

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Communist continuity and
Malcolm X legacy

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 9 MARCH 8, 2010

EU governments push crisis on working class

Athens, Madrid, Lisbon prepare more cuts



Taxi drivers march in Athens, Greece, during 24-hour strike February 19 against government austerity measures, including wage freezes and higher sales taxes on some items.

BY SETH GALINSKY

Taxi drivers in Athens walked off the job for 24 hours February 19 to protest government austerity measures aimed at workers and farmers. “These measures won’t do anything. All they will do is throw us out of work,” said cab driver Anastasis Damianidis.

In late January, Papandreou told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that he was prepared to “draw blood” to establish Greece’s financial credibility and avert defaulting on loans. Government debt in Greece is 120 percent of the country’s gross domestic product. Some \$75 billion comes due starting in March.

The latest figures show that official unemployment in Greece is at 10.6 percent.

Before they provide more loans to Athens, leaders of the European Union, especially the German government, want Papandreou to take deeper austerity measures to ensure that wealthy bondholders and banks get their payments. In spite of the symbolic nature of union protests so far, European Union (EU) leaders are not confident that the Greek rulers will be able to impose the measures on working people there.

Workers in Greece, along with those

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Millions of workers have no job prospects in ‘recovery’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Despite claims that the economy is starting to rebound, millions of workers face diminishing prospects for finding a job. Long-term unemployment in the United States is at its highest level since figures on this were first recorded.

In January, 6.3 million workers had been unemployed for six months or longer, according to the U.S. Labor Department. “That is more than double the toll in the next-worst period in the early 1980s,” the *New York Times* reported February 21.

Long-term unemployment for women between 45 and 64 years is up dramatically. “In 1983, after a deep recession, women in that range made up only 7 percent of those who had been out of work for six months or longer,” the *Times* said. “Last year, they made up 14 percent.”

Most companies are not seeking to hire new workers, but to increase the

“productivity” they extract from their current workforce through increased speedup, thereby making working conditions more dangerous.

At Ford Motor Co., for example, in spite of a 25 percent increase in U.S. sales in January, the bosses plan to further cut the workforce—a jobless “recovery.” Only about 300 workers accepted a buyout proposal last month and the company said it will cut a shift of 900 workers from its Michigan Mustang factory in July, raising those laid off to 1,500. Ford has cut 47 percent of its North American workforce since 2006.

The government has no serious program to provide jobs to the millions of unemployed. Instead, the Barack Obama administration’s jobs proposal gives tax breaks to businesses and bailout funds to community banks.

A recent report by the president’s Council of Economic Advisers proj-

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Washington takes aim at social programs

BY BEN JOYCE

President Barack Obama has begun a new effort to resuscitate health-care “reform” legislation after months of impasse, calling a February 25 meeting to discuss a compromise between the two bills passed in each house of Congress.

Meanwhile, the president signed an order February 18 establishing a commission that he said would end the “stranglehold of debt” on the U.S. economy. These initiatives aim to accelerate cuts already being carried out in government-financed health care across the country and in other social programs.

Three days before the health-care summit, the White House released a new version of the bill, which closely resembles the one passed by the Senate in December. The legislation continues to feature an insurance mandate, which would require everyone to buy health insurance or face fines of 2.5 percent of their income or \$695 per year, whichever is greater. Cuts to Medicare and Medicaid are also part of the package.

While the mandate would provide a profit bonanza for the insurance giants, the Obama administration has attempt-

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Marjah assault part of 18-month campaign

BY DOUG NELSON

February 23—Ten days into Operation Mosharak (Together), U.S.-led forces continue to push out Taliban forces in the southern Afghan province of Helmand. The new offensive represents the opening of a broader campaign that aims to permanently weaken the Taliban’s influence in the region.

The objective of the offensive is to displace the Taliban’s control over the farming community of Marjah and the district of Nad Ali in central Helmand with a new administration loyal to Washington and the Afghan central government. “This is just the initial operation of what will be a 12- to 18-month campaign,” said Gen. David Petraeus, the head of U.S. Central Command, on NBC’s “Meet the Press” February 21.

After taking the main population and economic centers of Helmand Province, the plan is to advance on key areas in neighboring Kandahar, the origin and traditional center of the Taliban.

There are currently 113,000 U.S.

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Cuban students host meetings on Cuban 5 and Pathfinder

BY JACOB PERASSO
AND RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA, February 18—Two back-to-back political events were hosted by students and faculty today at Havana’s main university of science and engineering, the Instituto Superior Politécnico (Higher Polytechnic Institute) “José Antonio Echeverría,” popularly known here as CUJAE.

A presentation given by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, on the Spanish-language edition of *Lenin’s Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922–23* was followed by a lively *peña*—a social and cultural event—organized by the university’s committee to defend the five Cuban revolutionaries held in U.S. prisons.

The *peña*, an event that is held at this university on the third Thursday of every month, took place on the shaded outdoor patio next to the university student center. The student center was once the mansion of the owner of a nearby sugar mill who fled the country with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959. The event, which drew 100 people, featured poetry readings, music and video presentations, and other performances by students and faculty.

Andrei Dibauko, a civil engineering student from the central African country of Gabon, was one of a dozen students speaking or performing as part of the program. He read a short composition he had written titled “Humanism in the Engineering Profession.” Dibauko compared the writings of José Martí, the central leader of Cuba’s struggle for independence against Spain in the final years of the 19th century, with the life and writings of Antonio Guerrero, one of five Cuban political prisoners held in U.S.

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UK candidates: ‘Troops out of Afghanistan now!’

BY TONY HUNT

EDINBURGH, Scotland—“We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British and all foreign troops from Afghanistan,” says Paul Davies, the Communist League’s candidate in Bethnal Green, London, in the forthcoming UK general election to Parliament. Davies, a factory meat cutter, is standing alongside Caroline Bellamy, the League’s parliamentary candidate from Edinburgh South West in Scotland. A general election is widely expected in early May and has to be held by June.

More than 1,200 British troops are among the 15,000 imperialist-led forces currently engaged in a military offensive against the Taliban in the Marjah region of southern Afghanistan, with a further 3,000 British troops waiting in reserve. Prime Minister Gordon Brown claims, “We will break the Taliban during this enterprise.”

Bellamy explains that through their wars “the wealthy capitalist rulers and their governments act at all costs to pro-

tect their profits. That’s why working people need to take state power from them through revolutionary action by the millions, as in Cuba.”

A factory sewing machine worker and member of the GMB union, Bellamy actively built the February 20 demonstration here against the ultrarightist Scottish Defence League (SDL). This outfit and its counterparts in the English Defence League have held actions targeting what they call “Militant Islam,” echoing the bourgeois parties’ support for Britain’s war in Afghanistan.

Bellamy says she “rejects the view of Edinburgh city councillor Cameron Rose, who opposes counterprotests against the rightists, calling instead for the police to deal with the SDL.” At key moments “the police have acted to protect the ultraright as they did in the 1930s with Oswald Mosley’s Black Shirts and in the 1970s and ’80s with the National Front,” Bellamy points out.

The scale and speed of cuts to government spending—and consequent attacks on workers’ social wage—has emerged as a main issue among the big-business parties. Chancellor of the Exchequer Alistair Darling said that the next government faces implementing the “toughest” spending cuts in 20 years. Echoing this, Tory opposition shadow business secretary Kenneth Clarke said, “We are going to have to be much tougher on public spending than Margaret Thatcher ever was.” University spending has already been cut by £449 million (\$693 million) for 2010–2011.

“As a loyal servant of the capitalist class Alistair Darling has acted to protect



Caroline Bellamy, Communist League candidate for Parliament.

Montreal students protest tuition hike



Militant/John Steele

MONTREAL—“On veut étudier, on veut pas s’endetter” (We want to study, we don’t want to run up debts) was the chant of several hundred students here February 17. Carrying desks and chairs, they briefly set up classroom formations at intersections to illustrate their desire to study as they marched through downtown Montreal heading for the offices of the provincial government ministry in charge of education. Junior college (CE-GEP) students joined university students in the streets.

The previous week, the government minister had announced her plans to increase the rate at which tuition fees are being raised, beginning in 2012. Between 2007 and 2012, a year’s university tuition will have gone from Can\$1,668 to Can\$2,168. Tuition fees in Quebec are qualitatively lower than elsewhere in Canada, due to regular student mobilizations protesting hikes over the past decades.

Marcher Jean-François Filiatrault said, “It’s important to react quickly against a hike in tuition fees.” Another student, Justine Lamarre, told the Militant, “We’re against an elitist society and education system.” Both attend the University of Quebec in Montreal.

