

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Imperialism's spreading wars in face of strengthening of U.S. working-class'

Nearly 400 at N.Y. event hear Socialist Workers Party leaders
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London, Washington are sending more troops to Afghanistan

BY JULIE CRAWFORD

LONDON, February 5—The British government announced February 1 it is sending another 800 troops to southern Afghanistan by this summer. This involves a net increase of British forces in the country by 300, bringing their overall numbers in the country to 6,300. Five hundred soldiers in Kabul are being redeployed to Helmand province, where some of the fiercest battles took place last year. British forces in this southern province will now total 5,800.

At the same time, Washington is building up its own forces there. An editorial in the February 1 *Washington Post* said, "By extending the deployment of a brigade of the 10th Mountain Division even as the 82nd Airborne begins to arrive, the Pentagon will bring the U.S. troop level to 24,000. That's 50 percent more than at this time last year and about six times the number of American soldiers who were in Afghanistan at the time of the battle for Tora Bora, in early 2002."

On February 4, U.S. general Daniel McNeill took over control of the NATO-led forces in Afghanistan from British general David Richards. "This is a good

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U.S. rulers use each bombing in Iraq to escalate imperialist war

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, February 7—A series of bomb explosions in Iraq, mostly in predominantly Shiite neighborhoods of Baghdad, killed an estimated 1,000 Iraqis in the first week of February, according to Iraq's interior ministry. Each bombing is being used by the U.S. rulers and the big-business media to win public support for accelerating the deployment of 21,500 additional troops to Iraq.

The dispatch of more troops has been under way since the January 10 announcement of the escalation of the war by U.S. president George Bush.

Another rationalization for the imperialist war in Iraq, which is gaining ground among capitalist politicians and pundits, is the argument that Bosnia should serve as a "model" for what Washington needs to do to establish a stable regime subservient to U.S. interests in the region.

"Today, many of the people active in Bosnia believe they have a model that could help stabilize Iraq," said columnist David Brooks in an opinion piece in the January 30 *New York Times*.

A "Marine Corps Assessment of Iraq Situation," published in the February 2 *Washington Post*, and other such reports by U.S. spy agencies increasingly describe as bleak the prospect for "national reconciliation" between Shiite- and Sunni-led factions of the Iraqi bourgeoisie vying for power. A debate is emerging



Getty Images/AFP/David Furst

U.S. troops from the 5-20 Infantry Division conduct house-to-house searches February 6 in northern Baghdad, as U.S.-led operations in the Iraqi capital intensify.

in U.S. ruling circles on the possibility of a "soft partition" of Iraq into a federation of Kurdish, Shiite, and Sunni provinces with a weak central government.

U.S. senator Joseph Biden, a Democrat from Delaware, and Leslie Gelb, former assistant secretary of state in the Carter administration, have promoted such an argument. One example is a column the two coauthored in the May 1, 2006, *New York Times*. "The idea, as in Bosnia, is to maintain a united Iraq by decentral-

izing it, giving each ethno-religious group—Kurd, Sunni Arab and Shiite Arab—room to run its own affairs," they wrote. That could be achieved, they said, by winding down "our military presence responsibly while preventing chaos and preserving our key security goals."

At the same time, support is widespread in the ruling class for the \$622 billion war budget the Bush administration submitted to Congress February 5

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'No papers? No problem!'

Immigrant, other workers in Texas resist boss and gov't attacks on rights



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Francisco Gutiérrez, a worker at a Pizza Patron restaurant in Houston, stands February 1 by sign at store saying in Spanish: "Welcome compatriots! We accept [Mexican] pesos."

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON
AND STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—"No papeles? No problema!" (No papers? No problem!) read signs in front of some apartment complexes here seeking new renters. The signs are an indication of the growing size and increased social and political

weight of an expanding section of the U.S. working class—undocumented immigrants. Growing numbers of them live and work on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, and show determination to fight for their rights.

According to state officials, the number

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Help increase paper's base among workers

Dear Reader,

We urge you to sign up for a long-term subscription to the *Militant*. The best offer is \$35 for a year. For just about 70 cents a week you will be getting the

Letter from the editor

paper home delivered for the next 12 months. You can also convince your coworkers, fellow unionists, schoolmates, neighbors, friends, or relatives to do the same.

A number of readers, whose comments are published each week in the subscription ad on page 2, are explaining why they are pitching in to build the paper's long-term readership. You can add your voice by sending to the *Militant* such endorsements, along with photos, and organize others to do the same.

As these statements indicate, increasing the circulation of the socialist newsweekly—single issues, subscriptions, and renewals, in particular—is central to the work by militant workers to organize and strengthen the trade unions in a period when the labor movement continues to decline.

At the same time, it is clearer that over the last year the U.S. working class has

been strengthened. This was registered in last spring's mass proletarian actions demanding legalization for all immigrants. It has been confirmed by recent events, such as the November 16–17 walkout by 1,000 meat packers at the Smithfield slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, protesting the firing of coworkers for "false papers." This strengthening is permanent, short of an all-out war by the employers and their government that can inflict crushing defeats on the workers. Hints of such a war can be seen in recent factory raids and deportations.

In the eyes of working people beyond
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Vancouver event promotes tour in Canada for Chinese-Cuban general

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—The Public Lounge café here was packed January 20. Some 35 people gathered to discuss the next steps in building the cross-Canada speaking tour of Armando Choy, one of the authors of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* (see ad below).

Published by Pathfinder Press a year ago, the book has enjoyed widespread publicity throughout North America, as well as in Cuba and other countries. Choy is scheduled to visit Canada March 9–18, and speak at a public meeting here March 11 at the Vancouver Public Library, and the following day at the University of British Columbia Asian Center.

People attending the January 20 event included leaders of the fight seeking redress by Ottawa to all Chinese immigrants in this country forced by the Canadian government in the past to pay a “head tax.” They also included trade unionists and people active in community groups and Cuba solidarity work. Two people came from Seattle.

Sid Tan, cochair of the Head Tax Families Society, told the meeting that the federal government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper was compelled to issue an apology for the racist head tax and to agree to compensate the 400 surviving head-tax payers or their living spouses. At the same time, he said, “Only 0.6 percent of all 82,000 head-tax families have been compensated. The Harper government has not dealt with the injustice of this racist tax.”

“We are building a movement that will outlast the Harper government,” Tan vowed. “We’ve outlasted five prime ministers so far and this struggle will not be over until we say it’s over.”

“I’m honored to be involved in this tour because the example of Cuba shows that injustices can be rectified,” said Tamara Hansen, coordinator of the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba.

Thomas Davies, a representative of the Free the Cuban Five Committee, urged those present to become part of the fight to free five Cuban revolutionaries framed-up by Washington and imprisoned on draconian sentences in the United States. The committee held a January 30 picket at the U.S. consulate demanding the release of the five men, and invited Mary Ellen Marus, an organizer of Choy’s tour, to speak about it (see adjacent photo box).

A fund appeal by Tim Louis, a former Vancouver City Council member and supporter of the Cuban Revolution, netted more than \$200 for meeting costs.

George Gidora, the leader of the Communist Party in British Columbia, was also introduced.

