

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'To read is to grow,' is banner of first book fair in Equatorial Guinea

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 69/NO. 43 NOVEMBER 7, 2005

Vote Socialist Workers! Organize, strengthen unions to resist bosses' attacks

*Build labor party, based on the unions,
that fights in interests of working people*

**Back struggle for electrification needed
for economic advances in colonial world**

Vote Socialist Workers Party! Vote for the SWP candidates where they are on the ballot and write their names in where they've been excluded. That's what we urge our readers to do November 8.

The Socialist Workers Party is fielding 34 candidates in 12 states and 14 cities this fall. These candidates offer a working-class alternative to the twin parties of U.S. imperialism—the Democrats and Republicans. They are the only ones running on a platform advancing the interests of working people.

The SWP candidates are presenting a revolutionary working-class program in the United States to reach out to our sisters and brothers around the world in order to strengthen



Michael Ortega (center), Socialist Workers Party candidate for State Assembly District 28 in New Jersey, campaigns September 17 at Puerto Rican Day Parade in Newark, New Jersey.

Militant/Sara Lobman

in advancing the U.S. rulers' imperial interests from Afghanistan to Iraq and beyond.

Hundreds of thousands of working people sense today that the same two parties of capitalism that are more united than in decades in leading U.S. imperialism's wars abroad are carrying out an escalating assault on workers and farmers at home—on our wages, hours, safety, and other job conditions, and on our living standards. That's why the

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EDITORIAL

the struggle against our common enemies—the imperialist aggressors and capitalist exploiters the world over.

The elections take place in a new political situation in the United States. It is fueled by Washington's initial successes

SWP candidates in California: Nationalize energy, health care! Socialists campaign for working-class program

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—"What we are experiencing now is something we haven't seen for years," said Frank Forrestal at a Militant Labor Forum here October 22. He was describing the new political situation in the United States that has resulted in the Socialist Workers Party ticket in the November 8 elections in California gaining a wider hearing among working people. Forrestal is the SWP campaign director in Los Angeles, where he spoke at a similar forum the previous day.

"More workers are turning to organizing unions and using those that exist to counter the employers' attacks on wages and job and living conditions," Forrestal said. "There is more readiness among working people to fight to defend their livelihoods and to reach out for and extend solidarity to others

doing the same thing." At the center of the SWP campaign platform is backing struggles to organize unions and use union power to defend working people from the bosses' attacks, Forrestal said. "It is through such struggles that working people can fight for demands such as nationalizing medical care."

There is a burning need to socialize medicine today and make health care a lifetime right for all, free of charge—from regular preventive medical checkups, to all forms of treatment, hospitalization, and prescriptions. "We also propose nationalizing the energy and power companies," Forrestal added. "Take them out of private hands and run them as public utilities for the benefit of the majority."

The Democrats and Republicans—the parties leading working people into

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Striking meat packers in Canada get labor support Counter scabs with unity on picket line

BY JOHN STEELE

BROOKS, Alberta—Meat packers on strike against Tyson-owned Lakeside Packers are maintaining strong picket lines despite efforts by the bosses to restart production with scabs and restrictions on picketing by the Alberta Labour Relations Board. The workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 401, walked out October 12 in a fight to get their first contract with the company.

At the same time, strikers are reaching out and receiving growing labor solidarity.

At an October 21 press conference, Doug O'Halloran, UFCW Local 401 president, said that representatives of UFCW Local 7 in Colorado had visited the picket line, bringing solidarity greetings and a donation of \$100,000 to help the strikers.

"We are mobilizing to do everything



Militant/Natalie Doucet

Meat packers on strike against Tyson-owned Lakeside Packers in Brooks, Alberta, confront bus carrying scabs October 18 outside Canada's largest beef slaughterhouse.

we can to support the strikers in Alberta," said Johnny Rodriguez, president of UFCW Local 540 in North Richland Hills, Texas, according to an October 21 union press release. "Tyson has been bullying its workers around for far too long... Local 540 is raising money to support the strike and will sponsor a

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Striking union at Northwest calls off vote on boss 'offer'

BY NELSON GONZALEZ

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—On October 20, leaders of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), which represents 4,400 striking mechanics, cleaners, and custodians at Northwest Airlines, called off a vote on a proposed offer from the airline. The union did so after the company added a clause to

"protect" the replacement workers. The offer, which AMFA officials initially planned to present to the membership, had called for dismissing nearly 90 percent of the union mechanics with four weeks severance pay.