—KATY LE ROUGETEL

those ‘too big to fail,’” Bellamy explains, “in other words the wealthy bondholders who stand behind the likes of RBS or Bank of Scotland. Meanwhile, working people face growing devastation as attacks on our living standards mount.” In order to achieve an economic recovery for workers, she says, “we must fight for

measures that cut directly into the capitalist profit system and its rule.”

“Millions could be put to work at union rates to build the schools, hospitals, and public transport that working people need,” Davies points out.

Paul Davies contributed to this article.

Puerto Rican birth papers voided

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The U.S. government is voiding all Puerto Rican birth certificates issued before December 2009. Any resident of the United States who was born in Puerto Rico before then will have to apply to the Puerto Rican Health Department to obtain a new certificate. The old documents expire July 1.

The U.S. State Department claims that 40 percent of all “identity theft” cases involve stolen birth certificates from Puerto Rico. These certificates are accepted in the United States as

proof of U.S. citizenship and for many official transactions.

The new measure is the latest insult to Puerto Ricans by the government that has maintained their homeland as a colony ever since the late 19th century.

For the millions of Puerto Ricans who live in the United States but were born in Puerto Rico, the possibility of losing legal status is posed. One Puerto Rican in Bronx, New York, who was interviewed by NY1.com, said, “With what’s going on now. . . . It’s like I’m an illegal alien.”



Compensate Black farmers!

Black farmers are fighting for compensation after the U.S. Department of Agriculture denied them loans for decades, while giving financial aid to similarly situated farmers who are white. Follow the farmers’ fight in the pages of the ‘Militant.’



National Black Farmers Association
Farmers rally February 9 in Jackson, Mississippi, demanding compensation for racist policies of agriculture department.

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Managing Editor: Martín Koppel

Business Manager: Angel Lariscy

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Seth Galinsky, Cindy Jaquith, Ben Joyce, Omari Musa, Doug Nelson, Emily Paul, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams

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Artwork by Cuban Five prisoner on tour in U.S.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

A February 18 program at the University of Louisville marked the conclusion of a successful exhibit of artwork by Cuban Five prisoner Antonio Guerrero, who has been unjustly held in U.S. prisons for more than 11 years.

Together with Gerardo Hernández, René González, Fernando González, and Ramón Labañino, Guerrero was arrested in 1998 in Miami, where the five were monitoring the activities of right-wing Cuban exiles who have launched armed attacks on Cuba, with Washington's blessing. They were convicted on trumped-up charges that included "conspiracy to commit espionage" and, in the case of Hernández, "conspiracy to commit murder."

In June 2008 a federal appeals court

ruled that the sentence of life plus 10 years for Guerrero was excessive, as were the sentences for two of the other five. All three had their sentences reduced, in Guerrero's case to 21 years and 10 months.

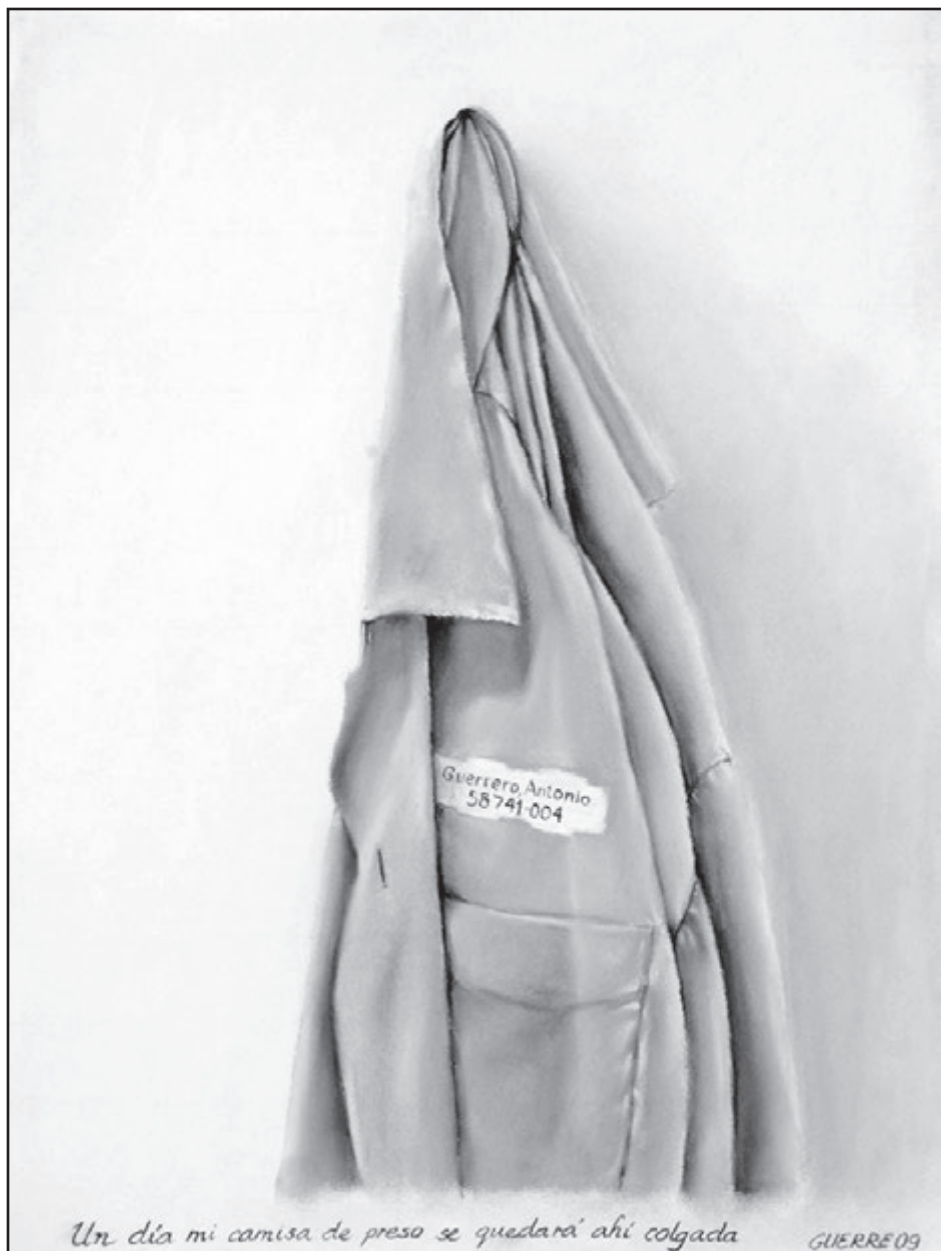
The Louisville exhibit of Guerrero's paintings and drawings, titled "From My Altitude," was located in the University of Louisville library in a well-traveled area, said Sonja DeVries, one of the exhibit's organizers. Some 40 people attended the wrap-up program. "They included a young Cuban woman who had left the island 10 years ago," said DeVries in a phone interview. "This was her first Cuba event in the United States."

The Latin American Studies department, Ekstrom Library Exhibits and Programs Committee, and the Anne Braden Institute for Social Justice Research at the university sponsored the event. Other sponsors included the Henry Wallace Brigade and the Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean.

With his reduced sentence, Guerrero now has the possibility of parole in about seven years. Since 2002 he has been incarcerated at the maximum-security federal prison in Florence, Colorado, where inmates are on lockdown an estimated 30 percent of the time. He wrote in 2007 about how he studied art in jail to "occupy my time, far from the climate of tension and violence" that dominates the prison.



Antonio Guerrero, Cuban revolutionary jailed for more than 11 years in United States on frame-up charges.



"One day my prison shirt will be left hanging." Pastel by Antonio Guerrero.

He went to a class given by another inmate on pencil drawing, and later learned pastels and watercolors from other inmates. When he asked to be moved into the cell of the drawing teacher, which had a vacancy, Guerrero said the guard "was surprised because

that prisoner was Black." Guerrero explained it's rare in the prison "that prisoners of different races or groups (gangs) live together."

"What is most important is that I have overcome imprisonment with a healthy and useful activity like plastic arts," Guerrero wrote. "Each work expresses not only my human essence but that of the Five, united as we are by unbreakable principles."

The exhibit of Guerrero's artwork now travels to Eugene, Oregon, where it will be on display at the Fenorio Gallery March 5-31. As part of the activities there, Guerrero's attorney Leonard Weinglass will speak. The exhibit will travel to other cities afterward, including New York in September.

