

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

‘We shared determination to emulate the example of Cuba’
PAGES 8–9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 11 MARCH 17, 2008

Turkish gov’t vows to ‘teach further lesson’ to Kurds

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, March 4—The head of Turkey’s military threatened today to return troops to Iraqi Kurdistan to “teach further lessons” to the Kurds.

Thousands of Turkish troops, backed by warplanes, helicopters, tanks, and long-range artillery, invaded Iraq’s mountainous northern region known as Iraqi Kurdistan February 21. They withdrew on February 29. The Turkish government claimed it was targeting rebel bases of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

The PKK has been fighting for Kurdish autonomy in southern Turkey, where some estimated 15 million Kurds live.

Turkish Gen. Yasar Buyukanit said 240 Kurdish rebels had been killed. “There are further lessons that we need to teach,” he said. “We will try to inflict heavier blows on the PKK.” The Turkish military said 24 of its soldiers were killed in the operation, and that they destroyed some PKK cave hide-outs, command centers, and anti-aircraft sites.

The invasion came after three-and-a-half months of bombing of Kurdish villages. Turkish government officials credited the operation’s success to Washington’s decision in November to provide Ankara with more U.S. satellite

Continued on page 3

Workers plan May Day actions for legalization

BY BETSY FARLEY

CHICAGO, March 2—In response to continuing raids and deportations, firings, and other attacks against undocumented immigrants, workers in several states are already making plans for marches and protests on May 1, 2008.

“On March 10, 2006, Chicago started the struggle of the immigrant community against the intent to be criminalized,” states a flyer for a March 8–9 Midwest Convention in Defense of Immigrant Rights. “In 2008 we are being treated as criminals.” The conference will map out plans for a regional demonstration on May Day in downtown Chicago.

On February 25, 70 workers at the Proex packaging plant in Batavia, Illinois, walked off the job to protest the firing of 10 of their coworkers for supposed problems with their Social Security numbers. Back on the job now, workers are pressing for the reinstatement of the 10, who worked at the plant for between 5 and 15 years.

In the Chicago area 632 people have been arrested in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sweeps targeting “fugitive aliens” since October, according to local ICE spokesperson Gail Montenegro. Some 30,408

Continued on page 4

Minnesota meat packers start negotiating new contract

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—“We’re just asking to be treated right, for them to do the right thing,” said Lucy Aguilar, a boning worker at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse here, referring to contract negotiations with the company. “They make it like it’s an offense, an attack on them.”

Aguilar’s comments were featured in the new issue of the *Workers’ Voice*, the newsletter of the members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 at Dakota Premium Foods.

Contract negotiations began February 29. They were the first talks since the 250 workers here voted January 25 by almost two to one against a company-backed campaign to decertify their union. The company began its attack on the UFCW two weeks before the previous contract expired in June.

On the day negotiations restarted some workers showed their support by passing out bright yellow or grey union T-shirts that say in Spanish “Fight for a better contract” and

“UNION YES! ¡SÍ SE PUEDE!” (Yes we can). Several workers put the T-shirts on, joining those who had already worn them to work.

Fifteen unionists, including work-

Continued on page 5

‘Militant’ to launch sub, fund drives

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The *Militant* will launch its spring circulation and fund drives March 22. Efforts to win new readers on campuses, in factories, and in working-class neighborhoods will coincide with a campaign to raise \$100,000 to keep the *Militant* publishing.

The *Militant* carries unique coverage of the big political questions being debated out in the 2008 presidential election race—from U.S. trade policy, to the escalating imperialist war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to

Continued on page 11

‘Jail the cops who beat us’ demand Miami students



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Hundreds of students at Miami’s Edison Senior High School demonstrated after cops attacked a February 29 peaceful protest by students against the arrest of a fellow student in school.

BY BERNIE SENTER AND MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—Cops attacked a peaceful protest by hundreds of Miami Edison Senior High School students February 29. A number of students were injured and 19 arrested as 60–70 police cruisers descended on the school in Miami’s Little Haiti neighborhood.

“They pushed all the females up against the wall,” student government president Alain Vil told the *Militant*. “They brought dogs, canines, to sic on us. Mainly male police were beating on female students.”

Students had organized a demonstration in the cafeteria at lunch to protest the arrest of a fellow student

the day before.

“The whole school was involved in the rally,” 11th grader Sabrina Francois said. “We joined in the cafeteria and marched to the front of the school. Police then drove people back into the cafeteria. In the cafeteria, police were calling us ‘bitch,’ saying ‘next bitch, next bitch’ after beating one of us.”

Richardson Denis, 18, a senior, said the police “stood on some students in the cafeteria.” Some students responded by throwing things at the cops. “I got milk, water, Gatorade, and everything else thrown on me, and I was the chief of police,” said Miami-Dade Schools Police Chief Gerald Darling. The county

Continued on page 4

Havana events launch book on Cuba, U.S. class struggle

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND BEN O’SHAUGHNESSY

HAVANA—Four presentations of Pathfinder’s *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* took place here in February. One was held as part of the Havana International Book Fair, and the others were sponsored by the Federation of University Students (FEU) at the University of Havana and by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

Among those participating in these events were Cuban vice president José Ramón Fernández, Gen. Moisés Sío Wong, FEU national president Adalberto Hernández, and University of Havana rector Rubén Zardoya. Over the course of the February 14–24 book fair and subsequent events, more than 250 copies of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* were sold.

A February 21 meeting took place at

San Carlos de la Cabaña, the historic fortress at the mouth of Havana Bay where the book fair was held. Attended by 50 people, it was addressed by Fernández, Sío Wong, and Mary-Alice

Continued on page 7

Also Inside:

Iowa students meet socialist candidate	2
Working people welcome Kosova independence	3
Colombian military attacks Ecuador	11
Candidates debate trade, unemployment	11

Iowa students meet socialist vice presidential candidate

BY RYAN SCOTT

AMES, Iowa—"We need a different perspective in the elections," said Byron Black, a student at Iowa State University (ISU) here. Black attended a lunch meeting of the ISU Socialists club with Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president of the United States.

"The campaign and the *Militant* make the actions against the raids and deportations visible," he said. Kennedy also spoke with professors at Drake University, met with farmers, campaigned among meat packers, and granted an interview to the *Des Moines Register* as part of her February 28–March 1 tour in Iowa.

At the ISU meeting Daniel Sardinas, 22, asked Kennedy her opinion on Venezuela, where he is from. She said she would use the world influence of the of-

fice of vice president to support popular struggles there for land, education, health care, and improved living conditions. She said that a socialist administration in the White House would end all threats against Venezuela and stop collaborating with the ruling class there in its efforts to roll back gains workers and peasants have won.

"If elected one of the first things we would carry out would be to cancel the Third World debt," she told a campaign event in Des Moines. "This is something you don't hear at all from Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John McCain. You never hear them talk about conditions and interests of toilers in the world."

"I tell other farmers that the socialists are for creating jobs and keeping farmers on the land and they support rights for immigrants," said retired farmer Larry Ginter at a meeting for Kennedy



Militant/Frank Forrestal

The Iowa State University Socialists club in Ames hosted a lunch-time meeting February 29 for Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president.

at his farm. George Naylor, a leader of the National Family Farm Coalition, also attended. "The capitalist class has not proved it cares for working people, all you have to do to see that is that troops are still in Iraq, recession and loss of jobs, and their response to Hurricane Katrina," said Ginter.

Kennedy also campaigned outside

the Tyson meatpacking plant in Perry, Iowa. More than 15 workers were introduced to her and talked about the difficult working conditions and racism they experience in the plant. The majority of the workers are immigrants from Mexico and Africa.

Joe Swanson contributed to this article.

Socialist presidential candidate speaks on Georgia campuses

BY RACHELE FRUIT AND LORETTA VANPELT

CARROLLTON, Georgia—"As president, I would introduce federal legislation to give the unions the power to shut down production if public and workers' safety is being put at risk by the bosses' practices," said Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president of the United States, speaking at a Militant Labor Forum here.

Calero pointed to the February 7 explosion at the Imperial Sugar refinery in Port Wentworth, Georgia, in which 10 workers have died so far, and the recall of 143 million pounds of frozen beef by

Westland/Hallmark Meat Company, a slaughterhouse in Chino, California.

"I call for the prosecution of the plant owners, who are the only ones responsible for this gruesome violation," he said.

Students at the University of West Georgia (UWG) also hosted a meeting for Calero during his February 23–25 tour stop here. He was joined by Loretta VanPelt, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress in Georgia's 3rd District.

Calero explained the measures that he would implement as president to help protect working people from the impact of the capitalist economic crisis.

He said that as commander in chief he would immediately withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Some students disagreed, saying it would result in "chaos." One student said that he supported Republican candidate John McCain because the troop surge is working to bring the war to a close. The same student supported Calero's proposal for permanent residency for all undocumented workers.

Ilsa Hernández hosted a meeting for Calero at the Latino Express store and restaurant. She explained that undocumented immigrants have been arrested for traffic violations and other misdemeanors and are being denied bail in Carroll County.

"How can we organize to protest what the police are doing?" she asked.

Calero told the 15 workers there that he would be attending a regional conference in Chicago in early March to organize for legalization of immigrants. He encouraged them to begin planning for actions on May Day.



BY DAVE FERGUSON

ATHENS, Georgia—Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger

Calero spoke at the University of Georgia here February 20.

Eight students attended the event. One asked what role women play in the party and in the revolution. Calero pointed to the centrality of the struggle for women's liberation as part of the class struggle in the United States. He said that as president he would implement affirmative action programs to force bosses to hire women in better-paying jobs, as part of giving women economic independence.

Another student asked about the Green Party. Calero said that the Green Party is a capitalist party. "The working class needs our own political party, not another party that represents the interests of the rich," he said. "I support the formation of a labor party based on fighting trade unions, one that can fight in the *political* arena for workers' demands."

