

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Havana book fair panel discusses U.S. class struggle
—PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 73/NO. 9 MARCH 9, 2009

Sri Lankan gov't presses war against Tamils

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The Sri Lankan government boasts that it is close to a crushing victory in the 26-year civil war pitting the Sri Lankan capitalist state against the Tamil people in the northeast of the island.

President Mahinda Rajapaksa said that a military offensive launched in July has forced a retreat by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) into a 55-square-mile area north of the city of Mullaitivu.

The offensive has received the implicit backing of Washington and other imperialist powers, along with the government of neighboring India. They have proscribed the Tamil Tigers—as the LTTE is known—saying they are terrorists.

Until the current offensive the LTTE controlled a large swathe of territory in the northeast, where it set up courts and collected taxes.

Sri Lanka is a semicolonial country with an economy based on exports of tea, rubber, and coconuts. Average annual per capita income is \$930. **Continued on page 7**

Latvia gov't falls, follows collapse in Iceland

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Latvian government collapsed February 20, after implementing major cuts that were tied to a \$10 billion “aid” package from the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. It is the second European government, after Iceland, to fall under the weight of a spreading economic crisis marked by a sharp contraction in production.

Latvian president Valdis Zatlers accepted the resignation of the coalition government headed by Prime Minister Ivars Godmanis. Zatlers said he will begin discussions with parties in parliament to find a new prime minister.

The instability of the government was highlighted in January when 10,000 people protesting the impact of the economic crisis clashed with police. In February, farmers blockaded the capital in tractors, forcing the resignation of the agriculture minister.

Hospitals and schools throughout the country are under threat of closing, local government budgets were cut as much as 40 percent, and wages **Continued on page 9**

Pakistan: 60 killed in 2 U.S. missile attacks

Islamabad cuts deal with Swat Taliban



AP Photo/Hasbanullah Khan

People carry coffins at funeral of those killed in February 14 U.S. drone attack in North Waziristan District of western Pakistan, near Afghan border. Funeral took place the following day in Miran Shah, the district's capital.

BY DOUG NELSON

Washington launched what appears to be its most deadly drone missile strikes to date in Pakistan February 14 and 16, killing some 60 people.

The most recent attack was the 86th known missile strike from a drone since the U.S.-led “war on terror” began in 2001. It is the fourth since two simultaneous attacks January 23, which killed about 30 people, including four children, just days after President Barack Obama took office.

Several Predator drones unleashed Hellfire missiles on the home of alleged Afghan Taliban commander Bahram Kochi February 16 in the Kurram Agency of Pakistan's Federally

Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The strike was the first such attack in Kurram. Previous attacks have focused on the North Waziristan, South Waziristan, and Bajaur agencies.

A February 12 statement by Sen. Dianne Feinstein and a February 18 article in the London *Times* claimed CIA-operated pilotless drone attacks are launched from Pakistani bases in the country, which the Pakistani and U.S. government deny.

While the *Washington Post* made a similar claim last year, the recent statements prompted reactions in Pakistan and have complicated Islamabad's attempt to maintain an official **Continued on page 3**

Mass strikes in Guadeloupe, Martinique remain solid

BY NAT LONDON AND JEAN-LOUIS SALFATI

PARIS, February 21—“Guadeloupe is ours, not theirs; they cannot do what they want in our country.” This chant, repeated over and over on demonstrations, picket lines, and at the barricades, has become the central slogan of the general strike in Guadeloupe, now in its fifth week.

The strikers are demanding relief from the soaring cost of living and respect from the French government that rules them.

French president Nicolas Sarkozy met February 19 with elected officials of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guyana, and La Réunion, the four French colonies that have the legal status of **Continued on page 9**



Militant/Jean-Louis Salfati

Demonstration in Paris February 21 in support of mass strikes in Guadeloupe and Martinique

‘Militant’ drive for long-term readers surpasses goal of 400

BY ANGEL LARISCY

Congratulations to *Militant* supporters and long-term readers around the world on a successful subscription renewal campaign! Over the past month, more than 400 readers decided to renew their subscriptions as part of a January 24 through February 24 campaign to expand the number of long-term readers to the socialist newsweekly. As the chart on page 4 shows, nearly every area made or surpassed their quota.

Because we have been informed by the post office that prepaid reply envelopes readers use to renew are delayed for processing, we will run the final chart with all mail-in subscriptions next week.

In New York, supporters of the paper picked up the pace of their work over the past two weeks and it paid off. They finished with 50 renewals—shooting them to 111 percent of their quota.

“We divided up into five teams, each

responsible for an area of the city,” said Seth Galinsky, organizer of the campaign in New York. “They printed out maps, called subscribers, and organized systematic visits to those we didn’t have numbers for or others we weren’t able to **Continued on page 4**

Also Inside:

Justice Dept. upholds ‘renditions’	2
Western China prisoners fight Guantánamo jailing	3
SWP mayoral candidate: oppose N.Y. cuts	4
Beijing fears new wave of protests by unemployed	5

Justice Dept. upholds 'renditions'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The U.S. Justice Department has asked federal judges to dismiss a lawsuit against an airline company for its alleged role in the government's "extraordinary rendition" program, in which individuals detained by U.S. authorities on suspicion of "terrorism" were flown to other countries where they were interrogated under torture. President Barack Obama has joined the former George Bush administration in arguing that the program is essential for "national security."

The American Civil Liberties Union brought the case on behalf of five individuals held as "terror" suspects by Washington. They charged Jeppesen Dataplan, Inc., a subsidiary of Boeing, with providing aircraft to the Central Intelligence Agency for the "extraordinary rendition" program.

One of the plaintiffs, Binyam Mohamed, a native of Ethiopia who is also a British resident, states in court papers that after being picked up in Pakistan he was flown to Morocco where he was imprisoned and tortured for nearly two years. He was just released from the U.S. military

prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, after being held in U.S. custody for nearly seven years.

Another plaintiff, Ahmed Agiza, was awarded \$450,000 in damages by the Swedish government, which helped the CIA transport him for incarceration in Egypt. Two other plaintiffs have been released without charges, and another one is still imprisoned in Morocco.

The lawsuit details the torture these individuals faced in secret prisons. While being detained in Morocco, it says, Mohamed "was routinely beaten, suffering broken bones and, on occasion, loss of consciousness. His clothes were cut off with a scalpel and the same scalpel was then used to make incisions on his body. . . He was frequently threatened with rape, electrocution and death."

The ACLU lawsuit, filed in May 2007, alleges that Jeppesen helped transport "terrorism" suspects on more than 70 flights to countries where they were tortured. Government lawyers for the Bush administration argued at the time that this case should not be allowed to proceed because it would damage "national security" by disclosing "state

secrets." The trial judge agreed, dismissing the case in February 2008. A federal appeals court panel is now hearing arguments about whether to reinstate the lawsuit.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported the following courtroom exchange between one judge and a lawyer for the Obama Justice Department: "Judge Mary Schroeder asked leadingly, 'Is there anything that might have happened' to cause Justice to shift its views? 'No, your honor,' the Justice attorney, Douglas Letter, replied.

"A startled Judge Schroeder tried again. 'The change in Administration has no bearing?' Mr. Letter reiterated that his positions had been 'authorized' and 'thoroughly vetted with the appropriate officials within the new Administration.'"



Former Guantánamo prisoner Binyam Mohamed, top, steps off plane February 23 at Northolt military base in west London.

ACLU executive director Anthony Romero said, "This is not change. This is definitely more of the same. Candidate Obama ran on a platform that would reform the abuse of state secrets, but President Obama's Justice Department has disappointingly reneged on that important civil liberties issue."

In a February 13 editorial, the *Journal* hailed what it described as "laudable signs" of Obama's "antiterror progress." "During his campaign Mr. Obama talked as if he really believed that the Bush Administration was uniquely wicked on national security," the *Journal* stated. "Now it seems that the Bush Administration's antiterror architecture is gaining new legitimacy. . . . Now the [Obama] Administration has endorsed the same secrecy posture that he once found so offensive, merely saying that it will be used less frequently. We'll see."

Latinos 40 percent of federal court sentences in 2007

BY CINDY JAQUITH

More Latinos were sentenced for federal crimes in the United States in 2007 than members of any other nationality. The increase in their prosecution is a direct result of the bipartisan crackdown on immigrant workers in the last decade and a half.