Go to freethefive.org/artshow.htm to view some of Guerrero's paintings and drawings.

Millions have no job prospects in 'recovery'

Continued from front page

ects "creating" 95,000 jobs each month this year. That's "barely enough to keep up with the normal number of jobs the economy would have to create" to keep the unemployment rate from going up further, noted the *Times*. It won't make a dent in the nearly 15 million people officially unemployed.

The council's report projects unemployment levels remaining at about 10 percent through the rest of this year, and at more than 9 percent in 2011.

The government's so-called stimulus program—the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—has had little impact. Since its passage a year ago unemployment has continued to rise. Some of these "stimulus" funds

have been transferred to state and local governments reeling from the financial crisis. About one-third of the \$272 billion paid out as of the end of January was for unemployment compensation and other entitlements.

Welfare and other benefits are less extensive today than during previous economic downturns. Only two-thirds of unemployed workers received unemployment checks last year, according to the Department of Labor, with some of the others having exhausted their benefits. Unless Congress approves an extension, about 2.7 million people will see their unemployment checks halted in April.

For those seeking to get welfare, 44 states over the past four years have cut off anyone with a household income

totaling 75 percent of the official poverty level, according to a study by economist Randy Albelda at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

Decline in strikes, union members

In the face of these economic conditions, workers lack a union leadership they have confidence can conduct an effective fight. According to the Department of Labor, there were only five "major work stoppages" last year involving 13,000 workers with 124,000 lost workdays, the lowest level since 1947, when records started being kept. In 2008, 15 stoppages idled 72,000 workers for 1.95 million lost workdays.

The government defines "major work stoppages" as either strikes or lockouts involving at least 1,000 workers. These figures have declined dramatically from the more than 350 such "stoppages" per year common in the 1950s and 1970s.

Union membership also declined in 2009, by 771,000 to 15.3 million. For the first time, there are more union members who are public employees, 7.9 million, than working at private businesses, 7.4 million.

Overall, union members comprise 12.3 percent of the workforce, down from 36 percent in 1945 and 20 percent in 1983. In the private sector 7.2 percent belong to unions, a decline from 7.6 percent the previous year. Black men have the highest union membership rate at 15.4 percent.

For further reading



The Changing Face of U.S. Politics Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions By Jack Barnes

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—CALENDAR—

OREGON

Eugene
"From My Altitude," a Touring Exhibit by Antonio Guerrero. March 5-31. Opening reception: 7 p.m., March 5. Fenorio Gallery, 881 Willamette St. Sponsored by Eugene Free the Cuban Five Committee.

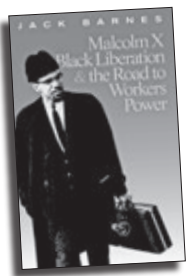
—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco
Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 6, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

NEW YORK

Manhattan
'At the River I Stand.' Documentary of 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers Strike. Fri., March 5, 8 p.m. 307 W. 36 St., 10th floor (near 8th Ave.). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.



Sell the book on 'workers power'

Iowa

Two long-term, repeat subscribers at the JBS Swift meatpacking plant in Marshalltown preordered *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* in Spanish last week. One asked, when we showed him the English book, "when is this coming out in Spanish?" He was familiar with Pathfinder Press and the importance the publisher places on putting out these important political books in the languages used by the working class in this country.

Another young man from Togo, who works at the Tyson packing plant in Perry, preordered the book in French. He was interested in learning more about the fight for Black liberation here and about Malcolm X. Before he began working at Tyson, socialists had met him while going door-to-door in his neighborhood where he subscribed and bought books in French by Thomas Sankara.

Mercy, one of our Liberian-born coworkers, bought the *Workers Power* book in the locker room after looking through it for a few minutes. She was so impressed with the photographs that she asked how much the book cost before anything was said about it being for sale. Also, Isabel, a shop steward, who had already bought *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* with a subscription during the fall, was ready to get the new book. She had read about it when she renewed her subscription.

—Rebecca Williamson
and Maggie Trowe

Chicago

Five copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* were sold at a "Tribute to Malcolm X," sponsored by the Inner-City Muslim Action Network, in southside Chicago February 19. The event, attended by hundreds of people, featured jazz and hip-hop musical performers.

When they arrived, two members of the Socialist Workers Party inquired about how they could set up a book display. After looking at a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, organizers of the event arranged for the books to be displayed on a table selling musical CDs.

One young Black man bought the book after commenting that he thinks the economic crisis is going to get worse. He said he is very concerned about what is happening in the world. Another copy of the book, along with an introductory subscription to the *Militant*, was sold at a meeting for Angela Davis, held at the University of Illinois here.

Cayetano Lopez sold a copy of the book to a coworker at the rubber plant where he works. "My coworker is from Mexico originally, and he has

read about Malcolm X," Lopez said. "He wants to learn more about the Black struggle in the United States."

—Alyson Kennedy

Edinburgh, Scotland

Five people at political actions here February 19–20 took advantage of the special offer of an introductory subscription to the *Militant* along with *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. These latest book sales, of the 24 sold here so far, came as supporters of the *Militant* campaigned to oppose a mobilization in this city by the far right—the racist Scottish Defence League.

Two students, who were on the Edinburgh University campus February 19 for activities building the "Scotland United" anti-racist protest the following day, bought copies of the book. More than 1,000 people participated in the February 20 countermobilization. Three participants in the march and rally snapped up the book—a student from Glasgow, a worker from Poland, and a youth from Pakistan. Over the two days a total of 19 copies of the *Militant* were sold along with 11 copies of the supplement containing the introduction to the new book. Three of those buying the supplement left information about being contacted later to get the book.

—Pamela Holmes

California workers discuss attacks on unions

BY ERIC SIMPSON
AND ELIZABETH STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—Supporters of the *Militant* here visited three yards of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) last week. They spoke with workers about their fight against contract concessions being demanded by city authorities.

Supporters also introduced the *Militant* to auto workers in Fremont, California, whose jobs are being eliminated with the closure of the giant NUMMI auto plant there on April 1.

Workers gathered at the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2244 hall February 13 to register with a "reemployment" service. They were anxious to talk about the impact the NUMMI plant closing will have on working people in this state, where unemployment is already more than 12 percent. The unionists purchased 21 copies of the *Militant*.

"This is the only Toyota plant in the country that is union," Salvador Gomez, a worker with 16 years at NUMMI, pointed out. "That's why they are pulling out. Toyota doesn't want to pay the union wages and benefits."

"I have 12 people living in my house," said Deborah Arroyo-Barrza, a worker with 18 years in the plant. "My daughter lost her home a year ago and now my son has lost his home." She and her husband, who also works at NUMMI, will both lose their jobs.

The NUMMI plant started as a joint venture of General Motors and Toyota in 1984. General Motors pulled out in June.

Arroyo-Barrza blames both GM and Toyota for the hardships the closing will

Vancouver airport food workers picket



Militant/Ned Dmytryshyn

RICHMOND, British Columbia—Three hundred food service workers are continuing their fight for job security and improved wages and benefits at the Vancouver International Airport after restaurant contractor HMS Host ended a six-day lockout February 24.

The workers had been picketing the airport in response to the lockout, which began the day after a February 17 one-day strike. The unionists, who are members of UNITE HERE Local 40, have been without a contract since March 2009.

Sixteen unionized food outlets including Harvey's, Milestones, and Tim Hortons remain closed.

Sixty long-time Milestones Restaurant workers will lose their jobs immediately after the Olympics as HMS Host will close Milestones and open a nonunion White Spot restaurant.

Workers were told that they could come back to work if they suspend their fight until after the Olympics. "We're not willing to give up our rights," stated Patricia, who has been working for Tim Hortons for seven years as a baker.

Mercy Dagsaan, a cashier at Tim Hortons, stated, "The lockout affects me personally because I can't pay my bills. I feel good on the picket line because we can express our rights."

—NED DMYTRYSHYN AND MIKE BARKER

bring, not only to the 4,700 NUMMI workers, but also to the estimated 40,000 workers in the area whose jobs are dependent on NUMMI staying open.

Like most workers we talked to she opposes the "boycott Toyota" campaign launched by UAW officials, a nationalistic campaign targeting Toyota, and not GM, as being responsible for the plant closing.

"It's not right what either of these companies are doing," she said. "The union has a 'hate campaign' going on against Toyota, but GM is responsible too. In fact, they were the first to pull out."

Less than half of the 200 people who came to a union-sponsored rally to support the boycott on February 12 were NUMMI workers. A copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, along with four copies of the *Militant*, were sold at the rally. Another worker bought a copy of the book outside the union hall the next day.