"This would allow the bosses to fire a union mechanic accused by a strikebreaker of harassment without any right to a hearing or arbitration," said Ted Ludwig, president of AMFA Local 33, referring to the "scab clause" the company inserted in its offer. "Also it would prevent the union from filing charges against members who violated

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'Militant' launches target week in subscription drive

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Militant readers are beginning a special effort October 28 to boost the pace of subscription sales to the paper. The expanded target week of the circulation drive will go through November 8. It coincides with efforts by Socialist Workers Party candidates and their supporters to win backing for the party's working-class platform leading up to state and local elections in the United States.

At week five of the nine-week circulation campaign, the sub drive continues to outpace previous efforts, as workers show greater interest in the paper. Another 270 people subscribed last

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UK dairy farmers protest charges resulting from fight for living income

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—Carrying signs that read “We milk cows—Supermarkets milk us,” 30 dairy farmers and their supporters gathered on October 12 outside the magistrate’s court in Lewes, where police were pressing charges against Peter Parkes, a Surrey dairy farmer. Parkes is the organiser of the Surrey Farmers For Action (FFA). He was facing charges of obstruction during a farmers’ protest in August at the nearby Arla milk processing plant in Uckfield, East Sussex.

Outside the court the farmers drew attention to the continuing decline in farm incomes, with placards that explained, “Farmers get 18p[ence] a litre, 6p less than in 1995; processors get 15p, the same as in 1995; supermarkets get 23p, of which 8–10% is profit.”

“Our costs are going up all the time, but dairies try and push down the prices that we receive for what we produce,” said Parkes’s wife Youelite, who also works on the farm. Total farm income in England dropped by over 8 percent in 2004.

“The dairies put up milk prices last year after protests but dropped it again two months later,” said Robert Capsey, 18, whose father is a farmer. He also described the support farmers received at the dairy protests from many tanker drivers delivering milk to the depot. “One tanker driver who stood with us when we were outside the dairy was taken off driving by the company.”

The court gave Parkes a six-month conditional discharge. “I absolutely stand by what I did, because we are being ripped off,” said Parkes, speak-

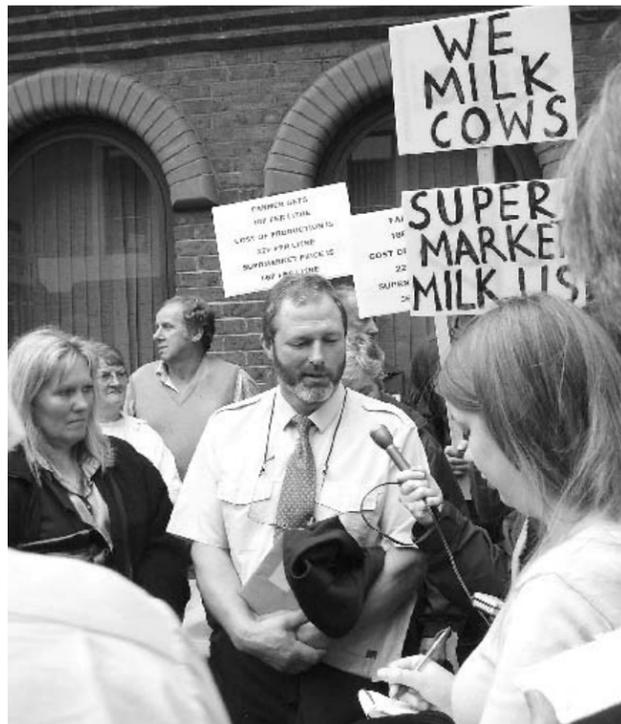
ing to supporters and the media following the hearing. He explained that farmers attending the hearing “had a whip around [passed the hat] to help me pay the court costs.”

Asked by reporters whether he would continue to be involved in action against the dairy companies, Parkes responded, “Will protests go on? Read between the lines. I will carry on. Maybe I won’t be the one sitting in front of the lorry, next time. The night I got arrested 3,000 farmers were protesting in France. We need to do more of what they did.”

Bruce Horn, an arable and beef farmer from Hampshire, also participated in the court protests. He described recent collaboration between the FFA and members of the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU)

who were due to take strike action at the Morrisons supermarket distribution centres, in opposition to job cuts and attacks on union rights. He said the union asked the FFA to co-ordinate action together. Eventually the TGWU suspended the planned strike.

Following the court hearing the farmers went to the town centre to circulate among residents a petition demanding an increase in the price they receive for milk.



Militant/Paul Davies

Dairy farmer Peter Parkes speaks to reporters October 12 outside courthouse in Lewes, England, after being charged with obstruction for his role in an August farm protest.

