

THE MILITANT

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politics at Havana Book Fair
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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N.Y. students hear socialist vice presidential candidate



Militant/Mitra Sharma

Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president of the United States, addresses a political science class at Borough of Manhattan Community College March 12.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—What socialists would do if elected to public office, who to vote for in the 2008 elections, and many other questions were fielded by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, at a campaign meeting here at Hunter College March 12. Kennedy also addressed some 50 students at a political science class at Borough of Manhattan Community College during her New York tour March 12–16. (See story on page 4.)

The campaign meeting of 25 at Hunter was sponsored by the student government. “On behalf of myself and the Undergraduate Student Government, it’s interesting to hear from those other than Democrats and Republicans,” said Jes-

sica Zannikos, who chaired the meeting. “It’s important to know all the choices we have.”

“The kind of government we need is a workers and farmers government,” Kennedy told the students. “That will come to power as the result of a fight by a revolutionary movement in the millions against the class rule of the tiny propertied minority that rules today.”

A workers and farmers government will take immediate measures to defend the working class, she said, from instituting a massive public works program at union-scale wages to create jobs, to enforcing affirmative action in hiring, to halting immigration raids and deportations. Such a government will imme-

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Fatal crane collapse adds to N.Y. construction death toll

BY VED DOOKHUN

NEW YORK—Seven people were killed in mid-Manhattan March 15 when a crane 19 stories high collapsed and crashed into buildings as far as a block away. The collapse occurred as workers were attempting to raise the height of the crane, an operation called “jumping.”

Five of those killed were construction workers who were members of Local 15 of the Operating Engineers Union. They were Wayne Bleidner, Brad Cohen, Anthony Mazza, Aaron Stephens, and Clifford Canzona. One construction supervisor, Santino Gallone, also died, as did a tourist, Odin Torres.

As soon as word spread about the collapse, construction workers from many other sites in the city came to the scene. Many maintained a vigil as rescue workers searched for victims in the debris.

The city buildings department had received 32 complaints since December about safety at the construction site and had issued 13 violations, 10

against one contractor, Reliance Construction Group. The violations included failure to safeguard the public and property, and failure to provide roof protection on adjacent property.

As recently as March 4, a retired

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Federal Reserve rescues top Wall Street firms

BY PAUL PEDERSON

On March 13 Bear Stearns, the fifth-largest Wall Street investment bank, collapsed. Its lenders and hedge fund clients began calling in their loans, prompting a run on the bank’s assets.

Days later the Federal Reserve bank, the U.S. government’s central bank, worked closely with top officials in the Bush administration to engineer a buy-out of Bear Stearns by the banking monopoly JP Morgan Chase. They also announced a government bailout for other

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Join May Day rallies for immigrant rights!

With six weeks leading up to May 1, we urge all readers of the *Militant* to build and participate in the important working-class mobilizations that will take place that day to demand amnesty and legal status for all immigrants in the United States.

In the last two years, immigrant work-

EDITORIAL

ers have transformed May Day in the United States. In 2006, 2 million took to the streets, many of them skipping work, under the banners “We’re workers, not criminals” and “Legalization now!” It was the first nationwide political general strike in U.S. history. May Day 2006 showed that a political vanguard of the working class had begun to take shape in the United States.

The ruling class retaliated by stepping

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Seattle: workers, students plan May Day march

BY EDWIN FRUIT

SEATTLE—Some 150 working people and students, mostly Spanish-speaking, met here March 15 to discuss plans for May Day actions. The meeting was organized by El Comité Pro Reforma Migratoria y Justicia Social (Committee for Immigration Reform and Social Justice).

Among those attending were 20 students from different campus chapters of the Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán (MEChA). Aldo Resendiz from the MEChA chapter at Seattle University gave a political background of the struggle for immigrant rights. He noted

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Militant/Chris Hoepfner

Seattle University student Aldo Resendiz speaks to some 150 people attending a March 15 meeting in Seattle to plan a May Day march for immigrants’ rights.

Washington pushes for more NATO troops in Afghanistan

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

The governments of the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada are working to secure additional troop and combat commitments in Afghanistan from other NATO powers ahead of an April 2–4 summit of the military alliance.

Having toppled the Taliban government in 2001, occupation forces now face guerrilla war tactics, including suicide bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings. A March 6 UN report said that the level of insurgent activity in Afghanistan jumped sharply in 2007 and estimated more than 8,000 combat-related deaths last year, the highest toll since the 2001 war. The report noted that international forces trained in conventional warfare are at a disadvantage in the changed situation.

Of the 43,000 troops under NATO’s command in Afghanistan, those from

the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada are engaged in combat in the turbulent south, while those from Germany, Italy, France, and Spain are

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- Caravan protests U.S. restrictions on Cuba travel 7

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Women miners build New Mexico conference

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

The Changing Woman Conference will be held on Monday, April 7, at the San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. “American workers should be able to work without fear and harassment. In reality that is not what happens in mining and other fields,” Rosie Foster, conference organizer, told the *Militant*. Foster, who is also a member of International Operating Engineers Local 953, is a coal miner at one of the BHP owned surface mines near Farmington.

“This is the fourth annual conference and every year new people attend,” she continued. “You may encounter things at work and you are not sure if it is discrimination and harassment. You are made to feel that this is okay, or that it’s your fault. The conference is the place where you find information on what is discrimination and what you can do about it. You have to know your workers’ rights, especially if you are a woman.”

A media alert sent to the press says, “The goal of the conference is to address the racial and gender discrimination and sexual harassment often faced by Navajo women coal miners. As women working in a non-traditional field, these miners face challenges from their co-workers and supervisors that do not affect their male counterparts.”

The “Changing Woman” is part of a Navajo legend. The first Changing Woman Conference was held in 2005.

A number of women miners who work at the BHP mines attended and spoke in the workshops about how they fight the discrimination they face on the job as women and as Native Americans.

Local 953 organizes coal miners at three surface mines and one underground mine located on the New Mexico side of the Four Corners area of the Navajo Nation. The majority of the miners are Navajo.

Anna O’Leary, a professor at the University of Arizona, will be the keynote speaker. O’Leary was president of the Morenci Miners Women’s Auxiliary, formed during the 1983–86 Phelps Dodge copper miners strike.

For more information on the 2008 Changing Woman Conference, contact Rosie Foster at rosiewil.foster@gmail.com.



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Lori Anderson, a coal miner at the BHP Navajo Surface Mine since 1975, speaks at the opening banquet of the Changing Woman Conference in Farmington, New Mexico, April 23, 2006.

Minnesota meat packers to rally for contract

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789 is calling for union supporters to join workers at Dakota Premium Foods as they come out of the plant on Monday, March 24. The action, scheduled from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., will solidarize with the Dakota workers who are fighting for a new contract at the packing house.