Quoting Moises Sio Wong, one of the authors of the book, Michel Dugré said, “The most important measure to eliminate racist discrimination in Cuba was the revolution itself.” Dugré described his participation in October on behalf of Pathfinder Books, the distributor of *Our History Is Still Being Written* in Canada, in a series of seven presentations in Cuba about the book. All three authors participated in one or more of these events, along with Mary-Alice Waters, the book’s editor.

In these meetings, the three Chinese-Cuban generals told the relatively little-known history of the inspiring example set by thousands of Chinese Cubans who participated in Cuba’s wars of independence and in the revolutionary war that toppled the Batista dictatorship in 1959, Dugré said. “The tour will bring this example to those in Canada who are fighting for head tax redress, for immigrant rights, and social justice.” Meeting participant Jaehun Choi, an international

student from Korea, told the *Militant* afterwards, “I didn’t realize that Chinese participated in the Cuban Revolution that put an end to racism.” He said *Our History Is Still Being Written* helps show that a revolution is needed to overcome anti-Chinese and other discrimination.

Racism is an important question in south Korea, Choi said. That country’s rulers are whipping up chauvinism against the growing numbers of immigration workers who have come to Korea from other Asian countries. *Our History Is Still Being Written* will help show the way forward in combating such prejudice, he said.

A number of participants in the January 20 event also attended a January 30 organizing meeting to discuss building Choy’s tour. The next organizing meeting is set for February 12.

For more information on Armando Choy’s tour, contact Pathfinder Books in Toronto, Tel: (416) 417-3475, e-mail: pathfinderbooks@bell-

‘Free the Cuban 5,’ demand protesters in British Columbia



Sarah Alwell

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Chanting “Free, free, free the Cuban 5,” more than 35 people picketed the U.S. consulate January 30 demanding that Washington release five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States for the past eight years. Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Gerardo Hernández, René González, and Fernando González were framed up by the FBI on charges ranging from “conspiracy to commit espionage” to “conspiracy to commit murder.” The picket was organized by the Free the Cuban Five Committee Vancouver.

—MARY ELLEN MARUS

net.ca.; or Steve Penner in Vancouver, Tel: (604) 324-2671, e-mail: stevepenner@telus.net.

After dragnet, gov’t deports hundreds in L.A. area

BY JAMES WARDE

LOS ANGELES—Under a banner demanding “Legalization for all!” about 200 people marched from the Pomona Day Laborers Center to City Hall January 26 to protest recent immigration police raids and deportations.

The action was in response to a weeklong sweep by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) cops, who arrested more than 761 immigrants throughout southern California. It was conducted under ICE’s “Operation Return to Sender.” Begun last May, more than 13,000 immigrants have been deported under this program.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, 423 of those arrested were detained immediately after being released from local jails. The big majority were from Mexico, but also from 13 other countries, including Honduras, Ukraine, India, Japan, Poland, and Trinidad. Jim Hayes, director of ICE’s detention and removal

operations in Los Angeles, plans to deploy dozens of ICE agents to city and county jails. Immigration cops say that they have identified 3,000 inmates in state and local jails who will be deported upon their release.

“It’s a practice that leads to the weakening or eliminating of civil liberties, first for immigrants,” Nativo Lopez, president of the Mexican American Political Association, told the *Militant*. “All of us are affected by that whether we’re here illegally

or can trace our roots to the pilgrims.”

Among those addressing the protest rally was Maria Morales, whose husband was arrested January 20 as he was on his way to work, and then deported to Tijuana. José Calderon, president of the Latino-Latina Roundtable of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valley, which helped organized the protest, explained, “Their strategy is to say they’ve only arrested criminals. But they’re arresting people on the street,” Calderon said.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

FLORIDA

Miami

Our Politics Start with the World: Global Warming and the Working Class. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 16. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 8365 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 206. Tel. (305) 756-4436.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

The Imperialist Engineered Breakup of Yu-

goslavia and the Fight for Self-Determination in Kosova. Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, *Militant* editor. Fri., Feb. 16. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor (use north set of elevators) Tel. (212) 629-6649.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

The Revolutionary Example of Malcolm X. Are His Ideas Relevant Today? Speaker: Arrin Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 16. Program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5907 Penn Ave., Room 225. Tel. (412) 365-1090.

TEXAS

Houston

Black Farmers Defending Their Land. Speakers: Jacquie Henderson and Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party, participants in recent farm conference. Fri., Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 4800 W. 34 St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

—CALENDAR—

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Socialist Education Weekend, February 17–18. A weekend of political discussion with Young Socialists graduating from summer schools in Auckland and Sydney. Sat., Feb. 17, 3:00 p.m. Celebrate the publication of *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*. Dinner 5:30 p.m. **Imperialism’s Spreading Wars and Financial Disorder in Face of Irreversible Strengthening of U.S. Working Class.** 7:00 p.m. Sun., Feb. 18. Final sessions of summer school. Sponsored by the Communist League and Young Socialists. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Tel. (09) 276-8885.

Our History Is Still Being Written

THE STORY OF THREE CHINESE-CUBAN GENERALS IN THE CUBAN REVOLUTION



Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sio Wong—three young rebels of Chinese-Cuban ancestry—threw themselves into the great proletarian battle that defined their generation.

They became combatants in the clandestine struggle and 1956–58 revolutionary war that brought down a U.S.-backed dictatorship and opened the door to the socialist revolution in the Americas. \$20.

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Houston: protesters condemn immigration raid



Militant/Amanda Uрман

HOUSTON—Forty people picketed the Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center here February 3 to protest a raid in which 53 workers at Republic Waste Services in Humble, Texas, were arrested January 31. Anti-immigrant groups U.S. Border Watch and the Minutemen organized a counterprotest of equal size at the same time.

—AMANDA ULMAN

Factory workers in Scotland stage sit-in to protest layoffs

BY PETER CLIFFORD

IRVINE, Scotland—“What do we want? Justice!” shouted 20 electronics workers February 3 as they marched out of the Simclar factory in Kilwinning, Ayrshire, in Scotland. Members of the Community union had been occupying the plant since the previous morning in response to a company announcement that 420 jobs were being eliminated with the closing of this plant and one here in Irvine. Cheered on by a crowd of workers and family members gathered at the gates, many then jumped in cars to head down to picket the Irvine factory.

“We’re here to get what’s due to us,” said Robert Gallagher, who has worked at Simclar for 17 years. He explained that when they arrived for work on January 29 the company took the workers into the canteen and read a letter telling them both plants were to go into liquidation. Gallagher described how company owner Samuel Russell had legally separated out these two plants from the rest of his business operations in order to make this move.

Patrick Harkins, another worker at the plant, pointed out that there was no guarantee that workers would receive any redundancy (severance) payments. “We don’t even get the normal 90 days notice,” a legal requirement if job losses are to be made in an ongoing company, he said.

Pickers at the Irvine plant stopped a lorry destined for Simclar’s Dunfermline factory, which is not affected by the company liquidation.

