

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Quebec immigration debate
targets Muslim, other workers
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 46 DECEMBER 10, 2007

Report: safety agency failed to inspect 107 coal mines



Crandall Canyon mine in Utah was not inspected by mine safety agency last year, according to government report. Six miners were killed there in an August roof collapse.

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

CHICAGO—A federal government report issued November 16 states that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) did not carry out legally required inspections last year at 107 underground mines in the United States, workplaces employing a total of 7,500 miners. There are 731 underground coal mines in the country.

Among the mines cited was the Crandall Canyon mine in Utah, where six miners were killed in a roof collapse in August and three more died days later in a rescue operation that

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Anti-imperialist students from across Americas meet in Ecuador

BY EMILY PAUL
AND JACOB PERASSO

QUITO, Ecuador—About 2,600 students and other youth from across Latin America and the Caribbean gathered here November 12–17 for the 15th congress of the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (OCLAE). Held under the theme “Latin America United Will Triumph,” the event discussed the fight against imperialist domination and the role of students in this struggle. It also marked the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution.

In addition to the 2,200 Ecuadoran youth who attended the congress at one point or another, conference organizers reported that 412 delegates came from other countries. The largest international delegations were made up of about 300 from Colombia, 50 from Venezuela, and 25 from Cuba. The event was sponsored by the Federation of University Students of Ecuador (FEUE) and other student organizations here.

“I came to exchange ideas and to get to know the necessities of other coun-

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Baghdad and Kurdish gov’t in conflict over oil contracts

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Iraq’s oil ministry has declared all contracts signed between the semiautonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and international oil companies to be illegal. Officials of the KRG have responded defiantly that they will continue to sign new contracts.

Meanwhile in Washington, Democrats approved \$50 billion for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the House of Representatives November 14. The bill was blocked in the Senate by Republicans.

Ten days after the vote the U.S. military announced that 5,000 troops will be withdrawn from Iraq as a result of improved security in the country.

Tensions between Baghdad and the KRG sharpened November 12 after the Kurds announced the signing of five new contracts with international oil companies without Baghdad’s approval. Iraq’s oil minister, Hussein Sharistani, threatened that companies that signed the contracts could be barred from operating in Iraq.

The dispute with the KRG is one factor in the Iraqi government’s inability to pass a national oil law. Disagreement between competing Shiite and Sunni capitalists over how to regulate the sharing of oil revenues is also involved. Such a

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‘Militant’ Fund raises \$100,525!

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Congratulations to all the readers and supporters of the *Militant*. In the eighth and final week of a \$100,000 fund campaign, we received about \$21,000, bringing the grand total of moneys in hand to \$100,525.

We expect to go still further over the top as more contributions arrive. All donations received by November 28 will be counted in the final scoreboard, which will be printed in next week’s issue.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Canada surpassed their goal by nearly \$2,000. In San Francisco, partisans of the socialist newsweekly raised their goal by \$500 heading into the last week, and say they expect to go well over their new goal of \$11,500.

In Newark, New Jersey, supporters of the *Militant* raised nearly \$300 above their quota of \$3,500, reported local fund director Brian Williams. Among the 32 individuals contributing to the fund in that city were several workers at a garment plant in Elizabeth, New Jersey. A worker at a meatpacking plant where socialists distribute the *Militant* contributed \$25. An activist who attend-

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‘Jail the killer cops!’ Demand protesters in Miami after police kill 4 Black men in 3 weeks



Militant/Bernie Senter

Marchers in Miami demand justice November 24 for four men recently killed by police

BY BERNIE SENTER

MIAMI—Four killings by police in 19 days have sparked a series of protest demonstrations and meetings here. Gracia “BG” Beaugris, 19; Roger Brown, 40; Michael Knight, 21; and Frisco Blackwood, 21, were killed in three separate incidents. Three of the men were Haitian American; the fourth was African American.

A crowd of 150 rallied at a local police station November 24 to demand

justice. Demonstrators held banners that declared, “Jail the Killer Cops” and “1 Month = 4 Killed.” A dozen pallbearers carried mock coffins representing the four men. The protesters were greeted by honking horns from passing cars and buses. Numerous family members came to the rally, which was held after the funeral of two of the victims.

“The cops executed, murdered these

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Thirst for culture and ideas marks Venezuela book fair Pathfinder book presentations, sales contribute to heightened political debate

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

CARACAS, Venezuela—“The book fair has been a great education for me,” said Venezuelan novelist Laura Antillano, at the closing event of the Third Venezuela International Book Fair, which took place here November 9–18. “I learned a lot about different political processes past, present, and future.” Antillano was the writer to whom this year’s fair was dedicated.

Organizers report that nearly one million books were on display or for sale at the 10-day event. Publishing houses from 25 countries participated, as did 263 international guests.

The largest international delegation came from Argentina, the country of honor this year. Argentina was represented by some 124 writers and artists who made presentations and performed throughout the fair. Other sizeable delegations came from Cuba and the United States. Some 22 writers and political activists, mostly from the United States, spoke as part of the five-day running forum on the fair’s central theme, “United States: A possible revolution.”

The political questions posed by that topic filtered through every aspect of the fair. (See articles in last two issues of the *Militant*.)

Every day there were book presentations, dance performances, film showings, concerts, and art workshops—more than 800 events in all. A children’s tent hosted programs for schoolchildren to read together and write stories. Nightly tango classes in honor of Argentina

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Anti-imperialist students meet

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tries and to look for solutions,” Isaac Ja-come, a law student from the University of Cuenca in Ecuador, said in an inter-view.

A range of political questions were discussed and debated at workshops and plenary sessions. Workshops were held on topics such as “Women in Society,” “Experiences in the Fight Against Im-perialism,” and “Socialism: Utopia or Reality.”

Several cultural events took place as part of the conference. The Federation of University Students (FEU) of Cuba organized a book presentation of *Cien Horas con Fidel* (One Hundred Hours with Fidel), a book-length interview with Cuban president Fidel Castro by French journalist Ignacio Ramonet.

One of the workshops was on “Social Movements and Their Historic Fight for a Better World: A Vision from the Student Movement.” Several delegates there spoke about the role youth and students can play in the struggle against imperialism. One of them, a member of the Popular Front of Ecuador, pointed to the mobilizations of workers and youth that led to the 2006 nationalization of

U.S.-owned Occidental Petroleum.

Students from Colombia spoke about opposition to the repressive measures the U.S.-backed Uribe government is taking against workers and farmers in the guise of “fighting terrorism.”

José Abril Viscaya, a student from Venezuela, pointed out that “not all stu-dents seek to be a part of social move-ments against imperialism.” He noted that in Venezuela today, some univer-sity students, many of whom are on track to be part of the better-off middle classes, are aligning themselves with the pro-imperialist opposition against the government headed by President Hugo Chávez. He said right-wing students had recently set fires at the University of Caracas and tried to blame pro-government students.

Participants in the OCLAE congress held two marches through the streets of Quito. They carried signs and ban-ners representing the different student organizations. At the end of one of the marches, a rally was addressed by a member of the Federation of University Students of Colombia, a member of the Young Socialists from the United States, and Irma González, daughter of one of five Cuban political prisoners in the United States known as the Cu-ban Five. She voiced the demands of OCLAE in demanding the release of the five.

The conference con-cluded with the approval of a final declaration of resolutions. The resolu-tions included demands for freedom for the Cu-ban Five, independence for Puerto Rico, an end



Students from across the Americas attended November 12-17 OCLAE congress in Quito, Ecuador, where they exchanged experiences in struggles against imperialist domination.