More than 250 Dakota workers, including workers at the nearby Newport storage facility, process more than 800 cows a day.

In January workers soundly defeated a company-backed union decertification election. Since then they are more confident they can win their contract proposals. These include meaningful yearly raises and some control over the line speed. Rubén Alemán, a worker in the boning department, told the *Militant*, “United we’ll win a contract. I see that people are more inspired and supportive of the union.”

The company has kept to its offer of a 15-cent-an-hour raise and a 10-cent attendance “bonus.” It has said no to lowering the line speed.

The March 17 issue of the Dakota workers weekly newsletter, the *Workers’*

Voice, referred to the sit-down strike at Dakota in 2000, which led to an agreement that the line speed be kept below 94 cows an hour with a worker checking the speed. “This was agreed to before and we can win it again!” the *Workers’ Voice* said. “Enough of cows coming down the kill line kicking and injuring workers because the line speed is too fast!”

Along with the officials and staff from Local 789, 14 workers participated in the last negotiating session with the company and the workers are continuing their weekly meetings as well as putting out the *Workers’ Voice*. Many workers have put union stickers on their helmets and are passing them out to others.

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

Crane collapse kills seven

Continued from front page
engineer had filed a complaint with the city that the crane was not braced to the building and that the upper 100 feet was “unsecured.” But an inspector found no violation and ruled that the crane was erected properly.

The company that owns the crane, New York Crane, was involved in a nearly fatal accident in September 2006 when an 8,000-pound piece of crane fell, crushing a taxi cab with two occupants, who later sued. The buildings department found in that case that the operator did not install the equipment adequately during a “jump,” the same operation workers were attempting March 15.

The recent deaths bring to 19 the number of construction-related fatalities in New York City in the last 12 months. While there is a slowdown in construction of homes nationally, New York has seen a boom in high-rise development in 2006, with \$26.2 billion spent on construction.

In 2006, 43 construction workers died from job-related injuries in New York, of which 26 were laborers. This was the deadliest in a decade and an 87 percent increase over 2005, when 23 people were killed.

According to data released from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the cause of 31 of the deaths in 2006 resulted from falls.

Nationally construction is among the most dangerous occupations, accounting for 1,266 fatalities in 2006, or 21 percent of the 5,703 deaths of workers overall.

The number of Latino construction workers killed in New York increased from 6 in 1997 to 22 in 2006.

Luis Martínez, a garment worker

who previously worked in construction here, told the *Militant*, “There is no real safety on the job. The bosses take advantage of illegal immigrants. The inspectors are in cahoots with them.”

U.S. Federal Reserve rescues Wall St.

Continued from front page

Wall Street securities dealers that made billions over the last decade speculating on securities based on mortgages and other debt, which today is largely worthless.

“Banks and brokerages are a house of cards built on the confidence of clients, creditors, and counterparties,” David Trone, a Wall Street broker told the *New York Times*. “If you take chunks out of that confidence, things can go awry pretty quickly.”

In Bear Stearns’s case it took a couple of days from when the run began until its managers announced the bank had collapsed. Like most Wall Street firms it was massively leveraged, with loans that amounted to over 30 times its assets.

To keep the panic from spreading, the Federal Reserve stepped in. Under a deal announced March 16, JP Morgan Chase agreed to buy Bear Stearns for pennies on the dollar of its book value. As part of the deal the Federal Reserve agreed to guarantee \$30 billion of shaky investments on Bear Stearns’s books.

The central bank announced the same day that it would begin lending directly to the top 20 Wall Street investment banks and securities dealers. As collateral for these loans, it would accept “a broad range of investment-grade debt securities.” This includes paper

based on mortgage and other debt that securities dealers can no longer find a buyer for.

The Federal Reserve has not extended credit to such entities directly since the Great Depression. Normally only commercial banks, which hold customer deposits, can borrow directly from the Federal Reserve.

In 1999, the Clinton administration repealed the depression-era Glass Steagall Act. The act had mandated

that commercial banks and investment banks, which deal in insurance, stocks, bonds, and other forms of speculative capital, are distinct and must remain separate.

As a result, commercial banks like JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, and Fleet-Boston began pouring massive capital into these speculative financial instruments. This helped propel the inflation of the speculative bubble that has now burst.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

GEORGIA

Carrollton

Cuba’s Revolutionary Example in the World. Speaker: Eddie Beck, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Mar. 29. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 907-C S Park St. Tel: (404)275-5504.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Growing World Financial Crisis. Speaker: Dennis Richter, SWP candidate for U.S. Congress, 7th C.D. Fri., Mar. 28. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner; \$5 program. 3559 S Archer Ave. Tel: (773)780-1190.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

What the Socialist Workers 2008 Campaign Stands and Fights For. Speaker: Róger Calero, SWP candidate for U.S. president. Sat., Mar. 29. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 188 W Wyoming Ave. Tel: (215) 455-2682.

NEW YORK

New York

The Fight for National Liberation from Kosovo to Kurdistan. Special Program for the Militant Fund. Speaker: Ma’mud Shirvani, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 28. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th fl. (north elevators). Tel: (212) 629-6649.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Women and the Cuban Revolution Today. Speaker: Cecelia Moriarity, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 28. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 5418 Rainier Ave. S Tel: (206)323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Kosova Independence: A Step Forward for Working People. Speaker: Felicity Coggan, Communist League. Fri., Mar. 28, 7 p.m. Donation: \$3. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Tel: (09) 276-8885.

Young Socialists at N.Y. colleges join in debate over 2008 elections

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

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY EMILY PAUL

NEW YORK—Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy joined other supporters in organizing activities for Alyson Kennedy, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, during her March 12–16 tour stop here.

On March 12, Kennedy addressed a political science class of more than 50 students at Borough of Manhattan Community College. Ben Joyce, a student at the campus and SWP candidate in New York’s 7th Congressional Dis-

trict, chaired the event.

“Working people are bearing the brunt of the world capitalist economic crisis,” said Kennedy. “We face rising unemployment, inflation, spreading wars, social breakdowns, and attacks on workers rights.” To fight back, the working class needs its own political party, a labor party based on fighting unions, she explained. That will be a step toward building a revolutionary movement that can end capitalist rule and establish a workers and farmers government.

Kennedy spoke about the escalating imperialist war in Afghanistan, where 3,200 more U.S. troops are headed. She said as commander in chief, Róger Calero, the SWP candidate for president, would immediately withdraw all U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as from all the other countries where they are stationed. John McCain, Hillary Clinton, and Barack Obama all support the war drive in Afghanistan, she noted.



Militant/Mitra Sharma

Students engage in discussion following March 12 presentation by SWP vice presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

After Kennedy’s presentation, Joyce explained that the Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy is open to all youth interested in campaigning for the working-class alternative. He encouraged those present to organize meetings for the socialist candidates and to get involved in petitioning efforts in the coming months to ensure as many SWP candidates as possible are on the ballot.