With new chancellor Angela Merkel, rulers in Germany plan to intensify attacks on labor

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Three weeks after elections that ended in a near deadlock, the two largest parties of the German rulers chose Angela Merkel of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) as chancellor. The decision reflects the German capitalists’ intention to pursue their offensive against the working class in the world’s third-largest economy.

The CDU had received 35 percent of the vote in the September 18 national elections, winning 226 seats in parliament against 222 for the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which took 34 percent of votes cast.

Merkel will head a “grand coalition” government of the two parties, which they agreed to October 10. Each party will hold eight cabinet seats. The outgoing SPD-Green Party government headed by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had spearheaded cuts in unemployment benefits and other social programs. It had steadily lost popular support as a result of these anti-working-class measures.

The election results, in which neither of the largest parties of the German rulers could garner more than a third of the vote, reflected their difficulty in convincing workers and farmers to accept cuts in pensions, jobless benefits, and other gains. Much of the big-business press in Europe had hoped for a CDU-dominated government as the best instrument to step up the profit-driven attacks on workers’ social wage and job conditions.

The October 15 London *Economist* expressed its satisfaction that “things are moving in the right direction” now that Merkel has been chosen chancellor. The new government is expected to act on its campaign promises to weaken industry-wide union negotia-

tions, and increase the weight of taxation on working people.

The “grand coalition” will continue attacks on workers’ gains. However, the German rulers are divided over how far and how fast to push these measures in face of working-class resistance to attacks by the SPD-led government under the Agenda 2010 series of measures. The jobless rate stands at more than 11 percent nationwide, and above 18 percent in the East.

Berlin has poured \$1.5 trillion into eastern Germany since reunification in 1990 in an effort to spend its way out of a showdown with workers and farmers who anticipated a marked improvement in their standard of living. German big-business daily *Der Spiegel’s* recent report on “The Price of a Failed Reunification” complains that “Germany’s politicians are mostly silent about one of the country’s most pressing problems. Former East Germany is a major liability costing the economy 100 billion euros annually.” It describes the eastern part of the country as a “money pit” where even Leipzig, the East’s “boomtown,” has an unemployment rate of 21 percent.

THE MILITANT

Build a labor party based on unions!

The ‘Militant’ brings you the news of Socialist Workers candidates across the U.S. They campaign not only for organizing and strengthening the unions, but for breaking with the twin parties of capitalism—the Democrats and Republicans—and building a labor party based on the unions that defends the interests of working people 365 days a year. Don’t miss a single issue!



Jay Ressler, SWP mayoral candidate in Pittsburgh, campaigns at September 5 Labor Day rally.

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Argiris Malapanos

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

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Over 50,000 dead after earthquake in Kashmir

Capitalism, imperialist domination maximize toll

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—Tens of thousands of people have died in the wake of an October 8 earthquake in Kashmir, a Himalayan region divided between Pakistan and India. More than 53,000 have been killed and 75,000 injured in the part controlled by Pakistan—according to government estimates. Another 1,350 have died on the Indian-controlled side. Many were killed as tens of thousands of cheaply constructed buildings and homes collapsed. Millions of survivors face increasingly severe weather conditions as winter approaches.

The imperialist domination of both nations and the capitalist regimes in Islamabad and New Delhi maximized the human toll.

The U.S. government is taking advantage of the catastrophe to further consolidate its relationship with the Pakistani regime, an important ally in Washington's "war on terror."

NATO officials announced October 21 plans to send up to 1,000 soldiers to Pakistan, but only four helicopters, Agence France-Presse reported. The U.S.-led military alliance made clear that they would not stage an airlift.

As of now, 20 governments have provided only 68 operational helicopters, which are the only way of providing tents, food, and medical supplies to the many villages made unreachable when the few roads there were buried by landslides. UNICEF, the UN children's organization, estimates that 10,000 more children will die in weeks unless needed aid reaches them immediately.

Cuba sends medical brigade

One country with relatively few resources has set an example. Some 200 Cuban doctors, nurses, and paramedics arrived in Pakistan October 21. They were deployed to a military hospital in Islamabad and the worst-hit towns of Balakot and Abbottabad in North West Frontier Province to help in the medical effort.

"We are happy to be here to help our Pakistani brothers and sisters and we are ready to work despite the very long flight," Francisco Rivera, a nurse from the Cuban city of Santa Clara, told Reuters at a military airbase in Rawalpindi after a 26-hour flight from Havana.

The Cuban medical team, which makes up one of the largest foreign contingents of medical workers in Pakistan, is prepared to stay for at least 90 days. The Cuban government has covered the transportation and food expenses for the operation.