Transit workers reject concessions

In San Francisco, members of Transport Workers Union Local 250-A were voting February 15 on whether to reopen their contract and agree to concessions. Mayor Gavin Newsom had proposed that workers pay an extra \$9 million of their pension costs next year and that overtime be paid only after 40 hours of work. These steps, city officials argue, are to raise \$15 million to help make up for a decline in public funding due to the economic crisis. Workers turned down the union-busting proposals with 857 voting against and 575 in favor.

About a dozen of the unionists picked up the *Militant*. One driver bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* along with *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. He said that he planned to give them to his children who attend local colleges. At the Balboa Park division yard, a student from nearby City College stopped to talk to the *Militant* sales team. He bought a copy of the book at the special \$10 discounted price along with an introductory *Militant* subscription and kicked in a couple of dollars for the cause.

The day after the vote the *San Francisco Chronicle* ran an editorial titled "Muni operators throw city under the bus," which threatened that if the workers "continue refusing to share any of the burden, the [transit] board will have to cut service by 10 percent and double the price of a monthly pass for seniors, young people and the disabled."

"Labor is the biggest piece of the pie," San Francisco MTA spokesman Judson True told the *San Francisco Examiner*. "Reducing labor costs is crucial to addressing our budget challenge."

"Every time the city asks us for something, they say it's just for one year," bus driver Benjamin Narag told the *Chronicle*, explaining his opposition to the concession package. "Then they ask for more."

Militant supporters here have sold 85 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. This includes three at plant gates, eight on the job, and eight to students.

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ON THE PICKET LINE

California borax miners rally for contract

BORON, California—Nine hundred borax miners and their supporters marched and rallied here February 16 as part of a fight against international mining giant Rio Tinto.

More than 500 miners, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 30, have been locked out by the company since January 31, after voting against a proposed contract with deep take-backs.

Demonstrators met at the ILWU Local 30 union hall and marched more than a mile to the mine entrance chanting, “We want a contract, we want to work, and we’ll be back.” In addition to the miners and their families, marchers came from ILWU locals in Los Angeles; San Diego; Port Hueneme, California; Seattle; and Vancouver, British Columbia. Two busloads and a car caravan came from Los Angeles-area locals.

A group of Rite-Aid workers who have been fighting to organize a union attended the rally. They donated money left over from a campaign to defend fired workers.

Willie Adams, vice president of the ILWU, chaired the rally and spoke. Various union officers addressed the rally from the International Longshoremen’s Association, several ILWU locals, United Steelworkers, and the unions represented at the mining and maritime conference that took place February 16–17 in nearby Palmdale, California. Delegates to the conference came from miners and maritime unions in various countries including the United States, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Conference participants joined the march and rally.

The locked-out workers put on a delicious BBQ after the march, where pledges of support came from the ILWU international and others.

—Mike Downs
ILWU Local 63, retired

Peruvian miners wage one-week strike over pay

Thousands of precious-metal miners in Peru went on strike February 13–20 against Buenaventura, to demand what they say is withheld profit-sharing pay. The issue remains unresolved and workers may strike again as early as March 3, union leaders say.

By law, mining companies are required to pay workers 8 percent of profits. The miners’ union says the company has underreported profits and demands that Buenaventura disclose its 2006–2009 financial records.

Workers are also demanding the company improve ventilation and general safety. Three workers were killed at the Uchucchacua silver mine last year.

Some 4,380 workers stopped work at half of the company’s six mining districts in the country: the Uchucchacua mine in central Peru and the Antapite and Orcopampa gold mines in the south.

Work ground to a complete halt for one week at the Uchucchacua and Orcopampa mines, while production at Antapite, the smallest of the three, continued to operate at a limited capacity, Carlos Galvez, the company’s chief financial officer, told Reuters.

The strike cost the company \$1.5 million per day, according to Luis Castillo, the national miners’ union general secretary.

The government labor ministry declared the strike illegal, giving the company a freer hand to fire workers. Castillo said miners returned to work to avoid losing their jobs, but would likely vote in the next few days to go back out, initiating a second strike as early as the March 3 date.

Peru is the world’s number one silver producer and ranks sixth in gold.

—Doug Nelson

Grocery workers authorize strike in New England

MARLBORO, Massachusetts, February 21—More than 40,000 supermarket workers from 240 Stop and Shop stores in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island may soon go on strike.

Some 4,000 workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1445, voted by an overwhelming majority here today to authorize a strike against the supermarket chain. No strike date has been set yet, and the union agreed to a seven-day extension of the expired contract so that negotiations could continue.

Local 1445 is one of five UFCW locals representing the 40,000 workers at Stop and Shop. All five locals have voted to authorize a strike if negotiations



Top: Militant/Mike Downs; Bottom: Militant/Ted Leonard

Top: February 16 rally in Boron, California, for miners locked out by Rio Tinto. Bottom: Workers outside meeting of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445 in Marlboro, Massachusetts. Local is in contract negotiations with Stop and Shop supermarket chain.

prove unsuccessful.

“It’s big business taking more from us,” explained Jim Nangle, a worker at the supermarket in Roslindale, Massachusetts, after the vote here by members of Local 1445.

The workers are resisting company efforts to make them pay more for health insurance, accept a one-time contract signing “bonus” in lieu of wage increases, and agree to lower company contributions to their pension fund.

Stop and Shop took applications for temporary replacement workers at a dozen locations across southern New England prior to the contract expiration last month. The replacement workers would make \$12 an hour for part-time and \$15 an hour for full-time, about \$3 an hour more than new permanent employees now make.

—Ted Leonard

Tea loaders in Kenya win minimum wage increase

Loaders at tea warehouses in and around the port city of Mombasa, Ke-

nya, united to win wage increases after a four-day strike forced bosses to raise the minimum pay.

Some 2,000 workers effectively shut down the tea distribution network February 8–12 at a port city that hosts one of the world’s largest tea auctions.

The loaders shut down operations because certain companies began paying some workers below the minimum rate established in agreements with the Kenya Shipping Clearing and Warehouse Workers Union. Bosses were attempting to make workers pay for the effects of bad weather on their profits.

George Nesbitt, director of Tea Warehouses Ltd, explained to the press that “all of the companies were affected because there was picketing even at places where they were paying the agreed rate.”

The loaders all resumed work after bosses decided to raise the piece-rate wages of the lowest-paid workers by 20 percent.

—Doug Nelson

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March 8, 1985

MARION, Alabama—An important rally for Black rights was held here February 17 to defend Black activists falsely charged with voting fraud.

The rally was part of a major defense campaign fighting a broadside attack on Black political rights conducted by the state and federal governments.

Berean Baptist Church was packed with more than 300 Blacks protesting the indictment of Albert Turner, Evelyn Turner, and Spencer Hogue, Jr.—now known as the “Perry County Three.” The three are veterans of the civil rights movement and led the fight for voting rights in this small town and throughout Perry County.

The U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI, and the State of Alabama are framing up and locking up Black leaders in order to halt and roll back the fight for Black political representation.



March 7, 1960

The Cuban government took another progressive step of possibly far-reaching consequences Feb. 20 when it passed a law setting up a Central Planning Board.

Speaking for the new board, which is headed by Premier Fidel Castro, Major Ernesto “Che” Guevara, president of the National Bank of Cuba, told the Wall Street Journal last week, “We desire to employ our limited resources to greatest advantage.”

Guevara cited Cuba’s one-crop economy as responsible for 700,000 unemployed in Batista’s days. Seizures of land and industry continue to be reported daily in the Cuban press, but Guevara assured an assembly of cane planters that they have the right to keep their “tiny pieces of land” and work them “as they wish.”



March 9, 1935

The National Recovery Administration, by official administration figures, has served to increase capitalists’ profits and lower workers’ living standards. The recent report by the Division of Research and Planning on the “Operation of the National Industrial Recovery Act” blows to bits the fantastic pretense that the NRA codes have acted to transfer purchasing power from the capitalists, the haves, to the workers, the have-nots.

So damning is the evidence uncovered by investigators working on the report that the whole intent of the NRA—as announced originally—is twisted to make an apology for the results. The codes, we now learn, were by no means intended to augment the wages and shorten the hours of wage earners in general.

True or false, the argument indicates the ingenuity of the “new deal” apologists.

Czech government moves to ban ultraright group

BY CINDY JAQUITH

On February 17 the Czech Republic's Supreme Administrative Court banned the Workers Party (DS), a small ultraright group. The presiding judge said the DS is "populist, homophobic, chauvinistic, and demonstrates racist tendencies." The ban is "a preventive one, to maintain the constitutional and democratic order in the future."