Later that evening Kennedy addressed a meeting at Hunter College, which was hosted by the Undergraduate Student Government there.

“I really liked the presentation. I think socialism is the only alternative,” said Camilo Sala after the meeting. “Everything else comes from the same place, from greed. But I will be voting for Obama.”

“This was a very good opportunity. I didn’t know there was a socialist candidate,” said Annie Zheng. She asked when Calero would be in town on a speaking tour.

Young campaigners for Calero and Kennedy also joined the vice presidential candidate at two picket lines of workers on strike against Aramark, which operates several cafeterias in Manhattan. “In 2003, I was part of a strike at a coal mine in Utah,” Kennedy told picketers. She described the successful effort of Utah miners to spread the word about their fight and win broader solidarity

One striking worker, Anthony, took a stack of campaign platforms and flyers for a campaign event. “I’m volunteering at a hospital later today and I want to make sure a few people there see this,” he said.

Socialist candidate speaks on N.Y. campuses

Continued from front page

diately withdraw U.S. troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and all the other countries where they are based.

‘The best qualified candidates’

This program, she explained, makes her and her running mate, Róger Calero, “the best qualified candidates in the race.” The solutions Barack Obama, John McCain, and Hillary Clinton offer to the current economic and social crisis of capitalism are policies in the interests of the wealthy. They spell more wars, unemployment, and attacks on the wages and living conditions of those who work for a living.

“Speaking as a young voter, I see Obama as the lesser of three evils, but then again, he seems to be about the same as the rest,” said one student. “How about a ‘none of the above’ movement? Would that be an effective tactic?”

“There is a way to vote for what you’re for in this election: vote SWP,” said Kennedy. “We are the only candidates with a program that defends working people and we’re serious about getting elected. If we’re not on the ballot in your state, ask for a write-in ballot.”

“Democracy is often associated with capitalism. Is that a problem for socialists?” someone else asked.

“There is no democracy for workers under capitalism,” Kennedy replied. “All the democratic rights and social gains we do have, such as Social Security and unemployment benefits, have been won in struggle. Today the U.S. rulers are using ‘antiterror’ laws to further undermine our struggles to organize unions, combat race and sex discrimination, and fight for jobs.”

Cuba, the socialist candidate noted, is often referred to as “totalitarian” by the capitalists, but in Cuba workers and farmers have won real democracy. When the workers and farmers government there began taking land owned by wealthy farmers and distributing it to landless peasants, they met resistance from the big landowners. The government nationalized their property to meet

the needs of the majority.

It did the same thing when workers called on it to take action against business owners who were hoarding or refusing to produce. They nationalized these companies and placed them under control of the workers. “That is democracy,” said Kennedy.

A student asked what Kennedy thought about the recent farm bill adopted by Congress. “The bill has measures to benefit wealthy farmers, not working farmers,” Kennedy replied. A workers and farmers government will halt farm foreclosures. It will guarantee the cost of production to working farmers, including inexpensive credit, she explained. No farmer who rents land or owns title to it would face eviction.

Kellen Monsano, a sociology student at Hunter, thought that Kennedy “supported her points very well.”

“It makes sense,” he told the *Militant*. “Whoever has the power makes the rules. It’s not a democratic government here at all, maybe on paper.”

On March 15, Kennedy joined a rally of some 2,000 Service Employees International Union members and supporters. The action was called to support the nursing home workers on strike against Kingsbridge Heights Rehabilitation Center in the Bronx. “Prices are going up for everything—food, rent, gas, and they’re cutting our health care,” striker Jeffrey Wojciechowski told Kennedy.

Dan Fein contributed to this article.

Spring ‘Militant’ Subscription Drive March 22 – May 18 Initial quotas	
Country/City	Quota
CANADA	105
NEW ZEALAND	60
SWEDEN	25
UNITED KINGDOM	
London	75
Edinburgh	45
UK Total	120
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	120
Boston	50
Carrollton, GA	145
Chicago	120
Des Moines, IA	120
Houston	75
Los Angeles	110
Miami	120
New York	315
Newark, NJ	130
Philadelphia	85
San Francisco	120
Seattle	100
Twin Cities	145
Washington, D.C.	110
U.S. Total	1865
Int’l total	2175

‘Militant’ launches circulation, fund drives

Militant/Natalie Bombaro

The *Militant* is launching its spring circulation and fund drives March 22. The eight-week international campaigns are aimed at winning thousands of new and long-term subscribers and raising \$100,000 to help meet the *Militant’s* operating expenses.

This week we report the initial goals for these drives taken by supporters in local areas.

Above, supporters of the paper got an early start at a March 15 antiwar demonstration in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where they sold eight subscriptions.

To get involved in the sub drive or make a contribution, contact distributors listed on page 8.

—OLYMPIA NEWTON

\$100,000 ‘Militant’ Fund Drive March 22 – May 18 Initial quotas	
Country/City	Quota
CANADA	4,500
NEW ZEALAND	3,200
SWEDEN	1,000
UNITED KINGDOM	
Edinburgh	600
London	1,000
UK total	1,600
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	4,000
Boston	2,800
Chicago	7,000
Des Moines, IA	2,000
Houston	2,500
Los Angeles	8,500
Miami	3,000
New York	15,000
Newark, NJ	3,700
Philadelphia	2,500
San Francisco	12,000
Seattle	7,000
Twin Cities	4,800
Washington, D.C.	4,300
U.S. total	79,100
Int’l total	89,400
Goal	100,000

Leaders of Cuban women's federation tour New York

BY BEN JOYCE
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—Nearly 60 people attended a meeting at Hunter College in Manhattan March 5 to hear presentations by two leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), Maritzel González and Dora Carcaño. The meeting discussed the role of women in Cuban society and the gains won through Cuba's socialist revolution over the past five decades.

The event was sponsored by the Latino Honor Society and the Young Socialists. Chairing the event was Mary Paz, vice president of the Latino Honor Society, and Tom Baumann from the YS.

Founded in 1960, the FMC is a mass organization that advances women's rights in Cuba. Carcaño described the lack of social and economic equality in Cuba prior to the revolutionary triumph in 1959, as well as some of the concrete gains women have since made, such as access to health care, child care, and education. "The revolution made it possible for all women to be included in the social transformation on a mass scale," she stated. Prior to the revolution only

12 percent of Cuban women were in the workforce. Today women comprise 46 percent of the Cuban labor force, Carcaño noted.

The FMC leaders had traveled to New York to attend the February 25–March 7 meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

"Our revolution made it possible to have access to science and particularly medicine," said González, pointing out that there are 71,000 doctors in Cuba today. More than 40,000 of them are women and many are young women. In addition, 37,000 Cuban doctors are doing solidarity work abroad. Carcaño pointed out that 43.6 percent of the Cuban parliament is female, including one 18-year-old woman.