According to a study released by the

Pew Hispanic Center February 18, Latinos represented 40 percent of those sentenced in federal courts in 2007, compared to 27 percent for whites and 23 percent for Blacks. The study estimated that Latinos are 13 percent of the U.S. population.

Between 1991 and 2007, the study says, "the total number of offenders

sentenced in federal courts more than doubled." During this period, "the number of sentenced offenders who were Hispanic nearly quadrupled."

Convictions for immigration law violations were 7 percent of all federal convictions in 1991, but that figure rose to 24 percent by 2007. Eighty percent of those sentenced that year for immigration crimes were Latino. Three-fourths of them were found guilty of entering or living in the United States illegally.

The arrests of Latinos have come from stepped-up factory raids, sweeps of working-class neighborhoods, and tighter controls at the border. "Beginning in 1995, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) implemented an initiative called Operation Gatekeeper," the study said. "Since that time, the number of immigration offenders in federal courts has increased from less than 10% of all cases prior to 1996 to 24% in 2007."

THE MILITANT

Support glass workers' sit-in in Ireland

The sit-in by glass workers at the Waterford Crystal plant in Ireland to protest layoffs is an important example of working-class resistance to the bosses' attacks. The *Militant* provides on-the-scene coverage of this fight and other working-class struggles.



Waterford Crystal workers marching against plant closing February 4 in Ireland.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$10 for 12 weeks

\$20 for 6 months

\$35 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, A\$8 • United Kingdom, £3 • Canada, Can\$6 • Caribbean and Latin America, US\$10 • Continental Europe, £9 • France, 12 Euros • New Zealand, NZ\$7 • Sweden, Kr60 • All other areas, US\$16 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 73/No. 9

Closing news date: February 25, 2009

Editor: Sam Manuel

Managing Editor: Martín Koppel

Business Manager: Angel Larisco

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Seth Galinsky, Cindy Jaquith, Ben Joyce, Omari Musa, Doug Nelson, Ben O'Shaughnessy

Published weekly except for one week in January and one week in July.

The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: For one year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above

address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: For one year send \$85 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: For one year send Canadian \$45 to the *Militant*, 7105 St. Hubert, Suite 106F, Montreal, Quebec, H2S 2N1.

United Kingdom: Send £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: Send £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 76 euros for one year to Diffusion du *Militant*, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: Send 400 Swedish kronor for one year to Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov, Stockholm, Sweden.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$50 for one year to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 for one year 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.

Western China prisoners fight Guantánamo jailing

BY DOUG NELSON

A U.S. Court of Appeals on February 18 struck down an earlier ruling that ordered the U.S. government to release 17 Guantánamo prisoners from Western China into the United States. Even though the government has conceded there is no basis for their incarceration, the ruling said, only the White House can decide when to release them and where they will go.

The U.S. government had “determined” that 17 Uyghur inmates at its Guantánamo prison camp were not “enemy combatants” and cleared them for release. But, like dozens of other prisoners there, they continue to languish with no release date and face further imprisonment and torture at the hands of the only government willing to accept them—Beijing.

The Uyghurs are an oppressed nationality in China, and the Chinese government has stepped up its repression against them in recent years. Beijing alleges the 17 Guantánamo prisoners are members of a terrorist separatist organization and has demanded their extradition to China.

Civil libertarian groups including the Center for Constitutional Rights, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch have campaigned for release of the Uyghurs from Guantánamo and against their repatriation to China, where they say they face torture.

In August 2003, then-secretary of state Colin Powell announced Washington would not release any Uyghur prisoners to China.

In 2006, five Uyghur prisoners were released to Albania, but government officials there have refused to accept more.

In September 2008 the U.S. government admitted it had no reason to keep the 17 remaining Uyghurs locked up. The following month, a federal judge ordered the government to release them into the United States. But the Justice Department appealed the decision on the basis that they are too dangerous. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled February 18 in favor of the Justice Department.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco
Mexico’s Deepening Economic and Political Crisis—U.S. Imperialism Eyes Intervention. Fri., Mar. 6. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St., Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland
The Working Class and the Economic Crisis. Speaker: Terry Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Mar. 6, 7:00 p.m. 7 Mason Ave. Suite 3, Otahuhu (Above Laundromat). Tel.: 09-276-8885.

—CALENDAR—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles
Celebrate the Accomplishments of the Los Angeles Socialist Workers Mayoral Campaign. Tues., March 3, 6 p.m. 2826 S. Vermont Ave. no. 9, Tel.: (323) 737-2191.

The Uyghur prisoners have been locked up in Guantánamo for the last seven years without charges in conditions of extreme isolation.

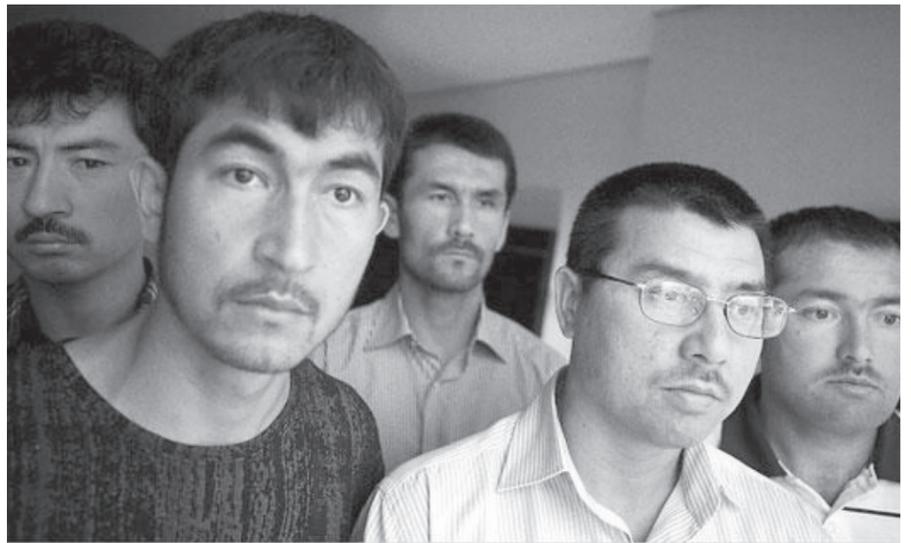
Supporters and attorneys for the Uyghurs are working to get the German or Canadian governments to accept them. The city council of Munich, Germany—home to the largest Uyghur population outside China—has offered to take them, but this has not been approved by German chancellor Angela Merkel.

President Barack Obama issued an order January 22 that the Guantánamo prison camp be closed within the next year. The Obama administration also suspended all military tribunals and requested the courts suspend some 200 pending legal challenges to the prisoners’ indefinite incarceration, while the government conducts its own “comprehensive interagency review.”

The executive order applies only to the 242 U.S. prisoners at Guantánamo. Washington holds more than 600 “terrorism” suspects from around the world at its air base in Bagram, Afghanistan. That prison is being expanded to double capacity. Based on a 2001 presidential order authorizing indefinite detentions for “terror” suspects, tens of thousands more are held without charges by the U.S. military elsewhere, particularly in Iraq.

Unlike Washington’s other military prisons, the Guantánamo camp has become a political liability for U.S. rulers.

Like many other “suspicious foreigners,” the Uyghurs were captured and sold to the U.S. military by bounty hunters in Pakistan following the launching of the U.S. war in Afghanistan. All of



Five Uyghur prisoners were released from Guantánamo and sent to Albania in 2006. Since then, no country except China has agreed to accept more Uyghur prisoners.

the prisoners have denied any connection with al-Qaeda or the Taliban.

Like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, the Chinese government armed and trained its own Islamist force among the Uyghurs to fight as part of the Mujahideen against the occupying Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The Mujahideen was a rightist Islamist military coalition backed by Washington to wage a holy *jihād* in order to reestablish political control by the country’s traditional landlord-based rulers.

Coming out of the small Uyghur section of the Mujahideen, the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) was formed. The Chinese government has used the existence of this group, with alleged ties to al-Qaeda, as an excuse for its repression against the Uyghur people and their fight against discrimination—branding movements against Beijing’s domination as Islamist terrorism.

Chinese soldiers opened fire Feb. 5, 1997, on a peaceful demonstration by Uyghurs against discriminatory practices and the closing down of their soccer arena for military training purposes.

The U.S. government alleges the

Uyghur prisoners have links to ETIM. Washington included the group, at Beijing’s request, on its list of “terrorist organizations” in 2002.

