the Pathfinder Print Project, said, “The *New York Times* calls itself the ‘paper of record.’ No, the *Militant* is the paper of record. The *Militant* is a paper of integrity that takes politics, accuracy, and reporting the truth seriously.”

Occupation of Iraq

Continued from front page
doing their utmost to entice the Pentagon to use massive force, which produces growing casualties among Iraqi civilians who have nothing to do with attacks on U.S. and allied forces. These steps are politically calculated to minimize the commitment of troops to Iraq from countries other than the United States and to undermine support for Washington’s course among Iraqis.

One example of the devastating firepower increasingly used by the occupiers, and how they were lured into unleashing it by their attackers, was the November 30 battle in the majority Sunni Muslim city of Samarra, north of Baghdad.

A force of 100 GIs with six tanks, four Bradley fighting vehicles, and four Humvees entered Samarra that morning to deliver new Iraqi currency issued by the U.S.-imposed regime to two banks in the city. They were accompanied by two squads of military police and four squads of infantry. The U.S. forces entered the city in two convoys and were attacked by fighters with hand and rocket-propelled grenades and rifles. The attackers persisted in firing, even after the U.S. troops began responding with machine guns and cannons.

According to many witnesses quoted in the U.S. media, the occupying troops fired indiscriminately, demolishing some buildings and damaging a mosque.

U.S. commanders said the next day that their forces suffered no fatalities, only seven wounded, and had killed 54 insurgents, many of whom were wearing uniforms of Saddam’s Fedayeen, a militia loyal to the deposed regime.

A range of Samarra residents, however, disputed this claim. Samarra General Hospital officials pointed out that only eight dead had been brought in, along with 54 wounded, most of them noncombatants, although they conceded that some of the victims may have been taken elsewhere.

According to the December 2 *Washington Post*, a man and his son were killed when a tank round hit the mosque near the hospital.

“Even in worship, we’re not safe from the Americans,” Abdel-Rahman Abdel-Qadir, an assistant at the mosque, told the *Post*.

Abir Mohammed al-Khayat, 28, said a rocket hit the minibus she and others were riding in on the way home from their jobs in a local pharmaceuticals factory. “There were about 20 of us, men and women,” she told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Her arm was injured by shrapnel.

“All the people in town today are asking for revenge,” Majid Fadel al-Samarai, a 50-year-old emergency room worker at the Samarra hospital, told the *Chronicle*. “They want to kill the Americans like they killed our civilians. Give me a gun, and I will also fight.”

Pattern of attacks on U.S. allies

At the same time, the forces attacking the occupiers, and their backers internationally, have systematically targeted U.S. allies that have stationed troops and other personnel in Iraq.

Such attacks have included the November 12 suicide bombing in Nasiriyah, southern Iraq, which killed 19 Italian carabinieri and at least 12 others; the November 20 bombing of the British consulate and HSBC bank in Istanbul, Turkey, that killed the British consul and 26 others, for which a unit of al-Qaeda claimed responsibility; the November 29 killings of a Colombian contractor in the town of Balad, two Japanese diplomats and their driver near Tikrit, and seven Spanish military intelligence officers ambushed south of Baghdad; and the November 30 killing of two south Korean electricians, also near Tikrit.

All of the imperialist and other governments involved have since declared their resolve to stay in Iraq or to send additional forces in the future—from Rome to Tokyo, Madrid, and Seoul.

There are indications, however, that this turn of events may delay implementation of the Japanese government’s decision to dispatch troops there. While condemning the “terrorists” who killed Japanese citizens,



AFP/Dusan Vranic

Sen. Hillary Clinton at 2nd Airborne Division barracks in Baghdad, November 28.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said, “I want to take all measures to ensure that there are no fatalities.” Some international organizations that had set up shop in Iraq—like the United Nations and Red Cross—have withdrawn or sharply scaled back their presence after earlier bombings of their installations.

Washington, meanwhile, continues to insist that its military offensive is concentrated on Hussein loyalists and that it is making progress toward smashing resistance.

“You are defeating the terrorists here in Iraq, so that we don’t have to face them in our own country,” said U.S. president George Bush November 27, repeating one of the main rationalizations of his administration for the invasion and occupation of the country. Bush was addressing 600 soldiers of the 1st Armored Division and the 82nd Airborne during a Thanksgiving visit to Baghdad which was kept secret until the last minute. “You’re defeating Saddam’s henchmen, so that the people of Iraq can live in peace and freedom,” he said. “We will win because we will stay on the offensive.”

Two weeks earlier, as the number of attacks on the occupiers rose to 50 per day, U.S. officers had launched an accelerated crackdown, focused on Baghdad and other

areas of central Iraq encompassing the so-called “Sunni Triangle,” where Hussein’s Baathist Party apparatus had its main stronghold. The area includes Samarra.

In political contrast to this area, opposition to the Baathist regime flourished among the Shiites in the south, who comprise the majority among Iraqis, and Kurds in the north. Following the 1990-91 Gulf War, U.S. and allied troops stood by as the Iraqi armed forces crushed rebellions in both areas, carrying out widespread atrocities.

While southern Shiite leaders led protests against the foreign troops in the early days of the current occupation, they have not endorsed widespread military action to date.

Bipartisan support

The day after Bush’s visit to Iraq, Democratic senators Hillary Clinton of New York and Jack Reed of Rhode Island visited both Baghdad and Kirkuk, an oil-rich city in northern Iraq. They had spent their Thanksgiving Day with U.S. forces in Bagram, Afghanistan.

In Iraq, Clinton offered a mild criticism of the Bush administration. At the same time, she praised Bush for his trip there to support U.S. troops in Iraq and expound once again on Washington’s goals. In an interview with the Associated Press in Bagram, she underlined the bipartisan support for the U.S.-led occupation of both Iraq and Afghanistan, calling for more troops to provide “security” to the U.S.-installed government of Hamid Karzai in Kabul.

“The U.S. is resolved to stand as a strong partner” of the Karzai government, Clinton said, “and to ensure that the terrorists, whoever they are, wherever they come from, will be dealt with.... I also want to convey to them that the American people are fully behind them as they carry out a very difficult task.”

Several of those vying for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination next year made a point of praising Bush for his trip to Baghdad. One was Sen. John Kerry, who said, “I thought it was terrific. I think it’s the right think for a president to do.” Fellow Sen. Joseph Lieberman was even more complimentary. “There are days when you have to say, we’re not Republicans, we’re not Democrats,” he said. “We are Americans.”

Salt Lake rally backs striking Co-Op miners

Continued from front page

ity. The company, owned by the Kingston family, fired the 74 workers, who launched a fight to get their jobs back and to organize into the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). Following the escalation of the struggle, collections of food and funds on campus and in the labor movement in Salt Lake City and closer to Huntington have proved vital in sustaining the miners in their fight—now in its third month.

With the assistance of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), the miners—most of whom are immigrant workers from Mexico—are waging an unfair labor practice strike. They have instituted regular picketing of the Co-Op mine and reached out to other miners and beyond to win solidarity. Low wages—about one-third of industry levels—and appalling safety conditions are key issues in their fight to organize the mine.

During the November 29 picket line by 35 miners and their allies, many motorists driving through the busy intersection honked their horns in solidarity.

“What has been done to these miners is simply unjust and wrong,” said John Walters, a 19-year-old worker who is also a student at Salt Lake Community College. He was pleased to hear that other students from the campus had driven to Huntington to bring support to the miners’ picket line. He told the miners he was going to talk to a college teacher who would be interested in having the workers address his class.

“I did not know that store was owned by the Kingstons,” said Clarissa, who works at a nearby coffee house. “I will never go into that store again.”

At the protest the Utah miners gave interviews to several TV stations and newspapers. “We are fighting today because we think this abuse and the conditions that exist at the mine have to come to an end not just for us, but for those who come after we are gone,” said Jesús Salazar on Channel 5. The anchorwoman had asked him why he didn’t get another job with better pay.

As has frequently happened in the course of the fight, the record of the polygamous Kingston clan, a labor-hating capitalist fam-

ily whose members have been convicted of anti-woman violence and sexual abuse, became an issue in the action.

Miners pointed to a dozen members of the Kingstons who arrived at the store after the picket line went up. “That truck with the Idaho license plate comes from their potato farm in Idaho,” said Salazar.

The store itself was staffed by two women and several very young children. One male family member stood outside the store to promote a prominent Christmas tree business in the parking lot of the strip mall where the store is located. The man, who refused to give his name to this reporter, objected to one miner’s characterization of the Kingston clan as an “evil empire,” as he passed out a flyer reading “Free photo with Santa.”

UN agency approves nuclear inspections in Iran

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on November 26 further tightens the pressure on Iran to scale back its nuclear program and lay its facilities open to ongoing scrutiny by agency officials. The imperialist governments of the United States, Britain, France, and Germany dominated the drafting and passage of the resolution.

The 18-clause document came on top of months of propaganda and pressure against Iran led by Washington, and after previous inspections and critical reports by IAEA officials. Its drafting was marked by sharp disagreements back and forth between Washington and its European rivals.

While noting that Iran had suspended its uranium-enrichment program and agreed to IAEA inspections, the resolution criticized it for alleged past failures in disclosing the extent of its program, and called for a “particularly robust system of verification,” or inspections. It also included a so-called trigger clause instructing the IAEA board of governors to “consider all options at its disposal” in the event of “any further Iranian

failures.” IAEA director-general Mohamed ElBaradei commented: “The resolution sends an ominous message that failures in the future will not be tolerated.”

