

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

A new stage in building
revolutionary workers parties

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Nationwide Cuban book fair expands education and culture

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN,
MARY-ALICE WATERS,
AND ARRIN HAWKINS

HAVANA—In city after city across the island, Cuba's first nationwide book fair has become "the most important cultural event" in decades, as Gladys Notares, local director of cultural affairs in the rural town of Artemisa, put it in an interview with the daily *Granma*.

In Artemisa, a town west of Havana with a population of 78,000, readers purchased 44,000 books in just the first three days of the week-long fair. Reporters described how books "virtually disappeared before their eyes" at nine sales sites throughout the town.

The annual Havana International Book Fair was held here February 7-17. The expanded festival is part of the campaign being waged by the Cuban revolutionary leadership to extend and transform the cultural horizons and educational opportunities of the Cuban people.

Speaking at the closing event of the Havana fair February 17, fair director Jorge Luna pointed out that for the first time the cultural festival was being taken beyond the country's capital and was going on the road to 18 locations in the country's provinces.

The regional events began with a week-long book fair in five cities and towns in the west of the island, including Pinar del Río, Artemisa, Matanzas, and the Isle of Youth. From there it has moved to the central re-

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Washington heads toward garrison state in Afghanistan

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Moving to reinforce the shaky imperialist-installed government of Hamid Karzai, U.S. government spokespeople are openly discussing several options for an increased military presence in Afghanistan, including expanding the military forces garrisoned there.

From the beginning, U.S. imperialism's war against Afghanistan had the logic of establishing a protectorate in the country. After carrying out a brutal military assault and overthrowing the Taliban regime, there is currently no prospect for a cohesive national government to administer the country. Karzai remains dependent on the imperialists for military support, financial backing, and development of basic infrastructure, say officials in both Washington and Kabul.

Reluctantly, Washington is turning its attention to what will be needed for the imperialists to keep the country from splintering. A CIA report released at the end of February warned of the "threat of Afghan chaos" and argued for steps to "restrain the competition for power among rival warlords."

"There are tensions between the central

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Widows walk to demand federal black lung benefits

Urge support at rallies on way from coalfields to Washington

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—Widows of miners who died of black lung are gearing up for a month-long protest, walking from Charleston, West Virginia, to Washington, and holding rallies along the way.

They will spotlight the fact that black lung, 30 years after the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act was enacted, still runs rampant in the coalfields. Black lung, also known as coal workers' pneumoconiosis, is a debilitating and sometimes fatal respiratory disease. The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) estimates that 1,500 miners die each year from black lung.

In a phone interview, Debbie Wills, a leader of the National Black Lung Association (BLA) and secretary of the Kanawha

Valley Black Lung and Disabled Workers Association in West Virginia, said the widows will start their protest March 15 with a rally in Charleston. "From there we will walk north to Fairmont and Morgantown, West Virginia. We plan to hold rallies in these towns and encourage people to walk with us. We are also hoping to walk to Uniontown, Pennsylvania, and then head

south to Washington, D.C. The walk will end with a protest at the Capitol on April 15," said Wills.

In West Virginia, the planned protest is beginning to receive TV and newspaper coverage. One of the main organizers of the walk is Linda Chapman, whose husband died from black lung. Before he died,

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Supreme Court Coal Act ruling deals blow to retired miners

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

PITTSBURGH—In allowing ex-coal companies to discontinue lifetime benefits, the U.S. Supreme Court has dealt a major blow to the United Mine Workers retiree health-care program. The February 19 ruling is the latest in a series of attempts by the coal bosses to take apart the Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act of 1992, also known as the Coal Act.

Following the court decision, retirees swamped union offices with concerned phone calls. In a press release, leaders of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) alerted retirees that no union retiree would lose their health-care benefits as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling. At the same time, UMWA president Cecil Roberts admitted that the Combined Benefit Fund (CBF) will be "further strained" by the adverse decision.

The CBF was set up in 1992 after the Coal Act was adopted by Congress. The fund provides health care and death benefits to

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In British Columbia, 30,000 condemn austerity moves



Militant/Monica Jones

Part of mobilization in Victoria, British Columbia, February 23.

BY BEVERLY BROWN

VICTORIA, British Columbia—More than 30,000 workers, students, Natives, retirees, and others marched through downtown Victoria to rally in front of the provincial legislature here February 23. The massive outpouring reflected the deep opposition among working people to the British Columbia (B.C.) government's attacks on union rights and social services, especially health care and education.

The B.C. Federation of Labour (BCFL) and Health Coalition organized the action,

the largest yet of the ongoing strikes, rallies, marches, and meetings across the province.

To meet the enthusiastic response of people wanting to fight government cuts, unions rented some 100 buses and chartered a ferry called the "Solidarity Queen" to bring people to Vancouver Island. Protesters came in buses and cars from up and down the island.

Driving off the ferries near Victoria, protesters were greeted by members of

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Help deepen support among workers for socialist fired for political views

The fight being waged by socialist garment worker Michael Itale in opposition to his political firing by Goodwill Industries has encountered keen interest among working people and youth. Many are also at-

tracting to the socialist perspective that Itale presents. Supporters of his campaign are urged to discuss this fight with co-workers; unionists involved in struggles against their employers such as nurses in New York; those

fighting cop brutality; and at other actions where workers and farmers are standing up to the brutalities of the capitalist system. Many can be won to signing a petition, sending a letter to Goodwill and the mayor of Miami, or endorsing the fight. Some will want to kick in funds or take some literature to show their friends. It's a simple fact: workers and farmers who are fighting like to learn about and support others doing the same.

Socialist workers and young socialists can explain the fight the same way Itale does at speaking events across the country. He points out that the attacks against the toilers

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EDITORIAL

tracted to the socialist perspective that Itale presents. Supporters of his campaign are urged to discuss this fight with co-workers; unionists involved in struggles against their employers such as nurses in New York; those

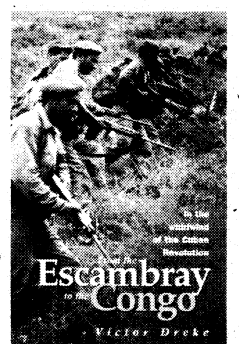
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Cuba mobilizes to defeat dengue — page 10

Capitalist drive to oust Chávez regime gains momentum

BY RÓGER CALERO

The fourth high-ranking military officer in Venezuela in less than a month has called for the resignation of President Hugo Chávez as part of an open and escalating drive by the capitalist rulers toward carrying out a coup against the government.

"I add myself to this protest, and alert all the state institutions and powers to assume their corresponding responsibilities," said Air Force general Román Gómez at a news conference on February 25. "President Chávez, for the good of the country and for the love of the armed forces, resign peacefully and take responsibility for your failure." The general warned that unless officials in the government who are involved in crimes are brought to justice, "the people and the armed forces will have to do it themselves."

Gómez, who had been the director of air transportation in the Infrastructure Ministry, said he was quitting his post because he was unhappy with the Chávez government. He later admitted that he had been charged with an "administrative irregularity."

The previous week, Army general Gueaipo Lameda, head of the state-owned oil company, announced his retirement from the military, saying he wanted to be free to criticize the government. A February 25 Reuters dispatch reported that "30 senior executives of state oil giant PDVSA accused the administration of trying to run PDVSA as a political fiefdom instead of as a commercial company."

Paul Masco, an executive at Solomon Smith Barney, said, "Wall Street wants to see him [Chávez] tone down his rhetoric, stop behaving like an autocrat, and start behaving like a president of a democratically elected government."

Gómez's challenge to the government came as officials of the Venezuelan Workers Federation (CTV) were organizing rolling work stoppages and marches leading up to a February 27 march in the capital. Although CTV leaders say the action will oppose government legislation and austerity

measures, the union is working hand-in-hand with Fedecámaras, the bosses' federation. CTV leaders supported a reactionary strike called by Fedecámaras last December, which demanded Chávez's resignation. Officials of the CTV have aligned the union with the Democratic Action Party, a capitalist outfit that is in the opposition.

Union officials say they will also organize a 24-hour strike on March 18 if the government fails to respond to the demands of the February 27 action. The CTV officialdom is also aiding the capitalists' campaign by calling for a nationwide referendum to decide whether Chávez should resign.

Seeking to bolster the turnout at the February 27 action, Fedecámaras encouraged workers to attend by giving them paid time off to join the antigovernment protest.

Chávez, a former lieutenant colonel in the army and a mestizo, led an abortive coup in 1992. He was elected president in 1998 with 57 percent of the vote, becoming the first person in 40 years to win the nation's highest office outside of the dominant capitalist parties. Some 80 percent of the population of Venezuela is mestizo, black, or Indian, but the parties of the wealthy capitalist and landowners are dominated by whites.

Repression by earlier regime

The election took place after a decade of brutal austerity measures carried out by the social democratic administration of Carlos Andrés Pérez, during which subsidies for food, electricity, water, and public transportation were slashed. The regime sold off state-owned factories, and the official unemployment rate shot up to 30 percent. In 1989, tens of thousands of working people took to the streets in eight major cities to denounce the government's policies. The regime unleashed army and police units who killed between 400 and several thousand people.

In the first half of 1992 at least 1,400 antigovernment protests were organized. In this context, the coup attempt by Chávez,

Rally at Miami INS office demands release of Haitian immigrants



Militant /Eric Simpson

Several hundred people marched and rallied February 23 in front of the INS office in Miami to demand the release of 185 Haitian immigrants imprisoned at the INS Krome Detention Center since December. "The U.S. is now violating its own laws by keeping in jail people who have shown they are qualified to be released until their case can be heard in a court of law," Marleine Bastien from the Haitian Women of Miami told CNN. Members of the Carpenters Union joined the action carrying flags of El Salvador, Mexico, and Honduras to show broad support among immigrant workers for the rights of Haitians.

which was suppressed by the government, won the backing of many working people. For weeks after his arrest and imprisonment, working people organized protests demanding the release of the officers.

In the 1998 presidential election, Chávez ran a radical, bourgeois nationalist campaign. His election rhetoric was marked by anti-corruption slogans; identification with Simón Bolívar, a Venezuelan national hero and main commander in Latin America's war of independence in the early 19th century; calls for "rigorous fiscal discipline" in the national budget; opposition to selling off the state oil company; and presentation of himself as a strong figure able to represent the Venezuelan nation as a whole.

There has been growing condemnation of the government for its economic and political relations with revolutionary Cuba and for stances on international questions that sometimes rub Washington up the wrong way. These have included a trip to Iraq in 2000 and less than full backing for U.S. imperialism's war against Afghanistan.

Capitalists' reactionary campaign

The capitalist class went into high gear recently when the president introduced legislation that would bring about a measure of land reform, opening some land up to peasants, and increase royalties paid by private-sector oil companies. They have seized on opinion polls showing declining support for Chávez to help bolster their reactionary campaign.

Those seeking to oust the Chávez government have also been aided by the impact of the world economic crisis and the sharp drop in national income from exports of crude oil. For several years the Chávez gov-

ernment had been able to use growing revenues from oil sales to shore up the national budget and bring about economic growth.

Venezuela is the world's fourth largest oil exporter, and the third largest exporter to the U.S. market in Latin America. Chávez played a key role in organizing the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to cut back oil production in 1999 in order to raise prices. But with the slowdown in the world capitalist economy and declining oil prices on the world market, there is growing capital flight from Venezuela. The government was recently forced to devalue the national currency. The capitalist rulers have sought to undermine popular support for the government by blaming Chávez for this crisis.

Not a pushover

Despite these developments, the reactionary coup plans are likely to meet resistance from sections of the military and working people. In response to the four officers' calls for Chávez to step down, the military high command has reiterated the armed forces' support. Army Chief Gen. Lucas Rincón warned that a military coup would bring "regrettable and serious consequences that nobody wants."

Chávez presents his government as a "friend of the poor" and has promised that social services would not be affected by budget cuts, even as the 11.5 percent devaluation has cut into working people's standard of living.

In recent appearances, Chávez has appealed for "national unity," and for all Venezuelans to work for progress and peace in the country. "I send a message from my

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THE MILITANT

Workers defend unions, social services

Workers, students, Natives, and others in British Columbia, are resisting the attacks by the government on union rights and social services. The 'Militant' brings you coverage about this and other fights and explains why working people should back these important struggles. Don't miss a single issue.



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Editor: GREG McCARTAN

Business Manager: JACK WILLEY

Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Martin Koppel, Jack Willey, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ROMINA GREEN

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Bag screeners in California fight for rights

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

SAN FRANCISCO—"U.S. citizenship has nothing to do with being able to do this job. It is the knowledge, the skill, and the quality of work that counts," said Erlinda Valencia, a baggage screener at the San Francisco airport.

Valencia was addressing a rally of 150 people held at the airport February 19 to protest a federal government assault on workers' rights. Under the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, signed by President George Bush last November, the 28,000 baggage screeners at airports across the country are to lose their jobs. Currently employed by a variety of private businesses, mostly for low wages, some will be rehired under federal jurisdiction. The law stipulates that all baggage screeners must be U.S. citizens.

The action was organized by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 790 and a coalition of other groups. Similar events were held simultaneously at the Oakland and San Jose airports with the backing of Filipino organizations. Nationwide about 15 percent to 25 percent of the screeners are noncitizens. At the San Francisco airport, 80 percent of the more than 1,000 people employed as screeners are noncitizens. The majority are originally from the Philippines.

Many local TV stations and other media covered the event, which started at noon the day the new law was put in effect and nine months before it is scheduled to be fully implemented.

Daz Lamparas, an SEIU organizer working with the airport screeners, chaired the event. Lamparas introduced four of the nine plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed against the federal government to overturn the citizenship requirement. The suit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and the SEIU. "The citizenship requirement discriminates against hardworking people," he said.

"This suit is brought," the complaint reads, "so that the horrific events of September 11, 2001, do not become a basis for another unwarranted denial of the rights and liberties guaranteed to noncitizens by the Fifth Amendment to our Constitution."

'Fight for workers interests'

Valencia has been working at the airport for 15 years and is a plaintiff. Ruby Gonzales-Boja, another plaintiff, said, "It is important to fight for all immigrants. Filipinos are in the U.S. Army to serve this country. What is the difference?"

Leticia Santo, a union bargaining committee member at Argenbright, explained, "We need to fight for workers' interests. We, the rank and file, must organize against these injustices." Santo led some chants in Tagalog, the language of the majority of Filipino people. Argenbright is an airport security firm that has contracts at a number of large U.S. airports.

In an interview, Santo said she had been an activist in the Philippines in the fight to bring down the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship, but had never been in a union before. After many months of organizing, "we won the union last August," she said. Since winning union representation, workers have fought to increase their wages from \$6 to \$13 an hour and to win benefits. The federal government is saying that screener

jobs will be paid \$15 an hour with benefits.

Other speakers included Walter Johnson, secretary-treasurer of the San Francisco Labor Council; Josie Mooney, executive director of SEIU Local 790 and president of the San Francisco Labor Council; Shelley Kessler, secretary-treasurer of the San Mateo Labor Council; and representatives of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Philippine Bayanihan Center, and Filipinos for Affirmative Action.

Among the crowd at the airport was Ray Quan, a mechanic at the Bay Area Rapid Transit system and a member of SEIU Local 790. He said that several other people had come from his workplace. "This country has been scapegoating immigrants since it was born," he said, adding that Filipinos are "only one more people" to be victimized. "My father was an immigrant from China and many of my co-workers are also. All workers and people in the community need to stand together to fight against these attacks."

Several dozen students came to show their support. Ethan Wynne-Wade of San Francisco State University asked, "If the screeners have been doing their job right for 20-30 years, why is it a question now?"

"It is like a domino reaction," said Carlos Cajulao, a customer service agent with



Militant/Peter Buch

Leaders of baggage screeners fight spoke on their struggle at Militant Labor Forum

Argenbright at United Airlines. "First the screeners, who's next? I hope not me, but I can't wait to see if I'll be laid off. I had to come and support them. We fought in World War II with Americans and we came

here for more prosperity for our family. But now there is no more American dream," he said.

Rollande Girard is a garment worker

Montreal meeting condemns 'antiterrorist' law

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—Some 200 people gathered at a protest meeting here February 13 to protest three laws that erode civil rights.

"My civil rights, I won't let them go," was the title of the event organized by the Simone-Monet-Chartrand Regional Council of the Quebec Federation of Women (FFQ). The FFQ was one of the sponsors of a demonstration of some 4,000 people in Montreal against the imperialist war on Afghanistan in the fall, the largest such action held in Canada.

André Paradis, the president of the League of Rights and Liberties, reviewed the so-called "antiterrorist" law C-36 recently adopted by the Canadian government in the wake of the September 11 attacks, and Bills C-35 and C-42, which are being debated in Parliament. C-35 gives substantially increased powers to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)—"amounting to the right to do what it wants," said Paradis—around major international gatherings like the G-8 meeting that will be held next summer in the western province of Alberta.

Under the guise of combating "terrorism," law C-36 allows preventive arrests, detentions for up to 72 hours without charges being filed, and increased police spying. The measures also deny defendants the right to remain silent and to have access to all evidence against them. The third law, C-42, would allow the Canadian government the right to declare a state of emergency for a period of 90 days before bringing it to parliament, and to establish military zones anywhere in the country.

George Lebel, a law professor at the University of Quebec in Montreal, explained that many repressive measures in C-36 were already part of five bills presented in April

2001 to the federal parliament by the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien. "This fact alone," said Lebel, "is the proof that C-36 has nothing to do with September 11," a point that several people picked up on during the discussion period.

Madeleine Parent, a well-known leader of a series of hard-fought strikes by textile workers in Quebec in the 1940s and '50s, described how the bosses and capitalist rulers launched an anticommunist witch hunt following World War II. They aimed to weaken the unions and to push back a series of labor struggles launched by working people after several years of a wage freeze, forced overtime, and other deprivations during the war. "We are not forced to accept these new attacks," she said. "There will be risks. We will have to organize. But in the end, we will win."

Amanthe Bathalier, from the Congress of Black Women of Canada, drew the parallel between Ottawa's new repressive laws and the War Measures Act imposed in Quebec in October 1970 by the Canadian government in an attempt to stop a massive wave of national and labor battles in this oppressed nation. Ottawa sent 5,000 troops to Montreal, suspended all civil liberties, arrested 500 people, mainly union, nationalist, and socialist activists, and carried out 2,000 searches.

