

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Regional protests demand end to U.S.-led war in Iraq

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Turkish gov't pounds Kurd rebel bases on Iraqi border

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, October 30—The Turkish government has intensified military operations along the border with northern Iraq, targeting guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Helicopter gunships and fighter jets pounded PKK bases in southeastern Turkey, as tens of thousands of Turkish troops massed on the border.

Meanwhile, the speaker of Iraq's parliament, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, warned that his government would cut off the flow of oil to Turkey if Ankara made good on threats to impose economic sanctions on northern Iraq. The Turkish government said it was considering sanctions as an alternative to a military incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan, where the guerrillas are based.

U.S. officials have pressed Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to rein in the PKK and have called on the Iraqi government in Baghdad to disrupt the rebels' supply lines.

Kurds are an oppressed nationality living in parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria who have long waged a struggle for self-determination. The PKK, of Maoist origin, has for decades led a guerrilla war for Kurdish sovereignty in southeastern Turkey.

Tensions between leaders of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq and the Turkish government escalated after 12 Turkish soldiers were

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Workers hit hardest by effects of wildfires in California

BY CHRIS REMPLE AND NAOMI CRAINE

POTRERO, California, October 28—Over the last week massive wildfires swept large parts of San Diego County and other areas of Southern California, destroying nearly 2,000 homes and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to evacuate. Although many people have returned home, several of the fires continue to rage.

Media attention has focused on wealthy and middle-class areas affected, painting a picture of orderly and adequate evacuation and relief efforts. The scene at San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium was "closer to a tailgate party than a disaster evacuation," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

But workers living in Potrero and Tecate, overwhelmingly Chicano towns near the Mexican border, told the *Militant* a different story.

Marta Gómez and her husband Pablo, a retired tow-truck driver, live in a small rented house in Tecate. On October 21 the fire raced through their backyard, burning down a van and a trailer where many of their belongings were stored. About 20 of their chickens and two dogs died in the blaze. They had left in time because a neighbor called to warn them.

"We never got a reverse-911 call" to

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Genarlow Wilson freed from prison

Campaign wins release of unjustly jailed Black youth



Militant/Bill Arth

July 14 march in Douglasville, Georgia, was one of many actions backing Genarlow Wilson and against harsh sentencing of African Americans. He served 3 years of a 10-year sentence after conviction for having consensual oral sex with 15-year-old classmate when he was 17.

BY LISA POTASH

ATLANTA—Genarlow Wilson, a 21-year-old Black youth, was freed from state prison in Forsyth, Georgia, October 26 after serving nearly three years of an unjust, 10-year sentence. The Georgia Supreme Court ordered his release, calling his sentence "cruel and unusual punishment."

The fight to win Wilson's freedom

had received broad support, including a July 14 demonstration of 2,000 organized by the NAACP in Douglasville, a small town near Atlanta. It became a national focus of opposition to the disproportionate imprisonment and harsh criminal sentences meted out to Blacks.

The young man was convicted of "felony aggravated child molestation"

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'Militant' subs keep rolling in

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Antiwar rallies in 12 cities helped keep the pace of the *Militant* subscription campaign strong this past week. More than 160 people subscribed at the actions.

The international effort has maintained a steady progress since the start.



Militant/Michael Baumann

Susan Anmuth sells *Militant* to protester at October 27 peace march in New York.

At the current rate the drive is on course to surpass 2,500 subs.

This week's top seller was Jacquie Henderson from Houston with 10 subscriptions—eight of them at the New Orleans antiwar rally of 200.

Militant supporters in Atlanta and Carrollton, Georgia, sent teams to join antiwar rallies in Jonesboro, Tennessee; Smithfield, North Carolina; Orlando,

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Fund picks up

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Real progress has been made as we pass the halfway mark in the campaign to raise \$100,000 for the socialist press. *Militant* supporters in 10 cities were on schedule this past week—an increase over the five in the previous week.

Just over \$12,000 was received this week. Around \$14,000 will be needed each week for the remainder of the campaign to make the goal by November 25.

The nearly 50 people who attended a

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Venezuelan peasants fight for land titles, equipment

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON AND RÓGER CALERO

SAN CARLOS, Venezuela—"These are the machines that President Chávez sent for the peasants," said Angel Sarmiento, pointing to a brand new harvester here October 20. "They didn't send them for those with money, but the machines are being used by the English company."

Sarmiento was referring to the British company Agroflora, which until 2005 owned the 32,000-acre El Charcote Ranch, now occupied by peasant families. He works a plot on La Yauquera, a 62,000-acre ranch near El Charcote. Both farms are outside San Carlos, capital of Cojedes state.

Over the last year, the government of president Hugo Chávez has sent combines, tractors, and other equipment to be rented out to peasants at half the rates charged by private companies. According to peasants interviewed, however, big landowners have received priority for the equipment because they offer more money to the government agency managing the machine rentals.

The Venezuelan Agricultural Company, under national law, charges small

peasants 28,000 bolivars (\$7) per hectare and medium-sized producers 35,000 bolivars per hectare to rent a combine. But, Sarmiento said, "those with money find people in the local government who will take 50,000. The peasants are the last to get the equipment." One hectare is 2.47 acres.

"We're waiting for a combine," said Doris Freite, 22, as she pointed to tall rows of corn on her land. "But if we don't get it soon, we'll have to harvest

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New ‘Sankara Speaks’ sells well in Canada and France

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE
AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—In the first two weeks since the arrival here of *Thomas Sankara parle* and *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, socialist workers in Canada sold 81 copies of these books, newly published by Pathfinder Press in French and English. The twin editions contain 30 speeches and interviews by this outstanding communist leader.

PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

Thomas Sankara led the revolution that took place in the West African country of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. Under his leadership, workers and peasants established a popular revolutionary government, which took steps to fight the hunger, illiteracy, and economic devastation imposed by imperialist domination, as well as the millennia-old oppression of women.

Revolutionary Burkina Faso extended a hand of internationalist solidarity to people engaged in struggle against imperialism, especially in Palestine, Nicaragua, and Western Sahara. Sankara championed the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa and established fraternal ties with revolutionary Cuba. He was assassinated in an October 1987 coup that overthrew the revolutionary government.

Seven people purchased the new book at an October 13 commemoration

of Sankara’s assassination that drew 55 people in Toronto, and 25 people did so at a similar event two days later in Montreal attended by 200 people. Another dozen people left their names to buy the book later. Fifteen other Pathfinder books and pamphlets and five subscriptions to the *Militant* were also sold at these events.

The publication of *Thomas Sankara parle* was mentioned twice in a front-page article in the October 15 *Le Devoir*, a Montreal daily. The article reported on the events in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, surrounding the 20th anniversary commemoration of Sankara’s assassination and announced the night’s event in Montreal.

Before the Montreal event, the book’s editor, Michel Prairie, was interviewed for the weekly Global TV program “Afromonde.” This resulted in a five-minute presentation of *Thomas Sankara parle* by columnist Nadine Mbemba on the October 20 broadcast.

That evening Prairie was interviewed live for 30 minutes on the book and the legacy of the Burkina Faso revolution for a program called “Giramundo,” broadcast by community radio station CKIA from Quebec City.

So far five bookstores have ordered 13 copies of the book, most of them in French-speaking Quebec. One bookstore in Quebec City, in addition to ordering four copies of *Thomas Sankara parle*, ordered 20 other Pathfinder titles in French and English.