The job actions began after more than 200 workers attended a Community

union meeting February 1. The unionists decided to picket the next morning. As workers gathered at both factories, they rushed the gates when security guards made a shift change. As the first factory sit-in for many years, the job action at the Kilwinning plant rapidly gained media attention and support delegations from other unions, as well as from some Labour Members of Parliament.

Community union president Jimmy McKee told the media that Russell “has closed three plants over the last years, with 1,500 losing their jobs.” He pointed to a report in the January 31 *Scotsman* that described the company owner as a Scottish hero for his business acumen. “Russell claims these two plants are different from the rest of his group, so he can shut them and continue to make



Militant/Peter Clifford

Workers, members of the Community union, leave Simclar electronics factory in Kilwinning, Scotland, after staging sit-down strike February 3 to protest layoffs.

profits at the other plants. Is that what makes him a hero?” stated McKee. The difference between these two plants and Russell’s other factories is that these are the only two factories in where he has to

deal with the union,” noted McKee.

With the conclusion of the Kilwinning sit-in, the union is now concentrating on maintaining a 24-hour picket at the Irvine site.

Immigrants, other workers resist attacks on rights

Continued from front page

of undocumented immigrants in Texas has increased by 270,000 over the past five years, bringing the state total to around 1.4 million, or 6 percent of the state’s population.

The widespread attitude that these immigrants are workers, not criminals, finds many expressions. “Pesos accepted here,” reads a sign at a popular Dallas-based Pizza Patron restaurant here, one of five in Houston. “Many people like to be able to use their [Mexican] pesos here,” commented Francisco Gutiérrez, “and they like the attitude too.” The sign has also prompted a few responses suggesting these customers

“go back to Mexico,” said Gutiérrez, who works at Pizza Patron.

When Uriel Aguirre picked up his pizza at the restaurant February 1, he told the *Militant* he has lived in Houston working construction jobs for almost six years and recently returned to his home in Querétaro, Mexico. “I thought that I’d be coming back in a couple of weeks,” he said. “But it turned into almost a year of working at an electronics factory there and helping out at home until my dad got his health back.”

Aguirre pointed to the January 31 police raid and arrest of 53 immigrant workers at Solid Waste Management Company in the Houston suburb of Humble (see photo box on page 3). “The *migra* comes out with armored cars and helicopters and what do they accomplish?” he asked. “They separate parents from their children and try to terrorize and humiliate all of us. People need to take action again,” he said, referring to the massive demonstrations and work stoppages last spring.

Another customer, Rogelia Urutia, was eager to talk about her recent experiences after traveling to El Salvador, her country of origin. “When I returned *migra* told me I had to reapply for all my papers to come back. It took four months for fingerprints, three for applications, two more for something else. I told them they were abusing me and I knew they couldn’t keep me out forever,” she said. “I ended up working there for a year as a fruit processor.”

Undocumented immigrant workers, who come in large part from Mexico and Central America, pay \$1.58 billion every year in taxes and fees, according to a recent state comptroller’s report, which also concludes that the absence of “illegal” immigrants would decrease the gross state product by \$17.7 billion a year. The report asserts that the presence of undocumented workers cost the state \$1.16 billion in 2005—\$968 million for education, \$58 million for health care, and \$131 million for prisons. About 70 percent of the 23,000 births at Houston and Dallas public hospitals in 2005 were to immigrant mothers without papers. There are currently 135,000 undocumented children in Texas public schools.

A dozen immigration bills are pending in the state legislature. These include ones that would deny access to state social service programs for children born in Texas to undocumented immigrant parents, bar in-state tuition



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Sign at Houston apartment complex reading, “No papers, no problem.”

for children of undocumented residents, require proof of citizenship for voting, and levy a fee on money sent from Texas to Mexico and Latin America.

Mexicans working abroad sent home a record \$25 billion last year, most of it from the United States, according to a study released February 2 by the Inter-American Development Bank. The estimated figure represents a 25 percent increase over 2005 and nearly 80 percent over 2003.

Without resident papers, immigrants here are currently denied access to Medicare and Medicaid, cash assistance, the Texas Children’s Health Insurance Program, food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, public housing, child care, and job opportunities for low-income individuals.

In Farmers Branch, a suburb of Dallas with 27,000 people, the city council voted unanimously in November to institute a ban on renting to immigrants without papers, which was to take effect January 12. In response to protests, the ban was blocked January 11, when a state district judge issued a temporary restraining order in one of the four lawsuits filed against the measure. On January 22, the city council adopted a revised bill that exempts children and the elderly from the rental ban. This has to be ratified by a citywide vote in May.

As part of responding to these attacks, a number of immigrants have simply moved across the highway to Dallas where apartment owners have been advertising with fliers proclaiming “No Papers? No Problem!”

“These laws and raids aren’t going to change the fact that we are here,” said Bernardino Flores in a February 3 interview. “I was deported twice, and now I am here to stay.”

Subscribe to ‘Militant’ long-term!

Continued from front page

those who regularly read it, the *Militant* has become more of an instrument of

the resistance to the bosses’ attacks. Expanding the paper’s long-term readership in the working class is essential in the struggle to advance the use of union power, as well as in building a revolutionary working-class movement.

By getting the paper week after week, month after month, you won’t miss a beat on its accurate coverage and analysis of imperialism’s spreading wars and financial disorder. Or its description of the place of the Cuban Revolution for the toilers of the Americas and the world.

We are making this appeal in the second week of a five-week sub renewal campaign, when we fell 15 subscriptions, or 3 percent, behind schedule. You can help turn this around and make sure all the quotas are met or surpassed in the next three weeks.

“Enclosed are three renewals,” wrote Jacquie Henderson, a garment worker in Houston, in a February 6 note to the *Militant*. “Two of them are from a meeting with two oil workers. The other we got at an anti-deportation protest. One of the oil workers mostly wanted to talk about Cuba and what workers in power can and have done.”

This kind of work can be emulated everywhere.

Help us make the sub renewal campaign a resounding success! Sincerely,

Argiris Malapanis, Editor

'Militant' Subscription Renewal Drive			
Jan. 20 – Feb. 25 ♦ Week 2 of 5			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
NEW ZEALAND	20	13	65%
SWEDEN	13	6	46%
CANADA	25	10	40%
UNITED STATES			
Boston	20	14	70%
Washington, DC	25	15	60%
New York	50	23	46%
Newark	25	10	40%
Seattle	20	8	40%
San Diego, CA	5	2	40%
Chicago	20	7	35%
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Miami	36	12	33%
Tampa, FL	3	1	33%
Los Angeles	30	9	30%
Twin Cities	27	7	26%
Atlanta	17	4	24%
Philadelphia	30	7	23%
Albany, NY	5	1	20%
Des Moines	35	7	20%
Birmingham	23	4	17%
San Francisco	20	3	15%
Pittsburgh	15	2	13%
U.S. Total	426	143	34%
AUSTRALIA	15	5	33%
ICELAND	4	1	25%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	20	7	35%
Edinburgh	8	0	0%
UK Total	28	7	25%
Int'l totals	531	185	37%
Should be	500	200	40%

ON THE PICKET LINE

Miners in South Africa strike against racist wage discrepancies

Some 2,500 mine workers in South Africa went on strike January 26 at the Modikwa platinum mine in Limpopo province. The National Union of Mine-workers (NUM), which represents these workers, is demanding an end to wage discrimination in which Black workers receive lower pay. The union also wants a 100 percent transportation subsidy and the immediate phasing out of the seven day, 24-hour production schedule at the mine. NUM represents mainly Black mine workers. The Modikwa mine is owned by African Rainbow Minerals and Anglo Platinum.

