

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

The Nov. 30, 1956, revolutionary uprising in Santiago de Cuba  
—PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 67/NO. 46 DECEMBER 29, 2003

## European Union in crisis, fails to adopt constitution

BY SAM MANUEL

A European Union summit aimed at negotiating a constitution collapsed in acrimonious division December 13.

Instead of a united Europe built around “25 current and future members of the European Union,” as most reports in the media refer to the EU, the summit highlighted deep divisions between competing states allied with the Franco-German bloc, on the one hand, or with its main competitor across the Atlantic—Washington, on the other.

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder labeled the meeting “largely a failure,” adding, “We don’t have a consensus on a constitution here because one or another country put the European ideal behind national interest.”

Berlin and Paris, however, the strongest imperialist powers in the European Union, have been the most aggressive in openly defending the interests of their respective ruling classes. Both insisted on setting rules

Continued on Page 4

## U.S. gov’t bars ‘old Europe’ from lucrative Iraq contracts

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND MICHAEL ITALIE

Washington announced December 9 that, in the name of protecting its “essential security interests,” it will shut out French, German, Russian, and other companies from the \$18.6 billion worth of contracts that the U.S.-led occupation authorities in Iraq are going to award for the reconstruction of the country. The next day, U.S. president George Bush reaffirmed that he would dispatch former secretary of state James Baker to Europe to present the demand to these same governments to write off Iraq’s debts.

The policy was made public in a memorandum signed by U.S. deputy defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz. “It is necessary for the protection of the essential security interests of the United States to limit competition for the prime contracts of these procurements to companies from the United States, Iraq, Coalition partners and force contributing nations,” the document said.

Bush presented this policy in a subsequent press conference and other public

Continued on Page 3

## U.S. occupation forces capture Saddam Hussein

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

On December 14, in an important propaganda coup for Washington, U.S.-led occupation forces seized Saddam Hussein in a village about 75 miles north of Baghdad.

U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, speaking on CBS’s *60 Minutes* the next day, said Hussein, who according to the U.S. government is currently being interrogated,

Continued on Page 3

## Utah solidarity rally backs Co-Op miners

BY KAREN TYLER

HUNTINGTON, Utah—“The Miners’ Council passed a resolution in support of the Co-Op miners.” This is what a message read at a December 13 solidarity rally held at Huntington Junior High School here said. It was signed by Chris More, an official of the Mining Council of the New Zealand Engineers, Print, and Manufacturing Union in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The event was organized to back the coal miners who were on the 86th day of their strike to get their jobs back at CW Mining Company, also known as Co-Op, and to win union recognition.

Roy Fernández, an international organizer for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), co-chaired the rally, and read the message to the 200 people present. Among other messages, he also described a letter of solidarity signed by more than 100 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 271 in Omaha, Nebraska. These workers had won a union-organizing drive two years ago in a Swift meatpacking plant in that city.

“Our whole union—from Pennsylvania to Arizona to Kentucky—

Continued on Page 5



Militant/Teri Moss

Coal miners on picket line December 13 outside Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah, where about 100 miners and supporters rallied in an expanded picket to support fight for a union. Striker’s sign says, “Amigo, you are about to cross a line of dignity and honor. If you cross to avoid losing your car or your house, keep in mind that what you are about to lose is your soul.”

## Offices of ‘Arab American News’ in Dearborn, Michigan, are firebombed

The statement below was issued December 12 by the Blue Triangle Network in Dearborn, Michigan, in response to a firebombing attack on the offices of the *Arab American News*, a weekly newspaper published there in Arabic and English.

Osama Siblani, the paper’s publisher, described the December 9 incident in a press release a couple of days earlier. He explained that the attackers were foiled by a reinforced back door: “The bomb fell just

inches away from stacks of the newspapers’ archives, but with the bullet-proof glass between them and the bomb,” he said.

“There have been several acts of destruction against the newspaper over the 20 years of its publication, which is why the bulletproof door was installed,” Siblani added. “This is a newspaper and we publish opinions not popular with everyone.” The *Arab American News*—available on the Internet at [arabamericannews.com](http://arabamericannews.com)—carries news and comment about developments in the Middle East and the United States.

The Blue Triangle Network was formed in May 2002 at a National Summit to Stop the Repression against Muslim, Arab and South Asian Immigrants, held in Dearborn—a suburb of Detroit.

♦

The Blue Triangle Network condemns the December 9 firebombing of the office of the *Arab American News* in Dearborn, Michigan. Luckily no one was in the building and damage to the building will not prevent publication of the newspaper.

This bombing came the day after a dem-

Continued on Page 4



Issue of weekly *Arab American News* reporting December 9 firebombing. Fragments of bomb beside reinforced door are shown in lower photo.

## Unionists in Quebec mobilize to oppose antilabor legislation

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

MONTREAL—The Quebec Liberal government has decided to ram through several antilabor bills before the Quebec National Assembly recesses December 19. In response, tens of thousands of unionists and other working people across the province took to the streets December 11, despite sometimes freezing rain, in what Quebec union leaders billed as a “national day of disruption.”

The actions capped off two weeks of demonstrations and other protests organized by all the main Quebec union federations. Several news commentators here have described the mobilizations as the most important union actions in 30 years, that is, since

Continued on Page 10

### Also Inside:

- Palestinian militant Farouk Abdel-Muhti shuffled to yet another jail in New Jersey 2
- Bush signs bill authorizing sanctions against Syria 2
- Combatants Association holds congress in Havana 7
- Florida court convicts six who hijacked Cuban plane 10
- Partisans of ‘Militant’ mark paper’s 75 years around world 11

# Massachusetts court rules gay marriage legal

BY MAGGIE TROWE

BOSTON—By a 4–3 vote, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled November 18 that the state may not bar two people of the same sex from marrying.

The court ruled eight months after hearing arguments on the case, which was initiated in 2001 by seven same-sex couples who applied for marriage licenses and were rejected. The decision provides for a 180-day period “to permit the legislature to take such action as it may deem appropriate in light of the opinion.”

The court ruling states, “Whether and whom to marry, how to express sexual intimacy, and whether and how to establish a family—these are among the most basic of every individual’s liberty and due process rights.” It notes that “civil marriage is an evolving paradigm,” citing how under common law “a woman’s legal identity all but evaporated into that of her husband,” and comparing the ban on same-sex marriage to previous bans on marriage between Blacks and whites that were repealed in past decades.

At the same time, the court ruling argued for shoring up the institution of marriage in a way that will reinforce the burden of social needs placed on individual family members. It states that civil marriage “is central to the way the Commonwealth [the state government]...ensures that children and adults are cared for and supported whenever possible from private, rather than public funds.”

President George Bush condemned the decision, as did Massachusetts governor Willard Romney, who said, “I agree with 3,000 years of recorded history.” On the other hand, Romney announced he would support a legislative package to provide some domestic partner benefits for gay couples, including hospital visitation

rights, health-care benefits, and the right to pass property to children.

Romney, a Republican, and Democratic state house speaker Thomas Finneran have endorsed a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would establish marriage solely as the union of a man and a woman, although at present they do not appear to have enough support in the legislature to pass it. If approved,

## Farouk Abdel-Muhti shuffled to new prison

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The Bureau of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement moved Farouk Abdel-Muhti from the Bergen County jail to the Hudson County Correctional Center the second week of December. The Palestinian revolutionist has been imprisoned for 20 months without charges, moved time and again to several prisons in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and has been repeatedly placed in solitary confinement.

Abdel-Muhti was placed in the Bergen County jail on October 30, and on November 19 was assaulted by his jailers there. The Committee to Free Farouk Abdel-Muhti reported that prison authorities, singling him out for his political views, confiscated his personal possessions, including the *Militant* and other reading material, and denied him medical treatment. The next day a disciplinary report was filed against him in which he was charged with concealing medicine. Abdel-Muhti, who is 56 and in poor health, was denied medical attention for a week.

Abdel-Muhti is well known in the New York area for his work on behalf of the Palestinian struggle and in defense of the Cuban Revolution. Before his arrest, he had been hosting a regular program on WBAI radio in New York on the resistance by Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The immigration cops say they are holding him on the basis of a 1995 deportation order. Although they had not acted on this order for the previous seven years, early in the morning of April 26, 2002, immigration agents and New York cops showed up at his apartment, claiming they wanted to question him about the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. They threatened to break down the door, asserting that they believed there were weapons and explosives in the apartment. Once

such an amendment could come before voters by 2006. Thirty-seven states have passed legislation asserting that marriage is limited to a man and a woman. Romney and Finneran are probing the possibility of proposing “civil union” legislation to meet the requirements of the court ruling without legalizing same-sex marriage. Neighboring Vermont approved same-sex civil unions three years ago.

inside—without a warrant—they arrested him and carted him off to jail.

On December 6 supporters of Abdel-Muhti’s fight against deportation rallied in York, Pennsylvania, where he had been held nine months prior to his imprisonment in Bergen County. Organizers of the protest report that some 50 people turned out to call for his release and to speak out against other attacks on immigrant rights. The local media reported that the police response to the protest included police in riot gear, undercover cops videotaping protesters and the media, and explosive detection units.

Letters to demand the release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti can be sent to David Venturella at the Office of Detention and Removal, Department of Homeland Security: fax (202)353-9435; telephone (202)514-8663; e-mail: david.venturella@dhs.gov, with copies to the defense committee at freefarouk@yahoo.com.

The Boston *Globe* cited a recent Pew Research Center poll indicating that while 80 percent of people in the United States think “the government should not put any restrictions on private sexual behavior between consenting adults,” only 32 percent support gay marriage. In New Jersey, a lawsuit similar to the Massachusetts challenge to the marriage laws is headed for the state supreme court.



Palestinian militant Farouk Abdel-Muhti

## Bush signs bill on Syria sanctions

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. president George Bush signed legislation December 12 that gives him discretion to impose a range of sanctions on Syria. Days earlier the European Union (EU) executive body concluded a draft economic accord with Damascus. Syrian trade with companies in Europe stands at \$6 billion annually as compared to \$300 million with U.S. companies.

The two actions highlight the continuing conflict between Washington and its rivals in Europe over the wealth and resources in the Middle East, one year after their sharp divisions broke into the open over the U.S.-led war on Iraq.

The so-called Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Act gives Bush the option of waiving sanctions against Damascus in the interests of “national security.” In October and November the House of Representatives and Senate, respectively, passed the bill with nearly unanimous bipartisan support. Bush signed the bill without the usual fanfare, commenting, “My approval of the act does not constitute my adoption of the various statements of policy in the act as U.S. foreign policy.” Administration officials have cited progress in Syrian cooperation in Washington’s “war on terrorism,” including searching for Iraqi frozen assets and support for the U.S.-backed occupation regime in Iraq.

The day after the signing of the bill, however, a delegation of members of the House Homeland Security Committee visited Da-

mascus to press Syrian president Bashar Al Assad to accept Washington’s demands.

The bill calls for sanctions against Damascus if it does not prevent armed groups opposed to the U.S. occupation of Iraq from entering into that country from Syria; shut down the offices of Palestinian groups in Syria that Washington deems “terrorist”; withdraw Syrian forces from Lebanon; and halt any development of medium- and long-range missile systems. Washington has also charged that Damascus is developing chemical and biological weapons.

Bush has the option of imposing at least two of six sanctions against Damascus: banning exports to Syria, except food and medicine; banning U.S. business investment; restrictions on Syrian diplomats in the United States; banning Syrian aircraft from entering U.S. airspace; reducing diplomatic contacts; and freezing Syrian assets.

The U.S. State Department already includes Syria on its list of “terrorist states,” which automatically triggers a series of sanctions. Syria has been on that list since the 1970s, even though the two governments have full diplomatic relations.

The “association agreement” between the European Commission of the EU and Syria would allow Damascus to export its goods to the EU at preferential rates. All EU member states must ratify the accord in order for it to come into effect. The EU began negotiations with 12 north African and Middle Eastern nations in the 1990s to establish an EU-dominated free trade zone in the Mediterranean basin.

### HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

This is the last issue of the year. The next issue, number one in 2004, will come off the press December 24 and will be a two-week issue. We will not publish between Christmas and New Year’s. Distributors should adjust their bundles accordingly.

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Militant/Nancy Boyasko  
Black farmers meet in Richmond, Virginia, December 6

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## The Militant

Vol. 67/No. 46

Closing news date: December 16, 2003

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Published weekly except for one week in January, July, and September.  
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 594-1014; Fax (212) 594-1018.

**E-mail:** TheMilitant@verizon.net  
The Militant **website** is: www.themilitant.com  
Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# ‘Old Europe’ shut out

**Continued from front page**

statements. “It’s very simple,” he stated December 11. “Our people risk their lives... coalition folks risk their lives, and, therefore, the contracting is going to reflect that. And that’s what the U.S. taxpayers expect.”