Killing by cop sparks protests in Canada



Militant

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—More than 1,000 people demonstrated here November 24 to protest the cop killing of Robert Dziekanski at the Vancouver airport. The Polish immigrant neither resisted nor provoked police. Nevertheless, he was zapped at least twice by Tasers administer-ing 50,000 volts and then jumped on by three cops who held him face down with their knees on his head and neck until he stopped breathing. A video of the assault was taken by a bystander and then shown around the world, provoking widespread outrage. Protest demonstrations also took place November 24 in Victoria and Toronto.

—STEVE PENNER

to the U.S. embargo against Cuba, and solidarity with Venezuela in face of Washington’s hostility.

One of the topics of discussion throughout the OCLAE congress was the political situation in Ecuador since President Rafael Correa took office in January. Correa was elected with broad working-class support based on prom-ises to improve living conditions and bring about “21st century socialism.” He promoted the election of a 134-mem-ber constituent assembly, with powers to modify the constitution, as a way to make these changes.

Discussion on Correa government

A number of Ecuadoran youth at the OCLAE congress cited actions by the Correa government they hope will lead to fundamental changes benefiting workers and peasants. These include increases in government spending for education and health care, cash relief for

the poorest sections of working people, and subsidies for housing, fuel, and oth-er essentials.

Luis Aynuca, an iron ore worker from Latacunga, Cotopaxi province, told the *Militant* Correa defends the expropria-tion of Occidental Petroleum, carried out originally by his predecessor Al-fredo Palacio.

Henrry Calazacón, director of cul-ture and tourism of the Tsa’Chila people in the town of Santo Domingo de los Tsa’Chilas, 60 miles from Quito, said it remains to be seen if the government will act decisively in the interests of in-digenous peoples, such as the Tsa’Chila, who make up 25 percent of Ecuador’s population. Earlier this year Calazacón helped lead three 10,000-strong mobi-lizations that shut down the Santo Do-mingo area and won more autonomy in the form of a new province, renamed Santo Domingo de los Tsa’Chilas in the largely indigenous region.

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Alabama miners rally in 2006 action or-ganized by United Mine Workers union.

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Managing Editor: Paul Pederson

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Housing market slump hits construction workers

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The slump in the U.S. housing construction industry, along with rising costs of fuel, food, and other essentials are increasing the squeeze on working people.

With home prices continuing to decline, construction companies have cut back on home building, leading to the loss of some 124,000 construction jobs since September 2006, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Among those most affected are immigrant day laborers.

The *New York Sun* interviewed day laborers in Queens in November. Luis Pérez, originally from Ecuador, said some weeks he only gets one day's work. He and others used to make \$100 to \$120 a day doing construction, but now such jobs are scarce and employers frequently pay them only \$50 to \$60. Some demolition jobs pay only \$30 a day. Enrique Ortiz, born in Mexico, told the *Sun* that some day laborers he knows have become homeless because they can no longer afford to pay rent.

The *Financial Times* reported that the drop in wages and hours worked by Mexican immigrants in the U.S. construction industry is having a big effect on their families back in Mexico who depend on their remittances. Mexicans working in the United States send back more than \$20 billion a year to Mexico. Remittances grew 23 percent in the first quarter of 2006 compared to the same period the previous year. But during the first six months of 2007 they increased by a mere 0.6 percent year-on-year.

Fannie Mae, the mortgage funding company, expects "significant increases" in foreclosures and home loan delinquencies in 2008, the *Washington Post* reported. There were 635,159 foreclosure filings in the third quarter of this year, "one for every 196 households" according to a report in the *Lexington Herald Leader*. Fannie Mae's expenses for delinquent loans and foreclosures increased six-fold during

the same period.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the housing crisis has affected not only construction workers, but workers in retail outlets like building supply stores and employees in the credit and loan industry. Overall, the official national unemployment rate remained at 4.7 percent in October.

Worker productivity was up, at a 4.9 percent annual rate, from July to September, the fastest pace in four years—a result of the employers' drive to speed up production and squeeze more labor out of workers. But wages remain stagnant. In October average hourly earnings increased by only 3 cents.

The average price of a gallon of gas nationally was \$3.08 the first week of November, 87 cents more than a year ago. A gallon of milk costs on average \$3.84, 79 cents more than a year ago. Eggs are up 46 percent.

With workers having less and less disposable income, most U.S. department store chains reported weak sales this fall. But sales at Saks, the luxury store, were booming—a 15.9 percent increase in October compared to a year ago.

100 workers killed in Ukraine mine blast



Associated Press/Sergei Chuzavkov

Miners walk outside the Zasyadko coal mine in eastern Ukraine a day after a methane explosion killed 100 workers there. The blast, which occurred November 18 about 3,300 feet underground, was likely caused by a combination of defective electrical equipment and explosive levels of methane gas. Four similar explosions at the same mine killed a total of 137 between 1999 and 2006. Since 1991, more than 4,700 miners in Ukraine been killed on the job as a result of unsafe conditions. On average, three miners are killed for every 1 million tons of coal extracted.

—DOUG NELSON

Report: MSHA did not inspect 107 mines

Continued from front page
also injured six.

The report, issued by the office of the Labor Department's inspector general, said the safety agency suggested it had conducted more inspections than it had really completed, presumably to inflate its enforcement record. Inspectors often failed to document basic tasks they were supposed to conduct, such as taking coal dust samples or checking high-voltage circuits.

Crandall Canyon was one mine where "critical inspection activities" were not documented as having taken place. In one inspection, 6 out of 22 critical safety tasks had not been doc-

umented. In another case, an MSHA field officer had to point out problems with inspections at Crandall Canyon to an inspector.

The report documented that in an inspection of Crandall Canyon, which began May 30 of this year, five inspection activities were falsely predated to February. This included a review of the roof control plan. If part of the late May inspection was actually done in February, the report could be omitting important information on the dangerous conditions at Crandall Canyon that led to the mine collapse in August.

Among the coal mines where inspections were not properly carried

out is the Darby Mine in Kentucky, where five miners were killed in May 2006. Inspections were also inadequately conducted at the Sago and the Aracoma Alma No. 1 mines in West Virginia, where 12 and 2 workers died, respectively, in January 2006.

The government report stated that in southern West Virginia alone, 51 mine inspections were counted as having been completed despite the fact that they were started and then canceled.

In 2002 MSHA had a total of 605 inspectors nationwide. In 2006 this had dropped to 496. At the same time, underground mining had increased by 9 percent, the report noted.

Miami actions protest string of killings by cops

Continued from front page

young Black men," Debbie Ferguson told the crowd. "Then they make up lies to cover up their tracks. My brother was also murdered by the cops and they covered it up. We all need to stand together." Ferguson is organizing a rally in December in Fort Pierce, where her brother was killed.

Maizelyn Reid, mother of Frisco Blackwood, said, "You have the murders [by the police]. Then you have the silent murders when they cover it up. I need answers. I need justice."

Marleine Bastien from Haitian Wom-

en of Miami told demonstrators, "They are building a case to make you believe they weren't human beings. That they aren't worth living. We know their games. They do it over and over and over again. The only way it won't change is if we give up."

On October 30 a vigil was held here to demand justice for Beaugris, shot to death by a cop as he and his brother were walking home from the laundromat. Officer Christopher Villano claims he shot the youth after Beaugris tried to reach for the cop's gun.

