

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Socialist workers campaign
to sell revolutionary books

— PAGE 5

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 66/NO. 11 MARCH 18, 2002

End imperialist assault on Afghanistan! U.S. out!

Back Palestinians' battle to get Israel out of occupied territories

In face of an escalating imperialist assault against workers and farmers from Palestine to Afghanistan, working people around the world can both deepen their battles against the employers and their government and demand: Washington and its allies out of Afghanistan and Central Asia! Hands off Iraq! Israel out of the occupied territories! For a democratic, secular Palestine!

EDITORIAL

The imperialist powers and their junior partner Israel, gave working people quite a taste this week of the brutal future they hold for humanity. On the military front Israel launched daily assaults against the Palestinian people; the U.S.-led "coalition" in Afghanistan began an offensive, killing hundreds of Afghans and their allies along with nine U.S. servicemen; and Washington continued to probe and build a case to attack Iraq.

Steps toward deployment of more U.S. forces in Georgia, the Philippines, Yemen, and Colombia were also taken by the U.S. rulers.

At the same time Washington continued
 Continued on Page 14



U.S. troops on way to join offensive in Gardez, Afghanistan. Pentagon has mounted brutal air onslaught, including use of 2,000-pound "thermobaric" bomb. Apologists for Washington boast that 500 Taliban and al Qaeda fighters have been killed in assault.

March condemns court reversal of cops' convictions for brutalizing Abner Louima

BY RÓGER CALERO

BROOKLYN, New York—"This is an insult to Black people," said Juanita Young, one of 150 people protesting a court decision overturning the convictions of three cops charged with brutalizing Haitian immigrant Abner Louima in 1997. "It just

shows how the laws in this country aren't made for Black people," she said. Young's son, Malcolm Ferguson, was shot and killed by the police in the Bronx while the Louima case was on trial.

The appeals court decision came a few weeks after cops killed Georgy Louisgene,

a 23-year-old Haitian worker in Brooklyn. New York cops James Muirhead and Joseph Thompson shot eight rounds at Louisgene, hitting him five times. The cops claim the

Continued on Page 11

Book on U.S. defeat at Bay of Pigs presented in Havana

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—Among the highlights of the February 7-17 Havana International Book Fair was the presentation of Pathfinder's *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández. The featured speakers at the February 14 event were Brig. Gen. Fernández, vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers, and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and co-editor of the book.

Talks at book launching by José Ramón Fernández and Mary-Alice Waters, pages 8-10

The book was published in both English and Spanish on the 40th anniversary of revolutionary Cuba's crushing defeat of the April 17-19, 1961, U.S.-organized invasion by 1,500 Cuban-born counterrevolutionaries at the Bay of Pigs on the island's southern coast. It was presented at a joint Cuba-U.S. conference, "Girón: 40 Years Later," held in Havana last March, and conference organizers gave copies to all participants in that event. Fernández, who commanded the main column of the victorious Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) at Playa Girón, was the chair of the conference's organizing committee.

Also on the platform at the meeting was Div. Gen. Samuel Rodiles, a member of the general staff of the FAR. In April 1961 Rodiles was second in command of the

Continued on Page 10

'Bring this struggle to thousands more workers and fighting youth'

Socialist Michael Italie fights political firing by Miami garment boss

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

MIAMI—Thousands of working people, students, and others have signed petitions, sent letters, and made donations across the United States as part of the fight to defend workers' rights in the case of socialist worker Michael Italie. The Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights has forwarded hundreds of petitions filled with signatures demanding Italie be reinstated at his job as a sewing machine operator at Goodwill Industries in Miami to the city's mayor and Dennis Pastrana, the company's CEO.

"Given our success so far," Italie said in an interview, "we want to ask all supporters of this fight to use the case to systematically talk to co-workers, union members involved struggles against the bosses, and working people and youth who join protest actions against police brutality, to defend immigrant rights, and other actions.

"Ask them to sign a petition, send in a letter, or make a contribution to this effort," he said. "Many will be outraged by my firing and want to talk about the issues around which I was fired, such as the Cuban Revolution, the imperialist assault on Afghanistan and working people here at home, and

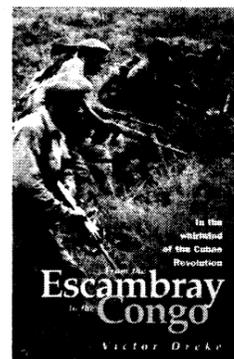
the need for workers and farmers to fight to take power out of the hands of the wealthy capitalist minority."

Italie added that he has found discussions with workers and youth people about his fight one of the best ways to introduce them to—and encourage them to join—the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists.

"Under capitalist justice the law of the land is what is known as 'employment at
 Continued on Page 4

New from Pathfinder
From the Escambray to the Congo
In the Whirlwind
of the Cuban Revolution

By Víctor Dreke
 Introduction by Mary-Alice Waters



Regional Socialist Conferences

'From the Escambray to the Congo': Report from Cuba
Join the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists
Build the world communist movement

ATLANTA – March 16-17, Reception 5:00 p.m., Meeting 6:00 p.m.
 236 Auburn Ave. NE in the Odds Fellows Building

LOS ANGELES – March 23-24 Reception 4:30 p.m., Meeting 6:00

CHICAGO – April 6-7

Hear

Mary-Alice Waters, Editor, *From the Escambray to the Congo* by Víctor Dreke; member of Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party

Jack Barnes, National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

Arrin Hawkins, Young Socialists leader and participant in Havana book fair

Linda Joyce, Pathfinder reprint project-volunteer and participant in Havana book fair

Brian Taylor, participant in Havana book fair, member of United Mine Workers of America Local 2133

Sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party branches and Young Socialists chapters in each region.

The events will coincide with meetings of socialist workers who are members of several industrial unions. United Mine Workers members will meet in Atlanta; members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees will meet in Los Angeles; and members of the United Food and Commercial Workers and the United Auto Workers will meet in Chicago.

Socialists launch campaign for mayor of Newark

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

NEWARK, New Jersey—Supporters of the socialist campaign of Maurice Williams for mayor of Newark fanned out across the city March 2-3 to kick off a petitioning drive to place Williams on the ballot.

By going door-to-door and campaigning on street corners, the socialist workers and youth collected 725 signatures the first two days of the three-week effort. Several working people who met Williams took him up on his suggestion that they join in the petitioning drive and support the campaign.

Construction worker Mike Evans approached Williams as he was collecting signatures on a street corner. "Before you say anything else, tell me do you support unions?" he asked. When Williams said he does, Evans said he is against Newark mayor Sharpe James "who helped get nonunion labor for a lot of buildings in this city. When we picketed those sites he called the cops on us."

Williams told Evans that his campaign "involves building a revolutionary party of workers. The unions are defensive organizations of the working class in its struggles against the employers and their government. That's why we support them."

"That's what I want to hear," Evans said. "I'll help you any way I can. Just give me a call."

Williams also spoke with Linda Boykin, a union member who works at nursing home in the area. After hearing what the socialist candidate had to say she said she would like him to speak at a rally her local union is planning as they prepare for contract talks.

Candidates for mayor are required to collect 1,174 signatures to obtain ballot status. Supporters of the socialist campaign plan to more than double that number and have set a goal of getting 2,500 people to sign up to give Williams a ballot slot.

The first evening of the petitioning drive the socialist campaign hosted a forum with Williams as the keynote speaker.

"My campaign provides a working-class voice of opposition to the imperialist assault

on working people. This includes the bipartisan attacks against workers and farmers at home, as well as Washington's military assault in Afghanistan, the Bush administration's drive toward war against Iraq, and Tel Aviv's unrelenting war against the Palestinian people.

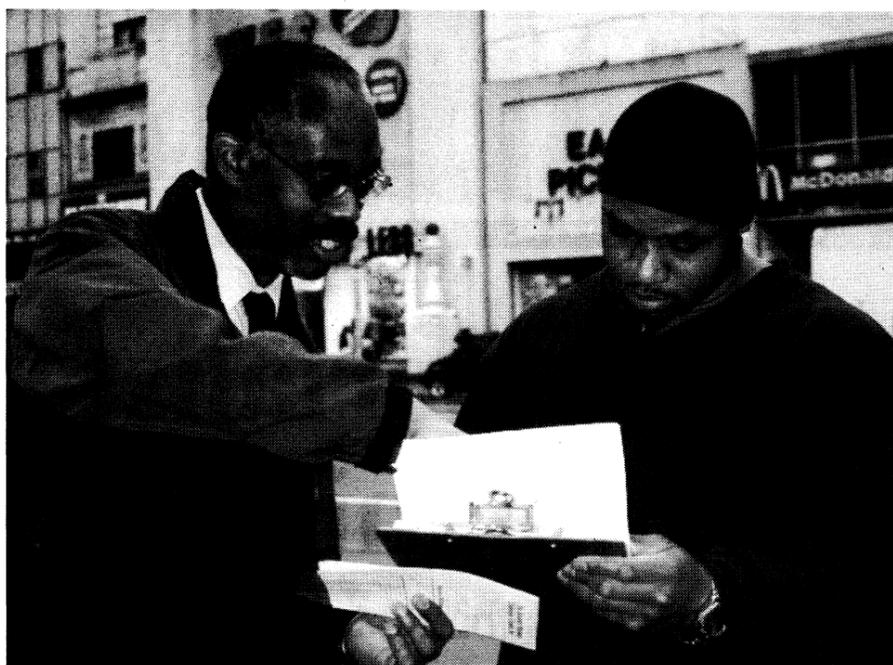
"Our campaign is seeking out workers and youth who, through their experiences and actions, are part of the leadership of working people that is emerging here and there across this country and around the world," Williams said. "We put forward a fighting, internationalist program to defend workers and farmers from the devastating effects of the capitalist economic crisis. We explain how the only way we can possibly begin to fight to win is by organizing to fight to take power out of the hands of the superwealthy—and numerically tiny—capitalist ruling class. To do this we need a revolutionary party capable of leading tens of millions of working people in that battle."

Williams said the campaign will speak in defense of the five Cuban revolutionaries framed-up by the U.S. government and sentenced to prison terms from 10 years to life for conspiracy to commit "espionage" and "murder."

"Our campaign is building support for Michael Italie, a garment worker who was the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami. He was fired from his job by Goodwill Industries because he spoke against the war in Afghanistan and called for defense of the Cuban Revolution during a televised candidates debate," Williams said. "Workers should have a right to express their opinions without being afraid of losing their jobs. This is even more outrageous because Italie was fired for saying something when he wasn't even at work."

The socialist candidate took up some of the political questions raised by incumbent mayor Sharpe James, who is running for reelection, and another Democratic mayoral candidate, Cory Booker, a 32-year-old Central Ward council member.

In his State of the City address January



Militant/Janet Post
Socialist Workers candidate for mayor Maurice Williams (left) joined campaign supporters on March 3 to canvas for signatures on petition to gain spot on Newark ballot.

31 James touted a list of buildings and new housing constructed during his 16-year tenure as reasons why he should stay in the mayors office. The buildings, which include a performing arts center and a baseball stadium in the downtown area, are hailed as a "renaissance" in a city where dilapidated and vacant buildings fill the downtown area.

Booker called James a "downtown mayor not a mayor of neighborhoods." One of the city councilman's campaign brochures mailed out to thousands of households in the city declares in reference to James, "It's time for a renaissance for the rest of us." Booker launched his run for office by living in a trailer for several months in various parts of the city in order to gain a better understanding, he says, of the situation facing regular people in Newark.

Williams said he and other working people in Newark don't need to move into a trailer to know the conditions they face. He pointed out that the social crisis in Newark is similar to, if not worse than, that facing workers and oppressed nationalities in cities across the country. This includes rising joblessness and a soaring infant mortality rate, which according to recent statistics from public health agencies is the worst in the state.

"The unemployment rate in Newark is 8.1 percent," the socialist candidate said. "This far exceeds the average in the rest of the country, which is currently 5.8 percent. These problems are social questions that won't be solved in Newark alone. It will take a broad social movement of millions of working people to change these conditions. That's why my campaign calls for a government-funded public works program to provide jobs for all. We also call for raising the minimum wage to a level where working people can receive a decent income. It takes a social movement to effectively fight for these demands."

Williams also took up the pro-cop stance of both Booker and James. Booker's program is one of law and order, calling for 200 more cops to be placed on the streets under the guise of combating "drugs and gang violence."

"The last thing we need are more cops in our neighborhoods," said Williams. "The police defend the interests of the government they serve, which is a government of big business. They serve to bring violence against workers, especially those who are Black and Latino, and frame-up working people from Newark to Los Angeles. We join actions against police brutality and call for jailing cops who kill people—like the killers who gunned down African immigrant Amadou Diallo a couple of years ago in New York. The cops who brutalized Abner Louima should not be let off the hook but remain in jail."

Williams called for supporting the upcoming walk by widows of coal miners who are demanding the federal government fully fund the benefit program for miners who contract black lung disease. They are organizing rallies and events along their route from Charleston, West Virginia, to Washington. "These fighting women are setting an example for the entire labor movement," Williams said. "We need to encourage our co-workers and union locals to join them in this fight."

Those who would like to join the socialist campaign effort can call 973-643-3341 or e-mail the campaign at swpnewark@yahoo.com.

Nancy Rosenstock is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

THE MILITANT

Defend the social wage

The fight to defend the social wage has broad implications for workers, farmers, and the oppressed. Workers and youth involved in the fight for wages, medical care, health and safety on and off the job, and against racist and sexist discrimination need to read the 'Militant.' Don't miss an issue.



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$10 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$15 for 12 weeks

\$27 for 6 months

\$45 for 1 year

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____ PHONE _____
CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,
410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A20 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • France, 12 Euros • Iceland, Kr1,800 • New Zealand, NZ\$20 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

Order revolutionary books on the Internet!

pathfinderpress.com

The Militant

Vol. 66/No. 11
Closing news date: March 6, 2002

Editor: GREG McCARTAN
Business Manager: JACK WILLEY
Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Martin Koppel, Jack Willey, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

Young Socialists column editor: ROMINA GREEN

Published weekly except for one week in June, August and December.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

E-mail: TheMilitant@compuserve.com

The Militant website is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to

above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80.

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

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4613 St. Laurent, Montreal, Quebec H2T 1R2.

Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East: £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address.

France: Send 65 euros for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U.

Iceland: Send 6,500 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 550 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. Australia: Send Australian \$90 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. Pacific Islands: Send New Zealand \$90 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.

Bush proposals build on bipartisan attacks on Social Security

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Bush administration announced at the end of February its proposals for another round of assaults on Social Security, welfare benefits, and against single women heading households.

Major parts of the bipartisan Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act signed by William Clinton in 1996—and touted by him as among his greatest achievements—expire September 30 unless they are reauthorized by Congress. A debate between the two big-business parties over what further inroads they can make against working people will take place over the next several months on Capitol Hill.

Speaking at the predominantly Black St. Luke's Catholic Church in Washington six years after Clinton ended "welfare as we know it," Bush called for tougher requirements for those applying for benefits.

He also added his voice to a reactionary campaign to federally finance programs encouraging single women who have children and receive some form of federal assistance to get married.

The new welfare requirements promoted by Bush would require 70 percent of welfare recipients in a state to have jobs by 2007. The current requirement is 50 percent. Bush also stipulated that people receiving welfare benefits must work 40 hours a week in place of the current requirement of a 30-hour workweek for single parents and 35 hours for people who are married.

The president's proposal would also maintain the five-year ban on welfare benefits for immigrants who entered the United States after 1996, imposed under the law signed by Clinton. That sweeping measure also eliminated the federally funded entitlement Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and placed a five-year lifetime limit on any individual's ability to collect welfare payments. The elimination of the AFDC program, which was part of the 1935 Social Security Act, was the biggest single blow to this entitlement since its enactment. Assessing the impact of the legislation, government officials say the number of people receiving welfare dropped from 12.2 million in 1996 to 5.3 million today.

Leading Democrats struck a bipartisan note in response to the Bush proposals. A spokeswoman for liberal Democrat Edward Kennedy, chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee that will vote on Bush's welfare proposal, said the senator was "committed to working with the administration to reauthorize the welfare program to ensure that we're doing everything we can to reduce poverty and make work pay for all Americans."

The *New York Times* reported that House Democrats "accepted the basic structure of the 1996 law" and pledged that they "would maintain the law's emphasis on work and would not try to restore the individual entitlement to cash assistance" that was abolished by the Clinton legislation.

Benjamin Cardin of Maryland, the chief sponsor of the Democrat's legislation in the House and a supporter of the 1996 bill, admitted that many families "are not leaving

poverty when they leave welfare for work. Some families at the very bottom of the income scale may have lost ground over the last five years because of a reduction in various forms of public assistance."

As the jobless rate continues to climb—an estimated 1.4 million workers have lost their jobs since the recession began last March—cities and states are slashing budgets, deeply affecting those put into make-work programs.

For example, in New York City, thousands of workers who participated in workfare programs have been dismissed from their jobs as they have reached the time limits for receiving welfare benefits. In January, New York's welfare commissioner ordered the firing of 3,500 workers who had been employed cleaning up city parks.

Chipping away at Social Security

In line with the proposed assault on welfare benefits, Bush revived his scheme for chipping away at Social Security as a universal entitlement. At the February 28 Summit on Retirement Savings sponsored by the Labor Department he said people should be allowed to invest part of their Social Security payroll deduction in the stock market. The administration has touted this proposal since the election campaign in 2000, but has kept quiet about it over the past six months as the stock market, in the grip of the recession, has suffered sharp drops and gyrations.

Casting Social Security as solely a government pension plan, Bush put forward claims that even the big-business press found hard to swallow. "Someone retiring today after 45 years of work would be entitled to a monthly benefit of \$1,128 a month from Social Security," he stated. "If those same taxes had been invested in the stock market over the last 45 years, during the same period of time, that person would now have a nest egg of \$590,000, or income of more than \$3,700 a month."

A number of journalists were quick to point out that this example requires investments to have been made in the best period of stock market returns in history and for an average income-earner to have invested every cent of their retirement savings in the stock market for their entire working life.

Even a Wall Street sharpie like Harold Evensky, a principal partner in the financial planning firm Evensky, Brown & Katz, found the proposal a little over the top. Putting a person's entire saving into the stock market "is ill-advised at best and unconscionable at worst," he told the press.

Social Security, won through massive struggles of working people in the 1930s and expanded through the civil rights movement and women's struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, provides not only an old-age pension, but disability payments for those

'Reinstate hotel workers now'



Militant/Doug Cooper

"No paradise in Shangri-la! Reinstate the workers now!" was one of the chants at a picket line of up to 30 people outside the offices of Shangri-la in Sydney, Australia, February 21. The action was called in solidarity with the 5-star hotel's 600 workers locked out in Jakarta, Indonesia, since December 2000. Despite violent intimidation, arrests, and an expensive lawsuit by the hotel owners—one of the largest chains in south and east Asia—the locked-out unionists have continued their fight to defend their jobs and union rights. The Sydney picket was organized by the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union as part of international solidarity actions in several countries in February.

injured or otherwise unable to be gainfully employed during their working years, and dependent coverage for minors whose parents or main income-earner in the family are killed or disabled.