The Wolfowitz memorandum drew angry reactions from Paris, Berlin, and Moscow. All three governments had opposed the way the Anglo-American war against Iraq was carried out earlier this year, knowing that a U.S. victory would jeopardize their lucrative investments and trade relations with Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein. French companies had billions of dollars invested in Iraq, and the deposed Iraqi government had taken out billions more in loans from French, German, Russian, and other creditors.

The three governments had also declined to pledge funds for the reconstruction of Iraq at the U.S.-sponsored Donors’ Conference in Madrid in late October.

The Pentagon memorandum listed 63 “coalition partners,” who, having sent troops or police to Iraq, will therefore be granted some of the lucrative reconstruction contracts. Among these are NATO members Italy, United Kingdom, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, and Turkey. Also on the list are Eastern European governments that are candidates for NATO membership including Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland, as well as several former Soviet republics such as Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the three Baltic states.

Three other imperialist powers are included: Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. Just this month Tokyo decided to send about 1,000 “noncombat” troops for the occupation.

Not on the list are NATO members Germany, France, and Belgium, which were critical of the Anglo-American invasion. These three countries—along with the Netherlands and Luxemburg—were the original members of the Common Market, which later evolved into the larger European Union. Other excluded NATO members include Canada and Greece. Also iced out are China and Israel.

**Washington to rivals: ‘write off debt’**

On December 10 U.S. president George Bush called his counterparts in Paris, Berlin, and Moscow, asking them to forego their share of Iraq’s \$120 billion foreign debt. He said former treasury secretary and secretary of state James Baker would be visiting those countries to press that demand.

Liberal commentators said the timing of the Pentagon memorandum and the call for the debt write-off were an embarrassment for the Bush administration. But every indication is that Washington was simply acting out of a position of strength in relation to its imperialist rivals.

The Russian government, Iraq’s major military supplier for decades, is owed \$8 billion, and those of France and Germany are not far behind. Bush stated that writing off part of the Iraqi debt, however, would not result in their admission into the ranks of those eligible for contracts.

The German government called the exclusion from the Iraq contracts “unacceptable.” Rejecting the U.S. “national security” argument, a spokesperson for German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder huffed, “The stabilization of Iraq is also in Germany’s strategic interest.” Russian defense minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters, “As far as the Russian government’s position on this, it is not planning any kind of write-off of that debt. Iraq is not a poor country.”

French officials did not issue an immediate public response. But Paris and Berlin responded through the European Union, which they dominate. Washington’s policy on Iraq contracts “is a gratuitous and extremely unhelpful decision,” said a spokesperson for the European Commission, the EU’s central body. He added that the commission would examine the contracts to determine whether Washington is violating the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the White House would prefer to avoid a challenge in the WTO, but that U.S. officials “had little doubt that the U.S. would win if it came to blows.”

Given that Washington controls Iraq’s ability to pay back its debts, Paris, Berlin, and Moscow do not have much leverage regarding Iraq’s debts. Condemning the stance of those three governments in relation to U.S. policy in Iraq, the *Investors Business Daily* editorialized, “These aren’t the acts of friends or allies, but of foes.” The paper advised the U.S. government, “Don’t pay.”

The Canadian government, which was also critical of the U.S.-British invasion of Iraq and did not send troops there, was angry that it was barred from the contracts. Canadian deputy prime minister John Manley said December 10 that it would make it “difficult for us to give further money for the reconstruction of Iraq.” The following day Canada’s prime minister, Jean Chrétien, took a more conciliatory tone, saying Bush had assured him the reports about Canada’s



**Supporters of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, protesting occupation, intervene in a U.S.-backed “antiterrorism” rally in Baghdad December 10.**

exclusion “were not true.”

Washington is placing 26 contracts up for bid at this time. They include work on rebuilding Iraq’s electrical grid, water projects, and “security and justice facilities,” development of transportation and communication facilities, oil industry infrastructure, and equipping the Iraqi army. The first round of contracts was made available to U.S. companies alone.

Currently the largest contractors are U.S. conglomerates Bechtel, a construction firm with a contract estimated at \$1 billion, and Kellogg, Brown and Root, a subsidiary of oilfield services company Halliburton.

Critics of Washington have raised a stink about a recent Pentagon audit that found that Halliburton, Vice President Richard Cheney’s former company, may have overcharged the U.S. army some \$61 million for gasoline delivered to Iraqis.

To downplay criticism of Washington’s contract policy, U.S. officials pointed out that the same restrictions do not apply to subcontractors. The French telecommunications company Alcatel recently became the first French-based company working in Iraq, and the German company Siemens AG is there as well.

But the Pentagon memo was not subtle about the U.S. government’s intention of using the juicy contracts as a club against its competitors. “Coalition partners share in the U.S. vision of a free and stable Iraq,” it stated. “The limitation of sources to prime contractors to those countries should encourage the continued cooperation of coalition members.” The memo added, “Limit-

ing competition for prime contracts...will encourage the expansion of international cooperation in Iraq and in future efforts.”

White House spokesman Scott McClellan stated, “If countries decide they want to... join the efforts of the coalition forces in Iraq, then circumstances can change.”

**Anti- and pro-U.S. protests in Iraq**

In the preceding days, several public demonstrations had taken place in Iraq involving a range of political forces. In Hilla, a city about 60 miles southwest of Baghdad, hundreds of demonstrators sat in at the U.S.-backed provincial governor’s office for three days, forcing his resignation.

The local occupation authorities replaced him with a former Iraqi air force officer, but demonstrators continued to rally. A protest of 1,000 on December 11 chanted “Yes, yes for elections!” and “No, no to appointment!” the *Washington Post* reported. Union leaders threatened to call a strike to demand the governor be elected by Iraqis, not chosen by an American.

On December 3, hundreds of supporters of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, demonstrated at Hilla’s government building, demanding elections before a new national government and constitution are established. They held banners and painted graffiti with slogans such as “Down U.S.A.” and “Death to America,” according to the *Washington Times*.

The U.S.-dominated occupation authorities have announced plans to transfer official government powers to a “transitional” national assembly by May 31. The assembly would be chosen through “caucuses” in each of the country’s 18 provinces instead of through elections. General elections would not take place until March 2005.

At the same time, pro-occupation forces held demonstrations in several cities against “terrorism,” that is, the bombing and sniper attacks by forces loyal to the former Saddam Hussein regime. Agence France-Presse reported December 12 that these protests drew several thousand across the country.

The Baghdad demonstration included contingents from several organizations such as the pro-U.S. Iraqi National Congress, the Iraqi Women’s Organization, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, and the Iraqi Communist Party, who waved large red hammer-and-sickle banners. They chanted “No, no to terrorism, Yes, yes to peace.” Some of the speakers expressed their support to the U.S. forces for “liberating” Iraq.

Supporters of al-Sadr intervened in the demonstration and began chanting “No, no to occupiers.”

In the Shiite cities of Najaf and Karbala, south of Baghdad, AFP reported that more than 2,500 protesters demanded the transfer of police and security from the foreign occupation forces to Iraqis. “Killing children is not resistance,” read one banner in the Najaf demonstration, referring to the deaths of Iraqi civilians by assaults launched by elements of the former regime.

“In Ramadi, west of Baghdad, a hotbed of anti-U.S. sentiment, about 100 people protested after a call by the local council. They gathered under the protection of American troops while a counterdemonstration of about 70 people threw stones at the Americans. Iraqi police dispersed them,” AFP reported.

## Imperialist troops capture Saddam Hussein

**Continued from front page**

would be treated according to the Geneva Conventions. “He will be accorded the privileges as if he were a prisoner of war,” Rumsfeld said. Under these conventions prisoners of war are not to be subjected to torture, corporal punishment, or degrading treatment.

U.S. Special Forces had conducted an intense search for the former Iraqi president since he went into hiding as the Anglo-American invaders advanced on Baghdad in early April. Over the past several weeks, U.S. government officials said, they had been closing in on leads in this area near Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit, located in a largely Sunni Muslim region where his Baathist party apparatus has built its main base of support.

Hussein was captured in a raid by 600 troops including the U.S. Delta Force, U.S. Navy SEALs, the British SAS, and Australia’s SAS, backed up by regular U.S. infantry.

Celebrations broke out in many parts of Iraq, including Baghdad, the Shiite city of Najaf, the Kurdish city Suleimaniya, and other towns. The record of a brutal party-police regime that Hussein ran for more than three decades had earned him the

hatred of millions of workers and farmers in Iraq and allowed the imperialist forces occupying the country an easy propaganda victory for his capture.

Hamid Ali, a baker in Baghdad who is a Shiite Muslim, told reporters, “Most of my family are either dead or were forced into the army because of Saddam. Every Iraqi should have the right to reclaim justice from him.”

Among those celebrating in the streets were members of different political parties that support the imperialist oc-

cupation, including the Iraqi Communist Party. Members of the CP passed out bags of candy and raised red flags outside their headquarters.

Hussein’s capture was announced at a December 14 press briefing in Baghdad. U.S. military officers showed reporters a video of Hussein in U.S. custody, reportedly undergoing a medical check, with soldiers sticking cotton swabs in his mouth.

At a press conference the next day, U.S. president George Bush said the former Iraqi leader would be put on public trial in a proceeding conducted by Washington in a way that “includes the Iraqi citizens and make sure the process withstands international scrutiny.”

Some members of the U.S.-handpicked Iraqi Governing Council, including Amar al-Hakim of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, called for executing Hussein. When asked about the death penalty, Bush skirted the question, saying that he had his personal views but “what matters is the views of the Iraqi citizens.”



AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen

**Standing outside their downtown Baghdad headquarters on December 14, members of the Iraqi Communist Party, which is part of the U.S.-run Iraqi Governing Council, celebrate capture of Saddam Hussein by imperialist forces.**

# Work starts on new N.Y. Pathfinder bookstore

## Volunteers needed, \$150,000 fund launched for construction of new premises

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

NEW YORK—On Saturday, December 13, in the heart of the Garment District in Mid-Manhattan, more than 100 volunteers from around the United States and other countries enthusiastically launched the work of building the new premises for Pathfinder Books in New York. It was the beginning of an effort that will draw volunteers over the next 10 weeks to complete the work.

The next day, at the same location, nearly 300 people attended a public meeting on “The War Party, Working-Class Resistance, and Building the Communist Movement.” The weekend also included a mega-sale of books on Marxism and world politics, a gathering of young socialists, and teams that went across the city to sell the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and books on revolutionary politics to working people and youth.

A public appeal was launched at the meeting to raise \$150,000 for building the new premises. Those present responded with pledges big and small totaling nearly \$87,000 and contributions of more than \$10,000—funds needed now to pay the immediate construction costs.

The new space is located on the 10th floor of a building in the middle of an industrial district where approximately 10,000 garment workers are concentrated in some 850 manufacturing shops, dozens of which are organized by the UNITE union, which has its international and several local headquarters nearby. A number of these shops can be seen from the windows of the new offices.

The new space “fits our political needs and, very importantly, fits our budgets,” Norton Sandler, a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party told the volunteers. “It is the right size for the movement today.”

The volunteers included members and supporters of the communist movement from cities across the United States as well as Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. On Saturday they divided into a number of work crews. One crew took initial steps toward building the new premises in the open floor, which included hanging fluorescent lights from the ceiling.

Other teams transported and arranged books for a second-hand book sale. It lived up to its billing as the “book sale of the decade,” as dozens snapped up books on Marxism, politics, and history. Most of the books came from the library in the building that housed the SWP national headquarters and the editorial offices of the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press until a year ago. A good number were donated from the personal collection of Arthur Lobman, a party member for nearly half a century, who died in June. Young socialists in particular walked out with big boxes filled to the brim with books.

Other crews set up photo and book displays for the public meeting on Sunday afternoon. Speakers included Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. Pete Connors from the Communist League in the United Kingdom and its newly established branch in Edinburgh, Scotland; Bill Schmitt from the Young Socialists

in the Twin Cities, Minnesota; and Norton Sandler were also part of the panel. Martín Koppel, organizer of the executive committee of the New York SWP branch, and Arrin Hawkins of the Young Socialists in New York, co-chaired the event.

Waters and Barnes both noted that the event and the weekend were a celebration of two achievements: the hard work and long road that brought the movement to this point, and the coming publication of four new Pathfinder titles.

The new titles are *Rebelión Teamster*, the Spanish-language edition of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs; *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58* by Armando Hart, in both Spanish and English; and *Leur Trotsky et le nôtre*, the French edition of *Their Trotsky and Ours* by Jack Barnes. (A report of the meeting will be published in a future issue.)

Barnes ended his talk with an appeal for volunteers to join the construction crews. Initial construction will enable the New York Pathfinder Books to be moved into the new premises by the end of December, the deadline for vacating their current location.

Barnes urged the volunteers not to skimp on providing a kitchen in the new hall. That will serve as a vital center for workers and young people who come in and out of the offices to sit down after a day’s work or in a break during their political work, and to relax, talk politics, and get to know each other and the communist movement—with a pot of chicken stew cooking, more often than not.