Carcaño also explained the importance of the international solidarity work of the FMC. Representatives of the FMC, she said, participated in delegations to a number of Latin American countries, including Colombia, Bolivia, and Puerto Rico, to meet with women's organizations there on the question of women's rights. She also mentioned that they've been fighting for the right of the wives of two of the Cuban Five to



Militant/Maura DeLuca

Dora Carcaño, a leader of the Federation of Cuban Women, addresses a crowd of 100 March 7 at John Jay College in New York. FMC leader Maritzel González, seated at far left, also spoke. Seated next to González were cochair Frank Velgara and Olympina Newton.

be able to see their husbands. Washington has refused to grant them visas. The five are political prisoners incarcerated in the United States for the past 10 years on frame-up conspiracy charges.

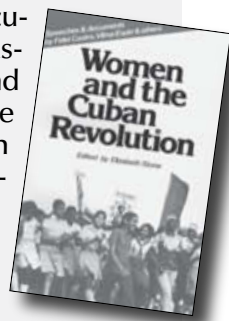
Responding to a question about whether the FMC's association with

the government has limited its work, Carcaño explained, "Our people can discuss what's right and wrong in society. Democratic participation of the Cuban people is guaranteed. The FMC has a program to support the institutions of the state and is dedicated to advances of women. In this context we have different opinions, discussions, and debate." She also said that there is an "overall consciousness in Cuban society that women have an important role to play."

On March 7 the FMC leaders also spoke at a citywide public meeting at John Jay College. The event, which drew 100 people, was sponsored by a number of political groups in the city active in defending the Cuban Revolution.

Women and the Cuban Revolution

Speeches and Documents by Fidel Castro, Vilma Espín, and others that chronicle the transformation of women's economic and social status in Cuba since the 1959 revolution. —\$15



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Sweden: Somalis protest threat to their child care

BY DAG TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—As many as 400 Somali parents packed a school auditorium here March 8 in a protest against the closure of seven Somali-language child-care centers in the suburb of Rinkeby. Some had to stand outside the packed meeting hall.

A week earlier the board of education recommended that the city council revoke the permit and withdraw funding for the company that runs the child-care centers, which care for 194 children, with 79 waiting to be admitted. The company's owner has been accused of financial irregularities and has been held in custody since January 18 without trial.

Many of the women at the protest meeting assailed the authorities for their disregard of the rights of the families involved. One woman said, "I am as Swedish as anybody else. But the Swedish society is trampling on our right to freely choose the best care for our children. That would never happen in the Östermalm." She was referring to a well-to-do area in downtown Stockholm.

Other women pointed to the necessity of the children learning their mother tongue thoroughly in order to be able to master Swedish. The targeted child-care centers are bilingual in Swedish and Somali. Several speakers also demanded the release of the centers' owner and employees.

Zeinab Abukar told this reporter after the meeting that the parents are committed to keep on fighting. They intend to keep the children at home if the centers are closed down, rather than sending them to other child-care centers.

In a parallel development three men in Stockholm and three others in Oslo were arrested February 28 and accused of making "preparations for terrorism." They were all Somalis and the three were from Rinkeby.

Some of the six men have contact with the "Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia," an organization that opposed the 2006 invasion of Somalia



Militant/Dag Tirsén

Protest at courthouse March 14 in Stockholm, Sweden, against the arrest of a Somali Swedish man accused of "terrorism." Placard reads: "No to a new Guantánamo in Sweden."

by Ethiopian troops that was supported by Washington. Protests against the arrests are planned to take place outside the courthouse when the cases are taken up by the court.

A statement by the Communist

League in Sweden called for the release of the arrested Somalis and repeal of all terrorist legislation. "It is obvious that the Security Police uses the terrorist legislation in Sweden—which was sharpened in May 2002—to terrorize organizations." The statement said this "is part of 'the long war against terror,' driven by imperialist governments from Washington to

Stockholm against political and union activists at home and with troop deployments abroad."

Catharina Tirsén contributed to this article.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 1, 1983

MANAGUA, Nicaragua—The Nicaraguan government announced here March 21 that it was confronting "the most aggressive military operation" launched by imperialism since the defeat of the dictator Anastasio Somoza in July 1979.

A total of about 2,000 former Somoza National Guardsmen have infiltrated into Nicaragua from their bases in Honduras. Some 1,500 of the heavily armed counterrevolutionaries have taken up positions in the northern mountains, while 400 to 500 have made their way into central Matagalpa Province, scarcely 50 miles northeast of the capital.

"The escalation is being and will be totally defeated," Minister of Defense Humberto Ortega announced at a March 21 news conference here.



March 31, 1958

For three-and-a-half years French imperialism has been slaughtering Algerians who want their country's independence.

The fact is that French imperialism has been able to carry on its war against the Algerian people for this long, and can continue to carry it on, only because of U.S. military and financial aid.

The French common people detest the "dirty" war in Algeria.

Bolstered by U.S. arms and U.S. funds, the rulers of France have taken one step after another to destroy civil liberties in France.

American workers can bring the bloodshed in Algeria to an end and help the French people maintain political democracy by forcing the U.S. government to stop acting as the quartermaster and finance officer of French imperialism.



April 1, 1933

Two days before the German Reichstag elections forty thousand Fascist storm troops, preceded by two hundred armed "auxiliary police" in Nazi uniform, marched through the streets of central and western Berlin. It was an attempt to put force behind the Fascist claim that they are the "masters of Berlin." To the extent that one can speak of weight of election figures, the claim appeared to have been confirmed two days later; although the real contest is yet to come.

One look at the Nazi storm troop reveals its makeup. Their appearance is in general that of roaming bandits. Its ranks contain primarily petty bourgeois elements to a large extent recruited from the declassed section, those impoverished by the inflation and the crises.

Broad discussions on culture, politics mark Havana book fair

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND BEN O'SHAUGHNESSY

HAVANA—The 2008 Havana International Book Fair was marked by a wide range of discussions on literature, politics, history, and other topics over the course of the 12-day event.

Organizers estimated that half a million people attended the fair, held February 13–24. Over the following three weeks, hundreds of thousands more flocked to the cultural festival as it traveled to 41 other cities across the island. Book sales and cultural events took place in schools, military bases, children's hospitals, prisons, and farming areas. By the time the fair concluded March 9, 5 million books had been bought nationwide, organizers reported.

During the rest of March, “mini-fairs” will be held in smaller towns. In April the “Mountain Book Fairs” will bring literature to working people in more remote mountainous areas of central and eastern Cuba.