Calero invited the students to build a meeting on the campus when Alyson Kennedy, SWP vice presidential candidate, comes here on tour. Several signed up to do so. Students also contributed money to help pay for Calero's travel.

THE MILITANT

Stop farm foreclosures!

The 'Militant' brings you regular coverage on the fight by working farmers to keep their land. It explains how the government tries to shift the burden of the capitalist economic crisis onto the backs of working people.

Don't miss a single issue!



Militant/Sam Manuel

National Black Land Loss Summit in Whitakers, North Carolina, February 16.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$5 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

☐ \$10 for 12 weeks

☐ \$20 for 6 months

☐ \$35 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

The Militant

Vol. 72/No. 11

Closing news date: March 5, 2008

Editor: Olympia Newton

Managing Editor: Paul Pederson

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Ved Dookhun, Cindy Jaquith, Martin Koppel, Doug Nelson, Ben O'Shaughnessy, Carlos Samaniego

Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in July, and one week in August.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: for one-year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year

subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: Send \$65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: Send Canadian \$45 for one-year subscription to the Militant, 2238 Dundas St. West, Suite 201, Toronto, ON. Postal Code: M6R 3A9.

United Kingdom: £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 76 euros for one-year subscription to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: Send 400 Swedish kronor for one year to Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov, Stockholm, Sweden.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A\$50 to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Working people welcome Kosova independence

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Working people in Kosova have welcomed the new independence of their country, as they confront attempts by the Serbian government to block their sovereignty.

"The Serbs have to accept the reality, and reality has changed. We are another country now," school teacher Mehmat Haxhani told the *Los Angeles Times*. Haxhani is an ethnic Albanian, like 90 percent of Kosova's population of 2 million. Despite their majority, Kosovar Albanians have historically been dominated by the Serbian government and subjected to superexploitation and discrimination.

Haxhani lives in the city of Mitrovica, which is sharply divided over independence. The *Times* wrote that in Haxhani's neighborhood "Red Albanian flags emblazoned with a black eagle fluttered from shops, homes and mosques, and relatively calm residents soaked up what they considered to be a new, if not quite tangible, freedom." Kosovar Serbs live on the northern side of town, "enraged, sad and humiliated; to the south are confident ethnic Albanians feeling newly empowered," the paper said.

Pristina, Kosova's capital, was a sea of Albanian flags February 17, the day independence was declared.

History of Kosova

Kosova and Serbia were both part of the nation of Yugoslavia, which was composed of several different nationalities. Both Serb and Albanian working people were enthusiastic partisans of the socialist revolution that took place in Yugoslavia in the 1940s. Coming out of that revolution, Albanians won recognition as a distinct national group for the first time. Albanian became an official language, and Albanians were permitted education in their own language.

Relations between workers of the sev-

eral Yugoslav nationalities were marked by solidarity. For example, because of discrimination, Kosova was the poorest region in Yugoslavia. The new workers state allocated extra funding to help overcome this inequality.

The advances for Albanian rights gradually eroded as the Yugoslav government increasingly turned toward capitalist methods. The desire for independence for Kosova grew. In 1974, in response to demands for an independent republic, the Yugoslav government granted autonomy to Kosova, which remained a province of Serbia.

Albanian students and others continued to press for independence in the early 1980s; the regime countered with more repression. Writing the slogan "Kosova Republic" became illegal, punishable by six years in jail.

In the late 1980s, the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and throughout eastern Europe began to fall apart, including in Yugoslavia. There, the bureaucracy split more or less along the lines of the existing provinces and the nationalities within those provinces. As government bureaucrats scrambled for control of Yugoslavia's resources, they resorted to nationalist attacks on their rivals. Most strident was Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, who sought to prevent other provinces from breaking away and forming independent republics. When he failed, he organized Serb rightists in other provinces to carry out violent assaults aimed at bringing these regions into a "Greater Serbia."

Anti-Muslim attacks

A major element of Milosevic's reactionary nationalism was its attacks on Yugoslavs who were Muslim, echoing the imperialist assault on "Islamic fanat-

Auto workers strike parts plants



Militant/Jean Luc Duval

DETROIT—Some 3,600 auto workers at five American Axle & Manufacturing plants in Michigan and New York walked off the job February 26 to protest a company proposal for steep wage and benefits cuts for current workers and retirees. As of March 4, six other auto plants had closed due to lack of parts because of the strike. Above, members of United Auto Workers Local 235 picket the Detroit plant.

—JEAN LUC DUVAL

icism" worldwide. Islam is the predominant religion among Albanians as well as many Bosnians. Christianity prevails in Serbia.

In 1988, a march of half a million, led by miners, in Pristina demanded an end to second-class treatment of Albanians. Then 1,300 zinc and lead miners occupied their mines.

The Serbian regime cranked up its anti-Albanian chauvinism, accusing Albanians of "breeding too much" and raping Serb woman. In 1989 Belgrade revoked Kosova's autonomy and imposed a state of emergency in the province. A campaign of "ethnic cleansing" began, during which 12,000 people were killed, most of them Albanians, and a million

driven from their homes.

Despite much hand-wringing about "human rights abuses," Washington and the European imperialist powers only intervened with troops when it became clear that the country was breaking apart. Each power participated from the standpoint of what cut of the former Yugoslavia's wealth they could get.

In 1999 NATO troops bombed Belgrade for 78 days straight, targeting industrial centers and killing more than 2,000 civilians. Serbian troops were forced out of Kosova and NATO seizing control of the province. Sixteen thousand NATO and UN troops continue to occupy Kosova. Under the independence

Continued on page 4

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Self-determination for Kosova. Speakers: Ilona Gersh, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 14. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 3557 S Archer Ave. Tel: (773) 890-1190.

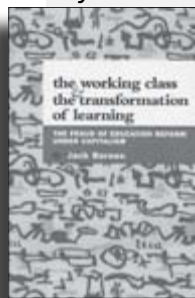
IOWA

Des Moines

Free the Cuban Five! Speakers: Ryan Scott. Program includes excerpts of the video "Mission against Terror." Fri., March 14. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707.

The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism

By Jack Barnes



"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity."
—\$3.00

www.pathfinderpress.com

Turkish gov't vows to 'teach Kurds lesson'

Continued from front page

imagery and other real-time intelligence on the PKK.

U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates gave the invasion the green light until mid-March. He expressed concern that a prolonged operation could undermine the most stable region of Iraq. "It's very important that the Turks make this operation as short as possible and then leave," he said.

The Iraqi government issued a statement condemning the invasion of its territory as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and warned that unilateral military action by Ankara is "unacceptable."

However, the Associated Press reported that a White House spokesman said Ankara gave Washington and its client regime in Baghdad advanced notice of the operation.

National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe said that "unless the PKK gives up terrorism," the United States would "have to continue to work with the Turks and the Iraqis to go after them."

Kurds, an oppressed nationality living in parts of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, have waged a long struggle for self-determination. One of the unintended consequences the imperialist assaults on Iraq in 1991 and 2003 was that Kurds took advantage of the weakening of the Saddam Hussein government to establish and strengthen a semiautonomous

region in northern Iraq.

Leaders of the main capitalist parties in the region, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), have cooperated with Washington and Baghdad, especially against the PKK.

"We do not allow the use of our territory to launch attacks against any neighbor, particularly Turkey," said Nechirvan Barzani, prime minister of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and a leader of the KDP, in a February 27 interview with Asharq al-Awsat.

PUK leader and president of Iraq Jalal Talabani praised Ankara for ending the invasion and said he looks forward to visiting Turkey. Massoud Barzani, KDP leader and KRG president, said he looked forward to working with both Ankara and the PKK to "search for a peaceful solution."

PKK leader Murat Karayilan told Agence France-Presse that the invasion was aimed at crippling the PKK and preventing the return of Kirkuk to Kurdistan. The oil-rich city has a large Kurdish population but is located just outside the KRG boundary. In the 1980s Hussein removed thousands of Kurds from the city and forced Arabs to replace them to ensure Baathist control. Kurds have demanded implementation of a referendum on incorporating Kirkuk into their autonomous region.

Meanwhile, on February 27 the

Iraqi presidential council rejected a law passed two weeks earlier by parliament that would have given broader powers to provincial governments. It was among three bills that are part of 18 "benchmarks" set by the U.S. government to measure Baghdad's progress on achieving political stability among Shiite and Sunni capitalist forces competing for control of Iraq's oil and other resources.

The largest capitalist Shiite party in Iraq's parliament, the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), along with the main Kurdish parties, support stronger provincial governments. Iraq's main oil reserves are in the mostly Shiite south and Kurdish north. The Kurds also seek to strengthen and extend their autonomous region.

Wealthy Sunni forces and supporters of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr want a stronger central government as leverage against SIIC and the Kurds.

Two other bills included a \$48 billion state budget and an amnesty law that would benefit thousands of Sunnis being held in U.S. and Iraqi jails. There are some 24,000 Iraqis being held in U.S. jails and thousands more in Iraqi-run detention centers.

The budget earmarks 17 percent for the Kurdish region. That was passed with the provision that it be reviewed in 2009 after a census to be completed this year.

Students protest cop riot

Continued from front page
employs 215 cops to patrol schools full-time. This is the second-largest school police agency in the United States and the fifth-largest law enforcement agency in the county.

“Police had guns in our face like we were criminals,” said student Gregory Mott. Dozens of cell phone videos and pictures of the police riot were taken by students on the scene. Some used on TV news broadcasts and circulating on the web show cops drawing Tasers or other weapons and pummeling students with nightsticks. Students reported that police broke some of their phones in an effort to prevent publicity.

‘They treated us like animals’

The protest rally was in response to a confrontation the previous day between assistant principal Javier Perez and senior Wadson Sagaille, 17. “Perez put him in a choke hold,” said Julian Jean-Simon, a senior.