The trigger was included at the insistence of U.S. officials. In debates leading up to the adoption of the resolution, they had rejected two earlier drafts supported by their British, French, and German rivals. At each stage Washington argued for sharper language. Until the final compromise U.S. officials had pressed for the inclusion of a threat of sanctions against Iran by the UN Security Council if recommended by the IAEA’s board. Such an outcome is among the “options” held by agency officials.

On the eve of the vote, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell declared himself “very satisfied” with the outcome.

Kenneth Brill, the U.S. ambassador to the IAEA, said, “There must be a very robust verification. The international community rejects 18 years of Iran’s denial, deceit, and deception.”

An unnamed French representative told the *Washington Post* that the final resolution is “very near the European logic” and that it focuses on Iran “implementing the agree-

ments it reached with us a few weeks ago.” The diplomat was referring to an October 21 accord in which Berlin, London, and Paris, backed by Moscow, wrenched an agreement from Iran to open its facilities to surprise inspections. Tehran also agreed to suspend its program to enrich uranium.

Giving a sense of the tensions bubbling under these differences, Peter Brookes of the conservative Heritage Foundation wrote in the November 23 *New York Post*, “With \$8 billion a year in trade and a deal pending to up the ante even more, the European Union is Iran’s largest trading partner. And it appears that the EU—led by France, Germany and Britain—may now value those trade privileges over the principle of opposing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.”

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told Reuters that the resolution was “an achievement for Iran and proved that Iran has followed its peaceful nuclear activities with transparency and truthfulness.” He urged the IAEA to allow Iran to “continue its cooperation with the agency seriously,” based on the October 21 agreement with the European powers.

‘Aldabonazo’: How Cuban

organized in the cities, 1952

Publisher’s preface to the account by a central organizer of the urban underground

Reprinted below is the preface to the forthcoming Pathfinder book *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, by Armando Hart.

Mary-Alice Waters, who edited this book, is the president of Pathfinder Press and the editor of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. She has edited more than a dozen books of interviews, writings, and speeches of leaders of the Cuban Revolution. Copyright ©2003 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The simultaneous publication in English and Spanish of Pathfinder’s edition of *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, brings this account of the victorious struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista to significantly new and broader audiences.

Written by Armando Hart, one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, *Aldabonazo* is now accessible for the first time ever to English-speaking readers. In Spanish, the book, which has been out of print for half a decade, is again available not only in Latin America and Spain, but for the first time to the large and ever-growing audience of Spanish-speaking readers in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere around the globe—wherever the whiplash of capital has accelerated the emigration of those who possess nothing to live by but the sale of their own labor power.

More than five decades ago, Armando Hart emerged as a leader of the young generation of students and working people who burst into history as they took to the streets in opposition to the 1952 military coup d’état in Cuba that installed one of the most brutal dictatorships Latin America had yet experienced. The Centennial Generation, as they became known, refused to accept or compromise with the tyranny and corruption that marked political life in Cuba. They asserted not only the right but the obligation of the Cuban people to rise in armed insurrection if need be to bring down a bloody, illegitimate regime that had usurped power by force. And they set out to forge a revolutionary movement capable of achieving their aims.

Aldabonazo—which in Spanish means a sharp, warning knock on the door—became a rallying cry of that generation of youth who risked their lives in defiance of the military regime. What distinguished them from the various bourgeois political parties and associations that opposed the Batista dictatorship was not primarily words, but



Bohemia Archives

Inset, Eduardo Chibás, leader of Orthodox Party in 1950s, which attracted Cuban workers and youth repelled by government corruption and subservience to U.S. imperialism. In August 1951, in an act of protest, Chibás ended his weekly radio broadcast with the words “This is my final *aldabonazo*” and shot himself. *Aldabonazo*—a knock on the door—became the rallying cry for youth seeking to fight the prevailing corruption. Above, march by the Orthodox Youth in Havana marking the first anniversary of Chibás’s death.



deeds. Without fear of consequences for themselves, or political hesitation over where the struggle might lead, they fought for what they believed was right and refused to settle for less.

Fewer than seven years later, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, the July 26 Revolutionary Movement and its Rebel Army led the workers, peasants, and revolutionary-minded youth of Cuba to victory. Some 20,000 had paid with their lives by the time Batista and his henchmen fled the country on January 1, 1959. A new revolutionary government was installed with the jubilant support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people. Armando Hart was the first minister of education in that government.

Aldabonazo takes us into this history from the perspective of the cadres who with courage and audacity led the struggle waged by the urban underground, known in the political vocabulary of Cuba as the *Llano* (plains). The book joins other titles published by Pathfinder over the last decade, among which are:

- Ernesto Che Guevara’s *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956–58*, and Teté Puebla’s *Marianas in Combat*, each of which tells pieces of the story from inside

what was known as the *Sierra* (mountains), recounting the experiences and lessons of the Rebel Army forces of the July 26 Movement based in the Sierra Maestra mountain range of eastern Cuba;

- Victor Dreke’s *From the Escambray to the Congo*, which incorporates experiences of the student-led forces of the Revolutionary Directorate and the guerrilla war in the Escambray mountains of the central region of Cuba; and

- *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba’s Revolutionary Armed Forces*, which recounts the experiences of Enrique Carreras and José Ramón Fernández, both military officers who helped lead anti-Batista conspiracies within the armed forces, as well as the stories of Néstor López Cuba and Harry Villegas (*Pombo*) who fought in the Sierra.

Hart’s narrative of his own political trajectory and experiences in the revolutionary underground draws extensively on and ties together a rich, even dizzying, collection of letters, circulars, articles, and manifestos interspersed throughout the pages of this book. Hart himself participated in drafting many of these documents, each written in the heat of the struggle. A good number of them are published for the first time in *Aldabonazo*.

Through Hart’s account we begin to understand more fully and accurately the day-by-day political struggle waged by the forces that came together in 1955 under the leadership of Fidel Castro to form the July 26 Revolutionary Movement, named for the date of the 1953 assault on the Moncada military garrison in Santiago de Cuba that marked the opening of the popular insurrection against the dictatorship. We follow the men and women of the July 26 Movement as they work to develop their political program; as they struggle, through action and debate, to win the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard; as they take advantage of every opening to intervene in the broad political ferment, exposing the empty posturing and pretensions of the traditional bourgeois opposition parties; and as they clarify questions of strategy and tactics debated not only among the revolutionary cadres of the Llano and of the Sierra, but throughout the anti-Batista opposition.

Above all we come to appreciate the leadership capacities of Fidel Castro as he pulls

together and politically orients the revolutionary cadres coming from diverse origins and experiences—exemplified by men and women like Armando Hart and his brother Enrique, Celia Sánchez, Frank País, Haydée Santamaría, Níco López, Vilma Espín, and Faustino Pérez—to name but a few of those whom we meet and begin to know in these pages. We watch the core of the national leadership of the July 26 Movement in the Llano emerge, grow, and recover from the blows of repression, and transform themselves in the course of the struggle.

As Hart puts it in his epilogue, “Revolutions are not a stroll through beautiful meadows and gardens, where men march without difficulty or anguish. A process of change is filled with both, and multiplies them. History does not move in a straight line. Contradictory situations generate passions that are full of human conflict and mark revolutionary conduct.” Those were the leadership challenges they met and surmounted.

We see how the men and women of the July 26 Movement fought to forge a *disciplined* organization of cadres whose goal—as explained in the leadership’s 1957 “Circular No. 1 to the membership,” printed here—was “(a) To overthrow Batista through popular action, [which] is not the same as just overthrowing him,” and “(b) To consolidate the revolutionary instrument to ensure the fulfillment of the revolution’s program, also through popular action, [which] is not the same as simply creating a new party.”

Along this course the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army not only led the working people of Cuba to bring down the dictatorship and establish the first “free territory of the Americas.” They opened the road to the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere as well. For the first time since the Bolsheviks under Lenin led the workers, peasants, and soldiers of the tsarist empire to power in October 1917, a leadership of the toilers unpoisoned by the degeneration of the Russian Revolution emerged on the world stage, bypassing obstacles and creating new possibilities for struggle. A quarter century of revolution in the Americas ensued—from the Southern Cone through the Andes, to Central America and the Caribbean. The liberation of southern Africa became a reality.

Therein lies the root of the implacable hatred of the U.S. rulers for the Cuban Revolution and for those who led—and lead—it. Therein lie the reasons why for more than forty years Washington has never for an instant ceased attempting to punish the Cuban people for their audacity, to force them into submission. And why imperialism has failed.



Aldabonazo is not an “inside story” or a polemic. “My aim was not to investigate what was done badly, or what could have been done, or what should have been done better,” Hart writes in his epilogue. “The main interest of this book lies in showing some fundamental elements of a historical thread that should not be forgotten, and that can serve as an important point of reference to better understand how the fabric of the Cuban Revolution was woven and, more broadly, to comprehend the second half of the twentieth century.”

It is in that spirit, too, that Pathfinder publishes this new edition of *Aldabonazo*. The book is of interest not only, or even primarily, for historical reasons, as important as they may be. The Cuban Revolution in all its rich complexity is a vital, living part of the present and future struggles of Our America, and the world. The better we understand how that revolution was led to victory, the better prepared we will be to emulate its example and meet the challenges posed by the social and political explosions that will shape the



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs Archives

Fidel Castro (center) is interrogated by Batista’s officers after he was seized following the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba.

revolutionists 1952–1958

Underground of the July 26 Movement

twenty-first century.

Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution, told an international youth congress in Havana in July of 1960, “If this revolution is Marxist . . . it is because it discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx.”

For more than forty years, one of the most persistent themes of the left-liberal spokespersons for the U.S. ruling class has been the examination and reexamination of what could have been done, what should have been done to prevent (or can yet be done to reverse) the mighty social revolution in Cuba. A revolution that swept away not only North American propertied interests but their Cuban counterparts as well, and established a new class—the working class—in power.



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs Archives

Armando Hart (front left) and other prisoners sing Cuban national anthem as they are led into court, to protest the murder of members of the Revolutionary Directorate after they attacked the presidential palace on March 13, 1957. Shortly after this, Hart escaped from the courthouse, shedding his prison clothes (inset).



A mythology has been cultivated and widely disseminated, especially by a layer of individuals who supported the struggle against Batista but recoiled from the deep social revolution that accelerated as that struggle advanced, assuring its victory. Among these individuals were men and women of whom Hart says, “they aspired to be more than what they could be in the revolution. They were moved by resentment.”

That mythology, in the version popular among liberals in the United States, holds that deep political differences existed between the leading cadres of the Sierra and Llano, with the latter being more “democratically” inclined. If only the U.S. government had acted differently, they argue, then somehow the leaders of the Llano, not Fidel Castro and the commanders of the Rebel Army in the mountains, would have emerged as the political leadership of the Cuban people after Batista was overthrown. The subsequent history of Cuba, and indeed the twentieth century, would have been different.

Hart addresses this mythology directly and indirectly throughout the pages of *Aldabonazo*.

bonazo, exposing the fallacies in which such arguments are rooted. “Outside the country,” he writes, “a tale has been woven about how our whole struggle could have moved toward a bourgeois revolution. I invite anyone who believes this to consider the consequences of the implementation of our entire program. Enactment and strict enforcement of laws implementing the constitution of 1940 alone meant totally opposing the interests of the domestic oligarchy and imperialism. Suffice it to say that this constitution provided for the abolition of the large landed estates.”

While he himself came from the family of a prominent Havana magistrate, “the social composition of the most representative leadership cadres and rank-and-file combatants was not bourgeois,” Hart notes. “They came from the working masses, the middle layers (mostly of modest means), the poor peasants, and the unemployed.” The reader need only review the content of the circulars, letters, and declarations printed here, issued from the beginning of the revolutionary war in 1956 onward, to realize the accuracy of Hart’s statement that they “illustrate the social and profoundly radical character of the revolution from its formative years.” They offer “proof that we were marching toward a confrontation with imperialism, and that the idea of social revolution had taken root among the combatants of the July 26 Movement.”

The majority of cadres of the July 26 Movement fighting in the Llano as well as the Sierra underwent a profound transformation as they put their lives on the line day after day, determined to transform their world. They emerged as different people, molded by these experiences and by the social

realities they shared with the men and women in the mountains and fields, from whom they learned, and with whom their future was fused. Whatever ideas each individual held to begin with, those ideas evolved, matured, became clearer, more proletarian, as the revolutionary struggle deepened. Moving from city to mountains, and sometimes in reverse, as a

significant number of cadres of the Llano did, brought greater homogeneity in political character and revolutionary priorities to the leadership core. As Faustino Pérez, Hart’s close comrade-in-arms, puts it in a letter to Hart included in these pages, the “Sierra is a savior. It has saved the revolution from being annihilated, and it saves sick spirits from death. . . . [It] detoxifies, encourages, heals, restores, revitalizes.”

The cord that has bound the leadership of the Cuban Revolution together for more than five decades is none other than their commitment to that “profoundly radical” social program, first presented in *History Will Absolve Me*, Fidel Castro’s courtroom defense speech at his trial for leading the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada garrison. That program became flesh and blood in the trenches of battle to bring down the dictatorship and to prevent the fruits of victory from being stolen once again by the masters of the empire to the north.



Aldabonazo was first published in Cuba



Council of State Office of Historical Affairs Archives

First meeting of the July 26 Movement leadership in the Sierra Maestra mountains in eastern Cuba, February 1957. From left: Frank País, Faustino Pérez, Raúl Castro, Fidel Castro, Armando Hart, and Universo Sánchez.

by Editorial Letras Cubanas in 1997. In 1998 the Spanish publishing house Libertarias Prodhufi brought out an edition under the title *Cuba: Roots of the Present*.

Pathfinder’s edition, prepared in collaboration with the author, reorganizes materials contained in the earlier publications, incorporating them into the narrative in a more integral way. Readers, especially those for whom much of the rich revolutionary history of Cuba is relatively unknown, will be aided by the extensive chronology and glossary, edited with generous help from a number of knowledgeable collaborators in Cuba, but for which Pathfinder alone bears editorial responsibility.

The historic photos and graphic illustrations of the underground publications of

Fernández Retamar, director of *Casa de las Américas*, and himself a combatant of the Centennial Generation.

The initial translation into English was provided by Olimpia Sigarrosa. Editing of the translation and preparation of the glossary, chronology, and annotation were the work of Michael Taber. The Spanish-language text was prepared by Luis Madrid.

Scores of volunteers from countries around the world, all part of the Pathfinder Printing Project, eagerly contributed their time and abilities to translate, format, proofread, index, prepare the photo pages and maps, assemble the digital production files, and assure delivery of the final printed product.

Above all, special appreciation is due to



Bohemia Archives

On Jan. 1, 1959, Batista fled Cuba in face of advance by rebels and spreading popular insurrection. Working people took to the streets to finish off the dictatorship. Above, Havana citizens take over the offices of a pro-Batista political party.

the 1950s that appear in these pages are also reproduced in large part courtesy of Armando Hart, who provided them from his own collection or helped make them available from other archives.

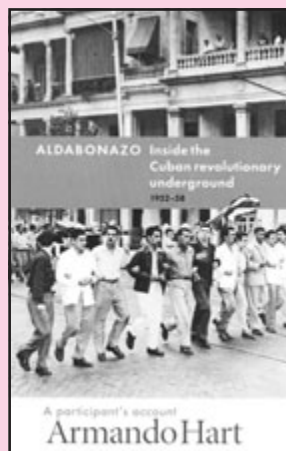
The preface to the U.S. edition by Eliades Acosta, director of the José Martí National Library of Cuba, is an especially welcome contribution. It joins the valuable preface to the original Cuban edition by Roberto

Eloísa Carreras, whose alert editorial contributions, diligence, and good-natured collaboration from Havana were indispensable to the quality and accuracy of this edition.

Most important, of course, without the close attention, keen interest, and generous allotment of time of the author himself, this new edition of *Aldabonazo* would not have been possible.

November 2003

Coming in January from Pathfinder



Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58

by Armando Hart

In this firsthand account by one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, we meet many of the men and women who in the 1950s led the urban underground in the fight against the brutal U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Together with their comrades-in-arms of the Rebel Army, they not only brought down the tyranny. Their revolutionary actions and example worldwide changed the history of the 20th century—and the century to come.

Order online from www.pathfinderpress.com
or from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.

Why American Revolution was necessary

The following are excerpts from “Was the revolution necessary?” an essay by George Novack that appears in *America’s Revolutionary Heritage: Marxist Essays*, which is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for November. Novack edited the book and contributed many of its chapters. This article appears in the section “The First American Revolution.” Copyright ©1976 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted here by permission.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

On March 22, 1765, George III gave his royal assent to the Stamp Act, which had passed both houses of Parliament with no more commotion than “a common Turnpike Bill.” The effects of this hateful tax measure on the American colonists and the attempts



British soldiers killed Crispus Attucks, an ex-slave, and four others in 1770 Boston Massacre, a key event in the buildup to the 1776–81 War of Independence.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

to enforce it provoked the first large-scale outbursts against the crown.

Ten years later, on March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry stood up and, in answer to those opposed to arming the people, told the Second Virginia Convention that war with Britain was inevitable.

“We have petitioned, we have remonstrated, we have supplicated, we have prostrated ourselves before the throne.... Why stand we here idle?” Henry asked. “What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?”

Forbid it, Almighty God. I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”

The motion to take up arms against the king passed by a small majority and the next week a committee, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Richard Henry Lee, established a plan for a militia in Virginia.

Why did loyal subjects become converted into rebels-in-arms over those ten years?

This question poses a highly debatable issue in history and politics. Have revolutions been produced by lawful causes or is their occurrence an avoidable accident? And how necessary was the First American Revolution?

The concept of historical necessity is in disrepute in contemporary American thought and has been disavowed by such influential English professors as Sir Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper. The former categorically asserts, “For historians determinism is not a serious issue....”

Marxists take the contrary view that social phenomena are regulated by their own laws, that the conflict of classes with opposing material interests and aims is the motive force in civilized societies, and that intensification of class antagonisms logically and irresistibly leads toward a revolutionary showdown in the contest for supremacy.

This line of thought originated among the

Greeks, notably in the works of Thucydides and Aristotle. In examining the reasons for the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides wrote that “what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta.” Two and a half millennia later, Marxism gave a far more deepgoing and rounded formulation to this mode of historical interpretation.

The revolution that took place along the coastal area of North America during the last quarter of the eighteenth century introduced a salutary change in the destiny of the American people. Nowadays no one will contest this judgment. There are no Loyalists to be found in the fifty states, as there are in Canada and New Zealand. Today scarcely a single voice will lament that the colonists broke away from British rule. Patriotism, realism, and two centuries of national sovereignty make such a position ridiculously anachronistic.