After his speech to the retirement saving conference Bush flew to Iowa where he spoke about retirement security and "pension plan abuse" to workers and others at a printing shop. He mentioned that his solution to preventing future Enron-type debacles would involve allowing workers to sell any stock their company contributes to their 401(k) retirement accounts or other retirement plans after three years—a proposal he made in January in response to the Enron Corporation's bankruptcy. In the wake of the company's collapse, workers were left with a worthless 401(k) retirement fund. The Enron bosses also fired some 4,300 Houston-area employees, leaving them without health insurance.

Campaign against 'unwed mothers'

As the economy continues its downward slide, the Bush administration is spearheading an ideological campaign to place growing economic and social responsibilities onto working-class families. The president picked up where the Clinton administration left off in scapegoating "unmarried women" with children and "broken families" for social problems in capitalist society.

"Statistics tell us that children from two-parent families are less likely to end up in poverty, drop out of school, become addicted to drugs, have a child out of wedlock, suffer abuse or become a violent criminal and end up in prison," Bush told the church audience in the nation's capital.

Single mothers' "lives and their children's lives would be better if their fathers had lived up to their responsibilities," he added.

Bush called for the government to allocate \$100 million annually to promote marriage programs that include "state and local experiments for counseling, education and research to foster sound marriages," the *Washington Post* reported.

Bush also made a pitch for his \$135 million abstinence education proposal. "Abstinence is the surest way and the only completely effective way to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases," he said.

In this ideological push, Bush is addressing from the point of view of the capitalist rulers and the social layers that look to them what they consider a giant problem: the historic changes in the family structure in the United States over the last half century. The number of children born to women who are not married is now at 31 percent, while the percentage of households headed by married couples dropped from 80 percent in 1900 to a little more than 50 percent today. The rate of divorce has jumped sharply since 1960. Between 1950 and 1998, the percentage of working-age women who hold jobs outside the home nearly doubled, rising from 33.9 percent to 59.8 percent.

This "pro-marriage" offensive aims to reinforce the family as a crucial economic institution under capitalism. Secretary of Health and Human Services Thomas Thompson said that in addition to federal financing of these programs, the administration will provide matching grants to the states to "strengthen families and reduce out-of-wedlock births."

Wyoming miner killed by company greed

BY HELEN MEYERS

CRAIG, Colorado—On February 20 Allen Greger, an equipment operator for 20 years at Arch Coal's Black Thunder Mine in Wyoming, was killed on the job. He was operating a bulldozer doing routine cleanup around a coal loading shovel when a large chunk of sandstone overburden fell off the high wall, crumbled into sand, smashed the cab of the dozer, and packed sand inside. The high wall is the highly unstable side of a pit that is exposed after explosives have been used.

Another accident occurred a month earlier in which Black Thunder worker Les Butts was critically injured when a boulder fell off a high wall and struck the cab of the cable-reel truck he was driving. Butts remains in the hospital today, paralyzed from the waist down.

Black Thunder is the second-largest coal mine in the United States, employing 500 people. In 2001 Black Thunder produced 67.6 million tons of coal. It is located in the Powder River Basin of northeast Wyoming where 30 percent of the nation's coal

is produced.

After the January accident officials of the Mine, Health and Safety Administration (MSHA) told Black Thunder it should increase the number of inspections at work sites and on the high walls in particular. MSHA regulations call for one work site and high wall inspection per 12-hour shift.

"We've talked to the mine operator in terms of making more than one examination per shift...especially when weather conditions could be aggravating conditions," said Allyn Davis, MSHA district director. Davis also said MSHA urged the mine owners to organize more than drive-by inspections and to instead have inspectors walk along the surface of the mine's high wall.

Constant fluctuations of temperatures from above to below freezing causes material to contract and expand and tends to loosen overburden material along high walls. This process can quickly change the safety status of a work site, Davis said.

Black Thunder official Greg Schaefer said in response that a state-certified mine supervisor and a state mine inspector had

checked the section of high wall that sloughed off and killed Greger one-and-a-half hours before the accident. He stated that Black Thunder follows the same practice as many surface mines which run a bulldozer with a heavy chain attached along the top of the high wall each day to clean and loosen material that could potentially fall from the edge.

MSHA ordered the pit where the accident occurred shut down until an investigation is completed. The company complied by shutting the entire mine down until the next day.

Black Thunder, along with Kennecott's Jacob Ranch Mine and Tritan Coal Company's North Antelope/Rochelle Mine—also located in the Powder River Basin, were cited by the Air Quality Division of the Department of Environmental Quality for high particulate measurements and for frequent high emissions levels over the last two years.

Helen Meyers previously worked at the Black Thunder Mine.

Militant Prisoner Fund

The *Militant* offers reduced subscription rates to workers and farmers behind bars. A six-month subscription costs \$6, and one year costs \$12. We send a free sample copy on request. Free complimentary subscriptions are sent on a first-come first-served basis according to budgetary constraints.

Contributions make these special rates possible for those who cannot afford regular rates. Please write your check payable to the *Militant* and send your donation to:

Militant Prisoner Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

'Bring this fight to more workers, youth'

Continued from front page will," the socialist worker said. "What this means is the boss can fire a worker for any reason, or no reason at all. It is only when there is a specific law against their action—such as discrimination or involvement in a union organizing effort—that a firing becomes illegal under the law.

"Goodwill bosses told me and the *Miami Herald* that they fired me for the political view I voiced as the SWP candidate for mayor of Miami during a televised candidates debate," he said. "My defense of Cuba and opposition to Washington's war against Afghanistan as a candidate in Miami was not their idea of the kind of worker they want around."

The only way working people have expanded workers' rights in relation to the boss, Italie said, has been through struggles to form unions and battles to oppose racism and discrimination against women, among others. This has curbed the employers' unlimited "right" to hire and fire whomever they want and has led to the expansion of democratic rights for all. "That is what this fight against Goodwill is all about," he said.

Invitation from meat packers

"Perhaps the most important invitation I have received was from members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) who work at Wolverine Packing in Detroit," said Italie. Written in Spanish and signed by 10 meat packers, the February 12 letter states, "We have learned about the injustices committed against you, and we hope to count on your presence here in order to analyze this and to accept our modest help for your struggle to express your ideas." The meat packers promoted the meeting among co-workers, and the discussion was held at the home of one of these unionists.

"The workers wanted to learn about my fight, but soon began raising ideas about broader political issues," Italie said. "The majority of the nine or ten workers there that evening were of Mexican background, and one brought in an issue of *Time* magazine that reflected some of the debate in the ruling class in this country about 'what to do about immigration.' We discussed why bosses promote anti-immigrant bigotry in order to divide the working class. We went on to discuss the newest Pathfinder Press title, *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, by Victor Dreke.

"When I encouraged everyone at the gathering to get a copy and read the book because it explains so well what the Cuban revolution stands for and as an example of what we can do here," Italie said, "one worker pulled out his copy of the book to show he had already started reading it." Two of the workers from Wolverine wanted to follow up this discussion and came to the public program held in Detroit three days later. Meat packers from the plant contributed \$120 toward the tour expenses.

The effort to win support for this fight,

said Italie "is financed by workers, who drop some money in the bucket when it gets passed around at meetings or put a check in the mail. No corporate funds or grants have contributed a dime to this fight."

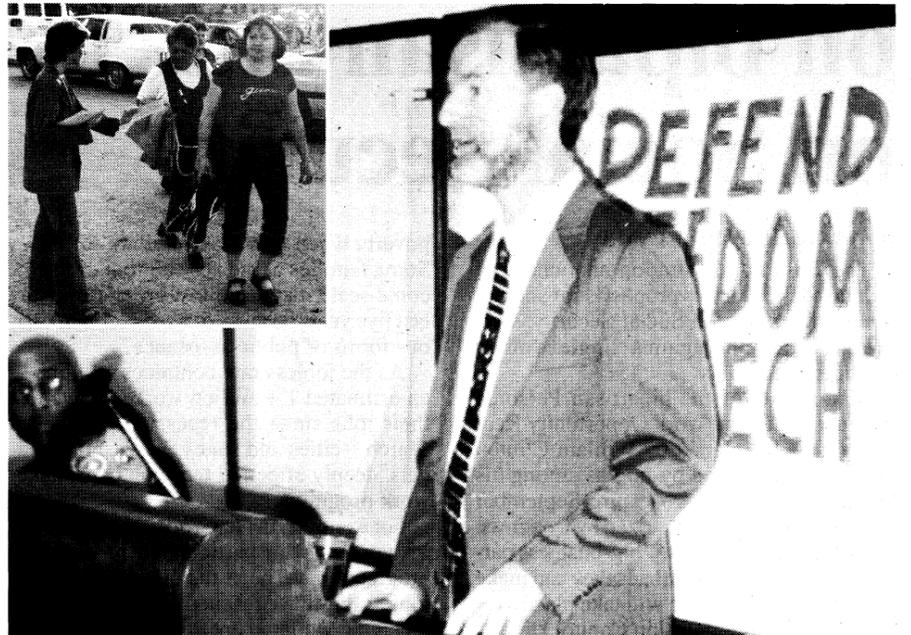
Signing up co-workers

A railworker in Washington is setting a good example of what can be done to win support among union members and workers, Italie said. This union member has sent the committee in Miami one or two petitions filled with 18 signatures of co-workers every few weeks for the last several months.

"When I arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina, in January," Italie reported, "supporters of my fight turned over petitions filled with signatures of textile workers who work at the Pillowtex plants in Kannapolis." The plants are organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

"There had been several unsuccessful union organizing drives at this plant over a 25-year period before the workers scored a victory in 1999," he said. "The bosses hoped to prevent a union victory by hiring large numbers of immigrant workers in order to divide the workforce, but instead many immigrant workers took the lead in joining the union organizing campaign and helped to assure its victory. So it was no surprise that among the many signatures gathered in the plant for my fight, there were many from immigrants from Latin America."

In addition to the petitions that workers have gathered around the country protesting the firing, workers have sent letters to the mayor of Miami. A coal miner from Colorado sent the following: "I'm a coal miner, member of the United Mine Workers of America and vocal in my union. If Mr. Italie can lose his job for voicing an opposing opinion, I feel that I and all of my fellow workers can lose theirs for voicing their opinion. Even though I oppose his views on Afghanistan, I feel that he has a right as an American to publicly voice his



Militant/Dean Hazlewood; Inset: Eric Simpson
Mike Italie speaks in North Carolina on January 23. Inset: supporter of his campaign hands out flyers to Italie's co-workers at the Goodwill Industries plant.

political views without losing his livelihood. As mayor of Miami, representing all the people of Miami, it is your responsibility to address this wrong."

Several workers at a Goodwill facility in Connecticut also sent a letter of support, explaining the conditions they face at the company in that state.

Students have also been important supporters of the fight, Italie noted. "At campus events from Muncie, Indiana, to Seattle, Washington, to Tampa, Florida, and Brownsville, Texas, students were eager to work through many issues," he said. Among the questions asked have been how a company like Goodwill gets away with paying disabled workers less than the minimum wage; is it possible to speak out in support of the Palestinian struggle at a time when there are so many attacks on Arabs and

Muslims in the United States; and what can be done in the face of all these injustices.

"The national speaking tour," said Italie, "demonstrates the growing opportunities to build the communist movement, and win fighters to the ranks of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. In response to the question 'What can we do in the face of all of these injustices?' I say: join the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists, the revolutionary organizations that are fighting for a world where freedom of speech is a reality, and the capitalist system of war, racism and brutality is wiped off the face of the earth for all time. Workers and young people have been joining the communist movement from Muncie to Miami, and we'll work to make the list grow. I encourage all supporters of this fight to organize a tour in your area."

Meat packers welcome Italie in Detroit

BY PETER THIERJUNG

DETROIT—"Free speech, you have to have it, or you defeat the idea of a union and having a contract. Without it, management becomes a dictatorship," Herman Harper told a February 22 meeting here as part of the nationwide fight to defend workers' rights and win support for Michael Italie.

Italie is a socialist worker fired from his job as a sewing machine operator by Goodwill Industries in Miami last October. He was dismissed after speaking out in defense of the Cuban Revolution and opposing the U.S. imperialist assault on Afghanistan during a televised candidates' debate. Italie was the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Mayor of Miami.

Harper is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 876 and a 21-year employee at the Dearborn Sausage Co. just outside Detroit. Some 57 workers there walked out on strike six weeks ago against company demands for concessions that would gut the union. Harper said that Italie's political firing is "absolutely horrifying" and needs to be reversed.

"When you're striking, your mind opens up, and you begin to see how strong you can be," Harper explained. He described the support the strikers had received as members of Local 876 and other unionists have stopped by the picket line to show their support. On February 15, some 300 unionists from the UFCW, United Auto Workers, United Steel Workers of America, and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) attended a rally outside the plant sponsored by the Michigan AFL-CIO.

"While the number of strikers is not large," Italie told the meeting, "their determination points the way forward for much broader layers of workers who have learned about and are inspired by their action and resistance. They are having an impact far greater than their numbers."

Italie joined the picket line the next day to express his solidarity with the strikers and explained his fight to some of the UFCW members on the line. "That's a violation of your free speech," they said as soon as Italie explained the background to his firing by Goodwill, and how he had been the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami and had expressed his opposition to the war in Afghanistan.

On the same day, Italie attended a CWA rally of about 100 people. Several unionists signed his petitions.

In his talk to the meeting here, Italie noted an editorial in the *Detroit News* which described Iraq as the "pivot of the axis of evil." Washington is now trying to build a case to go to war to topple the government in Iraq, the socialist worker said. "The imperialists want to expand their domination in the Middle East, establish a mandate over Iraq, increase their control over oil profits, and strike blows at the Palestinian and Kurdish national liberation struggles."

Italie was introduced to the meeting by Francisco Rodriguez, a meat packer in Detroit's Eastern Market district and also a member of UFCW Local 876. Rodriguez explained how after he and several of his coworkers had been following Italie's fight in *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant* they decided to write Italie inviting him to a house meeting to discuss his case and its importance for workers' rights.

Seven co-workers along with some family members, most of them immigrants from Mexico, attended the house meeting with Italie and the discussion not only took up his case but touched on a wide variety of issues that the workers were concerned about.

One worker asked Italie what he thought about immigrants coming to the U.S. to work and make a living and another pulled out a copy of *Time* magazine with an article about the situation of immigrant workers in this country. "I'm for a world without borders," Italie said. "I think no human being is illegal. We are all part of an international working class. The bosses use the borders to divide us."

Another worker urged Italie to move to Michigan to get away from the poor working conditions at Goodwill and the attack on his rights by the company. To this Rodriguez countered that conditions in Michigan were no different than those faced by workers in Florida because of capitalism. "A victory in Mike's fight would advance the rights of workers everywhere," he explained.

Inspired by their exchange with Italie, the UFCW members took up a collection among themselves over the next couple of days and contributed \$120 toward the \$685 dollars raised during Italie's stop here.

Letters of protest against Italie's firing from Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit and by United Steelworkers Local 1900 president Les Caulford were read at the meeting. The letters were sent to the mayor of Miami and Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana.

Peter Thierjung is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876.

U.S. rulers back Bogotá's offensive

BY RÓGER CALERO

The U.S. Congress is considering making a shift in its public stance of restricting the Colombian government's use of military aid to the fight against "drug trafficking."

According to the *Washington Post*, high-ranking members of the House Foreign Operations Appropriations subcommittee suggested that the Bush administration was very likely to find a "receptive audience" to a proposal to help Colombia fight "domestic terrorism."

Until now, official U.S. policy has barred use of some \$2 billion in military aid pro-

vided to Colombia to fight the opposition guerrilla army, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Last week the regime launched an offensive to retake a large swath of territory it granted the rebels as part of a negotiations process.

"There is just more support now," a subcommittee aide told the *Post*. The lawmakers have pointed to the change in Washington's designation of FARC from "insurgents" to "terrorists" as enough justification for the shift in policy.

The Bush administration has requested \$600 million for 2003 to fight "drug trafficking," and an additional \$98 million for training and equipment for an army brigade to protect an oil pipeline. It has also authorized providing the Colombian military with intelligence and other aid to combat the guerrilla army.

"Colombia is not asking for anything out of the ordinary," said the Colombian ambassador to the United States. "There is a large amount of equipment in Colombia that we can use to improve our armed forces to prevent attacks and to pursue the terrorists." The equipment includes 12 Black Hawk helicopters that could be quickly upgraded for combat use.

The Communist Manifesto

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels



Founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communism is derived not from preconceived principles but from facts and proletarian movements springing from the actual class struggle. \$3.95

From bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or visit www.pathfinderpress.com

Drive to sell 'From the Escambray to the Congo' is launched

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Socialist workers and Young Socialists around the world have begun an international campaign to sell *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke to co-workers, participants in union strikes and social struggles, fighting farmers, and others. They are also making initial progress in introducing the new Pathfinder title to buyers at bookstores in a number of cities, broadening the number of places where workers and youth can find the book.

In local areas supporters of Pathfinder are taking goals for sales of *From the Escambray to the Congo* between March 16—the first of the regional meetings in the United States publicized on page 1—and early June. Books sold in these areas since its publication in late January will be counted toward the goals.

Dreke fought in the Cuban revolutionary war, led by the Rebel Army, that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. In the early 1960s he was a commander of the volunteer battalions that fought the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba. In 1965 he was second in command of the column of Cuban internationalist volunteers, headed by Ernesto Che Guevara, that joined with national liberation fighters in the Congo. He subsequently carried out numerous internationalist missions in Africa.

In her remarks at the launching of *From the Escambray to the Congo* at the recent Havana International Book Fair last month, and some dozen other meetings there and across central Cuba, Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters pointed out that through reading this book, "we see the capacity of ordinary men and women—workers, farmers, students, shopkeepers, housewives—to transform themselves as they cease being victims and 'dare to storm the gates of heaven' (to borrow Marx's eloquent description of the men and women of the Paris Commune). That is the lesson of the Cuban Revolution. *Si, se puede.*"

In the United States, especially, "Dreke's story has an additional powerful message," Waters said. "It shows us the kind of revolutionary power of the workers and farmers necessary to even begin to eradicate the legacy of centuries of African slavery in our hemisphere. Whatever its imperfections, only socialist Cuba provides an example of how the racist discrimination that still permeates all aspects of social and economic relations in the United States—and elsewhere throughout the Americas—can be eliminated."

Through the course of this sales effort, socialist workers and YS members are utilizing *From the Escambray to the Congo* to bring a revolutionary perspective and a deeper understanding of the Cuban Revolution to those who purchase the book on the job, at literature tables set up in workers district, Pathfinder bookstores, and political events.