*Hilda Cuzco contributed to this article.*



Militant photos by Arthur Hughes and Osborne Hart

**Red Weekend of volunteer labor and political activity December 13–14. Top: with his back to the camera, Norton Sandler addresses 100 volunteers at huddle on Saturday morning. Middle left and right: taking down disused wiring and moving light fixtures. Bottom left: table in the Garment District, near the new flagship Pathfinder bookstore**

# European Union fails to adopt constitution

Continued from front page

in the 1996 Stability and Growth Pact requiring each member state to maintain budget deficits below 3 percent of gross domestic product, which is particularly onerous for weaker economies. They have both violated this rule over the last three years as well as insisting on policies that would ensure their continued dominance in the EU.

The Brussels summit broke down after no agreement could be reached on altering a formula for voting representation.

The governments of Spain and Poland led the opposition to a French-German proposal that would alter a voting formula that gives countries with smaller populations almost the same voting weight as those with substantially larger populations. Paris and Berlin have proposed that the current system be replaced by one based on a simple majority of 13 members, the catch being that the majority must also equal at least 60 percent of the EU’s population. Madrid and Warsaw countered that the plan would give larger countries like Germany, with a population as large as Spain and Poland combined, even greater voting weight.

“We’re talking about compromise or domination,” said Polish foreign minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz. Poland’s prime minister, Leszek Miller, said that his government was standing up for all smaller nations in opposing the French-German move to diminish their voting weight. Poland is scheduled to officially enter the EU on May 1 along with nine other countries that would receive similarly weighted voting power under the current formula. Many of the new member states are from the former East European bloc.

Danish prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen described the result as “a sad day for Europe.”

French president Jacques Chirac threatened that if no agreement could be reached Paris might push forward on areas of common agreement with a smaller “pioneer group.”

“It would be a motor that would set an

example. It will allow Europe to go faster, better,” Chirac asserted.

According to the *Washington Post*, diplomats attending the meeting said that several of the founding members of the EU—France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands—might soon issue a statement in support of Chirac’s course.

Earlier this year tensions erupted when Paris and Berlin announced that they would again violate EU monetary policy by projecting budget deficits that exceed limits governing the euro. In November EU finance ministers rejected a European Commission demand that the two powers be sanctioned for violating the Stability Pact. Intended as a currency to counter the dollar, the euro is only used by 12 of the EU’s current 15 members. In addition, an open-borders agreement that allows free travel within the EU is still not honored by all of its members.

Disagreements over the ongoing U.S.-led occupation of Iraq also steamed behind the scenes of the meeting. They were fueled by Washington’s decision to bar governments that were not part of its “coalition of the willing” in the war against Iraq from bidding for contracts to rebuild that country. (See front page article.)

Backing Washington’s decision, British

prime minister Anthony Blair said it was “for the Americans to decide how to spend their money.”

Christopher Patten, the EU’s external relations commissioner, called the White House decision “maladroit.” The European Commission is investigating whether Washington’s action violates world trade rules, and its president, Romano Prodi, said, “It does not help the relationship, most of all on the eve of a meeting that was meant to take a decision on Iraq’s debt, as many of these countries excluded are large creditors.”

At a time of sharpening diplomatic language earlier this year between Washington on the one hand, and Paris and Berlin on the other, over U.S. preparations for a military assault on Iraq, the latter countries pressed for a European military alliance separate from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is dominated by Washington. For the first time Paris and Berlin were able to get agreement for such a force at the summit, but on a sharply reduced scale from the original proposal.

Instead of having its own headquarters in Brussels, apart from NATO’s, the plan adopted includes a “planning staff” of up to 100 military and civilian officials with teams of liaison officers stationed at each other’s headquarters.

# ‘Arab American News’ bombed

Continued from front page

onstration against Shimon Peres, former prime minister of Israel and chairman of the Labor Party. Osama Siblani, editor of the *Arab American News*, in his capacity as the acting head of the Congress of Arab-American Organizations (CAAO), played a leading role in organizing the demonstration.

The *Arab American News* has taken strong stands against the U.S. war in Iraq, against Israel’s occupation of Palestine, against the U.S. government’s taking away of civil liberties in the U.S. and against the repression aimed at Muslim, Arab, and South Asian immigrants. Osama Siblani

is a respected leader in the Arab American community.

Whatever the source, this firebombing is intended to intimidate and silence a strong voice for the Arab American community and all in the community. The Blue Triangle Network is certain this will not succeed. With the post-9-11 U.S. governmental vilification and demonization of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians, it is all the more important for all voices, especially non-Arab and non-Muslim, to condemn this outrageous attack against an Arab American newspaper and Arab American leader.

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# Utah solidarity rally

Continued from front page

knows about this fight and is behind it,” Mike DalPiaz, a UMWA international executive board member, told the rally. “It was a proud moment for us when the Co-Op miners came to the UMWA. We stood up then, and we stand up now. We will stand up till we make sure these Co-Op miners win dignity and justice.”

Earlier that day, a busload of 55 supporters of the Co-Op miners’ strike from Salt Lake City pulled up in front of the mine. A car caravan from that city joined the trade unionists, students, and others who came by bus. The expanded picket line of nearly 100 marked the 86th day of the miners’ struggle, which is backed by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). The miners, most of them born in Mexico, have drawn the line against the bosses’ profit drive that includes operating the mine under increasingly dangerous conditions. Most miners were paid between \$5.25 and \$7 an hour.

Cal Ockley, treasurer of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 57 at the Huntington power plant a couple of miles down the road, came to the picket line after receiving a flyer advertising the day’s solidarity activities. “I support the Co-Op miners because they are standing up and they deserve some dignity and a decent wage,” he said.

Members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), three locals of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical & Energy Workers union (PACE), United Steelworkers of America from the Kennecott

Copper mine, and workers in the building trades and musicians unions joined the picket line. CWA members brought five truckloads of food to the Co-Op miners and have opened their union hall in Salt Lake for meetings of the Co-Op strike solidarity committee there. Students from the University of Utah, members of the Student Labor Action Project who have raised food and financial contributions for the strikers, also took part.

Amidst cold gusts of wind in the entrance to Bear Canyon, pickets held banners and signs reading, “Jobs with Justice,” “Mormons for Equality and Social Justice”, and hand-written placards saying “Support the Co-op Miners.” A banner hung in front of the canvas shelter read, “Organizations Supporting the Co-Op Miners on Strike.” The names of union locals and other organizations that have visited the picket line and given support to the strike are inscribed on it. They include UMWA Locals 1984 and 9958, PACE Local 8593, the Central Utah Labor Council, UMWA District 22, the International Association of Machinists Local 568, and Jobs with Justice.

The picket line was followed by the solidarity rally and a dinner prepared by the miners and their families. Spirits were high as the strikers pledged to continue their struggle, encouraged by solidarity messages that have begun to arrive from around the world.

“After more than nine months of being on strike I can tell you that fighting for what is right is not always easy but it is necessary,” said a message from Keith Griep of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 538 in Jefferson, Wisconsin. “Your fight is for all workers across the nation, so stay strong and stay together and you will be victorious.”

Members of Local 538 have been on strike since February 28 against Tyson Foods. While the rally was taking place here, a solidarity rally was being held in Jefferson for the striking meat packers.

The Co-Op miners responded with their own message to the workers in Jefferson, written by Jesús Salazar on behalf of the miners’ leadership committee. “With this



Militant/Teri Moss

**Nearly 100 unionists, students, and other supporters of Co-Op miners came by bus and car from Salt Lake City to join picket line December 13.**

message we want you to see us as brothers in struggle as well,” wrote Salazar. “We want Tyson to know that your fight is now our fight, and starting today we will help to get the truth out about your strike. We celebrate your nine and a half months of resistance. You are an inspiration that reaffirms our decision to fight for justice.”

“After almost three months of struggle the company has just now begun to hurt in the pocketbook and is getting concerned,” said another message from Lawrence Oliver, former president of UMWA Local 1332. “Therefore it is important that you stay strong and united. You have a union, the United Mine Workers of America, which will support you all. It’s a strong union with experience and one that you can depend on.”

Oliver is a veteran miner at the UMWA-organized Pittsburgh and Midway’s McKinley mine in New Mexico on the Navajo Nation. He is currently the Division Director of Human Resources for the executive branch of the Navajo nation. “The UMWA has just begun to fight,” Oliver continued. “Pressure is rising with support from other unions for an attack on the Kingstons and other assets

they own at the core.”

The Kingstons are the owners of the Co-Op mine. They are notorious not only for the superexploitation of their employees in their \$150 million empire across six western states, but also for the convictions of prominent members of the clan for abuse of young women in the family forced into polygamous marriages with relatives who have beaten them when they tried to escape.

Ernest López, a retired UMWA member and president of the Parish Council at the San Rafael Catholic Mission in Huntington, explained that through their efforts monies have been raised to cover the rent and utility bills for the miners for the last three months. The Council will continue to raise these funds, he said, adding: “This is a just course and we stand with you.”

Miners reported that five truckloads of food were brought by workers from Salt Lake City—including some fresh meat and eggs—contributed through the efforts of the support committee and KRCL radio there.

“Today we are proud to celebrate the 86th day of our struggle for justice and we are even more determined to continue until justice is served,” said Salazar for the miners’ leadership committee. “We are coal miners and immigrant workers mainly from Mexico. Because of this fact, the company never thought we would ever stand up and organize to defend ourselves.”

This mine is “one of the most lucrative businesses of the Kingston family,” Salazar added. “But today they do not have the production they need and are losing thousands of dollars every day. We want that to be a message to every employer in the region that wants to abuse workers in the same way.”

## UMWA: ‘Support Co-Op miners strike’

**Printed below is an update posted on the web site of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) outlining the backing by the UMWA of the coal miners’ union-organizing struggle in Huntington, Utah, and urging broader solidarity. The article is titled “Let’s Support the Co-Op Miners’ Struggle for Justice.” You can find it at [www.umwa.org](http://www.umwa.org). It is reprinted by permission.**

Seventy-four coal miners at C.W. Mining Company’s Bear Canyon mine (known also as Co-Op mine) in Huntington, Utah, were illegally fired from their jobs on Sept. 22, 2003, after they protested the suspension of a co-worker and unsafe job conditions. The mine, owned by the Kingston family, had suspended UMWA supporter William Estrada for refusing to sign a disciplinary warning the week before. At the time, it was the company’s third attempt to victimize a UMWA supporter, according to the Co-Op miners.

These workers, mostly Mexicans, contend they were fired and locked out by the company because of concerted activities and unsafe conditions. The Co-Op miners allege:

- Most immigrant workers at the mine earn only between \$5.25 and \$7 an hour;
- Most workers lack medical insurance and retirement benefits;
- Miners are forced to work under unsafe conditions in violation of Mine Safety & Health Administration regulations (Three workers have been killed at the Co-Op mine since 1996);
- Workers are forced to use defective and unsafe machinery;
- Workers are not provided adequate training by the company;
- Workers are abused and mistreated by management; and
- Female workers have no bathhouse.

On Sept. 23, the UMWA filed unfair labor practice charges against C.W. Mining before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) stating: “The regular hourly workforce was discriminated against in regard to hire and tenure of employment by being discharged for protected, concerted activity.”

On Oct. 3, the UMWA assisted in setting up picket lines at the Co-Op mine to support the striking miners. The miners’ spouses, who formed an auxiliary group, are preparing hot food and feeding those on the picket line. The pickets are organized in 6-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### UMWA’s Action:

United Mine Workers of America Vows to Support Struggle of Coal Miners Unjustly Fired from Utah’s Co-Op Mine for Fighting to Join the Union

At the UMWA Special Convention Sept. 29–30 in Las Vegas, International President Cecil Roberts pledged the union will assist the coal miners who were fired from C.W. Mining Company’s Co-Op mine.

Seven of the 74 fired Co-Op miners joined Roberts at the convention hall podium where their spokesman, Jesus H. Salazar Jr., described their plight—earning between \$5.25 and \$7 per hour with “no health insurance and no benefits in an unsafe, underground mine.”

“We stand with these workers in solidarity as they fight for justice and dignity,” Roberts told the 550 convention delegates at the closing session Sept. 30. “We call on all American workers to support their struggle because we believe ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’”

“We are here looking for the UMWA’s indispensable support because we were unjustly fired for defending our rights and protesting the mine’s unsafe working conditions,” Salazar said. “We are determined to fight until this mine becomes UMWA territory and we can put an end to the abuse

and extreme level of exploitation we have endured.” Currently, 75 percent of the mine’s 83 hourly workers have signed a representation petition with the UMWA.

“We all walked out in defense of our co-worker,” explained Salazar, who has worked at the Co-Op mine four years. “The company refused to cooperate with us and fired us. We have been locked out because of our pro-union activity. Now, we’re fighting back, and we want to be part of the UMWA. We are at a critical point in our fight. The company expects us to come back begging for our jobs.”

“We won’t go back to work until we get everybody back to work,” said fired Co-Op miner Alyson Kennedy of Price, Utah. “We won’t stop fighting until we get union representation.” Describing the mine’s “bad working environment,” she noted that female miners have no bathhouse to change clothes.