On November 7 school and Miami-

Dade police killed Roger Brown near Miami Central High School. They say he was driving "erratically" in the area and became "extremely resistant" when they tried to arrest him. The cops used a Taser stun gun to "immobilize" him. Handcuffed, he died in police custody.

Fifty people attended a vigil November 13 on behalf of Knight and Blackwood. The day before, police shot and killed the two men and wounded a 23-year-old woman who was in the car with them when they were stopped for allegedly running a red light. The cops say they had to shoot in "self-defense" because the men put the car in reverse and smashed into the police car.

The November 24 protest was organized by several local organizations including Cop Watch and the NAACP. Melody Gonzales spoke for the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). "This fight is our fight too," she said. "We are here in solidarity to be in the streets with you. There should be an end to criminalizing of our youth. It's important to mobilize together." The CIW has been organizing protests against low pay and bad working conditions for farm workers in south central Florida.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Pakistan: Martial Law and the U.S. "War on terror." Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 7. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3926 Mission St. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Why Capitalism Creates a Housing Crisis. Speaker: John Staggs, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 7. Program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 188 W Wyoming Ave. Tel: (215) 455-2682.

—CALENDAR—

GREECE

Athens

Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983-1987. Presentation of new expanded editions in French and English from Pathfinder Press. Speakers: Samsideen Iddrisu, immigrant rights activist; Hamado Ouadrago, Burkina Faso community representative in Greece; Georges Mehrabian, Diethness Vima publishing house. Sun., Dec. 9. 7 p.m. *Cosmos of Culture*, Andrea Metaxa #20. Tel: 210 33 03 385, 210 88 33 002.

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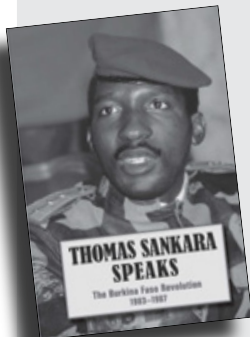
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'Ny International 5' launched in Sweden



Militant/Eva Schmitz

Lars Johansson and Catharina Tirsén at November 10 program in Stockholm

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The fifth issue of *Ny International*, the Swedish-language translation of the Marxist magazine *New International*, was launched here November 10 during a weekend of political education and campaigning. The feature article in the issue is “Our Politics Start with the World” by Jack Barnes.

Speakers included Steve Clark, managing editor of *New International* and author of two articles in the issue; Anita Östling, a leader of the Communist League in Sweden and one of *New International's* international consultants; Debbie Delange, head of the indexing team of Pathfinder's Print Project; Lars Johansson, a volunteer in the project; Filip Tedelund of the Young Socialists in Sweden; and, chairing the event, Catharina Tirsén, who is responsible for the Swedish translation.

Ny International no. 5, a translation of issue 13 of *New International*, is the ninth Swedish-language title distributed by Pathfinder Press. Other titles include *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes and *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara.

Delange and Johansson described the international volunteer effort that went into translating, typesetting, and preparing the magazine. “The index was prepared by 21 people in only one week, to make it in time for the Gothenburg Book Fair in September,” said Delange.

The magazine has been sold at plant gates, on street tables, and at political events here since it came off the presses. Members and supporters of the communist movement in Sweden, Canada, Norway, the United States, and the United Kingdom participated in the weekend's activities.

—DAG TIRSÉN

UK: YS campaigns to defend Cuban Revolution

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY KYLE BELLAMY AND BJÖRN TIRSÉN

EDINBURGH, Scotland—The Young Socialists here have been campaigning to defend the Cuban Revolution and to oppose the British government's participation in the imperialist “war on terror.”

At the University of Edinburgh's Freshers Week Societies Fair, held September 12–13, the YS and the Communist League met students and introduced them to revolutionary literature. We built a public meeting entitled “Meet the Young Socialists, an international revolutionary youth organization,” which took place on the fair's final day. Many young people who approached us at our literature stalls expressed interest in the Cuban Revolution and some wanted to find out more about the perspective of the YS of making a socialist revolution in the United Kingdom.

The 11 people at the meeting, including several first-year university students, heard Alex Xezonakis, a YS member in Leeds and student at the university there. He reported on a conference on the campaign to free the Cuban Five in Havana he had attended in April, as well as other activities of the YS.

YS members from across the country also helped publicize and build meetings, held in Glasgow and Edinburgh in mid-October, on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of*

Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution. In the process they met students who were interested in the YS and purchased the *Militant* and other revolutionary literature. (See *Militant* November 5).

On November 3 the YS joined others in a “People and Parliament against Trident” march and rally held in Edinburgh. Trident is the British government's submarine-launched nuclear weapons system, based in Scotland.

The march organizers, Scotland's for Peace, made a big feature of the fact that the Scottish Parliament, led by the pro-capitalist Scottish National Party, had voted in June against replacing and upgrading Trident. The vote, of course, has not changed London's military plans.

Arguing for a working-class approach to oppose imperialist war and nuclear weapons, the YS and CL marched with slogans demanding, “Not a penny, not a person for Britain's wars! Troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! Hands off Iran!”

Margaret Bresnahan, 20, a literature student here who is originally from Minnesota, took part in the “Meet the YS” event and the meeting on *Our History Is Still Being Written* in Edinburgh. “I liked being in an environment where you could have discussion, meet other students my age, and see the theories in action,” she said at a November 16 Militant Labour Forum that she attended. “That's why I keep coming back.”

Radek Polkowski, 19, a politics student originally from Poland, attended the same meetings. He said he had been inspired to read more about the example of the Cuban Revolution and looked forward to continuing to participate in political activity with the YS and Communist League.

Kyle Bellamy and Björn Tirsén are YS members in Edinburgh.

Sub drive: a resounding success

Fall 'Militant' Subscription Drive Sept. 29 – Nov. 18 ♦ Final Chart

Country	Quota	Sold	%
NEW ZEALAND*	65	72	111%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	80	90	113%
Edinburgh	50	52	104%
UK Total	130	142	109%
AUSTRALIA*	45	49	109%
CANADA*	125	136	109%
SWEDEN	30	31	103%
UNITED STATES			
Des Moines, IA*	145	154	106%
Philadelphia	105	111	106%
Washington, DC*	160	168	105%
Houston*	90	94	104%
Newark, NJ*	130	134	103%
San Francisco*	120	123	103%
Atlanta*	135	138	102%
Los Angeles*	100	102	102%
Boston	60	61	102%
Pittsburgh*	65	66	102%
Twin Cities*	130	132	102%
Chicago*	90	91	101%
Seattle*	100	101	101%
Carrollton, GA	135	136	101%
Miami*	140	141	101%
Denver*	15	15	100%
New York*	315	315	100%
Albany, NY	20	18	90%
U.S. Total	2055	2100	102%
Int'l totals	2450	2530	110%
Should be	2300	2300	100%
* Raised goal			

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The *Militant's* fall subscription campaign was a resounding success. Some 2,530 people subscribed, and campaigners in nearly every participating city met or exceeded their quotas.

Supporters of the socialist newsweekly surpassed the international goal of 2,300 by 10 percent. The campaign started strong and kept a steady pace over seven weeks. *Militant* supporters sent in an average of 315 subs in the first four weeks of the drive, and an average of 237 in weeks 5 and 6. The campaign finished strong, with 431 new readers signing up in the final week.