The Xinjian Uyghur Autonomous Region in Western China is a sparsely populated area comprising about one-sixth of China’s territory. The Chinese government lays its claim to the territory based on the region’s historic subjugation by Han dynasties. The Han people are the dominant nationality in China.

Before the Chinese revolution, independent Uyghur governments were briefly established in 1933–34 and 1944–49. The bureaucratic caste headed by Mao Zedong that was brought to power with the Chinese revolution maintained the second-class status of the Uyghurs. In 1955 the region was classified as an “autonomous region” of the People’s Republic of China.

Today there is at least 8.7 million Uyghurs out of a population of 18 million. The province’s population of Hans has grown from 6 percent in 1949 to about 40 percent today, a result of the Chinese government’s “Hanification” policy in the region.

Pakistan: 60 killed in U.S. missile strikes

Continued from front page

stance in opposition to the unpopular U.S. strikes on its soil.

According to the *Post*, Pakistani officials have said their intelligence services provide targeting information to the CIA and have requested participation in the decisions in the operations.

“The best way forward is obvious: grant Pakistan some ownership of the drone programme, make sure the public is aware that the ownership is real and meaningful, and widen the list of targets,” said a February 20 opinion piece in *Dawn*, Pakistan’s most widely circulated English-language newspaper.

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government announced February 21 that it secured a permanent cease-fire with Taliban forces in a region north of the drone attack sites. The agreement cements the Islamists’ influence over the Swat District and surrounding region, covering some one-third of the country’s Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). While the Taliban leadership based in Swat agreed to a 10-day cease-fire February 15, it has yet to announce a decision for a truce beyond that.

After defeating three Pakistani military offensives since November 2007, Taliban forces led by Mullah Maulana Fazaullah established control of Swat and defacto imposed *sharia*, or Islamic law, under which they have begun to purge their opposition.

The talks with the Taliban have been brokered through Sufi Mohammad,

leader of the Movement for the Implementation of Mohammad’s Sharia Law, who led a failed revolt in 1994 to establish sharia in the region and spent six years in a Pakistani jail after returning from Afghanistan where he led a force of some 10,000 against the U.S.-led troops.

Under the pact, the Taliban are to agree to a cease-fire in exchange for the release of Taliban prisoners, the withdrawal of Pakistani troops, and the establishment of sharia in the NWFP districts of at least Swat, Malakand, Shangla, Buner, and Dir.

Much of the local population has welcomed the prospect of an end to fighting between Taliban and Pakistani forces, according to press accounts. In Swat alone at least 1,200 civilians have been killed by both sides and as many as half a million have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the war.

Some 40 percent of students returned to school in Swat February 23 after all schools had been closed in response to the Taliban bombing and torching of 191 schools, 122 of them for girls. Girls’ public schools have only been open up to the fourth grade.

Meanwhile, three rival Taliban factions based in the Waziristan districts announced the formation in late February of a new Taliban coalition and declared their allegiance to Osama bin Laden and Mullah Mohammad Omar, former head of the Afghan Taliban government. Two of the three factions had

opposed fighting the Pakistani government and had come to be referred to as “pro-government Taliban.” The other faction, led by Baitullah Mehsud, is the main Taliban group that has been at war with the government.

“We are attempting to drive a wedge between al-Qaeda and the militant Taliban on the one hand, and Swat’s indigenous movement that seeks to restore traditional law in the district,” said Husain Haqqani, Pakistan’s ambassador to Washington. “This is part of our pragmatic military and political strategy to turn our native populations against the terrorists,” he said.

NWFP chief minister Ameer Haider Kahn Hoti issued orders to distribute 30,000 rifles among “patriotic people” to be used against “miscreants and anti-state elements,” Pakistan’s *Daily Times* reported February 23.

When asked February 18 how confident he was in the assurances from Islamabad that the deal won’t give the Taliban greater reach, U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates said, “We have some experience with these agreements. Maybe this will buy some breathing space for the Pakistani army, but I would say we’ll wait and see.”

“If insurgents are made to put down their arms, if the reconciliation is essentially on the terms being offered by the government, then I think that we would be very open to that,” Gates said when asked February 20 whether similar deals could be made in Afghanistan.

SWP mayoral candidate: 'Oppose New York cuts'

BY PETER THIERJUNG

NEW YORK—"I'm opposed to the layoffs and tax increases," said Dan Fein, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of this city, speaking at a Militant Labor Forum February 20.

"Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council claim there's no money and that the budget has to be 'balanced,'" Fein said.

"This city pays out more than \$3.7 billion in interest every year to the city's billionaire bondholders. There's plenty of money, but it's going to the wealthy capitalist rulers while working people are being forced to shoulder the brunt of *their* crisis. Stop paying the bondholders and put working people to work!"

Bloomberg recently announced plans to solve a \$4 billion "budget crisis" with another round of layoffs and demands for substantial concessions from city workers in pension and health-care benefits. The city is also planning to increase the sales tax to 8.75 percent, eliminate the sales tax exemption on clothes, and impose a five-cent tax on plastic grocery bags.

Among the 23,000 layoffs of city workers the mayor has proposed are 14,000 teachers. These plans are on hold pending the release of federal "stimulus" funds.

The mayor projects \$1 billion in cuts. These are in addition to \$2 billion cut over the last two years.

Bloomberg is now demanding that city workers start paying 10 percent toward health-care coverage and make contributions to pension plans. He also

wants to increase the retirement age. The mayor said that nearly all private-sector workers have already been forced to accept such concessions. Uping the retirement age and getting workers to contribute to pension plans, he added, are necessary because "people [are] living longer."

New York, like many cities in the United States, Fein explained, operates on a deficit basis: it does not raise enough funds through taxes and state and federal revenue to cover its expenses. That shortfall is made up through issuing bonds—similar to taking out a loan.

"When a municipal government decides to reduce the deficit," Fein said, "bondholders are always guaranteed their payments above anyone else, while city employees and social services are put on the chopping block to meet the 'crisis' and balance the books."

Fein said that to confront the attacks of the Democrats and Republicans in City Hall, "we need a fighting labor movement that starts with the needs of the working class, not the needs of the bondholders."

Fein said a campaign supporter had just shown him a statement presented by a boss to garment workers at a shop



Militant/Willie Cotton

Socialist candidate for New York mayor, Dan Fein (center), joins other workers at march to support Stella D'oro bakery workers on strike in New York January 31.

in Brooklyn. Fein read from the statement, which announced that the plant would shut down for a week to save on wages and benefits paid to workers and that the boss planned further layoffs.

"If we take 10 percent of the weeks on unemployment in the next year," the statement said, "employees will maintain their health care while losing only 5 percent of their wages. This would save 15 jobs!"

"We must also operate more efficiently," the boss lectured. "Many people waste as much as 20 minutes every day, either not starting work on time or

stopping early."

"Who's the 'we'?" Fein asked. "We're *not* all in the same boat. Garment and other workers are seeing our paychecks cut while the bosses try to squeeze more work out of us, using the threat of even deeper layoffs to get us to accept their demands."

"The socialist campaign says shorten the workweek with *no* cut in pay to spread the available work. Put millions to work at union-scale wages through a massive program to build and repair homes, schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges."

Philadelphia socialists demand cops solve arsons

BY ELLEN BERMAN

COATESVILLE, Pennsylvania—This largely working-class city, an hour west of Philadelphia, has been the scene of 44 arsons over the past

14 months—18 since the beginning of this year. All of them have occurred in working-class neighborhoods and trailer parks.

Socialist Workers Party candidates

Janet Post, who is running for Philadelphia city controller, and Osborne Hart, running for district attorney, visited the town in early February to tell residents that the SWP campaign calls for prosecution of the anti-working-class arsonists and supports all efforts by the workers and youth to defend themselves, including against harassment by the cops.

The candidates spoke with workers on Fleetwood Street where 15 row houses were burned January 24, leaving dozens of people homeless. Like many here, Beth Howard, who used to work in a building that was destroyed by an unsolved 2007 arson, told them she doesn't think the authorities are doing enough to determine the cause of the recent fires.

In response to the demands by working people that the perpetrators of the arson be found and prosecuted, city officials called a meeting January 28, which was attended by more than 400 people.

James Jackson said he believed the arsons were hate crimes. The cops have used the arsons to step up random searches of working people. Jackson said the cops should also be searched. That remark drew cheers from the audience, reported the *Daily Local*.