“We demand that our workers be reinstated with back pay, and we demand fair wages,” said the Co-Op delegation to the UMWA convention. “We are tired of the abuses, lies and trickery of the fake company-led ‘union’ that Co-Op has maintained for years in the workplace. Our plea to the UMWA is to help us defend our dignity and our families.”

“It was heartwarming to see our union delegates’ overwhelming support of the Co-Op miners as they struggle for workers’ rights and fairness,” said UMWA District 22 International Executive Board Member Mike Dalpiaz of Price, Utah. “We’ll be with them from the beginning to the end of their fight.”

Since the UMWA convention, labor unions from across Utah and other states have responded to the striking miners’ plea. Recent support has come from the New Mexico Federation of Labor and University of Utah students and professors, who gathered food and funds to deliver at a “Solidarity Rally” on Sunday, Oct. 26.

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### Rebelión Teamster

by Farrell Dobbs

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# The 1956 uprising in Santiago

## Frank País: ‘Entire people cooperated with us’ in rebellion against U.S.

Over the coming weeks the *Militant* will be reprinting excerpts from *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-58*, by Armando Hart, a new Pathfinder book that will be available in January in both English and Spanish editions. This firsthand account of the victorious struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship, led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, headed by Fidel Castro, is now accessible for the first time ever to English-speaking readers. It recounts the events from the perspective of how revolutionary cadres organized in the cities. Armando Hart was a central organizer of the urban underground and one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution.

This week we reprint an article by Frank País on the Nov. 30, 1956, popular uprising in Santiago de Cuba against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. País, the central leader of the July 26 Movement in Cuba's Oriente province in the east, was the main organizer of the uprising, which was timed to support the landing on Cuba's southeastern coast by Fidel Castro and dozens of other revolutionary combatants who had traveled from Mexico on the yacht *Granma* to launch the revolutionary war against the Batista tyranny. Written in February 1957, the article was printed in *Revolución*, the clandestine publication of the July 26 Movement, during the first half of that year. País was murdered by Batista's forces on July 30, 1957.

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### BY FRANK PAÍS

On November 23 the leadership of the [July 26] Movement assigned each group leader to study and submit a definitive report on its military target. Three days later it was decided that the basic targets were to be the Maritime Police, the National Police, and the Moncada garrison.

On the 28th we met to finalize details and discuss plans. We had already received the message saying that Fidel and the compañeros from Mexico had left for Cuba.

"Fidel arrives tomorrow," Pepito Tey stated. "We have only one night to prepare everything."

"Does anyone object?" he then asked.

"No!" we all answered.

When we were later informed we had another day for preparations we were very happy. On the 29th we worked frantically to prepare the houses and distribute the arms and uniforms.

In the evening we settled down in barracks. The city seemed normal. But during the night many families began noticing the absence of their sons, husbands, or brothers, and the population was overcome with fear, with the premonition that "something" was about to happen.

The attack had initially been set for



Frank País, facing camera, during April 1957 trial for role in Nov. 30, 1956, Santiago uprising.

6:00 a.m., but it was postponed until 7:00 to avoid the changing of the guard. At 5:00 the alarm clock rang, although almost all the combatants had spent the night wide awake and were understandably nervous. Café con leche and biscuits were distributed, but almost no one ate or drank a thing. With intense emotion we put on for the first time our July 26 uniforms—olive green, black armbands with red letters on them and military insignia.

Needless to say, the moment was dramatic and we were all so moved by this beautiful crusade for freedom that our fervor grew and overcame us completely. In my group the weapons were divided up. We were informed that since there were many more men than weapons, the leadership was ordering married men or those with family responsibilities to stay in the reserve force until called.

"No one can deprive me of the right to fight for Cuba!" Tony Alomá shouted nervously. "I've waited too long to remain still now."

"No, Tony, you've just become a father this very night. If we fall, you'll take our place."

"Then how come Otto's going?" he said, referring to Otto Parellada, married just like he was and with children.

"He's a group leader."

"One way or another I'm going," said Tony.

We sang Cuba's National Anthem. Pepito spoke a few fiery words to us:

"We're going off to fight for Cuba! Long live the revolution! Long live the July 26 Movement!"

Our group was composed of 28 men. This included 20 in uniform headed by Pepito Tey, who were to attack the police headquarters from the front. Prior to the attack, eight men in civilian clothes headed by Parellada were to move in and take positions behind the building.

Time passed at a dizzying speed. Before leaving we embraced one another. We carried hand-held machine guns, rifles, grenades, Molotov cocktails, and a .30-caliber machine gun. We had some cars but we needed more. So we stopped several that were passing in front of the place we were leaving and told the owners:

"At this very moment the revolution in Cuba is beginning. The homeland asks you to sacrifice your car. On behalf of the July 26 Movement, we're going to fight the dictatorship. We're sorry, but it's necessary."

Amazed, naturally, they gave us their vehicles. I remember one

man said to me: "Be careful, boys. Cuba greatly needs you."

### The first battle begins

Parellada's group came down Padre Pico Street, entered the School of Visual Arts, crossed the courtyard, and reached the roof overlooking the rear of the police station. But a sentry saw us and opened fire, starting the unequal battle: 28 revolutionaries against 70 policemen and 15 soldiers.

Those of us with Pepito were going up the hill toward the station when the enemy opened fire with a machine gun they had set up on top of the building, preventing us from reaching the door in the cars we had seized. Pepito jumped out of the car, shouting fiery words to us. We took positions and began firing. A tremendous machine-gun duel ensued. Our war cries were heard in the midst of the intense exchange of fire:

"Long live the revolution! Down with Batista! Long live the July 26 Movement! Long live Fidel Castro!"

*Moments later, uncontrollable flames swept through the headquarters building.*

In silence the enemy fired back. The compañeros at the back of the building inflicted several casualties on the policemen running in the courtyard. Smoke and flames began to rise very slowly. Pepito saw Tony Alomá fall with a shot to the head and became very agitated, since he had been the one who had tried the hardest to stop Tony from coming. In this state, he got up and gave the order to advance. As we followed, Pepito fired his m-1 to protect the rest of the column behind him. When he turned the corner, a burst of fire wounded him in the leg. Leaning against the wall he continued advancing, firing nonstop. Another burst knocked him down forever.

In the meantime, Parellada, seeing that we had not been able to reach the main door, tried to draw the enemy's fire onto his group. He attempted to reach the courtyard, but fell to the ground face up, with a shot in the head. Having lost the surprise factor, with heavy fire raining down on us and two leaders killed, we began an organized retreat, with cover provided by the firing of our .30 machine gun. Three of our comrades had fallen. The enemy had lost five.

Moments later, the uncontrollable flames swept over the station completely. Had we waited before advancing on the station, we would have wiped out all the defenders of the Batista stronghold.

Something occurred at the police station that we do not wish to pass over. A policeman who was retreating while the flames were gaining force wanted to open the door to the jail where several young men from Santiago had been kept since

the previous night. The cop wanted to prevent those arrested from being burnt to ashes. But Lieutenant Durán, expelled from the army for being a criminal and restored to his post by Batista, gave the following order:

"Retreat! Let them all burn so they won't make any more revolution!"

In desperation, the young men watched the flames do their macabre dance around them. Abandoned by the policeman who had the keys, they began to be burned. In terror, with legs, arms, and other parts of their bodies covered in flames, some tried to force open the padlock, already reddened by the fire, while others prayed. Endless minutes went by until the firemen arrived and opened the cell door.

### The harbor master's office falls

We were more fortunate in the action at the harbor master's office. Several armed compañeros, wearing workers' clothes, took three posts by surprise and disarmed them. Wearing uniforms, the rest of the men drove cars right up to the very door of the office and went in. When the sentry attempted to open fire, he was cut down by a burst of our fire. Two more cops fell dead. The lieutenant in charge, wounded, shouted:

"Don't shoot, boys, we're with you!"

"Down with Batista!" shouted other frightened policemen, in unison with us.

We had instructions from our general command to respect the lives of our prisoners. We took the weapons of those we captured. Meanwhile, on the ground floor the police opened fire but were silenced by our sharpshooters, stationed on nearby roofs.

Finally they surrendered and the position fell into our hands.

Amid cries of happiness and revolutionary curses against Batista and the tyranny, we began to pick up the ammunition, the weapons—some 20 rifles—and to take care of the wounded cops. They had 4 dead. We came out unscathed from this first encounter, but two trucks arrived with 70 soldiers from the Moncada garrison carrying heavy weapons, and an unequal battle began. Finally we retreated, under the cover of a curtain of lead. We withdrew to our command post. The barrel of one of our machine guns nearly melted, such was the trial by fire to which it was submitted. The leader of our group fired nonstop while another fed it more ammunition.

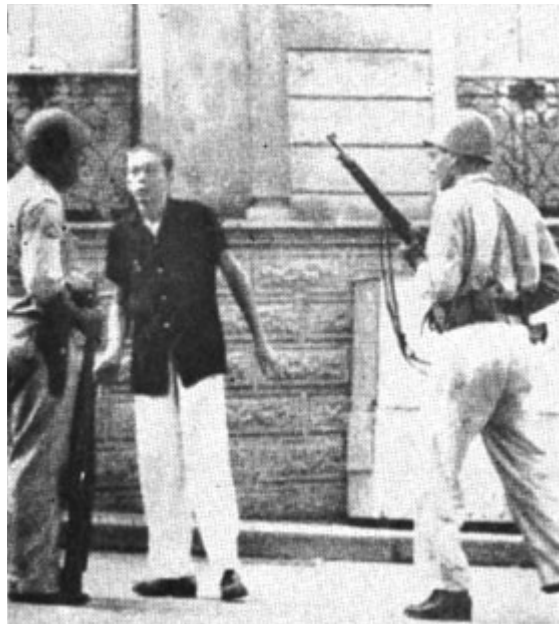
After retreating two blocks, a brave comrade realized he had left behind a handkerchief of his girlfriend and other documents. So with the .30 machine gun loaded and blazing he returned to the line of fire. He recovered the items, and withdrew once more.

The army was so frightened they did not pursue us. . . .

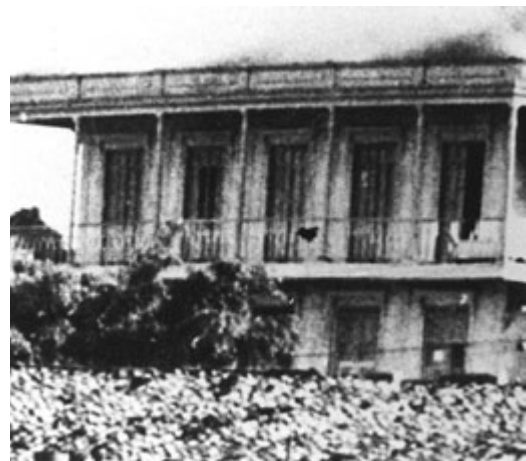
At Corona Street there was another battle when a group of compañeros attempted to reach us, amid intense fire from the army. Several soldiers were wounded and picked up in military trucks.

### A fundamental objective: Moncada

With our mortar battery failing to fire,



Batista's troops question a man walking on a Santiago street on the morning of the uprising.



"Moments later, uncontrollable flames swept Santiago de Cuba burning after Nov. 30, 1956"

# Santiago de Cuba

## U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship

and having been located by the enemy, it was not possible to carry out the assault on the Moncada garrison, where the Cuban revolutionary youth wrote a beautiful page of courage and idealism on July 26, 1953.

The plans for the attack were to blockade it, torch it, and carry out other simultaneous actions. As the army fought to break through the blockade at several points, an intense exchange of fire occurred between our forces and Batista's. Our people, posted nearby, intercepted the soldiers who fell wounded or dead facing our barricade.

Many soldiers at Moncada refused to fight against the revolutionaries. Sixty-seven were arrested and court-martialed afterwards.

A .30 machine gun was set up opposite the frigate *Patria*, which was in port. The ship withdrew to the entrance of the bay, with its crew at battle stations.

### The people of Santiago

Four compañeros arrived at the Dolores hardware store and pointed their guns at the owner, saying to him: "Pardon us, but we need these weapons to fight for Cuba's freedom."

A soldier who was having coffee at a nearby cafeteria threw himself to the floor on his stomach.

The streets were being guarded by members of the Revolutionary Army. A citizen asked:

"Can we get through?"

"Of course. Just stay close to the sidewalk. This is yours!"

A soldier who was traveling in a bus attempted to fire at the revolutionaries standing guard, but they closed in on him. Without our having to fire, he decided to flee.

We installed our command post at an appropriate location. We surrounded a house and asked to speak to the owner.

"We need this house for the revolution. We're sorry to bother you, but we want your permission and we ask you to leave with your family. Take all your jewelry and money. We trust our comrades, but if we have to withdraw, these things could be in danger from the other side..."