The overall top seller for the campaign was New York garment worker Dan Fein, who sold 47 subscriptions. Jacquie Henderson, a garment worker in Houston, came in second with 44. Garment worker Sara Lobman from Newark, New Jersey, sold 42, putting her in third place. Laundry worker Julio Campos from Des Moines, Iowa, came in a strong fourth with 40 subscriptions sold.

In the final week of the campaign, supporters of the *Militant* in Atlanta and Carrollton, Georgia, got a boost to the campaign by participating in an annual protest against the U.S. military training academy School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia.

'Militant' Fund goes over the top

Continued from front page ed the September 20 demonstration of tens of thousands in Louisiana demanding “Justice for the Jena Six” and then participated in a Militant Labor Forum on the protest purchased a *Militant* subscription and donated \$65 to the fund.

In Pittsburgh, supporters of the *Militant* surpassed their goal of \$3,500 in the final week. Ryan Scott, a garment worker there, said supporters of the paper organized meetings with readers—from Cleveland to Charleston, West Virginia, to Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Two of the newest contributors were youth in Pittsburgh. One, a student at the University of Pittsburgh, contributed \$20 and bought a Pathfinder Readers Club membership. A young worker renewed his subscription to the *Militant* for a year along with his contribution.

The money raised will be put to good use. The *Militant* depends on donations from its readers to cover basic operating expenses like printing and shipping, and to field reporting trips all over the world. Coverage like the recent articles on the Venezuela International Book Fair is only possible because of donations by workers, farmers, and young people who value the socialist newsweekly.

To donate, contact local distributors

on page 8 or send checks payable to the *Militant* to the address listed on page 2.

\$100,000 'Militant' Fund Drive Sept. 29 – Nov. 25 ♦ Week 8 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
CANADA	4,100	6,020	147%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	600	950	158%
London	1,500	1,922	128%
UK total	2,100	2,872	137%
SWEDEN	700	877	125%
FRANCE	250	280	112%
NEW ZEALAND	3,000	3,120	104%
AUSTRALIA*	1,750	1,750	100%
UNITED STATES			
Pittsburgh	3,500	3,864	110%
Miami	3,000	3,233	108%
Newark, NJ	3,500	3,680	105%
Washington, D.C.	2,800	2,925	104%
Seattle	7,000	7,067	101%
Philadelphia*	4,300	4,340	101%
Des Moines, IA	2,000	2,012	101%
Twin Cities	4,700	4,720	100%
Atlanta	4,500	4,487	100%
Los Angeles*	9,000	8,898	99%
New York	15,000	14,640	98%
San Francisco*	11,500	10,805	94%
Albany, NY	125	113	90%
Carrollton, GA	4,500	3,968	88%
Boston	2,800	2,393	85%
Houston	3,000	2,535	85%
Chicago*	7,000	5,675	81%
U.S. total	88,225	85,355	97%
OTHER		250	
Int'l totals	100,375	100,525	101%
Goal/Should be	100,000	100,000	100%
* Raised goal			

ON THE PICKET LINE

Australia gold miners trapped underground for five hours

SYDNEY, Australia—Gold miners were trapped deep underground in Western Victoria for almost five hours November 19. The 27 miners at Lihir Gold Limited's Ballarat Goldfields mine at Mount Clear took refuge in two safety chambers following a rock fall that cut power and blocked the main portal. After several hours they were lifted to the surface in a bucket lowered down a ventilation shaft.

Operations were suspended while a preliminary investigation took place. Corrosion in steel reinforcements in the walls of the mine was considered a possible cause.

The Australian Workers' Union (AWU) Victorian branch secretary, Cesar Melhem, raised concerns about Lihir's safety standards. According to the *Australian* about 10 of the 180 miners belong to the union. Melhem said that for the last year the union has been denied entry to the mine to raise safety issues.

The union had raised concerns following a blasting incident on June 19

that affected the ventilation system. Workers entered a blast site before getting safety clearance. Melhem said that workers were told by a manager to "disregard that and go back into the mine."

The AWU branch in Victoria is calling on the state government to investigate safety at every mine in the state and wants the Ballarat mine to remain closed until the union is satisfied it is safe for work to resume. Seven miners have died in Australian mines this year, including three in underground mines.

—Linda Harris

Toronto hotel workers win jobs back

TORONTO—Two hundred hotel workers and supporters rallied November 10 in front of a downtown Holiday Inn here. Many walked off the job for 45 minutes to join the action.

The 135 workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 75, have been without a contract since the beginning of the year. They are fighting for a wage increase. Workers say they earn about \$2 per hour less than other hotel workers in Toronto.



Militant/Emily Paul

Hotel workers picket Holiday Inn in Toronto November 10 to demand wage increase

The rally also celebrated a victory. Two weeks earlier 23 workers who had been locked out in the course of the contract fight were called back to work. Management locked out the workers after 90 percent of the union's members

rejected a company contract offer.

The great majority of the workers were born outside Canada. More than 30 workers spoke at the rally in many different languages.

—Annette Kouri

Quebec immigration debate targets Muslim workers

**BY MICHEL PRAIRIE
AND ROBERT SIMMS**

MONTREAL—A debate on immigration raging in Quebec for the past year reached new levels this fall with public hearings held across the province. Framed by capitalist politicians, the debate on "reasonable accommodation," as it is often couched, centers on what allowances should be made for immigrants' religious and cultural practices.

The hearings were conducted by the so-called Bouchard-Taylor commission, a consultative body set up by the Quebec government and chaired by two well-known academics.

While targeting the foreign-born in general, the debate takes special aim at immigrant workers who are Muslim. In the past decade there has been a substantial growth in the number of immigrants settling in Quebec, an increasing proportion of whom are Muslims. With Ottawa's troops in Afghanistan, Canadian imperialism's "war on terror" propaganda campaign has also fed the flames of the controversy.

Accommodating prayer obligations, the *kirpan* (a small Sikh ceremonial dagger), and kosher food is "quite accessory to the survival of Quebec culture," said Yves Rocheleau at the commission's October 23 hearing in the city of Trois-Rivières, Quebec.

"The only francophone [French-speaking] people in America among 400 million Anglophones [English speakers]—that's the real cultural diversity that must be respected and protected," he emphasized. The Quebecois are an oppressed nationality in Canada of about 6 million people. They are subject to oppression based on their language, French.

In a contrasting view, retired teacher Rueul Amdour stated at a hearing of the commission in Gatineau, Quebec, on September 10, "The idea that we are going to be suspicious of people because they dress differently, or have different religious beliefs. . . . I think it's disgusting."

The debate erupted a year ago when a Montreal YMCA installed frosted windows in a gym, paid for by Hasidic Jews

who said they did not want their youth seeing women in leotards. About the same time, a community health center in Montreal roused protests because it banned men at prenatal classes, saying this was in accommodation to Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh women.

At that point, Mario Dumont, leader of Democratic Action of Quebec (ADQ), a small right-wing party in Quebec's National Assembly, jumped in to declare, "There is a difference between [equality of rights] and staying in the background, and saying that the majority no longer has the right to exist, to have its own traditions, to have its ways of doing things."

Then in January of this year, the town council of Hérouxville, a village of 1,300, issued a "code of conduct" for would-be immigrants that barred stoning, female circumcision, immolation by fire, and the veiling of the face.

The Liberal government of Jean Charest in Quebec responded by setting up

the Bouchard-Taylor commission and called provincial elections for March 26.

Dumont used the elections to deepen his reactionary campaign, casting himself as the protector of "Quebec culture." After the vote, ADQ deputies increased their ranks from 4 to 41 and their share of the vote rose from 18.1 to 30.8 percent. The ADQ became the official opposition in Quebec's National Assembly.