Opportunities for selling the book and other Pathfinder titles remain significant in the coming period. A November 9–10 conference in Toronto, with participants



Militant/John Steele

Participants in October 15 event in Montreal marking assassination of Thomas Sankara purchase new French-language *Thomas Sankara parle* and other Pathfinder books.

from Canada and the United States, will discuss the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in the United States for almost a decade because of their defense of the Cuban Revolution.

In mid-November Pathfinder will have a booth at the annual Montreal Book Fair, which typically draws more than 100,000 people, and at the conference of the Middle East Studies Association, also in Montreal.

✦

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS—Pathfinder supporters in France have sold 182 copies of the new French edition of *Thomas Sankara Speaks* since the book’s arrival in France at the end of September. Bookstores across the country have already purchased 112 books. Many have also ordered other Pathfinder titles, particularly the two others by Sankara—*Women’s Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* and *We Are Heirs of the World’s Revolutions*—as well as *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada.

A major bookstore in Paris, the Forum outlet of the FNAC chain, set up a special display on Africa featuring *Thomas Sankara parle* and other pamphlets by the revolutionary leader. Pathfinder supporters have thus far met with buyers in 27 bookstores in five cities, and telephoned buyers in another 25 stores in various cities.

The October issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique* published excerpts of San-

kara’s 1984 address, “Freedom can be won only through struggle,” published in the Pathfinder book. And a large color ad placed in the October 16 issue of the Communist Party daily *L’Humanité* has led to 11 orders of the book, including one from Guadeloupe, a French colony in the Caribbean. *Livres hebdo*, the main book trade review in France, included the new title in the listings of its October 12 issue.

At two events featuring films and talks about Sankara, sales were brisk. On October 13 in the city of Clermont-Ferrand, at a day of “Solidarity with African peasants,” which drew 200 people, 13 copies of the new book sold along with 18 other books and pamphlets. A special evening on Sankara in Paris October 15, attended by 150, brought sales of 12 new books and 6 Sankara pamphlets.

Six workers at the Peugeot auto plant in the Paris suburb of Poissy have purchased the new book so far. One is Oumar Ndiath, 56, originally from Senegal. He has been showing *Thomas Sankara parle* and selling it to other West African immigrants. Another person who bought the title traveled to Burkina Faso in October and offered it to a friend there, a supporter of Sankara’s political ideas. This person in turn spent the next two evenings reading aloud from the new book with invited friends in his home. On his return to France, the original purchaser enthusiastically called up Pathfinder supporters to order more copies, saying “Keep up the good work!”

THE MILITANT

‘Working people of the world need to read it’

“Just as athletes need exercise to heal and align their bodies, after all the lies and distortions by the capitalist media working people of the world need to read the ‘Militant.’”

—Raymond Mármol
Queens, New York



Raymond Mármol is a member of Service Employees Local 32BJ in New York.

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Editor: Olympia Newton

Managing Editor: Paul Pederson

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Cindy Jaquith, Martin Koppel, Doug Nelson, Ben O’Shaughnessy, Jacob Perasso, and Rebecca Williamson.

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Regional actions demand an end to war in Iraq

Regional actions against the war in Iraq took place in 12 cities October 27, organized by the coalition United for Peace and Justice. The actions included San Francisco, which drew more than 10,000; New York, nearly 4,000; Philadelphia, 1,000; and Salt Lake City, 1,000. Below are reports on some of the protests.



BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO, October 27—More than 10,000 people marched here today to protest the Iraq war.

The demonstrators, many of them young, came from Northern California and nearby states. “I’m tired of the deceit about the war and the killing of innocent people,” said Kintessa Quintanar, a Sacramento City College student.

Antiwar coalitions UFPI and ANSWER sponsored the demonstration. More than 100 organizations and individuals endorsed. The march included contingents from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Communications Workers of America Local 9415, Glaziers Local 178, and the Building and Construction Trades Council of Alameda County.

“Get out of Iraq, Stay out of Iran” was one of many signs protesting U.S. threats against Iran. “Calling them terrorist, sanctions, we’ve seen this before when they want to go to war,” said Nick Alvarez, a student at San Francisco State University.

Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party campaign of Lea Sherman for mayor, Gerardo Sánchez for district attorney, and Chauncey Robinson for sheriff, marched behind a banner demanding, “Not one penny, not one person for Washington’s wars” and “Hands off: Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Korea, Somalia, Cuba, Venezuela, Philippines.”



BY EMILY PAUL

NEW YORK, October 27—“I’m demonstrating because I’m sick of war for oil and I want to prevent any further military action against Iran,” James LaGrutta, a student at Siena College in Loudonville, New York, told the *Militant* at a protest here today of nearly 4,000.

“We have to continue to make sure Congress does what it should do—stop

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

MINNESOTA

Minneapolis

From New Orleans to Jena: Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government to End Racism and Exploitation of Working People. A benefit for the *Militant* Fund. Speaker: James Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Nov. 11. Brunch 1 p.m.; program 2 p.m. Donation: \$10 program, \$5 brunch. 1311 1/2 E. Lake St. Tel: (612) 729-1205.

TEXAS

Houston

Cuban Revolution Points the Way Forward: 165 Years of Chinese Toilers’ Struggles Against Imperialist Exploitation and Racism. Benefit for the *Militant* Fund. Speaker: Tom Leonard, former merchant seaman and veteran leader of the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Nov. 10. Dinner 6:30 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel: (713) 688-4919.

funding war,” said UFPI national coordinator Leslie Cagan at the opening rally.

“This is an unjust war and we need to get out as soon as possible,” said William Orellano, who was part of a lively contingent from El Puente, a community group in Brooklyn.

“Being there is creating more enemies. I’m for total withdrawal of the troops, but gradually,” said Shawn Whiting, a student at Ithaca College.

Salm Kolis contributed to this article.



BY LAURA GARZA

BOSTON, October 27—Thousands of people rallied on the Boston Common today against the Iraq war and then marched to Copley Square.

Students from New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, and Massachusetts were among those protesting.

“Something has to change and the best way to do this is to spread awareness,” said Nathan Wigfield, 19. He was among three dozen students from the University of Vermont in Burlington

UAW approves Chrysler concession contract

BY PAUL PEDERSON

United Auto Workers (UAW) members at Chrysler narrowly approved a concession contract October 27 on the heels of a similar agreement with General Motors.

The pact establishes a two-tier wage system, with many new workers hiring in at half the wages and with fewer benefits than the existing workforce. It also ends the company’s responsibility to provide health insurance to retirees.

The union membership at Chrysler approved the contract proposal by 56 percent of production workers and 51 percent of skilled trades. Workers at six large plants rejected the deal.

The *Detroit News* called the Chrysler contract “a second major step toward a dramatic transformation of the American auto industry.” Negotiations are now under way with Ford.

The union struck Chrysler for six hours in the final moments of negotiations. At GM unionists struck for 48 hours.

“The brief walkouts appear to have emerged as a way for both union leaders and company managers... to prove to their constituents that they got the best deal they could under the circumstances without an all-out war,” the *New York Times* commented October 11.

In the just-approved contract, new hires in a fuzzily defined category of “non-core” jobs will start at half the current starting wage.

“There are 3,000 people in this plant. Almost half the jobs are non-core—maintenance, material handling, underbody in the body shop, paint shop, inspection, people who drive the cars off the line,” Aaron Devers, 47, a worker at Sterling Heights Assembly in Michigan, told the *Washington Post*. “Non-core is an open window. We don’t know where it closes.”

Like GM, Chrysler won agreement to shift billions of dollars into a union-run trust fund called a voluntary employees’ beneficiary association (VEBA).

“Active workers will contribute to



Militant/Scott Breen

October 27 rally in Seattle was one of 12 regional actions against the U.S.-led war in Iraq

who came in vans organized by Students and Soldiers Against the War.



BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

NEW ORLEANS, October 27—Two hundred people rallied here today to demand an end to the war in Iraq.

The rally included speeches from veterans of U.S. wars in Iraq and Vietnam, and activists protesting government in-

action on restoring basic social services, housing, and hospitals here in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Chanting “Not one penny, not one dime, the Iraq war is a crime!” and “Make levees, not war!”, the protesters marched following the rally. Several people joined as the action made its way to Jackson Square in the heart of the French Quarter.

the cost of retiree health care through COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) diversions,” the UAW announced in a press release describing the terms of the GM accord. It explains that “resources that would have been used for a general wage increase for active workers will instead be contributed to the VEBA.”

In exchange for these concessions, both companies made pledges—tied to profitability and sales—not to close certain plants or lay off sections of the

workforce. These pledges were hailed by the UAW officials as a victory for the union.

Chrysler has cut its U.S. workforce from 60,000 in 2002 to 45,000 today through plant closures and layoffs.

Nationalist rhetoric was a central part of how the UAW tops tried to sell the concession contracts at both Chrysler and GM. The “protection of U.S. manufacturing jobs,” said a union newsletter, was “at the top of the union’s bargaining agenda.”

Genarlow Wilson freed

Continued from front page

for receiving consensual oral sex from a 15-year-old girl when he was 17. On top of the harsh sentence, the law forced him to be registered for life as a “sex offender.”

Two days after his release, Genarlow Wilson received a warm welcome at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. He spoke briefly. Speaking to the press, he said, “I just want to thank everyone. It feels real good to be free.”

One of those in attendance was Kenyatta Simmons, a student at Martin Luther King, Jr. High School in Lithonia, Georgia. She said in an interview, “Genarlow Wilson should have never been in jail for two years and nine months.” Simmons said she had joined a recent march in Jena, Louisiana, to protest harsh sentences threatened against six Black high school students.

Her friend Samantha Lundy, a student at Benjamin Franklin Academy High School, said Genarlow Wilson’s case was “incorporated with everything going on in Jena and is still going on in 2007.”

Stephanie Simmons, a teacher in Decatur, Georgia, said she felt that “the march in Douglasville, along with the ministers and others, opened up and educated people about Genarlow Wilson.” Wilson and five other 17-year-olds were arrested in 2003 after police found a videotape of them having consensual oral sex with a 15-year-old classmate.

Wilson refused to plead guilty in exchange for a lesser sentence.

In a 2006 jailhouse interview with *Atlanta Magazine*, Wilson said, “Even after serving time in prison I would have to register as a sex offender wherever I lived and if I applied for a job for the rest of my life.” The mother of the 15-year old herself stated that Wilson should never have been criminally charged and imprisoned.

After his sentencing, the state legislature changed the law, making the charge for which Wilson was convicted a misdemeanor with a one-year maximum jail term and no registration as a sex offender. But the change was not retroactive, so it did not apply to Wilson.

In June of this year, Monroe County Superior Court Judge Thomas Wilson ruled that Wilson’s sentence violated the state constitution as cruel and unusual punishment. The judge reduced the conviction to a misdemeanor, resentenced him to 12 months, and ordered his immediate release.

Wilson was kept in prison, however, because state attorney general Thurbert Baker appealed the ruling to the Georgia Supreme Court and another judge ruled that he was not eligible for bond during appeal.

The state supreme court set aside Wilson’s sentence altogether, noting that the law was changed only last year to make similar acts a misdemeanor.

Young Socialists demand:
‘Bring troops home now!’
and ‘Free the Cuban 5!’

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS
IN ACTION

BY BEN O'SHAUGHNESSY

NEW YORK—"The Young Socialists joined thousands across the country today to demand, 'Bring the troops home now!'" said Jenny Johnson-Blanchard, a Young Socialist from New York.

She was speaking at a Militant Labor Forum following a regional demonstration against the Iraq war here October 27. She shared the platform with Militant correspondent Sam Manuel at a forum on "Africa, Oil, and Imperialism."

"The U.S.-led war against Iraq and the imperialist drive against countries such as Iran are a necessity of the capitalist system," said Johnson-Blanchard. "They are rooted in the deepening financial crisis, with the declining profit rates of the bosses and sharpening imperialist competition, which drives the rulers toward war and further assaults on workers, farmers, and youth around the world."

She reported on the spirited participation by young socialists from half a dozen cities in the YS-Socialist Workers Party contingent at the antiwar action in New York City. The contingent included students from upstate New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

The Young Socialists met youth at the march who were interested in a revolu-

tionary socialist youth organization. In doing so, they and the socialist workers sold 33 subscriptions to the Militant and got a number of books and pamphlets on revolutionary politics into the hands of demonstrators.

"It is important to be a part of these antiwar protests to point out the root cause of war, which is imperialism," said Chris Batchelder, a student at Hamilton College in upstate New York who joined the demonstration and attended the forum. "War is a sign of the system in crisis."

Johnson-Blanchard reported on other recent activities of the Young Socialists around the country. This includes supporting meat packers who are fighting a union decertification drive by the bosses in Minnesota, actions to demand justice for the Jena Six, and participating in a team of socialists to exhibit Pathfinder books at the upcoming Venezuela International Book Fair.

"I'd like to invite any young person interested in fighting to build a revolutionary movement of workers and farmers in this country, against the rulers' war, racism, and system of exploitation, to join the Young Socialists," said Johnson-Blanchard.

Young Socialists around the country also participated in simultaneous local actions against the Iraq war in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Orlando, and New Orleans.

Emily Paul from New York contributed to this article.

BY LYSIE CLOTT

MOSCOW, Idaho- Half a dozen students attended an October 16 meeting here at the University of Idaho to



Young Socialist Chauncey Robinson (right) and other socialists march in Socialist Workers Party campaign contingent at October 27 peace march in San Francisco.

demand the release of five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries.

The Socialist Club at the university sponsored the event. Speaking was Chauncey Robinson, a member of the Young Socialists from San Francisco.

Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González—the Cuban Five, as they are known—were arrested in 1998 on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage" and other accusations. In 2001 they were convicted in an unfair trial in a Miami federal court.

The five men were on an international mission to gather information on Cuban-American ultrarightist groups, operating from South Florida with the complicity of Washington, that have a history of violent actions against Cuba.

Robinson presented the facts surrounding the frame-up of the five

Cubans and noted it is an example of the nearly 50 years of aggression carried out against Cuba by Washington.

"The U.S. rulers are hostile to the Cuban Revolution because of what it represents," said Robinson. "Cuba represents an outstanding example of what working people can do when they realize their self-worth, take power out of the hands of the exploiters, and organize society based on human solidarity and not profit and exploitation."

After the presentation, clips of the documentary film Mission Against Terror were shown and students participated in an hour of discussion. Robinson encouraged participants to attend an upcoming solidarity conference on the Cuban Five November 9-10 in Toronto.

Lysie Clott is a member of the Socialist Club at the University of Idaho at Moscow.

Militant Fund picks up

Continued from front page very successful Militant Fund meeting in Seattle contributed nearly \$2,000 in payments and \$1,000 in new pledges October 27, reports Edwin Fruit. That brought pledges to \$200 above Seattle's \$7,000 goal.

The featured speaker was Militant editorial volunteer Cindy Jaquith, who explained why working people should oppose imperialist sanctions or military moves against Iran. Jaquith was in Tehran during the 1979 Iranian revolution as a Militant reporter and gave a firsthand account of how working people rose to overthrow the U.S.-supported government of the shah.