Those were hours of enormous tension. With guards stationed outside, we prepared all the details in that house. After 6:00 p.m. Santiago became a hell. The city became a generalized crossfire. Weapons of all calibers spewed out fire and shrapnel. Alarms and sirens from the firefighters at the Moncada garrison, and at the Navy. The sound of low-flying planes. Fires all over the city. The Revolutionary Army controlled the streets, and Batista's army intended to take away that control. The shouts of our comrades, repeated by the people, and a thousand other indescribable events and emotions.

The entire population of Santiago, emboldened and allied with the revolutionaries, cooperated with us as one. They cared for the wounded, hid the armed men, safeguarded the weapons and uniforms of those being pursued, encouraged us, lent us their houses, and watched out from place to place, letting us know of the army's movements. The sight of a people cooperating courageously during the most difficult moments of the fight was beautiful. When the first plan basically failed—due primarily to the fact that the mortar battery would not fire, preventing the attack on Moncada—our forces began to

retreat to the command post.

These were difficult and anguished moments. Three of our best comrades, brothers of ideals, had left their generous blood on the streets of heroic Santiago. We were no longer nervous or frightened, as we had been before going into combat. We were now battle-hardened, and inside us burned the desire to continue fighting, so that our goal of liberation would not be cut short.

### Plan no. 2

We put Plan no. 2 into effect, which we had studied beforehand in order to take contingencies into consideration. It consisted of withdrawing, taking control of the city's heights, and beginning a war of snipers. There was a battle at the high school, where our comrades fought heroically. All day Friday the shooting was intense. Planes flew very low. We fired at them from wherever we were, and pierced the gasoline tank of one that had to land, damaged.

On Saturday the battles continued. The army, frightened, fired at anyone, killing several passersby, as in the well-known case of the two cars that collided.

On Sunday, given the uselessness of continuing the fight under such disadvantageous conditions, we ordered a retreat. Weapons were to be put away. We would await another opportunity to relaunch the struggle until victory or death.

### In Guantánamo

At the Elia sugar mill our comrades captured the Rural Guard garrison, taking it by surprise, setting the prisoners free. Singing revolutionary songs and shouting revolutionary slogans, they walked through the town shooting at the Guantánamo garrison and then withdrawing to the countryside. The city backed the general strike, stopping all activities, closing shops, and reviving its tradition as one of Cuba's most combative towns.

Meanwhile, our armed fighters took over the hills, interrupting public services. When the army arrived with workers who had been brought in by force to work or restore the services, our comrades' gunfire forced the soldiers to retreat.

In the hills our fighters set an ambush, killing several members of the military by throwing hand grenades.

### Plan no. 3

Plan no. 3 began to be carried out immediately: sabotage of public services, burning of sugarcane fields, setting fire to large estates, etc. Fifty days after the heroic November 30, the situation is extremely violent in Santiago de Cuba and throughout the eastern province. The forces of public order, incapable of controlling the situation, began to carry out a barbaric massacre. More than thirty murders are public knowledge, making the entire citizenry tremble with rage. They protest not only the Batista regime's fury, but have together risen up against the acts of the vandals and of the tyranny that provokes and directs them.

In Oriente even the women have gone out into the street ready for battle. The mothers, just as in the great demonstration of days past, marched in a challenge to the janissaries represented by the evil officers Díaz Tamayo, Cruz Vidal, and Cowley. The mothers of all Oriente shouted with all their might:

"STOP THE MURDERS OF OUR CHILDREN! DOWN WITH THE MURDERERS!"

And when the mothers raise their voices like that, it does not take long before they see their promises fulfilled.

The eastern rebellion will not end until the tyrants have disappeared.



Granma

Some 60,000 people joined Santiago de Cuba funeral march on July 31, 1957, for Frank País, who had been gunned down on the street by the police the day before.

## Combatants Association holds congress in Havana

BY MATILDE ZIMMERMANN

HAVANA—The Second Congress of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution (ACRC) took place here the weekend of December 8.

Founded in 1994, the Association has more than 330,000 members who have taken part in revolutionary battles from the 1930s to today. These include the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the 1950s that culminated in the 1959 revolutionary victory and the later internationalist missions in Angola, where, from 1975 to 1991, Cuban volunteers joined with Angolan forces to defeat the invading South African army of the apartheid regime.

Cuba's minister of the Armed Forces, Raul Castro, called the ACRC "a small organization, but powerful ideologically because of the rich history of its members."

The congress was preceded by several months of meetings and discussions in all the municipalities and regions of the country, on the basis of which 638 delegates were elected.

ACRC president Juan Almeida sent a letter to the Congress explaining he could not attend because of "my heart, which together with my brain, has been responsible for all my revolutionary activities." His cardiologists had warned against excitement and, Almeida wrote, "I would have to stop being the person I am in order not to feel strong emotions at a gathering like this."

The congress drew a balance sheet of the accomplishments and weaknesses of the organization in the five years since the last conference. It emphasized the increased stature of the Association among the Cuban people, and the role of the combatants in what is referred to here as the Battle of Ideas. This is a political offensive aimed at deepening the involvement of working people and youth in the revolution, central to which is broadening the educational and cultural opportunities available to the Cuban people. The goal is to counter the imperialist ideological drive promoting capitalism as the future and to address the social inequalities

ties that have widened as Cuba has become more directly exposed to the capitalist world market since the collapse of preferential trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s.

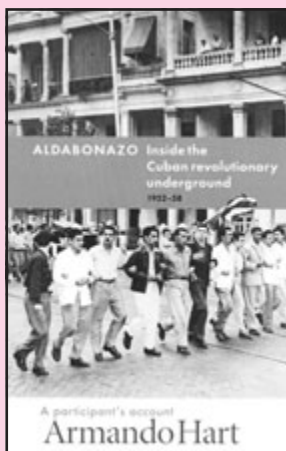
Magalys Duarte Ledo, president of the ACRC in a Havana municipality, called the organization's work with young people "a labor of love." She added, "the students really like these meetings with the combatants, who tell them about their own experiences, explain how things used to be, tell them about the lives of the martyrs the kids' schools are named after, and who also teach them to shoot." The delegates said some areas needed improvement, including keeping in touch with members who moved to new places and being more aggressive in taking on corruption and crime.

Delegates elected Juan Almeida as president for another five years. They also reelected retired general Harry Villegas, known by his nom de guerre, Pombo, as executive vice president, and Gen. Alvaro López Miera as vice president.

A few days after the Congress, Villegas met with a group of U.S. students at his home and explained that the ACRC is a voluntary organization, "completely self-financed," and based on the "principle of activism" and on "unconditional defense of the revolution." More than 300,000 of its members had served in overseas missions, mostly in Africa. "For us," Pombo said, "the word surrender doesn't exist."

"What do we actually do day to day?" he asked. "We all play some part in defense. And we contribute to the Battle of Ideas by studying and teaching history and values." Villegas added that the *combatientes* taught marksmanship in the schools, starting with sixth graders. He said that members of the Association were studying the experiences of Yugoslavia and Kosovo, as well as the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and using their own experiences in battle to make suggestions about the strategy for defending Cuba in case of attack. "Our role," he concluded, "is simply to represent the morality of having been in combat for the revolution."

### Coming in January from Pathfinder



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by Armando Hart

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over the station." Above, police headquarters in , attack by rebels.

# Workers can't 'reform' away exploitation

Printed below is an excerpt from the author's introduction to *Reform or Revolution* by Rosa Luxemburg, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in December. Luxemburg was a leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Germany at the dawn of the 20th century. This book was her first major political work and one of her most enduring. In 1897–98, Eduard Bernstein published a series of articles in *Neue Zeit*, the theoretical organ of the SPD, in which he attempted to refute the basic tenets of scientific socialism, particularly Marx's conclusion that capitalism contains within itself the seeds of its own inevitable destruction. Luxemburg polemicized against Bernstein in this book, which she completed in April 1899.

Ferdinand Lassalle, referred to by Luxemburg below, was a German socialist and



Workers guard post office in Dortmund, Germany, during November 1918 revolutionary uprising. Rosa Luxemburg was arrested and killed by police the following year.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

founder of the General Union of German Workers in 1863, which later fused with the followers of Karl Marx to form the SPD.

The November 17 *Militant* published the introduction to *Reform or Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters, the book's editor. As readers may have noticed, December's Books of the Month are the same as for November. Copyright ©1970 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY ROSA LUXEMBURG

At first view the title of this work may be

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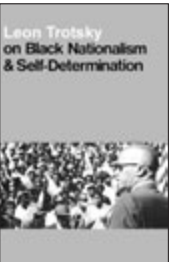

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found surprising. Can the social democracy be against reforms? Can we counterpose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of the workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers to the social democracy the only means of engaging in the proletarian class war and working in the direction of the final goal—the conquest of political power and the suppression of wage labor. Between social reforms and revolution there exists for the social democracy an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.

It is in Eduard Bernstein's theory, presented in his articles on "Problems of Socialism" in *Neue Zeit* of 1897–98, and in his book *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie* [The Preconditions of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy—in English published under the title *Evolutionary Socialism*—Ed.] that we find for the first time, the opposition of the two factors of the labor movement. His theory tends to counsel us to renounce the social transformation, the final goal of the social democracy and, inversely, to make of social reforms, the means of the class struggle, its aim. Bernstein himself has very clearly

and characteristically formulated this viewpoint when he wrote: "The final goal, no matter what it is, is nothing; the movement is everything."

But since the final goal of socialism constitutes the only decisive factor distinguishing the social democratic movement from bourgeois democracy and from bourgeois radicalism, the only factor transforming the entire labor movement from a vain effort to repair the capitalist order into a class struggle against this order, for the suppression of this order—the question: "Reform or revolution?" as it is posed by Bernstein, equals for the social democracy the question: "To be or not to be?" In the controversy with Bernstein and his followers, everybody in the party ought to understand clearly it is not a question of this or that method of struggle, or the use of this or that set of tactics, but of the very existence of the social democratic movement.

Upon a casual consideration of Bernstein's theory, this may appear like an exaggeration. Does he not continually mention the social democracy and its aims? Does he not repeat again and again, in very explicit language, that he too strives toward the final goal of socialism, but in another way? Does he not stress particularly that he fully approves of the present practice of the social democracy?

That is all true, to be sure. It is also true that every new movement, when it first

elaborates its theory and policy, begins by finding support in the preceding movement, though it may be in direct contradiction with the latter. It begins by suiting itself to the forms found at hand and by speaking the language spoken hereto. In time, the new grain breaks through the old husk. The new movement finds its own forms and its own language.

To expect an opposition against scientific socialism at its very beginning, to express itself clearly, fully, and to the last consequence on the subject of its real content; to expect it to deny openly and bluntly the theoretic basis of the social democracy—would amount to underrating the power of scientific socialism. Today he who wants to pass as a socialist, and at the same time would declare war on Marxian doctrine, the most stupendous product of the human mind in the century, must begin with involuntary esteem for Marx. He must begin by acknowledging himself to be his disciple, by seeking in Marx's own teachings the points of support for an attack on the latter, while he represents this attack as a further development of Marxian doctrine. On this account, we must, unconcerned by its outer forms, pick out the sheathed kernel of Bernstein's theory. This is a matter of urgent necessity for the broad layers of the industrial proletariat in our party.

No coarser insult, no baser aspersion, can be thrown against the workers than the remark: "Theoretic controversies are only for academicians." Some time ago Lassalle said: "Only when science and the workers, these opposite poles of society, become one, will they crush in their arms of steel all obstacles to culture." The entire strength of the modern labor movement rests on theoretic knowledge.

But doubly important is this knowledge for the workers in the present case, because it is precisely they and their influence in the movement that are in the balance here. It is their skin that is being brought to market. The opportunist theory in the party; the theory formulated by Bernstein, is nothing else than an unconscious attempt to assure predominance to the petty bourgeois elements that have entered our party, to change the policy and aims of our party in their direction. The question of reform and revolution, of the final goal and the movement, is basically, in another form, but the question of the petty bourgeois or proletarian character of the labor movement.

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**Accent the positive**—We reported the finding that baby boomers (born from 1946 to 1964) aren't saving enough to retire on. But the



**Harry Ring**

Congressional Budget Office has a brighter approach. As Bloomberg News puts it, "...most boomers

who aren't saving enough will see a 'modest' drop in income that can be made up by working a few years longer."

**Well, that's a relief**—"Being in debt isn't immoral"—Opinion page, *Los Angeles Times*.

**Hear no evil, see no evil, do lots of it**—In Grand Rapids, Michigan, a judge dismissed charges against two whites who were heard to shout racist epithets while beating Ronald Robinson, a Black motorist. The judge said it was road rage, not racism.

**If roles were reversed?**—Courtland Childs, a former Utah highway patrol cop, was sentenced for killing a boy on the road five years ago. He had pled guilty to something called "misdemeanor negligent homicide." Reports said that at the time of the killing he had "therapeutic" levels of codeine and two other drugs, which his lawyer said was to relieve back pain. Childs was sentenced to probation and community service.