In Havana, steps were taken to ease the overflow crowds of book lovers that have in recent years made the narrow cobblestone lanes of the sprawling fairgrounds at San Carlos de la Cabaña—the historic fortress overlooking Havana Bay—virtually impassable on some days. A week before the fair opened, 350 new titles were put on sale at 44 bookstores across the city as well as in parks, recreational centers, and computer clubs.

Poetry recitals, plays, film showings, seminars, dance and musical performances, art exhibits, book presentations, and several literary awards were among the varied events that were organized as part of the book fair. This year's festival was dedicated to the Cuban writers Graziella Pogolotti and Antón Arrufat, and to Galicia, a region in northwestern Spain. A substantial delegation of Galician publishers and writers brought a large display of literature from that part of the Iberian peninsula, where the predominant language is similar to Portuguese.

A broad range of new books was available, registering the continuing ex-

pansion of publishing in Cuba since the sharp decline during the 1990s economic crisis. This included contemporary Cuban and Latin American literature, classic works such as those by the German playwright and poet Friedrich Schiller, new children's books, and American literature from *The Spoon River Anthology* by Edgar Lee Masters to Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

There were exhibitors from 31 countries, with the largest representations coming from Spain, Mexico, and Peru. Popular contemporary titles covered everything from climate change to AIDS treatment in Cuba.

A significant number of events featured books on political questions. These included titles on Cuba's place in the world class struggle, such as Editora Política's new edition of *Octubre de 1962: A un paso del holocausto* (October 1962: One step from the holocaust) by Tomás Díez Acosta, published in English by Pathfinder Press under the title *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba*.

Another such title was Ediciones Verde Olivo's *Operación Carlota*, by Milton Díaz Cáncer, which is based on a popular Cuban TV documentary series that interviewed Cubans who in 1975 volunteered to fight in Angola to help defend the newly independent country from an invasion by the South African apartheid regime.

Revolutionary continuity

Several new books drew renewed attention to the 1930–35 revolutionary upsurge in Cuba. During that period, the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Gerardo Machado was toppled and a revolutionary “Hundred Days Government” came to power, only to be overthrown in a U.S.-backed military coup led by Fulgencio Batista.

One such title was *La revolución cubana del 30* (The Cuban Revolution of 1930) by Fernando Martínez Heredia, published by Ciencias Sociales. It highlights the political role of several outstanding revolutionaries during that period. These include Julio Antonio



Militant/Ben O'Shaughnessy

February 22 presentation at Havana International Book Fair of new book on cultural policy of Cuban Revolution featured five of the six authors. From left, Mario Coyula, Ambrosio Fornet, Desiderio Navarro, Eduardo Heras León, and Fernando Martínez Heredia.

Mella, one of the two leaders who in 1925, drawn to the example of October 1917 Russian revolution, founded the first Communist Party of Cuba; CP leader Rubén Martínez Villena; and Antonio Guiteras. The latter served in the Hundred Days Government and then led a revolutionary organization, Young Cuba, in guerrilla actions to try to overthrow the Batista regime.

The course these revolutionaries fought for, Martínez noted, clashed with the political line of the Cuban Communist Party in the late 1920s and early '30s. The CP, following the ultraleft “Third Period” course dictated by the Stalin-led Communist International at the time, attacked Guiteras and his followers as “social fascists.”

As a result of the Comintern's “abandonment of the United Front advocated by Lenin and the imposition of sectarianism,” Martínez writes, the Cuban CP remained on the sidelines and acted as an obstacle in the mass revolutionary struggle of the early 1930s.

Speaking at the book fair presentation, Martínez explained that Guiteras played “a decisive role in the development of communism and the fight for socialism in Cuba” to which the Cuban Revolution of 1959 can trace its continuity.

Debate on revolution's cultural policy

Two major panels at the fair, each drawing up to 200 people, focused on the debate and discussion on the Cuban Revolution's cultural policy that has unfolded here over the past year.

One centered on the presentation of the new printing of *Las polémicas culturales de los 60* (Cultural polemics of the 1960s). This is a collection of debates, published in various Cuban periodicals in the early 1960s, by prominent Cuban filmmakers, writers, and political figures. It was first presented at last year's book fair and quickly sold out. Published by Letras Cubanas, it was edited by the well-known theater critic, essayist, and national literature prize winner Graziella Pogolotti, who also wrote the introduction.

The second panel featured a new title, *La política cultural del período revolucionario: memoria y reflexión* (Cultural policies of the revolutionary period: Memory and reflection). It is a compilation of talks given last year by six prominent writers: Desiderio Navarro, Ambrosio Fornet, Mario Coyula, Eduardo Heras León, Arturo Arango, and Fernando Martínez Heredia. The talks were given at seminars sponsored by the magazine *Criterios*, edited by Navarro, as part of a debate

that began early last year.

That controversy was sparked in January 2007 by a TV interview with Luis Pavón, director of the government's National Council of Culture from 1971 to 1976. Pavón was responsible for implementing policies similar to those imposed by the Soviet bureaucracy, preventing many writers, musicians, and artists the Council deemed politically “unreliable” from being published or having the resources and conditions necessary to work. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, this period came to be broadly known in Cuban cultural circles as the *Quinquenio Gris* (Gray Half-Decade) or *pavonato* (Pavón reign).

In 1976 the Council was dissolved and the Ministry of Culture established under the leadership of Armando Hart, one of the historic leaders of the clandestine revolutionary struggle against the Batista dictatorship in the 1950s.

‘Within the revolution, everything’

The Stalinist policies that made inroads in Cuba during the 1970s—and not only in the cultural arena—were a reversal of the proletarian political line championed by Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and other historic leaders of the revolution like Hart of guaranteeing full freedom of artistic expression to all but the open enemies of the revolution. In a famous 1961 speech known as “Words to the Intellectuals,” Fidel Castro summarized that policy with the statement, “Within the revolution, everything. Against the revolution, nothing.”

The TV program, presenting Pavón as a prominent cultural figure of the 1970s while remaining silent about this history, outraged many Cubans. Scores of prominent writers and artists, many of whom had themselves been victims of the “pavonato,” spoke out at meetings organized with government officials, as well as in e-mail debates and numerous conferences.

Speakers at the panel on *Cultural Polemics of the 1960s* noted that this title became a contribution to the discussion. Essayist and screenwriter Ambrosio Fornet, author of one of the polemical articles in that collection, said the book documents the rich debates on culture and politics that marked revolutionary Cuba in the 1960s. This included, he said, sharp polemics between figures associated with the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), the old pro-Moscow Communist Party, and non-PSP writers and filmmakers who in the course of the revo-

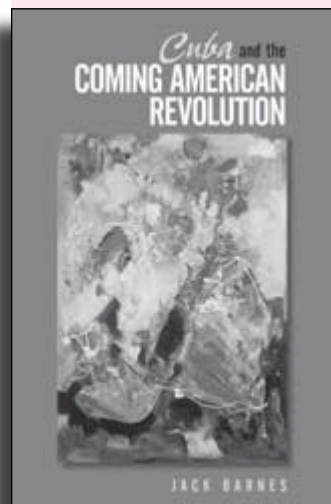
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Caravan protests U.S. restrictions on Cuba travel

BY MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—Dozens of opponents of U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba carried out a procession March 8 of some 50 cars along S.W. 8th Street, also known as “Calle Ocho,” an area of Miami with a heavy concentration of Cuban Americans.