Selling, reading, and holding discussions on the book will be an important part of building the Socialist Workers Party and winning new members to its ranks. Sales of this book also go hand in hand with introducing hundreds of fighting workers and youth to the broad range of revolutionary literature available from Pathfinder.

Socialist garment workers and meat packers organized in the SWP's national trade union fractions in the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), have set goals for sales of the book to run from the time it was released until their national fraction meetings later this month and in early April.

"Campaigning with this new book will give a boost to our ongoing efforts to increase sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets on the job," wrote Naomi Craine for the UNITE National Fraction Steering Committee in a February 5 letter to local fractions.

"Lessons from the initial two months of sales, classes, and broad political use of this book will make the national fraction meeting stronger," said a letter from the UFCW National Fraction Steering Committee.

Sales by socialist workers in Washington of 24 copies of the book helped to lift January totals to \$640, just \$10 short of the local Pathfinder Bookstore's monthly goal. In Upper Manhattan 39 books have been sold, boosting the bookstore's January sales totals to more than \$950.

The international effort to sell and promote the book "will make a substantial contribution to the success of meeting the goal of \$500,000 in sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets between Jan. 1, 2001, and July 1, 2002," said Steve Clark, Pathfinder's editorial director, in an interview.

Reaching out to Black community

"We have special opportunities with this book to get placements in bookstores in the Black community," said Clark, "to sell and discuss this book with co-workers who are Black, to take it to organizations involved in struggles against racist discrimination, to get reviews in the Black press, and to organize discussions of it with Afro-American student organizations and departments on college campuses."

The week *From the Escambray to the Congo* arrived in Toronto, Pathfinder sales representatives took it to three bookstores focusing on Black, African, and Caribbean titles. They sold 14 copies, and placed a range of other Pathfinder books. In Atlanta, supporters placed a \$1,400 order at a bookstore there, including three copies of the new book and 33 other titles. A team of two supporters in the United Kingdom sold 14 copies during a trip to Dublin and Belfast. This was part of the 344 books and pamphlets they sold and placed during the visit.

"Pathfinder came close to making the \$325,000 goal we had set for January 1 of this year, netting \$321,200 by that time," said Clark. "As of the end of February, Pathfinder's net sales since Jan. 1, 2001, stood at \$388,700. This leaves \$111,300 to make our goal of selling half a million dollars in Pathfinder books and pamphlets by July 1, 2002."

To make the goal, supporters will need to make effective use of Pathfinder bookstores



Toronto bookstore displays Pathfinder titles and posters during Black History Month. Militant/Katy LeRougetel

in workers districts and weekly street-corner literature tables; to sell books on the job and at plant-gate sales; to get Pathfinder titles placed in retail bookstores and libraries; to increase the sale of communist literature at weekly Militant Labor Forums; and to set up tables at political events, strikes, social protest actions, and college campuses.

"The first two months of 2002 were good ones for Pathfinder sales," said Clark, "netting \$37,825 in January and \$29,670 in February. This included substantial numbers of classroom adoptions, some of them the direct result of work by volunteer Pathfinder sales representatives."

An order for 400 copies of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* was placed for a college course at a university in Texas. In the San Francisco Bay Area, Pathfinder representatives made 79 visits and sold 704 books during 2001, for a total of nearly \$7,000. In the United Kingdom, sales representatives sold more than \$3,000 worth of books last year.

Book sales can be substantially boosted through participation in regional book fairs and other related events occurring throughout the country. In February, for example, supporters in Houston sold 56 books and pamphlets totaling more than \$600 out of a booth at the five-day National Association of African American Studies.

In Miami, 127 books and pamphlets to a value of more than \$1,000 were sold at the annual book fair in December. At the Latino Book and Family Festival held in Los Angeles in October, supporters sold \$600 in Pathfinder literature plus 10 *Militant* subscriptions and 6 subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Other events that have been a boost to Pathfinder sales have included the Southeast Booksellers trade show in Memphis in September and the Printers Row book fair in Chicago.

Upcoming events where Pathfinder booths or literature tables are planned include the America Library Association convention taking place in Atlanta in June. In New York City Pathfinder has reserved a booth at the May 3-5 Book Expo to be held at the Javits Center in Manhattan. This American Booksellers Association event is the largest book trade show in the United States.

"Making our July 1, 2002, goal, plus what Pathfinder supporters have already accomplished along this course, is a truly international effort," said Clark. "Sales of Pathfinder books in Canada last year increased 220 percent over 2001, both through sales to retail outlets and direct sales by party and YS members. Sales in the United Kingdom in 2002 were up nearly 10 percent over the year before. The London bookshop is our flagship, with sales of roughly \$1,400 a month."

U.S. steel tariffs threaten to spark trade war

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With President George Bush set to decide on whether to impose tariffs of up to 40 percent on steel imports, European Union (EU)-member nations are preparing their own retaliatory measures in what could develop into a serious trade war.

As we go to press...

On March 5 Bush announced tariffs of up to 30 percent on most imported steel. The countries hardest hit by the measure are Japan, south Korea, China, Taiwan, Germany, and Brazil. Governments of the European imperialist powers and Japan said that "they would almost certainly challenge the action before the World Trade Organization, setting the stage for a major trade fight," reported the *New York Times*.

Brussels has warned Washington that if it goes ahead with the steel tariffs, then the EU will immediately withdraw from talks in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development aimed at voluntarily cutting steel production worldwide and reducing subsidies to the industry.

In addition, the EU would respond with steps designed to prevent "its market from being swamped by a wave of imports diverted from the United States," stated a *Financial Times* article. "We are ready to act quite quickly," said one EU official.

"The erection of barriers around the world's two largest steel markets would create turmoil in the sector and risk setting off an international chain reaction of protectionist measures," noted the *Times*.

The U.S. steel bosses are arguing for import restrictions at a time when most steel imports have actually been falling over the past several years, after reaching high lev-

els in the late 1990s during the collapse of the Asian markets.

According to the capitalist rulers, the steel crisis stems from a worldwide overcapacity of steel production, which has driven prices to some of their lowest levels in 20 years.

In capitalist terms, overcapacity means that too much steel is being produced for the steel barons to sell at a profit, not that there is no need for this amount of steel in the world.

Argentine honey makers get taste of Washington's free-trade hypocrisy

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While claiming they're for free trade when it comes to opening markets for their products abroad, Washington imposes some of the most restrictive barriers on other countries seeking to sell their products in the U.S. market. This is especially true for semicolonial countries which already face unequal terms of trade vis-a-vis the imperialist powers.

The case of honey produced in Argentina, for example, made headlines this week. With typical imperial arrogance, U.S. treasury secretary Paul O'Neill said last summer of Argentina: "They don't have any export industry to speak of at all. And they like it that way."

Despite O'Neill's claim, Argentina has become the world's leading exporter of honey over the past decade, selling nearly 90,000 tons a year to foreign markets. Until recently almost half of it was going to the United States. In November, however, in response to complaints of dumping by U.S. honey producers, the Commerce Depart-

The EU Commission has stated its intention to challenge any U.S. curbs on steel imports in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

EU officials got a boost for their stance in late February, when a WTO appellate body ruled that Washington "had violated rules by restricting imports of south Korean line pipe without showing that these had caused problems for American steel producers," the *Times* reported.

ment placed a tariff of up to 66 percent on Argentine honey, effectively shutting it out of the U.S. market.

Nicholas Sargeantson, president of Sunland International, an importer of Argentine honey based in New Canaan, Connecticut, said the Commerce Department ruling illustrates "the immense hypocrisy of U.S. trade law."

"On the one hand, the U.S. advocates to the world to tear down trade barriers," he said, "but on the other it has these wonderfully convenient dumping laws which enable domestic producers to bring a case against foreign suppliers any time they see competition they don't like."

"This always happens," commented José Ignacio de Mendiguren, Argentina's minister of production. "It happened with lemons too. Whatever Argentina is capable of exporting we know that the United States will administer its own trade in such a way as to be able to protect its own producers at our expense."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves.

Ashcroft's loaded indictment of Lindh draws fire from right

MAURICE WILLIAMS

In a blistering column, David Kopel of the conservative *National Review* magazine pointed out on February 19 that U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft's handling of the John Walker Lindh case violated ethics rules of the state of Virginia.

"The gratuitous comments by the attorney general did not enhance public safety, or provide any other special public benefit," Kopel wrote. Ashcroft's remarks, he added, "were inappropriate" and "might unintentionally imperil successful prosecutions."

Kopel was responding to a February 5 press conference by Ashcroft announcing the indictment of Lindh by a federal grand jury. Walker Lindh, a U.S. citizen, was captured in Afghanistan last year as Washington conducted its bombing raids and other military operations there.

Ashcroft said the grand jury in the Eastern District of Virginia filed a 10-count indictment against Lindh that included "conspiracy to murder U.S. citizens" and "providing material support and resources to terrorist organizations." Ashcroft claimed that the charges were based "in part on voluntary statements" made by Lindh, who faces multiple life sentences if found guilty and convicted.

"Americans who love their country do not dedicate themselves to killing Americans," said Ashcroft. Thus, he said, the grand jury indictments were filed to "secure justice for the nation that John Walker Lindh betrayed and they will uphold the values that he dedicated himself to destroy."

The head of the Justice Department said the "United States is a country that cherishes religious tolerance, political democracy, and equality between men and women. By his own account, John Walker Lindh allied himself with terrorists who reject these values."

Ashcroft's "plainly negative statements about Lindh's character" appear to be a breach of Virginia's rules of legal ethics, said Kopel. "Legal ethics rules have long forbid-

den prosecutors and defense attorneys to try their cases in public."

He pointed to a section of "Virginia's Rules of Professional Conduct" which states: "A lawyer participating in or associated with the investigation or the prosecution of a criminal matter that may be tried by a jury shall not make or participate in making an extrajudicial statement that a reasonable person would expect to be disseminated by means of public communication that the lawyer knows, or should know, will have a substantial likelihood of interfering with the fairness of the trial by a jury."

Kopel said that Ashcroft's "observations about Lindh's character" also deviated from guidelines of the Justice Department's Code of Federal Regulations that supposedly prohibit "subjective observations."

Kopel noted that those involved with the prosecution cannot publicly reveal the contents of any confession or statement by the defendant, another rule apparently violated by Ashcroft. Even though some counts of the indictment could be based on a CNN interview given by Lindh, evidence that he decided to "dedicate" himself to "killing Americans" is not among them.

The attorney general's defiance of these guidelines as well as Virginia's rules of legal ethics "gives Lindh's attorney a plausible basis for arguing that Ashcroft's comments deprived Lindh of the possibility of a fair trial," said Kopel. "Lindh's attorney now has a basis for a new argument with a non-trivial chance of success."

Kopel noted that the U.S. Congress enacted legislation in 1999 that bound federal attorneys to state rules of legal ethics. Unsuccessful attempts were made to repeal this statute during the passage of the USA Patriot Act signed into law by Bush October 26. Under the guise of fighting "terrorism," that bipartisan measure gave wider latitude to the FBI and other political police agencies to conduct spying and disruption operations against individuals and voluntary



U.S. attorney general John Ashcroft announced indictment of John Walker Lindh on February 5. Right-wing columnists have voiced fears that Ashcroft's "gratuitous comments" in support of the prosecution's case might "imperil the prosecution."

associations, carry out arbitrary searches and seizures in private homes and businesses, and jail immigrants indefinitely with virtually no charges.

"Urban warfare" exercises

As Washington prepares the trial of John Walker Lindh to bolster its antiterror campaign in the assault on workers' rights, the U.S. military has also begun conducting "urban warfare" exercises "aimed at improving tactics in the U.S. war on terrorism," according to a Reuters dispatch. About 300 Marines practiced "reconnaissance and house and vehicle searches" in downtown North Little Rock, Arkansas, in February. The war games took place in nearby neighborhoods, on key bridges, and at a nuclear power plant. The soldiers hunted for "mock combatants" and practiced "interrogation techniques."

Jenny Holbert, a Marine Corps public affairs officer in Quantico, Virginia, said, "It's the first time we've done such training in real neighborhoods, with the tempo of a city—people walking dogs, going about their lives." The military maneuver, organized by the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, also included cops, city workers, and officials.

A "mock commando raid" took place Feb-

ruary 20 in Phoenix Site, Nevada, where U.S. senator Harry Reid proposes to set up a "National Training Center for Combating Terrorism." The military demonstration involved a SWAT team that supposedly practiced securing a nuclear processing plant, saving hostages, driving "Al Qaeda intruders" off, and dismantling a "crude atomic device."

The site is one of several around the country under survey by Thomas Ridge, director of "homeland security," as potential military training grounds for counterterrorism. According to the *New York Times* other sites being considered for "counterterrorism training," include one in Cincinnati, where Ridge spent a morning reviewing a demonstration by an "urban assault team."

Last April working people and youth in Cincinnati's Black community, along with other opponents of police brutality and racism, held demonstrations on a nearly daily basis for more than a week to protest the cop killing of 19-year-old Timothy Thomas. The mayor declared a state of emergency and instituted a curfew as more than 850 people were arrested. He also threatened to call the Ohio National Guard and hinted at bringing in tanks to suppress the protests.

One military exercise in North Carolina didn't end up quite as planned. One Special Forces soldier was killed and another severely wounded at the end of February after the two were stopped by a deputy sheriff who later said they appeared suspicious riding around in an unmarked pickup truck. The soldiers, wearing civilian clothes, apparently thought the cop was part of the drill, and engaged him. Acting like a cop, the deputy sheriff unloaded his pistol at the two. The incident occurred just outside Fort Bragg.

Protest condemns political firing by Macy's

BY BILL KALMAN

SANTA CLARA, California—More than 150 people held a three-hour protest in front of the Macy's department store in Valley Fair Mall here February 24 to demand justice for Alia Atawneh and Hiam Yassine, two Palestinian sales clerks fired by the company.

Santa Clara is home to a large Palestinian community and the spirited action included college students, Palestinians from the neighborhood, and local trade unionists.

The protest was sponsored by the San Francisco and San Jose Coalitions to Rehire Alia and Hiam.

Atawneh, who is 29 years old, was fired by the Valley Fair store after a customer berated her September 27 about "her people's" responsibility for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. When Atawneh asked the customer to explain his statement, he complained to her boss. The bosses at Macy's claim that Atawneh violated

its policy of not making provocative or insensitive comments about September 11, which she denies doing.

Yassine, who is 39 and had worked at the store since 1997, was fired January 5 for offering a customer a 10 percent discount on a handbag without a supervisor's permission, which was a common practice in the store. Both women are Muslims, and Yassine wears a head covering. Atawneh has filed a discrimination lawsuit against Macy's, while Yassine has retained a lawyer.

The picket line was the first protest held at the store. Playing a prominent role in organizing the rally was Silicon Valley De-Bug, described in their magazine as an organization of mostly young people "who have worked on the low-wage end of Silicon Valley." These young workers joined with college students to bring to the protest youthful energy.

Ray Callaway, with the San Jose Minority Employment Task Force, told the *Militant*, "After September 11 some people think it is okay to discriminate and harass people. What happened to these women is outrageous." Curtis Portwood, an African-American Muslim, echoed this sentiment. "As a Muslim it is my duty to stand up against racism. Companies in this area will see this picket and maybe think twice before doing the same."

Rally speakers urged the store to immediately rehire Atawneh and Yassine and offer an apology for the unjust firings, compensation for their time off work, and unionization of the store's workers. While Macy's at Valley Fair Mall is nonunion, workers at the downtown San Francisco store are organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). Representatives of two UFCW locals, along with other union officials, addressed the rally.

Macy's defended the firing of Atawneh in a press release: "We cannot and will not condone offensive, rude, provocative, or disruptive comments in the workplace."

Macy's officials refused to discuss the cases of Atawneh and Yassine with a delegation sent from the picket line.

Bill Kalman is a member of UFCW Local 120 in San Lorenzo.

Italian union calls general strike

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Cgil, Italy's largest trade union, announced February 21 that it would be calling a one-day general strike at the beginning of April. The nationwide walkout, set for April 5, is planned to protest labor "reforms" promoted by the country's right-wing prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. The proposed legislation would suspend sections of the country's labor law as a way to make it easier for bosses to fire workers.

The government is trying to portray the bill as a job creation measure. "If we only eliminate Article 18 in the area around

Milan, we will create tens of thousands of new jobs," claimed Roberto Maroni, the welfare minister.

The Cgil has received little support from Italy's two other leading labor unions, the Cisl and Uil. Both organizations say they support efforts to press the government to back off its antilabor moves, but are committed to holding talks over the issue.

The Berlusconi administration has indicated little concern about any mass labor action. "If [the Cgil] were really determined to act they would have called the strike for next week," said one senior government official.

Back issues of the 'Militant' posted online

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

As a result of special efforts by two *Militant* supporters, articles from April 31, 1995, through to the current issue are now posted to the paper's on-line edition.

Until Peter Link and Doug Hord completed their work, the available issues only went back to September 1999—the date of the first issue of themilitant.com. Earlier years had been inaccessible on the Internet for more than a year, after the text-only site they had been posted to was discontinued by the hosting company.

Adding three and a half years of *Militant* articles greatly expands the wealth of material available to readers around the world.

"The articles in the older issue are searchable in exactly the same way as the more

recent ones," said Link, who is the web administrator for themilitant.com. He noted that an occasional formatting error or other problem may have slipped past the volunteers' checks and encouraged readers who notice anything that needs to be fixed to send a note to the *Militant*.

In *New International* no. 6
**Washington's 50-Year
Domestic Contra Operation**

LARRY SEIGLE

As the U.S. rulers prepared to smash working-class resistance and join World War II, today's national political police apparatus was born. Also tells how the working-class vanguard has fought to defend democratic rights against ruling-class attacks.

Also includes ♦ The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop by STEVE CLARK ♦ Land, Labor, and the Canadian Revolution by MICHEL DUGRÉ ♦ Renewal or Death: Cuba's Rectification Process ♦ Two Speeches by FIDEL CASTRO. \$15

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or visit www.pathfinderpress.com

Visit

THE MILITANT

on line

www.themilitant.com

U.S. mounts brutal new Afghan offensive

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Over the past week Washington has pressed militarily on several fronts, throwing ground troops and air power into its largest combat assault to date in Afghanistan, and testing the ground for aggression against Iraq. In the same period, the conflict between the Israeli occupiers and the Palestinian people has sharply escalated, resulting in close to 100 deaths in the space of nine days.

The assault on Taliban and al Qaeda forces at a complex of caves near Gardez, in eastern Afghanistan, reportedly involved weeks of planning by the Pentagon. Gen. Thomas Franks, the overall U.S. commander in Afghanistan, told the media on March 5 that the offensive was "undertaken at our initiative" and followed military guidelines of "points, places, and times of our choosing."