“We are protesting against the many discrepancies caused by racism in the company,” stated NUM spokesperson Onis Serothwane. “Working conditions for whites here are made to be much better than their black counterparts.” NUM general secretary Frans Baleni added, “Our cadres must fight the supremacist tendency when and where it rears its ugly head.”

—Ryan Scott

Copper miners in Arizona, Texas vote on new ASARCO contract

LOS ANGELES—The United Steelworkers (USW) together with several other unions reached a tentative agreement on a new contract with ASARCO, a Tucson-based copper mining company. The pact covers 1,600 workers. USW members are voting on the contract February 5–9. The agreement must also be approved by the bankruptcy court.

According to a union press statement,

‘Fusion centers’ centralize spying data for federal, local cop agencies

BY RÓGER CALERO

Local and state governments in at least 37 states across the country have set up intelligence centers in the last five years to gather and analyze information from local, state, and federal law enforcement officials, according to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

These “fusion centers,” as they are called, range from small conference facilities to high-tech ones with expensive communications networks, reported the December 31 *Washington Post*.

The emerging “network of networks” is aimed at streamlining information-sharing between federal agencies and local police departments, in order to centralize domestic spying more efficiently under the banner of “homeland defense.”

“Fusion centers” are expected to pool information sent to them by the 700,000 local and state police officers across the country, and make it available to federal agencies. Local police departments will also be able to scan federal records, said the *Post*.

With the support of Democratic and Republican politicians the White House has been pushing to end restraints on spying and disruption operations imposed on cop agencies in the 1970s, under the impact of the struggle for Black rights and the movement to oppose the Vietnam War.

“You need to educate cops, firefighters, health officials, transportation officials, sanitation workers, to understand the nature of the threat,” said Harvey Eisenberg, an assistant U.S.



Kerri Canly and Jennifer Hines, members of Service Employees International Union, bring food to Harley-Davidson strikers outside Springettsbury Township, Pennsylvania, plant.

the agreement includes a \$3 per hour wage raise over the three-and-a-half-year contract, a 20 percent increase in the pension formula, and no increase in costs for health-care coverage for active workers. It also restores most of the health-care benefits for retirees that were cut by ASARCO in August 2003, and reduces retirees’ monthly contributions.

Workers in Arizona and Texas struck ASARCO for four months in 2005. The company was demanding massive wage

and benefit concessions, including 12-hour days with no overtime payment and no benefits for new hires.

—Dean Hazlewood

Machinists strike Harley-Davidson plant in Pennsylvania

SPRINGETTSBURY TOWNSHIP, Pennsylvania—Nearly 2,800 workers at the Harley-Davidson motorcycle plant here went on strike February 2. Twenty-four hour pickets began after

Eye clinic opens in China with Cuban volunteers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

An ophthalmologic medical center that Cuban internationalist volunteers helped to build and staff opened in Qinghai province in northwest China in mid-December.

The China-Cuba Friendship Oph-

thalmologic Hospital, which focuses on treating eye diseases for people in the western region of China, is the product of a 10-year health cooperation agreement signed in April by Cuban and Chinese medical officials. Under the agreement, “Cuba will supply the hospital with equipment and experts, while the Chinese side provides space and other staff,” reported the Chinese news agency Xinhua. Of the 135 medical personnel at the hospital, 52 are from Cuba.

The Cuban Medical Services group, which is responsible for the clinic, was created in March 2005 to promote “free and/or subsidized cooperation, the training of national and foreign experts, scientific research, and for the organization of the International

members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 175 rejected the company’s concessionary contract. Workers are opposing introduction of a two-tier wage system, pension concessions, and that employees for the first time make payments for health insurance coverage. The walkout has won solidarity from area workers. Pickets on the line said Harley plans to hire hundreds of new workers over the next few months. The plant employs more than 3,200 union and nonunion workers.

—Osborne Hart

Garment workers in Vietnam strike south Korean-owned plant

Some 4,500 workers walked off the job at a south Korean-owned garment plant in southern Vietnam February 2. The workers at Hansoll Vina factory in Binh Duong province are demanding higher pay and better work conditions. The plant’s Korean managers routinely insult the workers, an official of the Binh Duong Trade Union told Associated Press. The bosses also force them to work even when they are sick, reported the *Touï Tre* newspaper. Binh Duong province is 19 miles west of Ho Chi Minh City.

—Brian Williams

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 19, 1982

It is almost seven years since the final defeat of the U.S.-backed dictatorship in South Vietnam, but Washington has never given up its vendetta against the Vietnamese revolution.

John Holdridge, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian affairs, summed up the Reagan administration’s policy to an audience of American businessmen in Peking last June by saying that “we will seek ways to increase the political, economic, and, yes, military pressures on Vietnam.”

Included in these pressures is a systematic attempt to starve out the Vietnamese by denying them desperately needed food aid.

To give one of the more recent examples, *New York Times* correspondent Bernard Weinraub quoted the testimony of Nina McCoy, an American teacher working with a Swedish aid group. “My students sit and stare and clutch their stomachs with hunger. I’m seeing people shrink before my eyes.”



February 18, 1957

At the tail end of the meeting of the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO in Miami last week, plans were announced for a large-scale campaign to organize 13 million white-collar workers.

The proposal is a substitute for the much-talked-of Southern organizing drive that was promised when the AFL and CIO merged in December of 1955.

The white collar workers need union organization. But the need to organize the South is far more urgent. Millions of Negro workers are already engaged in a life and death struggle for their civil rights. The militancy of the Negro people would supply a ready-made basis for an organizing campaign. On the other hand, if the labor movement permits this fight to be defeated by the White Citizens Councils, the latter, in all their labor-hating fury, will dominate the South. Union organization will be blocked for a long time to come.



February 20, 1932

The terror of the boss-class in Kentucky knows no bounds. Not content with brutal repressions and beatings, they have resorted to murder. Cold, planned, premeditated murder.

On Wednesday morning, February 18, William Simms, nineteen year old organizer of the National Miners Union and member of the Young Communist League was shot down by deputy thug Orbin Miller in the employ of the Rockefeller controlled mine interests in Pineville, Kentucky. Lawson Green, a N.M.U. organizer, who was with him when the shooting took place was arrested.

Murderer Orbin Miller who went through a formal arrest was later released by county Judge Baker of Barbourville.

Lawson’s testimony in the mock-trial against killer Orbin Miller was rejected because he was a miner. His testimony was rejected as invalid because he dared tell the miners of Kentucky-Tennessee to organize.

‘Imperialism’s spreading wars and financial disorder in face of irreversible strengthening of working class’

Nearly 400 attend New York meeting to hear Socialist Workers Party leaders

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS
AND OLYMPIA NEWTON

NEW YORK—Washington’s war in Iraq is the most important conflict of a multi-theater war that the U.S. rulers are leading their imperialist allies into under the banner of fighting “terrorism,” said Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. “The bloodshed we’re seeing there today is part of the continued breakdown of the world imperialist order, the only way out of which is the toilers taking power.”