Most of the demonstrators were Cuban Americans, and many were members of the Alianza Martiana (Marti Alliance), a coalition of organizations that oppose Washington’s decades-long embargo against Cuba, including travel restrictions, which have been tightened substantially in recent years.

In 2004, the U.S. government tightened restrictions on trips by Cuban Americans to the island, limiting visits to once every three years and only to visit immediate family members. Washington also limited remittances to Cuba to \$300 per quarter. Prior to these restrictions, Cuban Americans were permitted to visit close relatives once a year.

The Alianza Martiana includes the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the Alliance of Workers in the Cuban Community (ATC), the Bolivarian Circle of Miami, and the Association of Christian Women in Defense of the Family.

The groups have organized similar caravans in the past, but this was the first time that they traveled on Calle Ocho past such rallying points of opponents of the Cuban Revolution as the Versailles Restaurant.

Most of the cars were decorated with placards in Spanish and English with slogans such as “No to restrictions on travel to Cuba,” “Yes to travel to Cuba,” and “The family is sacred.”

A few cars joined the caravan while it was in process.

Reactions from people on the street were mixed. Many waved, cheered, or gave the thumbs up sign, but some shouted, “Go to Cuba and stay there,” cursed, or gave the thumbs down sign.

As the protesters gathered in preparation for the caravan, Rosa Reyes, president of the Association of Christian Women in Defense of the Family said, “This is the best possible way to celebrate International Women’s Day.”

Andrés Gómez, a leader of the Alianza Martiana, told participants, “This is a good turnout, and next time we will have more. We have done these caravans sporadically, but now we will do them regularly. We represent the conscience of the Cuban-American community.”



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Sign on car in March 8 caravan in Miami reads “Yes to travel to Cuba.”

Four sue to overturn U.S. curbs on travel to Cuba

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—Four people filed a lawsuit March 5 in U.S. District Court in Burlington, Vermont, against U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba to visit family. Armando Vilaseca, Maricel Lucero, and Yurisleidis Leyva were born in Cuba. The fourth plaintiff, Jared Carter, is married to Leyva.

“The Supreme Court in numerous cases has upheld the right to family privacy and familial relations,” said Carter, a student at Vermont Law School who is representing himself in the case. “We’re saying if you want to visit your mother who’s in the hospital, you have a right to do it.”

Carter and Leyva applied for a license to travel to Cuba last December

to visit their immediate family members to celebrate their marriage, including with her aging grandparents.

Travel to Cuba is regulated by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). As a division of the Treasury Department, the OFAC enforces the government’s economic and trade sanctions. The OFAC denied the couple a license because Mora “had immigrated to the United States less than three years prior to their application for the specific family-visit license.”

The new rules also mean that Vilaseca cannot visit his terminally ill aunt in Cuba and Lucero cannot visit her extended family. Traveling without a license to Cuba is

punishable with a fine of up to \$1 million dollars and 10 years in jail.

In an editorial, the *Burlington Free Press* wrote, “Even in the darkest days of the Cold War, we engaged the Soviet Union and China. Yet we continue to shun Cuba. From a humanitarian, political or security standpoint, or even for encouraging democracy, keeping families apart makes no sense.”

Dexter Randall, a Vermont dairy farmer who traveled to Cuba in 2000 with other U.S. farmers to attend the ninth congress of the National Association of Small Farmers in Havana, told the *Militant*, “People should be able to travel to Cuba just like we can travel to England or Spain. We are all human beings.”

Broad discussions on culture, politics mark Havana Book Fair

Continued from page 6

lutionary struggle had found their own way to Marxism and led the fight against the Stalinist pretensions to represent a communist approach to culture.

Those associated with the PSP argued in favor of what was known worldwide as “socialist realism,” the bureaucratic proclamation that such a thing as “proletarian culture” existed and should be promoted by all “revolutionaries.” Under that policy, Fornet said, James Joyce’s classic novel *Ulysses* “had been labeled a ‘bourgeois excrescence.’” In contrast, he said, writers like himself who “were followers of Martí and Fidel—we had not read the Soviet manuals”—believed in embracing “all of humanity’s cultural patrimony.”

Pogolotti, also a panelist, said the cultural debate was and remains part of a more fundamental question, “How is socialism to be built?” The revolution’s policy of encouraging debate and artistic expression was part of a broader approach, she said. “It is not enough to change the economic structures,” she noted. “As Che said, to build socialism you also have to develop the subject of that new history—the men and women, and also culture.”

This discussion continued in the panel on the book published by *Criterios*, and included five of the six authors whose essays are in that collection. Navarro described how the debate sparked by the Pavón interview had unfolded last year. An overflow crowd of 400 people at-

tended a Jan. 30, 2007, conference sponsored by the National Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC).

Many young people could not participate, however, because attendance was by invitation, largely to leaders of cultural institutions. To rectify that, he said, *Criterios* and the Saiz Brothers Association, an organization of young artists and writers, sponsored a workshop on February 23 that drew 400 youth. The discussions broadened with the series of forums organized by *Criterios*, which continued through July.

Speaking on the panel, Fernando Martínez said this process of discussion was positive, and helped pose an important political challenge. “It called attention to the need for public discussions on the principal questions facing the country,” he said. Martínez pointed to Raúl Castro’s July 26, 2007, speech calling for broad discussion of pressing social problems.

Race and social relations in Cuba

Another of the noteworthy titles presented at this year’s fair was *Desafíos de la problemática racial en Cuba* (Challenges of the race question in Cuba) by Esteban Morales, published by the Fernando Ortiz Foundation. The author is now director emeritus of the University of Havana’s Center for the Study of the United States.

First presented January 17 to an overflow crowd at the foundation’s headquarters, the book is seen by many here as an



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

At the Havana International Book Fair, the Pathfinder Press booth was among those that drew many people interested in books on revolutionary politics.

important step toward openly addressing racial questions that Morales says have long been taboo. These include the role of Blacks in important chapters of Cuba’s history that are largely unknown here, and how to combat the legacy inherited from capitalism of discrimination against Blacks.