Despite the unanimous opinion that the revolution was desirable and beneficial, wide disagreement persists on the degree of its objective necessity. This uncertainty goes all the way back to the decade before the Declaration of Independence, when the revolt was ripening behind the backs of its prospective signers.

Tom Paine wrote in *Common Sense* that “it is contrary to nature that a whole continent should be tributary to an island.” Nonetheless, England had dominated North

America for almost two centuries and was then the strongest imperial power in the world.

Although some colonials believed that their fellow citizens would one day cut loose from England’s apron strings, before 1775 they could not see how independence could be achieved, nor did they expect that it would come in their lifetimes.

The decision to proclaim national freedom crystallized quite suddenly in the early months of 1776. It had taken a decade of compromises before the desirability and the immediacy of independence merged in the minds and deeds of the Patriots.

Here we bump into another familiar philosophical, historical, and moral problem: the relation of end to means.

The rebels finally resorted to armed struggle to attain their goals. Did they have to apply violence for that purpose, and was this revolutionary means justified?

Marxists have no difficulty in answering these questions affirmatively. The liberal thinkers since that time have found it as difficult to resolve this dilemma in theory and square it with their principles as the moderates did at the time of the revolt.

Many scholars argue that armed conflict might have been averted if reason and moderation had prevailed in adjudicating the differences. They seek to rearrange the course of history in accord with their preconceptions much as a teacher corrects mistakes in a pupil’s paper. Yet they are the ones who have the most to learn from the actual historical process of their own country.

The revolutionary cycle in which the Declaration of Independence falls was launched by the Stamp Act demonstrations in 1765—the first intervention of the plebeian masses as an independent force in the contest against British exactions—and was consummated with the establishment of the Constitution in 1789.

Here was a tenacious twenty-five-year struggle, involving millions on both sides of the Atlantic and the major maritime powers. Was it an event that might as well not have happened? Or was it an *inescapable* stage in the advancement of the American people that had been in the making for decades and had necessary and sufficient causes for its emergence and development?

A scientific historian who wants to explain how something came to be—rather than to explain it away—has to face up to this crucial issue.

—IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP—

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 3029A Bessemer Road. Zip: 35208. Tel: (205) 780-0021. E-mail: bhmSWP@bigfoot.com

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 4229 S. Central Ave. Zip: 90011. Tel: (323) 233-9372. E-mail: laswp@earthlink.net
San Francisco: 3926 Mission St. Zip: 94112. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: sfswp@hotmail.com

COLORADO: Craig: 6 West Victory Way. Zip: 81625. Mailing address: P.O. Box 1539. Zip: 81626. Tel: (970) 826-0289. E-mail: westerncoloradoswp@yahoo.com

FLORIDA: Miami: 8365 NE 2nd Ave. #206 Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 751-7076. E-mail: miamiswp@bellsouth.net; **Tampa:** 1441 E. Fletcher, Suite 421. Zip: 33612. Tel: (813) 910-8507. E-mail: TOC1004@aol.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 2791 Lakewood Ave. Zip: 30315. Mailing address: P.O. Box 162515. Zip 30321. Tel: (404) 763-2900. E-mail: atlpathfinder@cs.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 2901 W. 59th Street. Zip: 60629. Tel: (773) 737-1190. E-mail: Chicagoswp@sbcglobal.net

IOWA: Des Moines: 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. E-mail: swpdesmoines@cs.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 12 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Mailing address: P.O. Box 261. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 4208 W. Vernor St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 44739. Zip: 48244-0739. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

E-mail: DetroitMISWP@netscape.net

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 113 Bernard St., West St. Paul. Zip: 55118. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: tcswp@qwest.net

NEBRASKA: Omaha: P.O. Box 7005. Zip: 68107. E-mail: omahaoc@netscape.net

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 168 Bloomfield Avenue, 2nd Floor. Zip: 07104. Tel: (973) 481-0077. E-mail: swpnewark@yahoo.com

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 545 8th Ave., 14th Floor. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 695-7358. E-mail: ny_swp@verizon.net.

OHIO: Cleveland: 11018 Lorain Ave. Zip: 44111. Tel: (216) 688-1190. E-mail: swpcleveland@yahoo.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Hazleton: 69 North Wyoming St. Zip: 18201. Tel: (570) 454-8320. Email: swpnepa@intergrafix.net
Philadelphia: 5237 N. 5th St. Zip: 19120. Tel: (215) 324-7020. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com
Pittsburgh: 5907 Penn Ave. Suite 225. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 365-1090. E-mail: pghswp@bigzoo.net

TEXAS: Houston: 619 West 8th St. Zip: 77007. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: swphouston@evl.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3717 Georgia Ave. NW, Ground floor. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 722-1315. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Avenue South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: swpseattle@yahoo.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@bigpond.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LF. Tel: 020-7928-7993. E-mail: cllondon@onetel.net.uk

CANADA

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

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

Vancouver: 2645 E. Hastings, Room 203. Postal code: V5V 1Z5. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: clvancouver@lynx.net

FRANCE

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

ICELAND

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

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885. E-mail: milpath.auckland@acrix.gen.nz

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: pathfinder.militant@paradise.net.nz

SWEDEN

Gothenburg: Ryttagatan 9, S-415 03 Gothenburg. Tel: (031) 21 56 90. E-mail: bokhandelnpathfindergbg@telia.com

Stockholm: Domargränd 16, S-129 47 Hägersten. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: pathfbkh@algonet.se

November BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

America’s Revolutionary Heritage
by George Novack
Explanatory essays on Native Americans, the first American revolution, the Civil War, the rise of industrial capitalism and the first wave of the fight for women’s rights. \$22.95
Special price: \$17.50

Eugene V. Debs Speaks
Speeches by the pioneer U.S. socialist agitator and labor leader, jailed for opposing Washington’s imperialist aims in World War I. \$19.95. **Special price: \$14.95**

Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination
Explains why support to Blacks’ right to national self-determination is an essential part of the strategy to unite the working class to make a socialist revolution in the U.S. \$12.95.
Special price: \$9.75

An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory
by Ernest Mandel
\$10.95.
Special price: \$8.25

Join the Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

Stunning—The Pima County sheriff's department in Arizona is arming some 320 deputies



Harry Ring

with Taser guns. Burbling with enthusiasm, a lieutenant told the

Arizona *Daily Star* that the \$800 stun guns caused no downwind cross-contamination, like pepper spray. And, he alleged, there's been few complaints over use of the 50,000-volt weapon which causes complete muscle contraction.

By the clock of history, maybe a bit late—"In their day, imperial powers like the Ottoman Turks and the British used to manage this unruly region by co-opting the tribes, keeping them occupied with internal rivalries or buying

their loyalty with land. Iraq's newest foreign occupiers are trying the same formula but the ingredients are different, producing inconclusive results."—*New York Times*.

Union time—"If you are the sole provider for your family and [cannot] move up the ladder, then maybe it's not the right place for you."—Mona Williams, spokesperson for Wal-Mart.

Blair's Labour gov't, it cares—"More than half of hos-

pital patients eat so poorly that they become clinically malnourished."—*The Times*, London.

How generous—To cope with prison overcrowding in England and Wales, immigrant inmates serving four years or less can win 90 days off if they agree to deportation.

The brass tacks fellas—The Labor Department says it's trying to repair a statistical quirk that causes regular underestimates of the number of workers filing for

jobless benefits. Reuters news agency explains: "The weekly jobless claims figures are closely watched by financial markets as the most timely measure of U.S. employment."

A truly great society—A district judge upheld the government's move to shut down a company chain that facilitates people in the U.S. buying less expensive drugs in Canada. Estimates are that up to 2 million people buy the Canadian drugs to escape the savage prices here.

Cuban doctors served in revolutionary Algeria

The *Militant* has been running weekly excerpts from *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa 1959–1976* by Piero Gleijeses, a book that documents revolutionary Cuba's record of internationalist solidarity in Africa and the clash with Washington's course of intervention to back colonial and imperialist rule there. The excerpts in this week's issue are taken from the chapter "Cuba's First Venture In Africa: Algeria."

Medical assistance was an integral part of Cuban internationalist aid to the Algerian revolution from the beginning. In December 1961 a Cuban ship delivered weapons and ammunition to Algerian liberation forces fighting against French colonial troops. That same ship returned to Havana with wounded Algerian National Liberation Front combatants and children from refugee camps, most of whom were war orphans.

After Algeria won its independence in 1962, Cuba sent several volunteer medical teams to Algeria. It also provided weapons and troops to aid the young Algerian republic when it was threatened with military intervention by the imperialist-backed regime of King Hassan in Morocco.

The revolutionary government headed by Ahmed Ben Bella collaborated to aid revolutionary movements in Africa and Latin America. On June 19, 1965, the workers and farmers government headed by Ben Bella was overthrown in a coup led by the Defense Minister Houari Boumédiène.

The experience Cuban doctors and soldiers gained in Algeria served them well as they fought and healed on other battlefields for African independence.

Copyright © 2002 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher and the author. <http://www.uncpress.unc.edu>



It was during Ben Bella's visit that Fidel Castro thought of a way to continue his country's aid to the Algerian revolution. A few hours after the prime minister's departure, Castro delivered a speech at the opening of a medical school:

Most of the doctors in Algeria were French, and many have left the country. There are four million more Algerians than Cubans and they have been left a great many diseases by colonialism, but they have only a third—or even less—of the doctors we have. In terms of health care, their situation is truly tragic.