Bathalier explained that she was shocked by this, since she had been in Canada for only two months at the time, having fled the brutal Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti. Other speakers described how Ottawa's repressive laws have especially targeted and victimized immigrants—above all, those of Arabic and Central Asian origin or the Muslim faith.

In the discussion period, Véronique

Gauthier introduced the fight she is helping to lead against the deportation of Eduardo Plagaro Perez de Arriluzea, 29, and Gorka Perea Salazar, 27. They are Basque activists who fled Spain after having been sentenced to seven and six years of jail respectively for arson, an act they confessed to under torture. They have been detained by the Canadian government in Montreal since June of last year.

"We should denounce the effort by Ottawa to criminalize immigrants and refugees," said Tess Tesalona from the Immigrant Workers Center. She urged people to join a protest action that the center is organizing March 1 in front of the detention center for immigrants.

Sylvie Charbin, a sewing machine operator who was among 3,000 garment workers who went on strike recently in Montreal, urged people attending the meeting to support the struggle by Michael Italie against his politically motivated firing in Miami. Also a garment worker, Italie was the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami last fall, and was fired after a televised candidates' debate in which he spoke in opposition to the imperialist war in Afghanistan and in support of the Cuban Revolution.

During the evening some 50 people stopped by an information table at the back of the rally to sign a petition supporting Italie's right to express his political ideas and to get his job back. Nine others took an information package on his case, expressing interest in writing about it in their trade union papers, circulating his petition, or becoming a sponsor of his defense committee.

Joanne Pritchard, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers and of the FFQ, contributed to this article.

Youth group in Georgia protests inmate abuse

BY BILL ARTH

SMYRNA, Georgia—Twenty people marched on the Smyrna Police Department here in what Gerald Rose, a leader of New Order, described as "the first annual Black History march in Cobb County."

New Order, a group of working-class youth in Cobb County, has organized recent protests against racial profiling and the treatment of inmates at the Cobb County Adult Detention Center. "We are attacking racial profiling, harassment, favoritism, and the violation of rights of inmates at the detention center," Rose said.

Marchers carried signs that said, "Inmates have rights too! They would be better off in Guantánamo Bay!" and "Inmates are humans! Not animals. And should be treated as such!" Guantánamo Bay, in Cuba, is occupied by the U.S. government that maintains a naval base there against the wishes of the Cuban people. Washington is currently hold-

ing under brutal conditions nearly 300 people it kidnapped from several countries.

Stephanie Johnson, vice president of New Order, reported that in preparation for the filing of a civil lawsuit they have collected the names of more than 500 inmates who have complained about conditions at the jail.

Brian Johnson, a 21-year-old member of New Order, works at UPS. "We're protesting humans being harassed by the police," he said. "We're trying to get everyone treated right; treated equally. Marching is the best way to do it."

Denise Watson, an assembly worker at Lockheed who participated in the march, said, "My son was in the Cobb County Detention Center. He has an eye injury, and they wouldn't treat it. I think inmates are still human beings, and we're trying to bring this to the forefront." Watson has also been involved in a lawsuit by workers at Lockheed against race and gender discrimination.

Cindy Lockett saw the march and decided to join. "We need to have more active participation," she said. "Issues need to be put on the table. I see a lot of injustices in my everyday living. All we want is justice."

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by Larry Seigle

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High court deals blow to retired miners

Continued from front page

about 66,000 retirees. These retired miners are referred to as "orphans." In 2000, the average age of retirees receiving benefits was 78 years. The vast majority are concentrated in the Appalachian coalfields of Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

For the past several years the CBF has faced a serious financial crisis. Stopgap financing has shored up the fund at least three times since 1992. This has come about through concerted mass pressure campaigns led by retired members and their union.

On May 17, 2000, some 8,000 retired miners and active union members, students, and other supporters from across the country converged on Washington and demanded that the government continue to fund cradle-to-grave health care for retired miners and their dependents. A few months after the march, emergency legislation was passed and \$96.8 million of federal money transferred into the CBF.

The February 19 Supreme Court decision *Barnhart v. Sigmon Coal Co.* was hailed in the big-business press as a victory for the coal bosses. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* minced few words with its headline: "High court hands coal firms victory." The same was true of the front-page article in West Virginia's *Charleston Gazette*, which read: "Court deals blow to UMW health program."

According to the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, the president of the Kentucky Coal Association, Bill Caylor, said the "ruling brought justice to companies like Sigmon, which owns the assets of a defunct firm—Shackleford Coal Co.—that Sigmon's predecessor, Jericol Mining Co., bought in 1973." The ruling will affect 86 retired miners. There are three other significant "successorship" cases that the decision will impact.

In arguing their case, coal boss lawyers found a loophole in the law and drove it home. According to the Coal Act, miners' benefits must be paid by the coal company that employed them, or by "related" companies; a coal company that takes over a "related" company can also be required to pay for benefits. But law does not say that a company that took over a coal operator itself must pay.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who wrote the majority opinion, said it was not the court's job to "read into" the law. Thomas wrote that it is not for the court to consider "why Congress would have written a statute that imposes liability on the successors of (related) companies...but not on successors to the signatory operators themselves." In a dissent, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported that Justice John Paul Stevens said that Congress did not intend "to let companies such as Jericol off the hook."

This is not the first time the U.S. Supreme Court has come to the aid of the coal bosses. In 1998, the country's highest court ruled in *Eastern Enterprises v. Apfel* that companies that were not signatories to the 1974 or later Bituminous Coal Operators of America

(BCOA) agreements with the union did not have to pay into the fund. In making this decision, the Supreme Court said the Coal Act violated the Fifth Amendment's ban on "taking" private property for public use without just compensation. Following the decision, 132 coal companies cast aside some 8,000 retirees. For the coal bosses this was viewed as a "tremendous victory."

In response to the *Eastern* ruling, UMW lawyer Grant Crandall said, "When the Supreme Court agreed with Eastern that money paid to fund health-care coverage for its former employees constituted a takings, it furthered the belief that property and profit are far more important under the law than the rights of the people who created Eastern's wealth with their sweat and blood."

There is more to the recent court ruling than meets the eye. Sigmon Bros. in 1978 (the year the company changed the name of the mine from Shackleford to Jericol) was at war with the UMW. Sigmon, based in Harlan County, Kentucky, refused to sign the 1978 BCOA contract. Jericol hired security guards who fired on striking miners. The company's refusal to pay into the UMW Welfare and Retirement Fund was the top issue in the strike; other issues included the bosses' eliminating seniority and job bidding, doing away with union-elected safety committees, and establishing a probationary period.

The health care and retirement benefits of UMW miners have been under attack since the late 1970s. It was one of the central BCOA contract issues in the 110-day strike in 1977 and 1978. In the 1989 UMW strike against Pittston Company, a major question in dispute was the company's refusal to pay into the union's health and retirement fund. Through a hard-fought 11-month strike the union won its demand that Pittston contribute to the fund.

In the wake of the Pittston strike, the government established a Coal Commission, which after one year of deliberations found that "the retired miners are entitled to the health-care benefits that were promised and guaranteed them and that such commitments must be honored." The commission recommended that Congress enact federal legislation that according to a union Coal Act fact sheet, "would place a statutory obligation on current and former signatories to the National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement (NBCWA) to pay for the health care of their former employees."

The Coal Act, which grew out of the work



Militant
Miners demonstrate for black lung benefits in Washington, D.C. Widows of miners are organizing rallies in coalfields starting March 15 to demand government pay benefits.

of the Coal Commission, was designed to prevent the "dumping" of union retirees. But since its enactment in 1992, just about every major coal operator has challenged the law, and in the same spirit they have ducked their responsibility to pay into the Workers Compensation Fund. As a result, union retirees live on a knife's edge of not knowing where the next challenge to their health benefits will come from.

The multifarious legal challenges to the law are also a huge financial drain on the CBF. According to a Government Accounting Office report, published in 2000, the fund had to pay almost \$4 million for "outside counsel."

To a person, retired miners are adamant about the government keeping their "promise" of providing lifetime benefits to retired miners and their families. They often point out that it took a series of work stoppages, confrontations, and strikes against the government and coal bosses beginning in the summer of 1945 and lasting through the summer of 1950 in order for the union to

win their right to health and retirement benefits. These union veterans point to that history with a sense of pride and determination.

At this time, the coalfields faced some of the worst social conditions imaginable. "A Medical Survey of the Bituminous Coal Industry," a government report, documented appalling levels of ill-health, infant mortality, grinding poverty, and chronic sickness in coal-mining areas. It took a fight by the union just to get the report—which had been suppressed—released to the public.

A part of these conditions was the horrifying safety record in the mines. Between 1935 and 1945 almost 13,000 miners died on the job and 639,000 suffered disabling accidents.

"One of the first tasks of the UMW Welfare and Retirement Fund," according to Claude Frazier, author of *Miners and Medicine*, "was to identify and provide medical and rehabilitative care for thousands of disabled miners, some of whom had not received medical care for several decades."

Miners' widows walk for black lung benefits

Continued from front page

Chapman's black lung benefits were cut off. Linda Chapman said she will be walking for the many widows, who for health reasons, are unable to make the long trip to Washington.

In an interview with the *Charleston Gazette*, Chapman said, "People who responded

to the disaster at the World Trade Center soon began to experience trouble breathing. In 48 hours of breathing that white dust from the towers, they started having problems, but no one said to them, 'Prove it.' With a coal miner, people are saying 'Prove it' until the day he dies. Then after he dies, they keep saying it to his widow."

Black lung programs hit widows the hardest. The law requires that in order to collect benefits, widows must prove their husbands died as a result of black lung or that it was a significant contributing factor. But because their husband's deaths are often attributed to other causes, most widows are unable to meet this burden of proof. If a miner dies while drawing benefits, payments stop and a widow has to file a separate claim.

The widows' walk is sponsored by the National Black Lung Association, the United Mine Workers of America, and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalitions. Wills said they are seeking more endorsements, as well as appealing for much needed funds.

It is becoming widely known that federal and state black lung programs are a fraud. Approval rates for black lung benefits have plummeted to less than 4 percent, according to the federal government.

This was not always the case. When federal legislation was enacted in 1969 after years of militant protests by miners, the approval rate for disabled miners, and widows of miners was close to 75 percent. Miners had to prove that they worked in the mines 10 years and provide medical evidence that they had the disease. The benefits were paid out of the Black Lung Trust Fund, which was financed by a tax on the coal companies.

Two main blows were dealt to the program. First, many coal companies refused to pay the tax, resulting in a huge debt. Sec-

ond, in the early 1980s the Black Lung Benefits Act was gutted by the Reagan administration. It was singled out by the big-business parties as one of the worse examples of "so-called entitlement programs."

The government changed eligibility rules and miners' ability to receive benefits went from bad to worse. The onus of proving black lung now fell on the coal miner. Getting black lung compensation has become a nightmare. *Roanoke Times* reporter Ron Nixon reported that "in house after house in the Virginia coalfields breathing machines and oxygen tanks are as common as TV sets." In most cases Medicare doesn't even pay for prescription drugs that disabled miners need to keep breathing.

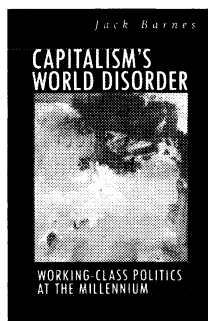
In the coalfields today it is not unusual for benefits to be denied, then granted after appealing, only later to be denied again, after months and even years. And then there are widows who have been turned down every time they applied.

Peggy Coleman, active in the Kanawha BLA for more than 20 years, said she had been denied black lung benefits 13 times. Her husband died of black lung 16 years ago. "My husband was only 55 years old," she said, adding that the government needs to pass a much stronger black lung bill. It is out of these hellish conditions that the widows have taken the lead by calling their protests.

Funds for the widows' walk can be sent and made out to NBLA c/o Thomas Ellis, P.O. Box 632, Royalton, IL 62983. For more information on the widows' walk, call Kanawha Valley Black Lung and Disabled Workers Association at 304-595-2280.

Frank Forrestal and Tony Lane are members of United Mine Workers of America Local 1248 in southwestern Pennsylvania.

FROM PATHFINDER



Capitalism's World Disorder

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

Jack Barnes

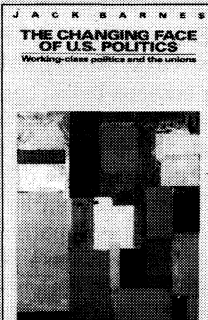
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Fired socialist worker wins new support in Illinois and Indiana

BY CAPPY KIDD

CHICAGO—Fifty supporters of workers' rights gathered at DePaul University to support the fight of socialist garment worker Michael Italie to be reinstated in his job at Goodwill Industries in Miami. Included in the audience were several garment workers, students and youth, activists in the Irish freedom struggle, and others.

Italie was actively campaigning for mayor of Miami on the Socialist Workers Party ticket when he was fired from his job October 22. "I was fired for straight up political reasons," Italie told the audience. "I used the campaign for mayor to explain why workers and farmers need to replace the capitalist government with one of their own, as part of a working-class campaign against imperialism's war on the people of Afghanistan and on workers' rights at home, and against police brutality and racial profiling. I spoke in defense of immigrant rights, the Cuban Revolution, and working people in this country. That is what my employers didn't like and that is why they fired me," he continued.

Referring to President George Bush's State of the Union address, Italie explained that the president's comments about a war abroad and a war at home really meant a war against the economic and political rights of working people.

Elaborating on the economic war, Italie told the audience that Miami is the city in the United States with the largest percentage of poor people—at least 32 percent of workers in Miami live below the poverty level. "And Goodwill is right in the center of this," he said. "They are what the government calls a 'sheltered workshop.' All this means is that the bosses are legally able to pay disabled workers much less than minimum wage. At Goodwill they receive sometimes between \$75 to \$125 for 80 hours of work a week," he said. As a sewing machine operator, Italie said, he made minimum wage.

One component of the government's assault on democratic rights is the frame-up of Muslim-based humanitarian aid organizations. Claiming that these organizations are "supporting terrorism," the Justice De-

partment has raided offices of the Holyland Fund and Global Relief foundations, seizing their records and freezing their bank accounts, forcing them to suspend operations.

Andy Thayer of the Chicago Coalition against War and Racism and the Chicago Anti-bashing Network spoke on the December 14 arrest of Rabi Haddad, cofounder of Global Relief. The government has kept Haddad imprisoned without charges and in solitary confinement, creating a firestorm of protests from prominent individuals, students, and others.

Thayer said the government has put severe restrictions on Haddad's ability to communicate with his family. He and his attorney have been denied access to the government's "evidence" and his court hearings have been closed to the public, including his family and the press.

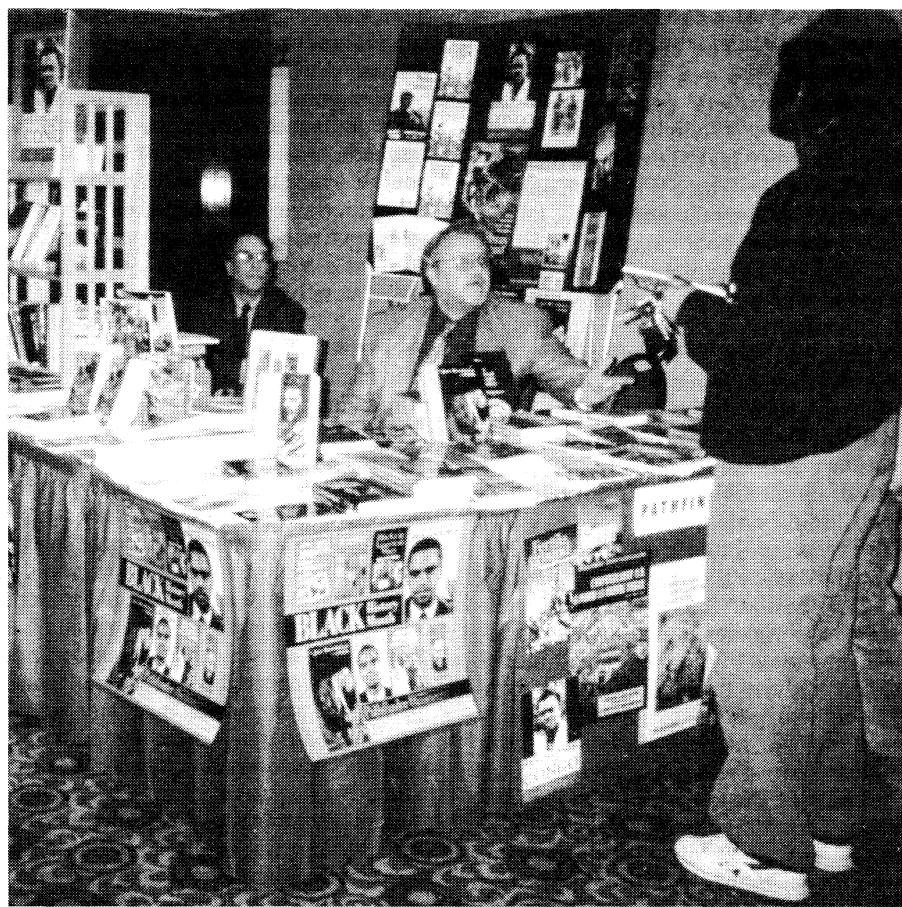
Muslims victimized

Also speaking were Abdel Noureldin, a volunteer doctor for Global Relief, and medical student Nahal Hafez Ghith, who described the stepped-up harassment of Muslim women in the United States. "Muslims are considered guilty until proven innocent," she said. Greta Holmes, an activist from the Hyde Park chapter of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, and José Landaverde, director of the Latino Union, also spoke.

Gisela Lopez, a member of the Chicago Cuba Coalition, condemned the frame-up and long prison sentences meted out to five Cuban revolutionaries in Miami. In reality, Lopez said, "these Cuban patriots were monitoring groups of Cubans who for 40 years have carried out violent attacks against the Cuban people. Operating from U.S. territory in violation of U.S. law, but with the full knowledge and protection of the U.S. government, the counterrevolutionary terrorists have caused the death of 3,498 Cubans," Lopez said. She denounced the hypocrisy of the U.S. government for claiming to be fighting terrorism while promoting the activity of the Cuban counterrevolutionaries.