“It’s not true that Wadson was fighting with Mr. Perez,” said Denis. “I was there.”

“This is not the first altercation by Perez,” said Vil. “He should be fired.”

Francois recounted, “I was in the cafeteria right next to Mr. Perez when he slammed a girl on the floor and slammed my friend Dawn Watson against the wall.”

“We were trying to do a quiet protest, like what they taught us in school,” said Watson after a court hearing for the students. “But they started treating us like we are animals.”

Many in the community expressed anger at the police violence. Others blamed the students for provoking the attack. “The children don’t respect authority,” one person told the *Militant*.

The night of the cop riot, scores of students, parents, and community members rallied outside the school. Teens were chanting “No Mercy. No Bail. Put Perez in Jail!” as they danced and waved fists in the air. Daisy McDuffie said her pregnant daughter Tangina was taken to the hospital after a cop hit her in the abdomen with a baton.

Three hundred people went to a March 2 meeting organized by school administrators. Marleine Bastien, executive director of Haitian Women

of Miami, said that “all Edison High School staff and police officers who in one way or another behaved in an unlawful way with the students should be prosecuted.”

The arrested students were released but face court hearings and charges of resisting arrest and disturbing the peace. The Haitian Lawyers Association is providing legal assistance free of charge. Many of the students at the school are either immigrants from Haiti or the children of Haitian immigrants.

The students are continuing to protest. Two hundred people rallied at the start of school on March 3. Chanting “Drop all charges,” “We’re not animals,” “Perez must go,” and “School, not jail,” the students received supportive waves and honks from many passing on the street. Students booed when police cars passed by.

Most of the students who attended the rally and many who did not wore black in solidarity.

After the rally the students marched together back into the school.

Deborah Liatos contributed to this article.

Workers welcome Kosova independence

Continued from page 3
declaration, the UN administrators will be replaced by European Union (EU) staff, and NATO troops will remain “until such time as Kosovo institutions are capable of assuming these responsibilities.”

50 percent unemployment

The legacy of the 1999 war and the decade of “ethnic cleansing” has left Kosova one of the most impoverished nations in Europe. According to the World Bank, economic output was slashed by 50 percent in the early 1990s and then by another 20 percent during the war. Unemployment is estimated today at about 50 percent, with much higher rates for young people and women. Infant mortality ranges between 18 and 44 deaths per 1,000.

Under these conditions Albanian working people see independence from Serbian control as offering a chance to

Immigrants in Maryland protest proposed bills



Militant/Tim Mailhot

ANNAPOLIS, Maryland, February 25—Some 500 immigrant workers and their supporters rallied at the state capitol here today to protest 25 anti-immigrant laws that have been introduced in the General Assembly. Most came on buses from cities throughout Maryland. “Driver’s Licenses For All” and “Education For Our Children” were among the signs in the crowd. One pending bill would require proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for a Maryland driver’s license or ID card. Other bills would declare English the official language, outlaw municipal pro-immigrant ordinances, cut off benefits to those who cannot prove legal status, or require police to enforce federal immigration laws. “We should be able to stay here to work as long as we want,” José Wilbert, a day laborer from Suitland, Maryland, told the *Militant*.

—JANICE LYNN

rebuild their nation. Bajram Kastrati, a gourd farmer in Medevce, Kosova, put it this way in an interview with the *Washington Post* in August 2007: “We need independence to develop the country. . . . We can’t get a good price for our vegetables. Our factory closed. We don’t have electricity.”

It remains to be seen how far Serbian authorities will go to try to force Kosova back into Serbia. Hundreds of Kosova police officers who are Serbian have rebelled against their Albanian commanders since the independence declaration and are demanding they only report to the UN police force in the country. Both Washington and the head of the new EU administration, Peter Feith, have rejected any partition of Kosova by Serbia.

Within the Serbian government, differences have emerged. Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica has declared that Serbia will join the EU only if Kosova returns to Serbian control. Deputy Prime Minister Bozidar Djelic has warned that such a stance is dangerous, and could threaten Serbia’s entry into the EU.

Russia has vowed to block Kosova’s membership in the United Nations. Moscow’s envoy to the EU, Vladimir Chizhov, said, “The recognition of Kosova’s independence in defiance of Serbia’s objection gives a powerful impetus to separatist movements all over the world.” Dmitri Medvedev, newly elected Russian president, said an independent Kosova has “jeopardized security and stability of the vast region.” Echoing other reactionary slanders against Albanians, he claimed that an independent Kosova would increase organized crime and drug trafficking in Europe.

Washington: ‘A special case’

Washington recognized Kosova as an independent nation right away. Some conservative voices in the United States have questioned the wisdom of that move. A February 26 editorial in the *Investor’s Business Daily* wrote that

“Supporting a Muslim separatist movement within Europe strikes us as a fool’s errand, one that could lead to similar uprisings around the world from aggrieved minorities.”

The paper went on: “All around the world there are nascent independence movements that could result in countries being split apart. This process would be neither pretty nor nonviolent. We could see a proliferation of bloody civil wars not unlike the anti-colonialist, anti-Western uprisings of the late-1940s to early 1970s.”

Washington anticipated the hostile reaction its support for independence would bring from some quarters but saw no other alternative, given the overwhelming support for a sovereign republic among Albanian Kosovars. Continuing to deny independence could provoke greater instability in the region.

But leading U.S. officials made clear when they endorsed independence that Kosova is, in the words of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, “a special case.”

“Kosovo cannot be seen as a precedent for any other situation in the world today,” she insisted.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee adopted a resolution a year ago accepting Kosova’s independence and interjecting similar words of caution. “[T]he international community has recognized the political circumstances in Kosova as unique, and the settlement of Kosova’s status therefore does not establish a precedent for the resolution of other conflicts,” the resolution said.

Meanwhile the U.S. State Department dismissed concerns that a major fight with Russia over Kosova was brewing. “I do not expect any kind of crisis with the Russians over this,” said Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns. Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said Moscow was “going in the right direction” on Kosova. “Within the UN system, we see a Russian desire to adjust” to Kosova’s independence, he said.

May Day actions for legalization

Continued from front page
people were arrested nationwide in the past year, and ICE officials admit that 40 percent of those caught up in the sweeps had no outstanding warrants against them. They call these “collateral” arrests.

Anti-immigrant laws enacted in Arizona, Colorado, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and other states and cities have provoked protests, including a February 6 rally of 3,000 in Danbury, Connecticut, to protest a City Council measure allowing local police to work with ICE authorities to enforce immigration law. In Indiana, workers are fighting anti-immigrant measures that have now passed both houses of the state legislature.

“People are being deported, and hundreds of workers are losing their jobs because of no-match letters,” said Rosi Carrasco, an organizer of the Chicago conference and member of the Latino Organization of the Southwest. “We have families be-

ing divided and children left without their parents.”

“Two years ago on May 1 we marched against criminalization. Last year we marched to stop the deportations. This year we need to take to the streets again for legalization for all, for human rights for all immigrants,” she said.

Organizing efforts are underway for May Day demonstrations in Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C., and other cities across the country.

On May 1, 2007, nearly 400,000 people poured into the streets of cities and towns across the United States to demand legal status for undocumented immigrants. These working-class demonstrations drew on the political impact of May Day 2006, when 2 million people mobilized demanding legalization of all immigrants. Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands skipped work that day, making it the first nationwide political strike in U.S. history.

Teachers in Puerto Rico strike for better conditions

BY TOM BAUMANN

NEW YORK—The Puerto Rican Federation of Teachers (FMPR) went on strike February 21. The teachers are demanding smaller classes, higher salaries, improved health and safety conditions in school buildings, adequate teaching materials, and an end to government efforts to privatize education.

The salary for a teacher in Puerto Rico starts at \$19,200, and tops at \$26,000—considerably less than what teachers in the United States, Puerto Rico’s colonial master, earn.

“The average class size has 38–40 students,” Iris Delutro, a member of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), said at a February 22 picket line in New York supporting the strike. The PSC is the faculty and staff union at the City University of New York. Delutro, who just returned from Puerto Rico, described bathrooms leaking sewage as an example of the poor conditions teachers face in schools there. She pointed to an extreme case of a dead dog being left in front of a school building for an entire day.

The striking teachers have won support in Puerto Rico and in the United States. Just 40 percent of enrolled students attended classes February 26, according to the Orlando *Sentinel*.

This is the first teachers’ strike since 1993. The teachers had worked two-

and-a-half years without a contract. A Puerto Rican law forbidding the disruption of the public school system means that any strike by teachers is illegal.

The Puerto Rican government decertified the 42,000-member union in January, after a strike authorization in November. An appellate court upheld the decertification February 22.

The U.S.-based Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has come out against the strike. According to the New York *Daily News*, SEIU president Dennis Rivera struck a deal with Puerto Rican governor Anibal Acevedo last year to decertify the FMPR and replace it with a new organization, the Union of Puerto Rican Teachers. The new union is a subsidiary of the organization that represents supervisors and principals, the Puerto Rican Teachers Association, which is affiliated with the SEIU. Both Rivera and Acevedo deny any such deal.

Meanwhile, more than 60 people turned out for a February 22 solidarity picket in front of the office of the Puerto Rican Federal Affairs Administration in New York, chanting “Puerto Rican teachers, we are with you!”

“Every worker has the right to organize,” said Nicos Apostolakis, a math professor at Bronx Community College and member of the PSC.

Meat packers snap up ‘Militant’

BY KEVIN DWIRE

Militant supporters made a special effort February 23 to get the paper into the hands of meat packers throughout Illinois and southern Minnesota. The effort was aimed in part at spreading the news about the victory of workers at the Dakota Premium Foods beef slaughterhouse in South St. Paul, Minnesota, in defending their union and their fight for a new contract. Workers at Dakota are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789.