There has been "no effort made whatsoever to negotiate surrender of anyone," he added.

At least nine U.S. troops and a number of allied Afghan soldiers were killed in the early stages of the assault, launched on March 1.

Unlike the December assault on the Tora Bora caves, in which Afghan troops were directed by a relatively small number of Special Operations forces, the Gardez attack has been marked by the large-scale use of regular army troops—the first such deployment on this scale since Washington's assault began in October. They include members of the 10th Mountain and 101st Airborne divisions. Franks said that as of March 5 about 800 U.S. troops had been sent into action, and up to 300 reinforcements were on their way.

This infantry mobilization notwithstanding, the U.S. command has relied on bombing raids for its primary killing power. Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that as of March 4, more than 350 bombs had been dropped from long-range bombers and carrier-based aircraft. AC-130 gunships and attack helicopters have joined the onslaught.

The airborne attacks have employed at least one 2,000 pound thermobaric bomb. This weapon, previously unused in combat, is designed to send exploding fuel and fireballs through caves. Its victims die from burns, suffocation, and ruptured organs.

Some 200 special operations troops from Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway have joined the offensive. Functioning under U.S. command, these forces are drawn from the 17,000 troops of U.S. "coalition partners" stationed in the Central Asian region, only a small fraction of which have been operating inside Afghanistan. French strike aircraft have flown several missions.

U.S. officials reported the involvement of these imperialist forces on March 3. A Ger-

man defense ministry spokesperson sharply criticized the revelation, saying that it violated Berlin's policy of confidentiality about the activities of its special forces, and that the lives of German troops could be endangered.

'Suck it up'

The big-business media and U.S. government officials have used the fighting and the spilled American blood to try to revive the war atmosphere that had largely been spent in the latter stages of the five-month assault on Afghanistan.

Speaking before a Minnesota audience on March 4, President George Bush offered "prayers" and crocodile "tears to those whose families have lost some life," and added with emphasis, "People say, 'Well, the hard part is over with,' and my answer is, 'No it's not—it's just beginning.'"

"We are in a dangerous phase of this war," he told reporters, adding that "it is worth it, and it is necessary."

In a March 5 *Wall Street Journal* column entitled, "In War, Soldiers Die," Ralph Peters, a retired U.S. military officer, predicted, "There will likely be more American casualties. Perhaps many more. We may see some American elements ambushed and even wiped out. That's war, folks. You suck it up and keep on marching.... We must not flinch for even an instant. Not even if the casualty figures soar."

The assault on Gardez also prompted spokespeople for the Democratic Party to reaffirm their support for the war. "The casualties in Afghanistan abruptly muted criticism from Democrats, who only last week had begun questioning the Bush administration's explanations for the broadening war," reported the *New York Times*.

"As we look at our circumstances today, I think there is no question that there is strong support for the troops and for the president's leadership," Sen. Tom Daschle, the Democratic majority leader, told the paper.

Israeli repression, Palestinian resistance

From February 25-March 6, the Israeli government cranked up its military repression of the occupied territories. In the closing days of February, the Israeli armed forces mounted incursions into refugee camps in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, killing more than two dozen people.

On the afternoon of March 3 the Israeli cabinet launched waves of assaults after 22 Israelis died from a suicide bombing in Jerusalem and a 30-minute attack by a sniper at a West Bank checkpoint that killed seven soldiers.

By midway through March 4 Israeli tanks, F-16 fighter-bombers, helicopters, and infantry had taken 16 Palestinian lives in less than 24 hours. The next day, thousands of Palestinians joined the Ramallah funeral of



Israeli soldiers in Batalan refugee camp, in the West Bank, on March 1, during sharp escalation of military assaults on Palestinians, who continue to fight the occupation.

a woman and her three children, killed by a tank shell. "Sharon, Sharon. We will give you our answer," they chanted.

On March 5 the Israeli forces unleashed an even larger-scale offensive on the Gaza Strip, firing on Palestinian targets from the land, sea, and air. The heaviest fighting was reported in southern Gaza, where a dozen Israeli tanks met intense Palestinian fire. Helicopter gunships fired machine guns toward the Palestinian defenders. One Palestinian woman was killed by a shot in the back. Palestinian doctors said that Israeli troops barred ambulances from reaching two wounded men, who died after being left untreated for three hours.

The ferocity of the Israeli assault drew words of concern from U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell, representing a government that has maintained U.S. support for the Israeli government and military, and that has increasingly converged with its militaristic course in the region. "I don't think declaring war on Palestinians will work," he said on March 6.

The death toll among Palestinians since September 2000 stands at 1,067 people. Almost 320 Israelis have been killed—a toll that is also rapidly mounting.

Preparations for attacks on Iraq

The U.S. attacks in Afghanistan, and the escalating Israeli repression against the unabated Palestinian resistance, tend to increase momentum toward a U.S.-led assault on Iraq.

Washington's preparations and provocations have proceeded on a number of fronts.

- The U.S. government has declared its intention of installing a radio transmitter to

begin regular broadcasts inside Iraq, aimed at encouraging opposition to Saddam Hussein.

- U.S. officials plan to present to the United Nations Security Council satellite pictures purportedly showing that Baghdad has converted UN-provided trucks into rocket launchers and other military vehicles. Diplomats cited by the *Financial Times* say that Washington aims "to win over UN sceptics for a tougher policy on Iraq."

- On February 28 State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher announced that the White House would support a conference of exile groups organizing in opposition to the regime of Saddam Hussein. The purpose of the gathering, said Boucher, is to help "marshall the support, look at ideas, [and] demonstrate that there are Iraqis who want a different future for their country."

The conference would "complement a separate gathering of former Iraqi military officers that is being organized later this month in Washington by the Iraqi National Congress," reported the *Chicago Tribune* on March 1.

"American officials are increasing contacts with two Kurdish groups that control areas of northern Iraq to determine whether they could form the vanguard of a U.S.-led military operation, similar to the role the Northern Alliance played in...Afghanistan," added the newspaper.

- According to the BBC, the CIA has been working on a plan for "low-level action [that] could escalate into large-scale defections in the Iraqi armed forces. That would be the hope at least. It could be accompanied by bombing of key Iraqi targets. And maybe feelers would go out to Iraqi officers who might mount a coup."

British prime minister Anthony Blair backed the Bush administration's war preparation in a March 3 interview with an Australian television channel. "Iraq is in breach of all the United Nations resolutions on weapons inspectors," he said. "We know they are trying to accumulate these weapons of mass destruction, we know he's prepared to use them. So this is a real issue but how we deal with it, that's a matter we must discuss."

The foreign affairs spokesperson of the opposition Tory Party supported Blair's position. By contrast, Tam Dalyell, a member of parliament for Blair's Labour Party, denounced the prime minister's "warmongering propensities." The statement reflected substantial divisions within the ruling party.

U.S. troops bound for Georgia and Yemen

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The Georgian government has announced that around 200 U.S. military personnel will be stationed in Georgia by the end of March. Washington will also provide the Georgian military with communications equipment, light weaponry, and vehicles. Heavier armaments are not part of the deal.

Another 100 U.S. troops are scheduled to be sent to Yemen, further expanding the spread of U.S. imperialist forces throughout Central Asia and the Middle East.

According to officials from both Washington and Tbilisi, the U.S. troops in Georgia, who are expected to be drawn from units of Special Operations forces, will train some 1,200 government soldiers in operations in the Pankisi Gorge, a region that borders Russia.

U.S. officials have justified the intervention by saying that al Qaeda forces and other so-called terrorists have found haven in the gorge. Preliminary negotiations and arms deals predated the Pentagon's assault on Afghanistan, however. A "senior U.S. diplomat" told the *Wall Street Journal* that "this has been in the works for months...going back to last fall."

Asked whether the U.S. forces planned to conduct the sort of surveillance flights in Georgia that it has begun to carry out in the Philippines, one U.S. defense official boasted that "we've got some significant surveillance assets in that [Georgian] theater that give us

a pretty good look at threats on the ground."

With this agreement, Georgia becomes the latest of the former Soviet republics to welcome U.S. troops and military hardware onto their soil since September last year. The others are Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. In the case of Georgia, and in contrast to the other three, top Russian government officials have shown signs of divisions and unease over the U.S. intervention. Foreign minister Igor Ivanov said at the end of February that the deployment could "further exacerbate what is already a complex situation in the region."

Putin gives green light

Two days later, Russian president Vladimir Putin gave the U.S. commitment his approval at a meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States. U.S. troops were already present in Central Asia, he said, and it would be "no tragedy" if they appeared in Georgia as well. Moscow backed the "antiterrorism" campaign, he emphasized, "No matter who is taking part in it, whether it's our American or European partners, or our Georgian colleagues themselves, directly."

The Russian government has unsuccessfully pressured Tbilisi to expel 8,000 Chechen refugees who have fled to the Pankisi Gorge. Moscow claims they provide shelter for some 1,500 Chechen separatist fighters, and has gone so far as to bomb

Georgian territory in its pursuit of the rebels.

Washington has also gained the agreement of the government in Yemen to station U.S. forces there. The 100 troops "would consist predominantly of special forces, but could also include intelligence experts and other specialists," reported the *New York Times*, noting that "the military campaign appears to be expanding by the week."

Yemen's ambassador to the United States told the *Washington Post* that his government has asked for a wide range of military assistance. "We're asking for everything," said Abdulwahab Alhajjri. "You name it, we want it."

Washington presses Manila for military 'access'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

With 600 troops stationed in Basilan and other islands in the southern Philippines, Washington is pressing the government in Manila to further open up the country's sea and land resources for the use of the U.S. military.

Roberto Romulo, the foreign policy advisor to Philippine president Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, told the *New York Times* about discussions between government representatives being conducted "out of the spotlight."

The concessions under consideration include: the granting of "access rights" to the U.S. armed forces to store weapons on Phil-

ippine soil; permanent overflight rights to U.S. combat aircraft; and the use of land for short-term military encampments.

Romulo said that in the near future U.S. warships might even be able to berth at Subic Bay for rest and repairs, under contracts with private suppliers and businesses.

From 1947 until 1992, the bay was the site of a major U.S. naval base. In repeated, massive protests organized after the end of President Ferdinand Marcos's martial law regime in 1986, workers, peasants, young people, and others forced the government to end U.S. leases to both the naval base and Clark Air Base.

'They fear ideas, they fear Cu

Cuban general presents Pathfinder's 'Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs' at Havana

Printed below are the remarks by José Ramón Fernández at the February 14 Havana International Book Fair launching of the Pathfinder book *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Defeat in the Americas*, by Fidel Castro and Fernández. Today the vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers, Fernández commanded the main column of the revolutionary Cuban forces that defeated the U.S.-directed mercenary invasion of the island at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961.

BY JOSÉ RAMÓN FERNÁNDEZ

I see the faces of many old compañeros and combatants—if not old in age, they are longtime comrades-in-arms, not only from the sands of Playa Girón but also from the diplomatic and political battle that was waged at the same time.

This book that we present today contains Fidel Castro's call to the Cuban people on April 15, 1961, in response to the treacherous air attack by U.S.-sponsored mercenary forces on the San Antonio Air Base, the Ciudad Libertad Base, and the airport in Santiago de Cuba, as well as Fidel's speech at the ceremony in honor of those who died on April 16, 1961.

It includes the call to arms issued in Santiago de Cuba on April 15 by compañero Raúl Castro, now General of the Army and minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

It also contains the closing words of the speech given for the same purpose by Che Guevara on April 15, 1961, in Pinar del Río, where he had been named to head up the defense of that region of Cuba. It reproduces the communiqués—all signed by Fidel except for one signed by the general staff of the Revolutionary Armed Forces—that were issued between April 17 and 19, where from the very beginning the people were thoroughly informed of what was happening.

It has my own testimony—forgive me for speaking in the first person—given on July 12, 1999, before the People's Provincial Court in the City of Havana, in Cuba's lawsuit against the empire for the human damages inflicted on us. It also offers details on the invading U.S. forces, a glossary, as well as other items.

It contains Fidel's speech of May 1, 1961, in the Plaza of the Revolution. And, finally, it contains something of great historical importance: Fidel Castro's speech to the Cuban people on April 23, 1961, where in an extensive televised presentation he described the background, alleged arguments, and all the mechanisms that were utilized by imperialism, using maps to explain in detail everything that happened at Girón.

As Mary-Alice said, this is a book that truly falls under the mantle of the battle of ideas. The goal of that battle is to make our people stronger every day, to create a system of information and instill convictions among our youth about their responsibility for the continuity of the Cuban Revolution.



Courtesy José Ramón Fernández
José Ramón Fernández during battle at Bay of Pigs, April 1961. U.S.-organized mercenary invasion, which was crushed by revolutionary Cuba's armed forces, was part of "a period of attacks that have never ceased," said Fernández.

I won't go into the details of the battle here, of course. In his televised speech on April 23, 1961, Fidel gave a summary of the background and explained that it was a typical attack, combining direct and indirect action against Cuba. He compared it to the one that overthrew the government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954 as well as many other interventions that the Empire carried out in various countries of Our America during the previous century. He referred to the entire history of U.S. aggression against Cuba.

The United States began attacking the revolution even before it triumphed on January 1, 1959.

They supported the Batista tyranny right up to the dictatorship's final days, supplying arms from the United States or from the Guantánamo Naval Base, permitting and assisting assassination attempts against Fidel in the Sierra Maestra itself. In other words, the assassinations and attacks did not begin after the triumph of the revolution, but instead before it.

In the final stage—which is described in a book titled *The Winds of December*¹—the imperialists used every means to try to prevent the revolution from taking power and, if it were to take power, to ensure it was influenced by those alien to the truly revolutionary forces so that its program could not be carried out.

Choice of invasion site not an error

Their choice of the Playa Girón region was not an error. It is an area that can be easily isolated and defended because of the lack of access routes.

Girón represents the culmination of a stage of U.S. attacks, just as the 1962 Oc-

tober Crisis was the continuation of Girón through Operation Mongoose and the culmination of a period of attacks that have never ceased. Since then the blockade has been tightened, the so-called two-track policy has been carried out together with the Torricelli Act, the Helms-Burton Act, and many other measures.



Courtesy José Ramón Fernández
Fernández, center, with Cuban vice president Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, right, at Playa Girón. Fernández commanded main column of Cuban forces in the battle.

Mary-Alice spoke about the "silver bullets." It must be said that they have been trying of late to break the revolution from within through different methods, attempting to weaken it, while at the same time maintaining the blockade, attempts at intimidation, attacks, propaganda, and their diplomatic struggle through various means. Imperialism has carried out an amoral, cunning campaign of disinformation and measures aimed at discrediting the revolution and its leaders.

The victory at Girón was a glorious victory for the Cuban people, at a cost of 176 dead: 151 in combat and the others in attacks during the preceding days—those on April 15, and those in the zones of operations, even prior to the arrival of Cuban forces there, when they used their planes to bomb, strafe, and attack transport vehicles, villages like Pálpite, and other places, causing numerous deaths.

Declassified CIA documents show what happened next and illustrate the continuity. It's worth noting that this information is not secondhand nor are we its source. By May 4, 1961, an interdisciplinary, that

interagency, group had been created in the United States, which worked up a plan that in the following months became known as Operation Mongoose. This plan was directed by General [Maxwell] Taylor, and its assistant political advisor—actually its driving spirit—was the brother of President Kennedy, U.S. attorney general Robert Kennedy. In other words, this aggression did not cease, and it culminated with the plans for a direct attack on Cuba that were thwarted by the outcome of the "missile crisis."

An academic conference on Playa Girón was held in Havana on March 22-24 of last year. The conference was well attended, and most of it was broadcast on Cuban television. About 10-12 of us here today also participated, providing testimony, giving information, or observing the meeting. These include compañero Carlos Lechuga, who at the time defended our flag in the United States by representing our country at the United Nations, as well as General Samuel Rodiles and several others who are also here in this room.

Conference participants from the United States included several of Kennedy's close associate leaders. Among them were Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Goodwin, special assistants to the president (I should add that in June 1961 Goodwin was head of the interdisciplinary group that prepared Operation Mongoose); John Nolan, an assistant to Attorney General Robert Kennedy; Robert Reynolds, chief of the CIA station in Havana, which came to have more than 500 officers assigned to the fight against Cuba—a station that, according to the report by CIA inspector general Lyman

Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas

By Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández

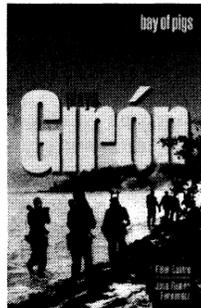
In less than 72 hours of combat during April 1961 near the Bay of Pigs, revolutionary Cuba's armed forces defeated an invasion by 1,500 mercenaries trained, supported, and deployed by Washington. In the process, the Cuban people not only transformed their country and themselves, but set an example for workers and farmers across the Americas and the world.

Forty years later the U.S. rulers can still neither accept nor extinguish this example.

Foreword by Jack Barnes. In English and Spanish. \$20.

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12; write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690; or visit www.pathfinderpress.com. Please include \$3 for shipping and handling.

From Pathfinder



'iba's example'

International Book Fair

cenaries who had been members of Brigade 2506 also participated.

I received a criticism of a political, not factual, nature because of the term I used on one occasion at the conference referring to mercenaries. However you portray them, they are, nonetheless, mercenaries.

Any Cuban who ends up defending a foreign flag is a mercenary. And if that foreign flag directs him to attack his own homeland and he receives money for it, I can find no other word in the dictionary or in the language we all use other than mercenary—even if for political reasons at a certain time, and in a dialogue of respectful reflection such as that one, we may use a different term. And even if by their subsequent attitude and conduct they deserve our respect and recognition. In the conference organizing committee we spent hours debating what term to use for those arriving from the Brigade, and, at my urging and with everyone's approval, we decided to call them "invaders."

After Girón, about 1,180 of the 1,197 mercenaries were exchanged for food supplies. The rest were tried for crimes committed prior to Girón.

Geneva convention

In dealing with the Brigade we observed the Geneva convention. We treated them truly as prisoners: feeding them, providing medical attention, treating them respectfully without abusing them physically, morally, or verbally. And we negotiated their return to the United States.

After returning to the United States, they formed an association of so-called veterans of the Brigade. Today some of them have taken positions of reflection and understanding and advocate dialogue, while others are uninvolved or are active only to a limited degree. And some, such as Luis Posada Carriles and many others, are enemies and assailants, pirates who did not appreciate the magnitude of the pardon and the consideration they were shown despite being traitors, and they continue to carry out actions against Cuba.

Of the 1,500 who came, we took nearly 1,200 prisoners. In some documents they admit to having suffered 114 deaths. Others never landed; they remained on the ships.