From Wisconsin, a message was received from Randy Jasper, a dairy farmer and leader of the Family Farm Defenders. He

Interest high in Pathfinder at Black Studies conference



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Supporters of Pathfinder Press staff booth at National Association of African American Studies conference February 12-16. Participants at meeting purchased more than \$600 worth of revolutionary books, including the new title *From the Escambray to the Congo; In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*. Other best-selling titles included *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

wrote, "I believe many people in the U.S. are fired when they speak out or are afraid to speak. It takes great courage for a man like Mike Italie to take his case to the people. I, along with Family Farm Defenders and the American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association, support Mike and applaud his courage."

"Many workers and farmers know what terrorism was before 9/11: working people made to work longer for less, farmers not able to work enough and losing their farms to the bank or big business. If free speech in this country is taken away, it will be the end for the U.S. as we know it."

In Muncie, Indiana, the Young Socialists

at Ball State University organized a meeting to defend free speech, with Italie as the guest speaker. Over the past few months they passed out literature explaining the political firing of Italie and why it is important to fight this attack on workers' rights.

More than 30 students came to the meeting, including the Ball State University television and newspaper (see accompanying article). Sarah Voyles, organizer of the Ball State Young Socialists, chaired the meeting. At the end of the event a donation basket was passed around. More than \$40 was donated and another \$40 had been raised with a bake sale the students held earlier to raise money to bring Italie to speak on the campus.

Throughout the day before the meeting students set up a campus literature table, passed out flyers for the event, collected signatures demanding Italie be reinstated to his job, and discussed politics with those who stopped by.

At the Chicago event a number of those present, including many of the speakers, endorsed Italie's defense campaign and offered their continuing support. Nearly \$600 was collected to help finance the fight to defend workers' rights.

Italie interviewed by Ball State college paper

Below is reprinted an article from the February 19 *Ball State Daily News* under the headline, "Socialist: Employees should avoid intimidation, speak out: Miami mayoral candidate urges students to fight unfair, hypocritical business practices." The article is by Nick Werner, the paper's chief reporter.

Freedom of speech in the workplace is not just a Socialist problem. It is everyone's problem, said Michael Italie, the Socialist Workers candidate for Mayor of Miami, in a speech sponsored by the Ball State Young Socialists yesterday at the Student Center.

"Regardless of what you think of my views, we should all be able to speak our minds without fear of intimidation, or fear of losing our jobs or being jailed," Italie said to an audience of about 30 students.

Italie was fired from his job as a sewing-machine operator at Goodwill Industries after he spoke against the war in Afghanistan and in support of the Cuban revolution. Italie's controversial speech took place on Oct. 18, 2001, at a forum for mayoral candidates at Miami-Dade Community College.

In the days following his speech, Italie said he was repeatedly questioned by supervisors about his Socialist campaign.

"For the first time ever, supervisors started asking about my views on politics," he said. "That's a bad sign when the boss starts asking about your political opinions."

Goodwill fired Italie four days after the speech. He said Goodwill did not deny the company fired him because of his political opinions.

Italie said he worried such firing practices might lead to an attack on the rights of minorities. If workers can be fired for support-

ing minority rights, he said, it will not be much longer until they can be fired for being a minority.

Italie also spoke out against the business practices of his former employer, calling Goodwill hypocritical. He said Goodwill employs many disabled workers because disabled workers can legally be paid less than minimum wage.

"You would think that if you were disabled then you would deserve a little extra help," he said.

According to Italie, some disabled workers he knew were being paid \$75 for 80 hours of work.

"I was lucky to be making \$5.15," he said.

Italie said he supported raising the minimum wage for everyone, although he did not know how much of a raise would be required to impact workers' standard of living.

John Segner, a junior at the Indiana Academy, attended the speech and said he agreed it is horrible when workers cannot express their opinions about minimum wage. Segner did not agree, however, that raising the minimum wage would solve any problems.

"I'm all for workers' rights, but I don't think doubling minimum wage will solve any problems," Segner said. "It will increase foreign exports and move labor out of the country."

Nicole Protolipac, a Ball State junior, said she thought the speech was very informative and enjoyed hearing information about the war in Afghanistan from someone other than the president.

Italie has spoken about the war in Afghanistan and workers' rights at colleges in Florida, California, New York and Washington.

Despite his problems with Goodwill,

Italie said he wants his job back and might take legal action to get it. He said that by firing him, Goodwill participated in campaigning against a political candidate, which is illegal for nonprofit organizations.

"I want to be able to walk back in that factory, look the boss in the eye and go back to my machine."

'We find this firing to be unjust,' say Black Telephone Workers for Justice

The following is a February 28 message to the mayor of Miami, Miami city commissioners, and Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana from Ron Washington, president, Black Telephone Workers for Justice, an organization of workers in New Jersey.

It has come to our attention that on October 22, 2001, Mike Italie was fired from his job as a sewing machine operator for Goodwill Industries. Dennis Pastrana told the *Miami Herald* that Mike Italie was fired because "we cannot have anyone who is attempting to subvert the United States of America."

Mike Italie was a candidate in the Miami mayoral race, and as an expression of his freedom of speech, he expressed his opposition to the US war in Afghanistan. For this he was fired. Black telephone workers in New Jersey, along with all supporters of democracy and free speech find this firing to be unjust and abhorrent.

Since when does a person's political beliefs become criteria for one's right to work?

And who anointed Dennis Pastrana as the arbiter of "what is politically correct to believe or not to believe?" No, this firing is an unjust infringement of our constitutionally protected right to free speech. Today there are millions of people who support the war in Afghanistan and millions of people who do not. We all have a right to believe what we want to believe. This debate will continue and will be fierce, as it should be, because of the life and death questions that are involved. This debate is constitutionally protected. It is the activity of persons like Dennis Pastrana that is not. Must we repeat the worn slogan of "although not agreeing with you, I will defend your right to say what you want?"

As Dr. King said, an injustice to any one of us, is an injustice to all of us. Therefore we demand that Goodwill Industries restore the job of Mike Italie and make due any and all monies that he may have lost. In addition, as a civic lesson for Dennis Pastrana we demand a written apology for his undermining of the constitutional rights afforded everyone in this country.

A new stage in building revolutionary party

BY JACK WILLEY
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—The communist movement has entered a new stage of building revolutionary workers' parties and a new international, noted Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes at a meeting here February 23. The SWP and Communist Leagues in several countries are taking steps to respond to political openings in the world today to both proletarianize their parties and make them more international in scope, he said.

At the same time, it is the judgment of the SWP National Committee that there has been a shift in the political conjuncture. The momentum whipped up by the U.S. rulers for military action in the aftermath of the events of September 11 "is largely exhausted," said Barnes.

The meeting, attended by nearly 100 people, took place at the Pathfinder building during the sixth "red weekend" of volunteer work brigades aimed at transforming the apparatus of the communist movement that produces the revolutionary books, pamphlets, and periodicals needed by workers around the world to advance their struggles. Participants came from the East Coast cities of Boston; Newark, New Jersey; New York; Philadelphia; and Washington, D.C., as well as Atlanta; Birmingham, Alabama; Pittsburgh; Cleveland; and Montreal, Quebec.

Over the course of the weekend, volunteers moved Pathfinder's stock of warehoused books to make them more accessible to the Pathfinder offices where orders are processed and shipped out to customers around the world. Crews also organized an inventory of the entire stock of Pathfinder books. The e-mail addresses of several hundred Pathfinder customers were entered into the publishing house's billing system, enabling the staff to send out electronic invoices, saving time and money.

Other volunteers participated in crews working on the wiring, plumbing, and other tasks needed to move the computer-to-plate machinery in Pathfinder's printshop onto the shop floor near the presses. Completing the move will mark a major step in press operators integrating all the operations needed to print jobs.

Among those participating was Christina

Pearsoll, from West Islip on Long Island, who was at her first red weekend. Pearsoll is involved in the Volunteer Workplace Project, which supports the fight for justice by immigrant day laborers in the area. She liked the fact that everyone involved in the weekend was "working toward the same goal. It's nice to be with people who think along the same lines as I think," she stated. "I believe in what you're trying to do, and what the SWP stands for. We need to change this system big time."

U.S. rulers need war dead

In his talk, Barnes explained that the U.S. ruling class cannot sustain widespread acceptance of patriotic war fever without a significant number of U.S. casualties on the battlefield, where blood is shed day after day. Only under those conditions can the trade union bureaucracy succeed in carrying out the bosses' bidding to force major concessions on working people under the pretext of "defending the homeland." And only with sustained casualties and war dead can the misleadership of Black or other organizations win a section of their membership to "temporarily" put aside their fight to support an imperialist war, Barnes explained.

With the effects of the September 11 attacks fading, working people and broader layers of the population find other concerns more pressing, including unemployment, the future of the pension and health care benefits as companies like Enron go belly-up, police brutality, and assaults on workers' rights.

Meanwhile, said Barnes, Washington is being drawn into carrying out in Afghanistan what it pulled back from 10 years ago in Iraq—the establishment of a U.S. protectorate along the lines of the one set up in Japan under Gen. Douglas MacArthur coming out of World War II. There can be no cohesive pro-imperialist government put in place in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. Washington's imperialist allies in Europe—whose forces are already getting shot at—are reluctant to be the military police over the entire country. Instead, Washington will be pressed to put masses of troops on the ground there.

In an attempt to pick up some of the steam lost in the months after September 11, the



Militant/Patrick O'Neill
Members of Laborers Union Local 79, with a giant inflatable rat symbolizing Pro-Dover construction company, picket at the company's nonunion work site in February 2001.

Bush administration is seeking to continue the bipartisan course it accelerated coming out of September 11 by saying that "America" must fight against the "axis of evil" of Iran, Iraq, and north Korea. These three countries have the capacity to produce and deploy weapons of mass destruction and are often at odds with Washington.

The Bush administration's drive against Korea under the guise of getting rid of such weapons, noted Barnes, may create the greatest division between Washington and Tokyo since the end of World War II. The north Korean government has already test-launched missiles over Japan and has built up its defenses in the face of nearly 40,000 heavily armed U.S. troops in the south of their country.

The SWP defends Korea's right to develop nuclear weapons and missiles as a necessary measure to defend themselves against Washington's ongoing threats, said Barnes.

The two nuclear powers in the Middle East—Tel Aviv and Washington—are chained together in defending each other's interests even as the Israeli state is in decline. The possibility of either Iraq or Iran developing missiles capable of landing a warhead in Israel, or hitting a U.S. military base in the region, is leading both the U.S. and Israeli governments to prepare to strike at these two regimes that are in conflict with imperialism.

Party-building lessons

Romina Green, a garment worker and leader of the international Young Socialists, spoke about the recent *Militant* reporting trip to Argentina during the upsurge of protests in December and January after the collapse of Argentine peso.

"The purpose of our trip was to meet revolutionaries and convince them of the need to join in building a new communist international," she said. "We had the same responsibility as communists had on other international trips to the world youth festival in Algiers and the Havana Book Fair—activities that are an extension of what we do among co-workers and at events in the United States like the recent rally of striking nurses in Long Island."

Green pointed to some of the shortfalls of the reporting trip and lessons that the communist movement can draw. "We didn't tell revolutionary workers and students we met that their political trajectory was toward becoming communists," she said. "They're just not organized into a communist party and part of an international movement yet." Green said the team placed too much emphasis on meeting with trade union officials, who, like many lower-level officials in the United States, use radical rhetoric at the same time as they demonstrate their contempt for working people.

"We saw tremendous resistance among working people," Green reported, "but this does not imply an inevitable collapse of the capitalist system." The imperialists and native bourgeoisie will reorganize, alternating

between different government factions, and continue to come out on top until a revolutionary movement is built that is capable of leading workers and farmers to overturn the capitalist system, she said. Reporting teams provide one avenue for getting books with the legacy of the communist movement into the hands of people who are part of an emerging—even if atomized for now—proletarian leadership that is searching for the most effective strategy to fight and win.

Pierre Toulouse, a leader of the Young Socialists in Haiti, announced an educational conference hosted by the YS and the Federation of University Students of Haiti over the May 17-18 weekend. He pointed to his organization's focus of reaching out to workers and peasants to build the socialist movement, and to the powerful example of the Cuban Revolution. His organization first met and began collaborating with the international Young Socialists, the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, and other groups of revolutionaries at the anti-imperialist youth festival that took place in Algeria last August.

Michel Prairie, the director of Pathfinder's French language program and a leader of the Communist League in Canada, spoke on the fruits of the communist movement's international work and on the next steps in the work to translate and publish more Pathfinder books in French.

"Today, 30,000 people rallied in Victoria, British Columbia, against cuts in public services," he said. "Socialists sold 230 copies of the *Militant* and a few dozen people signed up for more information about the league and the YS."

At the demonstration, said Prairie, socialists met an Argentine who first ran into the Young Socialists at the São Paulo Forum in Cuba last year and a Palestinian who talked with YS leaders at the Algiers festival.

"We decided several years ago that in order to build a party of equals in Canada—with a large French-speaking oppressed nationality in Quebec—we had to translate into French the books presenting the strategic course and theory of the communist movement," stated Prairie. Now these books are getting in the hands of people around the world. Communists who are part of the French translation team have moved up by a month the publication of *History of American Trotskyism* by James P. Cannon to have it available for the conference in Haiti. Two YS members in Haiti have joined the translation effort.

Building on initial steps forward

SWP leader Jack Willey reported on the important step taken in beginning to ship the *Militant* from the Garment District branch hall each week. "This brings together members, supporters, and those we want to recruit, to be part of an international responsibility of getting the paper into the hands of working people and youth from Peru to Sweden to New Zealand," Willey said. "We

Continued on next page



Militant/Monica Jones
Public workers protest attacks on education, health care, and union rights in Victoria, British Columbia, on February 23. Socialists sold more than 200 copies of *Militant*.

Washington heads toward a garrison state in Afghanistan

Continued from front page

and regional authorities and competitions for power within the regions,” said a CIA official. Referring to proposals to equip and train an Afghan army, the official said, “If it takes six months or more than a year to create a single army what do we do in the meantime to deter war among the warlords?”

“Chaos” and “warlords” are terms routinely used by U.S. government officials and military personnel to describe the political situation in other countries to justify their supposed “enlightened” intervention. In reality, the “warlords” are regional leaders and rival groupings in Afghanistan who retain armed men at their disposal as one of the ways to advance their interests.

U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld laid out four options being considered in Washington at a Pentagon press conference February 21. According to several news wire reports, the first option outlined by Rumsfeld was the deployment of as many as 30,000 U.S. troops to “police the whole country.” AP reported they would “essentially occupy Afghanistan.” At present some 4,000 troops are stationed in the country, backed up by tens of thousands more in surrounding countries and on ships in the Arabian Gulf.

Resistance to foreign occupation

“A disciplined and well-armed force”—meaning U.S. troops—“could keep Afghanistan’s internal rivalries from exploding into nation-threatening violence,” wrote the Associated Press. On the “minus side” for the U.S. rulers was Afghanistan’s “centuries-long history of resisting foreign occupations. Public opinion could unite against a one-country peacekeeping force,” the article warned.

Rumsfeld said the U.S. administration is also considering a plan to carve Afghanistan into zones to be administered by several imperialist powers.

This is the course followed in both Bosnia and Kosova, where France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States each has a region within both countries under their military control. A total of some

42,000 troops are in Kosova, backed up by 7,500 more soldiers in Albania and Macedonia. U.S.-dominated NATO has also stationed some 60,000 troops in Bosnia, a territory one-twelfth the size of Afghanistan.

The U.S. defense secretary said Washington is also looking into expanding the British-dominated forces stationed in Kabul, and reinforcing it “to police the entire country.” The force presently carries out 24-hour patrols in the capital and is slated to reach a maximum strength of around 5,000 soldiers. But there are growing signs from both London and Paris that neither wants to pursue this option, partly because the force is under U.S. military command.

The final “option” outlined by Rumsfeld is to build up an Afghan army, a course that few see as viable since there is no authoritative central government for the army to serve. The AP report dryly noted that “training and equipping such a force would take time, which would give warlords and remaining Taliban and al Qaeda forces opportunities to regroup, strengthen, and attack each other.”

With the momentum from the September 11 attacks largely behind them, and the justifications for their military action in Afghanistan under the banner of the “war on terror” wearing thin, defending the government in Kabul is becoming Washington’s major preoccupation in the country. On February 16–17, for example, U.S. aircraft were dispatched to deal blows to forces opposed to the Karzai administration. The U.S. pilots dropped bombs on “enemy troops” near the southeastern city of Khost.

A *Washington Post* editorial argued that “the Bush administration needs to shift the weight of relationships whenever possible from local Afghan commanders to Karzai’s allies and appointees.”

‘An American imperial endeavor’

Seeking to maintain the veneer of an “international coalition,” the February 26 *New York Times* called on Washington to “lead the way in persuading the international community to expand the [ISAF] peacekeeping force beyond the capital.” At the same time,



wrote the editors, the U.S. rulers should “leave open the possibility of playing a more direct role later.”

“Turning peacekeeping over to the Pentagon now,” noted the editorial, “might...reinforce the mistaken view that the reshaping of Afghanistan is an American imperial endeavor.”

Karzai and other representatives of the interim government have pleaded with the British government and other imperialist powers represented in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to bolster the numbers and range of the occupation force.

Preparing for discussions with British foreign secretary Jack Straw in New Delhi, Afghan foreign ministry spokesperson Omar Samad said that Karzai would “probably be asking the British and others for expanding that [the ISAF’s] mandate and expanding that force to other cities.” Until an Afghan army is set up, he said, “we feel there is a need for a limited presence of international forces under the UN umbrella.”

Samad also said that the country needs \$15-20 billion over the next decade for reconstruction. To date, the imperialist powers and others have said they will contribute around \$5 billion.

London reluctant to expand force

London has responded less than enthusiastically to calls for the expansion and reinforcement of the ISAF occupation force. Although the force is presently commanded by British general John McColl, final authority

rests with the U.S. command in Afghanistan. On February 23 McColl reported that British troops in Kabul had come under fire.

While reviving memories of the outcome of past British attempts to occupy and rule Afghanistan, the British Defense Ministry has complained that its forces are overextended worldwide.