Workers at the Cargill hog slaughterhouse in Beardstown, Illinois, grabbed up 39 copies of the paper and three subscriptions at the plant gate during afternoon shift change. Two additional subscriptions and seven single copies were sold going door to door. Beardstown is a town of 5,800 and 2,000 people work at the slaughterhouse. The plant is organized by UFCW Local 431. In April 2007, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 62 workers on the sanitation crew.

Two workers turned around to see the paper as they were driving into the plant. It turned out they were from the Congo and were excited to see the story in the *Militant* about the Havana Book Fair presentation of the book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, by Victor Dreke.

Two workers told the *Militant* volunteers that the pace of work is too fast. One woman, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of reprisal by the bosses, said there are asbestos hazards in the plant, particularly in the barn areas. She said that old, barely readable signs warn against stirring up dust be-

cause of the asbestos. In summer when it is hot, huge ventilation fans are used to cool the area down, stirring up dust.

Militant supporters also sold 12 copies of the paper and one subscription to meat packers at the Meadowbrook Farms plant in Rantoul, Illinois.

In southwestern Minnesota, supporters of the paper sold 30 copies and two subscriptions at the plant gate, and several other subscriptions going door to door in Worthington. Three people who helped lead a fight for a union at the PM Beef plant in Windom last year renewed their subscriptions to the paper.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 18, 1983

The Reagan administration has sharply increased its demand for more military aid to the dictatorship in El Salvador. The move comes as rebel forces there score more victories, urban workers renew their struggle against the regime, and popular support grows for the rebels’ call for immediate negotiations.

On March 8, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger told congressional leaders that instead of an extra \$60 million in military aid, the White house now is pushing to send the Salvadoran regime a total of \$110 million this year.

Speaking in San Francisco March 4, President Reagan said that Washington “may want to go beyond” the current limit of 55 U.S. military personnel in El Salvador.



AP/Dennis Rivera

Striking teachers picket in San Juan, Puerto Rico, February 28. They are demanding improvements to school buildings, more materials, smaller classes, and higher salaries.

Minnesota meat packers

Continued from front page

ers from the plant and from the company’s cold storage unit in nearby Newport, sat across the negotiating table from three company representatives.

According to the *Workers’ Voice*, company representatives complained about union grievances and what they called the “daily” *Workers’ Voice*.

The workers’ newsletter answered: “Apparently our newsletter has so affected management they believe it comes out every day. . . . We’ll continue to talk about their firings, abuses, racist practices, our injuries, and violations of our rights. They don’t want workers informed and involved. The *Workers’ Voice* is our organizer. We will use it to fight for justice and demand respect.”

The *Workers’ Voice* went on to point out the two main issues that workers are fighting over in their new contract—wages and line speed. In earlier negotiations the company had offered a raise of 15 cents an hour with a 10 cent bonus for perfect attendance. “That’s an insult,” said the

Workers’ Voice. It went on, “As prices of bread, milk, gasoline, and other things rise (Gasoline is expected to hit \$4.00 a gallon this summer!) our checks are worth less and less.”

On line speed the *Workers’ Voice* said, “Injuries come from working too fast, with bad equipment and no time to sharpen knives, change gloves, etc. As worker after worker has made clear, we must fight for more control of the line speed and fight for enough workers to do the job.”

Along with contract negotiations workers and union staff are discussing how to better organize themselves to answer the ongoing company offensive, including an increase in firings and other disciplinary actions. Many of these have been aimed at well-known union fighters in the plant and a disproportionate number of Black workers have been targeted.

Rebecca Williamson is a member of UFCW Local 789 and works in the boning department at Dakota Premium Foods.



March 17, 1958

Although unemployment is admitted by Secretary of Labor Mitchell to have reached a post-war record of 5,173,000, the Democrats and Republicans are just now belatedly taking the first slow steps—and inadequate ones at that—to meet the crisis.

According to the March 13 *N.Y. Times*, at the AFL-CIO Emergency Conference in Washington there was “a strong current of opposition among labor leaders” to the temporary nature of both Republican and Democratic proposals on unemployment compensation.

A minimum demand for labor should be unemployment compensation for the entire period of unemployment and extension of benefits to all those needing jobs. Moreover, labor must demand that unemployment compensation be at full trade-union wages.



March 18, 1933

The onslaught of Fascism is sweeping over the German working class with breath-taking swiftness. The heavy blows already struck have served to raise the necessity of united front action as the immediate life-and-death question of the German proletariat.

A capitalist Germany—under Fascist rule—cannot exist without imperialist aggression against the USSR. A socialist Germany can only exist as a unit with the USSR in its extension to the Soviet United States of Europe. That is what the question of Fascism or Communism means to the international working class.

Against the Brown Shirt agents of world imperialism—the Red Army, the arm of the international working class, must be prepared to act!

Socialists celebrate three decades of party building in Pittsburgh

BY VED DOOKHUN

PITTSBURGH—A special Militant Labor Forum here February 16 celebrated more than three decades of building the Socialist Workers Party in Pittsburgh and western Pennsylvania. Socialists closed the branch here shortly after the meeting in order to strengthen the party's efforts to respond to political opportunities among packinghouse and other workers in the Midwest.

Among the 30 people attending the celebration were longtime supporters and friends of the Socialist Workers Party, political activists who had worked with the Pittsburgh branch, and youth



Militant/Abby Tilsner

Tony Lane, center, speaks at February 16 Militant Labor Forum in Pittsburgh. Seated on the panel are meeting chair Ryan Scott and Betsy Farley, who described the SWP's record of joining labor and social struggles there.

learning about the communist movement.

Ryan Scott, a member of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers candidate for Pittsburgh mayor in 2007, welcomed people to the event and introduced Betsy Farley. Farley, who was in the Pittsburgh branch from 1979 to 1983, currently lives in Chicago and is the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Illinois.

"The Pittsburgh branch was established in 1973 as a coal branch to reach out to the renewed struggles by coal miners for safety and black lung benefits," she said. In 1969, 45,000 coal miners went on strike in West Virginia, demanding that black lung be recognized as an occupational disease. The year before, 78 miners had been killed in an explosion in Farmington, West Virginia.

Farley described how, out of battles around health and safety issues, a fight developed which saw the ranks transform the United Mine Workers of America. In 1977-78, in an attempt to break the union, the coal bosses provoked a 110-day national strike when miners voted down two concession contracts. "The Pittsburgh branch was involved in these struggles," Farley said.

The mine workers' vanguard role had an impact on other workers. In 1975 a movement called Steelworkers Fight Back developed to democratize the United Steelworkers of America (USWA). This was a struggle to oust the bureaucracy in the USWA and to win the right to vote on contracts. While the campaign was not successful, it indicated an important development in working-class politics, she noted.

These were some of the developments that led to the party make a turn to the industrial working class in 1979,

to act on growing opportunities to carry out revolutionary politics in the trade unions.

Farley mentioned some of the fights the party became involved in. "Socialist miners were active in the Coal Employment Project in Pittsburgh," Farley said. The CEP was an organization of women fighting to get hired or maintain jobs in coal mines.

"The initial experience gained through the Pittsburgh branch enabled the party to extend into the coalfields and establish branches in Morgantown and Charleston, West Virginia, and in Birmingham, Alabama, and Utah," she added.

"The branch was active in struggles against racism," said Farley. "When the Klan decided to march in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, they were met by union contingents of miners, steel workers, and rail workers."

The Socialist Workers Party was involved in protests against police brutality, including the fight that erupted in 1995 when Jonny Gammage, a Black man, was killed at a traffic stop by five white cops.

Tony Lane, who was a leader of the Pittsburgh branch, spoke about some of the struggles the branch has joined in recent years. In 2001, socialist coal miners at the Maple Creek mine in southwestern Pennsylvania were part of a fight to beat back union-busting efforts of coal boss Robert Murray, who owns the Crandall Canyon mine in Utah where six miners were entombed and three rescue work-



Militant photos by Flax Hermes (top), Phil Norris (left)

The Pittsburgh branch of the Socialist Workers Party was involved in a wide range of labor and social struggles over the last 30 years. Top: Members of movement to democratize the United Steelworkers of America union, known as the Steelworkers Fight Back, participate in 1975 rally for jobs in Washington, D.C. Right: Linda Chapman, leader of 2002 Widow's Walk talks to reporters after a 525-mile walk from West Virginia to Washington, D.C., to demand black lung benefits for coal miners. Left: Demonstration of more than 2,000 in 1996 protesting the acquittal of one of the three cops charged with killing Jonny Gammage, an African American.

ers killed last year. Socialists joined broader social fights in the coalfields, and in 2002 participated in the Widow's Walk, a march by miners' wives from Charleston to Washington, D.C., demanding black lung benefits.

"In our election campaign in 2002 we responded to the flooding at the Quecreek mine, explaining how the fight for safety was becoming more important in face of the bosses' profit drive," said Lane.

During the party's election campaign for mayor of Pittsburgh in 2005, the party successfully challenged Pennsylvania's undemocratic loyalty oath. This throwback to the anticommunist witch hunt of

the 1950s required candidates running for public office to sign an affidavit stating that they were not subversive. The party was placed on the 2005 ballot without having to sign, and in 2006 the law was challenged on a statewide level. The state of Pennsylvania struck the law off the books.

"We are celebrating the fights we have been part of, and the fights of today and tomorrow we will all be joining in and helping to advance," Lane said, in concluding his remarks.

Participants at the meeting bought more than \$500 worth of Pathfinder books and contributed \$575 to the *Militant* reporting team in Cuba.

Australian gov't apologizes to Aborigines

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Prime Minister Kevin Rudd issued an official apology February 13 to those who have become known as the "Stolen Generations" of Aboriginal children. Around 5,000 people, predominantly Aboriginal, gathered outside the Parliament in Canberra to listen to a televised broadcast of speeches by Rudd and parliamentary opposition leader Brendan Nelson.