According to Radio Prague, many cops testified in court in favor of the ban, describing DS demonstrations against Roma, an oppressed nationality referred to disparagingly as "gypsies" who have been a target of rightist groups throughout Europe.

The DS holds no national seats in the Czech Republic and just three local ones. It is expected to get about 1.5 percent of the vote in the next election. DS leader Tomas Vandas said if the

ban is not overturned on appeal, party members will simply regroup under a new name.

The move to ban the DS, whose racist, anti-working-class views make it widely detested, sets a precedent to go after workers organizations in the future. According to the *Prague Daily Monitor*, Czech interior minister Martin Pecina said that the courts "must have the courage to fight not only with rightist, but also leftist extremism that promotes communism."

The government initiated the action leading to the DS's dissolution, and all other Czech parties supported it, including the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM). Vojtech Filip, KSCM chairman, praised the ban on the DS and said he wasn't worried about attempts to ban his own party. Several senators have called for outlawing the KSCM, which got 14



Some 500 supporters of ultraright Workers Party in Czech Republic clash with riot cops Nov. 17, 2008, as they attempt to enter Roma settlement in Janov, a suburb of Litvinov in the north. Group was recently banned by Czech government. At same time, rightists are encouraged by government's longstanding racist and discriminatory practices against Roma people.

percent of the vote in European Parliament elections last June, coming in third.

On the pretext of opposing their views and violent activities, several other European governments have

sought to ban rightist groups in recent years. The Belgian government outlawed the Vlams Bloc in 2004, charging it violated laws against racism. The Slovak Supreme Court dissolved the Slovak Solidarity-National Party, which advocates restricting the right to vote.

In the case of the Czech Republic, the government itself perpetuates the oppression of Roma people at the same time it bans the DS supposedly for its anti-Roma activities. A January report by Amnesty International found that Prague continues to send healthy Roma children to public schools for the mentally disabled despite a 2007 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights against the practice. Forced sterilization of Roma women—done routinely by the Stalinist regimes from the 1970s to 1990—continues to occur, according to the European Roma Rights Centre.

EU governments push crisis on working class

Continued from front page

in Portugal, are the lowest paid workers in the euro zone, the 15 countries that use the euro as their only currency within the European Union.

Along with Greece, other weaker capitalist nations in the EU—Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Spain—have

also been hard hit by the worldwide economic crisis.

In January, Italy's national statistics office announced official unemployment there reached 8.3 percent in November, the highest in more than five years. Industrial output in Italy plunged 17.4 percent in 2009. Rome's public debt is now the third highest in the world, behind only Washington and Tokyo.

In Portugal, official unemployment is more than 10 percent. Although opposition parties defeated an austerity bill, the ruling Socialist Party vowed to find ways to implement parts of the plan. Portuguese unions have called for a strike March 4 to protest a wage freeze for government workers.

Spain, with the fifth largest economy in the European Union, has the highest unemployment rate. Unemployment among youth between the ages of 16 and 25 is at 40 percent. Collapse of the housing bubble there has left 800,000 newly built homes empty.

'Comfortably unemployed?'

The *New York Times* complained February 18 that government-paid benefits have created a class of "comfortably unemployed" in Spain. The "generous" amount? Twenty-five percent of a worker's wage. According to the paper, Spanish companies must pay fired workers 45 days severance for each year worked.

The *Times* noted that so far Madrid has been unable to significantly slash the social wage in Spain. However, it said, "Some argue that as a socialist, Mr. Zapatero [the Socialist prime minister] is in a better position to tackle reform than are the conservatives."

The two main union federations in Spain, one led by the socialists and the other by the Communist Party, have called regional protests beginning February 23 to protest Zapatero's proposal to make Spain one of the first in the European Union to raise the retirement age to 67, along with changing how benefits are calculated.

Union officials are hoping to use the protests to maintain their authority without seriously challenging the government. Although the Social-

ist-led UGT federation opposes most of the retirement proposals, "the discontent is almost more with its form than the content," reported the daily *El País*.

As the capitalist economic crisis unfolds, trade tensions are also sharpening.

On February 4 the EU extended tariffs on shoe imports from China and Vietnam for another 15 months. There are some 350,000 workers in the shoe industry in Spain, Portugal, and Italy.

Rhode Island high school fires all 74 teachers to bust union

BY CINDY JAQUITH

More than 500 teachers, other unionists, and students demonstrated February 23 outside a meeting of the school board in Central Falls, Rhode Island, to protest the firing of every single teacher at the local high school. "The real goal is to bust the unions," said Julie Boyle, a teacher at the high school in Coventry, Rhode Island, who came to show solidarity.

Demonstrators poured into the school board meeting and shouted at its members as they voted 5-2 to get rid of 74 classroom teachers, as well as reading specialists, guidance counselors, physical education teachers, the school psychologist, the principal, and three assistant principals, the *Providence Journal* reported.

U.S. secretary of education Arne Duncan said he "applauded" the Central Falls board for "showing courage and doing the right thing for kids," according to the *Journal*.

Duncan is the point man for the Barack Obama administration's program to "reform" education. To get federal aid states are now required to rate their schools by performance criteria laid down by the federal government. States must adopt radical changes in the lowest 5 percent of the schools.

There are four ways a state can "fix" a "low-performing" school: close it; allow a charter or other management organization to take it over; "transformation," which means lengthening

the school day and other changes; or "turnaround," firing all the teaching staff and not rehiring more than 50 percent of them the next year.

Central Falls High School, with a graduation rate of 48 percent, was one of those the state of Rhode Island selected to "fix." In negotiations with the Central Falls Teachers Union, schools superintendent Frances Gallo proposed that teachers accept the "transformation" plan, entailing longer hours. But Gallo said they wouldn't be fully paid for the extra hours worked. When negotiations broke down, Gallo moved to "turnaround." The terminations go into effect as of the next school year.

The attack on the teachers union in Central Falls mirrors assaults across the country. Some 60,000 teachers were laid off nationally in 2009, according to the U.S. Labor Department. The figure is twice as many as those laid off in 2008 and three times the number in 2007.

Some 8,500 teachers could lose their jobs this year in New York City. Schools chancellor Joel Klein is pushing for weakening the use of union seniority to determine layoffs.

The attacks on teachers and education fall heaviest on schools in working-class districts. Central Fall High School, for example, serves a community where the median income is only \$22,000 and the population is 65 percent Latino.

For further reading

Capitalism's Long Hot Winter Has Begun

from *New International* no. 12
by Jack Barnes

Today's accelerating global capitalist slump accompanies a continuation of the most far-reaching shift in Washington's military policy and organization since the U.S. buildup before World War II. Class-struggle-minded working people must face this historic turning point for imperialism, and draw satisfaction from being "in their face" as we chart a revolutionary course to confront it. \$16.



Europe and America

by Leon Trotsky

Writing in the mid-1920s, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explains the sharpening conflicts between Washington and its European rivals and highlights the revolutionary openings for the working class that would be played out in the decades to come. \$12.

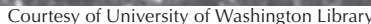


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Printed below is an excerpt from Revolutionary Continuity: Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918–1922 by Farrell Dobbs, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. It is the second volume in a series by the author on the history of the development of Marxist leadership in the United States. With the onset of World War I, leaders of the largest Social Democratic parties organized in the Second International backed their own governments in the imperialist slaughter. The book traces the emergence of a communist movement in the United States and its political interconnection with the efforts by V.I. Lenin and the Russian Communist Party to replace the politically bankrupt old International with a new international leadership of the working class. The excerpt is from the chapter

"New Capitalist Repressions," which describes growing labor militancy that arose in response to government demands for greater sacrifices by the workers during the war, and the major labor battles that erupted after the war ended. Copyright © 1983 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



BY FARRELL DOBBS

In 1917 and 1918 mounting discontent among workers, combined with the capitalist government's efforts to maintain a "responsible" and stable wartime labor force, led to the recruitment of three-quarters of a million new members to the American Federation of Labor [AFL]. This increased its total forces by nearly 40 percent to more than 2,700,000.

After the United States entered the European hostilities in April 1917, the capitalists raked in ever-larger profits, while workers' wages lagged farther and farther behind rapidly climbing prices. The "patriotic" sacrifices in support of the war effort that the government demanded from "everyone" were imposed in a one-sided way. As the workers' buying power shrank, and their economic hardships became more severe, the urge to organize for a fight to improve their situation grew stronger.