The acknowledged leader of the brigade was Marine Colonel Jack Hawkins, who participated in and directed landings in the War in the Pacific and later commanded a U.S. unit at the landing at Inchon, a port on Korea's coast, which was carried out when the invading forces attempted to defeat and take the northern part of Korea.

The true leaders were members of agencies of the U.S. government, the Empire. It is they who from day one paid them out of the taxes of U.S. citizens. They were the ones who organized, led, armed, and carried out that attack. They did so subsequently in the lesser-known Operation Mongoose, which we hope will become better known after the conference to be held this October on the 40th anniversary of the "missile crisis," which is already in preparation.

The United States was the promoter. And this was admitted by Kennedy when he said he alone was responsible and, alluding to the outcome of the attack, stated that victory has a thousand fathers but defeat is an orphan—thus raising an umbrella to shield himself from everything that was raining down on him in the press.

Battle of ideas

I want to stress one point here: What is interesting about the book is that it is centered on the fight we are waging so that those who did not live through these events—above all, the newly born and those not yet born—may learn about the nature of the enemy we face, and I say "enemy" rather than "adversary." They should know what it is we are defending with the utmost clarity. They should know what really happened then and what has been happening up until now.

I mean this in all honesty, because I believe there is no task more important among our people today, strategically speaking, than this struggle in the realm of thought—as Jose Martí said in his time—this "battle of ideas" that we are carrying out, which is the guarantee that we will be truly invulnerable to any attack of any kind.

We see how they attack us in the [United Nations] Human Rights Commission, with their terrorism against our country, and in all other areas. They talk about terrorism—I would like for someone to tell me what greater terrorism there is than the war that has been waged against Afghanistan. And now we've heard from the president's mouth that when they finish in Afghanistan they'll move on to Iraq, as well as Iran, North Korea, and other countries. What greater terrorism is there than that? We could also talk about another terrorism—that of Israel and its attacks on Palestine. It

Continued on Page 10



Militant/Daniel Ahl

Fernández, center, addresses meeting at Havana book fair launching Pathfinder's *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*. Joining him on the platform are, from left: Div. Gen. Samuel Rodiles, Pathfinder president and *Playa Girón* co-editor Mary-Alice Waters, and Iraida Aguirrechu, who organized editorial collaboration on the book in Cuba.

'Truths that must be told today'

The following is the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters at the Havana International Book Fair meeting February 14 to celebrating the publication of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández. Waters is the president of Pathfinder Press and an editor of the book.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

First a sincere thank you to compañero Fernández as well as to compañera Iraida Aguirrechu without whose editorial work and political help this book would not have been possible.

I would also like to take this occasion to thank the many other compañeros and compañeras, both those of you who are here today and others who were unable to make it, who have generously given their time and energies in the last several years to help make *Playa Girón* as well as other titles published by Pathfinder—such as *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, *Pompo: a Man of Che's 'guerrilla'*, *Making History*, and *From the Escambray to the Congo*—the lasting and valuable contributions they are. Many of you have helped verify biographical data and other information for the glossaries and annotation, identified photos, reviewed maps, and contributed in countless other ways. These books are the product of a genuinely collective effort for which we thank you.

Richard Bissell, the Central Intelligence Agency's director of covert operations at the beginning of the 1960s, was the top-level government bureaucrat responsible for the concrete planning and implementation of Washington's mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. Shortly before his death a few years ago, Bissell published an autobiographical memoir entitled *Reflections of a Cold Warrior*.

In that book he describes exchanges that took place in the White House strategy sessions leading up to the Bay of Pigs landing. Then Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Bissell writes, "used to ask (quite sensibly, I thought) whether something couldn't be done with 'silver bullets.'"

Rusk, Bissell continues, thought "that even in a well-run covert operation one should try to bribe one's enemies rather than fight them." Bissell's comment on Rusk's approach is brief, to the point, and despairing:

"Unfortunately, this would not have worked in Cuba."

For me, this little story, as told by the enemy many years later, captures the historic dilemma facing the U.S. rulers and underscores what is the heart and soul of this wonderful book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*.

The imperialist rulers never stopped to ask themselves: If the Revolutionary Armed Forces, the Revolutionary National Police, and popular militias of Cuba were so solid they could not be divided or bought, why did they think they would be able to defeat revolutionary Cuba with an invasion by some 1,500 Cuban counterrevolutionary mercenaries? The answer, I believe, is not that officials of the aging Eisenhower and callow Kennedy administrations were crazy, stupid, or incompetent. To the contrary. As Fernández notes in his testimony, their military plan was well conceived.

Their problem was a class problem. The old Eisenhower hands and the young New Frontiersmen alike so discounted the revolutionary capacities of the workers and farmers who would crush the mercenary invasion in fewer than 72 hours that they truly could not even recognize these compañeros' existence. They could not believe that a few thousand cane cutters, bricklayers, campesinos, and "niños héroes," with a leadership worthy of them, were more powerful than all the firepower Washington had supplied to the invaders.

As Fidel and Fernández, each in his own words, insist throughout the pages of *Playa Girón*, the U.S. rulers "failed to measure the moral relationship of forces."

"They did their mathematical calculations as if...they were coming to take a beachhead in Normandy," Che noted a few weeks after the victory. But they miscalculated the determination of the Cuban people to defend the society they were building on new foundations.

Pathfinder decided to publish this book to mark the 40th anniversary of the victory at Playa Girón because these are truths that need to be told today. Through the speeches by Fidel, Raúl, and Che; the testimony of compañero Fernández; the dozens of pages of photos, charts, and maps, young people in the United States and elsewhere, born many years after the historic events that are

at the center of the book, can begin to absorb what happened at the Bay of Pigs and why. They can begin to understand what enabled the people of Cuba to inflict a defeat on the Yankee empire so total and ignominious that it remains an example today that inspires the oppressed and exploited the world over.

And it remains an example that can, and will, be emulated and repeated, including in the United States itself.

For us, *Playa Girón* is not only a book through which we learn about the Cuban Revolution. It is a book about the class struggle in the United States. Among the many elements it contains is a foreword that tells the story of what a generation of young communists-in-becoming were doing at the time on campuses and in workplaces across the United States to mobilize opposition to the U.S.-organized invasion, build the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and recruit to a small but growing movement of revolutionary young socialists.

Only a few weeks prior to the invasion—in a March 13, 1961, speech marking the fourth anniversary of the attack on Batista's Presidential Palace in which a number of courageous young Cuban revolutionists had been killed—Fidel made what was to some the startling statement: "We will see a victorious revolution in the United States before we see a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba."

For our part, many of us in the United States who, under the impact of the Cuban Revolution and rising struggle for Black rights, were coming to revolutionary conclusions had fewer and fewer doubts that Fidel was right. We set out to do what we could to learn and understand what it was that could allow Fidel to come to such a judgment, with its far-reaching implications. We became more and more determined to discover the concrete dynamics

Continued on Page 10

NEW FROM Pathfinder

From the Escambray to the Congo

In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution

by Víctor Dreke
Introduction by Mary-Alice Waters

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Infantry battalion of Rebel Army after climbing highest mountain in Pinar del Río, 1959.

'They fear ideas, they fear Cuba's example'

Continued from Page 9

is horrifying and sad, and leaves one with a sense of helplessness, to see on television what is happening there every day.

Moreover, Cuba is the greatest victim of state terrorism: *La Coubre*; the plane that was blown up in midair over Barbados; what our country's sons and daughters have endured for years along the coast, in factories, in hotels. More than 40 years of state terrorism against Cuba!

They speak of human rights, but for years now we have been major victims in that regard. It's outrageous. Recently we all heard what a South American foreign minister went to do in Washington and what he later stated about the Human Rights Commission, which is to take up this issue once again next week.

Five Cuban prisoners in U.S.

What injustice could be greater than that of the five prisoners we have in the belly of the Empire? Antonio, Ramón, Gerardo, Fernando, and René did not violate any laws and were not spying on state activities. They worked to find out what the terrorist mafia was trying to do to us, so that we could prevent it from happening, prevent acts of terrorism. In the Florida courts, most of which are known to be spurious, enemies of Cuba have had to make up the biggest lies and have sentenced them in a truly criminal, sadistic fashion. A prosecutor even said that if he could—because he read the statement by one of our heroes in the trial—he would seek a 100-year prison sentence. It is a veritable act of vengeance, as is the war in Afghanistan, irrespective of the criminal, unjustifiable, and wholly contemptible nature of what happened on September 11 when the World Trade Center and other facilities in the United States were attacked.

I am holding in my hand the testimony of these compañeros. The more we understand what they did, become familiar with the trials, read the testimony, and learn about the sentences and under what conditions they were sent to serve them, we realize we confront enemies who are truly



Militant/Daniel Ahl

Part of audience at event launching *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*

amoral, criminal in their behavior against our people both in general and in specifics.

It's worth mentioning that several cruise ships with U.S. college students have been coming to Cuba from the United States. You must have seen on television and in the press that Fidel has been meeting with the young people who arrive on these cruise ships. It's a program established by U.S. universities where young people from various campuses make this journey visiting different countries, receiving daily classes on board in several subjects. At the end of the semester-long cruise, if they pass the exams on the subject matter that has been taught on board during that time, they are given valid credits in their courses of study.

Here in Cuba they are offered 8 to 10 options: visits to research centers, farm cooperatives, social organizations, hospitals, schools, etc., as well as a visit to Playa Girón. I was in charge of attending to the two groups that went to Playa Girón. These young people are of different nationalities,

mostly Americans, of different skin colors, religious beliefs, and political opinions. They have only one thing in common: their absolute ignorance of Cuba and what is happening in Cuba. This is because of what the U.S. government and media have done.

Imperialism fears Cuba's example

The Empire's fear is such that it even barred one of the groups from having a meeting with Fidel. In other words, they fear ideas, they fear Cuba's example, which despite all our difficulties is a valid example for all peoples.

In our efforts to convince the young people we spoke to in Girón, we showed them declassified CIA documents such as the Kirkpatrick report and other documents, such as a famous one that refers to possible actions to justify an invasion of Cuba. These are documents declassified by them. I don't think anyone would dare argue that they are falsified, or that it's all been made up.

We've set up displays with the books we

have, so these young people may read them, and we've had extensive discussions with them in the museum at the Australia Sugar Mill, at Playa Larga, and at Playa Girón. We weren't talking about a battle, but rather the heart of this question—the permanent and unceasing U.S. aggression that is carried out by all means against our Cuban Revolution. That's why this battle of ideas is so important, and that's why it's so important to educate our young people.

These youth from the United States are often surprised at the schools, at the health-care system, at the fact that everyone here knows how to read and write, at the fact that people move around freely, that they can go wherever, whenever, and however they want, at the warm and friendly nature of the Cuban people.

Their ignorance of Cuba, the revolution, and socialism is astonishing. When you speak to them about the elections in Cuba, they ask, "You mean there are elections here?" I tell them yes, and that they're fairer, more democratic, and have greater voter participation than elections in the United States. In Cuba the party never chooses or designates anyone to be elected.

One of the things we are proud of is the courage of our people: at Girón, during Operation Mongoose, where there were hundreds and hundreds of acts of terrorism and attacks of various types, and during the October Crisis. At no time did anybody waver, and this firmness and confidence is what allows us to remain victorious.

Fidel was the strategist who conceived of the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of Cuba, who led the attack on the Moncada garrison and the fight in the Sierra. It's through his leadership that we triumphed. He personally directed operations at Girón, he led the Cuban people during the October Crisis, and he continues to do so today, acting intelligently, firmly, and audaciously in defense of the revolution under very difficult and complex conditions.

I will close by saying the same thing I said last March 24, before nearly all the Americans and many of the Cubans who attended the meeting on "Girón: 40 Years Later." At Playa Girón itself I told them, "Everything that we have done in the past, everything we have done up to now, and everything we are prepared to do in the future has as its goal the defense of our sovereignty."

'Truths that must be told today'

Continued from Page 9

of the politics of the class struggle in the United States and, even more importantly, how to accelerate making Fidel's judgment the historic reality.

In the process, through our own concrete experiences as revolutionists of action, we, like many of you here in Cuba, soon discovered we were communists.

This is a story that is amplified in another of Pathfinder's new titles available here at the book fair, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*. We hope many of you will have an opportunity to read it.

When the imperialist rulers go to war,

the pace of politics accelerates among layers of young people and thinking workers. The broadening resistance to the effects of the lawful and brutal workings of finance capital sharpens its contradictions both at home and in its ceaseless attempts to impose itself around the world.

The devastating economic and social crisis that is rocking Argentina and foretells the future that capitalism has in store for us all; the mounting U.S. government-engineered efforts by the Venezuelan capitalists and landowners to organize a coup to overturn the Chávez government; the war of conquest in Afghanistan and expanding turmoil in South Asia; the assault on the

democratic rights of working people inside the United States—all are having a politicizing impact on young people, especially.

That is when books like *Playa Girón* are needed more than ever, and this political fact has been registered in the sales figures for the first ten months. Since last April Pathfinder has shipped out more than 2,100 copies of *Playa Girón* in English and nearly 1,300 in Spanish.

If this book helps young readers understand that Washington's defeat flowed not from blunders by the CIA or vacillations by the administration of U.S. president John F. Kennedy, but from the strength, preparedness, and determination of the Cuban people to defend their newly conquered freedoms and social justice—and if it inspires them to become the same sort of people—then for us *Playa Girón* will have served its purpose.

We are also pleased if this book can be a weapon in the battle of ideas being waged here in Cuba as well. And for that reason, on behalf of the communist workers and socialist youth whose labor and support makes it possible to produce this book and others like it, we brought with us as a donation some 50 copies of the hardback edition of the book in Spanish that we know will be put to good use by its authors.

In Washington the imperialist political parties, Democrats and Republicans alike, today discount the revolutionary capacities of working people in the United States as thoroughly as they discounted those of the workers and farmers of Cuba on the eve of Playa Girón. And just as wrongly.

It is in that spirit that we hope these books will be accepted—as an expression of our conviction that Fidel's judgment that "we will see a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba" remains as true today as when he pronounced those words 40 years ago.

Havana event presents Pathfinder book

Continued from front page

Revolutionary National Police and of the police battalion that fought in the Bay of Pigs battle.

Iraida Aguirrechu, who organized editorial collaboration on the book in Cuba, introduced the speakers and Gen. Rodiles at the event, which drew 60 people. She highlighted the contents of the book, which contains major excerpts of speeches given immediately before and after the Bay of Pigs battle by commander-in-chief Fidel Castro.

It also features the testimony given by Fernández in 1999 before a Havana court during a hearing on a suit by Cuba's mass organizations demanding that Washington pay damages for the consequences of its four-decade-long campaign to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. Aguirrechu also drew attention to the "more than 70 beautiful photos, maps, and charts that make the book very accessible to the reader."

Among those attending the meeting were brigadier generals Rafael Moracén

Limonta, Gustavo Chui Beltrán, who were also representing the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, Pedro Franco Hidalgo, Rogelio Milián, and José Alberto Morfa; Col. Alberto Fernández, one of the ace combat pilots at Playa Girón; Col. Juan Carlos Rodríguez, author of *The Inevitable Battle* and director of the Capitán San Luis publishing house; Col. Raúl Izquierdo Canosa, president of the Cuban History Institute and of the Association of Cuban Historians; and numerous other combatants from Playa Girón or other revolutionary battles.

Among those singled out for a special welcome by Fernández was Carlos Lechuga, who as Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations denounced Washington's role in the mercenary invasion as it was unfolding.

At the conclusion of the event, dozens crowded around the sales area to purchase copies of the book and then lined up to have them autographed by Fernández and Rodiles.

Court frees cops in Abner Louima case

Continued from front page

youth, who weighed only 115 pounds, had charged them with a knife and a stick.

Louisgene's sister Abellard came to the protest with several others who support the fight to win justice in the case. "My brother did not deserve to be shot eight times," she told the *Militant*. "We are working with our lawyers and pursuing our legal options. But above all we are going to fight until the cops who killed Georgy are behind bars," she said.

Tony Morales, whose nephew was shot five times by cops who claimed that he was robbing a store, said, "I was outside my house and the march passed by me. I heard someone saying Louima so I joined it."

"There is something fishy going on," said Jensen Desrosiers, a drummer in the band at the club where Louima was arrested. He said the decision would reinforce a widely held perception in the Haitian community that police officers can get away with hurting Haitians. "If there's a Haitian involved, the cops are going to be much quicker to pull the trigger," he said.

In August 1997 Louima was arrested by several cops outside a nightclub in Brooklyn. They beat him while yelling racist slurs, then drove him to the 70th police precinct where they tortured him, forcing a broken broomstick up his rectum and causing severe internal injuries.

The assault sparked outrage and protests by Haitians and other working people in

New York demanding an end to police brutality, justice for Louima, and the firing of all police officers from the 70th precinct involved in the assault and cover-up.

The demonstrations forced the city prosecutors to press criminal charges. In the end, officer Justin Volpe, the main defendant in the case, pleaded guilty to assaulting Louima with the broomstick. He was sentenced to 30 years in prison on charges of aggravated sexual assault, first degree assault, and a series of civil rights violations. His sentencing will not be affected by the appeal court's decision and he will remain in jail.

Charles Schwarz was convicted and given 15 years for holding Louima down during the attack. Two other cops, Thomas Wiese and Thomas Bruder, were sentenced to five years for conspiring to obstruct justice.

The court held that Schwarz was denied a fair trial because his lawyer, Stephen Worth, had a conflict of interest in also representing the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association. Along with being Bruder's lawyer, Worth had been hired to represent the cop association in a multimillion-dollar civil suit Louima filed against them.

Although the prosecution argued that Worth could not represent Schwarz because of the conflict of interest, the judge allowed Schwarz to continue with his lawyer at his own request. The court also ruled that not enough evidence had been presented in the



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Protesters demand justice for Abner Louima, a worker from Haiti tortured by the cops, during August 16, 1997, demonstration outside 70th Precinct in Brooklyn.

cases of Bruder and Wiese to prove that a conspiracy to obstruct a federal grand jury from proceeding had taken place. The *Times* reported that the court ruling had noted there had been "abundant evidence at the trial of phone calls, meetings, and other contacts among the officers, all of it suggestive of a conspiracy to cover up what had happened," but not enough to prove the specific charge against them.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg told a church congregation in Brooklyn he had visited cops from the 70th precinct and told them that "what happened five years ago was a dis-

grace, it was intolerable [and] we have to take steps to make sure it never happens again."

"But also I said to them that they should be proud of the job that they do on the police force," he added. "These are members of the community and they brought crime down. And we want to continue that."

Schwarz could face a new trial on the charge of taking part in Louima's assault. The U.S. attorney's office in Brooklyn said that they are ready to retry the case. The other two officers face no further legal action.

Paul Pederson contributed to this article.