This is why I told the students that we need fifty doctors to volunteer to go to Algeria.

I am sure that there will be no lack of volunteers... Today we can send only fifty, but in eight or ten years who knows how many, and we will be helping our brothers... because the revolution has the right to reap the fruits that it has sown.

There was indeed no lack of volunteers. They were motivated by a spirit of adven-

ture and, above all, by the desire to respond to Fidel's appeal. "When Fidel spoke, we were moved," remarked Sara Perelló, who was then a young doctor. "My mother told me: 'We must help this muchacho [young man]' (my mother called Fidel muchacho) 'and those people.'" Perelló wrote a letter volunteering and handed it to the director of the hospital where she worked. A few days later she received a telegram telling her to see the minister of public health. She went and was accepted.

Time passed and nothing happened. "Then, all of a sudden, we were told that the medical mission had to leave for Algeria at once," Dr. Manuel Cedeño recalls.... The volunteers left on May 23, 1963 on a special flight of Cubana de Aviación. "None of us had a passport; we just had a sheet of paper from the Foreign Ministry," remembers Dr. Angela Morejón. "We didn't even know how long we were going to stay," adds Perelló, "or where [in Algeria] we were going, or anything at all." Cuban officials knew little more. The two countries had not yet signed an agreement, and many important points (such as the duration of the mission) had yet to be decided....

The minister of public health, José Machado Ventura, led the group, which included twenty-nine doctors, three dentists, fifteen nurses, and eight medical technicians... "The majority," wrote a journalist, "had only a hazy idea of what Algeria was like. They thought of deserts and palm trees; of beduins and the Foreign Legion; of French terrorists and Arab guerillas; of Ahmed Ben Bella and [French General Jacques] Massu; of bombs and Arab dances.... But they were all agreed on one thing: it was a heroic country that had won its independence with its own blood. It was like Cuba. And Fidel Castro had said it needed their help."

With the arrival of this medical mission in Algeria on May 24, Cuba's technical assistance abroad began. It was an unusual gesture: an underdeveloped country tendering free aid to another in even more dire straits. It was offered at a time when the exodus of doctors from Cuba following the revolution had forced the government to stretch its resources while launching its domestic programs to increase mass access to health care. "It was like a beggar offering his help, but we knew that the Algerian people needed it even more than we did and that they deserved it," Machado Ventura remarked. It was an act of solidarity that brought no tangible benefit and came at real material cost.

"It was a special moment," a member of the mission mused thirty years later, "because it was when this process of internationalist aid began... Nowadays when you say that you have been on a mission people understand what you mean; there is a history, a tradition. Back then there wasn't any. We were taking a first step; we were launching out into the unknown."

How truly unknown it was is described by Dr. Cedeño. "Before we left Cuba," he recalls,

They gave us a lecture about Algeria at the Foreign Ministry; the speaker was the official in charge of North Africa. We wanted to know about the climate, about what kind of clothes to pack. He told us that Algeria was a tropical country and that we should take short-sleeved shirts. This was the full extent of our prepara-



Sara Perelló, second from left, a Cuban volunteer doctor who served as part of 1963 medical mission in Algeria, shown before departing Cuba for Algiers that year.

tion! When we arrived in Algeria it was very cold...

The French and Algerian doctors looked at these strange newcomers from across the Atlantic with some suspicion. "They couldn't understand why we weren't charging for our services—it puzzled the Algerians, and the French even more," Perelló remarked. "And we were doing a lot of things that the doctors there [in Algeria] didn't do. The men [in our group] did their own washing and ironing. We didn't have any money, and we didn't have a car—so we walked everywhere! But the French and Algerian doctors drove their cars. And to

make matters worse, we wanted to put in longer day than they did."

The Cubans also found things that unsettled them. Coming from a society that had established free health care, some were shocked that in Algeria, the revolution notwithstanding, patients had to pay for examinations and drugs. And while machismo certainly existed in Cuba, many of the Cubans who went to Algeria were deeply troubled by the treatment of women there...

The first medical mission remained in Algeria for a little over a year, until a second arrived in June 1964 with twenty-four doctors, four dentists, twenty-four nurses, and nine medical technicians... The first mission, however, retains a special aura. Looking back some thirty years later, one member remarked:

"Our work there was extremely difficult in emotional terms.

First, I found a country with habits and customs completely different from mine; an Arab country, Muslim, very different from our culture. Second, the different language—Arabic and some French. There were some unbelievable situations, like when we had to form a chain of translators just to understand what the patient was saying... There aren't many things in life that you remember thirty years later with a feeling of pride and warmth. Now, with more than sixty years under my belt, I still remember my stay in Algeria as something good, something that helped me, something that made me the man I am today."

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



December 15, 1978

NEW ORLEANS—Leaders of labor unions, Black organizations, student groups, and the women's movement met here November 30 and launched a committee to defend affirmative action and overturn the *Weber* decision.

Eighty people attended the meeting at the Southern University of New Orleans. Included were elected officials of the two largest union locals in the area, representing New Orleans dockworkers and teachers, as well as representatives of the steelworkers, painters, and piledrivers.

Brian Weber, a white steelworker in Gramercy, Louisiana, has sued to overturn the affirmative-action program negotiated by the United Steelworkers of America in its contract with Kaiser Aluminum.

The meeting at Southern University was especially significant because union officials have begun to take the lead, together with Black community and women's movement leaders, in a campaign to defend equal job rights for Blacks and women. This unity reflects a growing awareness that Weber's suit against the USWA contract is an attempt to divide and weaken the entire labor movement.

Rev. Isidore Booker, chairperson of the Civil Rights Committee of USWA Local 13000, called *Weber* "the most far-reaching case that affects affirmative action since its inception."



December 14, 1953

The full employment conference of the CIO United Automobile Workers, held in Washington on Dec. 6 and 7, has helped to focus attention on the growing problem of unemployment and the threat of economic crisis. It is to be hoped that this will help lead to the recognition of the necessity for a broad Congress of Labor, representing all sections of the labor movement, to deal with unemployment, McCarthyism and other basic issues that can be solved only through the united action of all organized labor.

Under the direction of UAW President Walter Reuther, however, the auto union's conference served as little more than a sounding board for Reuther's own inadequate program. His main stress was on the vague, guaranteed-annual-wage program that he pushed at the recent CIO convention.

Unemployment is an integral part of the workings of the capitalist system. The present growing unemployment is technological in large part. A new rationalization of industry, displacing workers at a fearful rate, is under way. Automation, as this super-rationalization process is called, threatens joblessness for millions.

The demand for the 30-hour week at 40 hours' pay offers the only immediate answer to the threat of mass unemployment that automation involves.

Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976
By Piero Gleijeses
\$24.95

Available from the University of North Carolina Press
www.uncpress.unc.edu/books

Bipartisan attack on Medicare

The Medicare bill recently adopted by U.S. Congress, which President George Bush is expected to sign, is another step in the assault—jointly carried out by the Democratic and Republican parties—on the social gains working people have fought for and won over the decades. It will further shift the burden of health care onto the backs of individual workers and their families.

Liberal critics of the bill point out the obvious: owners of insurance companies, hospitals, pharmaceutical monopolies, and other profit-hungry health-care businesses will be major beneficiaries of this law. But they don't challenge the heart of this attack, which is an effort by the employer class to tear apart social solidarity and reinforce divisions among working people.

Medicare, won in 1965 as a byproduct of the mass Black rights struggles of the 1950s and '60s, was along with Medicaid an extension of the Social Security gains wrested from the U.S. rulers by the labor battles in the 1930s. The capitalist politicians who enacted Medicare sought to make the smallest possible concessions, falling far short of making health care a universal entitlement.

Promoters of the Medicare "reform" bill claim it will expand coverage to include prescription drugs—not included in the original program. But virtually every provision in the new bill is designed to shift the burden for health care more onto working people and to reinforce the approach of individuals fending for themselves.

In the name of offering prescription drug coverage, the new law will force many Medicare recipients to rely more heavily on private health-care companies. It will introduce means-testing, tying premiums to income levels. Many working people will face big premiums, out-of-pocket costs, and deductibles. The bill will also push Medicare recipients toward depending on individual "health savings accounts."

Some pro-Democratic critics of the bill blame it on Bush and the Republicans. But the measure was adopted by a bipartisan congressional vote. Sen. Edward Kennedy was instrumental in lining up Democratic support for Medicare "reform," bailing out only at the last minute over objections to a couple of provisions.

The assault on Medicare is part of the overall war by

the employer class on working people. The bosses are compelled to wage this offensive in order to turn around the long-term decline of their profit rates, which has led to a worldwide economic crisis for them. It's for the same reason they are forced to cut jobs, drive down wages, speed up production, and roll back social benefits at home, as well as fight to edge out capitalist competitors and launch imperialist wars abroad.

Because Medicare and Social Security were won by working people in struggle, the government can't simply repeal these programs, viewed by millions as an elementary right. So the opening wedge of this offensive was the dismantling of welfare in 1996 by President William Clinton when he signed the cynically named Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.

The gutting of the Aid for Families with Dependent Children was the prelude to a broader attack. The rulers first targeted a vulnerable section of our class—single women with children among impoverished layers of the working class. They sought to pit these unemployed workers against those with jobs, portraying the former as freeloading "welfare queens" leeching off the hardworking citizens.