Along with the rise in recruitment stemming from this upturn in labor militancy, the AFL's growth was given a boost by government policies. Shortly after war was declared on Germany, President Wilson set up a War Labor Board responsible for assuring uninterrupted industrial production. The

board's chief tasks were to prevent strikes for the duration of hostilities, and, except for the few changes it approved, to keep wages frozen. These measures, it was claimed, did nothing to impair workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively in a "responsible" manner. As the labor upsurge gathered momentum, however, the government became more explicit about how the workers should be steered in a "responsible" direction. Employers were pressured to tolerate organization of their employees by the AFL as a temporary wartime policy.

Wilson justified this course to the boss class by pointing to the collaborative record of top AFL officials. When the U.S. government entered the war, they had quickly imposed a no-strike policy upon the union ranks and accepted establishment of the War Labor Board to control collective bargaining. [Samuel] Gompers, especially, had taken the lead in keeping a tight rein on all union activities to prevent outbreaks of workers' actions to defend themselves. These policies aimed at containing the class struggle were doggedly maintained, no matter how pressing the workers' need for effective action.

Despite this treacherous conduct by

the heads of their own organization, AFL members were able to secure limited concessions from the employers. Through mass pressure they forced the War Labor Board to grant some wage increases and reductions in the workweek. In general, though, these concessions were confined to skilled hands. The only significant exception occurred in the meatpacking industry where a unique situation existed. For the great mass of workers in basic industry, things continued month after month to go from bad to worse.

By the time the war ended in November 1918, the workers' grievances ran so deep that they began to revolt on a massive scale. A spirit of rebellion spread, not only among unorganized workers in basic industry, but also into the ranks of white-collar employees. All were ready to fight for pay hikes to catch up with rising living costs, an eight-hour day to replace the common ten- to twelve-hour day, and improved job conditions, which had deteriorated under the employers' wartime offensive.

The employers' rejection of these demands triggered a nationwide strike wave on a scale never before witnessed in the United States. In some instances, where top AFL officials tried to prevent such action, "outlaw" walkouts took place. Union-busting lockouts by the bosses were usually turned into strikes. Brutal assaults on picket lines by hired thugs and cops were stoutly resisted.

As the struggle tempo accelerated, three major battles erupted in February 1919, each of them involving large numbers of workers. Textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and copper miners in Butte, Montana, walked out, and a general strike was called in Seattle, Washington, to protest a government attack on a local union of shipyard workers.

The impact of the Russian revolution on workers in this country was among the factors giving rise to the militancy displayed from Lawrence to Seattle. The proletarian victory sweeping across the former Russian Empire enabled U.S. workers to perceive more clearly their inherent power as a class, and they wanted to use that power in their expanding fight to wrest concessions from the bosses.

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Communist continuity and Malcolm X legacy

The following is the seventh in a series of excerpts the Militant is running from Pathfinder Press's latest book, Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. We encourage our readers to study and discuss the book. This excerpt is from the chapter "Malcolm X: Revolutionary Leader of the Working Class." Subheadings are by the Militant.

Like these relatively recent examples, the development and legacy of Malcolm X during the last year of his life are woven into the strands of proletarian political continuity opened, in our century, by the victory of the Bolshevik-led October 1917 revolution in Russia and by the first four congresses of the Communist International under the leadership of V.I. Lenin. Reporting in 1920 to the opening session of the Second Congress of the Comintern, as it was called, Lenin celebrated the unprecedented composition of the gathering, saying it truly "merits the title of a world congress." At this congress, he said, "we see taking place a union between revolutionary proletarians of the capitalist, advanced countries, and the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is no or hardly any proletariat."

"World imperialism shall fall," Lenin added, "when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming resistance from petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper crust of labor aristocrats, merges with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood beyond the pale of history and have been regarded merely as the objects of history."

The political reverberations of the Bolshevik revolution unleashed na-

tional liberation struggles over the subsequent half century through which the toilers transformed themselves into the subjects of history throughout growing portions of the colonial world. They are demonstrating that the leadership of the revolutionary workers movement is not and will not be overwhelmingly European or North American, but will reflect the composition of working people the world over.

During the past half century, the working class and industrial proletariat have grown explosively in many countries of the semicolonial world. Moreover, as we're seeing in Burkina Faso today, leaders of exceptional political caliber can and do emerge from countries, as Lenin said, "where there is no or hardly any proletariat"—and toilers from these countries still number in the hundreds of millions.

Malcolm X—speaking and acting from within the earth's strongest and wealthiest imperialist power, and from an oppressed nationality heavily working class in composition—was representative of this internationalization of proletarian leadership. It is not artificial to speak of Malcolm in the same breath as of V.I. Lenin, of Leon Trotsky, of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, of Maurice Bishop, of Thomas Sankara, of leaders of the communist movement in the United States such as James P. Cannon and Farrell Dobbs. . . .

Proletarian, internationalist politics

Malcolm correctly insisted that the struggle for Black freedom in the United States is part of an international struggle, a struggle for human rights not just civil rights. He refused to look at America through American eyes, or to look at the world through American eyes. He took his stand from within the oppressed and exploited in the battle for liberation the



Bottom: Marla Puziss

Top: V.I. Lenin addresses opening session of Second Congress of Communist International, July 1920. Congress adopted resolution drafted by Lenin on fight against national oppression. Bottom: Thomas Sankara, leader of 1983-87 revolution in Burkina Faso, West Africa, August 1985. "We are heirs of all the world's revolutions," Sankara told UN General Assembly in 1984, "the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the great October Revolution that brought victory to the proletariat and realized the Paris Commune's dreams of justice."

world over. That was his starting point. And that's the beginning of wisdom for any revolutionary today.

Malcolm rejected any notion that the oppressed could rely on some common humanity shared with the oppressors, or with a "well-meaning" section of the oppressors. There is no latent supply of love in the "soul" of all human beings, regardless of class, that can be tapped if they're shamed or pressured—or lobbied or voted for. There is no abstract, classless "humanity"; there is only human solidarity conquered in struggle as a social product of class solidarity, of solidarity in political action among the exploited and oppressed worldwide. The job of revolutionists is not to act "responsibly," which in class-divided society can only mean "responsibly" toward the rulers, or at least the bourgeois liberals and bourgeois socialists among them. What revolutionists are responsible for is to advance along the line of march toward power of the toilers, who compose the great majority of humanity.

Don't "run around . . . trying to make friends with somebody who's depriving you of your rights," Malcolm urged the Mississippi youth I mentioned earlier. "They're not your friends. No, they're your enemies. Treat them like that and fight them, and you'll get your freedom." . . .

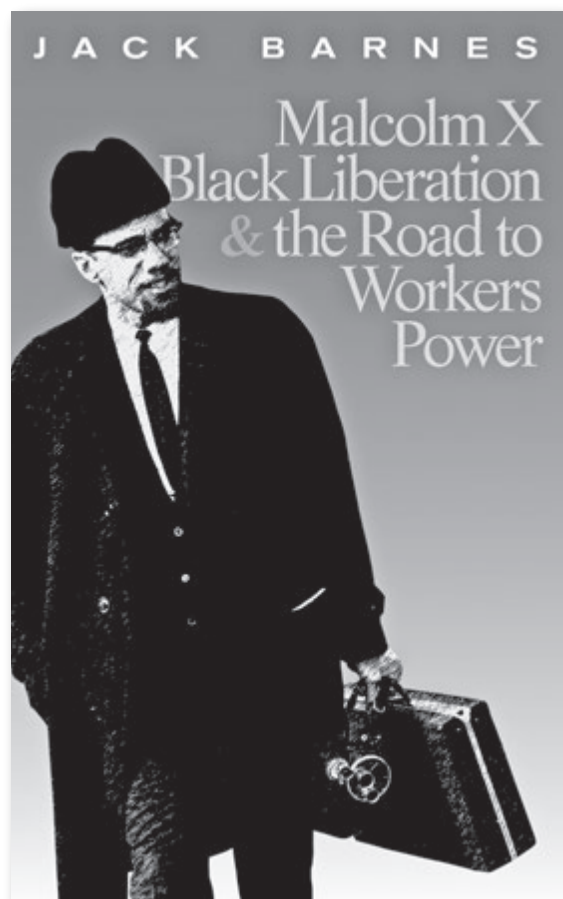
During Malcolm's final year, the 1964 U.S. elections were in full swing, with the incumbent president, Democrat Lyndon Baines Johnson, being challenged by Republican Barry Goldwater. With the exception of the Socialist Workers Party—and Malcolm X—virtually every political current in U.S. politics claiming to speak and act on behalf of working people and the oppressed were going all out to defeat Goldwater. This was necessary to advance the fight for "peace" in Vietnam, they claimed. Some even warned of the triumph of "fascism" if Goldwater were elected. The Communist Party USA was leading the pack. Of course, as we now know, the "peace candidate" Johnson, who was elected in November, went on to escalate the Vietnam War, raising U.S. troop levels *more than thirty-fold* from some 16,000 to 537,000 by the end of his term in January 1969 and initiating a murderous and sustained campaign of bombing and chemical warfare. . . .