So far city officials have pointed more in the direction of blaming residents for the fires than taking action to find the culprits. Six-hundred-dollar fines have been levied against anyone leaving furniture or other "flammable objects" on their porch.

Twenty-one-year-old Giovanni told Post about the 8:00 p.m. curfew for youth under 18. "If you're coming home from work, or you're going to visit some friends," he said, "they stop you while you're walking down the street; they check your pockets for no reason."

2009 'Militant' Subscription Renewal Drive			
January 24 – February 24			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED STATES			
Philadelphia	15	17	113%
San Francisco	25	28	112%
New York	45	50	111%
Twin Cities, MN	30	33	110%
Houston	15	16	107%
Seattle*	14	15	107%
Des Moines, IA*	18	19	106%
Chicago	20	21	105%
Washington, D.C.	25	26	104%
Los Angeles	20	20	100%
Miami	25	25	100%
Newark, NJ	20	20	100%
Boston	10	9	90%
Atlanta	40	28	70%
U.S. Total	322	327	102%
AUSTRALIA	25	26	104%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	7	7	100%
London	15	12	80%
UK Total	22	19	86%
CANADA	15	17	113%
NEW ZEALAND	12	13	108%
SWEDEN	8	6	75%
Int'l Totals	404	408	102%
Should be	400	400	100%
* raised quota			

'Militant' drive tops 400 goal

Continued from front page phone. Close to half of the subscription renewals were the result of face-to-face meetings," he said.

Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, reports he met with Olga Abel, a Dominican worker. She said, "I need the *Militant*. It is so different from the news on TV and the daily newspapers. I work and don't have time to read it at home, so I read it at work and share it with my coworkers."

Four readers in Worthington, Minnesota, renewed their subscriptions after a team of distributors of the paper from Twin Cities visited and talked with them. "I have been waiting for you for a long time," said one of them, after *Militant* supporters knocked on his door, reported Tom Fiske. His subscription expired in August. He, along with two others, decided to buy the Spanish-language edition of the booklet *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* with their renewal.

"In Miami we have had quite a week getting to know our subscribers and winning long-term readers," writes

Maggie Trowe. After falling behind in the drive, supporters mapped out a day-to-day plan of calls and visits to make their goal of 25 renewals.

This included a discussion with Edilia Galvez, a Cuban child-care worker and member of Alianza Martiana, reports Emily Paul. "Galvez said she thinks the *Militant* is very important and needed," said Paul. "She described the campaign of lies by the U.S. government in regards to the Cuban Revolution and thinks it's important others know the truth about Cuba." Galvez says she passes the paper on to her neighbors and friends.

The work to contact readers of the paper and convince them to renew their subscriptions helped lead to a successful Militant Labor Forum on Malcolm X in Chicago, reports Ben O'Shaughnessy. Among those attending were two meat packers from the Chicago area, who renewed their subscriptions; a long-time civil rights activist involved in anti-police brutality campaigns, who also renewed her sub; a student and a teaching assistant, who both subscribed to the *Militant* for the first time during the drive.

While the campaign is over, supporters of the paper can use these positive results to regularly follow up on those who subscribe—to make sure they are getting the paper, to have political discussions, sell them revolutionary literature, and let them know about Socialist Workers Party candidates in their area.

Beijing fears new wave of protests by unemployed

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Chinese government officials are increasingly worried about the potential for massive protests by unemployed workers, many of them migrants from the countryside.

At least 20 million workers who left rural villages in China to work in urban factories have been laid off in recent months. These migrant workers—estimated to number at least 130 million—are the most exploited sector of the Chinese working class, and at the same time, one of its most combative layers. Lacking many rights in the cities where they sought work, and forced by the employers to work longer hours for less pay, they have launched spontaneous battles against their employers, police, and government officials as the economic contraction has worsened.

The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was brought to power in 1949 by a victorious socialist revolution of the workers and peasants. Land was nationalized and given to poor peasants and industry was placed under state control, with a monopoly on foreign trade. Living conditions for toilers in the cities and in the countryside advanced qualitatively ahead of other semicolonial countries in the region. It was one of the great advances for workers and toilers against imperialist subjugation in Asia and the world.

From the beginning, however, the CCP was a Stalinist party whose leadership sought above all to preserve its material privileges and those of the rest of the petty-bourgeois layers in the government, at the expense of the workers and peasants. In the late 1970s the government began to open up the country to foreign investment and loosen restrictions on private businesses. Moving away from centralized planning, it increasingly allowed prices, wages, and production to be determined by capitalist market methods.

In the last two decades hundreds of millions of Chinese peasants have migrated to factory jobs in the cities, forging a far larger, younger working class with higher expectations and greater confidence. Their families in the countryside now depend on their remittances for 40 percent of their income. Today these expectations are clashing with the reality of the contraction of capitalist production worldwide.

The contraction has hit China with particular rapidity, with manufacturing taking a big hit. In 2007 the Chinese economy grew by 11.4 percent. It grew by at least 10 percent in each of the previous five years. This quarter, it could drop to as little as 6 percent.

When mass layoffs began last fall, spontaneous struggles broke out in industrial centers as workers were thrown out on the streets, often by employers who refused to pay all their wages. When the owner of a company supplying the fashion designer OmniaLuo in Shenzhen left town in September without paying wages, the workers refused to turn the garments they had sewn over to OmniaLuo until they got paid. The local government had to intervene and pay the back wages to get the clothing released.

There is only one union permitted in China, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, which collaborates

with the government and capitalists to maintain “class peace” in the workplace. According to Associated Press, Sun Chunlan, vice chairman of the federation, addressed union and government officials February 17, saying they should “be on guard for hostile forces from both home and abroad that use the problems that businesses are facing to infiltrate and undermine the migrant work force.” Sun added that the union needed to prevent the emergence of “illegal ‘rights protection’ groups” by urging workers to raise their demands with “rational and legal methods.”

Some 8,000 cab drivers in the city of Chongqing went on strike in November over the sharp drop in their income and called for the formation of an independent cab drivers’ union, which the government denied, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

To try to keep the lid on social conflicts, the government is now urging employers to avoid mass layoffs if possible, and if not, requiring that they provide 30 days’ notice whenever planning to lay off more than 10 percent of their



Hundreds of workers protest their layoff from toy factory in southern China in October 2008

workforce. The government has also announced social programs to encourage migrants to leave the cities and return to their home villages for good.

But the government has also made clear it will use force if workers get “out of line.” *New York Times* reporter Keith Bradsher visited the railway station in Guangzhou as migrant workers were returning from New Year’s holidays. “Police officers were positioned every few feet along the walls and fences,” he reported February 6.

“At the nearby intercity bus station, loudspeakers . . . told arrivals over and over again, ‘Do not loiter or stand at the station. Move on quickly. Do not sit or squat.’”

The *China Labour Bulletin*, based in Hong Kong, reported that Guangdong officials “are willing to relax their enforcement of China’s labour laws during the economic crisis. “However,” the bulletin continued, “workers whose protests are deemed to jeopardize factory production will be prosecuted.”

Peanut plant knowingly shipped tainted product

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

Nine people have died and more than 600 have been sickened by a company that sold tainted peanuts to nursing homes and cafeterias, as well as to hundreds of food processors.

According to reports from the Food and Drug Administration, the Peanut Corporation of America’s plant in Blakely, Georgia, shipped some peanuts *before* they had been tested for salmonella, others *after* they had tested positive for the bacteria.

Stephen Sundlof, food safety director for the Food and Drug Administration, testified February 11 that in total, Peanut Corporation “distributed potentially contaminated products to more than 300 consignee firms.”

Company e-mails from October 2008

document American Peanut owner Stewart Parnell’s response to a plant manager’s recommendation that a shipment be placed on hold because it had tested positive for salmonella.

“We need to discuss this,” Parnell responded. “The time lapse, besides the cost is costing us huge \$\$\$\$ and causing obviously a huge lapse in time from the time we pick up the peanuts until the time we can invoice.”

On February 11 Parnell appeared before a congressional committee investigating the poisonings. He declined to answer any questions and, not surprisingly, did not respond when invited to taste peanuts his company had shipped.

On February 13 American Peanut declared bankruptcy, attempting to shield its assets from future legal claims.

In the meantime, investigation by food inspectors had turned up a host of violations in addition to salmonella—including filth, rodents, and bird feathers—at the Georgia plant and another in Texas owned by the company.