Similarly, the employers argue for Medicare "reform" and "cost reduction" by issuing dire warnings that the program will become bankrupt in the coming years—and it's all the fault of the "baby boomers," the generation of working people who are entering retirement age today. They try to convince us that the conditions faced by the elderly are not the problem of the middle-aged or the young. In reality, the capitalists don't care about the first 13 years of workers' lives; then they care about our ability to work hard for the next 50; then they hope we die quickly. That coarse attitude—"Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost"—is what the superwealthy try to get working people to accept.

In contrast, class-conscious workers not only oppose the current attacks on Medicare. They argue that working people, whose labor produces all wealth, have a right to *lifetime medical care*. The labor movement needs to fight to bring all medical and disability claims, retirement pensions, and welfare payments into a single, nationwide, government-guaranteed entitlement—as a social right for all.

Irish republican facing deportation wins round

BY RÓGER CALERO

On December 1 Irish republican Malachy McAllister, who has been living in the United States for the past seven years, won a stay of deportation until a federal appeals court hears his case.

McAllister reported to the offices of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (BICE) in Newark, New Jersey, under an order to surrender with his bags packed, ready to be deported. He was accompanied in court by his wife, family members, and supporters of his right to live in this country. They met in front of the building carrying Irish and U.S. flags and other banners. A press conference was held before McAllister entered the immigration offices with his lawyer. Major news coverage was given to the case by local radio and TV stations.

McAllister, 46, a former member of the Irish National Liberation Army, has gone through several appeals in his petition for political asylum for himself and his family. The McAllister family fled their home in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1988 after an assassination attempt and continued harassment by pro-British paramilitary groups.

On November 17 an immigration board issued another

rejection of McAllister's asylum request and ordered his immediate deportation, on the basis of a conviction Malachy received from British authorities stemming from his political activities in Northern Ireland. The board also revoked the asylum status granted to his wife and children in 2000, arguing that the family faces no risk if sent back to Ireland.

Subsequently, in a federal appeals court in Philadelphia, his attorneys were able to win a stay of deportation. BICE authorities insisted, however, that the ruling allowed them to jail him while awaiting the next hearing.

When McAllister reported to the BICE offices in Newark December 1, however, the authorities decided to not to carry out their threat to arrest him until his federal court hearing, which may take place early next year.

"We feel that this outcome is due only to the intense public and media pressure," said Deanna Turner, of the Irish American Unity Conference in a statement soon after McAllister walked back out the front doors of the BICE offices just before 3:00 p.m. to be welcomed by his supporters.

Sarah Katz in Newark contributed to this article.

Newark protest demands release of Abdel-Muhti

Continued from front page

In a statement that day, the committee described the move as "apparently a disciplinary proceeding" connected to the beating.

"Prison officials claim they are punishing Abdel-Muhti because the guards discovered that he had 'stockpiled' newspapers and medicine in his cell," the statement said. "Prison officials also withheld all medication from Abdel-Muhti between November 19 and November 25." The 56-year-old, it added, "needs medication for hypertension, arthritis, and a thyroid condition."

The committee noted that the Palestinian's treatment "follows a pattern of harassment of Abdel-Muhti for his political activities."

At the rally that followed the Newark march, Abdel-Muhti's son Tarik spoke on behalf of the defense campaign. He reported that in light of the guards' assault, the committee had decided to file a complaint with the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations.

Defense committee coordinator David Wilson read a message from Abdel-Muhti written before his latest transfer to the "hole." The Palestinian reported that he was "living with 64 other immigration detainees."

"Before I came here," Abdel-Muhti continued, "I was held for eight months and five days in solitary confinement in York County Prison, in York, Pennsylvania. Shackles

were placed on my hands and feet on a daily basis; I was locked in for 23 hours and 15 minutes each day. In all, I have been imprisoned for one year and seven months. But I never give up on my principles and my dignity."

Among the speakers at the rally were representatives of Al Awda—the Palestine Right to Return Coalition; the Committee for the Human Rights of Immigrants; One People's Project; the Partisan Defense Committee, and the Freedom Socialist Party.

Róger Calero, a *Militant* staff writer and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor who recently defeated an attempt by the U.S. government to deport him, also spoke. "The *Militant* is one of the publications the prison authorities confiscated from Farouk," he said. "We urge you to join the campaign to send letters to the prison authorities demanding that Farouk be released from the 'hole' immediately, and that all of his reading materials and other possessions be returned."

Wilson reported that following the prison guards' assault on Abdel-Muhti, dozens of people responded to an appeal for protest messages to the authorities. He encouraged participants to continue this campaign. Messages should be sent to David Venturella at the Office of Detention and Removal, Department of Homeland Security: fax (202) 353-9435; telephone (202) 514-8663; e-mail: davidventurella@dhs.gov, with copies to the defense committee at freefarouk@yahoo.com.

Teamsters back grocery strikers

BY JAMES VINCENT

COMPTON, California—Giving a boost to striking and locked-out grocery workers, 8,000 members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters are honoring picket lines set up November 24 at grocery distribution centers in southern California. "I'm out here to support my fellow unionists," said Jesús Acuña, a clerk dispatcher, who was reporting to his shift at Ralphs distribution center here. "I decided not to report to work and honor the picket line instead."

The Teamster action followed a United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) announcement that it would expand picketing to nine Albertsons, Ralphs, and Vons distribution centers after six weeks on strike.

On October 11, members of UFCW Local 770 walked out at Safeway, Vons, and Pavilions stores. The next day the owners of Ralphs and Albertsons, who bargain jointly with Safeway, locked out workers there. Since then some 70,000



Militant/Diana Newberry

Grocery workers picket Albertsons distribution center in La Habra, Southern California, November 29.

workers at more than 850 stores in central and Southern California have been walking picket lines. All three stores have hired thousands of scabs.

The UFCW has accused the grocery companies of violating California antitrust law by making a secret pact to share revenue generated during the strike. The bosses aim to use their "pain-sharing" agreement to neutralize the union's decision to stop picketing at Ralphs stores, and instead beef up the pickets at the two other chains.

The distribution centers supply goods to the three grocery chains. Acuña said most of the drivers "who bring the food to the warehouses are nonunion, but that all the drivers who deliver to the grocery chains are union."

In anticipation of the Teamster job action, the grocery bosses hired replacement workers to load trucks inside the distribution centers and drive loaded trucks to the stores. "We saw a bunch of scabs driving in vehicles with license plates from Nevada earlier today," said Anna Marie Kallas, who is locked out from Ralphs. She and several co-workers were walking the picket lines the day after Thanksgiving.

"Only two pickets are allowed to walk in front of the entrance to the warehouse. This means much of the time we're standing around which we don't like," she said. Teamsters who honor the picket line are not allowed to picket or carry picket signs. Some Teamsters, however, joined the pickets at the Ralphs distribution center here.

The Teamsters union, which has signed labor agreements with the grocery chains, has sanctioned the UFCW picket lines as "a legitimate 'bona fide' primary picket line." At this time no Teamsters are working in any of the warehouses.

From the beginning of the strike, the grocery bosses have been taking a hard line. They assert that they must wrest health-care and wage concessions from the union, claiming they need to cut costs in order to compete with nonunion competitors like Wal-Mart and Target. The grocery bosses regularly place full-page anti-union ads in English and Spanish in the big-business press.

A recent Merrill Lynch report says the grocery companies are together losing \$40 million a week in sales to the smaller chains. But this is small change when compared to the fact that Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons rake in more than \$30 billion apiece in annual sales. A report in the business section of the November 27 *Los Angeles Times* noted "the supermarkets want to use the Southern California contract as a template that will lower their labor expense elsewhere as other employee contracts come up for renewal."

"We've made many concessions over the years to keep health benefits. This is my fourth strike," said UFCW picket captain Louis Tanahara, who has worked 29 years at Albertsons, while picketing its distribution center in La Habra November 29. "Now they want to even take away our medical benefits and make us third-class citizens." As at the Compton facility earlier that day, several vans loaded with scabs drove into the center.

"They are trying to take our jobs," Tanahara said. But he added: "Morale is still high. The only thing we have to fight back with is solidarity. And that's what we'll keep doing."

In a related development, 2,800 transit mechanics ended a 35-day walkout here November 17. They had shut down the third-largest transit system in the country. Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1277 voted by an 85 percent margin to return to work although the main strike issue, medical benefits, remains unsolved. The union agreed to nonbinding arbitration. It won modest wage concessions and the right to strike should the union reject the mediator's proposal.

New York meeting celebrates 75 years of 'Militant'

BY MARY ANN SCHMIDT

NEW YORK—"Tonight is a special occasion. We are marking three-quarters of a century of uninterrupted publishing by the *Militant*—the first issue of which was dated Nov. 15, 1928—as part of the worldwide fight for socialism," said Argiris Malapanis in welcoming those present at the 75th anniversary celebration of the socialist news-weekly held here November 21. Malapanis, editor of the *Militant*, chaired the event.

The Pathfinder bookstore here was packed with more than 50 people, from half a dozen new *Militant* readers to several veteran worker-correspondents. The audience, in a festive mood, devoured a delicious dinner, looked through bound volumes and framed covers of the *Militant* from high points in the class struggle over the years, and stayed around enjoying conversation and refreshments until well after the end of the program.

Some of those present commented that when they had publicized the event among co-workers, friends, and collaborators, a common reaction was "Seventy-five years!"—expressing surprise at the socialist paper's staying power and consistency.