**It figures**—The average United Kingdom worker loses about

\$7,000 a year in unpaid overtime, a study by the Trades Union Congress found. Meanwhile it was reported that London cops pocketed about the same amount in their version of overtime.

**Mideast moral model**—A member of the Israeli parliament expressed outrage at the light court sentences given to males found guilty in widespread cases of domestic violence. The English-language paper *Haaretz* cited Zahava Galon, a member of the Knesset, as a harsh critic: "She slammed the courts for essentially implying that

women are their spouses' property and can be beaten and hurt, with their spouses facing punishment equal to a property crime."

**Greetings**—A welcome to new readers and an invitation. This column is based in good measure on clippings sent in by readers. If you don't like capitalism and read an item that helps underline what it really is, clip and send. By mail, send to Great Society, Pathfinder Books, 4229 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, California 90011. By e-mail to: laswp@earthlink.net. Thanks.

## U.S. gov't: sponsor, paymaster of mercenaries in Congo

The *Militant* has been running weekly excerpts from *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* by Piero Gleijeses, a book that documents revolutionary Cuba's record of internationalist solidarity in Africa and its clash with Washington's course of intervention to back colonial rule and reinforce imperialist domination there.

The excerpt below is taken from the chapter "Flee! The White Giants Are Coming." It describes how the United States government, during the administration of Lyndon Johnson, employed a racist mercenary army to help the regime in the Congo defeat an anti-imperialist rebellion there in 1964-65. Months after the U.S.-backed mercenary offensive began, Ernesto Che Guevara led a column of Cuban internationalist volunteers to fight side by side with these rebels. The story of that mission is told in subsequent chapters.

The Congo, referred to here by the author as Zaire, won its independence from Belgian colonial rule in June 1960. The imperialist rulers in Washington, Brussels, and Paris acted to ensure that none of their vast economic holdings in this massive country would be threatened by the deepgoing anticolonial struggle, which was led by Patrice Lumumba, the country's first prime minister.

In September 1960, at the instigation of the U.S. government, a section of the Congolese army (known by its initials, ANC) led by Col. Mobutu Sese Seko seized power in a coup. Five months later Lumumba was assassinated by the forces of Moise Tshombe, a wealthy plantation owner who had staged an anti-government rebellion, backed by 10,000 Belgian troops, in the mineral-rich Katanga province.

After Lumumba's murder, anti-imperialist forces continued to fight to liberate their country, chasing Mobutu's forces out of a large part of the Congo by early 1964.

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### BY PIERO GLEIJESES

The revolt spread "like a forest fire," taking the Johnson administration by surprise. In mid-June 1964, the U.S. ambassador in Leopoldville, McMurtrie Godley, had assured Assistant Secretary Williams, "all of us here share your optimism that the economic and political progress that has been made in the Congo [Zaire] during the past four years will...continue." A few weeks later the ANC had virtually collapsed. "Everywhere the soldiers of Mr. Mobutu, armed with machine guns, flee from rebels who usually have only bows, arrows, and bicycle chains," *Le Monde* reported. As they advanced, the *Simbas* ("lions"), as

the rebels were called, seized the weapons abandoned by fleeing troops. For the ANC, this is "almost accepted practice," the West German embassy reported....

In the weeks that followed, the United States increased its military aid to Zaire, but it could not stem the revolt. By late July frantic cables were reaching Washington from Leopoldville: the rebels were winning, the ANC was collapsing, well-trained, foreign soldiers were necessary. On August 5, 1964, Stanleyville, Zaire's third-largest city, fell to the Simbas, while in Washington a National Intelligence Estimate on Zaire predicted "a total breakdown in governmental authority."

The United States preferred a "clean solution" (European or African troops) but would rely on mercenaries if necessary. This had been its two-track approach from the outset. A cable from Godley on August 5 had posed the problem crisply. "There are only three places," he wrote, the Zairean government (GOC) could turn: "a) GOC can seek direct Belgian military intervention; b) it can attempt to recruit white mercenary brigade; c) it can ask for US troops.... If Belgian Government refuses to accept risks of intervention...mercenary brigade is second best alternative.... From US standpoint [the] employment of mercenaries would carry advantage of being done on GOC responsibility and would reduce overt western (i.e. Belgian or US) involvement .... It would place burden of responsibility on GOC and not on ourselves or Belgians...."

The mercenaries flowed into Zaire. Most came from South Africa and Rhodesia. "Hundreds in queue for Congo [Zaire] army," reported the *Cape Times* from Salisbury. "They will be formed into all-White commandos." The weekly *Jeune Afrique* noted that "at Johannesburg they are lining up in front of the recruitment center. All you need to be is white, able to shoot, and ready to help Mr. Tshombe, 'the good friend of Whites and foe of the Red Chinese.'... *Air Congo* planes fly the South African mercenaries to Leopoldville. There, they are met by instructors who hand them machine guns (American), and then they are flown in planes (American) toward Stanleyville or Bukavu to crush the rebels...."

"These mercenaries are everywhere evident, talk frequently to the press and anybody who will listen to them," Godley complained. They talked openly, for instance, to an Italian journalist, who subsequently described their entry into the town of Boende in late October 1964. "Occupying the town," he wrote, "meant blowing out the doors with rounds of bazooka fire, going into the shops and taking anything they wanted that was movable.... After the looting came the killing. The shooting lasted for three days. Three days of executions, of lynchings, of tortures, of



Photograph of lynching sent home as postcard by mercenary in the Congo, 1965.

screams, and of terror."

Just as tourists send postcards home, so the mercenaries sent photos of their exploits. Several found their way into the British weekly, the *Observer*. The first showed two almost naked black men, their hands tied behind their backs, ropes around their necks, being led by a white mercenary to their hanging. In the second, "smiling mercenaries" fought for the privilege of doing the "stringing up." A photograph of a swinging corpse was described but not printed....

When they met resistance, the mercenaries called on the Zairean air force,

Secretary Ball reassured the U.S. mission at the United Nations, were not U.S. citizens. "Guiding them into action," the *New York Times* reported after the operation had ended, "were American 'diplomats' and other officials in apparently civilian positions. The sponsor, paymaster and director of all of them, however, was the Central Intelligence Agency.... Its rapid and effective provision of an 'instant air force' in the Congo [Zaire] was the climax of the agency's deep involvement there." It was an impressive air force, particularly against an enemy without planes or anti-aircraft guns.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



### December 22, 1978

The 128-day California Teamster strike ended November 23 when eight striking union locals voted 1,328-340 to return to work.

The long strike against the Bay Area's market chains began when Safeway's warehouse workers walked off their jobs to protest company speedup. The Safeway-led Food Employers Council turned the strike into an all-out effort to cripple the union's strength.

Despite the tremendous militancy and unity displayed by the strikers they were forced back to work without any resolution of their main demands.

A "Union-management committee" will review Safeway's despised speedup plan. If they fail to reach an agreement, the arbitrator takes over. In the meantime, Safeway has already extended its speedup system from grocery into produce warehouses.

Also slated for arbitration is the question of strikers' amnesty. The markets intend to fire sixty-nine workers and suspend eight for their strike activities.

Of the union's main demands, only wage increases were settled—seventy-five cents, sixty cents, and fifty-five cents per hour in each year of the three-year contract. Other key demands including cost-of-living increases, nighttime premium pay, and job security, are also left to arbitration.



### December 28, 1953

"Don't make us D.P.s [displaced persons]" says a sign in the hallway of the building where I live. This is directed at "Construction Coordinator" Moses whose proposal to redevelop an area below Washington Square went to the Board of Estimate this week. It turned out to be a rather hot issue and the Board of Estimate cautiously postponed it for at least another month. They hesitated because just a few days before the hearing on this proposal, details of a report on housing by the City Planning Commission leaked out to the daily press.

The report reveals that thousands of slum families are being driven out of their homes so that new housing can be built. But few of them ever move back into these new developments. Negroes and Puerto Ricans are particularly hard hit. They face discrimination not only in private housing but in many tax-aided projects. Right now, more than half the people living in sites to be cleared are "non-white" minorities.

A city council law passed in 1944 penalizes any insurance company or housing redevelopment company for discrimination in rentals or occupancy by removing it from tax exemption. *This law has not once been invoked in 9 years!* Not more than 50 Negro families have been admitted to the 18 tax-aided developments throughout the city.

**Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976**  
By Piero Gleijeses  
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# Stakes are high in Co-Op strike

The messages of support read at the December 13 solidarity rally to back the striking Co-Op miners—from miners in Christchurch, New Zealand, to meatpackers on strike in Jefferson, Wisconsin—and the expanded picket line of 100 earlier that day outside the mine near Huntington, Utah, show the potential to expand backing for this struggle.

The examples reported in this week's lead article can and need to be multiplied on campuses, in union halls, factories, rural areas, churches, community centers and a multitude of other places across the United States. As the message from the New Zealand miners indicates, solidarity from around the world can become a factor in the outcome of this battle as well.

The strike by these 75 coal miners—for a union, for their jobs, for safety and dignity—is the most important labor battle in the United States today. It has the potential to become a real social struggle—involving forces from the working class and other social strata way beyond the organized labor movement.

If the workers at Co-Op win, their success will give a boost to the entire United Mine Workers of America (UMWA)—first in the West and then more broadly—and strengthen the hand of coal miners everywhere fighting for their livelihood and safety on the job. A victory by the miners will provide impetus to other union organizing efforts. If the company prevails, the bosses will have blood in their mouths to press their antiunion drive.

The UMWA, which has a history of being one of the strongest and most combative unions in the United States, has been dealt serious blows the last 25 years as the bosses have shifted the center of coal mining to the West and the union has not kept up in organizing most of the new mines.

Some 55 percent of the coal produced in the United States is mined west of the Mississippi, but only about a half-dozen mines in that region are union.

The workers at the Co-Op mine in Utah have refused to accept the status quo. They are setting a different pattern and are winning support—within the UMWA and beyond. These miners, mostly Mexican-born, provide a powerful example of how immigrant workers, bringing with them their own histories and traditions of struggle, strengthen rather than divide and weaken the working class in the United States. They have already shown, after three months on the picket line, that they are determined to persevere.

What's needed now is for every worker and farmer and others who believe in the rights of working people to weigh in the balance.

Messages of support can be won from many unions, immigrant rights organizations, and churches. Financial contributions can follow. As the holidays approach, collections for the miners and their families—including clothes and toys for the children—food drives, “Adopt a Family” campaigns, and distribution of the miners’ fact sheets (see [www.umwa.org](http://www.umwa.org)) need to be stepped up. Groups concerned with violations by employers of health and safety standards on the job can bring their skills in helping to spotlight and publicize the dangerous conditions at Co-Op. Students can contact the Student Labor Action Project at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, which has taken the lead among youth in the United States in organizing support for the Co-Op miners, to find out how to garner solidarity among young people on their campus and beyond.

Let's join these miners in their struggle to beat back the coal barons and reinvigorate the union!

# Florida court convicts Cuban hijackers

BY SAM MANUEL

A jury in Key West, Florida, convicted six Cubans December 11 on charges of air piracy. They face a minimum of 20 years in prison, with sentencing scheduled for February 26. The six were found guilty of using knives and a hatchet to hijack a Cuban passenger plane en route from the Isle of Youth, off Cuba's southern coast, to Havana on March 19.

Attorneys for the hijackers argued that the six men had been pawns in the staging of the hijacking in order to cover a “flight to freedom” by the crew and other passengers on board. The U.S. government holds that if a pilot is not under coercion and freely flies a plane to the United States no hijacking has been committed and no criminal charges can be brought.

Alexis Norneilla Morales, who admitted to being the organizer of the group, claimed that he had been approached by the copilot of the plane and an airport security guard a year in advance with a detailed plan to stage the hijacking. He also alleged that the airport security guard had furnished the weapons used to take over the plane.

The Cuban pilot and copilot, however, testified that they had never met the hijackers before the plane was commandeered and knew of no agreement to stage a hijacking of the aircraft. They testified that the assailants broke down the cockpit door, threatened the lives of passengers, and tied up other crew members in the rear of the plane.

Describing the assault on the crew, Daniel Blas Corría Sánchez, the plane's pilot, explained how a knife was held to his throat. “I had to lean myself backward, and for an instant let go of the controls,” the pilot said on the stand. “If I had leaned forward, he would have cut my throat,” he added. Corría Sánchez said that when he told the hijackers there was not enough fuel to fly to Miami one of them told him to go any place, even land in the sea. The pilot suggested they could reach Key West, and was then allowed to inform Havana of the kidnapping in order to get flight coordinates to Key West.

Of the 31 passengers on the flight, 14—some of them family members of the hijackers—have been allowed by Washington to remain in the United States. Two of them were called as witnesses for the prosecution. The other passengers and all of the crew members returned to Cuba. This is the second conviction of individuals involved in a string of seven hijackings of Cuban airliners and boats between August 2002 and April of this year. Cuban authorities said they uncovered evidence of plans for 29 additional hijack-

ings, which they have foiled.