Salmonella is serious. The Center for Disease Control estimates the food-borne bacteria kills 400 people a year in the United States and sickens as many as a million more. Children are the most likely victims, followed by old people and those with “compromised” immunity systems—as is often the case with people in nursing homes.

Michael Baumann works on the beef line at Thumann’s in Carlstadt, New Jersey, and is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1245.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

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

March 9, 1984

The Supreme Court dealt a dangerous blow to the labor movement February 22, granting companies a free hand to use bankruptcy laws to tear up labor contracts and bust unions.

The two-part ruling allows a company to void a contract *immediately* upon filing under the bankruptcy code without even waiting for a bankruptcy court to hear the case and rule on its merits.

The court further ruled that a company may void a union contract without producing much actual evidence of financial hardship.

This was a closely watched case. Other corporations have since used bankruptcy filings to get out from union contracts. Others have threatened the use of bankruptcy as a means to pressure unions to grant concessions.

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

March 9, 1959

MARCH 4—The African struggle for freedom from imperialist rule reached a new high last week in Nyasaland [today’s Malawi] when demonstrators faced British planes, guns and tear gas. The crowds shouting for the independence of Nyasaland responded with sticks, stones and whatever else they could lay hands on. Yesterday at least 23 were killed by British forces and scores wounded.

Nyasaland and Southern and Northern Rhodesia comprise a federation from which Nyasaland is demanding independence. Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia are British protectorates.

The British imperialists are worried that the Nyasaland revolt will spread into the Rhodesias. They are especially concerned with their precarious positions in Northern Rhodesia, where they have been exploiting rich copper deposits for 68 years.

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America (Opposition)

March 17, 1934

In an effort to break the spirit of the unemployed, the Roosevelt administration through the local offices of the CWA [Civil Works Administration] is forcing a Pauper’s Oath on all CWA workers under the threat of immediate discharge. A questionnaire which must be sworn to before a notary public asks information on relatives, past employers, others living in the household, union affiliations, etc.

An army of snoopers from the City Welfare Dept. is also being mobilized to follow up the questionnaire by delving their snouts into the intimate affairs of all CWA workers, wives and families, other relatives, fellow roomers and friends. The form drawn up by the masters of snooping, the City Welfare Dept, as an application for relief, has been “improved” upon by these supporters of the “New Deal.”

Book fair panel discusses class struggle in Havana

Havana event presents Pathfinder's Teamster books and 'Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND OMARI MUSA

HAVANA—One of the many book presentations at the Havana International Book Fair, which began February 12, featured three new titles by Pathfinder Press. A standing-room-only audience of 90 heard a panel of speakers discuss the Spanish-language editions of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Mary-Alice Waters, in a newly expanded edition, and *Teamster Rebellion* and *Teamster Power*, the first two of a four-volume series by Farrell Dobbs on the historic Upper Midwest organizing drive led by Local 574 of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis in the 1930s.

These three books were among those that drew the most interest at the Pathfinder booth. Discussions at the 11-day cultural event have been marked by a thirst for understanding the world capitalist economic crisis today, with particular interest in developments in the United States.

The speakers at the February 18 presentation of Pathfinder books were Miguel Toledo, general secretary of the National Sugar Workers Union of Cuba (SNTA); Yankiet Echevarría, international relations secretary of the Federation of University Students; Martha Martínez of the Americas region of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU); and Róger Calero, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and SWP candidate for U.S. president in 2004 and 2008. The event was chaired by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder.

Luis Martell, former long-time general secretary of the sugar workers union, was one of the special guests at the meeting. Also participating were 40 trade unionists from several Latin American countries who were in Havana attending a two-week course organized by the WFTU in collaboration with the Lázaro Peña school of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), Cuba's trade union federation.

Miguel Toledo spoke about the two Teamster books, which are now available together in Spanish for the first time. *Teamster Rebellion* describes the 1934 Minneapolis strikes that helped pave the way for the rise of the industrial unions in the United States. *Teamster Power* tells the story of the 11-state cam-



Militant/Ben Joyce

Panel at Havana book fair from left: Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party; Martha Martínez of Americas region of World Federation of Trade Unions; Miguel Toledo, general secretary of National Sugar Workers Union; Yankiet Echevarría, international relations secretary of Federation of University Students; and moderator Mary-Alice Waters.

campaign to organize over-the-road drivers that extended union power into much of the Midwest.

'Who was Farrell Dobbs?'

"As workers, we identify with the account *compañero* Farrell Dobbs offers us," said Toledo. He cited the vivid descriptions in *Teamster Rebellion* of how trucking workers in Minneapolis, including many Scandinavian-born immigrant workers, organized into Local 574 of the Teamsters, standing up to deadly assaults by the bosses' thugs and cops and "turning 574 into a battle cry."

"Who was Farrell Dobbs?" Toledo asked. "This union and party leader was a worker who, while in his 20s, became one of the main leaders to emerge from the 1934 strikes. That year he joined the Communist League of America, forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party." He noted that Dobbs became "a citizen of the world, a proletarian internationalist," and who "together with other comrades from Local 574 and the SWP, was locked up in a federal prison for opposing the imperialist aims of the United States during World War II."

In *Teamster Power*, Toledo noted, Dobbs tells how the class-struggle leadership in the union led a campaign that organized some 200,000 over-the-road drivers throughout the region.

The account by Dobbs "documents a

concrete experience in the class struggle," he said, and today provides "an encouragement to continue the struggle of the dispossessed around the world."

Toledo also thanked the *Militant* for "allowing us to be informed about important developments in North America and the rest of the world" and for its defense of the working class.

Over the past decade, SNTA leaders have worked with *Militant* reporters from the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries, organizing visits by them to sugar mills and farm cooperatives. A recent two-part series in the *Militant* on the reorganization of the Cuban sugar industry was one of the products of this collaboration.

Socialist revolution in United States

Yankiet Echevarría focused on *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* He quoted the author's statement that to think such a revolution is not possible, "You would have to believe that there won't again be economic, financial, or social crises on the order of those that marked the first half of the twentieth century. That the ruling families of the imperialist world and their economic wizards have found a way to 'manage' capitalism" so as to preclude depressions, imperialist wars, and fascist movements.

Echevarría said the perspective of a socialist revolution in the United States was "one of the most attractive and probably one of the most controversial questions" to be posed today.

While class battles were unfolding in the United States during the 1930s depression, he said, Cuba in the 1920s and '30s was "a hotbed of revolution." Radicalizing students joined with workers in a revolutionary upsurge that led to the end of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. He pointed to Julio Antonio Mella, a student leader who, two years after founding the Federation of University Students, went on to found the Communist Party of Cuba in 1925.

A subsequent generation of Cuban youth joined the movement headed by Fidel Castro that led a socialist revolution. Young people today, Echevarría said, need to study the lessons of these struggles.

Today, he concluded, "Pathfinder is

launching a new book on the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. I hope that in 50 years, when we reach the centennial of the revolution, Pathfinder Press will be at the book fair presenting the book entitled, *Socialist Revolution in the United States Was Possible.*"

Glad Teamster books now in Spanish

Martha Martínez expressed her pleasure that the two books on the Teamsters organizing drive are now available in Spanish. The accounts by Dobbs sweep up the reader, "from the fighting enthusiasm of the masses, to the suffering and outrage over Bloody Friday," she said, referring to one of the 1934 street battles in Minneapolis between striking workers and the bosses' cops and thugs. Readers like herself are impacted by the vivid descriptions of strikers shot in the back, workers' efforts to save the wounded, and the solidarity, resistance, and ultimate satisfaction at the victory for the union.

Martínez said these books show how workers were able to organize an effective fight that overcame efforts by the union bureaucracy to demobilize them and "defeated the bosses and opportunist politicians."

She pointed to the world economic crisis today, "whose effects are already hitting thousands of laid-off workers and impoverished families." Capitalists "attempt to convince the exploited that the bourgeois order is the only one possible." But the class struggle continues, "the result of the irreconcilable antagonism between capital and labor," Martínez concluded.