Canada's rulers weigh in

In late October, Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper introduced a bill requiring women who wear veils to show their faces when they vote. The Charest government followed suit the following week in Quebec's National Assembly.

Meanwhile, trying to outdo Dumont's ADQ, newly chosen Parti Quebecois leader Pauline Marois proposed a bill in Quebec's National Assembly to require immigrants to prove an adequate knowl-

edge of French and of "Quebec's fundamental values" before they can run as candidates for the national legislature.

In English-speaking Canada, the capitalist media and politicians, not known for their pro-immigrant record, have seized on the debate to paint Quebec as a bastion of anti-immigrant intolerance. In a November 3 editorial titled "Quebec's toxic identity debate," the *Toronto Star* described the Bouchard-Taylor hearings as "a festival of fear, bigotry and ignorance."

Up to now, union officials in Quebec have either remained silent or bent to the chauvinist pressure. In a position paper presented to the Bouchard-Taylor commission in October, the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), while denouncing the most extreme cases of anti-immigrant chauvinism, supported the banning of the chador and burqa in public schools and the requirement that women show their face in order to vote.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 10, 1982

Throughout the morning of November 27, hundreds of D.C. police protected a handful of Ku Klux Klanners. Throughout the afternoon, hurling tear-gas grenades and swinging clubs, they attacked thousands of anti-Klan demonstrators and onlookers. They arrested 38 people and injured an undetermined number.

The Klan had vowed to march in its hoods and robes through the streets of the capital. But they didn't march; and as they wandered around the Capitol grounds, intimidated by thousands of protesters nearby, they carried their robes in paper bags.

The Alabama-based Knights of the Ku Klux Klan tried to organize the first KKK march in Washington since 1925. However in response to the Klan's threats, 1,500 to 2,000 anti-Klan demonstrators did march.



December 9, 1957

The government's use of the Smith Act as a weapon for punishing dissident political thought received a crippling new blow today when a federal judge in Los Angeles dismissed "conspiracy" indictments under the act against ten California Communist Party members. The dismissal came on the "reluctant" request of an Assistant United States Attorney who said that the Justice Department could not "satisfy the evidentiary requirements laid down by the Supreme Court in its opinion reversing the conviction in this matter."

Those released were among 15 defendants convicted in 1952. On June 17 the Supreme Court freed five of the defendants and ordered a new trial for the others, declaring that the government must prove something more than abstract advocacy of ideas.



December 3, 1932

SHANGHAI—From the Reuters News Agency you have probably heard some news about the Chinese Opposition. But while some of it is right, there is a good deal of untruth in the reports.

Since the organization of the Blue Shirt Society, nearly all the students from the Moscow Sun Yat Sen University have concentrated in it. They learned many things in the USSR, especially from the GPU, and they are using it faithfully, especially to strengthen Chiang Kai-Shek. According to an official report, the students miseducated by the Stalinists number about 500. Their only task is to arrest Communists and destroy the Communist organizations.

The prisoners number nearly 30. The first wave of arrests is over but the second and more extensive wave of persecution is being prepared.

The origins and defeat of 1925–27 Chinese revolution

(First in a series)

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Over the past year readers have written in with questions about the *Militant's* coverage of China. Frequently they want to know: How did the 1949 socialist revolution come about? Are the property relations conquered by the Chinese workers and peasants still in place? What's the nature of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)? What explains the policies of the Chinese government in recent decades?

This article begins a series that will take up these questions, starting with the initial efforts by Chinese working people at the beginning of the 20th century to cast off imperialist domination and class exploitation.

In the early 1900s, precapitalist, semifeudal relations prevailed in most of China, especially the countryside. The vast majority of Chinese lived in isolated, rural villages. The country was loosely governed by a royal family and by gangs of wealthy warlords in the different provinces, who allowed imperialist powers like London, Paris, Washington, and Tokyo to freely loot China's resources.

In 1911 the Manchu dynasty, which had ruled since 1644, was toppled by a bourgeois democratic movement that drew a range of social layers—from anti-imperialist students to capitalist elements chafing under feudal backwardness—into political activity.

The new republic established by Sun Yat-sen, who headed this movement, didn't last in power for long. Regional warlords, linked to one or another imperialist power, took over. In 1912, Sun Yat-sen formed the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) to continue the struggle. Initially attracting some revolutionary elements, the Kuomintang became increasingly dominated by bourgeois forces.

Meanwhile, China was experiencing a tumultuous growth in capitalist industry and commerce, especially in the urban centers most exposed to foreign capitalist penetration. From 1913 to 1926, factory and mine production more than doubled. In tobacco and cotton goods, it multiplied five-fold. By 1927, the working class was already 15 million strong, concentrated in coastal cities such as Shanghai, the most industrialized city at the time.

Three-quarters of China's population remained peasants, most of them landless.

Second Chinese revolution

The birth of a modern working class in China and the impact of World War I and the October 1917 Russian Revolution all gave impetus to growing nationalist sentiment among Chinese against the imperialist powers and the local rulers aiding them.

At the end of the war, Japanese imperialism took over some Chinese territory that their German rivals had controlled. In response, students launched widespread anti-imperialist protests on May 4, 1919. This movement accelerated the broader radicalization among working people, including strikes and other social struggles.

In 1921, some of the young leaders of what had become known as the May 4 Movement founded the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The principal communist groups were in Shanghai and Beijing, led by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, respectively.

Trade unionization was proceeding rapidly by this time. The number of organized workers grew more than 10-fold in just a few years: from 230,000 in 1923 to 2.8 million in 1927.

In the countryside peasants began mobilizing. Millions were involved in struggles for land, including some land seizures, in the provinces of Kwangtung, Hunan, Kiangsi, and Hupeh.

In Shanghai, where various imperialist powers still had colonial enclaves, British and U.S. police fired on a 1925 demonstration, killing several students. More than 800,000 workers across the country responded by launching a general strike.

The CCP, although young and inexperienced, had a revolutionary program and became deeply involved in the student, labor, and peasants movements. It was in a good position to help advance the democratic, anti-imperialist revolution that erupted in 1925.

What was needed was an alliance between the workers and the peasantry to take political power and end the reign of the landlords and the imperialists. As a new revolutionary government took measures in the interests of the vast majority, and the propertied classes re-



Worker and peasant demonstration in Canton (now Guangzhou), China, on Dec. 12, 1927.

sisted, more far-reaching steps would be needed, leading to the expropriation of the capitalist class and the socialist reorganization of society.

From the start, the working class, in an alliance with the peasantry, would have to lead the revolution. It would have to be politically independent of the bourgeois nationalist forces, including the Kuomintang.

The CCP initially received valuable collaboration from the Communist International, the world communist organization, under the leadership of V.I. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party in revolutionary Russia.

By 1924, however, the wave of revolutions and workers' upsurges around the world that followed the Russian Revolution had been defeated. The first world war and then the 1918–20 civil war left the young Soviet Union economically exhausted. These objective conditions helped foster the growth of petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic layers in the Soviet government and Communist Party, mainly concerned with assuring themselves a privileged life. Josef Stalin emerged as their main leader.

CCP joins Kuomintang

Under the Stalin misleadership, revolutionary struggles in other parts of the world were subordinated to the needs of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. Rather than helping the Chinese communists lead the working people, the Stalinist forces told the party to subordinate itself to the Kuomintang. Doing so meant putting the brakes on strikes, land seizures, and other independent actions by the toilers. While the Kuomintang was waging an armed struggle against the Chinese warlords, it defended capitalist interests and was conciliatory toward the imperialist oppressors.