Another speaker was Carlos Morales, a Militant supporter who works as a truck driver. "I was around a political organization known as a socialist party in Peru. I am glad to see an organization and newspaper in the United States that helps people change," he said.

Charles Ellis, 20, said he has been reading the Militant for several years. "I like the international articles, stories about unions and other protests, and I especially enjoy the column written by the Young Socialists."

Five people attending the meeting had found out about it at a rally against the war in Iraq held earlier in the day.

Caitlin Coey, a student at Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle, signed up for a Militant subscription at the demonstration and came to the fund meeting that night.

Between the antiwar rally and the fund meeting, 17 new readers signed up for subscriptions to the Militant and some \$225 in Pathfinder literature was sold.

To make a contribution, contact local distributors listed on page 8 or send checks payable to the Militant at the address listed on page 2.

Table with 4 columns: Country, Quota, Sold, %. Rows include UNITED KINGDOM (London, Edinburgh, UK Total), CANADA*, UNITED STATES (Denver*, Newark, NJ*, Pittsburgh*, Des Moines, IA, Washington, DC*, Philadelphia, San Francisco*, New York*, Carrrollton, Chicago*, Houston*, Los Angeles*, Atlanta*, Seattle*, Boston, Twin Cities*, Miami*, Albany, NY), U.S. Total, NEW ZEALAND, SWEDEN, AUSTRALIA*, Int'l totals, and Should be. A note at the bottom says '* Raised goal'.

Sub drive

Continued from front page Florida; and New Orleans.

Sara Lobman of Newark stayed in the top three for another week. She was the second-highest sub-getter with nine—seven of them at the New York peace march.

Harry D'Agostino, a student at Elizabeth Irwin High School in Manhattan, was one of 33 new subscribers at that action. He and a half-dozen friends attended a Militant Labor Forum later that night on "Africa, Oil, and Imperialism."

"The problem is much deeper than Bush," Nathan Railla, a student at Sonoma State University, said at the San Francisco rally. "Even if Gore is elected, we'll be dealing with the same problems."

"We had great sales today at a rally and march of 600 to protest antiterror raids and arrests of political activists," reported Ruth Gray from Auckland, New Zealand. "We set up the table an hour before the march, selling 5 new subscriptions and 2 renewals mostly to participants as they arrived for the protest."

Table with 4 columns: Country, Quota, Paid, %. Rows include CANADA, FRANCE, AUSTRALIA, UNITED STATES (San Francisco, Des Moines, IA, New York, Los Angeles, Newark, NJ, Miami, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia*, Washington, D.C., Seattle, Chicago*, Atlanta, Twin Cities, Boston, Houston, Albany, NY, U.S. total), UNITED KINGDOM (Edinburgh, London, UK TOTAL), NEW ZEALAND, SWEDEN, Int'l totals, and Goal/Should be. A note at the bottom says '* Raised goal'.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Construction workers in Australia down tools

MELBOURNE, Australia—About 15,000 workers, mostly from the construction industry, downed tools and took to the streets here September 26. The rally was called to protest the government's antiunion "WorkChoices" legislation and the antilabor drive of the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

Construction workers in Perth, members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union, face fines of more than \$18,000 each for an "illegal" strike in February 2006. A federal law passed in 2005 placed severe legal restrictions on construction unions' right to strike. Speakers from the platform and many workers at the September 26 rally focused their fire on voting out the government in the November federal elections.

—Alasdair MacDonald

Canada forest workers narrowly approve strike settlement

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Forest workers here, members of the United Steelworkers (USW), voted a razor-thin 50.77 percent majority to approve a new contract. On Vancouver Island, union locals with a high number of loggers rejected the proposal.

The vote ended a three-month strike by 4,500 workers against Forest Industrial Relations (FIR), which represents 31 forest companies on British Columbia's coast. Strikers at Island

Timberlands, Interfor, and Timber West have yet to settle.

Workers were striking to end the bosses' ability to impose shifts and use nonunion contractors. Safety was also a key issue; 43 forest workers were killed on the job in 2005.

Fighting for a common contract expiration date with woodworkers in the interior of British Columbia was also an important issue.

In a union leaflet to the membership, USW Western Canadian director Steve Hunt stated that the union has now limited the right of companies to unilaterally impose new work schedules and that there are "dispute resolution mechanisms" in place.

The leaflet notes that the right to refuse unsafe work is currently in the contract and that there is a new clause that provides severance pay for workers affected by partial plant closures. There was no change in contracting out work to nonunion companies.

"I voted against this proposal," said USW Local 1-3567 member Martyn Padden on the picket line at the CIPA mill in the Vancouver area. "Very little has changed since the initial contract proposal and we didn't even get a common expiry date with the interior."

"I can live with this. I think it's the best we could have hoped for at this time," said Wendy Clarke, cochair of the Local 1-2171 strike committee in Powell River. "But there are still grey areas that have to be worked out."

—Ned Dmytryshyn



Militant/Bob Aiken

Construction workers demonstrate in Melbourne, Australia, September 26 to protest antiunion legislation that threatens to punish workers with fines and jail sentences for strike actions.

Mattress plant workers confront lockout in upstate New York

GREEN ISLAND, New York, October 26—Dozens of workers at a Sealy Mattress factory here have set up pickets in response to a company lockout that began October 22. The 350 workers at the plant are members of UNITE-HERE Local 1714T.

The lockout, at the largest of Sealy's 26 North American plants, comes amid protracted contract negotiations that have been under way since September. The most recent company proposal called for a speedup in production as well as wage and health benefit cuts. This was

rejected by the workers by an 8-1 margin, pickets reported. Sealy, which operates 26 plants in North America, said it would shift work to other facilities.

Workers at the picket line pointed out that hourly production standards are too high and many workers have a hard time keeping up. Others reported that strict attendance policies penalize workers, even for documented family emergencies. Many are also concerned about health benefits, noting that the company immediately canceled the workers' coverage when it locked them out.

—Ben Joyce

Book tells of fight against racism by Chinese launderers in N.Y.

To Save China, To Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York, by Renqiu Yu. 253 pp. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992. \$26.95 paperback.

IN REVIEW

BY MILTON CHEE

This book tells part of the hidden history of Chinese American struggles against institutionalized racism and class oppression, tied to the fight for China's self-determination.

It focuses on the Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance (CHLA), founded in 1933 to represent thousands of Chinese laundries in the New York area in order to oppose a proposed city ordinance that would have driven virtually all Chinese hand laundries out of business. That local law, which had the support of white laundry businesses, would have been a major blow to the Chinese community that depended on the income from those Chinese laundries.

Author Renqiu Yu tells the story of Chinese immigration in New York from early colonial times. He describes how in the 1870s Chinese laundry workers were used to replace Irish women workers who went on strike at a Passaic, New Jersey, steam laundry. On learning why they were used as replacements, the Chinese workers also struck, fighting for better wages.

Yu explains how Chinese immigrants, facing restrictions on jobs and other racist obstacles, were forced to become small laundry owners and workers. In New York they founded the CHLA because the organization that claimed to represent all Chinese immigrants,

the Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Association (CCBA), acted on behalf of the wealthy merchants in New York's Chinatown at the expense of the exploited majority. The CHLA emerged as an effective defender of the small laundry owner-operators, and CHLA membership quickly grew despite red-baiting and factionalism by the CCBA.

This struggle took place during a period of labor radicalization when class battles erupted in the United States and internationally. Yu ties it to events un-

folding in China at that time, and he notes the influence of the Stalinized American and Chinese Communist parties on the CHLA and those around it.