Cuba defuses provocation at Mexican embassy

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—The Cuban government defused an incident that took place at the Mexican embassy here when a group of men hijacked a city bus February 27 and crashed it through the gates of the diplomatic compound. The incident followed a statement in Miami by Mexican foreign minister Jorge Castañeda that the doors of his government's embassy were "open to all Cuban citizens, as is Mexico." When Radio Martí, Washington's anti-Cuba propaganda station, broadcast a report on Castañeda's comments, rumors circulated in Havana that the Mexican embassy was issuing visas.

On the request of the Mexican government, Cuban police evicted 21 individuals from the embassy grounds March 1.

The morning after the initial incident at the Mexican embassy, Cuba's main daily newspapers, *Granma* and *Juventud Rebelde*, published on their front pages a statement by the Cuban government outlining the facts of what happened and denouncing what it termed "a gross provocation organized openly by an official radio station of the United States government."

In early February Mexican president Vicente Fox made a 24-hour visit to Cuba, where he met with President Fidel Castro to discuss Mexico's trade with the island and other topics. Fox and Castañeda also met at the Mexican embassy with several U.S.-backed opponents of the Cuban Revolution and then issued a statement calling on the revolutionary government to pursue "democratic reforms" and respect "human rights," standard fare for the U.S.-led campaign against the country's socialist revolution.

At the same time, seeking to present his government as acting independently from Washington, Castañeda declared that Mexico would not sponsor an anti-Cuba resolution at the United Nations, for which U.S. officials have been arm-twisting under the banner of "human rights." Castañeda has previously made a number of public statements critical of revolutionary Cuba.

On February 26, while on a visit to Miami where he presided over the opening of the Mexican Cultural Institute, Castañeda stated, "This cultural institute belongs to all Mexicans, all Latin Americans, and naturally, to all Cuban-Americans." He added, "The doors of the Mexican embassy in Havana are open to all Cuban citizens, as is Mexico."

The next day Radio Martí reported that Castañeda "reiterated in Miami that the doors of his country's embassy in Havana are open to all Cuban citizens and added that so is Mexico." According to the official statement in *Granma*, "The radio station added that the

Mexican foreign minister reiterated the position stated after his return to Mexico following his visit to Cuba that 'Mexico's relations with the Cuban Revolution have ceased and those with the Republic of Cuba have begun.' This phrase was framed in such a way that it could be interpreted to mean that diplomatic relations between Mexico and Cuba had just been broken."

That afternoon, as rumors spread through Havana that the Mexican government was issuing visas, several dozen people gathered near Mexico's embassy. Later that night, some 20 men commandeered a passenger bus and rammed it through the embassy gates, while dozens who were gathered nearby sought to walk through the breach into the diplomatic compound. Most of them were prevented by a detachment of 40 members of a specialized unit of the city police, who had been posted to the Mexican embassy when it became clear earlier in the day that an abnormal situation was developing. Some 150 were detained, according to a March 1 Cuban government statement.

The Cuban government immediately condemned the incident as a provocation and blamed Radio Martí. It pointed out that U.S.

immigration policy, codified in the Cuban Adjustment Act, encourages incidents such as this one. Under that law, Cuban citizens who cross the Florida Straits on flimsy boats and land on U.S. shores are automatically granted official residency status. Meanwhile, Washington limits the numbers of exit visas for those seeking to emigrate through legal channels.

The Mexican government responded by asking Cuban authorities to remove the 21 men occupying the embassy building. Castañeda and Mexico's ambassador to Cuba, Ricardo Pascoe, said their government would not grant visas to the men because they had not asked for political asylum and were seeking to leave for economic reasons. On March 1, unarmed Cuban police evicted the 21 without incident. That day, a statement in *Granma* highlighted the fact that 13 of the 21 individuals had criminal records, including for robbery, assault, and theft.

Placed on the defensive, Mexican officials claimed Castañeda's words had been quoted out of context by Radio Martí. Castañeda blamed "radical elements in Miami," Cuban-American rightists in Miami, as well as

opponents of the Cuban Revolution in Mexico City, circulated the accusation that the crashing of the embassy had been manufactured by the Cuban government itself "to warn the Mexican government off its new emphasis on human rights in its relations with Cuba," the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

The incident recalled, on a much smaller scale, the events of April 1980, when a group of Cubans crashed a bus through the gates of the Peruvian embassy, killing a Cuban soldier. After Peruvian officials, who had joined in Washington's anti-Cuba chorus, provocatively refused to hand over the criminals, the Cuban guards were withdrawn, and some 10,000 people crowded onto the embassy grounds, believing the U.S. and Peruvian propaganda that they would be welcomed with open arms. When that turned out to be false, Cuba's revolutionary government called the U.S. rulers' bluff and, much to their dismay, opened the port of Mariel to anyone who wanted to emigrate, leading to a boatlift in which 128,000 Cubans left for the United States, while millions of Cubans throughout the island poured into the streets in support of their revolution.

'Cuban youth are continuation of the revolution'

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—"Young people are the continuation of the revolution in Cuba," said Barbara Cantero Isasi from the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba at a public meeting here. "The imperialists might think the Cuban Revolution will cease to exist but we are working with new generations to ensure that they will learn this: our youth are an invincible army."

"The Cuban leadership has confidence in its youth," Cantero explained, pointing to how the campaign to defend Elián González had started with the activities and projects among young people. The U.S. government refused to simply return González to Cuba for seven months after he was rescued at sea. Massive mobilizations in Cuba during the entire time showed the Cuban people's determination to not let Washington get away with this affront to its sovereignty.

The February 17 meeting, which drew about 50 people, was held at the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) headquarters. Cantero was welcomed by Andrew Ferguson, New South Wales president of the CFMEU, and also by Castro Abdullah, a visiting construction workers' union leader from Lebanon. Greet-

ings were also given by Luis Almaro, from the Colombian Solidarity Committee and the Simon Butler from Resistance, which organized the UJC leader's tour to Australia.

In her talk, Cantero said one of the main projects of the UJC is to increase the cultural level of all Cubans. One example she pointed to is the broad number of courses available through the University for All—a televised school aired three times a day so that workers and students can study according to their schedules.

Another initiative is establishing schools to train revolutionary social workers who collaborate with youth and working people in their community to tackle various problems that need addressing. This includes everything from eradicating the sources of dengue fever to questions about jobs, housing conditions, and alcoholism.

Cantero said the UJC is campaigning to defend five Cuban revolutionaries who were arrested in Florida, framed-up by the U.S. government on charges of conspiring to "commit espionage" and "murder," and sentenced by a federal judge to jail terms of between 10 years and life. The UJC leader said the five had been working to inform the leadership of the Cuban Revolution of

terrorist activities being organized against the country by Cuban counterrevolutionaries in the United States.

During the discussion a student asked what can be learned from the Cuban Revolution about how to organize youth who are "apathetic" in Australia. "The most important thing is not to get tired," Cantero said. "Everyday there are meetings of students: it is a political and ideological battle."

In Cuba today, "mass mobilizations are a habit," she said, and Cuban youth are well informed about what is happening in the world through their access to a range of newspapers and news programs. "When mobilizations are called, we understand what the action is about."

Cantero said the delegation from Cuba that participated in the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students last August in Algiers was very broad and multinational. "There were young people studying in Cuba from 52 different countries who participated in the delegation and helped increase solidarity with other countries," she said.

Linda Harris is a member of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union.

Sinn Fein leader speaks in Australia

Continued from Page 16

the British government should "prepare for disengagement" from the six counties of Northern Ireland, the Sinn Fein leader said.

Sinn Fein wants "unity in Ireland through consent." Unionists—those in the north who favor the partition of the country and continued political union with the United Kingdom—need to "think about their future," McLaughlin said. "They can be 20 percent of a united Irish political system, or remain less than 2 percent" as they are in the United Kingdom.

McLaughlin returned to the question of the place of Unionists in a future united Ireland in a brief question-and-answer session. "We won't put Unionists in the same dark corner they put nationalists in for 50 years under one-party rule," he explained as part of answering a question on what can be done about the upsurge in paramilitary attacks against nationalists and Catholics by a section of those who support partition.

Demands on London

The upsurge in murderous attacks "won't be resolved in the short term," McLaughlin noted, putting the onus on the failure of successive governments in London to move from a policy of stalling and equivocation. Once that happens "loyalist paramilitaries will lose their reason for being," he said.

McLaughlin also slammed the government of Anthony Blair for failing to implement the recommendations of a report commissioned by London on the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police force. The RUC is one of the main military props of contin-

ued British rule in the northern six counties, with a record of violence, abuse, and torture towards nationalists and Catholics. "The report didn't go anywhere near far enough for us," McLaughlin stated, "but we had an unequivocal promise from Blair that he would implement its recommendations. He hasn't done it."

"We now have a new promise by Blair to amend the regulations" that changed the RUC's name to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. "We will not be fooled," McLaughlin said. "Simply giving the RUC a new name and a new uniform does not constitute a 'new beginning' on policing."

In response to a question on the spate of racist and anti-immigrant thug attacks taking place in Ireland, McLaughlin explained that Sinn Fein is "part of the anti-racism movement" and "speaks out on every platform" against "this latent racism." He noted that while Ireland itself had "until recently been a monoculture...societies around the world had opened their arms to Irish immigrants.... We owe that debt to the world," he

said, and it should be repaid through solidarity with immigrants and refugees.

McLaughlin also took up the case of Niall Connolly, Martin McCauley, and James Monaghan, three Irish republicans imprisoned in August 2001 in Bogota, known as the Colombia 3.

Despite there being "no evidence" the three had been involved in anything illegal, they were "set up by the American government working with a corrupt government" in Colombia. Thanks to the testimony of an informer, they "were charged last week," he said. "There is every possibility of a miscarriage of justice. We need to bend our backs to secure justice for these men."

During the visit, the Sinn Fein leader spoke at public events in Melbourne, met with the state Labor premiers of Victoria and New South Wales, other members of state parliaments, former prime minister Paul Keating, the lord mayor of Brisbane, and Irish-born businesspeople. The visit received national television coverage on at least two channels.

In Perth, McLaughlin spoke to a public

political meeting sponsored by the AAI Western Australia branch attended by 65 people. An extended discussion period followed his remarks. "What we do is about political ideas. This was an opportunity for members and the public to engage with republican ideas," AAI (WA) president Simon Adams told the *Militant*.

"There was an incredible mix of people: from Irish immigrants to longtime republicans, from university students to rank-and-file Maritime Union members and others who sympathize with the struggle or simply wanted to find out more. People came prepared to ask questions and Mitchel gave them answers," Adams said.

The growing confidence evident among nationalists and republicans is due in part to leaders like McLaughlin, Adams noted. "This leadership has been steered in more than 30 years of struggle," he explained. "Meetings like this inspire and reinspire people."

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

Protest in Venezuela targets Chávez gov't

BY RÓGER CALERO

In another in a series of public demonstrations that are part of a reactionary drive to oust the Venezuelan government headed by Hugo Chávez, some 20,000 people marched in the capital city of Caracas February 27. The march was joined by one of the four high-ranking military officers to publicly called

for Chávez's resignation in the last month.

According to a March 1 CNN online report on the action, "The U.S. government has reported that several officers have approached American diplomats to sound them out about a coup."

The protest in the capital was called by the country's main trade union federation,

the Venezuelan Workers Federation (CTV), and supported by the employers' association, Fedecámaras, along with capitalist opposition parties.

This was the third major action recently organized by the capitalist class and social layers that support their efforts towards carrying out a coup against the Chávez government. In December the bosses organized a one-day strike that shut down 85 percent of the country's businesses and industries. Some 70,000 people turned out for a January 23 march, called by Fedecámaras with support from the CTV leaders.

Even though workers were given the day off by the bosses to attend the February 27 action, it was substantially smaller than the earlier protests. The same day Chávez joined with several thousand supporters in front of the presidential palace chanting, "They will not come back," in reference to the previous administrations.

"I will hand over the presidency in 2013, I am not leaving yet," said Chávez to the rally in response to calls for his resignation. He went on to call on the military "to grab the sword to defend social entitlements."

The CTV leaders cast the protest as one

Continued on Page 14

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Washington's Threats against Iran, Iraq, and north Korea—Who Really Possesses Weapons of Mass Destruction. Speaker: Deborah Liatos, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120. Sat. Mar. 16, 7:30 p.m.

Ireland and the Fight against British Imperialism Today. Fri. Mar. 29, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 3926 Mission St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

IOWA

Des Moines

The Irish Freedom Struggle and the Deepening Crisis of British Imperialism Today. Speaker: Laura Richards, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., Mar. 24, 2:00 p.m. Lunch at 12.30 p.m. Lunch donation \$5.

Oppose Israel's War against the Palestinian People. Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 29, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 3720 6th Avenue. Tel: (515) 288-2970.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Fight for Women's Equality Today: Celebrate International Women's Day. Speaker: Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

The 1979-83 Grenada Revolution and Its Overthrow. Speaker: Angel Lariscy, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

Oppose Capitalist Drive to Topple the Venezuelan Government. Speaker: Róger Calero, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m.

The Philippines Struggle against U.S. Occu-

pation and Intervention, Yesterday and Today. Fri., Mar. 15, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

'Homeland Defense' and Attacks on Workers' Rights in the United States. Speaker: Jack Willey, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., Mar. 8, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street. Donation: program, \$5; dinner, \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Defend Immigrant Rights, Defend Our Unions. Sun., Mar. 17, 4:00 p.m. 1st Floor, 3/

281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9718-9698.

CANADA

Toronto

Socialism and the Fight for Women's Liberation. Speaker: Patricia O'Beirne, Communist League. Fri., Mar. 15, 7:30 p.m. 2761 Dundas St. W. Tel: (416) 767-3705.

Vancouver

From Algiers to Buenos Aires, from Havana to Vancouver: the Building of a New Communist International Today. Speaker: Michel Dugre, Communist League. Sat., Mar. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2nd Floor, 4806 Main St. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Defend Immigrant Rights, Defend Our Unions. Sun., Mar. 17, 4:00 p.m. 1st Floor, 3/

—IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 3029A Bessemer Road. Zip: 35208. Tel: (205) 780-0021. E-mail: bhmSWP@bigfoot.com

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 4229 S. Central Ave. Zip: 90011. Tel: (323) 233-9372. E-mail: 74642.326@compuserve.com
San Francisco: 3926 Mission St. Zip: 94112. Tel: (415) 584-2135. E-mail: sfswp@hotmail.com

COLORADO: Craig: 6 West Victory Way. Zip: 81625. Mailing address: P.O. Box 1539. Zip: 81626. Tel: (970) 826-0289. E-mail: westerncoloradoswp@yahoo.com

FLORIDA: Miami: 8365 NE 2nd Ave. #206 Zip: 33138. Tel: (305) 751-7076. E-mail: Pathmiami@yahoo.com
Tampa: P.O. Box 16002. Zip: 33687. E-mail: TOC1004@aol.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 2791 Lakewood Ave. Zip: 30315. Mailing address: P.O. Box 162515. Zip 30321. Tel: (404) 763-2900. E-mail: atpathfinder@cs.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1212 N. Ashland Suite 201. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. E-mail: ChicagoPathfinder@compuserve.com

IOWA: Des Moines: 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. E-mail: swpdesmoines@cs.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 12 Bennington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 569-9169. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 4208 W. Vernor St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 441580

Zip: 48244. Tel: (313) 554-0504. E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 113 Bernard St., West St. Paul. Zip: 55118. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 506 Springfield Ave. 3rd floor. Zip: 07103. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: swpnewark@yahoo.com

NEW YORK: Brooklyn: 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Mailing address: PMB 106. 4814 4th Ave. Zip: 11220. Tel: (718) 567-8014. E-mail: swpbrooklyn@earthlink.net
Garment District, 545 8th Ave. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 695-7358. E-mail: swpnygd@attglobal.net;
Upper Manhattan: 599 W. 187 St. #1A Zip: 10033. Tel: (212) 740-4611. E-mail: swpuptown@usa.net;

OHIO: Cleveland: 11018 Lorain Ave. Zip: 44111. Tel: (216) 688-1190. E-mail: 103253.1111@compuserve.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 5237 N. 5th St. Zip: 19120. Tel: (215) 324-7020. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com
Pittsburgh: 5907 Penn Ave. Suite 225. Zip: 15206. Tel: (412) 365-1090. E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

TEXAS: Houston: 619 West 8th St. Zip: 77007. Tel: (713) 869-6550. E-mail: swphouston@ev1.net

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3437 14th St. NW Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 387-1590. E-mail: dc-swp@starpower.net

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 5418 Rainier Avenue South. Zip: 98118-2439. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: swpseattle@qwest.net

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 3/281-287 Beamish St.,

Campsie, NSW 2194. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240. Tel: (02) 9718 9698.

E-mail: cl_australia@bigpond.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 4613 St. Laurent. Postal code: H2T 1R2. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: Librpath@sympatico.ca

Toronto: 2761 Dundas St. West, Postal code: M6P 1Y4. Tel: (416) 767-3705. E-mail: milpathtoronto@sympatico.ca

Vancouver: #202D-4806 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3R8. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: clvancouver@cs.com

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Skolavordustig 6B. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milpth@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: Suite 3, 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 276-8885.

E-mail: milpath.auckland@actrix.gen.nz

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 13-969. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

E-mail: pathfinder.militant@paradise.net.nz

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Domargränd 16 (T-bana Västertorp) Postal code: S-129 04. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

—CALENDAR—

IOWA

Des Moines

Defend Workers' Rights against Employer and Government Assault. Speaker: Michael Italie, Socialist Workers Party, garment worker fired for political views. Thurs., Mar. 14, 7:00 p.m. Meredith Hall, Drake University, Room 102. Tel: (515) 288-2970.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Class series on *From the Escambray to the Congo—In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke. Sponsored by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party. Wed., March 13, 5:237 N. 5th St. Tel: (215) 324-7020.

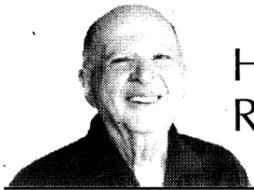
Say cheese—A columnist for the *Financial Times* of London cites a study by two “social scientists” who report that marriage brings about

from the 1996 census indicate that nine out of 10 people in the United States get married at least once. Fifty percent of first-time marriages end in divorce.

as ‘sleeper’ agents. One of these lists, from the State Dept., contains 64,000 names from around the world.”

with the feds. He will plead guilty. What he’ll get has not been disclosed.

thorized use of rental property.



Harry Ring

the same amount of bliss as an extra \$100,000 a year. And, they report, psychologists have found that people who say they are happy smile more.

Just keep trying—Data derived

What’s all the excitement?—“U.S. Will Not Lie to Public, Defense Chief Says” (Headline, February 21 *Los Angeles Times*); “Bush Promises No Lying on Defense Policy” (Headline, *LAT*, February 26).