In order to stem the string of hijackings, Havana began to take harsh measures. After a rapid trial and conviction, three ringleaders involved in the armed hijacking of a Cuban ferry boat were executed on April 11. Eleven men in the group, armed with a handgun and knives, had taken over the boat carrying 29 passengers.

During the same period 75 opponents of the Cuban Revolution were arrested and convicted on charges of collaborating with and taking funds from U.S. government officials in Cuba to advance the U.S. rulers' economic war against the Caribbean nation.

Washington seized upon these arrests, and the executions of the three hijackers, to organize an international campaign of threats against Cuba and to tighten existing sanctions.

Since October the U.S. government has stepped up scrutiny of passengers on the roughly 30 charter flights from the United States to Cuba. Juan Zarate of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) said that 55 passengers have been denied travel to Cuba because they did not have proper documents or the agency's approval. OFAC is responsible for enforcement of the travel restrictions and prosecution of those who violate them.

Zarate told the *Washington Post* that officers of the Department of Homeland Security are also being trained to look for U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba via third countries, including Canada and Mexico. Just days before the convictions of the six hijackers, a White House-appointed commission charged with coordinating U.S. sanctions against Cuba held its first meeting. The Commission for Assistance to a Free Cuba is co-chaired by Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The U.S.-orchestrated campaign against Cuba notwithstanding, Havana's policy of zero tolerance for hijackers has paid off. No successful hijackings have taken place since April.

In mid-July, a boat belonging to the Cuban company GeoCuba was hijacked in Camaguey with 15 people on board. It was pursued by the Cuban Coast Guard until it reached Bahamian waters. Because the boat was originally headed for the United States the Cuban government requested it be returned to Cuba along with the hijackers. After initially claiming the boat had been stolen and not hijacked, U.S. authorities admitted after interviews with 15 passengers that the vessel “may have been hijacked.”

On July 21, James Cason, chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, issued a statement to the Cuban media discouraging hijackings. The same day the U.S. Coast Guard returned the 15-person group that had been on the GeoCuba, including three guards who had been overpowered by the hijackers.

The hijackings are fueled to a large degree by Washington's hostile policies toward the Cuban Revolution. These include restrictions on the number of visas that are issued by the U.S. Interests Section in Havana to Cubans who apply to immigrate to the United States. At the same time Washington has for decades encouraged Cubans to cross the 90-mile Florida straits by any means through the application of the Cuban Adjustment Act.

Approved by Congress in 1966, the Cuban Adjustment Act provides virtually automatic asylum and expedited residency to any Cuban who lands on Florida's shores regardless of crimes they may have committed to get there. It is part of Washington's long-term goal of overthrowing the Cuban revolutionary government.

# Quebec rallies

Continued from front page

the general strike that swept the province in June 1972.

Across Quebec, each union federation initiated its own type of action.

Members of the Quebec Federation of Labor (FTQ), the Confederation of Quebec Unions (CSQ), and the Teamsters union closed off access to the ports of Montreal, Trois-Rivières, Quebec City and Bécancour for over 24 hours.

*Militant* reporters visited one of the seven blocked entrances to the port of Montreal. About 1,500 trucks usually run daily deliveries through there. Some 200 workers were present, waving banners from the Canadian Autoworkers Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), and the Teamsters.

Richard Pigeon, a member of CUPE Local 2873 who works in an old-age home in Brossard, south of Montreal, expressed the mood there. “We need to fight,” he said. “It's time to stick together. The Common Front of the 1970s starts now.” He was referring to the common actions of Quebec unions at that time.

## Unionists block highways in Quebec

Thousands of unionists also blocked off seven major highways, including the only accesses to Quebec's North Shore, Abitibi, and Saguenay-Lac-St. Jean regions of northeastern Quebec.

“We decided to hit the government and its allies, the bosses, where it hurts,” said Henri Massé, president of the 540,000-strong FTQ. The Montreal daily *La Presse* said economic losses were “incalculable.”

Under the campaign slogan “Stop the demolition,” the 280,000-member Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), organized dozens of demonstrations and hundreds of workplace actions across the province. The CSN had



QFL/Mishell Potvin

**Workers blocking Highway 175 to the Saguenay-Lac St. Jean region in Quebec to protest antilabor laws.**

held a November 29 demonstration of 20,000 in front of the National Assembly in Quebec City.

In a decision taken by parents, more than half of the 900 public day-care centers in Quebec were closed. In Montreal, some 25,000 day-care workers and parents joined a spirited march to the downtown offices of Quebec's premier, Jean Charest, against government plans to increase fees in provincially funded day-care centers from CAN\$5 to \$7 (CAN\$1=U.S.\$ .76) per day and to open the door to further fee increases based on parental income.

The universal daily \$5 child-care fee here was won in 1997. It is unique in Canada and is the product of a 30-year fight by Quebec women and unions.

Elected in April 2003, the Charest government has cut child-care services alone by CAN\$60 million so far.

Since the beginning of the fall, with the enthusiastic support of Quebec bosses, the Charest government has introduced a series of bills aimed at weakening union power and cutting social services under the code word of “reengineering” the provincial state.

Among them is Bill 31, which would amend the Quebec Labor Code to make it easier for companies and government services to contract out work, lower wages, worsen working conditions, and get rid of unions.

Bill 25, a law that will restructure state health-care institutions, sets the stage for carrying out Bill 30, a massive attack on workers' right to freedom of association. At a set date, larger health-care unions will be dismantled and smaller unions forced to merge into a set number of unions, grouped into four job categories. Unions would be allowed to bargain collectively or strike only over wages. These workers are now organized in several major unions and federations.

Bills 7 and 8 deny the right to unionize to the 10,000 workers who provide child-care or other health-care services in private home settings. This attack comes in the midst of an organizing drive by the CSN among these workers.

In the flurry of anti-labor legislation, Quebec's Minister of Labor announced the abolition of Law 46, which had extended many of the guaranteed wage minimums and working standards of unionized workers in the garment industry to workers in nonunion shops. As of January 1, a new two-page regulation will increase the basic hourly minimum wage in the industry from CAN\$7.30 to \$8.00, but remove all previous minimum wages for skilled job categories, leaving it up to employers to define any job categories and relative wages.

According to FTQ president Henri Massé, “We have already received proposals from 125 union locals for a general strike” that the federation is planning for February. “We're not threatening,” Massé said. “We're promising.”

## CORRECTION

The article “Timber workers strike across British Columbia” in the December 15 *Militant* contains some factual errors. It gave the wrong figure for the number of workers on strike. There are 10,000 woodworkers involved in the walkout, not 12,000. The strike is not taking place among workers across the province, as the headline said, but on Canada's west coast. These points were corrected in subsequent articles on this struggle.

Finally, a striker quoted in this article has 32 years on the job—he was mistakenly referred to as 32 years old—and works at Interfor, not Weyerhaeuser.

# ‘The truth can burst on cunning falsehood like a storm of wrath divine’

## Partisans of ‘Militant’ celebrate paper’s 75th anniversary around the world

Printed below are articles we received on meetings celebrating the 75th anniversary of the *Militant*—the first issue of which was dated Nov. 15, 1928. Anniversary meetings were held over the November 14–16 weekend in Chicago; Des Moines, Iowa; Detroit; Los Angeles; and St. Paul, Minnesota, and the following weekend in Atlanta; Birmingham, Alabama; Boston; Cleveland; Houston; Miami; Newark, New Jersey; New York; San Francisco; Seattle; Pittsburgh; and Washington, D.C. A final round of celebrations were held between the end of November and mid-December in Tampa, Florida; Philadelphia; Hazelton, Pennsylvania; Sydney, Australia; Stockholm and Gothenberg, Sweden; and Reykjavik, Iceland. Over the last three weeks the *Militant* covered the anniversary events in Twin Cities, Cleveland, and New York.

### BY ANITA ÖSTLING

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Björn Tirsén described how the first issue of the *Militant* was published in 1928 as he kicked off the 75th anniversary celebration here November 23.

Every chair was occupied as a dozen and a half workers and youth gathered at the Pathfinder Bookstore. Tirsén, a meatpacking worker and leader of the Communist League, told how James P. Cannon brought Leon Trotsky’s critique of Joseph Stalin’s anti-revolutionary, bureaucratic course to the United States when he returned from the sixth congress of the Communist International. Soon after their expulsion from the Communist Party for promoting Trotsky’s defense of a Leninist, internationalist course, Tirsén related, Cannon and other founders of the Communist League were publishing the first issues of the *Militant*, featuring a serialization of Trotsky’s document later published as *The Third International After Lenin* by a forerunner of Pathfinder Press.

Tirsén also explained that the *Militant*, together with Pathfinder books, were instrumental in the process of founding the Communist League in Sweden in 1989. He described how he started reading the *Militant* some years later as a high school student, during the turbulent events in Yugoslavia that culminated in the overthrow by working people of the Stalinist dictatorship of Slobodan Milosevic.

Tirsén introduced Joel Britton and Bill Schmitt from the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. Schmitt, also a member of the Young Socialists, pointed to the *Militant*’s campaign to get out the truth about the fight by the Co-Op miners in Utah for union recognition and decent pay and working conditions. Explaining why this fight by 74 miners—mostly immigrants from Mexico—“is the most important labor battle in the United States today,” Schmitt appealed to everyone present to work with others to help garner aid for the miners.

Britton, the SWP candidate for governor of California in the special election in that state in October, reported on steps being taken by the communist movement in Toronto, London, and New York to more effectively organize the distribution of Pathfinder books. He also discussed the meaning of the outcome of the California election and of recent moves by the U.S. rulers in their “war against terrorism.”

At a similar meeting in Gothenburg, Sweden, chaired by Catharina Tirsén, Britton and Schmitt were joined by Mehrdad Ahmadi, an immigrant worker from Iran who told the audience how important it was that he came upon a Communist League/Young Socialists literature table this past May Day. Getting acquainted with the communist movement was the culmination of more than a decade of reading and studying books by Leon Trotsky, V.I. Lenin, and others in Farsi, the main language of his country of birth.

Ahmadi first found some of these books—from *The History of the Russian Revolution* and *My Life* by Trotsky to *State and Revolution* by Lenin—in a small town library in northern Sweden where he spent several months at a refugee camp await-

ing permission to get a job. He noted that Trotsky’s book on the Russian Revolution “is by a participant in the revolution, and even the founder of the Red Army.” He said this book “helped me see that the Russian Revolution was more than what I knew about the Soviet Union.” It also helped him understand “the role of people who had called themselves communists in Iran,” he said, referring to the Stalinist Tudeh party. Since getting a subscription last spring, he noted, “I have deepened my understanding on many issues by reading the *Militant*, Pathfinder books, and discussing with communists here. You have to have a bigger perspective than only one country. The *Militant* gives such a perspective and links struggles around the world to each other.”



### BY STEVE WARSHELL

HOUSTON—“I know I heard the now-famous speech by Martin Luther King,” Robin Maisel told those gathered here November 22 for the *Militant*’s 75th anniversary, “but the most memorable part of the march for me was this newspaper that I bought while there. It was the first paper I ever read that started with the truth—and facts are hard things. But that’s what the *Militant* worked with.” A lifetime partisan of the paper who now lives in Waco, Texas, Maisel said he was first introduced to the socialist newsweekly at the August 1963 civil rights march in Washington, D.C.

“I can say now that the only thing more important than reading the *Militant* is selling it,” he concluded.

Veteran Socialist Workers Party leader Tom Leonard described how the *Militant* advanced his political understanding while he was a merchant seaman in the late 1940s and early ’50s. After describing some of the revolutionary struggles he encountered while at sea, as well as the working people who fought in them, Leonard said, “Seeing these struggles and some of the political people involved is not the same as understanding what is really going on. I only began to do that in a serious way from reading the *Militant*... and I’ve been learning from the *Militant* ever since. It’s really a fact that truth can burst on cunning falsehood like a storm of wrath divine. The *Militant* fights to write the truth and makes corrections when it errs.”

Also speaking was Tony Dutrow, former SWP candidate for Houston mayor who recently returned from a trip to the western coal fields, selling the *Militant* to working people and getting out the truth about the struggle of coal miners at the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah.

Dutrow, who had lived in the area in the late 1980s, noted the continuity of readers who had been part of union struggles in that period and are now supporting the UMW struggles today. Dutrow described meeting miners in Orangeville, Utah, who knew about the paper’s accurate coverage of the 1984 Wilberg mine disaster that killed 27 coal miners. “It didn’t take long before our team ran into an ex-Wilberg miner who remembered and appreciated the paper’s coverage of the mine accident,” he said.

Former *Militant* staff writer Brian Williams, local university professor Tom Kleven, new *Militant* subscriber Jason Watley, and radio show host Henry Cooper also spoke on the panel.

Jacquie Henderson, Houston chairperson of the SWP, appealed to the participants to contribute to defray the costs of setting up a Pathfinder Press booth at the International Book Fair in Guadalajara, Mexico. More than \$1,200 was raised at the event.