His account shows that there was not unanimous support for Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang (KMT) among Chinese Americans, as portrayed in other accounts. The CHLA campaigned vigorously in support of the fight against the Japanese occupation of China. This was in contrast with the KMT's refusal to wage a consistent fight against the

imperialist occupation and its focus on attacking the Chinese Communist Party and workers movement. The CCBA was torn between its loyalty to the KMT and community sentiment against Japanese occupation.

The CHLA remained involved in struggles through the 1950s, when it faced FBI surveillance and interrogations against some of its members.

This book tells an important part of working-class history and the contributions of Chinese American workers.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 12, 1982

With the elections over, supporters of Socialist Workers Party (SWP) candidates are not closing up shop. Instead, they are organizing a nationwide effort to build the upcoming convention of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA).

The growing resistance by workers to the policies of the employers and their government—illustrated by the Chrysler workers' rejection of their contract and the 70,000-strong labor march in San Francisco October 24—will be at the center of the discussions at the YSA convention. It will be held at the McCormick Inn in Chicago, Illinois, from December 30–January 2.

In addition to a series of political reports and discussions, and workshops, a highlight of the meeting will be a public talk by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Barnes will speak on "Their Trotsky and Ours: Revolutionary Continuity Today."



November 11, 1957

No one can fail to be impressed by the Soviet firing of two man-made "moons" into full orbit around the earth.

The ruling U.S. capitalists, as represented by their political spokesmen and press, have responded to the Sputniks with snarls of chagrin and frustration. They see in the latest accomplishments of Soviet scientists only a challenge to their vaunted military superiority and a brake, if only temporary, on their drive toward imperialist penetration of other lands and war against the Soviet orbit.

The Soviet bureaucracy, as represented by the Kremlin leaders and their servitors of the Communist Parties throughout the world, for its part has been quick to use the latest achievements of Soviet science to bolster its own positions and claims.



November 12, 1932

The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, reversing the lower courts in setting aside the trial and appeal verdicts in the Scottsboro case, is a triumph for the nine prisoners and the entire working class. It is a victory militantly won by the party in the face of great terror and repression.

But no illusions! The fight is not yet won. The end we are fighting for is not yet. The boys are still in prison. They are to be tried again in March, thus far, by the same judge, in the same court in which they were railroaded a little more than a year and a half ago.

The need for a fighting movement of the working class for unconditional freedom of these victims of capitalist class justice is greater than it was before. What we have already accomplished must be the stimulus to yet greater efforts. We cannot stop until we have forced the bourbon tiger of the south to open his jaws and let our class brothers go.

‘Only after revolution was equality won’

University of Houston meeting discusses book by Chinese Cuban generals

BY STEVE WARSHALL

HOUSTON—“This book provides a clear picture that only after the revolution was racial equality won,” said Xiaoping Cong, a Chinese studies professor at the University of Houston. She was speaking at an October 22 panel discussion at the University of Houston on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*.

Some 50 people attended the meeting, sponsored by several University of Houston organizations. Most in the audience were students and faculty members.

Robert Buzzanco, chair of the history department, served as moderator. He opened the meeting by thanking Pathfinder Press, which published the book, for providing an “important resource on revolutions and progressive ideas.”

Philip Howard, a professor of Latin American history, explained that “between 1847 and 1874 about 125,000 Chinese laborers came to work on sugar plantations in Cuba. Plantation owners relied increasingly on Chinese labor as the African slavery abolitionist movement gained ground, a shift that resulted in the Chinese living less like workers and more like slaves. For all intents and purposes, Chinese indentured servants belonged to the holders of their contracts.” He noted that these conditions led the Chinese to join in Cuba’s independence revolt against Spain.

Cong spoke about the conditions in China that fueled the emigration from that country in the second half of the 19th century. “The European colonizers came to China looking for cheap labor. *Our History Is Still Being Written* shows us that this transfer of population was only for economic exploitation,” she said. “This book gave me a picture not just of how the Chinese lived in Cuba, but of all Cuban society.”

Zadia Murphy, a senior and past president of the campus NAACP chapter, reported that she had participated in a September 20 demonstration by tens of thousands in Jena, Louisiana, against the unjust treatment of six Black high school students there.



Panel at October 22 meeting on *Our History Is Still Being Written* at University of Houston. From left: Latin American history professor Philip Howard, Chinese studies professor Xiaoping Cong, Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters, and UH student Zadia Murphy.

She noted that the three generals had started as teenager rebels. “They stepped outside of themselves to fight against injustice, not just in Cuba, but wherever they found it. If we learn to do that, we can rewrite history.”

“The Cuban Revolution was not an isolated event. It was part of the wave of struggles for national liberation throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America,” said Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder and editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

“It did not start out as a socialist revolution either. When the masses of Cubans overthrew the Batista dictatorship, they weren’t thinking they were making a socialist revolution,” she said. “They simply wanted to create a society with greater social equality and justice.”

After the January 1959 revolutionary victory, she said, “They began by eliminating racial discrimination in its legal forms. They opened the door to the employment of women; they carried out a massive literacy campaign and a land reform.” In this way, “they came into direct conflict with the economic interests of U.S. imperialism, which owned the vast majority of the productive property in Cuba.

“The Cubans simply refused to back down, and to this day this remains the sole source of U.S. hostility toward the Cuban Revolution.”

Waters noted that “today there are five Cuban revolutionaries serving life sentences for the work they did in the United States trying to find out what U.S.-based Cuban counterrevolutionary groups were doing to attack their country.” Despite the jailers’ efforts to isolate them, the Cuban Five remain politically active from behind prison walls.

What a revolution makes possible

During the discussion period, Cong recounted, “I learned about the generals and read comments from Moisés Sío Wong in Chinese articles on the Internet.” She said she was skeptical that the reports could be true—until she was introduced to the book, read it, and then understood Sío Wong’s explanation of what Cuba’s socialist revolution made possible.

In response to the news that a translation has been completed for a Chinese-language edition to be published in China in 2008, Cong said, “I believe this book will be warmly received when it appears in Chinese.”

Two students asked about race rela-

tions and the position of Chinese in Cuba today. Waters replied that Cuba has eliminated the legal structures of racism. While this does not end the legacy of racism, she said, the revolution creates the conditions where this is possible. She added that “real integration of Chinese in Cuban society has taken place at all levels. It is an example of the strength of the revolution.”

Tiffany Spurlock of the students’ Council of Ethnic Organizations asked, “Will the United States ever wake up and lift the embargo against Cuba in my lifetime?”

“The economic and diplomatic war on Cuba is based on the refusal of the Cuban people to back down,” Waters stated. “If Cuba allowed U.S. companies to come in and directly exploit Cuban workers, things would change. But as long as they refuse, the embargo will remain.”

Commenting on the same question, Buzzanco expressed a different view. “The problem is not Cuba. When the older Cuban exiles in Miami die off, then this policy will change,” he said.

Speaking from the audience, Nine-Min Cheng, outreach director of the Chinese Community Center, said, “I appreciate being invited to this event and have learned much from this meeting and from reading this important book. *Our History Is Still Being Written* will now be added to our library and will be used in our Chinese school for 750 students.”

An article on the book presentation appeared in the campus newspaper, the *Daily Cougar*.

The event was sponsored by the University of Houston history department, Asian American Studies Center, and Council of Ethnic Organizations, as well as Lorenzo Cano, associate director of the Center for Mexican American Studies.

Amanda Ulman contributed to this article.

London: immigration cops arrest dozens in Chinatown raid

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—Immigration cops seized 49 workers at businesses in Chinatown October 11, in the biggest such raid in London this year. Chinese, Malaysian, and Singaporean immigrants were arrested.