Barnes was speaking at a January 28 public meeting here titled “Imperialism’s Spreading Wars and Financial Disorder in Face of the Irreversible Strengthening of the U.S. Working Class.” Workers and young people from across the United States and several other countries attended. For a good number of the nearly 380 participants, the event was a way to learn more about the SWP and Young Socialists, the two sponsors of the meeting.

Militant editor Argiris Malapanis and Ben O’Shaughnessy, organizer of the YS National Steering Committee, co-chaired the program. O’Shaughnessy opened the meeting with a report on actions the previous day to demand immediate withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Iraq. He highlighted the response by protesters to the Young Socialists and SWP. The majority in the audience had participated in the actions, which took place in Washington and other cities. (See the articles “‘Bring troops home!’”, “‘Not one penny, or person, for Washington’s wars!’”; and “1,400 protesters buy ‘Militant’ at antiwar actions” in last week’s issue.)

The meeting also launched Pathfinder’s newest book, *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*. Some 230 people bought copies of the title in English and Spanish over the weekend.

Example of Cuban Revolution

“The new book was born at the Caracas book fair in November,” said Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of the book, and editor of *New International* magazine.

Today in Venezuela substantial numbers of workers, farmers, and student youth, as well as oppressed national minorities of many origins, are being politicized by popular struggles that have been a driving force in Venezuelan politics for a decade, she noted. These include struggles for land, greater control by workers over job conditions, retaking control over the country’s vast patrimony of natural resources such as oil, and to push back economic sabotage by entrenched capitalist owners of industry, financial institutions, and land. Among the most committed of the popular forces, especially the youth, thirst has grown for a revolutionary socialist perspective and for broader knowledge of the modern history of popular revolutionary movements, she said. Many wonder “why some have succeeded while others have failed?”

“At the Caracas book fair we were involved in nonstop political discussions over such questions,” Waters said. “Is Marxism still relevant today? Is it still worth reading Marx, Engels, and Lenin? Is socialism a set of ideas or the line of march of the working class



Militant photos by Ben Joyce
Above: Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*, speaks at January 28 meeting in New York. Inset: Maura DeLuca (left), Ingrid Franco, and Eddie Beck continue political discussion over dinner.

toward power?” It was also stunning to see the degree to which most who consider themselves revolutionaries in Venezuela don’t think that what they are doing has anything to do with the Cuban Revolution, she noted.

The First and Second Declarations of Havana clearly answers these questions. It shows that the revolutionary struggle for power by working people is necessary throughout the Americas, Waters said. Pathfinder Press has kept these documents in print for 45 years in the pamphlet *The Second Declaration of Havana*. With the passage of time, however, the historical context becomes unfamiliar, making them less understandable to new generations.

“We had to take that pamphlet and transform it into a new book,” she said, referring to the chronology, glossary, index, and photographs in it. These place the mass mobilizations by working people in Cuba in the early 1960s, which surrounded the two declarations, in the context of the class struggle at the time, including the fight for Black freedom in the United States and the Algerian revolution.

The new book helps expand the reach of the international campaign to promote and use *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, said Waters. She pointed to upcoming events in five countries around this title.

Waters introduced young socialists seated on the platform who are taking part in February in the International Book Fair in Havana, where *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* will be presented; and to a meeting in March of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Hanoi, Vietnam. Young socialists participating and reporting for the *Militant* on the Havana book fair have accepted an offer from the Union of Young Communists of Cuba to speak at pre-university high schools there to discuss with students what life is like under capitalism, she said.

Waters also introduced young socialists taking part in a summer school

organized by the communist movement in Australia and New Zealand, pointing to how indispensable Marxist education is to building proletarian parties.

Breakdown of imperialist order

Speaking about the unanimous confirmation by the Senate of Gen. David Petraeus as the new commander of the U.S. forces in Iraq, Barnes noted that Petraeus had responded positively to a question from Sen. Carl Levin as to whether the Senate could support the course Petraeus outlined—the biggest escalation of the U.S.-led war in Iraq since the 2003 imperialist invasion—without “supporting the policies of the [Bush] administration.” Such open politicization of the officer caste of the imperialist armed forces, giving military officers direct access to “the people,” is dangerous for the working class, he said.

Barnes noted that the swift confirmation of Petraeus by an 81-0 vote showed that no section of the U.S. ruling class has any serious alternative to the escalation of the imperialist war in that country. Instead of the charade over “nonbinding resolutions” opposing the Bush administration plan, and empty threats to cut off funding for more troops, all the Senate had to do to hold off the rapid deployment of more troops was to put off confirming Petraeus.

The fragmentation of the world evident from Yugoslavia to Iraq, which is imposed or fostered by imperialism, has nothing to do with national liberation, said Barnes. As an example, he pointed to how the U.S. government is pressing for greater autonomy for Kurds in Iraq as part of its drive to establish a stable capitalist regime in that country friendly to imperialist interests in the region. But this has nothing to do with national self-determination for the Kurds, who live in an area that spans the borders of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria, he said. At the same time, Washington has been cooperating militarily with Ankara to smash the Kurdistan Workers Party, a Kurdish organization based in Turkey that has led an armed campaign for independence.

“The Bolsheviks explained the only road to world solidarity was through a voluntary union of Soviet republics,” Barnes said, referring to the revolutionary leadership of V.I. Lenin in the early years of the Russian Revolution.

The SWP leader emphasized that the breakdown of the imperialist order makes understanding and applying Marxist theory and practice essential for those seeking today to chart a road forward for the toilers, the vast majority of humanity.

“Communism is not an idea, nor a party, nor a specific group,” said Barnes. “It’s the practice of a section, of the vanguard, of the working class. It’s a movement.” To the degree it’s a theory, it is a generalization of the lessons of the working-class fight for power. Workers head toward communism before they know it, he said, but without a theory and strategy the proletariat cannot conquer power and transform the world.

Barnes pointed to the importance of systematic study of Marxist theory. “To learn Marxism as part of history, which is the only way it can be learned, is an enormous undertaking,” he said. That is why the work by more than 200 volunteers of the Printing Project to transform some 400 titles published by Pathfinder Press so that they include glossaries, chronologies, indexes, and photos wherever possible, and are issued in larger and more readable type, is so essential. Doing so makes them understandable to new generations of readers of all ages, making it possible to integrate into the communist movement workers and youth attracted to a revolutionary party.

Barnes also spoke about the permanent strengthening of the U.S. working class, and the changing place of the *Militant* as a supplement, not a substitute, to the mass work of socialist workers and young socialists. One reflection of this reality is the response to the *Militant* by workers at meatpacking and other plants recently raided by immigration police. He pointed to a photo display showing how workers welcomed the *Militant* after immigration cops raided six Swift plants in December, arresting nearly 1,300 meat packers. Workers at these and other factories in the Midwest bought 1,000 *Militants*—600 of them at factory gates—and 90 subscriptions, Barnes pointed out.