### BY LAWRENCE MIKESH

MIAMI—“From the first issue to today the *Militant* has been and continues to be the voice of the class-conscious toilers, campaigning for the interests of workers and farmers,” Omari Musa told the audience that packed the Pathfinder Bookstore



Militant/Dag Tirsén

**Socialist Workers Party leader Joel Britton speaks November 21 at celebration of 75 years of the *Militant* in Gothenburg, Sweden.**

here November 22 to celebrate the *Militant*’s 75 years in the fight for socialism.

Musa served on the *Militant* staff in the 1970s and was one of the contributors to a column titled “By Any Means Necessary,” which covered the struggle for Black freedom. He described those battles from the 1940s to the ’60s.

Seth Galinsky, also a former *Militant* staff writer, described his experiences as part of the paper’s bureau in Managua, Nicaragua, in the 1980s when a workers and farmers government was in power in that country.

Nicole Sarmiento, a University of Miami student and Young Socialists member, also spoke. “You can’t understand politics if you don’t read the *Militant*,” she said. “I first saw the paper at a rally against the U.S. assault on Iraq about a year ago, and it was the only paper that provided a real answer to what was going on. That same day, *Militant* supporters invited me to go to Georgia to meet Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke, who was on a speaking tour in the United States and was meeting with Black farmers in southern Georgia fighting the U.S. government to save their farms. I got a subscription as soon as I got up there. Later, when Dreke spoke to a packed room of hundreds at Florida International University North campus here in Miami in November 2002, the *Militant* provided the only accurate coverage of the meeting.”

“The *Militant* is not just an aid. It’s a weapon to understand the world and to realize that there is a revolutionary movement in the United States. I had started to think that I would have to leave to go to Bolivia, where part of my family is from, to fight alongside brothers and sisters there. The *Militant* is about building a revolutionary party to fight imperialism from here.”



### BY RACHELE FRUIT

TAMPA, Florida—“It is always an honor to have anything to do with the truth. And I am not talking about facts and figures but about a world view that the *Militant* has provided directly, honestly, and with total integrity for 75 years,” said Linda Jenness welcoming two dozen people to the *Militant* anniversary event here December 6. Jenness was a *Militant* staff writer from 1973 to 1976 and the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president in 1972.

John Benson, the first speaker, explained the paper’s origins in the October 1917 Russian Revolution and described its history through the momentous labor struggles of the 1930s through World War II.

Dave Wulp, a partisan of the *Militant* for 43 years, said he began to read the paper in the fall of 1960 “because it was the only place in the country to get news of the Cuban Revolution, including entire speeches by Fidel Castro, even when they had to be continued week after week after week in the four-page paper.”

He described a *Militant* subscription

drive in August 1963 that began on the day of the civil rights March on Washington. “We heard all of the speeches going from house to house in the Black community where everyone was watching the march on television,” he said. “We sold our entire quota for the drive that first day, showing the importance of having the *Militant* as an upsurge takes place. And you will have that experience too.”

Wulp is a volunteer in the Pathfinder Printing Project. He announced that one of the goals of volunteers like him is to convert the entire 75 years of the *Militant*’s bound volumes into digital form, making them easily and permanently accessible to all.

Other speakers included Rachele Fruit, organizer of the SWP branch here, who described the *Militant*’s coverage of labor struggles from the 1970s to today, and Karl Butts, a farmer.

Butts described the impact of the *Militant* on his political development, including coverage of a trip by U.S. farmers to rural areas in Cuba in February 2000. “When I returned from Cuba,” he said, “I decided that I wanted to work here in imperialism’s bastion to make a revolution for which I believe the *Militant* not only has been but will be an indispensable weapon.”

Juan Blandon, a student at the University of Florida in Gainesville, sat down before the program began and read every one of the 45 *Militant* front-page reproductions. At the end of the program, he said he planned to go out on campus with a can and begin collecting money for the Co-Op miners to support their strike.



### BY CLAY DENNISON

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—“In 36 years I experienced three strikes,” said Ezekiel Hameen, at the *Militant*’s November 23 anniversary celebration here. “We’d always see the *Militant*.” Hameen, who works at a plant that makes coke and other coal by-products in the area, spoke on the panel along with Cristián Juárez, a reader of the *Militant*’s sister publication in Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and former *Militant* staff writers Susan LaMont and Brian Taylor.

Willie Evans, a leader of a three-year strike against Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, and member of United Steelworkers of America Local 303L, sent greetings to the event.

“What a great milestone!” Evans said in his message. “The *Militant* is the real ‘McCoy’ of all the papers in that it is very candid in expressing the whole stories and truth hidden behind the facts in today’s events, whether they are economical, social political, religious, ethical, or civil matters.” Let’s support the paper’s work, Evans concluded, “by buying it, reading it, becoming knowledgeable of its truths...passing it along to someone who is not aware of its existence and wholesome information. I wish its future well, for another 75 years.”

# Australia mine machinery workers strike

## P & H bosses lock out workers, seek to bargain with ‘individuals, not union’

BY BOB AIKEN

MT. THORLEY, New South Wales, Australia—Workers at P & H MinePro have set up picket lines at Mt. Thorley, 140 miles north of Sydney, to fight a union-busting drive by mining equipment giant Joy Global, and have begun to reach out for support. Like many other bosses in Australia, Joy Global is attempting to impose contracts with individual workers instead of the union.

The same company locked out workers at Joy Mining Machinery in Moss Vale, south of Sydney, for several months in 2000 in an attempt to break the unions there. Workers at that plant eventually won a collective agreement.

After the unionists had carried out an overtime ban for several weeks in their fight for a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), P & H locked them out on November 14. This reporter was part of a December 6 reporting team that visited the picket line and a union picnic in nearby Singleton.

The P & H workshops at Mt. Thorley are located in an industrial area in the heart of the southern Hunter Valley coalfields. The 60 workers on the picket there are almost all tradespeople—mainly boilermakers—who assemble and maintain massive “draglines” used in open cut coal mining, and also make huge coal mining buckets and coal truck trays. The majority of pickets are members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), with a handful in the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU). A few miles away at the Bulga company’s open cut mine, six of the 12 P & H workers who maintain company-made equipment there are also locked out and are keeping up a protest picket.

Phil Mitchison and other workers we met at the picnic described how the company had tried to intimidate union members leading up to the lockout. The bosses had assembled all the workers into one of the



Pickets at P & H MinePro in New South Wales, Australia, December 6. Bosses locked out 60 workers in union-busting move to impose “individual contracts.”

rooms at the workshops, he said, and put a padlock on the door before taking them out one at a time to “ask” if they were prepared to work overtime and end other union action. The unionists were locked out one-by-one as they refused to accept company demands.

Mitchison explained that P & H is trying to introduce nonunion “individual contracts,” with wage raises tied to profits through company-imposed “key performance indicators.” The company terminated negotiations over the EBA, he said, by declaring that they had made a “final offer.” After workers rejected this proposal

57-10 in a postal ballot, the company declared that this was their final offer anyway, and locked out the workforce.

Steve Unicombe, a boilermaker with eight years at the company, was part of a two-person “skeleton crew” at the picket line during the union picnic. He explained that they had just returned from a speaking tour to several plants in Bathurst and Orange, west of Sydney.

The key issue in their fight—the company drive for “individual contracts and no union”—had struck a chord among the workers they had met, Unicombe said: “Everywhere we went workers had

had their own fight.” They learned that AMWU members at the Electrolux washing machine plant in Orange, for example, have so far been able to block a drive by the company to decertify the union among the 1,000-strong workforce there. Workers at Rail Infrastructure and EDI Rail had also fought to renew collective agreements and block company attempts to impose individual contracts, he said.

At the picnic, Shane Ratcliffe told us he had just returned from a two-day visit to Sydney with other P & H workers where they had spoken at “more than a dozen” metal shops and construction sites. “It affects everyone,” he said, describing the good hearing they received when they explained the issues in the fight.

Workers at Rheem, a waterheater manufacturing plant in Sydney, for instance, voted for a A\$5 levy (A\$1 = US\$.74) to support the P & H workers. Rheem locked out workers there several times earlier this year in the course of a fight over a new EBA at the plant.

Ratcliffe described how one company, Heatcraft, had refused entry to the locked-out workers, though the union official who was accompanying them, who has legal right of entry, was allowed to go into the plant. He said about a third of the workers had assembled outside during their lunch break and “we spoke to them through the fence.”

Speaking teams have also gone down to Newcastle, and Mitchison said he was going to be part of another team to more workplaces in Sydney the coming Monday.

A couple of days before the picnic two bus loads of CFMEU and AMWU members from the construction divisions of those unions drove up from Sydney to visit the picket line—with a check for A\$19,000, and about A\$1,000 worth of meat for a big barbecue. They marched up and down the road between the picket shack and the company offices at the workshops, waving union flags and chanting union slogans.

Local support is also strong. A sign in the picket shack states “groceries were donated by the Singleton Baptist church.” A steady stream of coal miners and other workers are visiting the picket line, and the local paper, the *Singleton Argus*, is giving favorable coverage to the union fight. The wives and other family members of the locked-out workers are also pitching in to help the picket, from circulating petitions to contacting the media.

# One of ‘Vieques 12’ gets 5 years in jail

BY RÓGER CALERO

A federal judge in San Juan, Puerto Rico, sentenced Vieques activist José Pérez González to five years in prison, two years probation, and a fine of \$10,000 December 11 for his participation in a May 1 celebration of the U.S. Navy’s departure from the Puerto Rican island.

This is the harshest sentence meted to one of the 12 activists from Vieques who have been convicted of charges ranging from trespassing to destruction of federal property stemming from the May 1 celebration. That night, hundreds of Vieques residents and demonstrators from mainland Puerto Rico entered the grounds of the abandoned military facilities at Camp García to celebrate the U.S. Navy’s departure from the island.

A sustained campaign by fishermen and other working people in Puerto Rico, and their supporters internationally, forced the Navy to finally leave the island in May last year after having occupied it for more than six decades. They used the island as a live bombing range and to conduct military exercises to prepare for imperialist inva-

sions around the world.

The frame-up against the 12 activists is Washington’s latest move to victimize Puerto Rican anticolonial fighters and is aimed at undermining the victory in Vieques.

Dozens of supporters of the campaign to demand justice for the Vieques 12, as they are known, gathered in front of the federal court building after Pérez’s sentencing to condemn the judge’s decision.

“What happened in Vieques was a popular event, not only an action of 12 people,” Liana Morales, Pérez’s wife, told the press, “The judge went after only one person.”

After the sentencing, U.S. marshals escorted Pérez out of the court room, handcuffed and dressed in a prison jump suit, and took him back to the Guaynabo prison. His lawyer said Pérez will appeal the decision.

Pérez has been in prison since September 11 after he was found guilty on frame-up charges of conspiracy to destroy federal property and destruction of property through the use of fire. In addition

to Pérez, nine of the Vieques 12 have received sentences ranging from one year of probation to one year in prison. The remaining two, José Vélez Acosta and José Montañez Sanes, are still awaiting sentencing.

# British Columbia ferry workers fight sweeping cutback demands

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

HORSESHOE BAY, British Columbia—After a two-day strike, the Ferry and Marine Workers Union agreed to binding arbitration with the British Columbia Ferry Services, the private company that operates the ferry network along the province’s coast. Ferry workers across this province had launched a strike on December 10 in response to a decree by British Columbia labor minister Graham Bruce demanding an 80-day cooling off period between the 4,300 members of the Ferry and Marine Workers Union and the company. The union had begun a limited strike two days earlier.

Despite a decision by the provincial Labor Relations Board (LRB) which had ruled their strike illegal, the unionists continued their shutdown of the province’s ferry system, which was privatized by the Liberal government this past spring. It serves an annual average daily ridership of 60,000 passengers at 48 ports of call.

Key issues in the dispute are contracting out, a proposal by the company that workers receive no overtime pay until they have worked more than 2,088 hours in a year, potential changes to workers’ pensions, and wage cuts from 12.5 percent to 53

percent. On October 31, on the eve of the last contract’s expiration, a record-breaking 82 percent of the union’s membership cast ballots and voted by 97 percent to give the bargaining committee a strike mandate.

“We’re standing up for all unions who, like the Hospital Employees Union (HEU), are having their agreements torn up. We’re fighting to keep a livable wage,” said a striker who asked that her name not be used.

“This government is anti-labor and has been sanctioned by the International Labor Organization. They’re a big-business government with an agenda to privatize and sell off government assets,” said union spokesperson Tom McNeilage.

The fact that the strikers are part of a broader fight that has been taking place against the Liberal government was clear from the participation of workers from many different unions in the first day of picketing here at the Horseshoe Bay Terminal. Among the unions present were the HEU, the British Columbia Teacher’s Federation, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the United Steelworkers of America, and the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers—which has 10,000 of its members on strike along the province’s coast.

## Further Reading from Pathfinder



### Puerto Rico: Independence is a necessity

By Rafael Cancel Miranda

In two interviews, Cancel Miranda—one of five Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979—speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign to free Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. Also available in Spanish. \$3.00