At the heart of the class-collaborationist line advocated by the Comintern leadership was the notion that a "bloc of four classes"—a coalition of the "progressive" bourgeoisie, the middle classes, the peasantry, and the working class—was needed to carry out a revolution in China.

Based on this assumption, the Comintern instructed the CCP to join the Kuomintang and, in doing so, give up its political and organizational independence. CCP members were to follow the lead of Chiang Kai-shek, the main leader of the Kuomintang.

Meanwhile, the revolutionary tide deepened. In March 1927, workers in Shanghai led an insurrection and took over the city. As Chiang's army

approached, the CCP, following the Comintern line, told them to put down their arms and welcome the "liberator."

Stalin declared in early April, "Chiang Kai-shek is submitting to discipline. The Kuomintang is a bloc, a sort of revolutionary parliament, with the Right, Left, and the Communists. Why make a coup d'état? Why drive away the Right, when we have the majority and when the Right listens to us? . . . When the Right is of no more use to us, we will drive it away. At present, we need the Right. . . . Chiang Kai-shek has perhaps no sympathy for the revolution but he is leading the army and cannot do otherwise than lead it against the imperialists."

One week later, on April 12, Chiang unleashed his troops against the politically disarmed Shanghai workers. Some 40,000 were killed. The unions were smashed.

Refusing to draw the conclusions of this disaster, Moscow urged the CCP cadres to focus on Wuhan, asserting that they could carry out an agrarian revolution in collaboration with the "left" Kuomintang of that city. In July, the Wuhan Kuomintang leaders turned on the CCP, killing some of its members, and forcing it out of the city.

Canton uprising

The defeat of the revolution came to a climax with the Dec. 11, 1927, Canton uprising. In a last-ditch adventure to somehow produce a victory, the CCP organized a few thousand workers to take over the city, with no preparation of the working class as a whole or the surrounding peasantry. Up against 50,000 Kuomintang troops, 5,700 workers lost their lives in just two days.

The disastrous course dictated by Stalin's misleadership did not go unopposed. Within the Soviet Communist Party, Leon Trotsky and other members of the Left Opposition fought for a revolutionary policy in China but failed to win a majority. In China, Chen Duxiu, the first general secretary of the CCP, called for the party to withdraw from the Kuomintang. In August 1927 he was forced out of the leadership and in 1929 was expelled from the CCP. He and other Chinese members of the Left Opposition collaborated with Trotsky over the next decade. (For further reading see *The Third International after Lenin* and *Leon Trotsky on China*. They are published by Pathfinder.)

It would be another 20 years before the workers and peasants would finally take power in China. That will be the subject of the next article.

For further reading:

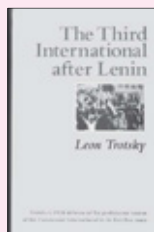
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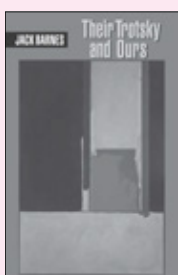
The Third International after Lenin

Trotsky's alternative to Stalin's course toward gutting the revolutionary program of the Communist International addressed to delegates attending the 1928 congress of the International in Moscow.—\$29.95



Their Trotsky and Ours

Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes traces the continuity with Bolshevism in the struggle to build revolutionary communist parties today.—\$15



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Venezuela book fair

Continued from front page
drew dozens.

The book fair registered the expansion of publishing, literacy, and cultural activity here. Some 150 Venezuelan publishing houses participated, a number of them opened in the last two years. More than 300 Venezuelan authors and others gave presentations.

Speaking at the opening ceremony November 9, Minister of Culture Francisco Sesto said that the ministry of culture had recently opened a print shop with the capacity to produce 25 million books a year, and that government-subsidized bookstores have been opened in every state.

A scaled-down version of the fair toured the country for a month beforehand, featuring talks on this year's theme, workshops related to resistance by indigenous peoples, movie showings, book presentations, and musical performances. Seven working-class neighborhoods on the outskirts of Caracas hosted the fair in the days before the formal opening in a large park in the eastern part of the city.

Discussions on constitution

Fair activities were marked by the political polarization leading up to a December 2 referendum on 69 proposed amendments to Venezuela's constitution.

The book fair took place as pro-imperialist opposition forces organized daily marches, while supporters of the amendments responded with several large mobilizations. Many students came by after marching either for or against the changes, sparking lively discussions.

As part of answering opposition

charges that the contents of the amendments—which include eliminating the presidential term limit, shortening the workday with no cut in pay for both public and private sector workers, and providing pensions and social security protections for self-employed workers—are not widely known, government supporters launched an educational campaign to win support for the measures. Volunteers staffing the fair passed out newspapers with the text of the changes. Speakers at several programs tied the books being presented to the proposed amendments, often arguing for their adoption.

At a November 10 presentation of a collection of children's books that are bilingual in Spanish and indigenous languages, anthropologist Marie-Claude Mattéi-Muller said that efforts to preserve indigenous cultures and languages will be strengthened by a constitutional amendment acknowledging Venezuela's mixed African, indigenous, and Spanish heritage.

At a November 12 launch of a new edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, professor Ramón Losada contrasted the proposed amendment on property rights with the program presented by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in that founding document of the modern revolutionary workers movement. The constitutional amendment, Losada noted, recognizes five forms of property: social, collective, public, mixed, and private. Expressing his support for the government of President Hugo Chávez, Losada nonetheless emphasized that in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels point to the necessity of eliminating private ownership of the means of production.

Losada wrote the introduction to the new edition, which is the first in the Basic Library of Revolutionary Thought collection, to be published by Venezuelan editorial house Monte Avila.

Pathfinder book presentations

During the fair, Monte Avila also released new editions of two titles published by New York-based Pathfinder Press—*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes and *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*. They are part of Monte Avila's Free Millennium collection, which also includes *The Economic Thought of Ernesto Che Guevara* by Carlos Tablada, *Beyond Capital* by Michael Lebowitz, *Terror as U.S. Foreign Policy* by Noam Chomsky, and *Cuba and Twenty-first Century Socialism* by Heinz Dieterich.

Chairing a November 13 presentation of the new 2007 edition of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, released simultaneously by Pathfinder and the Venezuelan publishing house, Monte Avila editorial chief Carolina Alvarez cited Barnes's description of the political polarization in the United States in 1961 when U.S.-organized mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. "There are moments in history when everything ceases to be 'normal,'" Barnes said, when "neutral ground seems to disappear." Monte Avila had decided to publish the book, Alvarez said, at a time in Venezuela when likewise "nothing is normal."

"There are three central themes to this book," she said, "One, that it is possible to stand up to great obstacles and win; two, the example of the Cuban Revolu-



Militant photos by Ben O'Shaughnessy

November 9–18 Venezuela International Book Fair in Caracas registered the expansion of publishing and cultural activity in Venezuela, and was marked by heightened political debate. Top: Free Millennium collection, published by Venezuelan editorial house Monte Avila, on display. The collection includes titles such as *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, and *Beyond Capital*. Middle: Dance performances were among the many cultural activities. Bottom: Participants in November 11 presentation of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* continue the discussion with panelist Loretta Van Pelt (left), a member of the Young Socialists in the United States, after the program.

tion; and three, the importance of organization."