In his book Morales notes that Fidel and Raúl Castro have been the most outspoken in the Cuban leadership in publicly promoting the need for conscious measures to combat discrimination against Blacks. He points out that Fidel Castro “first dealt with it extensively in March 1959,” barely two months after

the victory over Batista, in a series of speeches. At that time the revolutionary government took measures that included barring discrimination against Blacks in employment and opening Cuba’s previously whites-only beaches to all. As a result of the socialist revolution, Cuba has made unprecedented advances in reducing social inequalities and uprooting racist discrimination, Morales emphasizes.

“Unfortunately, since [the question of race] became a taboo in the early 1960s”—often with the argument that discussing it would foster “divi-

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Imperialist war and fight for a proletarian party

Below is an excerpt from The Struggle for a Proletarian Party, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in March. The collection of speeches and correspondence of James P. Cannon records the struggle to build a proletarian party, in program and composition, under the impact of World War II and the Stalin-Hitler pact. Cannon was a founder of the communist movement in the United States and was national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1938 to 1953, and thereafter national chairman until his death in 1974. Copyright © 1972 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JAMES P. CANNON

The Second World War, no less than the First, strikes all organizations and tendencies in the labor movement with cataclysmic force. Our own organization is no exception. Like all others, it is being shaken to its foundations and compelled to reveal its real nature. Weaknesses which remained undisclosed in time of peace are rapidly laid bare with the approach of war. Numerous individuals and whole groupings, wheth-



Leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and the Teamsters union in Minneapolis march Dec. 31, 1943, to federal courthouse to surrender after being convicted under the Smith Act for opposing World War II. James P. Cannon is at front of the line in foreground.

er formally members of the Fourth International or sympathizers, are being submitted to the same tests. There will be casualties, which may seem to indicate a weakening of the movement. But that is rather the appearance of things than the reality. Trotskyism is the veritable doctrine and method of proletarian revolution; it reveals its true substance most unfailingly in times of crisis, war and revolutionary struggle. Those who have assimilated the program, the doctrine, the method, and the tradition into their flesh and blood, as the guiding line of struggle, cling all the more firmly to the movement under the pressure of the crisis.

It is only those who took Bolshevism as a set of literary formulas, espousal of which gave one a certain distinction in radical circles without incurring any serious responsibilities; those who adopted Trotskyism as a form of “extreme radicalism” which never went beyond the bounds of sophisticated debate—it is such people who are most inclined to falter and to lose their heads under the pressure of the crisis, and even to blame their panic on that same “Trotskyism” which simply remains true to itself.

Everybody knows the crisis has dealt heavy blows to the imposing

movement of Stalinism. With the signing of the Soviet-Nazi pact the flight of the Stalinist fellow-travelers began. They could stomach the Moscow Trials but not the prospect of coming into collision with the democratic government of U.S. imperialism. After the Soviet invasion of Poland and then of Finland, the flight of the fellow-travelers became a rout. This wild migration attracted wide attention and comment. We ourselves contributed our observations and witticisms on this ludicrous spectacle. Up to now, however, we have remained silent on an analogous phenomenon in our own “periphery.” The flight of the more sophisticated, but hardly more courageous, intellectual fellow-travelers of American Trotskyism has been scarcely less precipitate and catastrophic.

With the approach of the war Trotskyism as a doctrine and as a movement began to lose its “respectability.” Many of the intellectuals, sniffing danger, arranged a somewhat hasty and undignified departure. In truth, there is not much left of that considerable army of drawing room heroes who used to admire Trotsky’s literary style and confound the less intelligent periphery of Stalinism with nuggets of wisdom mined from Trotsky’s writings. The collapse of

the Trotskyist “cultural front” was taken by some people, especially the ex-fronters themselves, to signify a collapse of our movement. In the journals of the class enemy to which they promptly attached themselves some of them have already worked up courage to write about Trotskyism as an “outmoded sectarian tendency.” However, it is they who are “outmoded,” not the movement of the proletarian vanguard, Trotskyism.

The petty-bourgeois intellectuals are introspective by nature. They mistake their own emotions, their uncertainties, their fears, and their own egoistic concern about their personal fate for the sentiments and movements of the great masses. They measure the world’s agony by their own inconsequential aches and pains. Insofar as our party membership consists in part of petty-bourgeois elements completely disconnected from the proletarian class struggle, the crisis which overtook the periphery of our movement is transferred, or rather, extended, into the party.

It is noteworthy that the crisis struck the New York organization of the party, thanks to its unfavorable social composition, with exceptional force and virulence, while the proletarian centers of the party remained virtually unaffected. The tendency of the petty-bourgeois elements to flee from our program and to repudiate our tradition is counterposed to a remarkable demonstration of loyalty to the program and to the party on the part of the proletarian membership. One must indeed be blind not to understand the meaning of this differentiation. The more our party revealed itself as a genuine proletarian party, the more it stood firmly by principle and penetrated into the workers’ mass movement, the better it has withstood the shock of the crisis. To the extent that our party has sunk its roots in proletarian soil it has gained, not lost, during this recent period. The noise we hear around and about our movement is simply the rustling of the leaves at the top of the tree. The roots are not shaking.

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Join May Day actions!

Continued from front page

up raids, deportations, and other attacks on immigrants. Despite the bosses' attempts at intimidation, nearly half a million demonstrated for immigrant rights in cities and towns across the country on May Day a year later.

This year, organizing for May Day actions is already under way in Chicago; Detroit; Houston; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Seattle; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Washington, D.C. These protests are demanding legalization and an end to raids and deportations. Students are getting involved in the actions, as shown by our report from Seattle this week on the activities of Latino groups on campuses in Washington state.

The fight to win legalization for all undocumented immigrants is a life-and-death question for the entire labor movement. Employers bring in immigrant workers to try to push down wages and conditions for all workers. They want a layer of the working class permanently vulnerable to deportation, who will keep their heads down in face of abuse and who, the bosses hope, will be too afraid to join union struggles.

But the opposite has happened in one case after another. Immigrant workers have been in the front ranks of some of the most important union struggles in recent years. Immigrant coal miners from Mexico were in the forefront of a 2003–2006 battle to win a local of the United Mine Workers of America at the Co-Op

mine outside Huntington, Utah. Earlier this year, at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse in South St. Paul, Minnesota, immigrant workers and native-born workers overcame employer-fostered divisions and defeated a company effort to decertify their union.

Nevertheless, the divisions between native- and foreign-born workers remains one of the potent weapons the bosses have to undermine working-class solidarity.

"The labor movement must take an unambiguous stand on this political question," Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Róger Calero has said. "Especially as the economic crisis unfolds, and real wages fall while the death toll of the bosses' 'productivity' drive continues to climb. The only way we can combat this is to organize and use union power. The unions need to throw their weight behind the struggle for legalization so that employers can no longer use immigration laws to intimidate, fire, or get rid of union activists."