Malapanis introduced Martín Koppel, a *Militant* staff writer and editor of its sister magazine in Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial*. "The *Militant's* continuity doesn't start in 1928," Koppel said. "It starts in October 1917, when workers and farmers in Russia stormed the heavens, took political power, and changed the world. They were led by a revolutionary working-class party, the Bolsheviks." He explained how the *Militant's* first editor, James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Communist Party in the United States in 1919, was expelled from that party in 1928 along with other revolutionists for defending the course charted by V.I. Lenin in opposition to the policies implemented by a rising bureaucratic caste headed by Joseph Stalin. The *Militant* was central to the building of the Socialist Workers Party along this revolutionary course.

Koppel spoke about the newspaper's early history—from its founding to the working-class battles that forged the Congress of Industrial Organizations, to the fight against the second world imperialist slaughter, to the

post-war labor upsurge, which had a direct impact on the *Militant*, whose circulation shot up by 22,000 in a single subscription drive.

The 'Militant' and revolutionary Cuba

Luis Miranda, director of Casa de las Américas, an organization of Cuban-Americans who defend Cuba's socialist revolution, said he first heard about the *Militant* in the late 1950s from Cuban revolutionary exiles who belonged to the Julio Antonio Mella Club in New York. "These experienced compañeros told us that our library had to have a collection of the *Militant*," he said.

Referring to members of Casa Cuba, which was founded in 1957 and later became Casa de las Américas, Miranda said, "Our confidence in this paper increased in the first years of the revolution" when the

Continued on Page 4



Militant/Paul Pederson

Luis Miranda, director of Casa de las Américas, speaks November 21 at New York celebration of *Militant's* 75th anniversary. Speakers included, from left, Olga Rodríguez, Naomi Craine, Argiris Malapanis, Martín Koppel, Stu Singer, and Carlos Samaniego.

Anti-imperialist fighters greet 'Militant' anniversary

Published here are messages sent to the November 21 public meeting in New York celebrating the *Militant's* 75th anniversary.

Luis Rosa

Luis Rosa spent 19 years in U.S. prisons for his actions on behalf of Puerto Rican independence. As a result of a defense campaign that won worldwide support, he and 10 other independentistas were released in 1999. Today Rosa is a leader of the ongoing campaign to win the release of five remaining Puerto Rican political prisoners locked up in the United States.

I send warm greetings and add my voice to the celebration of 75 years of militancy, resistance, and struggle on this anniversary of the *Militant* newspaper. It's not easy, nor was it easy 75 years ago, to be a militant socialist and dare to organize within an anti-working-class, capitalist arena and government that is blinded by its greed.

In the class struggles, the anti-racist struggles, the community struggles, you were—and are—a constant factor. During the 20 years that I was locked up in the Yankee dungeons, I received copies of the paper. For a prisoner, and especially for a political prisoner, being connected to the struggles that nourish the revolutionary soul is extremely important. That is how we can turn the jails into new trenches and into the universities that George Jackson always talked about—using everything available to serve as a point of reference and analysis.

In 1979, five of our Puerto Rican Nationalist heroes were freed from prison. The campaign for their release was long and intense, and it was able to bring together revolutionary forces from all sectors and all parts of the world. That campaign made it necessary to educate both the Puerto Rican people as well as people abroad about who were Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Irving Flores, Oscar Collazo, Lolita Lebrón, and Rafael Cancel Miranda. The *Militant* newspaper contributed to the effort to raise this consciousness.

In 1999, the Puerto Rican people, and all people marching at their side in solidarity, celebrated the release from prison of 11 anticolonial fighters and prisoners of war. That too was a long and intense campaign, and once again we had to appeal for support from those who dared to go against the current and make the impossible a reality. There too the *Militant* was present.

Today we celebrate a Vieques without the presence of the Navy, and we live in a Puerto Rico that is more confident of its capacity to defend its national dignity. We also find ourselves in a Puerto Rico that consistently offers solidarity to just struggles.

But Puerto Rico continues to be a colony, and the Vieques struggle as well as the fight to free our political prisoners continue.

In one of its recent issues, the *Militant* published an article on the delicate state of health of Oscar López Rivera, one of our five political prisoners. In publicizing this information, the paper not only educates people about the situation facing this fighter, but also lets his jailers know that Oscar is not alone.

Thanks again to the *compañeras* and



Photos by Osvaldo Perez/El Diario La Prensa(left), Militant/Eric Simpson(center)

From left, Farouk Abdel-Muhti, Rafael Cancel Miranda, and Luis Rosa.

compañeros of the newspaper. There are many reasons for which we should fight for a more humane, a more dignified world without exploitation. The main ingredient in any revolutionary struggle must be love, and with the same intensity that we love freedom, we must reject everything that enslaves us.

Greetings of solidarity,

Free all the political prisoners in the United States!

Independence and socialism, *cueste lo que cueste* [whatever it takes]!

Standing up in struggle,

Luis Rosa Pérez

Farouk Abdel-Muhti

Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a well-known advocate in New York for Palestinian self-determination, was arrested by immigration cops in April 2002 and has been locked up in New Jersey and Pennsylvania jails for the past 19 months (see front-page article on his case). This message has been translated from Spanish.

I speak to you with all frankness at this celebration of the 75th anniversary of this unique source of information that, with an internationalist spirit, has crossed the borders of this country on behalf of the working class.

In its pages you can read and study some of the speeches of that great revolutionary, El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X). Its pages always cover the socialist revolution in Cuba, the internationalism of Che, of Fidel, as well as the rights and the resistance of the Palestinian people, the Arab and Islamic peoples, and all the people of the world who oppose injustice, inequality, and colonialism, the defense of the indigenous peoples of this nation and continent, of the political prisoners and victims of oppression and racism, such as Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Its pages always condemn the unjust imprisonment of the five Cuban comrades who are victims of a conspiracy. It also opposes the brutal, unjust "wise" used by this government (since 9-11) against immigrants from the Middle East and South Asia. It always denounces this anti-human campaign against immigrants, both with and without residence papers, by this sinister administration in Washington.

The *Militant* is always in the trenches of peace with justice, opposing imperialist invasions against the sovereignty of peoples and nations such as Iraq and Afghanistan.

I sincerely wish the best, from this jail in Bergen County, New Jersey, to this great

weekly, the *Militant*, a light for the working people, for Marxist and humanist socialism, and opposition to imperialism's exploitation and racism.

Congratulations and keep going forward. Not a single step backward.

Venceremos! [We shall win]

Socialism yes, imperialism no!

Farouk Abdel-Muhti

Rafael Cancel Miranda

Rafael Cancel Miranda is a longtime leader of the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. He was one of five Nationalists who spent more than a quarter of a century in U.S. prisons for conducting armed protests in Washington, D.C., against U.S. colonial rule of their country. From 1954 to 1979 Cancel Miranda was locked up successively at the federal prisons at Alcatraz, in the San Francisco Bay; in Leavenworth, Kansas, and in Marion, Illinois. He and the other Nationalist heroes were freed in 1979 as a result of a years-long international defense campaign. Cancel Miranda read the *Militant* in prison, and on a few occasions contributed articles and letters to the paper.

In prison the *Militant* informed me about things I could not find anything about and which other papers said nothing about. It helped me to follow the road I had chosen and to have a better understanding of what was happening around the world. While I was in prison, reading the *Militant* strengthened me.

Since getting out of jail, I have continued reading the *Militant*. I appreciate its articles on the struggle in Vieques, in defense of our prisoners, and in support of independence for Puerto Rico.

It has always helped me get a better appreciation of the world: the situation facing the workers in the United States, the social struggles.

I remember that two years after getting out of jail, in 1981, the Young Socialists invited me to their congress in Chicago, and I went. There I got to know a number of comrades in the Young Socialists, and comrades from the *Militant*.

I thank the *Militant* for its solidarity. I thank you for the interview with me that later ended up being published as a pamphlet.

When I get it, I always share it with others.

For me, reading the *Militant* is like talking with a comrade.

Rafael Cancel Miranda

Cleveland event: 'I hope 'Militant' stays in business for a long time'

BY DOUG NELSON

CLEVELAND—"I really appreciate what you do. I also appreciate the writing and research done in *Militant* articles. I hope you stay in business a long time and continue what you do," wrote Franz Kopp, a presser in a garment factory, in a message to a November 21 meeting here to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the *Militant*. Kopp just renewed his *Militant* subscription for a second year.

"The overseas *Militant* reports, especially on, for example, the Kurds (their history) and President Chavez's struggle in Venezuela are so informative and excellent—the *Militant* reporters should be complimented," wrote Cincinnati subscriber Michael Smith in a message accompanying a subscription renewal.

Romina Green, a member of the Young Socialists, said she first read the *Militant* in 1999 as a student at Pasadena City College in California, trying to understand what was behind the U.S. war on Yugoslavia at the time. She read several socialist papers, but "the *Militant* was the only one that gave an accurate explanation of why the imperialist war was taking place."

In 2002 Green went to Argentina and Paraguay as part of a *Militant* reporting team. She explained how useful it was, in preparing for the trip, to study the *Militant* coverage over the years of the class struggle in South America, as well as books by Pathfinder, in particular the explanation of Peronism in *The Leninist Strategy of Party Building* by Joseph Hansen, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party who at various times

Continued on Page 4

Argentina garment workers win back jobs

BY ROMINA GREEN

On October 30 the Buenos Aires city legislature voted in favor of the “temporary expropriation” of the bankrupt Brukman garment factory, allowing the plant to operate as a cooperative run by the workers there. The workers expected to be able to return to their jobs in the coming weeks.