Other panelists at the presentation, attended by more than 75 people, were Enrique Ramos, founder of Venezuela's National Institute of Youth and advisor to the dean of the National Experimental University of the Armed Forces; Hilario Rosette, a journalist with *Alma Mater*, the newspaper of Cuba's Federation of University Students; and Olympia Newton, editor of the *Militant*.

Speakers at the November 11 presentation of a new edition of *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* included Oscar Fuentes of the Bolivarian Students Federation and the Cimarron Movement, a nationwide organization of Afro-Venezuelans, and Loretta Van Pelt, a member of the Young Socialists in the United States. Yoel Barrios, responsible for organizing members of Cuba's Union of Young Communists (UJC) on internationalist missions in Venezuela, gave extended remarks from the floor.

"By studying Malcolm we can better understand how people transform them-

selves," said Barrios. Malcolm "was a product of capitalism." Drawing a parallel between Malcolm's political transformation and the process of radicalization unfolding here, Barrios described the work of UJC cadres in Venezuela combating youth drug addiction and alienation.

Pathfinder presented *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* on November 12. Panelists were Idol Gallardo from the Caracas Municipal Youth Institute; Zuleica Romay, vice president of the ALBA Cultural Fund; and Róger Calero from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters chaired.

"I am of the generation of Cubans who went to the Plaza of the Revolution in the arms of our parents," said Romay, referring to the mass mobilizations that adopted the declarations in 1960 and 1962. Rereading them, she said, "you can see why the Empire is so afraid of Cuba—when the documents speak of peasants, of workers, of taking political

Continued on page 9

Revolutionary books are popular in Caracas

CARACAS, Venezuela—*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes was the best-selling title at the Pathfinder stand during the Third Venezuela International Book Fair, with 139 copies in Spanish and 11 in English.

Malcolm X Talks to Young People in Spanish was the second-highest seller, with 114 copies. Books by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983–87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso, were also popular. Seventy-three copies of *We Are the Heirs of the World's Revolutions* and 70 of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* were sold in English, Spanish, and French.

Other top sellers included *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes, *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*, and issues 6 and 7 of the Spanish-language *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory.

In all, 1,057 Pathfinder books were sold at the 10-day event—about 250 more books than last year. This was the fourth year in a row that the U.S.-based publisher has participated in a book fair in Caracas.

—OLYMPIA NEWTON

How revolutionaries organized Bolivian miners in 1950s

Below is an excerpt from Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. It is an interview with Rodolfo Saldaña, a founding member of the National Liberation Army (ELN) of Bolivia, which was led by Ernesto Che Guevara, an Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution, and Bolivian revolutionary Inti Peredo.

In the excerpt below, Saldaña describes how he joined the Bolivian Communist Party in 1950 and went to work in the country's largest tin mine to recruit other miners to the party. Saldaña and other revolutionaries left the CP in 1966, when the party leadership, under the direction of its general secretary, Mario Monje, refused to support the guerrilla effort led by Guevara. Saldaña

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

led the ELN's underground network in the cities and tin mining regions, which supplied the guerrilla fighters and recruited more youth, miners, and others to their ranks.

Following the death in combat of Guevara and most of the other ELN fighters in October 1967, Saldaña continued his revolutionary activity. He died in Havana in 2000. Copyright ©2001 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Prensa Latina

Bolivians demonstrate in support of the Cuban Revolution in the early 1960s. Saldaña was a leader of the Bolivian movement to extend socialist revolution to South America.

Question: Tell us something about your personal history. How did you become involved in political activity?

Saldaña: Well, my first political struggles began when I entered high school. I was always on the side of the revolutionary forces.

Question: What year was this?

Saldaña: In 1947 I began high school in the city of Sucre. In 1946 there was a popular insurrection against the government of [Gualberto] Villarroel. Villarroel was hanged from a lamppost in La Paz, together with one of his followers.

...

In 1950 the Communist Party was formed primarily by young people who had been members of the PIR [Party of the Revolutionary Left]. . . . I participated in some actions, strikes that ended in confrontations, in massacres. That was when I began my political life, in the CP. This was in 1950. I was practically a founding member. . . .

Then I became a member of the Communist Party's organization commission, and in that commission we began to consider what to do, how to organize the party. We decided that the most im-

portant thing was to organize the party among the proletariat. But we had to consider what sectors of the proletariat were the most important, and where in the countryside we should devote special attention.

That was how we decided we had to begin in the mines. We identified the most important mines in the country at the time: the Siglo XX, which had around 6,000 workers, the largest mine on the continent at that time; Potosí; and Pulacayo.

At first we did what had always been done. A leader would travel, meet with some people who belonged to the party or wanted to belong to the party, a cell would be formed, the comrade who had attended the first meeting would leave, and then nothing would happen after that. And once again we would have the same situation.

So three comrades went to these three mines to stay there about a month, find the people, meet with them, and organize the party.

But we reached the conclusion this wasn't enough. We would go, assuming we could hit all three, hold a bunch of

meetings with people we had met with many times, explain the situation, and then once again the thing would evaporate. The only way to guarantee that the party would be organized for real was for us, the three of us, to enter the mines. That was how I became a miner at Siglo XX.

We also determined that we had to go inside the mines themselves, not remain outside in other sections, but to go into the very center of the mine. And so I became a miner.

The section I entered, which was made up of young men, was the specimen section. These are miners who go around in groups taking samples from the unmined locations and bringing them to the laboratory to determine what quantity of mineral the specimen contains. This was a mobile group. One day they would work here, the next day there, and the following day somewhere else. It was an ideal situation to make contact with a lot of people.

At first the specimen section had around 200 workers. Eventually the majority of the miners there became members of the party; they formed their cell and held meetings. That was where we recruited Rosendo García Maismán [the leader of the mine workers' federation at Siglo XX].

So now the party existed. Then we pointed out the party had to expand within the mine, and we said that people should transfer to different sections of the mine. But people did not want to move. In order to have the others do so, I had to set the example, and I went to the most difficult section, Block Caving.

There the amount of space was very small, and there was a lot of dust. A lot of dynamite was used, there were many explosions. In short, the work was very tough, very difficult. There are people who get silicosis after three months. Their lungs are destroyed. That's where I went.

García Maismán went to one section. And the same with the other comrades, who transferred to different sections. Then the party encompassed much more. It wasn't just the specimen section, but we had party groups in other sections.

December

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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8 The Militant December 10, 2007

Mine safety through union power

In late October two more U.S. coal miners were killed on the job, both in West Virginia.

Howard Harris, 54, was caught in a conveyor belt at a mine owned by United Coal. Charles Kenney, 34, was pinned by a dislodged rock at a Long Branch Energy Corp. mine. That raised to 29 the number of coal miners killed at work in U.S. mines so far this year.

Two weeks later, a U.S. Labor Department report exposed the fact, not surprising to workers, that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), has routinely failed to carry out required inspections of mines and falsely inflated its enforcement record. On top of that, the fines are so small that bosses can get away with their murderous neglect year after year.

These facts underscore the reality facing coal miners, and millions of other workers today—the bosses’ brutal “productivity” drive. The findings in the latest report offer further confirmation that the high death toll in mining is due neither to “acts of God” nor to “the nature of the industry,” as the bosses and their apologists claim. It is caused by the accelerating drive for profits by the wealthy owners, who want to produce as much coal as they can in the shortest time possible.

Ensuring proper roof support, dust control, and other safety requirements are just irritations that get in the way of making money as far as the bosses are concerned.