Many of those gathered had rallied the previous day against the federal takeover of 73 Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory.

Between 1910 and 1970, an estimated 10-30 percent of Aboriginal children were taken from their families by government agencies as part of a racist assimilation policy. A decades-long fight for recognition and justice by members of the Stolen Generations has won widespread popular support.

Despite demands for compensation by indigenous leaders, both Rudd and Nelson opposed any compensation.

The bipartisan parliamentary apology reflects a shift in government policy that began with an official program of "reconciliation" set up in the early 1990s. Aboriginal ceremony was incorporated

into the formal opening of Parliament for the first time ever this year.

The refusal of the previous prime minister, John Howard, to apologize to the Stolen Generations prompted many protests during his 12 years in office. In 2000, as many as one million people joined "walks for reconciliation" around the country.

In his speech Rudd, who is from the Labor Party, promised to halve the "widening gap in literacy, numeracy, and employment" within a decade and to deal with high infant mortality and other health issues among Aborigines. He proposed a bipartisan "war cabinet"—the first since World War II—to implement these goals.

Nelson, Howard's successor as head of the Liberal Party, endorsed the formal apology. At the same time, he defended Howard's intervention in the Northern Territory last year, through which the federal government took control of most townships on Aboriginal land there.

Rudd also supported the takeover. While he has promised to reintroduce a job creation scheme and a permit system through which Aboriginal communities control who enters their land in the Northern Territory, his government has continued to imple-

ment a program to monitor welfare payments to all Aborigines living in these communities.

The February 12 protest of 1,000 demanded "Aboriginal control of Aboriginal affairs" and an immediate review of the federal intervention. Barbara Shaw, an Aboriginal rights activist from Alice Springs, said a delegation of 20 from the Northern Territory raised A\$40,000 and drove 2,000 miles by bus to participate in the protest. She explained that government managers of the communities had used their wide powers to block participation, stopping her from talking to people about joining the delegation.

"We can manage our own things," said Valerie Martin, from Yuendumu, who came as part of a delegation. "We know how to raise our own kids. We don't want to be treated like animals."

Meanwhile, a February 13 meeting in Perth protested the death in police custody of an Aboriginal elder from Warburton, West Australia. The man was arrested January 26 on a drunk driving charge. He collapsed and died after being transported through the desert heat 355 miles to a courthouse in Laverton, and then, when bail was refused, 200 miles to the prison in Kalgoorlie.

Book on Cuba, U.S. struggle

Continued from front page

Waters, editor and author of the preface to *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and president of Pathfinder. The event was chaired by Jonathan Silberman of Pathfinder Books in London.

Sio Wong is president of Cuba's National Institute of State Reserves. He is one of the generals in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces interviewed in Pathfinder's *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, which was presented at the Havana book fair in 2006. Together with Fidel Castro, Fernández is co-author of Pathfinder's *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*. He commanded the main column of Cuban forces in the historic April 1961 battle in which a U.S.-organized invasion force was crushed in 72 hours.

Waters noted that *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, takes as its starting point the impact of the Cuban Revolution on a generation of U.S. youth who were won to the communist movement in the early 1960s. It is not primarily a book about Cuba, she pointed out, but rather, as the back cover explains, about "the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made." (See text of Waters's remarks on page 8–9.)

The book was originally published in 2001, marking the 40th anniversary of the victory at the Bay of Pigs. A new edition was presented last November in Caracas at the Venezuela International Book Fair, whose theme was "The United States: A possible revolution." The new edition came out of the initiative of the Venezuelan publisher Monte Avila to print the book there in response to growing interest in this subject among working people and youth in that country.

Imperialists 'don't understand us'

With this book "Pathfinder once again offers us another weapon in what Fidel calls the battle of ideas," Sio Wong told the audience. "We must recognize the work Pathfinder has done to make known the Cuban Revolution and what the Cuban people have achieved."

To much laughter, he read from news dispatches by foreign journalists in Ha-

vana reporting with surprise that "everything remains normal" in Cuba two days after Fidel Castro's announcement that he would not stand for reelection as president. "What reaction do they expect?" he asked. "They don't understand the Cuban people."

The U.S. government cannot explain the fact that "91 percent of Cubans voted in favor of the revolution," Sio Wong said, referring to those who voted for the full slate of deputies nominated for the National Assembly in the January elections. "That's despite all the difficulties we face—you go to the bus stop and there is no bus; there are potholes in the road; there isn't enough food." About 9 percent of valid ballots were cast for less than a full slate; of those who went to the polls, nearly 5 percent cast spoiled or blank ballots.

While U.S. officials today call for change in Cuba, "the changes began in 1959 with our revolution," he said.

Fernández told the audience he was "an admirer and friend of Pathfinder" because of its record in telling the truth about the Cuban Revolution.

"We are very encouraged to know that within the United States, not only now but as early as 1961, there were university students as well as leaders of a political organization who had confidence in the Cuban people and the Cuban Revolution," he said. Fernández was referring to the account in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* of how socialist workers and youth in the United States acted in defense of revolutionary Cuba in response to the U.S.-organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

Fernández noted that the book is dedicated to the Cuban revolutionaries known as the Cuban Five who are today incarcerated in U.S. prisons because of their actions in defense of their revolution: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González.

The Cuban leader read a message from René González to Fidel Castro, published in the press that day, responding to Fidel's decision not to continue as president and commander in chief. "An imperial, morally decrepit society cannot understand a decision by a lifelong revolutionary that is dictated by his sense of duty," González wrote. "It would be expecting too much for them to understand how deeply your example has taken root among Cubans, and how it will inspire countless generations of combatants around the world."

Magaly Lloret, the mother of Fernando



Militant photos by Ben O'Shaughnessy

Above, from left, Cuba's Federation of University Students president Adalberto Hernández, University of Havana rector Rubén Zardoya, and Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters at February 27 presentation of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* at University of Havana. Inset: Participants check out literature after February 28 event at national hall of Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution in Havana. Event launched *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* together with *From the Escambray to the Congo* by Víctor Dreke.



González, was among those who came to the book presentation. Family members of the Cuban Five took part in several events at the book fair, and the Havana-based International Committee to Free the Cuban Five had a booth there.

University of Havana meeting

A presentation of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* was also held February 27 at the University of Havana, sponsored by the Federation of University Students. More than 50 students and faculty members attended the event, which was addressed by University of Havana rector Rubén Zardoya, FEU vice president Fernando Luis Rojas, and Waters. Rubiel García, FEU's secretary of cultural affairs, chaired the meeting, and FEU president Adalberto Hernández joined them on the platform.

Noting that the young people attending the meeting did not live through the 1961 events described in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, Rojas said the book would help youth on the island understand the central place of Cuba for revolutionaries in the world today, "especially in the United States."

The "defense of socialism must be at the center" of the political work of young Cuban revolutionaries today, Rojas said. At a time when there is a tendency among radical political activists internationally to criticize the consequences of capitalism but not the system itself, "We must increase the educational component of our work in schools and communities to counteract the distorted views that many youth have about politics," he said.

Imperialism in crisis, not socialism

Zardoya recounted how he had first met members of the Socialist Workers Party almost 15 years ago, at a 1994 international solidarity conference during the worst years of what is known here as the Special Period—the deep economic crisis resulting from the abrupt loss of aid and favorable trade relations with the Soviet Union. In those years, he noted, there was barely anything to eat, bicycles replaced cars on the streets because

there was no fuel, and university classes had to be cut back for lack of resources.

At a time when the Soviet Union had collapsed and "imperialism appeared to have emerged victorious," Zardoya said, he met these communists from the United States "who were telling us that it was imperialism that was in crisis and that there could be a world revolution, including in the United States."

The rector said he had read many books published by Pathfinder, including Leon Trotsky's *The History of the Russian Revolution*, which he said "contains some of the most brilliant pages written, not only about the Russian Revolution but about how people's mentality changes during a period of revolution."

Pathfinder's books, he said, show "the seriousness with which they take revolutionary theory." Moreover, the books are carefully prepared, with accurate translations, and are well illustrated—"attractive books, as opposed to the ugly books we used to get from parties that wanted to make ugly revolutions."

"I urge you to study carefully what this book says," Zardoya concluded, "not to believe, but in order to think."

After the presentations, students crowded around the literature table to purchase a variety of Pathfinder books and pamphlets on sale in Cuban pesos and continue the discussion for another half hour. Some took copies of the *Militant* and read the platform of the Socialist Workers Party 2008 presidential campaign, asking questions about U.S. politics—from the race for president to how communists carry out political work in the imperialist heartland. Several youth had come to the meeting after hearing about it at the book fair.

Combatants of the Cuban Revolution

A third book meeting was hosted by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution to present both *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke. In attendance were some 50 members of the Combatants

Continued on page 9

Part of 18-title series...

From the Escambray
to the Congo

IN THE WHIRLWIND
OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION
BY VÍCTOR DREKE



Dreke, second in command of the internationalist column in the Congo led by Che Guevara in 1965, recounts the determination, internationalism, and creative joy with which working people have defended their revolutionary course against U.S. imperialism—from Cuba's Escambray mountains to Africa and beyond. \$17

Included in the series *The Cuban Revolution in World Politics* are *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*; *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes; *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*; and 14 other titles.

All 18 books are available from distributors listed on page 10, or at...

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

‘We shared determination to emulate the Havana presentation of ‘Cuba and the Coming American Revolution’

Below are remarks by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, at a February 21 presentation of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* by Jack Barnes as part of the February 13–24 Havana International Book Fair. Presentations of the book also took place at the University of Havana and at meetings sponsored by the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution (see front-page article).