“It is hardly encouraging,” wrote Anatole Lieven in a commentary published in the February 25 London-based *Financial Times*, “that in April Britain is supposed to hand over leadership of the International Security Assistance Force in Kabul to a very hesitant Turkey and withdraw most of its troops, after only three months.”

Lieven said that imperialist troops should be kept in Afghanistan for “as long as the country is still threatened by renewed civil war.” Otherwise, he wrote, “both western diplomacy and the United Nations might as well shut up shop and leave such countries to the sophisticated diplomatic attentions of the U.S. Air Force.”

In a February 15 statement, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Paris was willing to keep its troops in Kabul beyond April. However, the statement also reminded other powers of the June 30 deadline established by the United Nations resolution under which the force was established. That resolution, said the ministry, also “stipulated that the force should be deployed in Kabul and its environs.”

The German government, on the other hand, is looking for ways to start putting troops on foreign soil. Berlin said that it is prepared to keep its troops in Kabul for several years. Whatever the exact outcome, all the European imperialist powers remain heavily dependent on the Pentagon for logistical support and transport aircraft to ferry troops and supplies into and out of the country.

In another sign of its scant resources and total reliance on U.S. support, the Afghan government is reportedly discussing the adoption of the U.S. dollar as its official currency. Officials of the Washington-led International Monetary Fund have encouraged the move.

Karzai’s finance minister, Hedayat Amin Arsala, a former economist at the World Bank, said in late February that “we are able to finance only 3 or 4 percent of our current budget from domestic resources.”

Deployment of U.S. forces in Georgia

Meanwhile, the Pentagon has announced that it has received the agreement of the government of Georgia to send up to 200 Special Operations forces, or Green Berets, to the former Soviet republic. A senior military official said that the number could grow “depending on how the operation unfolds,” according to the *New York Times*. The troops’ role would be limited to training and the provision of military equipment, said another defense official.

Officials presented the planned deployment as another move against “terrorism.” The troops will join operations against guerrilla fighters in the Pankisi gorge, an area northeast of Tbilisi, the capital. They may also assist with a crackdown on Chechen forces, claimed by Moscow to have found haven in Georgia.

In broader Central Asia, the Pentagon has already stationed troops and aircraft in the former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan, as well as in the semicolonial countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan itself.

New stage in building revolutionary party

Continued from previous page

are moving the editorial offices of the *Militant*, Pathfinder, and the party’s national office to be in the same location as the New York local of the party,” he said, “because we need the totality of the membership of the party branches available in order to meet the opportunities we have in the area.”

By the end of the red weekend the *Militant*, Pathfinder, and SWP National Office had begun using simplified web-based shipping programs to prepare all their shipments and to send tracking numbers to customers by e-mail. “This is one of several steps to simplify our work, and cut down on paper waste and preparation time,” he reported.

Wiley pointed to the response by miners to the *Militant* and to the emerging social movement in the coal communities around health and safety. At a recent sale at a Pittsburg and Midway mine on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, socialists sold 50 papers. At the P&M mine in Kemmerer, Wyoming, they sold another 10.

Widows of miners killed by black lung as a result of the bosses’ greed are marching from Charleston, West Virginia, to Washington. “These workers are buying the paper knowing that it’s written by communists. They read it for the same reason the people at this meeting read it: to broaden their political scope.”

Building the communist international

Jack Barnes returned to some of the themes addressed by other speakers. He said that Pathfinder’s printshop is leading the effort to transform the apparatus of the communist movement, which produces revolutionary books and periodicals. The communist volunteers in the printshop have put together a smaller shop of disciplined, cross-

trained, competent press operators who are selling commercial work at the same time as they produce the range of Pathfinder titles.

Barnes read from a letter by Peggy Brundy, a leader of the Pathfinder Reprint Project, in which she pointed to the discipline and rigor necessary to learn all the tasks of running a small shop with a working foreman—an operation like the one she was part of in the 1960s. She compared it with the recent steps the cadre of the current shop have taken to reorganize their work.

Referring to Toulouse’s earlier remarks, Barnes noted that each advance in political consciousness, convergence, or regroupment of revolutionary forces is part of the new stage of building a communist international. This involves proletarianizing and broadening the international scope of the SWP and Communist Leagues, he said.

He pointed to the example of several Haitians studying in Cuba who stopped by the Pathfinder literature table at the Havana Book Fair and signed up for more information about the Young Socialists. Some had gone with the Cuban delegation to the Algiers festival and met the YS there.

What is taking shape in Haiti is only the beginning, as communist organizations that use Pathfinder books will be built in country after country, he said. The task of communist workers is to convince fighting workers and youth in the United States and abroad that they are acting like communists and that together it is possible to build a world movement of working people that can fight for power in country after country.

As the U.S. war fever fades, more workers are growing angry about assaults on their livelihood. Barnes explained that the fact that U.S. imperialism carried out its assault on Afghanistan with few U.S. casualties, and

consequently did not emerge from its victory with accelerating war fever, provides precious time to working-class fighters to utilize the political space open to them.

“Workers’ rights are not protected by law; it’s not possible under capitalism,” Barnes said. “We are living at the highest point of imperialist democracy. This is as good as it gets.”

One good example of this fact is the party’s campaign to defend Michael Itale against his political firing by Goodwill Industries, prompted by his speaking out as a communist at a candidates’ debate when he was running for mayor of Miami. Bourgeois law is not designed to reverse such an action. Workers’ rights, however, are defended by other workers who respond to such attacks and join in the fight.

Barnes encouraged everyone at the meeting to focus their work in support of Itale’s fight on reaching out to co-workers, workers and farmers in struggle, and militant youth who are outraged at yet another worker being vamped on by the bosses. Many will want to learn more about the political views that led to his firing, and some will be interested in joining the communist party, Barnes said.

The SWP leader pointed out that communists do not offer “socialism” to other proletarian fighters. “What we offer is the perspective of the glorious battle to overthrow the state and monopoly of the means of production that is in the hands of the superwealthy ruling class. That struggle opens the door to fight for socialism.” Under capitalism, all reforms are temporary and a by-product of revolutionary struggle, he noted. Ultimately, they can only be maintained and advanced after workers and farmers have been led to take power.

Book fair in Cuban cities expands education

Continued from front page

gion, taking in among other places the provincial capitals Santa Clara, Cienfuegos, and Sancti Spiritus. It concludes with a week in the east—in Guantánamo, Las Tunas, Holguín, Bayamo, Manzanillo, and the country's second city, Santiago de Cuba, where the closing ceremony will be held March 11.

"People are buzzing about the book fair coming to Sagua la Grande," Jorge Luis Pérez, a leader of the Cuban Communist Party in that town in Villa Clara province, told the *Militant*. "One hundred thousand books are being made available for sale here—a city of 60,000 inhabitants. People have drawn up their lists of books to buy. Families are talking about it. People are talking about it on the street and at workplaces."

Tenfold increase in books at fair

Five million books—multiple copies of 800 titles—are being published for sale in Cuban pesos at the different fairs. This is a 10-fold increase from last year, when 500,000 books were distributed through the Havana book fair by Cuban publishers. This increase was graphically captured by the tall stacks of thousands of books filling the central sales area at the Havana fair where every day throngs of readers eagerly lined up to purchase literature.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the book fair here in the capital, Cuban president Fidel Castro said, "From now on we'll no longer speak of the Havana book fair, but rather of the Cuba book fair."

The event in Havana itself broke all records for what has become an annual event here. Some 310,000 people attended, compared to 200,000 last year, the previous record. A special shuttle bus service was organized from different points in the city to facilitate attendance. In addition to Cuban publishers, 120 publishing houses from 24 countries had stands at the fair.

In 1994 and 1996, when economic conditions were extremely difficult and the book fair was being held every two years at a different site, 80,000 and 60,000 people attended respectively.

For the last three years the fair has been held at the San Carlos de la Cabaña, the Spanish colonial fort dominating the entrance to the Havana harbor. The structure will now become known as the "book fortress," Fidel Castro said at the opening ceremony. The fair has expanded so much that for next year the organizers are considering taking over the adjoining Morro fortress as well, using it for the array of activities known as the Children's Pavilion, one of the book fair's main components and attractions.

'To read is to grow'

The book fair is held under the banner "*Leer es crecer*"—"to read is to grow." Each year it has become more and more the cen-



Militant photos: Above, Jonathan Silberman; Right, Linda Joyce
Above: Book fair participants wear T-shirts declaring "Más libros, más libres" (More books, more freedom). Right: visitors to Pathfinder stand examine poster of Pathfinder mural. Attendance at Havana fair, renamed the "Cuba book fair" by Cuban president Fidel Castro because it has been expanded to 18 more cities, broke all previous records. Five million books were made available as part of campaign by Cuba's revolutionary leadership to broaden cultural horizons and increase educational opportunities for the country's working people.

ter of a broadening range of cultural activities that include literary gatherings, TV roundtable discussions, film showings, theater productions, and ballet performances. Special book fair-related events were held in Havana's libraries and at the University of Havana.

There were also almost nonstop poetry readings, fine art and photo exhibitions, computer demonstrations of electronic magazines, and a permanent exhibition of the work of Norwegian anthropologist and *Kon-Tiki* author Thor Heyerdahl. The children's pavilion, which drew thousands, held a number of events each day such as puppet shows, music, games, and an exhibit of African illustrators, as well as serving as a place for kids to sit down with piles of newly acquired books and simply read.

The inauguration event was broadcast live on Cuban TV and Castro's speech was later rebroadcast to ensure the widest access. There were daily items on the book fair in the press and broadcast media reporting on the hundreds of book launchings, literary prize ceremonies, and other events. Each night, concerts were held at the fair with prominent Cuban artists performing a

variety of music such as Compay Segundo, Síntesis, and Grupo Moncada. TV roundtable host Randy Alonso described the book fair as really being a "festival of the people."

Illustrating what this meant for ordinary Cubans, Nidia Areas Rojas, a cook, reported that her granddaughter Gretel had said that for her eighth birthday, which was coming up, she didn't want a party or a cake or to go out to eat but rather, "I want to go to the book fair and buy books!"

Part of battle of ideas

"The expansion of the book fair is part of the battle of ideas," Castro explained. The battle of ideas is the popular term in Cuba for the political offensive waged to defend the socialist revolution in the face of both the imperialist ideological drive portraying capitalism as the only future for humanity, and of the contradictions and inequalities that have grown up with the penetration of the capitalist world market over the last decade. The latter is the result of measures taken to revive industrial and agricultural production during what is known here as the Special Period—the sharp crisis provoked by the collapse of the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe, with which most of Cuba's trade was conducted, and the tightening of the U.S. embargo.

Central to this battle of ideas is deepening the participation of working people in the revolution and reinforcing proletarian internationalism. Broadening the education of the Cuban people and expanding access to cultural activities is central to this effort. In his speech at the inauguration, Castro took the opportunity to talk about this campaign and its continuity with the cultural policy of the revolution.

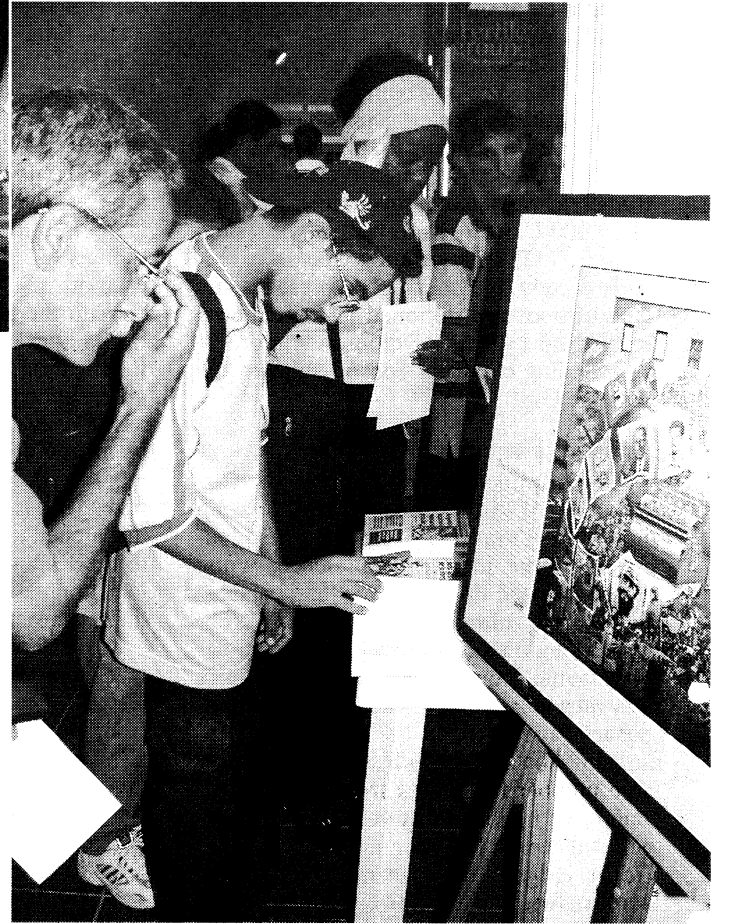
"A country can have many writers and poets," the Cuban leader explained. "But you have to ask yourself first, when talking about artistic talent, how many citizens have learned to read and write? The development of artistic talent, the development of literature, and other such matters, depend in the first place on the educational level of the population."

When the Cuban Revolution triumphed in 1959, he said, "illiteracy was 30 percent.

Our first battle was to eliminate illiteracy. Within the first two years we mobilized 150,000 youth" to carry out a literacy campaign. The Cuban president explained that this was followed up by sending teachers to areas that prior to the revolution had none.

Castro described how, given improving economic circumstances, the government is seeking to reconquer the level of book production that existed prior to the Special Period. Currently the average print run of a new book published by Cuba's 123 publishing houses is 9,000. The objective is to increase this.

"We acquired 15 inexpensive printing presses for \$11,000 each so that in every municipal district of the country, young writers, poets, and essayists will



be able to publish their works," he explained.

In addition, Cuba has embarked on an effort using newsprint to publish literary classics at the rate of 25 every three months. "One of the first titles published in newsprint edition was *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson," said Javier Dueñas, proudly displaying a copy. Dueñas, a leader of the Union of Young Communists, is one of the people with central responsibility for the publishing project.

'Popular libraries'

Castro said that the objective was for each household in the country to eventually have a library of 300–400 titles. Along that road an expanded public library system is being developed. "Popular libraries," each with 10,000 books—10 copies each of 1,000 titles—are being established in working-class neighborhoods and rural areas. Twelve of these popular libraries are now operating as a pilot project.

In his speech opening the book fair, Fidel Castro took up the measures being introduced to improve Cuba's educational system. "This year we're going to introduce 45,000 computers in Cuba's schools, from primary through pre-university levels. This in turn has necessitated the training of teachers," he said. The Cuban leader spoke of the Joven Club, the Computer Youth, which are centers where young people can go to get computer training. After seeing what their children are learning, "parents are requesting computer training" too, Castro noted.

The number of television sets in schools is being increased, from one for every 100 pupils to one per each 50, he added.

"Each of Cuba's 6,000 schools, no matter how isolated, either has a television or is in the process of being rigged up for TV and video," reported Luis Ernesto Morejón, a UJC leader with central responsibility for the project, in an interview. "If there's no

Hear reports on the HAVANA BOOK FAIR

and launchings of
'From the Escambray to the Congo:
In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution'

ATLANTA – March 16–17

LOS ANGELES – March 23–24

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The events will coincide with meetings of socialist workers who are members of several industrial unions. United Mine Workers members will meet in Atlanta; members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees will meet in Los Angeles; and members of the United Food and Commercial Workers and the United Auto Workers will meet in Chicago.

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ation and culture

electricity, which is still the case in some of the remotest areas, we're installing solar panels. It doesn't matter how many pupils there are. In one very remote school, where there's just one pupil, it's being rigged up for a TV, video, and computer."

In Havana province, where 3 million people reside, there is now a third TV channel that is dedicated to education. In the "University for All" nationwide TV program, language teaching is being extended. "We can think of a not too distant future when our citizens will command four foreign languages," Castro remarked. Class sizes are being cut to a maximum of 20 pupils per teacher. "And we're not just concerned about the extension of education but with its deepening, with improving the quality of education."

Castro noted that all this is being accomplished in the face of an economic war being waged by Washington against the Cuban Revolution.

Don't 'believe,' read

Also speaking at the inauguration was president of the Cuban Book Institute, Iroel Sánchez. "Beyond the international financial crisis, hurricanes, hostile [U.S.] laws, plots, and slander," Sánchez said, "Cuba is developing its institutions and cultivating readers. It does so because it knows that this is the only possible road in this world of enormous conflicts and inequalities."

Reiterating the country's cultural policy established in the earliest years of the revolution, Sánchez went on, "We don't tell people 'believe,' we say, 'read.'"

"And what has developed," he said, "is a country purged of illiteracy, with 700,000 university-trained professionals, thousands of libraries, and the broadest and most democratic educational system in the world. Facts, more than words, are testimony to our conviction that without culture, liberty is not possible."

Books presented at the fair included a range of world literary classics including a large number by figures from France, the country of honor at this year's fair. These included works by Marguerite Yourcenar, Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, Alexandre Dumas, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and René Descartes.

A wide range of works by Latin American and Spanish authors was featured, from Jorge Enrique Adoum and Laura Esquivel to Jorge Luis Borges, Camilo José Cela, and Rubén Darío.

Taking advantage of the French-language participation, a special event was organized around French-speaking Caribbean authors from Guadeloupe, Guyane, and Haiti.

Works by Franz Kafka, Charlotte Bronte, Jack London, Emilio Salgari, H.P. Lovecraft, Alan Sillitoe, and Anton Chekhov; North American classics such as *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* by Mark Twain, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper were presented at the fair, along with books by Ray Bradbury and Dashiell Hammett. There were new Spanish-language editions of the children's classics *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll, *The Ugly Duckling* by Hans Christian Andersen, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by the brothers Grimm, and *The Black Doll* by José Martí. New Spanish-language editions of *Asterix the Gaul*, the popular French children's book series, became a particular favorite of book fair participants, just as *Pinocchio* was when Italy was guest of honor two years ago.