Róger Calero addressed the question posed by the title of *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* The answer is unequivocally "yes," he said, and this conclusion is based not on hopes but "on the capacities demonstrated by working people in United States." The Teamsters organizing drive and broad social struggles they led offer a graphic example of how workers, if they have the leadership they deserve, "can transform the unions

For further reading

Teamster Power by Farrell Dobbs

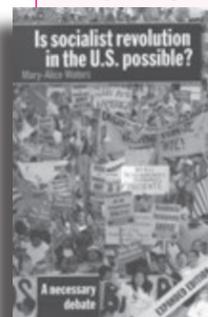
Teamster Power describes the growth of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis and the 11-state over-the-road organizing drive that brought union power for the first time to the region. —\$19

Teamster Rebellion by Farrell Dobbs

This is the first in the series on the class struggle in the United States, describing the organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters into a fighting social movement and pointed the way to political action. —\$19

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible? By Mary-Alice Waters

"To conclude that a socialist revolution is possible, you would have to believe that we have found a way to 'manage' capitalism that would be world-shaking economic and social change. **New expanded edition April 15: only \$5**



Militant/Ben Joyce

More than 90 people attended Havana book fair discussion on U.S. class struggle

Order from www.pathfinderpress.com

n the United States evolution in the U.S. Possible?’

into instruments of revolutionary working-class struggle.”

Calero noted that today, as the capitalist contraction deepens, working people are at first stunned by the layoffs, home foreclosures, and other blows. “The first reaction is to think the crisis will be brief and things will soon return to ‘normal,’” he said.

The U.S. trade union officialdom is more concerned with making companies profitable than defending workers’ interests, he said. While the trade unions now represent barely 7.6 percent of workers in private industry, Calero noted, it is not because the fighting capacities of the working class have been diminished. To the contrary.

Defensive struggles will be initiated not by workers and farmers but “by the crisis-driven attacks of the employing class,” he said, citing examples of working-class struggles he had joined as the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president in 2008, such as the pro-

tests by workers in Postville, Iowa, who were targeted by a massive immigration raid at a meatpacking plant there. He also pointed to the victorious sit-in in December 2008 by workers at a Chicago window factory who were laid off without the back pay owed them.

“What working people around the world face is decades of intertwined economic, military, social, and political crises, with the explosive class battles that will accompany them,” said Calero. Revolutionary struggles are *inevitable*, he insisted. “Their victory is not. That depends on us.”

At the end of the meeting, audience members rushed to the table at the back of the room to buy the three books on sale.

Presentations on the same books will take place at the University of Havana, the José Antonio Echevarría University, and other campuses, as well as at meetings sponsored by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

Sri Lankan gov’t presses war

Continued from front page

halese speakers number about three-quarters of the population of around 21 million, while some 18 percent, or 4 million people, are described as Tamil-speaking.

The Tamils are divided between Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils. The latter were originally brought in by the British colonialists to work the giant tea plantations established in the 19th century. Many still work in the tea-growing areas in the south, while Sri Lankan Tamils live mostly in the northeast and in Colombo, the capital.

Sri Lankan Tamils face discrimination and violence fostered by a succession of Sinhalese chauvinist governments. Such regimes have treated the Tamils’ language and the religions they practice as second-class even when officially equal. When it suits them they have organized bloody

anti-Tamil pogroms.

The BBC said February 17 that “about 50,000 soldiers are pressing the Tamil Tigers into a patch of northeastern jungle after taking the key areas of Kilinochchi, Elephant Pass and Mullaitivu.” A government ban means that “no independent journalists can reach the conflict zone so claims by either side cannot be independently verified,” the BBC added.

Sri Lankan government officials have announced plans for “welfare villages” to hold some 200,000 Tamils and others forced by the fighting to leave their homes. “Opponents say [they] are little more than concentration camps,” reported the UPI press agency.

The Red Cross and other agencies have criticized the government for refusing to suspend the offensive to allow civilians to escape. Human Rights Watch stated February 20 that about 2,000 civilians have been killed and another 5,000 injured in recent combat.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have accused both the army and the LTTE of firing on civilians who attempt to leave the area.

The offensive is the latest stage in the civil war waged by Sri Lanka’s ruling capitalist parties against the Tamils’ fight for national self-determination—a war that has taken 70,000 lives.

While allying with Sri Lanka in its brutal war, Washington and other imperialist governments accuse the Tigers of pioneering suicide bombings and of carrying out hundreds of such attacks, including the assassinations of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991 and Sri Lankan president Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993.

In 1995 the government retook Jaffna, Sri Lanka’s second-largest and northernmost city, from LTTE control. A relative stalemate ensued—codified in a 2002 ceasefire—until the government launched a 2006 offensive against the LTTE areas.



Members of Teamsters Local 574 gather to hear announcement of victory in May 1934 Minneapolis truck drivers’ strike.

Building fighting unions: lessons from the 1930s

Printed below are excerpts from Teamster Power, one of the new books from Pathfinder Press available for the first time in Spanish to participants in the Havana International Book Fair. In 1934 Teamsters Local 574 in Minneapolis conducted a successful strike for union recognition. Through the course of this fight a new leadership of the local emerged that prioritized educating union militants to rely on union power and to draw class lessons in the struggle against the employers. Copyright © 2008 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

With the change in official leadership, efforts to construct an ever-stronger left wing took new forms within the local. It was no longer a matter of building a broad caucus around a militant program in order to displace misleaders sitting on top of the organization. Conscious revolutionists were now at the helm, and they enjoyed harmonious relations with the rank and file. . . . From this it followed that the next major task was to make the general membership more aware of the laws of class struggle.

Workers who have no radical background enter the trade unions steeped in misconceptions and prejudices that the capitalist rulers have inculcated into them since childhood. This was wholly true of Local 574 members. They began to learn class lessons only in the course of struggle against the employers.

Their strike experiences had taught them a good deal. Notions that workers have anything in common with bosses were undermined by harsh reality. . . . At the same time the workers were gaining confidence in their class power, having emerged victorious from their organized confrontation with the employers.

To intensify the learning process already so well started, the union leadership now initiated an educational program. Study courses open to all members were organized. The curriculum included economics, labor history and politics, public speaking, strike strategy, and union structure and tactics. Wherever practical, officers’ reports at membership meetings were given with a view toward making them instructive as well as factually informative. Articles of an educational nature were printed in the union paper. The themes varied from analysis of local problems to coverage of events and discussion of issues in the national

and international labor movement.

These endeavors stood in marked contrast to the policies of bureaucratic union officials. Bureaucrats don’t look upon the labor movement as a fighting instrument dedicated solely to the workers’ interests; they tend rather to view trade unions as a base upon which to build personal careers as “labor statesmen.”

Such ambitions cause them to seek collaborative relations with the ruling class. Toward that end the bureaucrats argue that, employers being the providers of jobs, labor and capital have common interests. They contend that exploiters of labor must make “fair” profits if they are to pay “fair” wages. Workers are told that they must take a “responsible” attitude so as to make the bosses feel that unions are a necessary part of their businesses. . . .

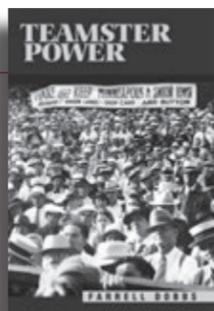
In carrying out their class-collaborationist line, the union bureaucrats exercise tight control over negotiations with employers. They try to avoid strikes over working agreements if at all possible. . . .

Once a contract has been signed with an employer they consider all hostilities terminated. Membership attempts to take direct action where necessary to enforce the agreement are declared “unauthorized” and a violation of “solemn covenants.” In fact the bureaucrats often gang up with the bosses to victimize rebel workers.

Local 574’s leadership flatly repudiated the bankrupt line of the class collaborationists. There can be no such thing as an equitable class peace, the membership was taught. The law of the jungle prevails under capitalism. If the workers don’t fight as a class to defend their interests, the bosses will gouge them. Reflecting these concepts, the preamble to the new by-laws adopted by the local stated:

“The working class whose life depends on the sale of labor and the employing class who live upon the labor of others, confront each other on the industrial field contending for the wealth created by those who toil. The drive for profit dominates the bosses’ life. Low wages, long hours, the speed-up are weapons in the hands of the employer under the wage system. Striving always for a greater share of the wealth created by his labor, the worker must depend upon his organized strength. A militant policy backed by united action must be opposed to the program of the boss.”

th and consolidation of
d its class-struggle lead-
ganizing campaign that
to much of the Midwest.



ss-struggle leadership of the strikes and
e Teamsters union in the Midwest into
ed the road toward independent labor

on in the U.S. Possible?

socialist revolution in the U.S. is not
ave to believe that the ruling families
anage’ capitalism so there won’t again
omic, financial, or social crises.”

dition! Special offer through

com or see distributors on page 8

The fight for Black rights during World War II

Printed below is an excerpt from *Fighting Racism in World War II*, one of *Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March*. In 1941 Black rights organizations called for a March on Washington to demand equality in employment and an end to segregation in the South and in the U.S. armed forces. With the U.S. rulers gearing up to enter World War II, the Franklin Roosevelt administration pressured the groups' leaders to call the march off. The March on Washington movement did organize mass rallies in 1942 in New York and Chicago. In April 1943, 10,000 people—many of them in United Auto Workers contingents—marched in Detroit against discrimination. The piece below is based on material that originally appeared in *The Militant*. Copyright ©1980 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Rally in New York City for Black rights in 1942 called by March on Washington movement. Action protested racist frame-up and legal lynching of Odell Waller, a Virginia sharecropper.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ALBERT PARKER

A committee of prominent Negroes headed by A. Philip Randolph, president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, is now engaged in furthering a march on Washington, which is scheduled to take place July 1.