Officials of the Border and Immigration Authority say they are carrying out 60 raids a week on London workplaces.

“More than 100 police went into restaurants and cornered everyone, arresting people with handcuffs,” said Jabez Lam, an organizer of a protest against the raids.

Bobby Chan of Min Quan, a Chinese immigrant rights group, said in an interview that many of those arrested in Chinatown raids are held in prisons far from London and denied legal representation.

Owners of Chinatown restaurants and shops shut down their business-

es October 18 to protest the arrests. The action was called by the London Chinatown Community Association. Banners were draped across Gerard Street with the slogans “Support Migrant Workers, Stop Persecuting Employers.”

Parliament is scheduled to discuss proposals to remove limits on fines that can be imposed on bosses who employ undocumented workers. The Office for National Statistics reports that one out of three London residents was born abroad, and that 10,000 immigrants settle in this city every month.

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Venezuelan peasants

Continued from front page by hand.”

Freite and her husband Evaristo Marufo work 30 acres on El Charcote. They are among 800 peasant families who occupied the uncultivated tracts in 1998. After they battled the local cops, company thugs, and National Guard troops, the national government bought the land from Agroflora in 2005 and turned it over to those who till it.

Two years later, no peasant working at El Charcote has received title.

In 2001 the Venezuelan government passed a land reform law that enabled those cultivating idle land to seek legal title. Peasants across the country have taken advantage of the opportunity and occupied lands owned by large capitalists. Their struggles have met fierce resistance from big landowners and bureaucratic obstacles.

Some 7.4 million acres of vacant land were put into production nationwide between 2001 and 2006. More than 1.5 million peasant families are working these plots, either as individuals or as part of cooperatives, according to Rito Jiménez, president of the Socialist Agrarian Network of Venezuela. The network is part of the National Institute for Agrarian Research, a government agency.

Peasants settle in

Even without legal title, peasants in Cojedes are settling in. Marufo had just finished clearing land to plant pomegranates and beans. Ferboss Quintero and Ana Julia Zumlave have sunk the foundations for a house on their 37 acres on El Charcote. The concrete home will replace their tin-roof and dirt-floor shack.

The landlords’ hired thugs, who used to patrol the lands by motorcycle at night, shooting rifles in the air, haven’t been around for at least a year. Freite said that Agroflora removed the last of its cattle in October of last year. The company used to turn livestock loose on the peasants’ fields to trample crops and scare children.

José Jiménez, who works for the Venezuelan Agricultural Company’s machinery program, denied that any large landowners are renting equipment at subsidized rates. “The mechanization is entirely for the poor. But now there are too many harvests and there are only eight combines, so there’s a wait,” he said.

Jiménez was looking on as workers loaded up a truck with corn just harvested by a subsidized combine on the plot worked by the New World Cooperative. Silvia Linare, a member of the cooperative, acknowledged that medium-sized producers get priority because they pay higher prices for the machinery. The cooperative qualifies as a medium producer because it includes seven families tilling 86 acres of corn.

“We’ve been on this land for five years, but nobody’s received a title,” she said.

“The process of obtaining titles is slow because the National Land Institute lacks adequate personnel,” said Rito Jiménez in an October 23 interview in Caracas.

In response to mounting pressure for titles, the federal government instituted a system in 2003 called the *carta agraria* (agrarian letter). This is an official

letter from the National Land Institute (INTI) enabling a peasant or a cooperative to apply for credit for the public lands they are working.

“We are cultivating 15 hectares, but our *carta agraria* only covers three,” said Quintero.

About a third of his corn crop was destroyed at harvest time. While no government guarantees exist to protect small farmers from such disasters, Quintero and Zumlave are pressing to recover some of their losses through the local branch of INTI.

“We have to pay the credit in 15 days,” said Zumlave. “We’re small farmers, we’re socialists, and the government has to do something.”

Pressing to expand social services

Peasants here are also pressing for technical assistance and greater access to education and health care.

“The Cubans taught us many good things, but now they’re gone,” said Ignacio Chávez, who works a piece of land outside La Vega.

He said Cuban volunteer agronomists had spent six months in Cojedes teaching farming techniques, but were relocated six months ago. More than 100 peasants here took courses.

Other projects, such as the installation of water pumps by the state oil company, have also stalled. “They only got to five or six plots,” he said.

Utah hearing does not answer questions on mine disaster

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—The Utah Mine Safety Commission held its fourth public hearing October 22 on the fatal collapse of the Crandall Canyon coal mine in central Utah August 6.

Six miners were trapped in the disaster and their bodies never recovered. During the efforts to rescue the trapped miners, three more people were killed and six were injured. The day before the October 22 hearing, César Sánchez, whose brother Manuel was killed at Crandall Canyon, spoke to the *Militant* about the hearings that have been held in Utah and in the U.S. Congress.

“My opinion is that these investigations are pretty poor,” Sánchez said. “I asked questions in these hearings that have never been answered. For instance, was there a mantrip [vehicle] for the workers to escape in? And why haven’t the workers who did escape from the mine when it collapsed been interviewed?”

The latest Utah safety commission hearing did not answer these questions, and posed few other questions. Instead, it focused on testimony by representatives of state agencies.

Among those testifying was Thomas Faddies, a former mine manager representing Utah’s School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, which manages state lands. In a moment of candor, trying to argue that the mine bosses want safety, he stated, “You can’t accept accidents in mining. Frankly, they’re too expensive. You don’t want to spend time training new employees.”

Among the eight commission members are David Litvin, president of the Utah Mining Association, which represents major mining companies in the state; and Michael Dmitrich, a state



Militant photos by Olympia Newton

Above: Government-subsidized combine at the New World Cooperative on the former El Charcote Ranch outside San Carlos, Venezuela, which was nationalized in 2005. Peasants want greater access to needed machinery. Right: Having pushed back landowners’ thugs for now, peasants are expanding production. Evaristo Marufo on a plot he readied for planting.



The Cuban volunteers had been staying in a mansion formerly used by Agroflora for its policing operations. Peasants occupied the estate and turned it into a clinic and school. According to Freite, adult classes in the second phase of a literacy program, going up through sixth grade, stopped eight months ago when the Venezuelan teacher returned to Caracas.

Freite graduated from the first phase of the literacy program a year ago. Today she teaches those courses.

Peasants are also pressing for regular medical services. A year ago, Cuban doctors came in from nearby towns to staff a clinic once a week. Today they come once a month.

“You can’t blame the Cubans, they have so many responsibilities, and they’re needed elsewhere,” said Zumlave. “But why is it only the Cubans will come?”

“Tell people we need a fully equipped hospital,” she said. “We need a full-time doctor, preferably a Cuban.”

senator who does consulting work for mining companies.

Another commission member, Joseph Piccolo, is the mayor of Price, Utah. He told the *Salt Lake Tribune* October 21, “By its nature, the industry is dangerous. But it’s certainly not unsafe, in my opinion.”

The one union member on the commission is Dennis O’Dell, United Mine Workers of America safety director.

Some working people in the area have pointed to the difference a union can make. “We need the young people today to learn the lessons of the past and support the union,” said Frances Anderson in an interview.

Anderson, who works in Price, helped organize fundraising for families of the miners who died at Crandall Canyon. Her father died in the mines years ago. She said she remembers having stood proudly on the union picket line with other women in support of their husbands and other miners.

César Sánchez expressed a similar view. “If workers want any kind of protection, they have to get the union hands in the mines,” he said.

Sánchez, who has worked in several non-union mines in the Price area, said that the last mine he worked in, the Bridger Mine in Wyoming, was union, and because of that it had

better safety and other conditions.