Zzzz—The *Wall Street Journal* reports that numerous employer groups are pressing for FBI “watch lists of suspected terrorists, including people who may have infiltrated the American workplace years ago

Defending ‘our way’—Immigration and FBI agents have been instructed to “detain” immigrants—legal and “illegal”—for possible criminal charges rather than shipping them out as they’re now doing. The targets are said to include a guesstimated 314,000 people alleged to have ignored orders to get out.

He wants to open a chain?—The Kansas City, Missouri, pharmacist who diluted chemotherapy medication, has cut a plea bargain

Part of the learning process—In Baltimore, Maryland, where the school children are mainly Black, the fleet of 364 school buses rank as the oldest in the state. In recent inspections, more than 25 percent flunked safety tests.

A ‘terrorist’ film?—In South Hampton, New Hampshire, Jessie Cohen was busted and her car impounded when, on a traffic stop, cops found there was a warrant out for her alleging she failed to return a rental video. She faces a fine of up to \$1,200 on a charge of unau-

Have a good weekend—Fourteen European Enron managers split \$9 million for four days work helping with the sale of Enron’s retailing business.

Shucks, we missed again—Last month, interior furnishings at Enron’s London offices were auctioned off. Like: A state of the art health club and gym; a bio-strength abdominal crunch workout machine; a collection of commissioned art works, including one that the artist explains “contains layers of images which oscillate between the conscious and the unconscious.”

Angolan troops deal blow to UNITA bandits

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Angolan troops dealt a severe blow to UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), the reactionary rebel force that ravaged the country in civil war for nearly three decades, when they killed Jonas Savimbi February 22.

Savimbi led UNITA in a counterrevolutionary war against the Angolan government and people for more than 25 years. He was killed in a battle with Angolan soldiers. UNITA was long backed and supplied by Washington and, earlier, by the apartheid regime of South Africa.

Angolan government officials said they will maintain military pressure on UNITA until its leadership commits itself to disarmament under the provisions of a peace agreement signed in 1994.

“The Angolan government will speed up the process of the cease-fire provided we get signals from people in the bush,” Manuel Augusto, the deputy minister of information, said February 27. He explained that despite the death of Savimbi “the war didn’t end. Military pressure will be kept up to tell them that this is the best way to talk.”

Following Savimbi’s death, Angolan president José Eduardo dos Santos, while on a visit to Portugal, had called for a cease-fire with UNITA, saying this would set the stage for the country’s first elections since 1992.

The Angolan government had negotiated a peace agreement with UNITA in 1992 when elections were held. When Savimbi lost the first round he resumed military attacks, terrorizing and killing civilians. Two years later, UNITA was on the verge of military defeat, and another treaty was brokered.

Last year Savimbi’s mercenaries launched attacks near the capital and planted a mine that destroyed a passenger train, killing more than 100 civilians. UNITA’s military assaults forced more than 4 million people from their homes. More than 500,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands wounded.

Decades of colonial domination

As a result of decades of colonial domination, Angola, a nation of some 13 million people with vast wealth in oil, coal, diamonds, and farmland, has one of the world’s lowest standards of living. Disease and malnutrition are rampant with life expectancy at 44 years. Nearly one-third of the children die before the age of five.

The imperialist-backed UNITA has sought to wreak havoc in Angola ever since the country gained independence from Portugal, the former colonial master. In 1975 the Angolan fighters defeated the Portuguese military, which withdrew along with 300,000 Portuguese settlers.

Shortly before the country’s independence from Portuguese colonial rule was to be formally celebrated, the new government—led by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)—was attacked by troops from apartheid South Africa and Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which at the time was ruled by dictator Mobutu Sese Seko. The invading forces were allied with the Angolan National Liberation Front (FNLA) and UNITA.

The MPLA government issued a call for help from around the world. The revolutionary government of Cuba immediately responded by sending thousands of volunteer troops to help defeat the invading racist army of South Africa. When the Cuban volunteers



Cuban troops in Angola, 1981. Internationalist volunteers 81 fought alongside Angolan forces to repel invading forces of the racist South African army aided by UNITA. For more than 25 years, UNITA, with backing from Washington and apartheid South Africa, carried out a counterrevolutionary war against Angolan government and people.

arrived, South African troops had already pushed more than 400 miles into Angolan territory and antigovernment forces had reached the outskirts of the capital city, Luanda. By late March 1976, with the help of the Cuban troops, Angolan soldiers repelled the invading forces over Angola’s southern border into Namibia, which at that time was still a colony of South Africa.

Over the next 12 years apartheid troops repeatedly conducted military operations in Angolan territory aided by UNITA, which carried out terrorist operations in the southern part of the country. UNITA raided the railroad and government posts and established itself in the diamond region.

In 1986 Savimbi traveled to Washington seeking military aid and met with former president Ronald Reagan, whose administration provided him with a \$15 million bipartisan package of “covert assistance.” The following year Angolan troops were lured into a trap by UNITA forces in Cuito Cuanavale where the South African regime intervened and encircled the area with artillery, tanks, planes, and troops.

In the face of this looming assault, the Cuban government made a decision in November 1987 to send thousands of volunteer reinforcements and massive amounts of weaponry and supplies to Angola. By March 1988 the combined forces of the Cuban volunteers, the Angolan army, and fighters from SWAPO (South West African Peoples Organisation) dealt a decisive military defeat to the South African troops at Cuito Cuanavale. The South African invaders were forced to withdraw from Angola and in subsequent negotiations the apartheid regime ceded independence to Namibia, which celebrated the end of racist colonial domination. The people of Namibia established their own government in March 1990.

By 1991, when the last Cuban troops left Angola under an agreement between the Cuban and Angolan governments, more than 300,000 Cuban volunteers had served internationalist missions in Angola.

Following the pullout of Cuban troops, Washington normalized relations with Angola and recognized the MPLA government in 1993. U.S. and other capitalists be-

gan increasing their investments in Angola’s vast oil fields. Only six countries in the world produce more petroleum than Angola.

“Angola is sub-Saharan Africa’s biggest oil producer after Nigeria, and has become

an important source of oil for the United States,” said an article in the February 25 *New York Times*. It noted that Chevron Texaco Corporation pumps the largest amount of oil and at the end of last year French imperialist investors from TotalFinaElf began pumping petroleum from a new field that is expected to push the country’s daily production over 1 million barrels.

Savimbi, touted in the big-business media as the “darling of Western anti-Communists” who “hobnobbed with American presidents and dignitaries,” became a growing liability for the imperialists. UNITA lost important backing with the coming to power of a nonracial government led by Nelson Mandela in South Africa in 1994 and the collapse of the Mobutu dictatorship in 1997. Two years later Angolan troops delivered blows that destroyed a sizable chunk of the UNITA war machine.

With Savimbi’s death, the U.S. imperialists are seeking ways to suck more wealth out of the country. They have stepped up their demands that the Angolan government begin rectifying its “abysmal repayment record” on its foreign debt and cough up payment for hundreds of millions of dollars on high-interest loans it took out last year. Washington recently sent a crew from the International Monetary Fund to Angola to assess the country’s “fiscal accountability” and to press the government to pay on its \$12 billion foreign debt.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

35 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 18, 1977

“Few social changes have ever swept the world so rapidly,” notes a United Nations study on the worldwide trend toward liberalization of abortion laws.

The study found that almost two-thirds of the world’s population lives where access to legal abortion is relatively easy, compared with one-third five years earlier.

During the past decade, thirty-three countries have liberalized their abortion laws, and twelve nations now permit abortion on demand during the first three months of pregnancy.

In Italy, despite fierce opposition from the Vatican and the governing Christian Democratic party, the Chamber of Deputies approved a liberal abortion law in January.

Until this year, abortion was illegal in Israel unless the woman’s life was in danger. On January 31 the parliament passed a partially reformed law.

The new law legalizes abortion after approval by a three-member committee consisting of two doctors and a social worker. Harm to a woman’s emotional as well as physical health is now a criterion for granting abortions.

A feature in the January *Scientific American* reports that “over the past 10 years in many countries abortion has changed from a largely disreputable practice into an accepted medical one, from a subject of gossip into an openly debated public issue.”

Yet, the article goes on to say, “the issue is far from being settled.” For instance, last year West Germany went from a liberal abortion law to a more restrictive one.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

March 18, 1952

The American way of life has so effectively segregated Negro and white workers that one of the first tasks in breaking the old patterns and winning equal opportunities for Negroes is to make their white fellow workers conscious that discrimination exists.

When the problem is discussed, many white workers point to the fact that their unions admit Negroes to membership; they cite “civil rights conferences” sponsored by their CIO district or regional office, speeches made by union leaders at conventions, or union pamphlets supporting Fair Employment Practices legislation, and conclude that Jim Crow has been licked in their unions.

Actually, a much closer examination of the conditions in their plants and unions is necessary, before they can appreciate the many forms that discrimination takes and what can be done to fight it effectively through the unions.

Here are just a few of the questions workers should ask themselves if they want to build strong unions capable of facing the employers’ attacks with a solid and united membership:

1. Are Negroes in our plants employed in all classifications? If not, why not? Are there “Negro jobs” and “white jobs”?
2. Is upgrading overtime work and preferred work shift assignment completely impartial and fair?
3. Do layoffs and terminations hit Negro workers harder than the rest, and if so, what is the union doing to change that pattern?

Build march for black lung benefits

The *Militant* urges its readers to join in making the march by widows of miners with black lung disease a success. The widows' walk will demand that the federal government fulfill its promise to provide benefits to miners who contract black lung, as well as surviving spouses. The protest sets an example for all working people in the fight to defend the social wage against assaults by the employers and state and federal governments.

The action will be launched with a rally in Charleston, West Virginia, March 15, and will continue for a month, culminating in a protest in Washington. These fighting women will hold rallies in Fairmont and Morgantown, West Virginia, and in other towns along the route.

There are many ways that supporters of this struggle can join in the initiative. They can encourage union locals and co-workers to join a leg of the march or to go to the rally in Washington. Workers can help organize rallies and get-togethers along the way to help spread knowledge of the fight in local areas. Organizing press coverage and other support activities are other ways to solidarize with the action by the widows.

After years of militant struggle, including a strike wave in the eastern coalfields, the government was forced in 1969 to pass legislation providing medical care for miners who officials deemed sick enough to receive it. This entitlement—which miners and their families consider a basic right—has been largely gutted over the last two decades. At the same time black lung remains the number one killer of miners.

As with other sections of the working class, the wealthy rulers are attempting to place more economic and social responsibilities onto miners' families, letting the bosses

off the hook. Like the steel barons, who are attempting to dump their responsibility for steelworkers' pensions, the mine bosses wouldn't think for a minute about the lives of coal miners once their "productive" life is over. It has only been through class battles that the employers have been forced to come up with a modicum of health and pension benefits.

The bipartisan drive to make further inroads into the social wage—denying millions more working people measly welfare benefits and further eroding Social Security as a guaranteed federal government entitlement for all—is of a piece with the black lung benefit program. The logic of the "workfare" supported by both the Democrats and Republicans is the workhouse. Those who cannot work are turned out to rely on charity.

The obstacle in the way of the big-business parties achieving such a dream is the working class itself, whose values and interests are different from those of the capitalists. Workers are motivated by class solidarity, an interest in seeing that no life is devalued or unnecessarily cut short, and the conviction that the social wealth created by the working class should be used to provide cradle-to-grave protection and benefits for anyone who is thrown out of work, struck with illness, injured on the job, or has reached retirement age.

The widows' month-long campaign is one strike back against the attempts by the government to gut programs that benefit working people. Sponsorship by the National Black Lung Association, United Mineworkers of America, and Ohio Valley Environmental Coalitions helps to broaden the opportunities to build support for the march across the country.

Probe against workers' rights

The Senate Equal Protection of Voting Rights bill's inclusion of an amendment allowing states to use Social Security numbers to establish the identification of an individual in any aspect of elections is a serious assault on workers' rights that should be opposed by all working people. Such a measure would not only represent an intrusion on a person's right to privacy, but also have a chilling effect for working people on many aspects of the election process.

The Socialist Workers Party has recent experience along these lines in its ballot drives in Delaware. A requirement to not only collect nearly 3,000 signatures for the party's presidential candidate to be on the ballot, but to get everyone's Social Security number as well, had a dramatic impact on the ability of socialist campaigners to complete the drive.

Although they did go over the number required, the state ruled them off the ballot. After the SWP filed suit charging that the requirement violated the Privacy Act of 1974, the

state settled out of court and removed the measure.

Working-class parties face a host of undemocratic laws crafted by the capitalist parties in order to maintain their monopoly on the political process. They face large signature requirements of registered voters and a host of technical requirements on top of being blacked out by the press and kept out of most candidates' debates. Often when the SWP organizes to meet these requirements, the state simply increases the number of signatures or adds other stipulations in the hope that it will never happen again.

Giving the green light to states to begin using Social Security numbers in the election process is one of the many ways the superwealthy rulers of the United States seek to push back workers' rights without trying to take away outright hard-won constitutional or democratic rights. As their system goes into deep crisis and the bipartisan offensive continues, they anticipate working people in larger numbers will seek to chart a political course in their own class interests.

U.S. and allies out of Afghanistan

Continued from front page

its trade war, imposing steep tariffs on steel to protect the U.S. steel trusts, leading the imperialist powers in Europe and Japan to threaten retaliatory measures. And the Bush administration, with broad bipartisan backing, announced proposals that if carried out would mark a further assault on the social wage, targeting Social Security and welfare benefits.

As he pledged in his January State of the Union address, Bush is pressing forward the rulers' "two-front war" at home and abroad. Working people around the world can take for good coin the U.S. president's pledge that "this is just the beginning"—not only in battlefield deaths of U.S. servicemen, but in their drive against the rights, union organization, and wages and conditions on the job of working people at home.

This is the brutal logic of the march of imperialism to war and economic and social devastation. Despite objections and complaints by its imperialist rivals about Washington's "unilateral" actions in the world, each is doing what it can to send troops and warplanes to attack and kill the small group of Taliban and al Qaeda forces trapped in the high mountains of Afghanistan. None even challenge the complete dominance of the military power and capacities of U.S. imperialism. Each must keep deploying their forces as best they can in order to keep their place in the pecking order and feeding chain of the vultures of imperialism.

The lack of any pretense by Washington that the battle in Afghanistan is either organized or authorized by the regime in Kabul is another mark of its course toward the establishment of a protectorate in the country. U.S. military bases are getting larger around the country, making it little more than a giant beached aircraft carrier for imperialist forces in the region.

The failure of the Israeli regime to break the Palestin-

ian people and force them to give up on their struggle for self-determination has led the colonial-settler state into a dead-end death trap for Jews who live there. While it has remained a military garrison outpost for imperialism and a bulwark against the aspirations of the Arab masses, more Israeli citizens recognize that the country has no economic future and the course its capitalist rulers continue to follow will simply drag them more deeply into conflict with the Palestinian people.

Extended to a world scale, the U.S. rulers are already preparing a similar future for working people in the United States. The difference is that there is no other United States to go to. From Zimbabwe and Argentina, to Japan and Korea, imperialism cannot offer an expanding world economy and brighter prospects for the future of humanity. The relative boom made possible by the inter-imperialist slaughter of World War II has long been in decline. Despite temporary periods of economic growth, the crisis of world capitalism cannot be resolved without the capitalist rulers imposing devastating defeats on working people the world over, including unleashing nuclear war as they attempt to salvage their outmoded system.

The battle against imperialism and its wars also begins at home. Joining marches for black lung benefits, picket lines against police brutality, strikes of nurses and meat packers, and rallies against government austerity measures are examples of how to begin to answer the horrors Washington and its allies are visiting on the world and to advance the struggle against imperialism.

Reading, studying, and selling books such as *From the Escambray to the Congo*, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, along with the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, are concrete ways to build a revolutionary leadership and proletarian parties today, capable of leading the fight to replace the government of the capitalist rulers with one of workers and farmers.

Senate elections bill adds hurdles to ballot access

BY JACK WILLEY

On February 14 the Senate approved an amendment to the Equal Protection of Voting Rights bill that would allow states to require people registering to vote or signing nominating petitions to place candidates on the ballot to furnish their Social Security numbers.

The amendment opens working people up to victimization and places substantial additional hurdles before parties that must collect signatures for their candidates to appear on the ballot. In many cases the main capitalist parties—the Democrats and Republicans—are exempt from petitioning requirements. Together with requirements by a growing number of states for individuals to provide a valid Social Security number in order to get or renew a driver's license, the measure is a significant assault on workers' rights and another step towards establishment of a national ID card.

Supporters of the Equal Protection of Voting Rights bill tout it as a measure that will open the door for more people to register to vote and reduce election fraud. The Senate summary claims that it "require[s] States to meet uniform and nondiscriminatory election technology and administration requirements" by the 2004 federal elections.

The amendment—approved by voice vote with one objection—paints a different picture. It states: "It is the policy of the United States that any state may, in the administration of any voter registration or other election law, use the Social Security account numbers issued by the Commissioner of Social Security for the purpose of establishing the identification of individuals affected by such law"

Senator Jon Kyl, the sponsor of the amendment, told congress, "I believe there are currently seven states that do this. Because of the way the Privacy Act was enacted several years ago, those states were grandfathered. Others states don't have that ability."

Kyl was referring to the prohibition in the Privacy Act that prevents any federal, state, or local agency from requiring a Social Security number unless it is specifically authorized by statute or executive order.

Both the Socialist Workers Party and Libertarian Party filed suit in Delaware and Kentucky respectively and struck down those states' violations of the Privacy Act that had required petition signers to write down their Social Security numbers.

In 1994, when the Socialist Workers Party succeeded in overturning the state law, the party pointed out that such steps would be used to target individuals who sign petitions to put communists on the ballot and would strengthen moves to create a de facto national identification card with the Social Security and other identification cards.

The new amendment will now go to the House of Representatives, which is debating similar legislation.

Venezuela protests

Continued from Page 12

to commemorate the 13th anniversary of a popular uprising against the economic policies of former president Carlos Andrés Pérez and to call for increased wages. During the 1980s Pérez slashed government subsidies and other social spending at a time when workers in that country were facing massive unemployment and an acute social crisis. In response to the protests, Pérez unleashed the army and the police who killed between 400 and several thousand people in 1989.

The capitalist opposition parties are trying to take advantage of the impact of a worsening economic crisis, aggravated by a sharp drop in oil prices and currency devaluation, to undermine popular support to the Chávez government.

The announcement by Chávez of the suspension of wage increases and contract negotiations for public employers has also been used by the union officialdom to step up the campaign to oust the current government. CTV president Carlos Ortega warned that a 24-hour strike called for March 18 could be moved up in response to Chávez's announcements and the appointment of a new minister of labor. Ortega warned that the federation will call a general strike if the government does not change its policies.

Support for such a strike will have to come from all sectors, said Ortega, including the active military, alluding to greater intervention of the armed forces.