MSHA and the rest of the capitalist government are complicit in covering up for the employers’ wanton disregard for life and limb. Faulty MSHA inspections were discovered at numerous mines where fatal disasters occurred recently, including Crandall Canyon in Utah, Darby in Kentucky, and Aracoma Alma No. 1 and Sago in West Virginia.

Miners have seen from bitter experience that they cannot depend on MSHA—or, for that matter, any other government agency, court, or capitalist politician—to enforce safety conditions. The only force that has the interest and the power to do that is the organized miners themselves.

There is only one way to effectively protect workers’ lives and well-being. We need to organize unions wherever they don’t exist. Where we have a union, we must use our collective power on the job when safety is threatened. Labor’s watchword must be: No miner has to die!

Baghdad and KRG in conflict over oil

Continued from front page

law is considered key to assuring wealthy Sunnis, who were the backbone of the Hussein regime, that they have a stake in the new U.S.-backed government.

Sharistani said the governments of Iran, Syria, and Turkey will assist in preventing the KRG from exporting oil from northern Iraq. The capitalist rulers in Tehran, Damascus, and Ankara fear that the KRG inspires nationalist aspirations among Kurds living in those countries.

The Turkish military has massed up to 100,000 troops along its border with northern Iraq and threatened to invade the region to destroy bases of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has been conducting a decades-long war in southeastern Turkey. Ankara has 1,500 troops several miles inside Iraq.

Under pressure from Washington and Ankara, the KRG has been stepping up efforts to get the PKK to end its armed struggle. The KRG has set up roadblocks to curb the supplies and movements of the PKK and banned reporters from traveling to PKK bases.

Attacks decline

Iraqi civilian deaths declined from at least 1,023 in September to at least 905 in October, according to an AP count. Over the same two months U.S. military deaths fell from 65 to 39 a month.

Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki said suicide attacks and other bombings dropped by 77 percent in Baghdad since last year.

Fighting continues, however. A suicide bombing killed three police and three civilians in Ramadi November 21. Earlier that week, a car bomb in a predominantly Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad claimed seven lives. A roadside bomb killed three children.

While the Bush administration has made little progress in getting the Iraqi government to approve a range of laws the administration has called benchmarks, it has made progress in winning the support of Sunni sheiks who have turned against al-Qaeda.

The U.S. military has recruited 26,000 Iraqi civilians to help fight al-Qaeda-led forces. They come from Baghdad suburbs, and in Karbala, Najaf, and Wassit provinces. Al-Qaeda has suffered defeats in its former strongholds of Anbar and Diyala provinces.

In addition, former Baathists are being reinstated to their old government jobs, one of the benchmarks for “national reconciliation.” Seventy former teachers, army officers, and police who were members of Hussein’s Baath party were reinstated in Anbar after joining the fight against al-Qaeda.

U.S. and Iraqi officials attribute the decline in attacks in part to cooperation from Iran in reducing aid to Shiite militias. Tehran, Washington, and Baghdad have held three rounds of talks since May.

Progress in those negotiations has led Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr to order his Mahdi Army militia to freeze operations and begin steps towards becoming a legal political movement, according to *Stratfor*, a private U.S. intelligence outfit.

War funding

Meanwhile, congressional Democrats are promoting a timetable for redeployment of troops in Iraq as an “antiwar” measure in their latest bill to fund the wars there and in Afghanistan. Redeployment out of combat areas in Iraq would begin within 30 days of the bill’s approval. But like previous Democrat-sponsored war funding bills, it would leave untold thousands of troops to conduct “antiterrorist” operations.

LETTERS

Students push back *migra*

The November 7 *Arizona Daily Star* contains an article and a column by Ernesto Portillo Jr. about a student march against the Border Patrol on the campus of Catalina Magnet High School. The 100 who marched succeeded in getting the Tucson Police Department and the Tucson Unified School District to announce that they will no longer summon Border Patrol officials or immigration authorities to school grounds.

The article quotes Catalina High School sophomore Daninza Bautista, “We’re doing something positive, something valuable. We’re showing other students to

stand up for what is right.”

*Betsy McDonald
Tucson, Arizona*

U.S.: A possible revolution

I have been following the *Militant’s* coverage of the discussion in Venezuela about the question, is a revolution possible in the United States? One of the issues in that debate questioned whether the Civil War was, in effect, a revolution. In my opinion the answer to this question has to do with the fact that before the Civil War the federal government supported the interests of slave owners and after that war those interests were forcibly pushed aside.

This didn’t mean that discrimination ended. Today there are 580,000 Black men in prison while there are only 40,000 Black men who graduate college every year. These statistics reflect just one aspect of the systematic discrimination which continues in the United States.

*Steve Halpern
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Pakistan president resigns army post

BY RÓGER CALERO

November 28—Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf stepped down as head of the country’s army today, leading up to his swearing-in for a second five-year term as president.

The move is the latest of a series of maneuvers aimed at securing the Musharraf government in the face of growing political instability in Pakistan. Prior to October elections, Musharraf, a steady ally for Washington in its war in Afghanistan, had pledged to give up his post as army chief.

Musharraf declared a state of emergency and suspended the country’s constitution November 3. He replaced more than half the judges in the Supreme Court in anticipation of a court decision that would have blocked his eligibility for reelection while heading the military. On November 22, the court dismissed opposition petitions that challenged his October reelection. Sustained protests by lawyers, judges, journalists, unionists, and opposition parties have challenged the implementation of marshal law.

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan November 25 after seven years in exile. Sharif vowed to intensify street protests until martial law is lifted.

Musharraf ousted Sharif in a 1999 military coup. Sharif was accused of corruption and hijacking—charges that were dropped in exchange for his leaving the country for ten years. Reflecting the rapidly changing political situation and mounting international pressure, Sharif returned with little interference from Musharraf. Less than three months ago Musharraf had Sharif deported to Saudi Arabia just hours after his arrival in Pakistan. Musharraf has repeatedly said he would not allow Sharif to return to participate in January elections.

“Being forced to so accept Sharif’s return from exile shows how much power Musharraf has lost in the last few months,” said Bruce Riedel, a former National Security Council member and official in the U.S. administration of William Clinton.

On his return, Sharif filed nomination papers as a candidate for January’s parliamentary elections. Calling for Musharraf’s removal from power, he said he would not serve as prime minister under Musharraf.

A meeting of the umbrella group of opposition parties known as the All Parties Democratic Movement is scheduled to take place November 29 to discuss whether the parties will boycott the January elections.

Venezuela book fair

Continued from page 7

power, at the same time they speak of the movement by Blacks for their rights in the United States.”

The panel sparked a lively discussion on the differing and evolving historical contexts in which terms such as Black, Afro-descendent, Afro-Cuban, and African American have been used in the United States, Cuba, and Venezuela.

On November 16 Pathfinder presented new editions of *Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* and *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions* by Thomas Sankara, leader of the revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. Some 35 people attended, including a large number of Afro-descendent women who were especially eager to discuss the example of the Burkina Faso revolution and the impetus it gave to women’s emancipation struggles. A presentation by Omari Musa, a Miami-based garment worker and longtime activist in the fight for Black rights, elicited many questions, and discussion continued past the fair’s closing time.

Other book fair events included poetry readings, writing workshops, and nightly performances of African and indigenous dance. A rock concert the final night closed the festival. The expanding thirst for reading and study registered throughout the 10 days of events reflect the sharpening class struggle and heightened political debate here in Venezuela.