An estimated 2–3 million people have been left homeless. Still there are no plans to evacuate people who will face the Himalayan winter in tents at best. UN official Jesper Lund reported that aid agencies plan to send 83,000 tents. But at least 450,000 are needed, he said. As of October 15, only 18,000 tents had been distributed, reported Associated Press. Lund added that in response to the UN appeal for \$312 million for aid relief, governments have pledged only \$86 million.

Rescue efforts that do exist are limited by the country's lack of infrastructure caused by decades of imperialist domination and brutal capitalist re-

gimes. According to a U.S. government profile, a little over half the highways in Pakistan are paved. Per capita energy consumption is only 5 percent that of the United States. Some 32 percent of the people live below the official poverty line, and more than half are illiterate. The government is also saddled with a \$34 billion debt owed primarily to banks in imperialist countries.

Though Kashmir is one of the areas of the world most vulnerable to earthquakes, most homes, schools, and other buildings are constructed out of mud bricks, field stones, and timber wood.

The governments of India and Pakistan have fought two wars over Kashmir. The Kashmiri independence struggle has its roots in British imperialism's division of its colonial empire. Trying to hold on to its power in face of a rising independence struggle across India, the British rulers in 1947 divided the country into a Muslim state of Pakistan and a largely Hindu state of India. Fighting was especially fierce in Kashmir, a predominantly Muslim region ruled by a Hindu aristocracy.

Washington has made progress in

U.S. gov't, imperialist allies press for anti-Syria sanctions

Washington, Paris use report implicating Syrian officials in Lebanon bombing

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Washington and its imperialist allies have ratcheted up their pressure on the Syrian government following the release on October 19 of a report by a UN investigative commission that implicates the regime in Damascus in the February 14 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri.

The UN Security Council met October 25 to discuss this issue. According to press reports, Washington and Paris are preparing a resolution calling on Damascus to detain high-level Syrian government officials, who UN investigators allege were involved in the assassination, and make them "unconditionally available" to the UN commission until its investigation is completed in mid-December.

The commission, headed by German prosecutor Detlev Mehlis, concluded that "there is probable cause to believe that the decision to assassinate former Prime Minister, Rafik Hariri, could not have been taken without the approval of top-ranked Syrian security officials."

The accused reportedly include Maher Assad, the brother of Syrian president Bashar Assad; Assef Shawkat, Assad's brother-in-law; the head of Lebanese intelligence; a former head of Syrian intelligence; and other top figures in the Baathist regime in Damascus.

U.S. officials have made it clear that Washington intends to use the UN meeting to press to weaken, isolate, and destabilize the Assad regime.

"The United States makes no distinction between those who commit acts of terror and those who support and harbor them," U.S. president George Bush said in a speech the same day the Security Council meeting opened. "Syria is destabilizing Lebanon, permitting terrorists to use its territory to reach Iraq, and giving safe harbor to Palestinian terrorist groups.... Now the

Cuba sets example in response to Hurricane Wilma



Reuters/Daniel Leclair

Rescue teams—like one above, in action October 24—evacuated some 250 people from flooded homes in Havana in aftermath of Hurricane Wilma. There were no deaths or major injuries in Cuba. Nearly 700,000 people were evacuated across western Cuba as Wilma approached. In Mexico, six people were killed and 350,000 left homeless. At least six deaths have been reported in Florida after the storm, and power was cut to millions of homes.

turning the Pakistani regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf into an important ally in its "war on terrorism." At the same time, the U.S. rulers have improved relations with India. Islamabad has carried out joint military operations

with U.S. Special Forces against the Taliban on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistani border. Washington has also worked to develop closer relations with New Delhi, helping to reduce its conflict with the Pakistani regime.

United Nations must act, and Syria and its leaders must be held accountable for their continuing support for terrorism, including any involvement in the murder of Prime Minister Hariri."

Damascus has lost substantial ground in Lebanon since the assassination, which sparked sustained protests there. In face of those mobilizations and pressure primarily from Paris and Washington, Syria withdrew the last of its troops from Lebanon in April, ending a 29-year military presence in the country.

Direct military pressure by Washington against Damascus is also

increasing as U.S.-led forces in Iraq have extended their fighting at times into Syrian territory. In the most serious incident, said to have occurred last summer, several Syrian soldiers were killed by U.S. troops in the border area, the *New York Times* reported.

Washington accuses Damascus of providing safe haven to Baathist officials who were formerly part of the Saddam Hussein regime, and to their allies who are providing financial backing to armed groups carrying out attacks inside Iraq on U.S. and Iraqi government forces.