Ten thousand Negroes, it is planned, will join in the march, demanding an end to Jim Crowism and discrimina-

tion in the armed forces and industry.

Certainly, if ever there was a time for the Negro people to take action against Jim Crowism and discrimination, this is the hour.

Never before has the plight of the Negro stood out so sharply against the national scene, now loud with talk about democracy and the rights of minority groups—somewhere else. Not even in 1917, just before this country entered the First World War, was there such a contrast between the treatment of the Negro and the high and shining words used to describe the advantage of living under capitalist democracy.

And now, as in 1917, there are misleaders who say that this is not the time for action, that the Negro people should wait. "Wait," they say, "wait until later; don't take advantage of the crisis; let us show them how loyal we are, and they will treat us differently after the war is over."

But to do what these Uncle Toms urge would be to close our eyes to what happened last time. In 1917 the Negro people followed this advice, with tragic results. A larger proportion of Negroes than whites went into the army. They gave up their lives; they suffered insult and discrimination both in the American training camps and abroad in the AEF [American Expeditionary Forces]. And when it was all over, they were forced back

into the same old Jim Crow straitjackets, Negroes who dared to continue wearing uniforms were lynched, and the Negro people did not have a single right or privilege in addition to those they had before the war.

Maybe the Negro misleaders can afford to wait—those who have soft jobs in the government, or are angling for them as a reward for their advice to sit and wait, or—that small top layer of Negroes who live well.

The Negroes dare not wait. The condition of the average Negro worker is getting worse. Nobody has all the figures—no government agency is anxious to collect them—but everyone knows that Negroes just aren't getting jobs in any numbers or of any importance in the booming war industries.

The old saying "last hired, first fired" applies as much as ever in the present expanding industrial picture. Most of the comparatively few jobs which Negroes are getting are the lower-paid occupations abandoned by workers getting employment in the strategic industries. Those jobs Negroes do get in the big industries are limited to the menial categories. The heads of big corporations controlling airplane and similar production have openly stated they refuse to hire Negroes except as janitors and similar categories. Most of the other corporations, more discreet, say nothing, but follow the same policy.

This would be bad enough for the Negro at any time, but it is critically serious because of the economic background against which it is taking place.

The cost of living is going up. As a result of profiteering and curtailed production of consumers' goods, food, shelter, and clothing cost more. The increased taxes to raise more money for the war machine hit the Negroes; before long these taxes will include sales taxes on everything workers use and income taxes on practically everyone working. All this is a heavy burden for the workers lucky enough to have halfway decent jobs. For the Negro people it is truly crushing.

Relief and WPA [Works Progress Administration] appropriations are being slashed. The argument that some workers have gotten jobs is being used to justify cuts in the individual relief allowances of those who aren't getting jobs. The argument that there is less unemployment is being used to justify discontinuance of most WPA projects, although they employ the people who haven't been able to get jobs. Since Negroes were the group that suffered the most in the depression, and since they find it hardest to get jobs today, these reductions in relief and WPA hit them the hardest.

In addition to being denied work, Negroes are being denied the right to learn how to work at skilled and semiskilled jobs. The usual argument of the officials in charge of the training schools is that there is no use in "wasting the training" when Negroes won't be able to get jobs afterward to utilize the training. To complete this picture, it should be remembered that one of the many alibis of employers who are put on the spot is that they can't find Negroes "qualified to handle skilled work."

In short, because the Negro is locked out of the war boom and because at the same time he is being forced to share the costs of the war program, his plight doesn't remain the same but grows constantly worse.

They won't take the Negro into the factories, but they take him into the armed forces. But not as an equal. He can die for democracy but he can't have it in life.

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2826 S. Vermont Ave. #9 Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 737-2191. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net **San Francisco:** 5482 Mission St. Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

FLORIDA: Miami: 6777 NW 7th Ave., Suite 5. Zip: 33150. Tel: (305) 757-8869. E-mail: swpmiami@att.net

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 2840 NE Expressway, Suite 102. Zip: 30345. Tel: (404) 471-1165. E-mail: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 3557 S. Archer Ave. Zip: 60609. Tel: (773) 890-1190. E-mail: Chicagoswp@sbcglobal.net

IOWA: Des Moines: 3707 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 255-1707. E-mail: swpdesmoines@qwestoffice.net

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 13 Bennington St., 2nd Floor, East Boston. Zip: 02128. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: swpboston@verizon.net

MINNESOTA: Minneapolis: 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Zip: 55407. Tel: (612) 729-1205.

E-mail: tcswp@qwestoffice.net

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

NEW YORK: Manhattan: 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 455-2682. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net

TEXAS: Houston: 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Zip: 77092. Tel: (713) 688-4919. E-mail: swp.houston1@sbcglobal.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3717 B Georgia Ave. NW, Ground Floor. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 536-5080. E-mail: swp.washingtondc@verizon.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Ave. South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: seattleswp@speakeasy.net

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@optusnet.com.au

CANADA

QUEBEC: Montreal: 7105 St. Hubert, Suite 106F, H2S 2N1. Tel: (514) 272-5840. E-mail: cllc_can@bellnet.ca

FRANCE

Paris: P.O. 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 40-10-28-37. E-mail: milpath.paris@laposte.net

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885. E-mail: clauack@xtra.co.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: kfstockholm@tele2.se

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: London: First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-2466. E-mail: cllondon@onetel.com

SCOTLAND: Edinburgh: Second Floor, 105 Hanover St. Postal code: EH2 1DJ. Tel: 0131-226-2756. E-mail: cledinburgh@talktalk.net

March **BOOKS OF THE MONTH**

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

Fighting Racism in World War II
by C.L.R. James and others
An account of efforts to advance the Black rights struggle in face of patriotic appeals to postpone resistance to lynch-mob terror and racist discrimination until after U.S. "victory" in World War II. \$22. **Special price: \$16.50**

25%
DISCOUNT

Teamster Politics
by Farrell Dobbs
\$19. **Special price: \$14**

Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory
by Ernest Mandel
\$11. **Special price: \$8**

Socialism: Utopian and Scientific
by Frederick Engels
Modern socialism is not a doctrine, Engels explains, but a working-class movement growing out of the establishment of large-scale capitalist industry and its social consequences. \$13. **Special price: \$9.50**

De la sierra del Escambray al Congo (From Escambray to the Congo)
by Victor Dreke
\$17. **Special price: \$12.50**

The Struggle against Fascism in Germany
by Leon Trotsky
\$32. **Special price: \$24**

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

ORDER ONLINE AT
WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM
OFFER GOOD UNTIL MARCH 31, 2009

Imperialist troops out of Pakistan!

The latest U.S. missile attacks in Pakistan near the Afghanistan border killed some 60 people and brought the number of such attacks to four since President Barack Obama took office. To shore up its unstable ally in the “war on terror,” Washington has sent some 70 U.S. military advisers to Pakistan. There they have been not so secretly training Pakistani troops since last summer.

The “war on terror” is not the policy of former president George Bush or of Obama, but of U.S. imperialism, regardless of who occupies the White House.

The attacks on Pakistan and the doubling of U.S. troops in Afghanistan are part of the same war. Add in the torture of prisoners at Guantánamo and CIA prisons around the world and the secret “renditions” of alleged “terrorists,” many with no evidence against them, and you see what the rulers mean by the “war on terror”—a warning to any working people who dare to fight back against capitalist exploitation.