Taking their rightful place as part of this world literature were titles by Cuban writers. These included a new dictionary of the thought of Cuban national hero José Martí; works by Cuban literary figures Alejo Carpentier, Rubén Martínez Villena, and Nicolás Guillén; and books by contemporary authors Roberto Fernández Retamar, Cinto Vitier, Ambrosio Fornet, Victor Fowler, Pablo Armando Fernández, Jaime Sarusky, Mayra Montero, and Antón Arrufat. The book fair this year was dedicated to Miguel Barnet, whose works were featured in several events. Renowned poet and essayist Nancy Morejón was awarded the National Literature Prize for her work *Piedra*

pulida (Polished stone).

A number of books on aspects of the history of the Cuban Revolution were presented. These included reprints of titles long out of print such as *Tania*, a book by Marta Rojas, Mirta Rodríguez Calderón, and Ulises Estrada, that tells the story of Tamara Bunke, who was part of the guerrilla campaign headed by Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1966-67; another was *El jefe del pelotón suicida* (*The head of the Suicide Squad*) by Larry Morales. It is about Roberto Rodríguez, affectionately nicknamed "El Vaquerito" (the cowboy) by Che Guevara. Rodríguez, a Rebel Army captain who fought in the revolutionary war in Che Guevara's Column 8, headed up what became known as the Suicide Squad, a volunteer platoon that took on the most difficult and hazardous missions; he died on Dec. 30, 1958, in the battle of Santa Clara.

Other titles included *Gente del Llano* by Enrique Oltuski, about the revolutionary struggle waged in the cities against the Batista dictatorship by the July 26th Movement; a book by Orlando Borrego, a close collaborator of revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara, entitled *Che: El camino del fuego* (*The road of fire*); *Escarmientos de pueblo* (*Punishment by the people*) by Raúl Menéndez Tomashevich and José Ángel Gárciga, on the struggle in the early years of the revolution against counterrevolutionary bandits starting from the moment the revolution triumphed. Menéndez Tomashevich, a division general who died less than a year ago, had central responsibilities for the fight against the counterrevolutionary bands in the east and in the Escambray mountains.

Also launched at the fair was *Cabinda* by Army Corps General Ramón Espinosa Martín about the military struggle in northern Angola in 1975 in which 200 Cuban volunteers, including the author, participated. The Angola mission ended after the 1988 battle at Cuito Cuanavale, where the defeat of the invading South African forces also paved the way for the independence of Namibia and accelerated the struggle that a few years later brought the racist apartheid system in South Africa crashing down.

Roundtable discussions included presentations on the works of Rosa Luxemburg and Antonio Gramsci.

Interest in Pathfinder books

The book fair attracted people young and old from all walks of life. One of the stands that drew a constant stream of visitors was Pathfinder's. Among the many who stopped to talk with members of the international team staffing the booth were Antonio Castinegros, a retired colonel of the Revolutionary Armed Forces; Rafael Montano, an electrical worker; Mohamed Sarki, a student at the Latin American School of Medicine who is originally from Nigeria; Haniel García, 20, a fisherman; Juan Legio, an automation technician; and Zito Minami, a janitor in a train station who also helps out on his father-in-law's farm.

Pathfinder hosted presentations of three titles at this year's fair: *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, an interview with Victor Dreke; *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, by Thomas Sankara; and *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández. A number of people went to the Pathfinder booth looking for the three new titles and to see what other revolutionary literature was available from Pathfinder.

Julio Valladares, 59, a veteran of the Angola internationalist mission, came to the fair with Roy Lorenzo Salazar. Both



Militant/Daniel Ahl

Pathfinder booth at book fair drew a constant stream of visitors, who discussed political questions as they looked at the revolutionary books on sale. "The capitalists are afraid of workers becoming cultured. If they get access to culture they can find an alternative," said retired dockworker Julio Valladares.

retired dockworkers, they spoke about the importance of workers reading. "The capitalists are afraid of workers becoming cultured. If they get access to culture they can find an alternative," said Valladares.

"This is what scares the bosses in capitalist countries," added Lorenzo. "Cuba is the only country in the Americas where the government wants to raise the cultural level of the people."

'We need books like these'

Discussions ranged over a wide number of topics. One of those that drew the most interest was the imperialists' Afghan war and the U.S. rulers' offensive against workers' rights, including the holding of prisoners at the U.S. military base on Cuban territory at Guantánamo. Other questions included life in Cuba today, the economic crisis and popular explosions in Argentina, which have been widely covered in the Cuban media; and the growing campaign by imperialism and its allies in Venezuela to overthrow the government of Hugo Chávez.

"We need books like these," said Lohania Aruca, a history teacher and researcher, pointing to *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes. "We know a great deal about the enemy but not so much about the working class in the United States." There was marked interest in *Capitalism's World Disorder*, also by Barnes, and many picked up issue 5 of the

Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional* to express their agreement with its title, "U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War."

Not everyone agreed. Augusto Kohan, a graduate in economics from the University of Havana, came by to discuss the book he had bought at last year's fair. "From the point of view of communists, they have lost the Cold War," he argued. "From the point of view of the imperialists, they wanted to destroy the Soviet Union and this they succeeded in doing."

Isabel González was among the dozens of people who expressed interest in the writings of Bolshevik revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. "I studied in Odessa in the Ukraine and I know about the crimes of Stalin," González said. "But I haven't read any Trotsky." Interest in books by Trotsky was second only to requests for books by Black U.S. working-class leader Malcolm X, a favorite year after year at the Havana book fair.

A number of Haitian youth studying at the Latin American School of Medicine came by as word got around that Pathfinder published in French. They cleaned out the stand of all French-language literature on sale. And many left their names and addresses to keep in touch.

Next year the book fair will be dedicated to Cuban writer Pablo Armando Fernández. Invited as guests of honor are the Andean countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela.

FROM Pathfinder From the Escambray to the Congo In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution

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Thousands in Cuba mobilize to eradicate dengue fever virus

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—In neighborhoods across this city, an army of volunteers going door-to-door in groups of three or four is visible. The volunteers wear distinctive T-shirts marking out the different groups. Shirts reading "Special Detachment" and "Social Workers" identify the 2,000 students from the School for Social Workers in the eastern city of Holguín. Like other volunteers, these students have spent the week talking to Havana residents, checking household water tanks, talking to residents again, and fumigating homes. Sometimes they would help out an elderly person get to the doctor or solve another problem as they carried out their work.

These teams of youth—preceded by similar numbers arriving from Santa Clara and followed by a large contingent from Santiago de Cuba, each with their distinctive T-shirts in different colors—are part of a gigantic popular social mobilization that is being organized to eradicate dengue fever on the island.

Dengue is carried by a particular mosquito, the *Aedes aegypti*, that breeds especially in unsanitary accumulations of water in towns and cities.

The last dengue outbreak in Cuba occurred in 1981, when 158 people died, mainly children. In 1981, the government reported at the time, the disease was deliberately introduced from outside Cuba. There were huge billboards depicting the mosquito inside the letters CIA, with the slogan, "We'll smash it!" The current outbreak is different, they explain—the result of an increase in the disease in the Caribbean and other regions with tropical and subtropical climates. The capitalist economic and social crisis in the semicolonial world today breeds the kinds of conditions in which this disease can flourish.

Cuba has not escaped the mosquito-transmitted epidemic that is on the rise in surrounding countries. But because of the social mobilization of the youthful anti-dengue campaigners and the population as a whole, the Caribbean island has been able to avoid the effects experienced by countries nearby and further afield. Only two people in Havana have died as a result.

What a revolution makes possible

The mass popular campaign and the atmosphere it has generated throughout the city is only possible because workers and farmers have taken power and a popular revolutionary government is in place. The campaign is covered daily in the press and on TV, and is organized through the various mass organizations of the Cuban people.

"There are literally thousands of anti-dengue campaigners working in Havana today," said Yoandri Pérez, who hails from Las Tunas and studies at the Holguín school. "They include students at the different schools for social workers, members of voluntary construction contingents, doctors and nurses, members of the Communist Party and Union of Young Communists, and local government workers."

Pérez, 21, Yasmeli Díaz, 19, and Dayana López, 19, are among the 2,000 students from the Holguín school of social workers who traveled to Havana as part of the mobilization to beat the epidemic.

"We've been sent to Havana because this is where the most serious problem is," Díaz, who is from Ciego de Avila, explained. "There are 200 of us from Ciego de Avila, 300 from Las Tunas, 700 from Camagüey, and 800 from Holguín."

The campaign has accelerated practical training for these students, about 80 per cent of whom have never been to Havana before. The Holguín anti-dengue campaigners were organized into 15 companies, one for each of Havana's municipalities, although Díaz highlighted Old Havana, Central Havana, Playa, and La Lisa as the four districts most affected by the epidemic and where the campaigners have been concentrated.

"We originally came for a week but we're prepared to stay as long as is necessary," said López, also from Ciego de Avila. "The first to come from outside Havana were the 1,000

or so students at the school of social work in Villa Clara. Now we've arrived."

Díaz, López, and Pérez, all members of Cuba's Union of Young Communists (UJC), were part of a team of four headed up by José Herrada, 38, from Havana, who were going house-to-house in the Miramar district of Playa. They were welcomed by local residents, who have followed intently the progress of the campaign and have joined it in different ways. The four took time out of their inspection rounds to talk to the *Militant* about the anti-dengue campaign and the social workers school.

"We work 12 hours a day, seven days a week" Herrada said. He was a member of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces until 1997, when he took a job in the Ministry of Health. "The ministry of health needs its own cadres, as the current mobilization demonstrates," he explained.

A member of the Communist Party, Herrada was a soldier in Angola, after hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers answered the call to defend that African nation against an invasion by the South African apartheid regime. Herrada's job in the current campaign is to head up the team and train the youth to recognize the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito and how to deal with it.

Campaigners in neighborhoods

"Hundreds of dengue campaigners come to an area and then we break up into teams of four," Herrada said. "We go house to house inspecting water tanks and other places where the mosquito might breed. If we discover eggs in a water tank, we pour alcohol over the water and set it alight, thereby destroying the eggs. Another team will come later to check the results of our work. And a third team does the fumigation. Every house is visited at least once a week by each of the three teams."

"Part of our work is also educational. We explain the need to live in a way that's conducive to keeping dengue at bay: keeping homes clean, disposing of rubbish in the correct manner. The Ministry of Health has issued literature as part of this education effort and we have organized meetings where local residents can talk out what's needed to eradicate the disease."

"In exceptional circumstances, if a particular household consistently refuses to act responsibly, we can issue a fine of 300 to 1,200 pesos," Herrada said. But it's not fines or regulations that are going to crack the



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Students from Holguín School for Social Workers and participants in campaign to eradicate the dengue-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. Through the mass organizations of the Cuban people, thousands have been organized to join this effort.

problem, the four explained. It's through persuasion, social mobilization, and changes to the way people live that advances are being registered.

The four explained that the campaign has already scored important advances. "The infestation has declined but we won't be satisfied until we've reduced it to zero," Pérez said.

"A knock-on effect of the anti-dengue campaign is that we're generally making Havana a nicer place to live," said López. "It's being cleaned up, and the fumigation is killing all sorts of pests—such as other mosquitoes and insects, and even rats."

Schools for revolutionary social workers

During their stay in Havana, the campaigners from Las Tunas are being housed in dormitories in the Havana school for social workers in nearby Cojimar. "We don't receive any special payment, just the 50 pesos per month we get in Holguín for the 10-month duration of the course," Yasmeli Díaz reported.

Asked what they thought of the school for social workers, López replied, "Marvelous! Yasmeli and I had ended our pre-university schooling and then spent one year doing nothing. We had no job, just hung around the house. Now, having entered the school to train revolutionary social workers, we're studying society, law, politics, psychology, sociology, computing, physics, and English and Spanish. When we graduate we're guaranteed a job as social workers in the neighborhood where we live."

The Holguín school is one of four around the country. The other three are in Santa Clara, Santiago de Cuba, and Havana. The schools were one of a series of projects established last year on the initiative of the national government to address two challenges. One involved the social inequalities

and related problems that have arisen in Cuba's cities as a result of the effects of the Special Period, the term used here to describe the sharp economic and social crisis that gripped Cuba in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the regimes in Eastern Europe, with which most of Cuba's trade was conducted. The other was the fact that there were large numbers of young people who had left school but neither joined the workforce nor found a place at the university.

"Special voluntary social work was initially organized by the UJC," López explained. "Then it was decided to launch the four schools." Students spend about a year getting intense training. The schools are well supplied with teaching equipment, including videos, overhead projectors, computers, and the like. They have their own child-care centers and mini-hospital with beds and a medical crew of doctors, nurses, and dentists that functions round the clock. Students live in, returning home for four days every two weeks if they live locally, or every 25 days if they live further afield.

Before he entered the school Pérez was doing his military service. He decided to enter when his service was up after hearing an appeal by the Union of Young Communists.

"Of course, it's much better if social workers tackling such questions as people without jobs, alcoholism, problems faced by old people and children, come from the area concerned. We have a hands-on knowledge of the conditions. And the anti-dengue campaign is not just important to clear up the disease. It's important for our own education, a lesson that we'll use in the future. It's the first really practical experience that we've had as a school and we'll all come out of it stronger."

Amid economic gloom and war-weariness in Israel, Palestinians continue their struggle

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Israeli government's unending brutality against the Palestinian people, the Palestinians' continued fight for self-determination, and a deteriorating economic situation in the country have combined to help expose the colonial-settler project as a deadly trap for all Jews who live there.

Tel Aviv's escalating military repression has involved land, naval, and aerial bombardments. On February 20 Israeli forces killed 18 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Nine were gunned down in Nablus, while helicopter missiles struck and killed two Palestinians near Yasir Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah in the West Bank. Arafat is the chairman of the Palestinian Authority and central leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The 18 deaths were among the highest totals in one day since the upsurge of Palestinian protests against Israeli occupation began in September 2000. Since then, at least 861 Palestinians and 273 Israelis have been killed. Thousands more have been wounded.

The next day, Israeli tanks and troops rolled into Gaza City, firing heavy machine guns and destroying the Voice of Palestine broadcasting station. The city is home to 500,000 Palestinians. This major military operation came two days after an Israeli rocket slammed into an office rented by Hamas, kill-

ing two of its members and injuring several children who were playing outside.

In mid-February U.S.-made F-16 warplanes bombed Gaza City, destroying Palestinian property and institutions, along with offices of the United Nations. This assault followed the aerial pounding of the city that began February 10 in broad daylight.

The February 12 *Washington Post* described the F-16 fighter bomber as "a weapon that, before last spring, had not been used in 34 years, since the Six-Day War of 1967, in Gaza or the West Bank. Now its use is becoming commonplace."

"This is not a one-time operation," said Israeli military commander Brig. Gen. Yisrael Ziv after a February 13 incursion into Gaza. "This is one of a series of actions to tighten the noose around those responsible for firing the Qassam 2 and mortars." The home-made Qassam 2 rockets were fired February 10 by Hamas at Israeli settlements in Gaza. They exploded in fields, causing no injury.

The Israeli government seized on the use of these rockets to justify harsher military action and the roundup of Palestinian fighters. Israeli troops raided areas near Beir Hanun in the Gaza Strip, where the rockets were fired from, and seized 18 Palestinians.

In addition to its military assaults, the Israeli regime imposed travel restrictions on February 20 that effectively closed down all

major roads in the northern West Bank, home to more than 1 million Palestinians. Israeli tanks have been deployed within 100 yards of Yasir Arafat's headquarters, and the Israeli regime announced February 24 that the Palestinian leader would have to obtain permission from Sharon if he wanted to travel outside Ramallah.

Economic downturn hammers Israel

The world capitalist economic downturn has dealt blows to Israeli stability, with the country's gross domestic product dropping 4.7 percent in the second half of 2001. Although the contraction was expected, it "did not soften the blow of the country's worst economic performance in nearly 50 years," said an article in London's *Financial Times*.

At just over 10 percent of the workforce, the jobless rate in the country is "at its highest ever level" since its founding, the Israeli news daily *Ha'aretz* reported. In the past year 42,600 people lost their jobs—an annual increase of 19.7 percent. The paper noted that there is "no reason to believe" that the trend will "get anything but worse."

Palestinians living inside Israel's borders are bearing the brunt of the economic crisis. The 21 towns with the highest unemployment levels are all Arab, including Kafar Manda, in the Galilee, where 22 percent of

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30,000 rally against austerity measures

Continued from front page

the Ferry and Marine Workers Union holding banners and signs on an overpass welcoming participants in the demonstration. A few kilometers away, a group of Hospital Employees Union (HEU) members carried a banner that read, "Save B.C.'s hospitals."

Contracting out jobs

Most people on the 7:00 o'clock ferry that morning were heading to the rally in union buses or cars. A group of HEU members who work in building services at Surrey Memorial Hospital boarded as foot passengers, confident they could find transportation to Victoria at the other end. They said they were joining the protest because of government plans to contract out their jobs to private firms, which, they fear, would mean a 50 percent cut in their wages and an end to real job training. A co-worker of theirs who works for one of the private companies said she decided to participate in the action because she thinks all hospital workers need union protection.

Donna Harper said she is opposed to the government cuts to health care and education taking place throughout Canada. "One of my friends is studying to be a teacher in Alberta," Harper said. "She told me that government cuts mean larger class sizes, espe-

Rally participants buy 230 copies of the 'Militant'

BY MARCEL CHARBONEAU

VICTORIA, British Columbia—As tens of thousands of workers and young people gathered here February 23 to protest cuts to the social wage by the Liberal Party government of Gordon Campbell in British Columbia, 18 communist workers and Young Socialists put in a fruitful day of talking socialism with hundreds at the protest.

Members of the Communist League, Socialist Workers Party, and Young Socialists, along with other supporters from Vancouver and Seattle, sold 230 copies of the *Militant* and 14 Pathfinder books. One young Palestinian met by the team members had first run into the Young Socialists at the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students in Algiers, Algeria, in August.

There was quite a bit of interest in the *Militant's* coverage of the struggle of working people in Argentina against the devastating impact of the capitalist economic crisis there. Nurses and other hospital workers were keen to learn about the strike by nurses in New York that was featured on the front page of the *Militant*. The fact that the nurses had been on the picket lines for 83 days struck many as quite an accomplishment, especially since the British Columbia government has deemed all strikes by nurses to be illegal.