Waters is the editor of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and wrote the foreword to the new edition, published simultaneously in October 2007 by Pathfinder and by the Venezuelan publishing house Monte Avila. First released six years earlier, the book tells the story of the political impact of the Cuban Revolution on a generation of young people in the United States in the early 1960s, the place of the revolution in building the communist movement in the United States, and its weight in the U.S. class struggle today.

Joining Waters on the speakers’ platform were José Ramón Fernández, vice president of Cuba’s Council of Ministers, and Gen. Moisés Sío Wong, president of the National Institute of State Reserves and of the Cuba-China Friendship Association.

The talk is copyright © 2008 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission. Footnotes and headings are by the Militant.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The book Pathfinder Press is presenting here today was born with the victory at Playa Girón, the first military defeat for Washington in the Americas.¹

In the historic days of April 1961, the author, Jack Barnes, was a student at a college in the state of Minnesota, where he and other students—and I count my-

1. Playa Girón is the Cuban beach on which some 1,500 mercenaries—armed, trained, supported, and deployed by Washington—invaded Cuba in April 1961. The assault, known in the United States as the Bay of Pigs invasion, was resoundingly defeated by Cuba’s revolutionary militias, police, and armed forces in less than 72 hours.



From left, Gen. Moisés Sío Wong, president of Cuba’s National Institute of State Reserves; José Ramón Fernández, vice president of Cuba’s Council of Ministers; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and editor of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, at February 21 presentation of the book during the Havana International Book Fair.

self among those then won to this battle—organized what for a time became the largest Fair Play for Cuba Committee on a campus anywhere in the United States. Some of you in the audience here today already know of the important work of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in North America during the early years of the revolution. Others of you, especially among the younger generations, will learn of it for the first time as you read the pages of this book.

Jack Barnes is today the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States. He describes here the political battle—the battle of ideas, and sometimes the physical battles—that we were waging night and day inside the United States in the months leading up to and through the mercenary invasion of Cuba, an invasion the entire world knew was coming.

He describes how we fought to counter the lies about the Cuban Revolution being spread by the U.S. government and mass media. He describes how, as revolutionary-minded youth whose enthusiasm and energy were matched only by our own inexperience, we were taken under the wing by workers who were veterans of years of class battles in the United States and who educated us. He

describes how these workers, members of the Socialist Workers Party, shared our enthusiasm and determination to emulate the example of our Cuban compañeros and fight shoulder to shoulder with you to prevent the U.S. government from crushing the first socialist revolution in our hemisphere.

He describes how in the course of these battles we too were transformed ... *for life*.

Even though the starting point of this book is the victory of Playa Girón, it is not primarily a book about Cuba. As the back cover puts it, this is a book

about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. It is about the class struggle in the United States, where the political capacities and revolutionary potential of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. And just as wrongly.

There may be some even among you who are here today who doubt that there is—or ever will be—“a coming American revolution.” A profoundly popular socialist revolution, the only kind wor-

thy of the name. That is the question this book addresses.

Three months ago the organizers of the Venezuela International Book Fair organized a debate on precisely this question. “The United States: a possible revolution” was the theme of that cultural event, where more than 20 participants from the United States, all active in various social struggles or political parties—including myself—took part in a rolling five-day forum debating this question. Among the panelists were some who indeed argued that there has never been and will never be a revolu-

“Not only is revolution possible in the United States. Revolutionary struggles are inevitable, forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes....”

tion in the United States. Who argued that working people there are too comfortable, have too high a standard of living, can buy anything they want with a credit card, never go hungry, and can’t think for themselves because they are fed so many lies by the mass media.

Caricature vs. reality

This caricature—so far from the lives of most working people in the United States—was forcefully answered by others participating in the forum. We pointed out that real wages continue to *fall* for the big majority of workers—that on average, they are *below* what they were 35 years ago. Meanwhile, the brutal intensification of labor—the, literally, killer speed of production lines—extension of the work day, the absence of health care and other social services, cuts in unemployment benefits and pensions, the fact that four out of ten workers in private industry have no paid sick days, and twenty-five percent no paid vacation time, the lack of housing workers can afford—these are the daily realities that lie behind the increasing determination of a still small but growing vanguard of workers to find effective ways to resist.

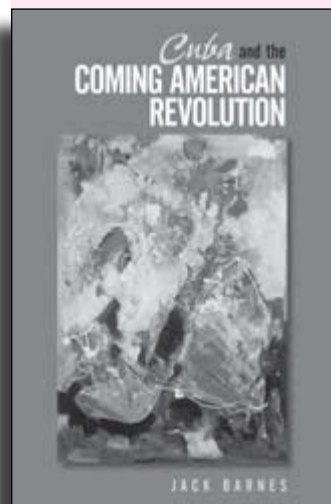
The most dramatic manifestation of this—though far from the only one—has

New edition! Now available from Pathfinder

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

By Jack Barnes

With a new foreword by Mary-Alice Waters



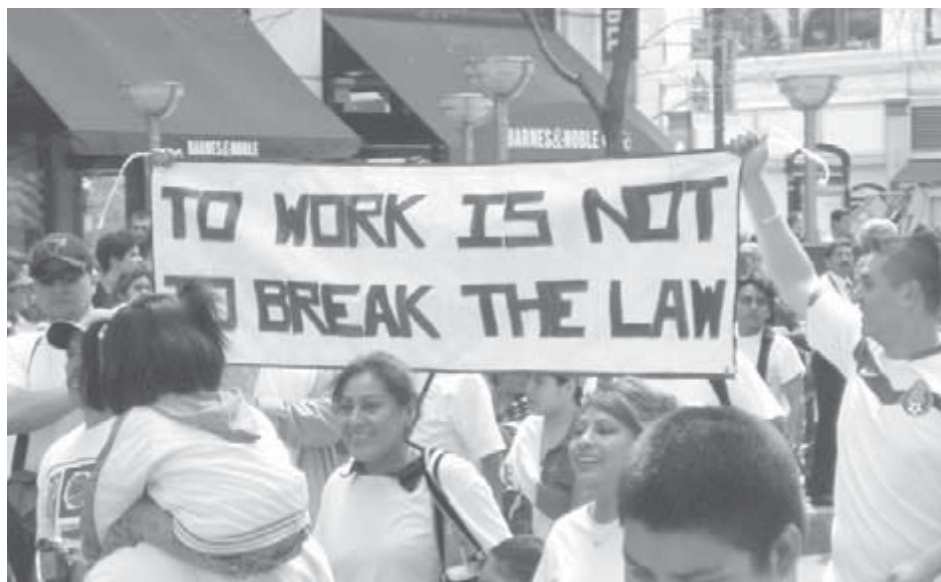
“There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before there will be a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba.”

That 1961 statement by Fidel Castro remains as true today as when it was spoken. This is a book about the class struggle in the U.S., where the revolutionary capacities of workers and farmers are today as utterly discounted by the ruling powers as were those of the Cuban toilers. It is about the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made.

**25% discount for members of
Pathfinder Readers Club**

Special offer \$7.50 (regular price \$10)

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM



Time Out Chicago

Some 160,000 immigrant workers and their supporters march in Chicago on May Day 2007. Waters says mass mobilizations for legalization are one manifestation of a vanguard of workers resisting worsening conditions of life in the United States, including “the brutal intensification of labor, extension of the work day, the absence of health care and other social services, cuts in unemployment benefits and pensions, and lack of housing workers can afford.”

The example of Cuba's

by editor Mary-Alice Waters

been the mass outpouring of millions of workers the last two years on May Day, led by immigrant workers from Mexico and Central America, above all, most of them without papers the U.S. government accepts as valid. Despite their vulnerability, they took to the streets in cities and towns large and small across the entire country, hoisting the banner “We are workers, not criminals,” and demanding “Legalization now.”

This is not a movement of immigrant workers alone. It is the nucleus of the beginning of a real working-class vanguard. The fight to win the majority of working people in the United States to



Militant/Ben O'Shaughnessy

Students browse books after February 25 presentation of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* at the University of Havana.

support and fight for the legalization of workers the bosses call “undocumented,” to prevent the employers from using this issue to divide and weaken the working class, especially as the economic crisis accelerates, is the most important political battle in the United States today. It is one that we have a better chance of winning than we did during the last great organizing battles of the U.S. working class in the 1930s.

Capitalist financial crisis

In the past several months the depth and breadth of the spreading global financial crisis capitalism faces has started to become clear to millions. It is far beyond a matter of whether one of capitalism's cyclical recessions has begun. What we have seen so far is but the tip of the iceberg created by a collapsing balloon of debt and contraction of credit. No one, not even the capitalists themselves, know how big the crisis is, or how it will end.

Even before the repercussions are broadly felt within the working class in the United States, however, what little cushion that remains is disappearing. Most families already have multiple wage earners. Millions are already working more than one job, and still going deeper and deeper in debt. And millions more workers will, in the next two years, find themselves packed together in apartments and houses, or without a roof over their heads of any kind, as they lose their homes for nonpayment of mortgages or rent hikes they simply can't afford.

Even without talking about imperialism's bloody wars in Iraq, Afghanistan,

and much more, this is the world in which we live. It is why we say that not only is revolution possible in the United States. Revolutionary struggles are *inevitable*, initiated not by the producing class to begin with, but forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes. And our struggles will be intertwined as always with the resistance and struggles of other oppressed and exploited producers around the globe.

If all this is inevitable, what is *not* inevitable is the outcome of these coming revolutionary struggles. As you here in Cuba know so well, that is where class consciousness, political clarity, organization, discipline, and the caliber of leadership become decisive. That is why what we do now, the kind of party we build now, weighs so heavily.

Dedicated to Cuban Five

To end.

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is dedicated to “Gerardo, Ramón, Antonio, Fernando, and René: Five exemplary products of the Cuban Revolution who today, even if against their will, serve with honor on the front lines of the class struggle in the United States.”²

2. The Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González, and René González—have been imprisoned in the United States since 1998, framed-up on charges ranging from conspiracy to commit espionage, to conspiracy to commit murder. On behalf of the Cuban government, they were in the United States monitoring the activities of counterrevolutionary organizations in south Florida with a history of carrying out acts of murder and sabotage against the Cuban people.