“At Crandall Canyon it was profits over safety, and I see the company and the government responsible,” he said.

Meanwhile, in Randolph County, West Virginia, coal miner Howard Harris was killed October 20 when he got caught in a conveyor belt at the Pleasant Hill mine, owned by Carter Roag Coal Co. Another West Virginia miner died at Arch Coal’s Mountaineer II mine on September 26.

This brings to 26 the number of miners killed in the United States this year.

Vote Socialist Workers!

The Socialist Workers Party is fielding these candidates for the November elections. They call for the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other fronts of the U.S.-led “war on terror,” and support workers’ struggles to organize and use union power, as part of a platform that points to workers and farmers organizing independently of all capitalist parties in defense of their interests.

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San Francisco, CA	Lea Sherman, Mayor Chauncey Robinson, Sheriff Gerardo Sánchez, District Attorney
Seattle, WA	Cecelia Moriarity, City Council Edwin Fruit, School Board

[†] Confirmed on the ballot

Cuba helped fight for Guinea-Bissau’s independence

Below is an excerpt from From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month in November. The author, Victor Dreke, has been a leading participant in Cuba’s revolutionary movement for half a century. In 1965 he served as second in command to Ernesto Che Guevara of the Cuban internationalist combatants in the Congo. Dreke is currently Cuba’s ambassador to Equatorial Guinea in west-central Africa. Copyright © 2002 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY VICTOR DREKE

When we left the Congo, a number of Africans returned to Cuba with us, and one of them came to live in my

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

home. He was like a member of my family. His name was Sumba and here we called him Fidelito. He was killed after returning to the Congo to fight. Soon after that, in 1966, I left for my first mission to Guinea-Bissau. I headed up our military mission there and in the Republic of Guinea. Keep in mind that Guinea-Bissau was still



Members of Cuban unit of volunteer combatants, led by Ernesto Che Guevara, that joined liberation movement in Congo in 1965. Standing, fifth from left, is Víctor Dreke, who recounts this struggle in *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*.

under Portuguese colonial rule, while the Republic of Guinea had won its independence from France in 1958. Amilcar Cabral was the central leader of the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, and because of his knowledge of Africa, he made a big impression on me. Che had held a high opinion of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde). At that time Che considered it a serious and organized revolutionary movement. I arrived in Guinea-Bissau with the experience I had gained in the Congo and a little more knowledge about Africa. From a strategic point of view, Amilcar and I didn’t always share the same opinion on how to wage the struggle. But you have to remember that it’s the leaders within each country who must decide the form to carry out the struggle. I’ll give an example. One day the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau decided to recruit a group of young people. They went into a small town and took six young

men and brought them to the camp. I didn’t understand this. How can you compel people to join? I said this to Amilcar. “You can’t force people to fight,” I told him. “You must win them over politically.” Amilcar listened to me very respectfully. Keep in mind he had lots of experience and I was a young person—not yet thirty—and new to that country. “Everything you’re saying is true,” he said to me. “But here that can’t be done. Because tomorrow the Portuguese will come, and they’ll forcibly take them away and conscript them to fight against us. We have to incorporate them into our ranks before the Portuguese do.” Another question was that of the neighboring Republic of Guinea, with its capital in Conakry. The command of the PAIGC was in Guinea-Conakry. Why? Because there were only two ways to enter Guinea-Bissau: through Senegal—which gave no assistance at all—or Guinea-Conakry, whose government was then headed by [Ahmed] Sékou Touré. Without that rear guard, the

armed struggle in Guinea-Bissau would have been wiped out, since food supplies, armaments, and ammunition, which came from Cuba, China, the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries had to go through that country. This was different from the struggle in our country, where our weapons were captured from the dictatorship’s army. The Portuguese remained in their garrisons and rarely came out to fight. So you couldn’t set ambushes to attack them and seize their weapons. They moved troops, supplies, everything, by plane and helicopter. The liberation movement needed a secure rear guard in order to survive. That’s why in November 1970, the Portuguese imperialists decided on an operation directly attacking Guinea-Conakry, trying to overthrow Sékou Touré while simultaneously trying to wipe out the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau. That invasion was defeated by militias trained by Cuban instructors. The Cuban leadership supported the strategy of strengthening the government of Sékou Touré. He asked for our help. We had to prevent the imperialists from toppling his government. We also knew that the French imperialists still didn’t forgive Sékou Touré or the liberation movement for winning independence a few years earlier. So Cuba responded to the request by Sékou Touré for Cuban instructors to help create a militia. We also responded to a proposal by Amilcar Cabral to help train artillery personnel and doctors to meet the needs of the people of Guinea-Bissau, sending a small military unit. We taught them the use of artillery and trained them to give medical care to the liberation fighters. We lived together with these compañeros in the same camps. This brought us even closer to the African struggle, and it enabled us to appreciate and to better understand the African people. And at the same time, they made an effort to understand us.

November

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FLORIDA: **Miami:** 8365 NE 2nd Ave. #206. Mailing address: P.O. Box 381395. Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 756-4436. E-mail: miamiswp@bellsouth.net

GEORGIA: **Atlanta:** 1146 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. SW. Zip: 30310. Mailing address: P.O. Box 162515. Zip: 30321. Tel: (404) 758-2151. E-mail: swpatlanta@bellsouth.net

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

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

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

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

E-mail: tcswp@qwest.net

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

NEW YORK: **Albany:** Tel: (518) 929-4786. E-mail: youngsocialists518@gmail.com **Manhattan:** 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 629-6649. E-mail: newyorkswp@mac.com

PENNSYLVANIA: **Philadelphia:** 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Zip: 19140. Tel: (215) 455-2682. E-mail: philaswp@verizon.net **Pittsburgh:** 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 225. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 365-1090. E-mail: PittsburghSWP@verizon.net

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

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

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

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box 164, Campsie, NSW 2194. Tel: (02) 9718 9698. E-mail: cl_australia@

optusnet.com.au

CANADA

ONTARIO: **Toronto:** 2238 Dundas St. W., #201, Postal code M6R 3A9. Tel: (416) 535-9140. E-mail: cltoronto@bellnet.ca

FRANCE

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

NEW ZEALAND

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

SWEDEN

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

UNITED KINGDOM

ENGLAND: **London:** First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane). Postal code: E2 6DG. Tel: 020-7613-3855. E-mail: clondon@onetel.com

SCOTLAND: **Edinburgh:** Second Floor, 105 Hanover St. Postal code: EH2 1DJ. Tel: 0131-226-2756. E-mail: cl.edinburgh@btinternet.com

Confronting the bosses' assaults

The auto bosses have taken another step in their assaults on workers' wages, working conditions, and benefits with the recently approved Chrysler contract. As in the General Motors contract accepted a few weeks earlier, union members at Chrysler now face a permanent two-tier wage system, with many new hires starting at half the pay of current employees. Retirees are no longer covered by company health insurance. Their benefits are dependent on a trust fund invested in the stock market.

For decades, United Auto Workers (UAW) officials, like those of other trade unions, have pursued a course of subordinating workers' needs to the bosses' demand to make the U.S. auto industry more "competitive" with their rivals abroad. The only way GM, Chrysler, and Ford can become more profitable, however, is by lowering wages, slashing health-care and pension benefits, and brutally speeding up the line to produce more cars in less time with fewer workers.

UAW president Ron Gettelfinger calls for "fighting for U.S. auto jobs." This American nationalist course ties workers' fortunes to the bosses and pits workers in the United States against our class brothers and sisters abroad. Far from protecting union jobs, the union officialdom's "strategy" has only contributed to a situation today where nonunion auto plants have expanded in the South and the UAW membership has shrunk to one-third of the 1.5 million members it had in 1979.