A number of workers and youth said they supported the signs on the socialists' literature tables calling for solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and for Israel to get out of the occupied territories. Among the crowd were members of the Canada Palestine Network, who were also campaigning to get out the truth about the battle for Palestinian liberation in the midst of the escalation of Israel's assaults. Two members of the group decided to attend a Militant Labor Forum on Argentina the next day in Vancouver.

Among the Pathfinder titles purchased by rally participants were *From The Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes; *Socialism On Trial* by James P. Cannon; *New International* no. 9 titled "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution"; *To Speak the Truth*, by Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara; and the *Communist Manifesto*.

Communist workers and YS members found abundant opportunities to talk about the need for revolutionary struggle by working people to fight to replace the capitalist government with one of their own. They were able to point out that it is the capitalist system that is the source of problems workers confront today.

By the end of the day, 15 protesters had signed up to receive more information on the Young Socialists, to receive Pathfinder catalogues, or to be on the mailing list for Militant Labor Forums.

cially in poorer areas like Edmonton's inner city." The Alberta government ordered teachers back to work February 21 after thousands had been on strike for more than two weeks.

Along the march route demonstrators chanted, "Hey, hey, ho, ho! Gordon Campbell's got to go" and "Liar, liar, pants on fire"—a reference to the fact that many workers feel betrayed by Campbell for breaking his promises to avoid cuts in health care and education and to respect union contracts.

Many participants brought their own signs, showing the degree of their involvement in the fight. "The Campbell nightmare continues; fight on and make your voices heard," read a sign carried by a member of the Canadian Union of Public Employees. "Only the wealthy will be healthy," and "Cuts to health care and welfare = death" were two signs highlighting the class character of the Campbell government's attack on working people.

'Aiding the rich'

"They're doing everything they can to aid their rich friends while they're ruining peoples' lives," said HEU member Lito Flores, who was in Victoria with a group from the Tilbury hospital in Delta. "B.C. fights back, enough is enough!" read the sign of one of his co-workers who, like Flores, is originally from the Philippines.

Members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union as well as the International Longshoremen's and

Warehousemen's Union carried signs opposing government plans to privatize B.C. Hydro, the electricity company.

Johanna Beavan, a home-care worker and shop steward in Courtney, came to the demonstration on a bus organized by Local 1518 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). Beavan told the *Militant* that the government "is cutting our contracts plus privatizing home care. We'll have to apply to private companies who'll pay us \$8 an hour." UFCW Local 1518 also organized buses of home-care workers from the Campbell River and Coquitlam.

Legal Aid workers organized by the B.C. Government Employees Union were well represented, given that there are only 250 of them in the province. On February 13 these workers shut down all 60 legal aid offices in B.C. to protest cuts of up to 40 per cent for legal aid, a move that will eliminate free legal services for about 100,000 of the province's poorest workers.

A big majority of those at the action were union members. Although most were from public-sector unions at hospitals, schools, and among government employees, union members from many private companies turned out as well. These included members of the International Longshoremen's Union; Teamsters; Telecommunication Workers; Communication, Energy and Paper Workers; United Steelworkers of America; International Association of Machinists; and Carpenters and Joiners. The blue and gold flags of the British Columbia Teachers Federation were visible throughout the crowd.

Participation by college and university students swelled the action. Signs produced by the Canadian Federation of Students demanding that tuition fees be reduced were everywhere.

"It's about time people fight together," said Malva Nunez from Camosun College. "I think it's important for people to fight for their rights."

High school students join action

Significant numbers of high school students were also present. "What they're doing in the schools is ridiculous—especially with class sizes," said Heather Campbell from Saahichton. Her sentiments were reflected in a sign carried by a teachers union member from Kelowna that read, "cuts to education bleed the future."

Joshua Gabriel explained that he had come to the action because he would "never work for six bucks"—the new minimum wage the provincial government has established for youth. "Hire a Liberal @ \$6/hr" read one sign. The Liberals are the governing party in the province, as well as nationally.

In addition, Native groups mobilized to protest the Campbell government's plans to hold a referendum on treaties negotiated with their peoples by the previous government.

Protests were also organized in several other towns and cities throughout the province on the same day. More are planned over the coming weeks.

Beverly Brown is a meat packer.

Peasants in Bolivia demand right to grow coca

BY RÓGER CALERO

A series of mass protests by peasants in Bolivia over the past two months has forced the government to step back from laws prohibiting the growing and selling of coca for local consumption. On February 9 thousands of peasants lifted roadblocks they had begun in mid-January on several main highways, warning they will resume their action if the government reimposes the measures.

The regime was also forced to agree to pay compensation to the families of coca growers killed by the Bolivian army and police during the protests and to cover medical expenses for the injured.

In one of the largest actions, some 5,000 peasants and supporters gathered in the town of Cochabamba January 14 to press their demands. Joined by factory workers, students, small merchants, and others, the crowd marched from the military garrison of Muyurina to the city's main plaza. Hundreds came in trucks from different towns of the coca-growing region, including from the town of Sacaba, just north of Cochabamba, which was the center of pitched battles between the coca growers and the army.

The next day a march of similar size attempted to take back and reopen a collection and distribution center occupied by the police under the pretext that coca leaves sold there were being used for cocaine production. The protesters were attacked by some 500 cops occupying the center. In the three days of battles that followed, seven peasants were killed, along with four soldiers and a police officer. Some 80 people were wounded. Twenty-five vehicles seized from alleged drug traffickers, parked in a government agency, were set on fire with molotov cocktails during the confrontations.

The cultivation of coca is the primary or only source of income for thousands of peasants in Bolivia, as well as for small merchants and truck drivers who transport the crop. Primarily grown for local consumption, coca leaves are chewed by thousands of workers in the countryside and in the mines for medicinal purposes or to mitigate hunger, thirst, and fatigue. In Cochabamba alone, press articles estimate that some 40,000 families consume coca leaves.

The Bolivian government has gone after the coca leaf distribution centers, claiming that they are an obstacle in the campaign it and Washington are waging to eradicate the cultivation of the plant for the production of cocaine. According to government officials, the U.S.-backed operation has destroyed 50,000 hectares of the crop since 1998. The Bolivian regime is preparing to extend the eradication campaign to other regions of the country.

The government has said it will assist peasants in cultivating and selling crops other than coca in order to make a living, but little has been done, peasants explain. In some areas the government has offered \$2,500 per hectare to peasants who switch to alternative crops.

"Even if they offer us \$10,000 per hectare, it would not be enough," a peasant leader told the *Economist*. In Yungas, an area in which coca has been grown since before the Spanish conquest, a UN alternative development program spent \$32.4 million in the area between 1984 and 1993 with nothing now left to show for it, the *Economist* reported.

Last December, during a ceremony to celebrate the "success" of the U.S.-Bolivian campaign to eliminate coca fields in the Chapare region, hundreds of peasants protested government policies by gathering outside a nearby military base and scattering piles of coca leaves over the road. The celebration was attended by the Bolivian president and the U.S. ambassador to the country.

Peasant leaders have also demanded the government fulfill its promises for assistance and land made in previous agreements, such as providing 1,000 tractors and 3.8 million hectares land to peasants in the Pucarani region. "We will continue with the roadblocks day and night. The government has not met the Pucarani agreement," said roadblock organizer Felipe Quispe. "The communities have instructions not to let any products out to the market, because the action is also meant to be an economic blockade."

The Bolivian army and police responded to the mobilizations with fierce repression, arresting peasant and union leaders and charging them with conspiracy to commit murder and sedition. It also moved to close down the radio station "Soberanía" (Sovereignty), which supports the coca-growers movement, by seizing its equipment. Showing their complete disregard for life, cops in Cochabamba contaminated the city's drinking water by shooting tear gas at the water purification plants. The same day, students at the university were attacked by cops with tear gas and live ammunition and three



Bolivian peasants block highway during recent protests

people were wounded.

In the wake of these assaults peasant leaders are threatening to renew the roadblocks unless those detained are released by the government.

In nearby Ecuador, unions, peasant organizations, and small merchants have initiated protest actions against the government of Gustavo Noboa to coincide with the second anniversary of the ousting of president Jamil Mahuad in February 2000. Noboa came to power when a popular rebellion forced Mahuad to flee the country. The military quickly intervened and turned power over to Noboa, who was vice president at the time.

"This will be a mobilization to recognize the overthrow of Mahuad as a symbol of social struggle in Ecuador," said Luis Villacís, who is the president of a popular coalition of unions, peasant, student organizations, and others. He warned the Noboa government "that the same thing can happen to him if he doesn't rectify his course."

The mobilizations have been called to oppose a raise in gas prices and cuts for universities and local governments. The demonstrations are also against the government's attempt to privatize the power company.

Union in Australia protests gov't spying

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an Australian is suspected of acting as an agent of a foreign power," according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. A February 14 *Herald* editorial described the DSD's powers as "formidable" and "essential for national security."

Media reports indicate that lawyers for the 438, who were in phone contact with them and challenged the government's actions preventing them from landing in Australian waters, are among those who have complained about the spying.

Union protests spying

The MUA has made a formal complaint. A February 14 statement by the union notes that more and more evidence is emerging "that the government espionage was outside the [DSD's] guidelines, a serious breach of privacy and an intrusion on legitimate union business."

"The government has not been able to justify these outrageous acts," said National Secretary Paddy Crumlin.

"Senator Hill ... claims we were not targeted but this does not rule out we were spied on nevertheless."

"Crumlin has also dismissed statements made by the Minister for Workplace Relations Tony Abbott questioning the unions' right to contact the ship," the statement said.

"All MUA/ITF correspondence with the *Tampa* was in support and concern for the crew," said Crumlin. "We believed the ship's master was only upholding maritime tradition and international law in rescuing people at sea and we told him so."

Billy Tsilimos, a straddle driver at the

Patrick's Port Botany container terminal and an MUA member for 28 years, commented, "Government attacks on us are not new. They started years ago. They're always trying to destroy the union, but we're still strong."

Australian Labor Party leader Simon Crean criticized the government over the allegations. "This isn't a genuine defense matter. This is about spying on Australian

citizens to assist with putting together a political strategy around the *Tampa*. It's not why the government's got powers to listen to telephone calls."

Ron Poulsen, an MUA member who stood in the November 10 election for the Communist League in part to vigorously defend an open border policy for refugees and immigrants, condemned the spying. "Our ability to defend our unions from government

attacks is completely tied in with the unions defending not only their own members but also every just cause. Canberra's demonization of refugees has begun to unravel. Thanks to protests by the detainees themselves to assert their humanity, now more working people are coming to realize that we are all in the same boat," he said.

Doug Cooper is a member of the MUA.

Drive to oust Chávez gains momentum

Continued from Page 2

heart to all sectors of Venezuelan society," he said during a weekly news program. "From the upper, middle, and lower class, this government belongs to all Venezuelans," he added.

Thousands of protesters, both supporting and opposing the government, are participating in actions in the streets. An anti-government demonstration February 21 outside the national university campus turned violent when a countermobilization of Chávez's supporters attempted to prevent the march from leaving the campus. Several people were injured.

Government offensive in Colombia

In neighboring Colombia, President Andrés Pastrana ordered a major military offensive against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) after breaking off negotiations February 20.

Colombian Air Force planes began bombing rebel camps, airstrips, and other facilities

as some 12,000 troops supported by tanks moved to occupy a zone that had been under FARC's control since 1998. The area had been ceded by the government as part of a negotiations process.

Colombian Air Force chief General Héctor Velasco said at a press conference that some 200 sorties had been carried out against FARC positions. The International Red Cross and the United Nations special envoy to Colombia reported civilian casualties in the area and a massive displacement of residents trying to escape the bombings.

The Bush Administration declared support for Pastrana's decision, and quickly offered to provide military intelligence and other aid to combat the guerrilla army requested by the Colombian government. The intelligence includes aerial surveillance and satellite photographs of FARC camps that would allow the military to keep track of the rebels' movements.

Under the guise of fighting drug trafficking, the United States has provided Colom-

bia with \$1.3 billion in military aid and training. The Bush administration is currently seeking approval for an additional \$98 million in equipment and training of an army brigade to protect an Occidental Petroleum oil pipeline and other infrastructure from guerrilla attacks.

Books for Cuba Fund

Militant readers are encouraged to contribute to the Books for Cuba Fund, which helps make it possible for Pathfinder books to reach working people and youth in Cuba.

Like their brothers and sisters around the world, Cuban working people find the titles published by Pathfinder to be effective revolutionary political weapons, including in the defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Through the fund, Pathfinder is able to send books and pamphlets to Cuban organizations and institutions that request them. During book fairs, the titles are made available to Cubans in pesos, at prices they can afford.

Among other initiatives, the fund also makes it possible to respond to the political interest in the books in Cuba with special donations to libraries and other cultural institutions.

Contributions, large or small, are welcome. Please send checks or money orders made out to the *Militant* and earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund" to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CANADA

Toronto

Solidarity with Fight in British Columbia to Defend the Social Wage. Speaker: Robert Simms, Communist League. Fri., Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m.
Socialism and the Fight for Women's Liberation. Speakers: Patricia O'Beirne, Communist League. Fri., Mar. 15, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 2761 Dundas St. W. Tel: (416) 767-3705.

UNITED STATES CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

The Truth Behind the U.S. Invasion of Somalia; the Continued Resistance to Imperialism's Wars Today. Speaker: Bill Kalman, Socialist Workers Party, meat packer. Fri. Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m. 3926 Mission St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

A Socialist Perspective on the Fight for Women's Equality. Speaker: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri. Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m. 4208 W. Vernor. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Socialist Workers Alternative in the Newark Mayoral Elections. Speaker: Maurice Williams, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor. Sat. Mar. 2, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Cuba's Proletarian Internationalism and its Impact in Africa. Speaker: Luis Madrid, Socialist Workers Party, helped to interview Víctor Dreke for Pathfinder's *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*. Fri., Mar. 1, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

Behind the Bush Administration's 'Axis of Evil' Speech. Fri., Mar. 1, 7:30 p.m.
Venezuela: U.S.-Backed Capitalists Prepare Coup. Speaker: Róger Calero, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

Behind Bush's 'Axis of Evil' Speech. Speaker:

Sarah Katz, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 1, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

NORTH CAROLINA

Charlotte

The Place of Pathfinder Books in Today's World. Celebrate the Publication of *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*. Pathfinder Bookstore Grand Opening. Speakers: James Harris, Socialist Workers Party; Dennis Richter, Socialist Workers Party; Representative of Young Socialists. Sat., Mar. 9, open house 1:00-4:00 p.m., reception at 3:00, program at 4:00. 2001A N. Cannon Blvd., Kannapolis N.C. Tel: (704) 933-7920.

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MICHIGAN: Detroit: 4208 W. Vernor St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 441580

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Cuba's Proletarian Internationalism and its Impact in Africa. Speaker: Arrin Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Mar. 10, 1:00 p.m. Brunch at 12 noon. 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 225. Donation: \$10 brunch and forum; \$4 forum only. Tel: (412) 365-1090.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Does an Imperialist "War Crimes Tribunal" Have the Right to Try Milosevic? Fri., Mar. 8, 7:00 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

Zip: 48244. Tel: (313) 554-0504. E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 113 Bernard St., West St. Paul. Zip: 55118. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

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NEW YORK: Brooklyn: 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Mailing address: PMB 106. 4814 4th Ave. Zip: 11220. Tel: (718) 567-8014. E-mail: swpbrooklyn@earthlink.net
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Upper Manhattan: 599 W. 187 St. #1A Zip: 10033. Tel: (212) 740-4611. E-mail: swpuptown@usa.net;

OHIO: Cleveland: 11018 Lorain Ave. Zip: 44111. Tel: (216) 688-1190. E-mail: 103253.1111@compuserve.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 5237 N. 5th St. Zip: 19120. Tel: (215) 324-7020. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com
Pittsburgh: 5907 Penn Ave. Suite 225. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 365-1090. E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

TEXAS: Houston: 619 West 8th St. Zip: 77007. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: swphouston@ev1.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3437 14th St. NW Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 387-1590. E-mail: dc-swp@starpower.net

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

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St.,

Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240. Tel: (02) 9718 9698.

E-mail: cl_australia@bigpond.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 4613 St. Laurent. Postal code: H2T 1R2. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: Librpath@sympatico.ca

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

Vancouver: #202D-4806 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3R8. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: clvancouver@cs.com

FRANCE

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

ICELAND

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

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885.

E-mail: milpath.auckland@actrix.gen.nz

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

E-mail: pathfinder.militant@paradise.net.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Domargränd 16 (T-bana Västertorp) Postal code: S-129 04. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

—CALENDAR—

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Class series on *From the Escambray to the Congo—In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke. Sponsored by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party. Wed., March 6, 13. 5237 N. 5th St. Tel: (215) 324-7020.

'Faith-based'—Warminster, Pennsylvania (AP)—“More than 50 Catholic High school students earned extra credit for protesting



Harry Ring

outside a suburban Philadelphia abortion clinic. The Archbishop Wood high school students...rallied

outside a Planned Parenthood clinic for extra credit in a religion class.... Religion teacher June Littell said she wanted to reward students for 'giving of their time.' The two-year-old clinic offers counseling, cancer screenings and contraceptives, which also drew criticism from the protesters."

Might change clubs to broomsticks—Penryn, Pennsylvania (AP)—“Police in a small Lancaster County community are refusing to direct traffic at a YMCA triathlon because they believe the YMCA promotes witchcraft by reading

Harry Potter books to children."

Of course, the janitor!—The Anderson auditing company, which helped cook the Enron books, said an internal investigation shows that its top company executives had not been responsible for the shredding of Enron documents.

Act now, be special—“Ninety people have already put up a \$75,000 membership fee to join Connecticut's newest country club—and the course isn't even built yet. The Bull's Bridge Club will be limited to 340 members. Once the

club is built, the membership fee will be \$90,000.”—News item.

Compared to half-life, nothing—Responding to local complaints of a snail's-pace cleanup of radioactive and acid waste dump in Idaho Falls, Idaho, the feds assured the cleanup would be finished within a decade. The news brief we read neglected to mention how long the mop-up has been under way.