Meetings on book about Cuba, U.S. class struggle

Continued from page 7

Association, which is made up of multiple generations of participants in Cuba's revolutionary struggles, from the movement against the Batista dictatorship in the 1950s to internationalist combat missions in Algeria, Angola, and other countries.

Iraida Aguirrechu, a senior editor at Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, chaired the event. She introduced the speakers, who included Waters as well as César Alba and Mario Rodríguez Martínez, leaders of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Alba and Rodríguez are both longtime combatants, having fought in the revolutionary struggle in the late 1950s.

Aguirrechu noted that Editora Política had this year published a Cuban edition of *From the Escambray to the Congo* with a run of 15,000 copies—making it available for the first time across the island. Waters had presented the title at the book fair earlier in the month. (For coverage of that meeting and the text of Waters' remarks there, see the March 3 issue of the *Militant*.)

Alba explained that Dreke gives a



Militant

1961 rally in New York called by the Fair Play for Cuba Committee protests the U.S.-backed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, says Waters, describes “the political battle—the battle of ideas—and sometimes the physical battles that we were waging night and day inside the United States in the months leading up to and through the mercenary invasion of Cuba, an invasion the entire world knew was coming.”

For us, this dedication is not simply an expression of solidarity and support, however vital that is. There is nothing symbolic about it.

As you well know, there are more than two million men and women behind bars in the United States. It is the country with the highest per capita prison population in the world. With few exceptions these are the sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters of the working classes, disproportionately Black and Latino in composition. That is where the vicissitudes of the class struggle have placed each of the Five, and that is where they continue to act as the Cuban revolutionaries they are, carrying out communist political work wherever they find themselves—this time within the heartland of world imperialism itself.

From the books they write Pathfinder to get, and from the letters, comments, and questions they send us about the history of the class struggle in the United States, we know how broad their interests and political discussions with other prisoners are. For us it is an incentive.

To give just one example, it is René's probing and persistent questions about the history of racist oppression in the United States that have pushed us to prepare a much-needed book we will be publishing later this year entitled *Black Liberation and the Fight for Workers Power*.

After reading the initial version of “1961: Year of Education,” the lead article in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, we received a letter of appreciation from Ramón, which is cited in the foreword to this new edition. Even though he had read many books and documents on Playa Girón, Ramón commented, it was only in reading this article that he for the first time learned about “the direct influence of the Cuban Revolution, its example and impact, on the people of the United States, and on the education of the revolutionary left movement.”

We hope that is what you will take away from this presentation here today as well. As Ramón said, it is evidence “that our peoples are fraternal—and invincible.”

vivid account in the book of his participation in Cuba's liberation war in the 1950s, as well as the campaign in the early 1960s after the victory of the revolution that defeated U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary groups in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba. Dreke also describes his experiences as second in command, under Ernesto Che Guevara, of a column of Cuban combatants that fought in 1965 in the anti-imperialist struggle in the Congo. Dreke is today Cuba's ambassador to Equatorial Guinea.

Rodríguez spoke about *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. “It is very useful to think about the ideas that comrade Jack Barnes explains in the pages of this book,” which, Rodríguez told the audience, explain “the efforts of U.S. working people, their struggles in the very heart of the imperialist monster.”

He said he agreed with Barnes “that there will be a revolution in the United States.” The many years of struggles by working people in the United States and Cuba have “common roots, planted and developed by generations of vanguard fighters and thinkers in both countries.”

Rodríguez pointed to “the increas-

ingly sharp crisis in the U.S. economy, which is creating intolerable living standards for families in the United States.” At the same time, immigrants arriving from other countries “are broadening the horizons and radicalizing the struggles of American workers.”

Books like *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, he said, are important because “they reach new generations that are hungry for the truth.”

Another book presentation took place at a March 2 meeting of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution in the Playa district of Havana. Hermes Caballero, a veteran of the revolutionary struggle in the city of Santiago and in the Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba, presented both *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and *From the Escambray to the Congo*.

In addition to the books sold at various meetings, donations of *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* and other recently published Pathfinder titles were made to the University of Havana library—and, through it, to university libraries across the island—as well as to Cuba's National Library system, the FEU, the Combatants Association, and other institutions.

Historical materialism: science of social revolution

Below is an excerpt from *In Defense of Marxism*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The book contains Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky's writings in defense of the theoretical foundations, political principles, and organizational methods of Marxism against a petty-bourgeois current in the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. The letter excerpted below is to James Burnham, who along with Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, led a grouping in the SWP that bent under the rising pressures of bourgeois patriotism in the middle classes during Washington's buildup to the second imperialist world war. Burnham left the communist movement in 1940, became an open anti-communist, and later editor of the National Review. Copyright © 1973 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

You have expressed as your reaction to my article on the petty-bourgeois opposition, I have been informed, that you do not intend to argue over the dialectic with me and that you will discuss only the "concrete questions." "I stopped arguing about religion long ago," you added ironically. I once heard Max Eastman



Meeting of Bolsheviks in Moscow, 1917. Historical materialism guided the practical revolutionary activity of the party that led Russian toilers in a victorious social revolution to oust the capitalist rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

voice this same sentiment.

As I understand this, your words imply that the dialectic of Marx, Engels, and Lenin belongs to the sphere of religion. What does this assertion signify? The dialectic, permit me to recall once again, is the *logic of evolution*. Just as a machine shop in a plant supplies instruments for all departments, so logic is indispensable for all spheres of human knowledge. . . .

In the article "Intellectuals in Retreat," written by you in collaboration with Shachtman and published in the party's theoretical organ, it is categorically affirmed that you reject dialectic materialism. Doesn't the party have the right after all to know just why? Do you really assume that in the Fourth International an editor of a theoretical organ can confine himself to the bare declaration: "I decisively reject dialectical materialism"—as if it were a question of a proffered cigarette: "Thank you, I don't smoke." The question of a correct philosophical doctrine, that is, a correct method of thought, is of decisive significance to a revolutionary party just as a good machine shop is of decisive significance to production. It is still possible to defend the old society with the material and intellectual methods inherited from the past. It is absolutely unthinkable that this old society can be overthrown and a new

one constructed without first critically analyzing the current methods. If the party errs in the very foundations of its thinking it is your elementary duty to point out the correct road. Otherwise your conduct will be interpreted inevitably as the cavalier attitude of an academician toward a proletarian organization which, after all, is incapable of grasping a real "scientific" doctrine. What could be worse than that?

Anyone acquainted with the history of the struggles of tendencies within workers parties knows that desertions to the camp of opportunism and even to the camp of bourgeois reaction began not infrequently with rejection of the dialectic. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals consider the dialectic the most vulnerable point in Marxism and at the same time they take advantage of the fact that it is much more difficult for workers to verify differences on the philosophical than on the political plane. This long-known fact is backed by all the evidence of experience. Again, it is impermissible to discount an even more important fact, namely, that all the great and outstanding revolutionists—first and foremost, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Franz Mehring—stood on the ground of dialectic materialism. Can it be assumed that all of them were incapable of distinguishing between science and religion? Isn't there too much pre-

sumptuousness on your part, Comrade Burnham? The examples of Bernstein, Kautsky, and Franz Mehring are extremely instructive. Bernstein categorically rejected the dialectic as "scholasticism" and "mysticism." Kautsky maintained indifference toward the question of the dialectic, somewhat like Comrade Shachtman. Mehring was a tireless propagandist and defender of dialectic materialism. For decades he followed all the innovations of philosophy and literature, indefatigably exposing the reactionary essence of idealism, neo-Kantianism, utilitarianism, all forms of mysticism, etc. The political fate of these three individuals is very well known. Bernstein ended his life as a smug petty-bourgeois democrat; Kautsky, from a centrist, became a vulgar opportunist. As for Mehring, he died a revolutionary communist.

In Russia three very prominent academic Marxists, Struve, Bulgakov, and Berdyaev, began by rejecting the philosophic doctrine of Marxism and ended in the camp of reaction and the Orthodox Church. In the United States, Eastman, Sidney Hook, and their friends utilized opposition to the dialectic as cover for their transformation from fellow travelers of the proletariat to fellow travelers of the bourgeoisie. Similar examples by the score could be cited from other countries. The example of Plekhanov, which appears to be an exception, in reality only proves the rule. Plekhanov was a remarkable propagandist of dialectic materialism, but during his whole life he never had the opportunity of participating in the actual class struggle. His thinking was divorced from practice. The revolution of 1905 and subsequently the World War flung him into the camp of petty-bourgeois democracy and forced him in actuality to renounce dialectic materialism. During the World War Plekhanov came forward openly as the protagonist of the Kantian categorical imperative in the sphere of international relations: "Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you." The example of Plekhanov only proves that dialectic materialism *in and of itself* still does not make a man a revolutionist.