For almost two years the garment workers waged a hard-fought battle to prevent the owners from closing the plant and laying them off—a fight that became a rallying point for the working-class movement in Argentina. They took over the factory and ran it without the bosses for months, and after being evicted they set up a protest tent in the street. While their slogan from the beginning had been “nationalization under workers control,” the workers considered the legislature’s action as a way forward: to return to work, keep their jobs, and continue the fight from there.

Before the legislative session, a march was held by contingents of workers, unemployed organizations, workers cooperatives, neighborhood assemblies, and students as a show of support to the workers at Brukman. A delegation from the Zanón tile factory in the southwest city of Neuquén was prominent in the march. On October 1 the workers at Zanón—another focal point of labor resistance—celebrated the two-year anniversary since their occupation of the plant. They have been producing under workers’ control ever since.

Workers took over the Brukman factory on Dec. 18, 2001, after months of not being paid most of their wages. The bosses claimed to be on the verge of bankruptcy and threatened to shut down the plant. The factory occupation took place at a time when, in face of an acute economic crisis, mass antigovernment demonstrations erupted in Argentina and President Fernando de la Rúa was forced to resign.

A group of 20 workers sat in the factory on the night of December 17 to demand payment of back wages. When the other workers arrived the following morning they decided to take over the plant. Some 50 of the 100 workers continued with the fight. They operated the plant under their own control for 16 months.

Jacobo Brukman, the owner of the factory, had been claiming bankruptcy as the reason for not paying wages. Once workers took over the plant and opened the company books, however, they realized they had been lied to. Brukman was officially declared bankrupt two weeks before the legislature’s temporary expropriation ruling.

The workers at Brukman fought off two attempts by the bosses and cops to evict them, thanks to the solidarity of other working people who mobilized in their defense, until the Buenos Aires police forcibly removed them on April 18 of this year. After the eviction the workers set up a solidarity tent in front of the factory as they continued to press their fight. On May 30 they held a *maquinazo* (sewing machine action), setting up of dozens of sewing machines right on the street in front of the plant and blocking traffic. All the garments they sewed were donated to the province of Santa Fe, which had been hard hit by floods.

The workers’ seizure of the Brukman plant was part of a wave of factory occupations throughout Argentina as workers resisted the economic collapse and efforts by the employers to shift its consequences onto their backs. In most cases where the companies had declared bankruptcy and closed the plants, the workers have ended up forming cooperatives. A total of 10,000 workers in Argentina have occupied plants and are now running more than 170 plants and workplaces as cooperatives.

Where the government has “expropriated” a plant, it has turned over all the machinery to the cooperative, and has agreed to pay two years’ rent to the capitalist owners while the workers are allowed to run the plant for a certain period of time, usually two years. By the end of these two years, the workers have



Garment workers, who had occupied Brukman factory in Buenos Aires to resist layoffs, celebrate October 30 after city legislature approved “temporary expropriation” of plant, to be run by the workers as a cooperative for the next two years.

to accumulate enough capital through sales to buy the building themselves.

For example, at the Yaguané meatpacking plant in the industrial district of Matanzas, Buenos Aires province, the two-year deadline is up. The owner, Alberto Samid, is demanding payment of 38 million pesos (U.S. \$12.8 million) for the building from the 480 workers who have been running the factory.

Workers at Brukman decided fighting for such an expropriation would put them in the best position to keep their jobs and continue their struggle.

“We are happy to prove to the people that our fight was not in vain,” Celia Martínez, a leader of the workers’ factory committee in the Brukman plant, told *Nuestra Lucha*, a newspaper produced by workers from Brukman and Zanón.

In a phone interview with the *Militant*, Martínez said, “We deserved nationalization,” referring to their initial demand for nationalization and workers control on the job. Nonetheless, she added, “we earned the ruling” by the city legislature. “We stayed outside the factory and wanted to continue the fight.”

National crackdown on protests

In the last few months, the government of President Néstor Kirchner of the Peronist party has begun prosecuting some 3,000 workers across the country for their participation in social protest actions. Sev-

eral Brukman workers are currently facing charges in connection with the brutal raid and eviction attempt by police on Nov. 24, 2002.

Raúl Godoy, head of the Ceramic Tile Workers Union at the Zanón plant in Neuquén, is being charged by the provincial police there for his participation in a road blockade along with members of unemployed organizations in 2001. He is one of 500 workers in the province of Neuquén facing charges, according to the union. On August 28 Godoy appeared at a hearing, which happened to coincide with a strike by teachers in Neuquén demanding wage increases. A rally of 3,000 in support of Godoy took place, swelled by striking teachers, members of the “Anibal Verón” Movement of Unemployed Workers (MTD), and students.

Juan Carlos Acuña, the Zanón workers’ press secretary, said in a phone interview that Godoy’s case is “affected by the relationship of forces. It depends a lot on what we do. If we don’t fight it, they will just take him. Since the demonstration, the government has not pushed further against us.” Zanón is now the only occupied factory where the workers are demanding “nationalization under workers control.”

Unemployed workers organizations have joined forces in the last few months to protest these attempts to criminalize working-class protests. Pablo Solana, an unemployed electrician and member of the

MTD-Anibal Verón in Lanús, Buenos Aires province, reported in a phone interview that the government has stepped up the eviction of unemployed workers who have taken over abandoned buildings and vacant lots to build housing.

A group of unemployed workers in Buenos Aires province called the Villa Crespo Assembly was evicted August 29 from the building they had been occupying. The previous day, the headquarters of the MTD-Anibal Verón in the province of La Plata was firebombed by ultrarightists. The facility included a child-care center, bakery, and community library. A note was left saying, “Leftist rats get out,” and signed “Peronist Youth.”

On October 23 unemployed workers protested in front of the offices of Minister of Labor Carlos Tomada, blocking the entrances and forcing him to sleep in his office overnight. Workers demanded an increase in “job plans”—government-funded temporary jobs—as well as food and a public works program. The temporary jobs pay 150 pesos a month to heads of households who might perform a few hours of make-work.

In response to the demonstration at the Labor Ministry, Alberto Fernández, head of the national cabinet, called for the formation of “anti-piquetero brigades” (*piqueteros* are the unemployed workers who set up pickets or road blockades demanding jobs). Other members of the cabinet, feeling the pressure from the demonstrations, have called for an amnesty for the 3,000 being prosecuted.

In the phone interview, Solana explained that on November 4 unemployed organizations held a march of 40,000 workers protesting the government crackdown and demanding an increase in public jobs programs for all unemployed workers. He reported that only 2.2 million out of 4 million unemployed workers are part of job programs.

Unemployed organizations as well as other workers and human rights organizations have called for a protest on December 20 to commemorate the massive demonstrations that led to the resignation of De la Rúa two years earlier. In an attempt to undercut the protest, Kirchner recently announced that an additional 50 pesos would be paid in December to those covered by the jobs programs.

“The protest is still moving forward because that is no answer to all those still receiving no job benefits, and the money is too little for those currently receiving benefits,” Solana said.

Timber workers strike across British Columbia

BY JOE YOUNG

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Some 12,000 timber workers are on strike in an action affecting all major mill and logging operations on the British Columbia coast with the exception of one company. The strike has hit Weyerhaeuser, International Forest Products, and other timber monopolies.

The strike was provoked by the employers’ attempt to unilaterally impose a contract that cuts back-pay for night shift, weekends, travel time, vacations, and other concessions. The Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA) has been negotiating since April with Forest Industrial Relations, the bargaining agent for 45 coastal companies. The last contract expired June 30 and the union members have continued to work under its terms.

Mike, a 32-year-old worker at the Weyerhaeuser mill in New Westminster, outside Vancouver, said, “At first they didn’t think we were serious. They’re taking away our jobs and working conditions. Why wouldn’t we be serious?”

Hundreds of sawmill workers started to walk out on the morning of November 18. When they had arrived at work they were infuriated with being told they would be working under the newly imposed contract.

Some 500 union members met in the town of Langley that morning. IWA policy director Scott Lunny said, “The guys left the meeting determined to shut down the mills that are still operating,” reported the *Vancouver Sun*.

On Vancouver Island, 35 loggers were ordered off the job when they refused to sign letters agreeing to the new contract.

Then on November 21 the British Columbia Labour Relations Board ruled that the bosses’ imposition of the contract was legal. The board claimed that a one-day walk out by union members on November 6 had violated a provision in the previous contract that there would be no strikes or lockouts during negotiations.

The IWA responded by calling out 6,000 union members who work in the sawmills. Thousands more joined them November 24.

Explaining why the union rejected the board’s action, IWA secretary-treasurer Dave Tones stated, “The ruling says an employer in British Columbia can cancel bargaining and implement any terms and conditions that he wants.”

The forest barons are seeking to dramatically cut labor costs, at a time when almost half of union members have been laid off. The contract they want to impose

eliminates premium payments for night shift workers who previously received eight hours pay for a shift of six-and-a-half hours. New shifts will be implemented that eliminate overtime pay for weekend work. The employers have instituted continuous operations—24 hours a day, seven days a week. They also aim to reduce vacation time after 30 years of service from seven to five weeks. The company-imposed contract ends payment for travel time to and from the work site for the timber workers, who often travel long distances to reach remote logging camps.

Les Veale, IWA staff representative, said, “What do we have left to negotiate with? They’ve taken away our weekends, our benefits, overtime, and seniority rights. There is nothing to say about the labor board decision other than to say that they shafted us.”

At the McKenzie sawmill, a maintenance worker who asked that he not be identified by name said, “If they are allowed to get away with imposing the contract, with these flexible hours, it will affect everybody.”

Joe Young is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1518 in Vancouver.