Like they say, 'Safety first'—Goodyear Tire agreed to recall 200,000 tires from ambulances and 15-passenger vans. The tires are

linked to at least 18 deaths and 158 injuries. This leaves 21 million potentially dangerous similar tires still in use on like large-sized vehicles.

Defending 'Homeland'—“Anti-terrorist technology will be used to trap disqualified drivers by using cameras that recognize faces and number plates,” the chief constable of North Wales told members of Parliament.—The Times, London.

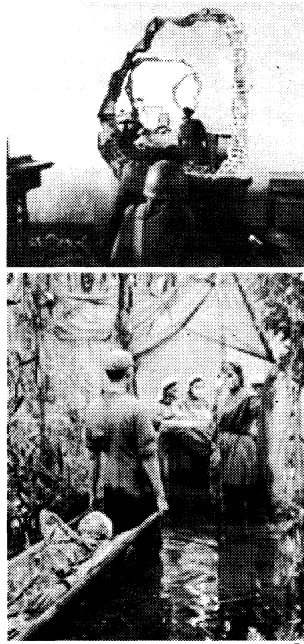
And how is the Labour Party looking?—“Shrill, nasty, racist, sexist—We've never looked worse, says top Tory leader”—London headline.

Vietnam photos show revolution, war of liberation

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

“Another Vietnam: Pictures of the War from the Other Side” is an exhibition of more than 120 pictures by Vietnamese photographers at the International Center for Photography in Manhattan. The exhibition focuses on the period of the U.S. imperialist assault on Vietnam, lasting two decades from the mid-1950s. A smaller section covers the period of the 1946–54 guerrilla war against the French colonial rulers.

The exhibition provides valuable glimpses of a key event in post-World War II history. The Vietnam War saw U.S. imperialism suffer a historic defeat, following its setback in the 1950–53 Korean War. Aided by the growth of a massive international antiwar movement, which demanded the withdrawal of all imperialist armies, the



From “Another Vietnam”: Left, militia member guards northern hamlet, 1968; Middle top, National Liberation Front soldiers move through “fighting holes,” created in battle against French; Middle bottom, casualty is carried to operating room in mangrove swamp on Ca Mau peninsula, 1970; Right, new recruits to the North Vietnamese army undergo physical examinations in Haiphong, 1967.

IN REVIEW

Vietnamese liberation forces fought off the full fury of the U.S. military machine.

In Indochina, Washington unleashed more bombs than had been dropped in all previous wars combined. By 1969, more than half a million U.S. soldiers were in the region. Close to 60,000 U.S. troops died in the conflict before their withdrawal in 1973. Millions of inhabitants of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos were killed on the way to victory in 1975.

This triumphant war of national liberation, involving both popular guerrilla warfare and large-scale military offensives, was part of an ongoing revolution by workers and peasants to unify the country and to break the rule of landlord and capitalist exploiters both north and south by making a socialist revolution.

“Another Vietnam” presents a different perspective from the most revealing and well-known photos published in the Western media. These tend to focus on the horrific impact of Washington's relentless aerial bombardment, as well as the degrading social effects of imperialist occupation. By contrast, most of the pictures on display are part of the record of a revolutionary struggle, depicting the daily lives and military resistance of the Vietnamese people.

The exhibit includes pictures taken by photographer-soldiers dispatched by news agencies of the government of the North and by the National Liberation Front (NLF) based in the south. As the photographers shared the life of the guerrilla troops and Northern soldiers, said Nguyen Dinh Vu, “We lived in the border between life and death.” The death toll of photographers of the liberation struggle was high, with some 160 killed in the wars against the French and U.S. invaders.

One reason was that they had to be close to the action. “We worked with rudimentary equipment, no zoom lenses like nowadays, so we had to get close to the subject,” said Le Minh Truong.

‘World's largest darkroom’

Photographers frequently constructed simple darkrooms to develop their shots in the fields by the light of kerosene lamps. Others worked with even less equipment, processing their film in the “world's largest darkroom,” as Vietnam at night was described. With film or prints in hand, the photographers then had to “deliver our babies ourselves” to the news services, said Doan Cong Trinh.

The results are powerful and instructive. Photos of individual and collective dedica-

tion to the struggle include a soldier receiving treatment for shrapnel wounds, clutching a grenade as he demands to return to the battle. Another is of an officer leading a close-quarter attack through jungle foliage, armed only with a pistol.

From the period of the war against Paris, a photo of the “fighting holes” that people knocked into their house walls that allowed liberation forces to move through a village without appearing in the street is particularly striking.

Although they frequently fought in bare feet, with inferior equipment or weapons captured from the enemy, the Vietnamese soldiers and working people built a powerful fighting force. The North Vietnamese army grew from 35,000 troops in 1950 to half a million by the mid-1970s. Together with the National Liberation Front, they were able to stand up to the U.S. air and ground forces, and the huge and well-equipped U.S.-backed southern army.

The key role played by women in military and economic life is well depicted. Many fought in antiaircraft units, in the infantry, and in the militia which guarded villages and communities. They also took on other “nontraditional tasks” in agriculture and fishing. In one shot, young women work alongside men to fill in bomb craters.

Several other photos show the devastation wrought by the U.S. air war. Seeking to deprive the liberation forces of cover, U.S. officers ordered the dropping of 40 million pounds of the defoliant Agent Orange, leaving vast tracts of the Mekong Delta and other forest areas as a wasteland of bare tree trunks.

Napalm, designed to suck oxygen out of an area and kill by suffocation as well as by direct contact with the skin, was widely used. U.S. planes dropped hand grenades on flimsy bomb shelters in areas where swampy conditions made it impossible for the Vietnamese to dig the tunnels that elsewhere frequently thwarted the U.S. attacks.

One shot shows a militia member with binoculars counting bombs as they fall. Those that did not explode on the spot would later be located and defused.

The scale of the liberation war can be seen in the section of the exhibition on the Ho Chi Minh trail. What was in 1964 little more than a network of jungle trails was built into a major link between north and south, with buried diesel pipes and telephone wires along its entire 12,000-mile length. Trucks

and elephants carried both foodstuffs and military materiel along this road. By 1969 some 10,000 troops a month were moving from north to south.

Volunteer teams from Cuba helped in the construction of the trail, a fact not reported in the exhibition. One shot shows Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro during a clandestine visit to the front, celebrating the 1973 victory over U.S. and South Vietnamese forces at Khe Sanh.

Spontaneous celebrations also broke out in the southern capital of Saigon two years

later, as city residents welcomed the victorious Northern and NLF fighters. Outside the city, the highway was strewn with boots and military clothing abandoned by south Vietnamese soldiers as they fled and tried to blend in with the crowds. The shot was captured by a soldier-photographer from the back of a truck as it sped its way into the liberated city.

“Another Vietnam,” on display until March 17, is an opportunity for working people and youth to learn more about this historic struggle.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

March 11, 1977

The Carter administration is planning a massive crackdown on Mexicans who have entered the United States without immigration permits, according to Secretary of Labor F. Ray Marshall.

The plan calls for barring undocumented workers—the so-called illegal aliens—from employment. To enforce this, Marshall said, the administration intends to introduce a system of “counterfeitproof” identification cards for all working people.

Traditionally associated with police states, such compulsory identification—or internal passports—would constitute a heavy blow to civil liberties.

Marshall told the *Los Angeles Times* that Carter had created a cabinet-level committee to deal with the issue. The committee includes Marshall, Attorney General Griffin Bell, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance.

The administration intends to “get everything together and be sure we are ready and then we can move in a hurry.”

Why is the government planning such drastic moves at this particular time?

Along with the racist victimization of undocumented *mexicanos*, it is aimed squarely at the rights, wages, and living conditions of all U.S. workers.

Until now, the government has been content to let undocumented workers slip across the border when unemployment is low and step up deportations when a supply of domestic cheap labor is available.

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

March 10, 1952

DETROIT—After a witch hunting orgy that raged for a week to the accompaniment of screaming newspaper headlines and blaring radio broadcasts the House Un-American Activities Committee recessed its Detroit hearings after threatening a return engagement here next Monday.

The main target of the witch hunt, according to advance notice, was to be UAW-CIO Ford Local 600, largest local union in the world. Because of its opposition to the red-baiting Reuther administration and its vigorous advocacy of a militant union program Local 600 appears as the symbol of “communism” to the labor-hating gang who descended on Detroit.

When the smoke cleared the witch-hunters could claim a few victims—but none in the ranks of Local 600.

One of the most ominous aspects of the committee inquisition was the attempt to terrorize the Negro community by concentrating a murderous fire against a number of prominent Negro leaders in the fight against Jim Crow. Coleman Young, secretary of the recently formed National Negro Labor Council was grilled for over an hour by the committee.

At another point in the questioning committee counsel Tavenner, admitting there was no “evidence” of Communist Party membership, asked Young what he knew about the CP. “You have me mixed up with a stool pigeon, sir,” Young replied.

Deepen support for Italie fight

Continued from front page
in Afghanistan, the threats against the people of north Korea, Iran, and Iraq, and the deployment of U.S. troops in the Philippines are an extension of the bipartisan domestic policy of the U.S. rulers. Their assault on the social wage, conditions of life, and political space at home is aimed at pushing back, dividing, and defeating the working class.

Supporters of Italie can also talk about the example of the Cuban Revolution and the tremendous advances working people have made since taking state power out of the hands of the capitalists and landlords, making a socialist revolution, and reaching out to support other liberation struggles around the globe.

Michael Italie's unflinching stand and nationwide fight set an example for others in speaking out against attacks on workers' rights. Under capitalism, those rights can never be protected through laws or in the courts. Italie's case is just one of many examples that shine a spotlight on the fact that laws under capitalism are not written to protect workers' rights. Even if a legal case can be mounted, Italie knows what millions of other workers do from firsthand experience: the odds are stacked against him in the capitalist courts.

These institutions of the ruling class simply give legal cover to the defense of the prerogatives of the bosses and the curbing of the rights of working people, especially Blacks and Latinos, who in disproportionately large numbers get caught up in the legal system.

The war fever that Washington began to whip up after September 11 has petered out. With each passing day more workers are more concerned with cop killings, rising unemployment, or bosses squeezing more sweat and blood out of our bodies to fatten their own pockets. Many will welcome information on Italie's fight.

The rulers are running into roadblocks in their attempt to go after working people's rights. Elementary solidarity in the defense of a fellow worker given a raw deal and messed over by the boss is widespread. Italie's fight touches a raw nerve, especially when workers find out how Goodwill—supposedly a "charity"—gets around state and federal minimum wage laws so it can pay disabled workers substantially below the already miserly minimum.

In his speaking tours and meetings, Michael Italie offers everyone the same road he has taken—that of dedicating their life to the revolutionary movement and joining in the struggle to overthrow the system that exploits labor and brutalizes working people.

We encourage all supporters of this fight to organize more tours across the United States that include house meetings with co-workers, discussions with unionists and others involved in struggles today, and public events.

This fight is a tool to find and recruit workers and farmers to Italie's party, the Socialist Workers Party. Most workers, regardless of their political views, will listen to and support a fellow fighter who stands up to a political firing. Many individuals will want to learn more about the political perspective he presents and to follow his example.

Steel bosses seek to dump pensions

The steel bosses' drive to dump the "huge burden" of retirees' pensions and health-care costs onto the federal government so they can get back to making a profit captures the capitalist rulers' real view of working people. Maybe they should just cut to the chase: when they retire, steelworkers should just be put in the blast furnace so they aren't a burden to the bosses. Meat packers, for their part, could jump into the rendering vat to help boost the capitalists' profit drive.

For 600,000 steelworkers and their families to be threatened with the loss of their pensions and health care by the steel barons is an outrage. It's a similar story for miners being denied access to black lung benefits by the coal bosses in cahoots with the government, seeking to impose ever-more restrictive requirements.

Under the capitalist system working people have no value for the bosses unless they're at work producing surplus value. The fact that steelworkers and other working people are living years past the age of retirement is viewed by the bosses as simply a drain on their profits. This fact alone speaks volumes about the social and political bankruptcy of the capitalist system.

Many of the same steel companies that claim they can't afford to pay health and pension benefits to steelworkers have also been seeking to rid themselves of obligations to coal miners on their payroll. Recent court decisions have allowed coal companies to stop paying into the Combined Benefit Fund for miners. Of the top five companies that

contribute to this fund, three—U.S. Steel, LTV, and BethEnergy Mines—are, or in the recent past have been subdivisions of, major steel companies.

The capitalist rulers seek to impose on individual families and workers the responsibility for social services that should be organized and taken care of by society as a whole. But the bosses, with backing from the trade union officialdom, have tied workers' "benefits" to the profitability of a particular employer or the well-being of the industry in which they're employed. In good times such a system appears to work for those lucky enough to belong to a union. But as the capitalist system sinks into deeper crisis—with more collapses like Enron on the horizon and bankruptcies like those occurring throughout the steel industry—the entire setup spells disaster for working people.

In backing the steel bosses' demand for a government bailout to save "our" industry and "our" jobs, the trade union bureaucracy has betrayed the fight that needs to be waged to meet the social security needs of the entire working class. Rather than tying health and pension benefits to the ups and downs of a particular capitalist company, the labor movement must fight for nationwide, government-guaranteed lifetime entitlements for all. This should include cradle-to-grave health care, retirement benefits, and coverage for disabled workers and their families, as well as national unemployment insurance at a livable level and funding for education and child-care needs.

Korean strike wins massive solidarity

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

A strike by railway and power workers and other government employees in south Korea that began February 26 attracted massive solidarity from industrial unions in the private sector, along with threats of police attacks and court action by the government.

Thousands of workers honored the strike call, which was sparked by government plans to privatize rail, electricity, and gas networks. Union spokespeople explained that the proposals would mean heavy job losses and would threaten safety and levels of service. While the government brought in scab workers to keep the highly automated gas and electricity services up and running, the rail system was brought to an effective halt. "The railroad suffered greatly from the strike," said Sohn Hak-Rae, head of the Korea National Railroad.

Many workers joined a vigil at two Seoul campuses for the duration of the job action.

On the first day of the stoppage, 50,000 workers at 93 private firms nationwide walked out in solidarity. Among them were 20,000 unionists at Hyundai and Kia Motors, south Korea's two largest car makers. Hyundai union spokesperson Lee Hyeon-woo described the four-hour strike as a warning. "We will keep monitoring developments in labor talks for future actions," he said.

With opposition parties in support, the government termed the public workers' strike illegal and said it would push ahead with its privatization program. State prosecutors said they would seek the arrest of 36 strike leaders, and warned that police could be used to attack workers' demonstrations and picket lines.

"The government must handle the strike through dia-

logue with the utmost patience but we must also deal with violence and illegality in a principled way," said President Kim Dae Jung.

"The strike is the latest blight on Mr. Kim's final year in office, following a string of government corruption scandals and a breakdown in his trademark 'sunshine' policy of engagement with communist North Korea," reported the *Financial Times*.

Pyongyang rejects Bush's threats

During his February 20-21 trip to south Korea, U.S. president George Bush reiterated the bellicose statements toward the government and people of the northern workers state of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) that was featured in his January 29 State of the Union address.

"In our dealings with north Korea, we've laid down a clear marker," he told U.S. soldiers at Camp Bonifas, who are among the 37,000 troops that Washington has stationed in the south. "We will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us or our friends or our allies with weapons of mass destruction," he said.

The government in Pyongyang said that Bush's remarks were "calculated to drive a wedge" between the government and people of the north, and had "made clearer the U.S. intention to violate the sovereignty of the DPRK, openly interfere in its internal affairs and stifle it by force."

The statement, released by the DPRK Foreign Ministry on February 22, described "Bush's outbursts" as an "insult to the national feelings of the Korean people," and emphasized the country's preparedness to defend itself against attack.

Israeli escalation

Continued from Page 10

the workforce are without a job.

Some Israeli workers have begun organizing job actions in response to the deepening recession and the assault on their living standards. Workers at the Bagir textile plant in southern Israel barricaded themselves in the factory, started bonfires, and threatened suicide in mid-February after learning that more than half the 1,080 workers were on the verge of being fired.

'War-weary Israelis'

A recent article in the *Washington Post* reported that a rising number of Israeli citizens see the "impossibility of a military victory" despite "their armed forces' almost daily strikes." The article, headlined "Weary Israelis Once Again Feel Grind of Conflict," noted that the "growing Israeli despair has been fueled not only by suicide bombings but also by the Palestinians' growing prowess as guerrilla fighters."

A 30-year-old staff sergeant who was a veteran of Tel Aviv's military occupation in Lebanon told the *Post*, "These guys are fanatic and determined. It's like if you blink, you get it, even if you're unprepared for a second."

The war-weariness of the Israeli population and the escalating military repression by the Zionist regime against Palestinians fighting for self-determination have fueled dissent among the Israeli military. Some 270 Israeli Army reservists—mostly sergeants and junior officers in combat units—have signed a statement saying that if called up for duty they will refuse to serve in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. The public refusals began in January, when 52 reserve soldiers declared that their stance was based on the unwarranted killings of Palestinian teenagers and the daily humiliations of Palestinians in the territories.

A group of 1,000 army reserve generals and high-ranking veterans of the Mossad and Shin Bet secret service, organized in a group called the Council for Peace and Security, have announced a campaign to press the government to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and large parts of the West Bank. The group has called for 50 Israeli settlements to be dismantled.

These developments have helped to revive protest actions. A rally against the war on February 16 drew 10,000 people in Tel Aviv, the largest since September 2000.

For his part, Israeli prime minister Sharon, who has won support from the Bush administration, has proposed establishing "buffer zones" in and around the West Bank and Gaza Strip that could be more than half a mile wide with fences and patrols by Israeli military forces. He did not elaborate on how the buffer zones would affect the more than 200,000 Israeli settlers who live in the occupied territories, surrounded by 3.2 million Palestinians.

Palestinian officials denounced the plan as a pretext for grabbing more Palestinian territory. "It amounts to a new occupation of our lands," said Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat.

The Bush administration expressed support on February 26 for a "peace proposal" floated by Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Abdullah. A senior official later told CNN that the plan "isn't doable for now," without a cessation of fighting between Israel and the Palestinians.

The proposal is presented in the big-business media as a plan for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories it captured in the 1967 war against Arab countries, in return for the full normalization of relations with all Arab governments. While no details of the plan have been made public or formally presented to the Israeli or other Arab regimes, Tel Aviv has rejected similar deals for decades.