The opposition Venezuelan daily *El Nacional* has also taken note of the growing polarization in the countryside, where landless peasants have taken over land belonging to wealthy landowners. The capitalists and big landowners are targeting the Chávez government in part for pushing through a partial land redistribution effort and have blamed the law for encouraging land occupations. Several big landlords complained to *El Nacional* that the occupations began last September after several hundreds peasants received titles for small plots of land from the government.

The daily described the sharpening conflict as "low intensity warfare." The landowners have hired armed thugs to remove the peasants from the occupied lands. According to the article, three peasants have died in the confrontations.

'Working class has no voice in declaring war'

Printed below is an excerpt from *Eugene V. Debs Speaks*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. The item is from the speech presented by Debs in Canton, Ohio, on June 16, 1918. In this speech, presented in the midst of Washington's war against Germany during the First World War, Debs reaffirms his revolutionary socialist internationalism and opposition to the inter-imperialist war. He defends the Russian Revolution, which in 1917 succeeded in placing power in the hands of the workers and peasants. For the political content of the speech he was sentenced to 10 years in prison the following year on the charge of violating the Espionage Act. He spent two years and eight months behind bars. Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY EUGENE V. DEBS

Yes, my comrades, my heart is attuned to yours. Aye, all our hearts now throb as one great heart responsive to the battle cry of the social revolution. Here, in this alert and inspiring assemblage [applause] our hearts are with the Bolsheviki of Russia. [Deafening and prolonged applause.] Those heroic men and women, those unconquerable comrades have by their incomparable valor and



Eugene V. Debs giving antiwar speech to crowd of 1,200 at rally in Canton, Ohio, June 16, 1918. In the speech Debs reaffirmed his support for the Russian Revolution.

moral appeal, not to kings, not to emperors, rulers or diplomats but to the people of all nations. [Applause.] Here we have the very breath of democracy, the quintessence of the dawning freedom. The Russian revolution proclaimed its glorious triumph in its ringing and inspiring appeal to the peoples of all the earth.

In a humane and fraternal spirit new Russia, emancipated at last from the curse of the centuries, called upon all nations engaged in the frightful war, the Central Powers as well as the Allies, to send representatives to a conference to lay down terms of peace that should be just and lasting. Here was the supreme opportunity to strike the blow to make the world safe for democracy. [Applause.] Was there any response to that noble appeal that in some day to come will be written in letters of gold in the history of the world? [Applause.] Was there any response whatever to that appeal for universal peace? [From the crowd, "No!"] No, not the slightest attention was paid to it by the Christian nations engaged in the terrible

slaughter.

It has been charged that Lenin and Trotsky and the leaders of the revolution were treacherous, that they made a traitorous peace with Germany. Let us consider that proposition briefly. At the time of the revolution Russia had been three years in the war. Under the Czar she had lost more than four million of her ill-clad, poorly-equipped, half-starved soldiers, slain outright or disabled on the field of battle. She was absolutely bankrupt. Her soldiers were mainly without arms. This was what was bequeathed to the revolution by the Czar and his regime; and for this condition Lenin and Trotsky were not responsible, nor the

Bolsheviki.

For this appalling state of affairs the Czar and his rotten bureaucracy were solely responsible. When the Bolsheviki came into power and went through the archives they found and exposed the secret treaties—the treaties that were made between the Czar and the French government, the British government and the Italian government, proposing, after the victory was achieved, to dismember the German Empire and destroy the Central Powers. These treaties have never been denied nor repudiated. Very little has been said about them in the American press. I have a copy of these treaties, showing that the purpose of the Allies is exactly the purpose of the Central Powers, and that is the conquest and spoliation of the weaker nations that has always been the purpose of war.

'Wars waged for conquest and plunder'

Wars throughout history have been waged for conquest and plunder. In the Middle Ages when the feudal lords who inhabited the castles whose towers may still be seen along the Rhine concluded to enlarge their domains, to increase their power, their prestige and their wealth they declared war upon one another. But they themselves did not go to war any more than the modern feudal lords, the barons of Wall Street go to war... [Applause.]

And here let me emphasize the fact—and it cannot be repeated too often—that the working class who fight all the battles, the working class who make the supreme sacrifices, the working class who freely shed their blood and furnish the corpses, have never yet had a voice in either declaring war or making peace. It is the ruling class that invariably does both. They alone declare war and they alone make peace.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

sacrifice added fresh luster to the fame of the international movement.

Those Russian comrades of ours have made greater sacrifices, have suffered more, and have shed more heroic blood than any like number of men and women anywhere on earth; they have laid the foundation of the first real democracy that ever drew the breath of life in this world. [Applause.] And the very first act of the triumphant Russian revolution was to proclaim a state of peace with all mankind, coupled with a fervent

LETTERS

Information on exhibition

As regards the article on the lynching photo exhibition at the Warhol Museum, there is a web site where you can view 80 of these "lynching" postcards along with the message that accompanies the card and a short history of the victims. The site is www.journale.com/withoutsanctuary/main.html.

Alan Grady
St. Paul, Minnesota

Support to Sinn Fein

Contrary to the letter of Josh Fritz in the February 25 *Militant*, it is incumbent for any revolutionary or progressive-minded person to support the struggle for Irish independence and unity. The only organization leading that struggle is Sinn Fein.

Gerry Adams came to the World Economic Forum to espouse the cause of Irish freedom and to use the platform available to win support or neutralize opposition to that goal.

In a discussion on World Hunger and Poverty he stated, "Let me say this clearly. It is wrong that the Third World should be crippled with debt while the first world is affluent. That debt should be canceled now." He said the same thing during his visit to Cuba and thanked the Cubans for their support despite strong criticism from his critics.

Support Sinn Fein? Absolutely.
Gary Cohen
Arlington, Massachusetts

Keep pushing on

I find myself writing to vent my frustrations with the problems that I see every day in the news and on the streets. I see so much homelessness, poverty, drugs, and total aggravation on the faces of the unnoticed in society. I hear their cries, I understand their anger in being out of work and not getting any support but ridicule by those who label them as misfits, uneducated, and lazy. The truth of the matter is that they the common workers of this land (America) are not lazy but stuck out here in this jungle looking for away to make a living, but it is not easy.

I myself am a laborer and a college student and find myself in the dark hole of this so-called recession, this hole of unemployment, just like the rest that are trapped in it. I lost my financial aid loans without any warning.

To many of my brothers and sisters out

there trying to survive I say, push on and stay strong.

Sigmund Scott
Atlanta, Georgia

Shah of Iran

I would like to bring to your attention a mistake that has happened quite a few times regarding the name of the king of Iran who was toppled by the February 1979 revolution. His name was Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, not Reza Pahlavi, who was his father.

Morteza Gorgzadeh
Toronto, Ontario

Imperialist protectors?

The *San Francisco Chronicle* recently reported on U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell's claim that the U.S. government, "far from being the great Satan, I would say we are the great protector." Another article in the same issue gave more details on the sort of "protection" the U.S. government provides.

General Abdul Rashid Dostum is one of the Afghan Northern Alliance leaders who was put back into power recently by the U.S. invasion and occupation. He had been infamous in Afghanistan since the late 1980s, first as a brutal thug for the Stalinist president, Mohammed Najibullah. Then in 1992 he switched sides when it became clear that the U.S.-backed forces would overthrow Najibullah. He and his troops became even more infamous in the subsequent period for massacres and widespread rapes of women and children.

The *Chronicle* reported on the renewal of similar assaults and injected some cold reality into the recent propaganda blitz by capitalist politicians like Hillary Clinton and Laura Bush alleging that the U.S. conquest of Afghanistan somehow benefits women there.

The U.S. government is the "Great Protector" all right—of the interests of the rich and powerful against the working class and working farmers of the world.

Robert Dees
Palo Alto, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

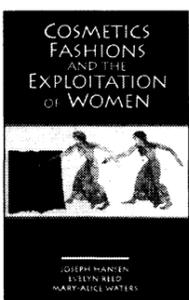
March BOOKS OF THE MONTH

★ ★ ★ ★ Pathfinder Readers Club SPECIALS

25%
DISCOUNT

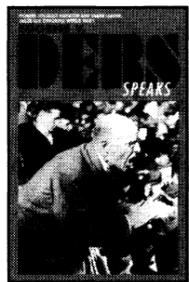
Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

JOSEPH HANSEN, EVELYN REED, MARY-ALICE WATERS
How big business plays on women's second-class status and social insecurities to market cosmetics and rake in profits. The introduction by Waters explains how the entry of millions of women into the workforce during and after World War II irreversibly changed U.S. society and laid the basis for a renewed rise of struggles for women's emancipation. \$14.95, special price: \$11.00



Eugene V. Debs Speaks

Speeches by the pioneer U.S. socialist agitator and labor leader, jailed for opposing Washington's imperialist aims in World War I. Debs speaks out on capitalism and socialism, anti-immigrant chauvinism, how anti-Black racism weakens the labor movement, Rockefeller's massacre of striking miners at Ludlow, Colorado, and more. \$19.95, special price: \$15.00



Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State

FREDERICK ENGELS
How the emergence of class-divided society gave rise to repressive state bodies and family structures that protect the property of the ruling layers and enable them to pass along wealth and privilege. Engels discusses the consequences for working people of these class institutions—from their original forms to their modern versions. \$17.95, special price: \$13.50

Military Writings

LEON TROTSKY
The central organizer of the Red Army discusses the challenge of organizing an army made up of peasants and workers, based on a shared interest in defending the young Soviet republic. \$18.95, special price: \$14.00

Available from
bookstores, including
those listed in page
12. Or order online at
www.pathfinderpress.com

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

London meddles in Zimbabwe election

BY GREG McCARTAN

Imperialist governments led by London have ratcheted up their intervention into Zimbabwe heading into the March 9-10 national elections in the southern African country. They hope to move out President Robert Mugabe and bring to power the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), headed by Morgan Tsvangirai. The MDC has openly backed the imperialist threats and sanctions, saying they are needed to stave off a wave of violence from the government.

In a provocation last month, the European Union (EU) sent Sweden's ambassador to the United Nations to head what was to be a 150-member elections observer team in Zimbabwe. The government in Harare had said it would not accredit observers from Britain, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, or Sweden and denied the Swedish ambassador's request to remain in the country for more than 15 days because he spoke to the news media about Zimbabwe, a violation of his visa.

The British government then pressed the EU to pass a resolution February 18 freezing any assets in Europe owned by Mugabe and other government officials, and prohibiting member nations from selling arms or equipment to Zimbabwe that could be used for repression. Washington followed soon followed suit.

London then moved to have Zimbabwe suspended from the Commonwealth, but ran into trouble at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Australia in early March. Prime Ministers Anthony Blair of Britain and Helen Clark of New Zealand both attacked a declaration that failed to carry out the suspension and instead empowered representatives of three governments to decide on what action to take after the elections are held.

Australian prime minister John Howard said the vote reflected the "optimum" that was possible given the lack of support from a majority of countries at the meeting.

Blair called the Zimbabwean government's decision to charge Tsvangirai with



treason an "outrage" and said Mugabe was being "completely wrong, undemocratic, and dictatorial." London endorsed Tsvangirai's candidacy.

President Thabo Mbeki in South Africa said his government opposed the sanctions, calling them "regrettable and unfortunate" and urged Mugabe to stem his attacks on the opposition. A government statement said the sanctions may "further compound the situation."

The Congress of South African Trade Unions, a longtime supporter of Mugabe's party due to historic ties in the struggle against apartheid and the white minority government in what was then Rhodesia, also called on the regime in Zimbabwe to halt "state-sponsored terrorism."

Over the past two years, Mugabe, Zimbabwe's 78-year-old president and central governmental official since independence in 1980, has unleashed a campaign of intimidation against the MDC as his support has fallen in face of a deepening economic

crisis in the country. Mugabe has combined this repression with a bureaucratic series of "land seizures" of large farms held by whites, and anti-imperialist demagoguery posing the battle as one between the old colonial powers and a newly independent country.

"We must decide whether we shall be the decision makers of Zimbabwe, or whether the British...will remain in power over us," Mugabe told an election rally in February. "Imperialism must fail! We must crush it here," he said. While support of the regime among working people in the cities is at an all-time low, Mugabe has been able to retain backing among peasants in the countryside with promises of land. It is to shore up this support that the seizures of white farms has been aimed. He is also taking advantage of Tsvangirai's growing connections with Washington and London and the opposition's open support for the sanctions to paint the MDC leader as a front man for the wealthy farmers and imperialist powers.

While London and Washington feign concern for whether or not "democratic" elections are held in Zimbabwe, the real history of imperialist support to the white minority regime that ruled the country until 1980, and the exploitation by finance capital of the wealth and resources of the south African nation, is a better gauge of what is really involved.

A decade ago the Mugabe government abruptly abandoned its socialist rhetoric and subscribed to an economic "structural adjustment" program demanded by the imperialist International Monetary Fund. In return for loans the government promised to carry out a stiff austerity program that had a wide impact on the population.

Modest social gains registered since independence were eroded as the imperialist powers tied the country ever more deeply into the prevailing trade imbalances and anarchy of the world capitalist market. In 1999 the IMF abruptly pulled out of the country and suspended loans to Harare.

The combined impact of the world capitalist economic downturn that is hitting southern Africa particularly hard, a growing economic boycott of Zimbabwe, and drastic decline in agricultural production has devastated the living conditions of working people.

Nearly 60 percent of the workforce is jobless and the annual rate of inflation is 116 percent. Some 500,000 people, mostly in the countryside, are at risk of starvation due to the rising price of food and the scarcity of goods. Nearly 400 companies have closed over the last two years and 60,000 physicians and other professionals have fled the country during the same time period.

The national treasury is also being drained by Mugabe's decision to send more than 10,000 soldiers to the Congo to defend the government there at a cost of nearly \$3 million a week.

The lack of any attempts at land reform in a country where 4,000 white capitalist farmers control nearly all the productive land has put the population at the mercy of this wealthy layer. As a condition of granting independence to Zimbabwe and easing out the racist regime in the late 1970s, London demanded a provision be written into the country's constitution barring the government from touching the land of the wealthy farmers for at least a decade. The British imperialists pledged in return to help fund government land purchases, a promise it has failed to keep. Today, some 6 million of the country's 12.5 million people remain landless peasants.

Looking closer to home, the British government is not extending such compassion to Zimbabwean citizens arriving in the United Kingdom. A recent report indicates that hundreds of Zimbabweans are either being sent back home or put in jail as they arrive. At the end of December there were 106 in detention in Britain and the Zimbabwe Asylum Seekers Association set up in October says it has 200 cases on its book of people who have been put in jail after fleeing Zimbabwe.

Sinn Fein leader speaks in Australian cities

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—"Our steadfast commitment that the people of Ireland should have control of their own destiny" is one of the political cornerstones of Sinn Fein, Mitchel McLaughlin told a fund-raising dinner here February 25.

McLaughlin, national chairperson of Sinn Fein, the all-Ireland party leading the political fight to reunify the partitioned country, visited Australia from February 24 to March 1 to win support for the freedom struggle. The trip followed similar visits in 1999 by once-banned Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams and in 2000 by Martin McGuinness.

The Sinn Fein delegation, which visited Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth, as well as Sydney, also included Sinn Fein's coordinator in Australia Dodie McGuinness and press secretary Dominic Doherty. The three were accompanied by John Little, the Perth-based organizer of Friends of Sinn Fein.

"There is an international fraternity of struggle," McLaughlin told the 110 people at the Sydney dinner, which was sponsored by the New South Wales branch of Australian Aid for Ireland (AAI). "We want to associate Sinn Fein with other struggles for liberation," he said, after being welcomed to Sydney by longtime Aboriginal activist Ray Jackson.

'A culture of arrival'

Aborigines and Irish not only had common experiences at the hands of the British colonizers of Australia and Ireland and an intertwined history going back 200 years here, McLaughlin explained. Both peoples "never relinquished their identity, never stopped identifying with other causes, other struggles," he said. "The culture of victimhood, defeat, denial, and struggle is

changing. It is now a culture of arrival," he noted, pointing to the growing confidence among millions of Irish people that "we will see a united Ireland in our lifetime."

Acknowledging the presence of two East Timorese community leaders in the audience, McLaughlin noted that "many other liberation struggles draw confidence and inspiration" from the Irish freedom struggle. "None of our struggles will be over till all of our struggles are over," he explained.

McLaughlin went on to describe the current political situation in British-occupied Northern Ireland. The 1994 cease-fire by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was a "decision and an offer made out of strength." Now one of the main pro-British paramilitary

organizations, the Ulster Defence Association, has called off its cease-fire, McLaughlin explained. "There have been more than 300 unprovoked attacks [on nationalists and Catholics] in the last 12 months alone," he said, including the "disgraceful blockade of young Catholic schoolchildren" trying to attend Holy Cross Girls Primary School near the north Belfast area of Ardoyne.

These events show the "absolute intention of British military intelligence and those they control" to provoke the IRA into calling off its cease-fire, he said, noting this attempt has so far failed to yield the hoped-for results.

Instead of trying to subvert negotiations, Continued on Page 12

Airport workers in UK strike against pay cuts

BY DEBBIE DELANGE AND TONY HUNT

MANCHESTER, United Kingdom—"We must stand up and fight for our rights and not sit back and take pay cuts," said Collette Parsons speaking at a spirited rally of around 600 airport workers and their families here February 23. Parsons was one of the leaders of the baggage screeners at Manchester Airport, mostly members of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) who had just staged a 36-hour strike against proposed job cuts, reductions in wages, and assaults on working conditions by airport management. The rally came at the end of a lively demonstration through the city center. TGWU members who work in other areas at the airport, and expect to be next in the firing line, also participated. "I'm here to support the union and fight

for what's right," said one baggage screener, who asked that her name not be used. Another said she was here "to keep the roof over the head of my children—at the end of the day it's my house that could go." This 34-year-old woman had worked at Manchester Airport for 14 years. Her children, like most participants in the demonstration, were wearing high visibility vests, making the demonstration appear like a sea of yellow that surged through the streets.

The 36-hour strike had been preceded by one- and two-hour stoppages between February 4 and 16. According to a TGWU leaflet distributed at the rally, airport bosses are trying to impose new contracts that will cut up to 590 jobs, reduce pay by 40 percent, increase the workweek from 38 to 42 hours, and eliminate seven paid holidays per year. Meanwhile, union officials speaking at the

rally placed emphasis on the threat to "airport security" posed by the bosses' attacks on jobs.

The marchers held official banners of the TGWU north-west region and TGWU Women Workers. There was also a banner from ICL computer workers, and a homemade banner that said, "Students support the airport strike." Printed placards called for "passenger safety before airport profit." A union spokesperson said the airport made £53 million (US\$79.5 million) in profit last year.

Also on the demonstration with their banner were 12 locked-out TGWU members at Friction Dynamics in north Wales who had traveled to Manchester to show their solidarity with the airport workers. They were greeted with loud applause when one of the speakers at the rally pointed them out.