Malcolm told a November 1964 meeting in Paris on his return trip from Africa that the U.S. capitalists "knew that the only way people would run toward the fox would be if you showed them a wolf. . . . [They] had the whole world—including people who call themselves Marxists" (a reference to the CPUSA) "—hoping that Johnson would beat Goldwater." Malcolm continued: "Those who claim to be enemies of the system were on their hands and knees waiting for Johnson to get elected—because he is supposed to be a man of peace. And *at that moment* he had troops invading the Congo and South Vietnam!"

And in early 1965, when the Johnson administration began floating trial balloons about appointing a Black to his cabinet, Malcolm told the audience at a Militant Labor Forum in New York City, "Yes they have a new gimmick every year. They're going to take one of their boys, black boys, and put him in the cabinet, so he can walk around Washington with a cigar—fire on one end and fool on the other."

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

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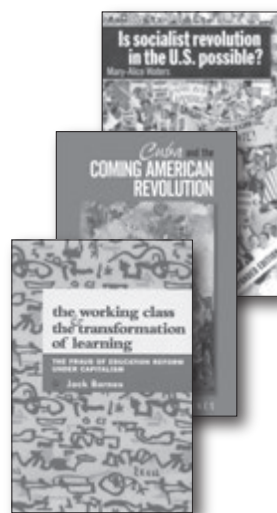
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Cuban students host meetings on Cuban 5, Pathfinder

Continued from front page

jails, who is himself a civil engineer. “There can’t be solidarity with greed,” said Dibauko. “You can’t be an engineer and build shoddy works. You can’t be a son of the revolution and not defend it. And these are the qualities Guerrero shows us.”

Guerrero, along with René González, Fernando González, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino are known as the Cuban Five. They have now served more than 11 years of draconian sentences in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges, including conspiracy to commit espionage and conspiracy to commit murder. When the five were arrested in 1998, they were living and working in the United States to monitor the activities of right-wing Cuban American groups, operating with impunity on U.S. soil, that for years have carried out murderous attacks inside Cuba.

Musical performances at the *peña* included a song featuring a poem by Antonio Guerrero titled *Regresaré* (“I Will Return”) and a student performing *Son Los Sueños Todavía* (“These Are Still the Dreams”), written by Gerardo Alfonso.

‘Born with 1917 Revolution’

Julián Gutiérrez, the director of international relations at CUJAE, chaired the presentation on the new 2010 edition of *Lenin’s Final Fight*.

“We often say that Pathfinder was born with the October Revolution,” Waters told the 40 students and faculty members in attendance.

“From 1917 to today, Pathfinder and its predecessors have sought to defend a course that is true to Lenin’s leadership of the Russian Revolution and the Communist International in its early years,” said Waters. “Lenin’s political trajectory was the opposite

of the course followed by the bureaucratic caste that dominated the Soviet Union under Stalin,” she explained.

Pointing to the importance of the new edition of *Lenin’s Final Fight* in Spanish and English, as well as other Pathfinder books available at the meeting, Waters said the production, use, and distribution of such books, pamphlets, and magazines was necessary to build communist parties in the United States and elsewhere. “Those of us who work with Pathfinder—mostly volunteers—are not primarily writers or editors but young communists and workers. We produce and use these books because they are needed as weapons in the class struggle.”

Citing the special responsibility of those living in the United States to fight for the freedom of the Cuban Five, Waters read from the dedication of the book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. “For Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando, and René—Five exemplary products of the Cuban Revolution who today, even if against their will, serve with honor in the front lines of the class struggle in the United States.”

The five Cubans, Waters said, are being held hostage in U.S. prisons as part of the five-decade-long effort by the U.S. ruling class to punish the Cuban people for making a socialist revolution.

FEU activity

Patricia García Placeres, international relations secretary of the Federation of University Students (FEU) and a member of its national secretariat, helped organize the presentation by Pathfinder at the university. “We arrange events like this one,” she said, “so that students can get to know Pathfinder Press, a defender of the Cuban Revolution that publishes



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Forty students and faculty at Havana’s main science and engineering university attend February 18 presentation by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, on new edition of *La última lucha de Lenin*, the Spanish translation of *Lenin’s Final Fight*. Chairing meeting at Waters’s right is Julián Gutiérrez, university’s director of international relations.

books of interest to students here—books on capitalism’s crisis and the works of leaders such as Lenin.”

At the University of Havana the Department of Philosophy and History and FEU have invited Waters to make a similar presentation there on February 22.

“Through this book we can understand what Lenin fought for on the national question, on increasing the proletarian composition of the leadership of the Russian Communist Party, and other questions,” said Orlando Carraz, a professor of civil engineering, during the discussion.

Following the program, Carraz and mathematics professor Carlos Cepero made a point of thanking Pathfinder for coming to the university and making *Lenin’s Final Fight* and other books available to students there.

Often the technical university gets overlooked when political events of such interest are arranged, they said. There is a tendency, they pointed out, to think that students of basic sciences and engineering are less interested in these questions than students of history, philosophy, and the humanities. But that is not true.

Books bought by students and faculty included nine copies of *Lenin’s Final Fight*; *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by Waters; issues

of *Nueva Internacional*, the Spanish-language magazine of Marxist politics and theory; Pathfinder’s newly published *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes; and *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

Faculty and students from around the world studying at CUJAE showed the visitors the reading room they had established on campus with a library of materials on the Cuban Five as well as the international campaign on their behalf.

Gutiérrez described the efforts to develop similar centers in universities across Cuba and link up with schools in other countries to win support for the Cuban Five. “Groups and individuals from universities in more than 50 countries have joined this network,” he said.

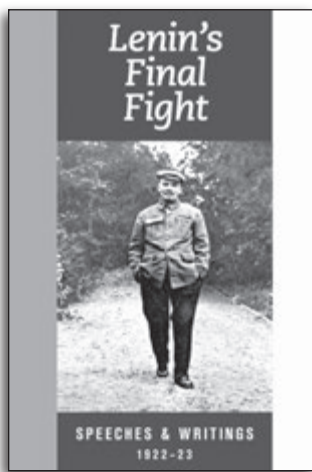
“Reaching out to schools and students in the United States to involve them in the program is one of our top priorities,” said Gutiérrez. He explained there are 40,000 international students studying in Cuba today. “They are learning about the case of the five and will bring the truth about the case back to their countries.”

Students and faculty are encouraged to visit the Web site, 5heroes.cujae.edu.cu and to contact the program at cincoheroes@tesla.cujae.edu.cu.



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Students and faculty from Instituto Superior Politécnico (Higher Polytechnic Institute) “José Antonio Echeverría,” Havana’s main university of science and engineering, participate in social and cultural event organized by university’s committee to support the Cuban Five. Event followed presentation on new edition of *La última lucha de Lenin*. On stage is Carlos Cepero (left), professor of mathematics, and Andrei Dibauko (center), civil engineering student.



Lenin’s Final Fight

New upgraded edition

As capitalism in the twenty-first century enters its deepest economic and social crisis since the decades spanning the first and second imperialist world wars, programmatic and strategic matters in dispute in the communist workers movement in the early 1920s once again weigh heavily in prospects for the working class worldwide to advance along its historic line of march toward the conquest of power.

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A joining of class politics and scientific training

The *peña* for the Cuban Five at the Instituto Superior Politécnico (Higher Polytechnic Institute) “José Antonio Echeverría” included a presentation on the legacy of 19th century Cuban independence leader José Martí, who was also a journalist, poet, and writer of international renown.

As part of that presentation, mathematics professor Carlos Cepero spoke about Martí’s appreciation of form and beauty in nature and quoted from his writings. For Martí, he emphasized, the greatest products of human creativity enhance, as opposed to destroy, such natural form and beauty.