We urge you to start now to work with your union, campus group, or community organization to sponsor events that can build May Day actions for legalization in your area. Encourage your coworkers, fellow students, neighbors, and others you know to attend the marches. Promote the demonstrations on campuses, in Black communities, in your union local, and at political events. Start planning now to march on May 1. All out to stop the raids and deportations! Immediate legalization without conditions now!

Culture, politics at Havana Book Fair

Continued from page 7

sions"—"today we face a lag in addressing racism, both on the level of ideas as well as in the scientific and political arenas," Morales writes.

He cites ongoing "disadvantages for blacks and mestizos in terms of access to the best jobs, little representation in positions in the state structure at all levels, overrepresentation in marginal [poor] neighborhoods, worse housing and living conditions in general, among other things, which tell us we still have much to accomplish."

In the presentation of the new title at the book fair, Morales said it was a positive sign that more public forums are being held and articles printed on this question in Cuban publications including, for the first time, an article scheduled for publication in *Cuba Socialista*, the magazine of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Cuba's internationalism in Africa

Among the highlights of the book fair was the presentation of a new Cuban edition of *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa: 1959–1976*, by Piero Gleijeses. The book, first published in English in 2002 and in a Spanish-language Cuban edition that same year, documents the Cuban Revolution's record of internationalist solidarity with liberation struggles in Africa from 1959 to 1976.

On the panel with Gleijeses, who teaches at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C., were Jorge Risquet, a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party who led Cuba's internationalist mission to Congo-Brazzaville from 1965 to 1967; and Fernando Remírez, head of international relations

for the party's Central Committee.

Juan Rodríguez, director of the Ciencias Sociales publishing house, which printed the book, noted that Gleijeses is now working on a complementary volume covering 1976–1991, the years during which more than 300,000 Cuban volunteers joined forces with the Angolan government to defeat invading troops from apartheid South Africa, culminating in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

Remírez, who served as a volunteer combatant in Angola in 1986–87, praised Gleijeses's book for its "total commitment to the historic truth." He said, "It is important for youth to read this book," to learn about the decisive role of Cuba's internationalist actions in the world. Risquet said Gleijeses's book "has inspired many more Cuban combatants to write of their own experiences," adding that "more needs to be written about this history."

Gleijeses said the strength of his book is that it is thoroughly backed up by documentation, including from government archives in Cuba, the United States, Russia, and South Africa.

With humor, he described how some academics in the United States and Europe have advised him to be more "objective" in his writings by speaking less favorably of Cuba and presenting more of "the other side." He said that in response, he added even more documentation from U.S. and other sources. All of it confirmed his favorable conclusions about the revolutionary foreign policy of Cuba and its role in Africa.

"It's necessary to explain that South Africa was *defeated* in Angola," Gleijeses said, to refute the lie that apartheid forces withdrew from Angola and Namibia because of U.S. "mediation." He said this fact is documented in his new book, for which he gained access to South African archives and conducted extensive interviews with key government officials.

In one document, he said, a South African general admitted that Cuban troops were better trained and led than his own army's. He wrote that Pretoria would have to pull out of Namibia and accept an independent government there or face "thousands and thousands of white casualties" at the hands of Cuban and Angolan forces.

These presentations are a sample of the rich debate and discussion that not only stamped the 2008 Havana International Book Fair, but have been a feature of this island-wide cultural event year after year. They are a reflection of the strength and working-class character of the Cuban Revolution, captured in a famous statement by Fidel Castro in the early 1960s that has become the slogan of the book fair: "The revolution doesn't tell you, 'believe.' It tells you—read!"

Seattle May Day

Continued from front page

the first massive May Day action for immigrant rights was in 2006. The rally that year in Seattle drew 30,000 people, and in Yakima, Washington, 15,000 marched, including 500 high school students.

Carlos Marentes of El Comité spoke about the current economic crisis and its affect on working people, especially on immigrant workers. He said that there was virtually no difference in immigration policy between the three current front-runners in the presidential race: Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, and John McCain. "None of these candidates represent the interests of the Hispanic community," he said.

The meeting broke into workshops to discuss proposals for actions this spring. In one group, Chris Hoepfner, the Socialist Workers candidate for governor, explained that the Democratic and Republican candidates could not represent immigrant workers because they were all spokespeople for the capitalist parties. "We need a fighting labor party of the working class that would represent the interests of all working people," he said. He urged people to consider the Socialist Workers platform and its candidates.

The meeting voted to build a large march on May 1, to have a two-day boycott of national chain stores, and to stage civil disobedience to focus media attention on the need for immigration reform.

On March 8 there was a lively picket line and vigil at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma. Immigrant workers from Washington state, Idaho, and Oregon are held there after being picked up by ICE. Vigils are held the second Saturday of every month. The March 8 vigil was sponsored by students from Evergreen State in Olympia as part of celebrating International Women's Day. Students from Evergreen and Seattle University marched, chanted and greeted those who had come to visit the workers behind bars.

In another development, students in the group Latinos Unidos (Latinos United) at Green River Community College in Auburn, Washington, about 30 miles south of Seattle, are discussing how to respond to a rightist provocation on their campus.

On March 5 postcards were distributed all over campus from a group called Citizens For A Better America. The message on the cards urged students to turn in the names of workers or students without papers for arrest and deportation.

Nav Sanhu and Lilia Hueso, members of Latinos Unidos on the campus, came to a regional meeting of MEChA students on March 9 at Seattle University to get support to counter the racists.

On April 11 and 12, the Labor Center at the Evergreen State College and El Comité are cosponsoring a "Workers' Assembly on Immigration" at the Tacoma campus of Evergreen State College.

Mary Martin contributed to this article.

Afghanistan war

Continued from front page

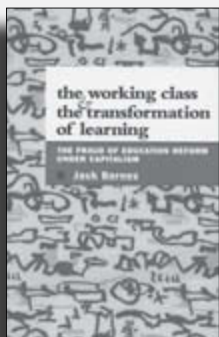
carrying out reconstruction in the relatively pacified north.

Speaking in Berlin March 10, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer argued against any "division of labor in which one side takes care of the fighting and the other specializes in the aftermath of the conflict." But German chancellor Angela Merkel, who shared the platform with Scheffer, said her government would not deploy forces to the south. Berlin is scheduled to send additional troops this summer to augment the 3,300 already there.

Washington is sending 3,200 additional marines to Afghanistan. Canadian Parliament voted March 13 to extend its troop commitments there to 2011 as long as other NATO powers reinforce their efforts in the south with troops and equipment.

In pushing for additional troop commitments, the Bush administration points to the degree to which the escalation of troops in Iraq last year has reduced violence there. According to official government figures, attacks dropped from about 180 a day in June 2007 to about 60 a day in January 2008. But there has been no further decrease in attacks since November, according to the *New York Times*.

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