Meeting other revolutionaries

Discussion after the presentations lasted late into the evening, including over a delicious dinner of Haitian food.

Among those attending the meeting was Ingrid Franco, 20, a student at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. “About six or seven months ago I started reading Pathfinder books. I believe a revolution needs to be done and will have to happen,” she said. Franco also took part in the Washington march against the Iraq war. “It was powerful to see all the people coming out united to stop this war, and lots of people realizing this is not a war against terror, but of imperialist domination,” she said.

Pedro Huinil, 34, a landscaper from Atlanta, said the number of young people

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U.S. Special Forces fighting ‘terror’ group in Philippines

BY RÓGER CALERO

February 5—New facts about the deployment and operations of the U.S. military in the Philippines have emerged over the last month. U.S. Special Forces have been engaged, along with Filipino troops, in an offensive against Abu Sayyaf, a group Washington and Manila have labeled “terrorist.”

Since last August, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) have been in pursuit of Abu Sayyaf, which means “Sword of God” in Arabic. The militia has been waging guerrilla warfare from bases in the jungle, including through bombings and kidnappings. Its aim has been to press for establishing an independent “Islamic state” in Mindanao, the second largest island in the southern Philippines. Abu Sayyaf has been based in a remote, impoverished, and predominantly Muslim area.

U.S. troops are there only to “advise, assist, share information” with AFP units, stated U.S. Embassy spokesman Matthew Lussenhop. However, “Unconventional Warfare,” a report released last month by the group Focus on the Global South, includes eyewitness accounts and other documentation showing that U.S. troops “joined the Filipino soldiers in operations at the immediate vicinity of the fighting.”

According to the report, the number of U.S. troops in the southern Philippines has ranged between 160 and 350. As recently as last October, some 5,700 Marines participated in amphibious landing exercises in the country.

U.S. soldiers have been sighted aboard military trucks and in rubber boats, mounting heavy artillery, operating military equipment, removing land mines, and performing other combat-related activities, according to the report. U.S. troops have also used unmanned spying planes, electronic tracking devices, eavesdropping mechanisms, and a full range of intelligence gadgets for “special reconnaissance” missions—a forte of Special Operations.

While not authorized to engage in direct combat, U.S. troops can fire back if shot at. C.H. Briscoe, a historian of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command who is quoted in the report, said the “guys were in the thick of it,” and were anxious to “get in the fight.” U.S. troops can operate at the company level and join patrols “as often as possible,” the report noted. This approach was used in Afghanistan, where U.S. Special Forces joined and commanded units of the Northern Alliance in the U.S.-led invasion that toppled the Taliban.

The Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines, composed of U.S. Special Forces and the AFP, began operations in January 2002, to target

Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, two groups allegedly linked to al-Qaeda. Prior to 2001, the groups ran unchecked military training camps, according to the U.S. Special Operations Command web site.

From the beginning, U.S. officials have referred to the operations in the Philippines as one of the theaters of Washington’s “global war on terror.” The Pentagon is also using the U.S. troop deployment there to set up military installations that can be used to expand its reach in the region.

The Pentagon’s presence in this former U.S. colony is opposed by many working people in the Philippines, who have condemned the many instances of abusive conduct by U.S. military personnel often stationed there in the past.

In 1992, in face of mounting opposition, Washington was forced to remove



VJ Villafranca/M4 Collective

U.S. troops with Filipino soldiers in Jolo, Sulu, in southern part of the Philippines.

its military bases from the Philippines. In addition to serving as a staging ground for U.S.-led assaults in Asia and the Pacific, the bases also played a role in the repression of the population by the Filipino rulers.

According to “Unconventional War-

fare,” members of the elite Australian Special Air Service (SAS) unit have also joined the AFP in “covert operations.” These are described as “the closest the SAS has come to conventional combat operations in Southeast Asia since the end of the Vietnam War in the 1970s.”

Guinea general strike ends with gov’t reshuffle

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—An 18-day general strike in Guinea brought much of the country to a standstill, including its vast bauxite mines. The West African country is the world’s largest producer of the ore, which is used to make aluminum. The strike ended January 29, after president Lansana Conté agreed to appoint a prime minister who would form a new government.

Conté, a former army colonel, seized power in a coup shortly after the death in 1984 of the country’s first president and independence leader Ahmed Sékou Touré.

Officials of the country’s two main union federations, the Guinean Workers Union (USTG) and the National Confederation of Guinean Workers (CNTG), had demanded that Conté step aside but have accepted the compromise. No prime minister has yet been named by the president.

Hundreds of Guineans living in the United States rallied here outside the White House and marched to the World Bank on January 25. Rally organizers said they hoped to pressure Washington and other governments to “help bring democracy to Guinea.” Some protesters carried signs with photos of Conté and former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, equating the two.

Most demonstrators carried signs demanding Conté’s resignation and condemning the killing by the military of protesters in Conakry, the capital, and other Guinean cities.

“Conditions in the country have become intolerable,” said Lamin Diallo, one of the rally organizers. Diallo said nine buses had come from New York,

three buses each from Boston and Ohio, and several cars and vans from Atlanta, and the metropolitan area surrounding Washington.

“Conté has squandered the wealth of the country,” Diallo said. “The regime is getting fat from the bauxite, gold, diamonds, and other minerals while the people don’t even have running water.”

Prices for alumina, which is extracted from bauxite, jumped 76 percent in Europe in January to \$360 a metric ton, reported the Bloomberg News Service. While the price fell 3.4 percent on the London Metal Exchange it still stood at \$2,700 a ton. During the strike, alumina

prices rose 7.2 percent. Officials at the Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinée (CBG), the state bauxite company, said CBG lost about \$1 million a day.

The U.S. company Alcoa, and its Canadian rival Alcan, both own stakes in CBG.

Despite its mineral resources, Guinea is among the poorest countries in Africa. The agreement to end the strike capped the price of gasoline and diesel at 4,300 Guinean francs (US 72 cents) per liter, and at 97,500 GF (US\$16) for a 110-pound sack of rice. The government also agreed to stop food exports in order to

Continued on page 8

More U.S., British troops go to Afghanistan

Continued from front page

war, this is a winnable war,” said Richards at the ceremony in Kabul handing over the NATO command.

Rationalizing the escalation of the imperialist war in Afghanistan, U.S. assistant secretary of state Richard Boucher told the BBC that he expects the Taliban to intensify attacks. “I think we will face a strong offensive and will have a difficult and dangerous and bloody spring,” he said. The Taliban ruled the country until their regime was toppled in 2001 by the U.S.-led invasion.

Many capitalist politicians and commentators in the big-business media complain the troop increases are not enough. The *Washington Post*, for example, said in its February 1 editorial that “there are still far fewer Afghan and foreign troops than are needed to secure the country.” With the latest increases, the total number of U.S., NATO, and other occupying forces will be roughly 45,000, the *Post* said, while the Afghan army has 40,000 troops.

“By contrast there are 146,000 coalition troops in Iraq” without the additional forces Washington announced in January it is deploying, the *Post* said, “and 134,000 Iraqi army troops. Yet Afghanistan is 50 percent larger than Iraq and has a larger population.”