Trying to defend jobs, income, and working con-

ditions by tying these to the employers' profitability is a trap. Bosses and workers have opposite interests. The starting point must be fighting for the interests of workers, not the bosses. Working people share common interests around the world, so we must join in solidarity with fellow workers, from Japan to Mexico, China, and Germany.

The only way to counter the assaults by the bosses is by using union power against them, through which workers can take ownership of their struggles. That includes organizing unions wherever we don't have them.

Many working people are learning the hard way that the unions must oppose two-tier wage structures, whose aim is to divide the workforce and ultimately push down the wages of all. Labor needs to fight for a substantial raise in the minimum wage and for cost-of-living adjustments in all union contracts.

To combat unemployment, what's needed is a fight for a massive, federally funded public works program to put millions to work at union scale. Unemployment benefits should be paid at union rate for the duration of joblessness.

Health care should not be dependent on individual employers and their financial viability. The unions need to fight for universal, government-guaranteed medical coverage and retirement income.

These are key elements of a fighting working-class program to be able to take on the bosses and win.

Ankara pounds PKK bases on Iraq border

Continued from front page

killed in an October 21 ambush by PKK guerrillas. Ankara says the PKK carries out attacks on Turkish troops from mountain fortresses in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Turkish government has massed 100,000 troops along its border with Iraqi Kurdistan. In addition to cross-border military strikes, some 8,000 troops are carrying out antiguerrilla operations in the mostly Kurdish provinces of Tunceli and Sirnak in southeastern Turkey.

Baghdad's threat to cut off the oil flow to the Turkish port of Ceyhan has alarmed U.S. and other imperialist energy cartels. World crude oil futures have shot up to record highs.

Iraq exports 1.6 million to 2.1 million barrels of crude oil a day. Most is shipped through the port of Basra in southern Iraq, but 100,000 barrels a day flow through a pipeline from Kirkuk oilfields in northern Iraq to Ceyhan.

Turkey collects hundreds of millions each year in transit fees from the pipeline shipments. Hundreds of miles of the pipeline cross Turkish areas with a significant Kurdish population. Over the years the pipeline has come under repeated attacks by the PKK.

Turkish sanctions

Ankara has said it is considering cutting off supplies of electricity, cement, iron, paper, and food to northern Iraq. Iraqi Kurdistan depends on trade with Turkey for most of its vital supplies. Turkish contrac-

tors are building roads, hospitals, housing, and other infrastructure in the region.

Turkey's capitalist rulers have used the PKK attacks to fan anti-Kurdish chauvinism. In Ankara, Reuters reported, "warplanes swooped, tanks rolled and troops marched past President Abdullah Gul and Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and senior generals in a display of military might" October 29. At a similar parade in Istanbul, "flag-waving patriots clapped loudly as tanks drove past. . . . Many people carried pictures of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk," Turkey's national hero." Turkey, a U.S. ally, has the second largest armed forces in NATO.

Washington and its client regime in Baghdad have been working hard to avoid a Turkish incursion into northern Iraq. Since the 2003 U.S. invasion, Iraqi Kurdistan has been the most stable region in the country, and leaders of the KRG are among the most reliable allies of the U.S. occupation.

The Shiite-led regime in Baghdad has no effective presence or influence in Iraqi Kurdistan. The KRG says it is unable to dislodge the PKK from the mountains or arrest its leaders.

But reporters in the region easily travel to PKK camps and conduct interviews with the group's commanders. Resentment of Turkish repression and public sympathy for the PKK in Kurdish towns is "enormous," a *New York Times* correspondent reported in an October 28 article. PKK fighters procure supplies and health care from the population.

liberties, particularly in the case of Native American prisoners in U.S. jails, like frame-up victim Leonard Peletier, who is still in prison. He was in the forefront of trying to get sports teams to drop their racist names and insignias.

David Salner
Frederick, Maryland

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.

California fires



Militant/Sylvia Hansen

October 28 protest in San Diego demanded equal access to aid for those hit by fires and protested deportations.

Continued from front page

evacuate, said Marta. "We didn't know where to go." They ended up with about 30 neighbors in the yard of the customs house at the Tecate border crossing.

The Gómezes have been relying on family, friends, and neighbors for support. It took nearly a week for Red Cross personnel to show up, and they brought only water. The family still has no electricity or running water.

Daughter Sandra Gómez said her union, the California Nurses Association, helped get food and water. "I think the whole setup was wrong, because they left my mom and dad without food and water," she said.

Those who went to Mexico to escape the fire have not been able to come back, because that border crossing was closed.

Authorities required those receiving relief supplies to provide identification, supposedly to prevent people who were not fire victims from "stealing" food and clothing.

Lorena García, an accounting office worker in Potrero, took in three other families whose homes were closer to the fire. "On the fourth day we went to the Volunteer Fire Department for supplies," she said, because they were cut off from the usual shopping centers. One of the people handing out supplies questioned why they needed toothbrushes, since their homes weren't destroyed. "I told him, 'We're not here to be humiliated but because we need these things.'"

"They accused us of stealing things," said Teresa Argiles, also from Potrero. "And it was very little what they offered us."

The Western Service Workers Association and other groups in San Diego have been collecting donations of food, clothing, and other necessities to bring to working people in rural areas.

Immigrant workers affected

The fires have taken a toll on undocumented workers. In Carmel Valley, workers never stopped picking tomatoes at Leslie Farms, despite being in a mandatory evacuation zone, according to an October 26 article in the Spanish section of the San Diego *Union-Tribune*. The bosses claimed they were in a voluntary evacuation zone and there was no need to worry.

"They're more interested in the harvest" than the life and limb of workers, said Juan Ramón of the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations.

At least 14 immigrant workers were taken to the Medical Center's burn unit at the University of California in San Diego. There are many undocumented day laborers living in tents and shacks in the canyons outside the city of San Diego. So far it is unknown how many of these workers may have died as fires swept through. On October 25 Border Patrol agents found four charred bodies in a canyon, bringing the official death toll to seven.

By October 26 immigration cops reported arresting 100 immigrant workers made visible by the fires.

Immigrant rights activists report that some workers have been denied help at shelters because they lack proper identification, and others have been hesitant to go to evacuation centers where they might be picked up by the immigration police. Border Patrol agents were redeployed to "help" at evacuation centers and with other relief efforts.

Several immigrants were arrested at Qualcomm Stadium and deported. Cops handed them over to *la migra* after accusing them of stealing relief supplies.

Rick Trujillo contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Prison price gouging

I am an inmate at the primary women's penal facility in Mississippi, writing to voice my outrage at the monopolization of commissary services at this prison.

Ivory soap (4.5 oz. bar) is listed at a rate of \$0.80 each. However, the most recent order, filled on Sept. 4, 2007, exhibited a price increase to \$1.80 each without prior notification or recourse.

Inmates are provided with only bare minimum of personal hygiene items by the state, but the soap, one bar each week, is too caustic for most skin types.

I refuse to sit on my hands and al-

low this company to prey upon the weak, myself included, without so much as a mention.

A prisoner
Pearl, Mississippi

Vernon Bellecourt

Vernon Bellecourt (Wabun-Inini) died October 13. Note should be taken of the energy with which he led the American Indian Movement and sought to win worldwide recognition of this struggle.

During the 1980s, Bellecourt defended the Nicaraguan Revolution and solidarized with the Palestinian and Irish struggles. Bellecourt campaigned for political rights and civil