March

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

PATHFINDER READERS CLUB SPECIALS

25% DISCOUNT

In Defense of Marxism
by Leon Trotsky
Trotsky describes how the rising pressures of bourgeois patriotism in the middle classes during Washington's buildup to enter World War II were finding an echo even inside the communist movement. \$25.
Special price: \$19

El desorden mundial del capitalismo
(Capitalism's World Disorder)
by Jack Barnes
\$24. **Special price: \$18**

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party
by James P. Cannon
On the eve of World War II, a founder of the communist movement in the U.S. and leader of the Communist International in Lenin's time defends the program and party-building norms of Bolshevism. \$22. **Special price: \$16.50**

Making History
Interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces.
\$16. **Special price: \$12**

How Far We Slaves Have Come
by Fidel Castro, Nelson Mandela
\$10. **Special price: \$7.50**

W.E.B. DuBois Speaks (1920-1963)
by W.E.B. Du Bois, Philip S. Foner
\$23. **Special price: \$17**

Join Pathfinder Readers Club for \$10 and receive discounts all year long

ORDER ONLINE AT

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

OFFER GOOD UNTIL MARCH 31, 2008

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA: **Los Angeles:** 2826 S. Vermont Ave. #9 Zip: 90007. Tel: (323) 737-2191. E-mail: laswp@sbcglobal.net **San Francisco:** 3926 Mission St. (front) Zip: 94112-1015. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: swpsf@sbcglobal.net

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: **Carrollton:** 1109 S. Park St. Ste. 504 #148. Zip: 30117. E-mail: swpcarrollton@charter.net. **Atlanta:** 2840 NE Expressway, Suite 102. Zip: 30345, Mailing address: P.O. Box 47053, Doraville, GA. Zip: 30321. 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: **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

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

QUEBEC: **Montreal:** 765 Beaubien est B.P 514 H2S 1S8. Tel: (514) 729-7776. E-mail: clle_can@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: cledinburgh@talktalk.net

10 The Militant March 17, 2008

Kosova's independence a step forward

Kosova's independence from Serbia is a step forward for working people around the world. It strikes a blow at the national oppression, divisions, and prejudices used to keep the working class divided on a world scale.

Ethnic Albanians in Kosova—who make up 90 percent of the population—have been oppressed by the rulers of neighboring Serbia. The Yugoslav socialist revolution in the 1940s showed the road to ending that discrimination, when all nationalities united to overturn capitalist rule. The new workers state that emerged extended language and cultural rights to Albanians and pledged an affirmative action program to prioritize development in Kosova, the poorest of all the provinces in the country. The strides forward by Yugoslav working people were cut short as the ruling Stalinist bureaucrats relied more and more on capitalist methods and began reversing the gains won. Growing inequalities for Kosovar Albanians fueled popular sentiment for independence.

The Serbian government's discriminatory policies have made Kosova one of the poorest nations in Europe today. Surging unemployment and a sharp decline in economic output disproportionately impact the Albanian majority. Working people have more space to address these burning questions free of Belgrade's stranglehold.

Serbian prime minister Vojislav Kostunica says Kosova's independence was "brought about by the destructive, brutal and immoral policies of force imposed by the United States." But it was the Serbian regime's policies of "ethnic cleansing" and national oppression that gave a handle to Washington and European imperialist powers to militarily intervene in the region. Now that they are there, nothing changes about the justness of the fight for self-determination in Kosova. In fact, it is only *through* this fight that

the toilers of the region will be able to end the NATO and UN occupation.

Struggles by oppressed nations, regardless of their initial leadership, are not initiated or inspired by the imperialists. Their governments, whether in Europe or North America, are no friend to oppressed nationalities. They make tactical decisions to advance their interests. Washington has just made that crystal clear by openly aiding the Turkish government's invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan.

Kosovar workers and farmers are in a *stronger* position to fight for their rights in an independent state free of the Serbian boot. Just as workers and farmers in Iraqi Kurdistan are better off today with regional autonomy than they were under the tyranny of the Saddam Hussein regime. In both cases, steps toward self-rule have been an unintended consequence of imperialist intervention, not imperialism's original goal.

Given the defeats inflicted by the Stalinist regime in the former Yugoslavia, the national struggle in Kosova does not begin with a revolutionary proletarian leadership. Only through the fight for self-determination will space open up for a communist leadership to emerge that can forge links to anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggles worldwide.

While recognizing Kosova's independence, U.S. officials insist that it does not set a precedent. But the new nation *does* inspire confidence among those facing national oppression around the world—from Kurds to Saharawis to Albanian immigrants living in Greece and other parts of Europe.

By championing fights by oppressed nationalities against their subjugation, the toiling classes can forge a united fight against their common enemies—not only the imperialist powers, but also the domestic exploiters, from Turkey, to Iraq, Iran, Kosova, and Serbia.

Colombian military attacks Ecuador

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The Colombian military carried out an air strike against Ecuador March 1. In response, the governments of Ecuador and Venezuela cut diplomatic ties with Colombia and mobilized troops to their borders.

"We are a small country, but we will defend our sovereignty to the last," Ecuadoran president Rafael Correa said March 5, while touring Brazil to win diplomatic support. Most governments in Latin America have condemned the Colombian attack as a violation of Ecuador's territory.

The government of Colombia, one of Washington's closest allies in the region, says the strike was directed against a camp of the anti-government guerrilla group Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Raul Reyes, who Bogota alleges was the FARC's second-in-command, was killed in the strike, making this the most senior FARC casu-

alty in 40 years of fighting.

Colombian president Alvaro Uribe has accused Correa and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez of supporting the FARC, a charge both governments deny.

"Is it possible that something like what happened in Ecuador could happen here?" asked Venezuelan General Jesus Gonzalez at a March 5 press conference. "The answer is simply yes."

Colombia's army is more than twice the size of the Venezuelan and Ecuadoran armies combined. Bogota has received \$600 million a year since 2001 in military aid from Washington, and U.S. troops are stationed in Colombia as "trainers."

According to Reuters, most of Venezuela's fleet of F-16s is not operational after Washington banned sales of spare parts and upgrades to Caracas.

Colombian officials say Washington provided them with intelligence to locate Reyes.

'Militant' to launch sub, fund drives

Continued from front page

the issue of immigrant rights, to the disproportionate impact of the capitalist economic crisis on working people who are Black or Latino. As a workers' paper, it depends on contributions from its readers to keep coming out week after week.

There are special opportunities to expand the paper's readership at campus speaking engagements for the Socialist Workers Party presidential and vice-presidential candidates, Róger Calero and Alyson Kennedy. Many of the young people who attend such events will be willing to donate to the paper's fund drive, as well.

Subscription sales and fund-raising among meat packers, garment workers, coal miners, and other working people will also be a key part of the drives.

A recent team of *Militant* supporters to packing-houses in Illinois and southern Minnesota sold a number of subscriptions at plant gates and in the community (see article on page 5).

The *Militant* is a political organizer. This week, a front-page article describes plans for May Day actions demanding legalization of undocumented workers. Partisans of the socialist press can sell subscriptions through their efforts to build these actions. The May Day actions can be a highlight of the subscription campaign, resulting in hundreds of new subscribers in one day.

The spring fund drive, which will run from March 22 to May 18, will raise the money needed to pay the operating expenses of the *Militant*, from printing and mailing costs, to rent and equipment, to travel expenses for covering such events as the recent Havana International Book Fair.

The *Militant's* fall fund drive collected \$100,525. The fall circulation effort brought in 2,530 subscriptions.

Candidates debate trade, unemployment

BY PAUL PEDERSON

March 5—New York senator Hillary Clinton won the Democratic presidential primaries in Texas, Ohio, and Rhode Island yesterday, after 12 straight losses to Illinois senator Barack Obama. The two remain locked in a close race for the Democratic nomination.

Arizona senator John McCain won enough delegates in Republican primaries yesterday to secure that party's nomination. Former Arkansas governor Michael Huckabee withdrew from the race.

Trade policies and unemployment were campaign themes in the days leading up to the primaries. While campaigning in Ohio, both Clinton and Obama ratcheted up protectionist rhetoric in an effort to respond to the deep impact of the capitalist economic crisis there. Over the last eight years, 200,000 manufacturing workers have lost their jobs in Ohio. Home foreclosures are soaring. The Democratic contenders blamed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and promised to save "American jobs."

"I'll pass the Patriot Employer Act . . . so we can end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas, and give those breaks to companies that create good jobs with decent wages here in America," said Obama in a February 24 speech in Lorain, Ohio.

"We will opt out of NAFTA unless we renegotiate it and we renegotiate it on terms that are favorable to all of America," Clinton said. Obama said he might do the same.

McCain said unilaterally opting out of NAFTA would be a blow to Washington's "global war on terror." It would hurt relations with the Canadian government, he argued, which "could have an adverse effect on the situation with regards to their commitment to Afghanistan."

"The statements by the Democratic and Republican candidates are pure demagoguery aimed at making working people believe that we have a stake in supporting one or another version of the bosses' trade agreements, and to protect 'our industries' and 'American jobs,'" Róger Calero, the Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate, said in a statement. Calero said he would address unemployment by establishing "a government-funded public works program to put millions to work at union scale wages, and cancel the third world debt to build unity among working people internationally."

Politicizing youth?

Given the close race between the Democratic candidates, both campaigns have focused on mobilizing voter turnout. Obama has drawn large crowds to his campaign events, including many college students. His supporters tout that his candidacy, centered largely on promises of "hope," is drawing a new generation into politics. But most Obama supporters quoted in the press steer clear of discussing politics or the proposals in Obama's platform.

"I can't really verbalize exactly what it is about him," said Ross Avila, a University of Pennsylvania senior who has volunteered for the Obama campaign in three states. "Part of it is just beyond explanation."

Agence France-Presse reported that, at a campaign rally in Maryland, Obama "did not flinch when women screamed as he was in mid-sentence, and even broke off once to answer a female's cry of 'I love you Obama!' with a reassuring: 'I love you back.'"

Both Clinton and McCain have attacked Obama for his campaign's lack of content. McCain called it "an eloquent but empty call for change." The Republican candidate ridiculed Obama for saying he would consider military action in Iraq only if "al-Qaeda is forming a base" there.

"Is Senator Obama unaware that al-Qaeda is still present in Iraq, that our forces are successfully fighting them every day?" McCain asked.

McCain campaigns as the most qualified of the three to be the next wartime commander in chief. He cites his experience as a military officer and his record of support for the escalation of troops in Iraq. "Today, thanks to the troop surge that Senators Clinton and Obama opposed, our soldiers have Al Qaeda in Iraq on the run," McCain said following a February 26 Democratic debate.