Afghanistan has an area of 402,000 square miles and a population of 31 million, compared to Iraq’s area of 271,000 square miles and 29 million people.

“The current level of 34,000 NATO

soldiers in Afghanistan is only about 85 percent of what military commanders say they need,” said an article in the February 6 *International Herald Tribune*.

Highlighting tensions among the imperialist powers occupying Afghanistan, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice told a January 26 meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels that they “must take a hard look” at their commitments to the country.

“Though Britain, Canada, and the Netherlands carried the burden of the war in southern Afghanistan last year, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain are among the countries that have kept their soldiers away from the war zone and tied them down with restrictions,” said the *Post* editors.

Speaking to military personnel on a warship January 11, British prime minister Anthony Blair outlined the growing importance of London’s military for the ruling class. “The covenant between Armed Forces, Government and people has to be renewed,” he said. Calling for a long-term increase in military spending, Blair said, “The new frontiers for our security are global. Our Armed Forces will be deployed in the lands of other nations far from home, with no immediate threat to our territory.”

Meanwhile, as part of the U.S.-orchestrated squeeze on Iran, London now has three warships in the Arab-Persian Gulf after sending two mine hunters there in January.

Donate to cover costs of ‘Militant’ reporting team to Cuba

A team of *Militant* reporters is in Cuba to cover the February 8–18 International Book Fair taking place in Havana, and in other Cuban cities, as well as other political developments in the country. They will also cover high school meetings organized by the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, where the Young Socialists have been invited to speak about life under capitalism. The trip’s costs exceed \$12,000. Please donate generously to help the *Militant* pay for the trip and continue fielding similar international teams. Earmark checks or money orders “Havana book fair travel fund,” and send your contribution to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Coltrane, Black rights, and the jazz revolution

Below is an excerpt from John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. The book presents a penetrating account of Coltrane's role in leading the last major innovations in jazz, and how it reflected intense cultural and political ferment—the rise of resistance to racial discrimination. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FRANK KOFSKY

During the autumn of 1964, a series of avant-garde jazz concerts took place in New York's Cellar Cafe. Although the music itself was of great significance, of equal importance was the title chosen for the series: The October Revolution.

To be sure, most of the reporters present missed the implications in the reference to the triumph of Bolshevism in 1917—an interesting commentary on the political awareness of jazz journalists—but this was not at all the case with the participating musicians. Subsequent events have shown the October Revolution to be only one of a number of signs



Trumpeter Lee Morgan (left) accompanies saxophonist John Coltrane Sept. 15, 1957, during the recording session for Coltrane's album *Blue Train*.

of a thoroughly radical upheaval, musical and social, taking place among young Negro jazz artists.

In every respect the combined social-musical revolution in jazz (as I suggested in the preceding chapter) amounts to a repudiation of the values of white middle-class capitalist America. This is most obvious from the statements of the musicians themselves, but it is also ap-

parent—to those who care to listen with an open mind—in the wild and exciting music the revolution is producing.

Among its leaders, three names top the list: John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor. To name the leaders, however, is simpler than to describe the movement they head. The substance of the music, for one thing, is too elusive; the range of styles, for another, is too great. Still,

beneath the apparently endless variety there are common themes that unify the diverse aspects of the revolution.

On a strictly musical level, one of these themes is the attempt of the revolutionaries to replace the fixed rhythmic pulse and unvarying cycle of chords that jazz artists have used as a framework for their improvisations since Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie first pointed the way in the mid-1940s. The new musicians have been moving away from these now-threadbare guideposts toward a fresh concept of group, as opposed to individual, improvisation. The reasons for this shift are, as I have said, both musical and social. At the social level, let it suffice that collective improvisation symbolizes the recognition among musicians that their art is not an affair of individual “geniuses,” but the musical expression of an entire people—the black people in America. . . .

A second and related unity underlying the “new black music”—a name bestowed by poet-playwright-essayist LeRoi Jones, who himself functions as an unofficial advocate for the musicians—is a rejection of Western musical conventions. Such a rejection, I argued in the preceding chapter, surely has clear social implications above and beyond the artistic ones. In point of fact, it reflects the larger decision of the Negro ghetto to turn its back on an exploitative and inhumane white American society.

Guinea strike ends with gov't reshuffle

Continued from page 7

increase food supplies. A provision that all assets of foreign mining companies operating in the country, including Alcoa, Alcan, and Russia's RUSAL, be located in Guinea would be negotiated by the new prime minister.

The agreement has been signed by the head of the Supreme Court and the national assembly, union leaders, and a representative of business groups but

has not been given Conté's official seal of approval, reported Reuters.

Amadou Troaré, a 31-year-old construction worker, came here for the January 25 rally from Columbus, Ohio. “Conté must be brought to justice for the people killed by the military,” Troaré said. Guinea's Health Ministry reported that 59 people were killed during the strike, according to the United Nations press agency. The president of Guinea's

Human Rights League put the figure at 90 dead and 300 injured.

There is no provision in the tentative agreement for an investigation into the deaths. Union leaders are demanding that January 22 be recognized as a “national day of remembrance and reconciliation” for those killed. According to the country's health ministry, 44 were killed that day during a march in Conakry.

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February BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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Imperialist fragmentation, not liberation

Columnists in the big-business press have begun to dangle the “Bosnia model” as the panacea for Iraq. A quick look at the breakup of Yugoslavia makes it clear that this has nothing to do with advancing the interests of working people, from the Balkans to the Middle East or anywhere else.

In the decade prior to the formal dismemberment of Yugoslavia in 1991–92, and throughout the 1990s, Washington took advantage of competition between rival gangs of aspiring capitalists from the crumbling Stalinist regime in Belgrade to fuel divisions along national lines and fan the flames of war.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. rulers allowed the bloodletting between Albanians, Croats, and Serbs, between Christians and Muslims, to reach a level they hoped would weaken the economic foundations of the Yugoslav workers state and could be used later as rationale for military intervention by Uncle Sam to stop the “ethnic cleansing.”

Washington’s goal was not to stop the slaughter or establish “democracy.” It was to strengthen U.S. supremacy in Europe, overthrow the workers state established in Yugoslavia through a workers and peasants revolution in 1945, and reimpose capitalism in that country. U.S. and other imperialist troops have occupied Bosnia for 11 years and have continued to foster national divisions to achieve their aims. Bosnia remains fractured along national lines and is run by the “imperial presidency” of a United Nations High Representative.

The same is true in Kosova, an autonomous region of Serbia, where the occupying NATO forces have played on the just demands of the Albanian majority for self-determination to further fracture the former Yugoslavia. (For a factual description of these points see “10 years since imperialist intervention in Bosnia” and “How U.S.

imperialism, allies fueled Yugoslav war” in the Dec. 26, 2005, and Jan. 9, 2006, issues of the *Militant*.)

Capitalist politicians and mouthpieces for the bourgeoisie in the media are now using similar rationalizations for the war in Iraq. They argue that if the U.S. forces pull out the Iraqis will slaughter each other. Or they propose “soft partition” of the country and limited autonomy for the Kurds. This is another case of fragmentation of the world fostered by U.S. imperialism and its allies. It has nothing to do with national liberation.