The purpose of their war is to defend the U.S. imperialist empire in decline, the world’s final empire. Washington is increasingly unable to stabilize a world in which the lives of hundreds of millions of work-

ing people are marked by turmoil, want, and disease produced by capitalism itself.

The missile strikes, the training of special forces, and the secret “renditions”—a code word for U.S.-authorized kidnappings—are aimed at preventing workers and farmers in Pakistan and Afghanistan from organizing an effective fight in their own interests to take on the capitalist and land-owning classes there.

That is why class conscious workers should demand U.S. troops and advisors out of Pakistan and Afghanistan, close all the U.S. bases, release all the prisoners, and close all the secret prisons.

The violations of the rights of prisoners in Guantánamo and other U.S. jails where “terror” suspects are held, along with the secret abductions, are part of the rulers preparing to respond to the resistance that will deepen inside the United States as the consequences of the capitalist economic crisis bear down.

By opposing U.S. intervention in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and around the world, working people will put ourselves in a stronger position to defend our democratic, political, and union rights in the months and years ahead.

Paris marchers back Caribbean strikes

BY JEAN-LOUIS SALFATI

PARIS, February 21—More than 10,000 people demonstrated here today in solidarity with the fight being waged by working people in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

Shouting “*LKP solidarité!*” and “Guadeloupe, Martinique, they belong to us, not to them,” many of the protesters—the majority originally from the Caribbean—were demonstrating for the first time. The LKP, which in Creole means Alliance Against Exploitation, is the union-based coalition in Guadeloupe leading the strikes there.

The march was initiated by “Continuité LKP” (Continuity Alliance Against Exploitation), which was set up in France to support the strikes in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

The unions CGT, CFDT, and Solidaires backed the demonstration, as did the French Communist Party,

Socialist Party, New Anticapitalist Party, and other organizations.

Julie Demaison, a 17-year-old-student from Guadeloupe, said, “You see, Guadeloupe is standing up and people start to see us differently. Here in France, people think Guadeloupe is a paradise with beaches and coconuts. Now, they see an oppressed people who stand up and who will be respected.”

Lucien Maximain, 42, an unemployed worker, joined the conversation and said, “Colonization is over, exploitation is over. Now, they will respect us.”

Lucette Ninien, 35, said, “I’ve been working in a hospital in Paris for 10 years and I know people in my country who never go to the doctor. Is this right? We want equality and dignity. We want to be respected.”

Demonstrations also took place in other cities throughout France, including Marseille and Bordeaux.

Guadeloupe, Martinique strikes solid

Continued from front page

“overseas departments.” The strike movement, which began January 20 in Guadeloupe, has spread to Martinique, forcing cancellation of the annual carnival there, normally a massive event in the capital city of Fort de France.

Sarkozy proposed a plan to allocate 580 million euros (US\$730 million) to finance a wage and aid increase that he claimed would be “roughly equivalent” to the central demand of the strikers for an increase in average salaries of 200 euros a month. It would be extended to all four territories.

Strike leaders said they had reached a tentative agreement with small business groups to meet half the requested raise, but that the government would have to take actions to make up the difference. Larger capitalists have proposed only a 50 euro monthly increase.

“The state doesn’t believe that it should finance or reimburse wage increases for private employers,” said Nicolas Desforges, the Paris-appointed top official in Guadeloupe, after leaving a February 23 negotiating session without a settlement.

“If they don’t want to talk, we will put the popular pressure on the streets and make them share their fortune with the people of Guadeloupe,” said strike leader Patrice Tacita, according to the Associated Press.

Other agreements had already been reached freezing rent for the year, cutting gasoline and food prices, and increasing aid for school lunch programs.

Sarkozy has also promised to open an undefined “general assembly” to discuss the status of the “overseas departments.”

“I do not trust the government propositions,” said LKP leader Elie Domota days before the February 23 negotiations. “We will meet with the negotiators in

a few days and demand details of the plan. What we want is that they explain exactly how this plan is set up, what it will lead to, and only on that basis will we make up our minds.” The LKP, the Creole acronym for Alliance Against Exploitation, is a coalition of some 50 organizations, centered in the trade unions, that is leading the movement in Guadeloupe.

Between 80 percent and 90 percent of the production in Guadeloupe is controlled by descendants of the white plantation slave owners, known as Béké, who still dominate the island’s economy. Yet in both Guadeloupe and Martinique they number only 1 percent of the population.

Some 1,000 French riot police, gendarmes, have been sent to Guadeloupe and Martinique to intimidate strikers.

Nearly 10,000 demonstrators took part in a march in Martinique to protest the death of trade union militant Jacques Bino, who was shot near one of the barricades February 17.

On the night following Bino’s death, barricades were reinforced in many places throughout Guadeloupe. One of the participants in the Gosier barricade telephoned a local Guadeloupean radio station to complain that the police had been firing on them with live ammunition and beating demonstrators with clubs.

By February 18, the police estimated that 50 of the barricades had reached the point where they were “hermetically sealed” and capable of stopping all traffic.

During the night the town hall was stormed and occupied by protesters. Police tried unsuccessfully to break through the barricades, which had cut off all roads into town. The cops finally sent two squadrons of mobile gendarmes by helicopter to retake city hall.

Latvia gov’t falls

Continued from front page

of government workers slashed by 25 percent.

Latvian foreign ministry officials say the country’s economy is expected to shrink 12 percent in 2009.

The collapse is even more striking given that Latvia, known as one of the “Baltic Tigers” along with neighboring Estonia and Lithuania, posted one of Europe’s highest economic growth rates after joining the European Union in 2004.

Other Eastern European governments could suffer the same fate as the Latvian regime. The Ukraine economy, in part dependent on steel exports, has been hard hit by the plummeting price of steel.

In many countries in Eastern Europe the contraction in production is combined with a currency crisis. Between September 2008 and February, Hungary’s currency, the forint, fell 28.9 percent against the U.S. dollar. In the same period the Ukrainian hryvnia fell 42.2 percent and the Russian ruble 32.2 percent.

The currency runs can have a devastating effect both on local capitalist enterprises and on working people. In Hungary home mortgages, although paid in forints, are often pegged to the euro. A devaluation means a sharp increase in monthly payments.

The *Washington Post* in a February 21 article warned, “A financial meltdown in Eastern Europe could drag down banks in Austria, Sweden and Switzerland, which lent heavily to financial institutions and businesses in Eastern Europe and for years enjoyed healthy returns.”

Banks in Austria, Sweden, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Belgium, and the Netherlands have about \$1.6 trillion in outstanding loans to Eastern Europe, increasing the possibility that other Western European countries could implode like Iceland.

Plunging auto sales

The decline in the auto industry, like the crisis of the weakened “Baltic Tigers,” highlights the international character of the unfolding economic contraction.

Sales of automobiles in the United States plunged 18 percent last year. General Motors says its sales decline since 2007 is equal to the capacity of 24 assembly plants.

In Mexico the decline is worse. Auto production in January was 51 percent less than a year ago. U.S. car sales of Toyota, now the world’s largest and richest auto company, have dropped by a third over the last year.

In South Korea, Ssangyong Motor Co., majority owned by China’s Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp., declared bankruptcy. General Motors’ Daewoo subsidiary there is asking Seoul for \$646 million to stay in business.

Shortly after GM’s request for help from the Swedish government was turned down, Saab, its Swedish-based subsidiary, filed for bankruptcy protection.

The auto industry is not alone in what Karl Marx referred to 150 years ago as the capitalist crisis of overproduction. “The world is suddenly awash in almost everything,” noted the February 17 *Washington Post*. “Televisions, bulldozers, Barbie dolls, strip malls, Burberry stores.”

Overproduction does not mean that many things piling up in warehouses—from gasoline and clothing to tractors and water pumps—are not needed by working people and farmers around the world; just that the capitalists cannot sell them at a profit they consider large enough to make it worth their while to continue to produce.

In a scheme that could inflate a new financial bubble, the Federal Reserve February 10 announced a program that dwarfs the so-called stimulus bill. Known as the Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility, the U.S. government will “loan” a trillion dollars to hedge funds and other financial speculators.

Under the plan first developed last fall, “investors” would get up to \$1,000 in government loans for every \$50 invested. The loans are not for factories or production or the planting of crops, but for buying debt: repackaged and “securitized” student loans, auto loans, and credit card debt.

If the loans go bad, the hedge funds will only have to pay back their original outlay. The government will pay the rest.