To illustrate the point, Cepero pointed to the graceful power of the Eiffel Tower, designed and built in the late 1880s by what were at the time some of the most farsighted engineers in France as a symbol of the country’s modernity. The tower was constructed as an explicit response to the Sacré-Coeur Basilica on the heights of Montmartre, one of the greatest eyesores in Paris.

The Sacré-Coeur, whose cornerstone was laid in 1875, was built by decree of France’s National Assembly “to atone for the crimes of the communards”—a monument to the French bourgeoisie’s reactionary drowning in blood of the revolutionary uprising that had brought to power the first workers government in history, the Paris Commune of 1871.

What a wonderful joining of class-struggle politics with scientific training and education. The real “liberal arts!”

—MARY-ALICE WATERS

Czech ban is danger to workers

The move by the Czech courts to ban an ultra-rightist group, which calls itself the Workers Party (DS), is a danger to the labor movement. The government is taking advantage of the fact that the DS is hated for its racist, anti-working-class activity to set a precedent that will be used against workers in the future. Interior Minister Martin Pecina has already said the courts must also go after “extremism” that “promotes communism.”

The ban hands the DS an opportunity to portray itself as the victim, diverting attention from its reactionary views against oppressed nationalities, immigrants, Jews, and homosexuals and its criminal assaults on people of the oppressed Roma nationality.

The idea of banning rightist outfits is widely promoted by capitalist politicians in Europe. Like the rest of the continent, the Czech economy is deeply affected by the world capitalist depression. It’s in this context that incipient fascist groups like the DS arise, appealing to middle-class layers and workers to blame immigrants, Jews, and Roma for the crisis, not the capitalist system.

But the capitalist crisis also inevitably produces efforts by the working class to defend itself. The Czech government is getting ready for that now by putting in place ways to counter the workers movement as it begins to organize resistance.

What is needed to defeat racist, anti-worker groups like the DS and its counterparts all over the world is a fighting labor movement that counterposes working-class solidarity to reactionary scapegoating and tells workers the truth about who their real enemies are—the wealthy capitalists who today hold power.

As Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian revolution, wrote in 1939, “Under the conditions of the bourgeois regime, all suppression of political rights and freedom, no matter whom they are directed against in the beginning, in the end inevitably bear down upon the working class, particularly its most advanced members. That is the law of history. The workers must learn to distinguish between their friends and their enemies according to their own judgment and not according to the hints of the police.”

Washington takes aim at social wage

Continued from front page

ed to blunt criticism by condemning “greedy” insurance companies. He is trying to convince workers that the situation will get worse without “reform.”

“The bottom line is that the status quo is good for the insurance industry and bad for America,” said Obama in his February 20 weekly address, responding to recent moves by some insurance companies to raise their rates by more than 20 percent. “And as bad as things are today, they’ll only get worse if we fail to act.”

While the capitalist rulers are pushing their health-care “reform,” other attacks on the social wage are in the works.

The stated aim of the commission established by the February 18 executive order is to reduce the growing debt held by the federal government, which stands at more than \$12 trillion. Alan Simpson, former Republican senator from Wyoming, and Erskine Bowles, former White House chief of staff in the William Clinton administration, have agreed to head up the 18-member panel.

“Everything is on the table,” said Obama after he signed the executive order.

Senate minority leader Mitchell McConnell said the panel should focus primarily on cutting spending, and that it should “come up with a way to deal with our large unfunded mandate problem: Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid.”

Medicare, which provides government subsidized health care for the elderly and permanently disabled,

and Medicaid, which aids people with “low income,” were established in 1965 when the U.S. ruling class was forced to make concessions as a direct result of the massive working-class movement that brought down Jim Crow segregation, and the urban uprisings for Black rights that went along with it. Social Security was expanded in 1972 with the creation of the Supplemental Security Income program for the blind, disabled, and elderly.

A February 19 article in the *New York Times* reports that “virtually every state is making or considering substantial cuts in Medicaid.” The state government in Nevada, for example, is proposing to end Medicaid coverage of adult day care, eyeglasses, hearing aids, and dentures. Kansas cut Medicaid payments to providers by 10 percent as of January 1.

The unprecedented cuts in Medicaid are taking place as enrollment in the government-funded health-care program for the poorest individuals is skyrocketing. A survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation released February 18 found that a record 3.3 million people enrolled in Medicaid from June 2008 to June 2009. Enrollment rose by 7.5 percent to 46.9 million and 13 states had double-digit increases.

While cutting Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare will be “on the table” of the bipartisan commission, two areas of government spending are not: the war budget and debt service. The interest paid to the bondholders by the federal government in 2009 was \$383 billion and \$451 billion in 2008.

LETTERS

Appreciates Prisoners’ Fund

My three-month complimentary subscription should be up almost any day now. This one subscription makes its rounds pretty extensively. Please find enclosed the correct amount for 12 more months, as well as a sincere ode of appreciation to all those who make it possible for prisoners to receive the discounts that we do through both our contact with the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press.

*A prisoner
Florida*

‘Only truth’

I do not want to miss a single issue. You are the only truth in news!

*Richard Neva
Norwich, New York*

Continue prison subscription

Can you please renew “our” subscription? The paper is thoroughly circulated and of interest to many here, particularly the pieces on Central and South America, which I use to counter mainstream hype. Peri-

odically we pool our limited funds and purchase a few books from Pathfinder.

*A prisoner
California*

Wants to do more

[The following note, translated from Spanish, was included with a subscription renewal and a contribution to the Militant prisoners’ fund.]

I would like to do more than just donate. I don’t know if there’s something I can help with.

*María Calvillo
Chicago, Illinois*

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.

Afghanistan war

Continued from front page

and coalition troops in Afghanistan. Launching the campaign was made possible, Petraeus explained, with the arrival of 5,400 additional U.S. troops—the first of 30,000 President Barack Obama announced in December. With the remaining deployments set to arrive later this year, the U.S. force will increase further from 75,000 to 98,000.

At the same time, the Dutch government is expected to pull out all its 1,950 troops by December. The Labor Party quit the coalition government February 20 over its disagreement with the dominant party’s push to extend the country’s troop deployment as requested by NATO. The collapse of the government follows months of tension resulting from differences and uncertainty on how to deal with the country’s deepening economic crisis.

A total of 15,000 troops are involved in Operation Moshtarak. More than 1,000 U.S. soldiers and about 4,500 Afghan troops are engaged in the assault on Marjah. The remaining troops operating in Nad Ali consist of U.S., Afghan, British, and Canadian forces, as well as a small number of soldiers from Estonia and Denmark.

Marjah is a major base of operations and recruits for the Taliban. By taking the area, U.S.-led forces also seek to cut off the Taliban’s main source of money, the taxation of part of the country’s lucrative heroin trade. Most of the country’s poppy is grown in Helmand, and nearly half of that in the 80-square mile area of Marjah. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, each of the area’s 187 heroin processing factories paid about \$1,200 monthly to the Taliban.

Haji Zahir, the new hand-picked governor of Marjah, made his first brief visit to the town yesterday where he handed out free phone cards and sought to convince a group of 50 men to support the U.S.-led effort, reported the *Washington Post*.

The discussion illustrates some of the challenges ahead for Washington and its allies in winning over the local population. The Taliban “did not bother us. . . . They were not corrupt like the police,” said Fakir Mohammed, a tractor driver. “Your government drops bombs on us,” said another. “We will give you two years,” said Ali Mohammed, a self-described Taliban supporter. “If you keep your promises, we will support you.”

U.S. commanders estimated 400 to 1,000 Taliban combatants were in Marjah before the assault. About 120 of these have been killed, according to Marine officers. On the other side, 10 U.S., 3 British, and 2 Afghan troop deaths have been reported.

Air strikes kill civilians

As of February 22, 19 civilian deaths had been reported as a result of the offensive, 12 by artillery rockets on the second day of the operation.

At least 27 civilians were killed and 12 injured in a U.S. air strike outside Helmand February 21. The strike targeted three buses that turned out to be transporting civilians from central Afghanistan to Kandahar in search of work. U.S. general Stanley McChrystal, head of U.S. and NATO forces, issued public apologies to Afghan president Hamid Karzai for the two incidents.

The stated aim of the U.S. military is to minimize civilian casualties, seen as counterproductive in its contest with the Taliban for “hearts and minds” of Afghans.

Meanwhile, news sources are reporting that Pakistani intelligence operatives captured the Taliban’s “shadow governors” of Kunduz and Baghlan in Pakistani territory last week, around the same time as a joint U.S.-Pakistani intelligence operation reportedly captured Mullah Abdulghani Baradar, considered the Afghan Taliban’s second in command.

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