While talking about autonomy for Iraqi Kurdistan, Washington is working hand-in-glove with Ankara to crush the Kurdistan Workers Party on the Turkish side of the border with Iraq. The U.S. rulers are simply using the historic struggle for Kurdish national liberation to advance their goal of establishing a stable regime in Baghdad friendly to U.S. interests in the region.

The bloodshed caused by factions of the Iraqi bourgeoisie competing for power, territory, and control of natural resources—fostered by the occupation forces—is the product of the continued breakdown of the imperialist world order.

Just like in Bosnia and Kosova, the only road forward for working people and the oppressed nationalities is for U.S. and all “coalition” troops to get out of Iraq, Afghanistan, and all the other theaters of Washington’s “global war on terrorism”—now.

Getting the imperialist military boot off their necks would give time and space to working people in the region to develop the leadership they deserve. A revolutionary leadership capable of charting the road to overcome national and other divisions and advance the toilers’ interests, which include self-determination of oppressed nations.

‘Capitalism’s spreading wars and disorder’

Continued from page 6

attending the meeting impacted him. “What the Young Socialists are working on now is important,” he said.

Huinil came to the weekend’s events in a van from Atlanta with several other workers. Among them was Cesar Castro, 21, who works in a grocery store. “I like how the Socialist Workers Party calls for legalization for all workers,” he said. “I agree with what the speakers said about the war. I want to know more about the movement.”

Sarilla Culver, 20, a student at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, offered her reaction to both the public meeting and the march in Washington. “I find participating in actions helps to strengthen the political side of yourself,” she said. “I really liked meeting YSers from all over. I missed class

on campus, but you’re going to learn more like this than you’re going to learn in class.”

Speaking as part of the program, Dave Prince of the Socialist Workers Party in Atlanta announced the launching of a \$500,000 Capital Fund Appeal for 2007. Donations to this fund of \$1,000 or more—which come from bequests, injury settlements, “accidents of birth,” and elsewhere—will be essential to help produce new books and transform the entire Pathfinder arsenal, he said. He announced that seven people have already contributed \$90,000.

In response to a separate SWP Party-Building Fund appeal, those present pledged or contributed \$20,406.

Rebecca Williamson, from St. Paul, Minnesota, contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Prisoner I

A federal report shows 2.2 million Americans are now in prison, with 4.8 million more on parole or probation. This means one out of every 32 adults are under direct government control.

The “Land of the Free” has long led the world in the oppression of its own people. Merciless and tyrannical, with only 5 percent of the world’s population, it confines more than 25 percent of the world’s criminals. Either Americans are the most evil people to ever plague the earth, or the system is rotten to the core.

Another report issued by the American Bar Association in September says that over one-third (22) of the last 60 prisoners executed by the state of Florida had been found to be completely innocent by DNA.

These figures strongly indicate nearly half of those now in prison must be innocent of their crimes.

*A prisoner
Mayo, Florida*

Prisoner II

I am writing in hope of having you assist me by making available a complimentary subscription to your newspaper. I am a prisoner confined here in the Texas Prison System and was allowed to read copies of your newspaper.

If at all possible, please provide me with the Spanish edition, as my primary language is Spanish, as I am not from the United States. I would pay for a subscription if the Texas Prison System would pay inmates. As you know it does not.

Please also let me know if you

can provide me with any books in Spanish addressing the socialist struggle in Central and South America.

*A prisoner
Iowa Park, Texas*

The Prisoners Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the *Militant* and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

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

U.S. war in Iraq

Continued from front page

for fiscal year 2008, and a supplemental request of \$93 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan this year.

“I am absolutely not inclined to leave things in the supplemental that *are not related to the wars*” [emphasis added], said Rep. John Murtha, chairman of the House Appropriations defense subcommittee, in a sign that opposition to the escalation of the Iraq war by leading Democrats is a farce.

“American troops under fire in Iraq and Afghanistan deserve every penny requested for them in President Bush’s new \$622 billion Pentagon budget,” said the lead editorial in the February 6 *New York Times*.

‘Iraqis want more U.S. troops faster’

The deadliest recent explosion in Iraq occurred February 3 in the al-Sadriya market frequented largely by Shiites, killing 135 people and wounding 300. It was followed by intense shelling of Adhamiya, a majority Sunni area of Baghdad.

“Iraqis Fault Pace of U.S. Plan in Attack” was the headline of a front-page article in the *New York Times* two days later. “A growing number of Iraqis blamed the United States on Sunday for creating conditions that led to the worst single suicide bombing in the war,” it said. “They argued that the Americans had been slow in completing the vaunted new American security plan.”

In response, Bush said it was a “good sign” that Iraqis want quicker implementation of his plan.

Meanwhile, U.S. government institutions are debating how many more troops are actually being sent to Iraq. “The Defense Department and the Army are disputing a new report that says the 21,500 additional combat troops being sent to Iraq by the Bush administration could result in up to 50,000 troops actually being deployed to the region when all support forces are taken into account,” said the February 12 *Army Times*. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) issued the report.

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates disputed the CBO claim. He told Pentagon reporters that the number of support troops “looks like it will be about 10 percent to 15 percent of the number that CBO cited.” That’s around 2,700-4,000 support troops.

At the same time, debate in the U.S. Senate over competing nonbinding resolutions criticizing the White House on the Iraq war came to a halt over procedural disputes February 6. In a sarcastic comment, the conservative *Investor’s Business Daily*, which backs the Bush administration plan, said in an editorial the next day, “As long as that august deliberative body can’t decide what to say, it can’t say the wrong thing.”

‘Bosnia model’

In the meantime, the rationalizations for the war proliferate. “To save Iraq, look to . . . Bosnia?” was the headline of the January 30 *Times* column by Brooks. “People active in Bosnia,” Brooks said, “acknowledge the many differences between the two places, but Iraq, they note, is a disintegrating nation. Ethnic cleansing is dividing Baghdad. . . . The best answer, then, is soft partition: Create a central government with a few key powers; reinforce strong regional governments; separate the sectarian groups as much as possible.”

Bosnia has been occupied by U.S. and other imperialist forces for 11 years, following a war fueled by Washington and its allies that led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. It is today subdivided in a Muslim-Croat federation and a Serb Republic. A weak central government is in fact under the command of a United Nations High Representative, which the *Economist* has described as the “imperial presidency.”

To get Sunnis to agree, Brooks proposes amending Iraq’s constitution to guarantee them 20 percent of oil revenues. Kurds would have to give up including oil-rich Kirkuk in their region, and must assure Turkey there will be no independent Kurdistan, he says.

Last August the Pentagon appointed Air Force general Joseph Ralston as a special envoy to Turkey to coordinate actions between the U.S. and Turkish military in a drive against the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The PKK is a guerilla group that has conducted an armed campaign for Kurdish self-determination.

The Marine Corps assessment of the military situation in al-Anbar, a predominantly Sunni province, also suggests a “soft partitioning” of Iraq. “A federated state might provide the Sunni of western Iraq with the general sense of ‘buy-in’ lacking under the centralized, Shi’a-dominated government,” it says.