"[Israel] is not expected to return to the vulnerable lines of 1967," wrote Dore Gold, an adviser to Sharon, in an opinion piece published in the February 27 *New York Times*. The Israeli ruling class "will not experiment with the lives of its citizens by agreeing to concessions that strip away tangible components of its national security," he added, reiterating Sharon's plans to set up buffer zones.

Decline of Israeli state

Despite the attempts to pummel the Palestinian people into submission, Israel is declining as a colonial-settler state. While the regime has sought to encourage Jewish immigration, many are instead leaving the country. A growing number of Israelis who have dual citizenship are beginning to spend more of their time outside the region. "Israeli society is disintegrating and fragmenting," observed a Palestinian analyst on Israeli affairs, speaking in Hebrew on Palestinian television.

"They're quite distraught about the situation because they had thought that this was behind them and they could get down to living normal lives," said Joshua Muravchik, of the American Enterprise Institute. "They're painfully disappointed to suddenly discover that that's an illusion. And they're not really ready to go back to the days of the pioneers, when people were always armed and always under fire."

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, with the full support of the U.S. government, involved the expulsion of 700,000 Palestinians from their homeland and confiscation of their land. Palestinians who remain in Israel, while having a status above those living in the occupied territories, live a life of second-class citizenship. Today the official number of Palestinian refugees living in the Middle East is more than 3 million, according to the Palestinian National Authority. The Israeli regime staunchly opposes their demand to return to their homes and land.

'We built Red Army on new class foundation'

Printed below is an excerpt from *Military Writings* by Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The item is from the chapter "Military doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism." Written in 1921, it was originally published as a pamphlet by the Supreme Military Council. The first workers and peasants government in Russia formed the Red Army to defend the October 1917 socialist revolution. Trotsky was commissar of war from 1918 to 1925, and led the Red Army to victory in the civil war, which included crushing the imperialist invasion aimed at overturning the new revolutionary power. Copyright © 1971 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY LEON TROTSKY

A quickening of military thought and a heightening of interest in theoretical problems is unquestionably to be observed in the Red Army. For more than three years we fought and built under fire, then we demon-

strated, domestic-political and military-political in character. The situation is constantly changing and, in consequence, the orientation likewise changes. It changes not in principle but in practice. Up to now we have successfully coped with the military tasks imposed upon us by the international and domestic position of Soviet Russia. Our orientation proved to be more correct, more far-sighted and deeper-going than the orientation of the mightiest imperialist powers who have sought individually and collectively to bring us down, but who burned their fingers in the attempt. Our superiority lies in possessing the irreplaceable scientific method of orientation—Marxism. It is the most powerful and at the same time subtle instrument—to use it is not as easy as shelling peas. One must learn how to operate with it. Our party's past has taught us through long and hard experience just how to apply the methods of Marxism to the most complex combination of factors and forces during the historical epoch of sharpest breaks. We likewise employ the instrument of Marxism in order to define the basis for our military construction.

It is quite otherwise with our enemies. If the advanced bourgeoisie has banished inertia, routinism and superstition from the domain of productive technology, and has sought to build each enterprise on the precise foundations of scientific methods, then in the field of social orientation the bourgeoisie has proved impotent, because of its class position, to rise to the heights of scientific method. Our class enemies are empiricists, that is, they operate from one occasion to the next, guided not by the analysis of historical development, but by practical experience, routinism, rule of the thumb, and instinct....

'History is working in our favor'

We foresaw the inevitability of the imperialist war as the prologue to the epoch of proletarian revolution. With this as our starting point we then kept following the course of the war, the methods employed in it, the shifts in the groupings of class forces and on the basis of our observations there crystallized much more directly—if one were to employ a pompous style—the "doctrine" of

the Soviet system and the Red Army. From the scientific foresight of the further course of events we gained unconquerable confidence that history is working in our favor. And this optimistic confidence has been and remains the foundation of all our activity.

Marxism does not supply ready-made prescriptions, least of all in the sphere of military construction. But here, too, it provided us with the method. For if it is correct that war is a continuation of politics by other means, then it follows that the army, with bayonets held ready, is the continuation and the capstone of the entire social-state structure.

Our approach to military questions proceeds not from any "military doctrine" as a sum-total of dogmatic postulates; we proceeded from the Marxist analysis of what the requirements are for the self-defense of the working class that has taken power into its own hands; the working class that must arm itself after having disarmed the bourgeoisie; that must fight to maintain its power; that must lead the peasants against the landlords; that must not permit the *kulak* democracy to arm the peasants against the workers state; that must create a reliable commanding staff in the Army, etc., etc.

In building the Red Army we utilized Red Guard detachments as well as the old statutes as well as peasant *atamans* and former Czarist generals. This, of course, might be designated as the absence of "unified doctrine" in the sphere of forming the army and its commanding staff. But such an appraisal would be pedantically banal. Assuredly, we did not take a dogmatic "doctrine" as our starting point. We actually created the army from the historical material ready at hand, unifying all this work from the standpoint of a workers state fighting to preserve, entrench and extend itself. Those who can't get along without the metaphysically compromised word, doctrine, might say that in creating the Red Army, the armed power on a new class foundation, we thereby built a new military doctrine, inasmuch as despite the diversity of practical measures and the multiplicity of ways and means employed in our military construction, there could not be nor was there either empiricism, barren of ideas, or subjective arbitrariness in the entire work which from beginning to end was fused together by the unity of the class revolutionary goal, by the unity of the will directed to this end, by the unity of the Marxist method of orientation.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

bilized and distributed the troops in quarters. This process still remains unfinished to this very day, but the Army is already close to a high degree of organizational definitiveness and has acquired a certain stability. Within it is felt a growing and increasingly urgent need of surveying the road already travelled, drafting the balance sheet, drawing the most necessary theoretical and practical conclusions in order to be better shod for the morrow.

And what will tomorrow bring? New eruptions of civil war fed from without? Or an open attack upon us by bourgeois states? Which ones will strike? How should resistance be prepared? All these questions demand an orientation that is international-po-



LETTERS

Support Sinn Fein

I would like to respond to a letter in the February 25 issue which called for revolutionary socialists to review the support they gave to Sinn Fein. It appears that the contributor feels that the party is about to "follow the ANC" and embrace neoliberal politics.

Criticism of Gerry Adams' visit to the World Economic Forum occurs without any reference to context. In reality, he was attending a debate on the future of the North of Ireland. Also attending was David Trimble (pro-British Unionist party) and Mark Durkan (Social Democratic Labour Party, a bourgeois nationalist party). Is Mr. Fritz suggesting that Sinn Fein allow other parties to argue their cases but for Republicans to "cut off our nose to spite ourselves"?

The Republican movement is in the midst of a conflict resolution process, one in which it is involved in strategic compromises, one which offers a road map to Irish liberation (and the subsequent achievement of a 32-County Socialist Republic). This situation has come about because of the inability of either militant Republicanism or British Imperialism to achieve an all-out military victory. If Gerry Adams can bring any (bourgeois) political forces to bear to support the cause of Irish reunification through his acts of participation (and still make comments on the need for canceling third world debt) then we as Socialists should support that.

The crucial issue here is that the Irish Republicans are acting, objectively, in the interests of the international proletariat. Indeed, I would contest that any national liberation movement which acts to defeat imperialism, to limit its strength, and to pass power back to the oppressed peoples is something which needs to be supported completely.

The movement for Irish liberation is precisely such a force; it has a mass base and can effectively mobilize tens of thousands onto the streets for progressive objectives. Sinn Fein is a party committed to the achievement of the 32-county independent Irish Socialist Republic. It is constitutionally bound to the achievement of the 1919 Democratic Programme passed by the first all-Ireland parliament which made explicit the common ownership of the means of production.

D. O'C.
Ireland

Pizza Hut workers

I am writing from a newly formed union of Pizza Hut workers in Greece. The core of initial activists are anarchist, but there are now many more independent workers. We participated in the big strike in Athens last April and have managed to get a colleague rehired who was fired last July. We have achieved better working conditions at one shop and have organized another. We have contacts with Pizza Hut workers in many more shops, including in Thessaloniki.

We would like to establish contact with workers in Pizza Hut all over the world (globalization of resistance is the only way to confront the globalization of capital). If you can help us we would be pleased.

Michael Stathogiannis
Athens, Greece

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

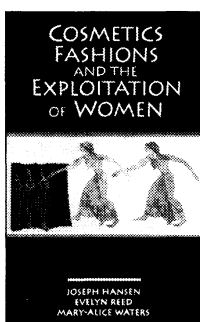
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March BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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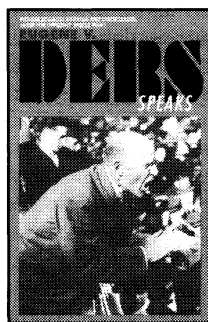
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Farmers hold meetings across Scotland

They say government regulations on nitrates unneeded, add work and costs

BY PETE WILLSON,

INVERURIE, Scotland—"Why should we spend time and money on this?" argued dairy farmer Ian Wakely to a packed meeting of 300 farmers here February 13. The meeting was called to discuss new regulations government officials claim will reduce nitrate levels in groundwater. The move would add extra costs and work onto the backs of farmers.

Held in a livestock market here, the meeting was the seventh organized by the National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS). Addressing these well-attended events have been representatives of the Scottish Executive, the governing body of Scotland, as well as soil and geological experts. The Scottish Executive says it plans to designate 20 percent of the country, including virtually all the arable land, as "nitrate vulnerable zones" or NVZs. Restrictions on use of nitrate fertilizer and manure use are to be imposed on 14,500 farmers in those areas late next year.

This move comes in response to a European Union (EU) directive stating that member states must take action when nitrate levels reach more than 50 milligrams per liter

of water. Water polluted with these levels of nitrates has been linked to cancer and encourages explosive growth of algae, which deprives fish and plant life of oxygen in rivers and lochs. London has yet to decide how to respond to the directive in England.

"The gloves were off," reported the *Press and Journal* after the first meeting took place in Fife. The paper reports "round one" went to the farmers. NFUS leader Rog Wood reported 200 farmers meeting in Dumfries were unanimous in their opposition to the plan. Attacking the Scottish Executive, he added that "many felt [they were] using a sledgehammer to crack a nut."

This reaction of farmers is significant in the wake of the devastating impact of the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom. The government culled 6 million animals to try to stop the spread of the disease and imposed widespread restrictions on sale and movement of all other livestock. Farmers whose stock was killed were compensated, but those who ended up unable to sell livestock trapped on their farms received nothing.

The *Financial Times* reported February

20 that in the wake of the foot-and-mouth disease, one in 10 farmers is planning to leave the industry. London has sought from the start to take advantage of the blow this dealt to working farmers to reorganize agriculture to better suit the needs of big business. For example, the main recommendation of a recent government commission is to end general production subsidies that many working farmers depend on, and instead to direct payments towards so-called "agri-environmental schemes."

Few government facts

Many farmers at the NVZ meetings have disputed the claims that nitrate levels are too high. At the meeting here, NFUS leader Cameron Ewen asked the Scottish Executive spokesperson for facts on when nitrate levels in his local river had exceeded regulations.

When there was no response to his question Ewen argued the restrictions are "all based on scientific theory. But what you need is the facts and you haven't provided them." The soil and geological advisers to the Scottish government at the meeting admitted that rather than paying for new re-

search, their claims are based on limited and already existing samples of groundwater. Of these, only 21 percent recorded nitrate levels over the EU limit. This led several farmers to ask why the regulations were being imposed. Toby Willison, representing the Scottish Executive, stressed their concern was primarily to comply with the EU directive and avoid legal action.

"There will be a massive amount of paperwork if the scheme is adopted as suggested," Allan Smith, chair of the Northeast NFUS, told the *Press and Journal*. He estimates the regulations would add an extra 35 hours a year of work for each farmer. This comes on top of additional paperwork the government has required farmers to fill out since the foot-and-mouth outbreak.

Among the new records farmers may have to keep is the level of manure produced by their livestock in each field. The changes in farming practices focus on restricting the use of nitrate-based fertilizers and manure in the autumn and winter months. Although many farmers already do this, they anticipate extra costs from having to build slurry towers to store manure during those months.

The Scottish Executive has so far indicated there will be no capital aid to cover the extra costs farmers will face with the new regulations. The NFUS is calling for a voluntary code rather than mandatory legislation and compensation for the costs farmers incur.

A parallel development to this is also taking place in Ireland, where "Organic Waste regulations" require livestock farmers to bring in new waste facilities and restrict the use of livestock manure and slurry. These moves are part of the Irish government's response to the same EU-inspired directives.

In Silgo, a predominantly rural area, the county council adopted a motion in mid-January calling on the Irish government to drop these moves. Speaking to this motion, Sinn Fein leader Sean MacManus said the measures will have "a devastating cost effect on small farmers whose incomes have diminished, and from whom all pollution control aid has been withdrawn by the government." MacManus, reminding his audience that thousands of farmers have been forced out of business in recent years, called for grants to compensate small farmers.

Union in Australia protests gov't spying

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—Revelations of government spying on the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), and others surfaced February 12. The development confirms that growing attacks on the rights of refugees and immigrants are part of a broader offensive against the rights of all working people.

The Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), a top-secret government spy agency that eavesdrops on all phone and satellite communications in the region, intercepted conversations between Arne Rinnan, captain of the Norwegian container ship *Tampa*, and officials of the MUA, the ITF, and others in August and September 2001.

The *Tampa* rescued 438 asylum-seekers after their boat sank in international waters in the Indian Ocean in late August 2001. It was then boarded by Special Air Services (SAS) commandos and prevented from entering Australian waters near the Australian territory of Christmas Island.

According to the February 12 *Daily Telegraph*, transcripts of the *Tampa* conversations were passed on to the government of conservative Prime Minister John Howard, which used them to formulate a political response.

After weeks at sea and a campaign of demonization by the government and big-business media marked by "fortress Australia" rhetoric, most of the mainly Afghan and South Asian refugees were dumped at detention camps set up at the demand of the Australian government in Papua New Guinea, a former Australian colony, and Nauru, where they remain. Some 130 went to New Zealand, where virtually all have been given asylum as refugees. Polarization around the issue helped the Howard government win a third term in the November 10 election.

Defense Minister Robert Hill denied any wrongdoing but was quickly forced to admit one "inadvertent" breach of the DSD's guidelines, which was then revealed to have actually been four breaches. He ordered William Blick, the Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security, to investigate the allegations.

Considered the most powerful Australian spy agency, the DSD has a close relationship with the U.S. National Security Agency and the United Kingdom's General Communications Headquarters. Nominally, the DSD has no authority to monitor domestic communications. In reality, its charter provides for exceptions in the case of "serious criminal offenses, or where there is a threat to the life and safety of Australians, or when

Continued on Page 12



Some 12,000 people rallied February 12 in the capital city of Canberra to demand an end to Australian government's brutal treatment of refugees.

2,000 condemn racist killing in Spain

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"My husband traveled [to Spain] with the dream of making our life better," said Ivonne Guznay, an Ecuadoran immigrant. "On February 15 my three children and I were going to come here to be with Wilson, but they killed him."

Guznay spoke during a demonstration of 2,000 people in Barcelona protesting the racist murder of her husband Wilson Pacheco. She led the march down a main street in Barcelona to the entertainment complex where he was slain.

Pacheco and several other Ecuadorans were denied entrance to a nightclub in Barcelona January 27 and a heated confrontation ensued. When the Ecuadoran men began fleeing the area they were chased by the doorman, the bouncer from the bar, and two security guards from a nearby club. The racists caught Pacheco, beat him, and shoved him into the harbor.

"If he had been Spanish they might have beaten him, but they would not have thrown him into the water. They would only do that to an immigrant, thinking that he would have no papers. That is why it is racist," said Javier Pedreño, a native Spaniard who is director of the Association of Ecuadorans and a spokesman for Pacheco's family.

The death of Pacheco and the subsequent rally condemning the racist murder highlights the growing social polarization in Europe, where immigration has become a central political issue. In Spain, Germany,

and other imperialist countries the capitalist rulers have encouraged an explosion of immigrants who are forced to come to major cities to eke out an existence.

"We are in an international competition for the best workers," said Rita Suessmuth, who heads a commission appointed by the German government to propose legislation increasing immigration levels. Facing a declining population because of low birthrates, some industry officials say that the country needs to bring in as many as 200,000 workers to sustain its workforce.

There are already 7.3 million immigrants in Germany, many of whom came as "temporary guest workers" or refugees. With a slumping economy, however, rightist groups and parties are attempting to scapegoat immigrants for rising unemployment and worsening social conditions. In 2000 there was a 59 percent increase in "reported far-right, anti-Semitic and racist crime," according to the *International Herald Tribune*.

The capitalist rulers in Europe have driven down living standards for immigrants whom they treat as second-class citizens with few or no rights. Over the last six years the number of immigrants in Spain has doubled to more than 1 million, many of them workers from Middle Eastern, North African, and Latin American countries.

Immigrants have formed organizations like the Association of Ecuadorans in Catalonia. An estimated 30,000 Ecuadorans live in Catalonia's capital of Barcelona.

Meanwhile, the government in Madrid has launched a broader assault on workers' rights, targeting immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa under the banner of fighting "Islamic terrorists." The number of Arab immigrants in Spain has ballooned from some 30,000 in the mid-1980s to an estimated 500,000 today.

An article in the *New York Times* aided this campaign by asserting that "Islamic militants have sunk roots into an Arab immigrant population growing so fast that it is now 15 times as large as it was a dozen years ago." The paper quoted Fernando Reinares, cited as a "counterterrorism expert," who said that "Islamic militants" are "hiding in the Arab immigrant communities. We're seeing the globalization of Islamic groups in Spain, which before were only concerned with events in their home countries. Now they cooperate with terrorists across the world."

Last September cops in Spain conducted raids in workers districts where thousands of Arab immigrants live and work. This included places such as Almeria where there are coastal truck farms; Murcia, where farm workers harvest lettuce and others work in canning factories; Valencia, where Arab workers pick oranges; and Huelva, where workers from Algeria and other North African countries pick strawberries. Six men from Algeria were arrested and charged with participating in plans to bomb the U.S. embassy in Paris.