AMFA calls off vote on boss 'offer'

Continued from front page

the union's constitution by crossing the picket line, interfering in the internal affairs of our union."

Northwest, currently under bankruptcy protection, is seeking to negotiate \$1.4 billion in additional concessions from its workforce. The cuts include substantial layoffs, wage and benefit givebacks, and changes to work rules. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the company is now seeking to outsource senior flight attendants' jobs on international routes.

In Detroit, some 80 strikers and supporters picketed the Northwest Airlines terminal October 23. In the afternoon, a caravan of 20 cars with slogans painted on boards supporting the striking mechanics drove around the departure platform slowing down traffic considerably.

That same day, some 100 mechanics, family members, flight attendants and others rallied at Macalester College here October 23 in a speakout organized by the Twin Cities Northwest Workers Solidarity Committee. "We're still out, and we're still determined," said Mike Klemm, AMFA's

local and national strike captain. "It's clear that Northwest never wanted to settle on a union contract, they were always looking to break our union, as a beginning movement to put down all the unions on the property.... That's why we decided to fight."

Guy Meek, president of the Professional Flight Attendants Association (PFAA), spoke about continued harassment by the company against flight attendants who log aircraft maintenance problems. Rebecca Johnson, 25, a customer service employee and member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), said, "I'm proud to stand up with you. Maybe this will be a long battle, but we need to stick together, no one union can do it alone, it will take each of us fighting together to get what we deserve."

Miguel Olvera a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, also spoke, describing the two-year fight for the union and a contract at Dakota Premium Foods, a local meatpacking company.

Rollande Girard and Ilona Gersh contributed to this article.

Miners, UMWA renew motion to dismiss harassment suit

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY, October 24—Attorneys for the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and 16 Co-Op miners renewed motions to dismiss the C.W. Mining harassment lawsuit last week. The miners and the union filed separate court papers. In their briefs they state that the coal mine boss lawsuit—launched to counter a union-organizing drive at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah—has no merit and should be dismissed in its entirety with prejudice, so that it cannot be refiled.

“In linking the alleged immigration law violations with their RICO [racketeering] claims, Plaintiffs assembled a convoluted house of cards that cannot withstand legal scrutiny,” says the brief filed by the UMWA. The document explains the coal company has no standing under the law to bring a lawsuit against the union or the miners for

alleged violations of immigration law.

One week before the union representation vote at the Co-Op mine in December 2004, the company fired some 30 supporters of the UMWA, saying Co-Op had recently discovered the workers were “illegal.” Many of those miners had worked at the mine for three years or more. In their lawsuit against the miners, the company contends it was the victim because the miners secured employment through fraud by supposedly not having valid work documents.

To assert RICO charges, the company must show it was injured by “defendant’s use or investment of racketeering income,” says the answer by attorneys for the miners. The company cannot possibly show how through getting a job the miners injured C.W. Mining in this way.

Attorneys for the UMWA and the individual miners also point out the

company continues its “shotgun approach” by listing every statement made by the miners about the labor dispute as “defamatory.” For the miners to say they “were ‘fired’ instead of resigned,” or that “the employer made the workers work in unsafe conditions” cannot “convey a defamatory meaning.” Those are opinions expressed in the course of a heated labor dispute and protected under the law, says the miners’ brief.

Those being sued by C.W. Mining—which include the UMWA and the Co-Op miners, supporters of the union fight at the mine, and newspapers that have reported what the miners had to say about the labor dispute—are now requesting the issues be heard before Judge Dee Benson for dismissal of the case. The *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Deseret Morning News*, and the *Militant* are asking the judge to take up the defamation charges against these newspapers first.

Labor support continues to grow for Militant Fighting Fund

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—Support for the *Militant*’s fight against the C.W. Mining harassment lawsuit continues to grow.

Rolf Gerstenberger, president of United Steelworkers Local 1005, at the giant Stelco steel plant in Hamilton,

Ontario, sent in his endorsement with a \$100 contribution to the Militant Fighting Fund, which has been set up to help the *Militant* defend itself in this case. Local 1005 is locked in a battle to defend its contract, which covers 3,000 workers and 8,000 retirees at Stelco. The company, under bankruptcy reorganization, is threatening many of the hard-fought pension and other gains of the steelworkers.

Gerstenberger said he plans to recommend to the local’s executive board that it endorse the labor rights defense campaign for the *Militant* and the other defendants fighting C.W. Mining.

Stefán Pálsson from Reykjavík, Iceland, added his name to the endorser list last week too. Pálsson is the chairman of the Campaign against Military Bases organization, which has fought since the 1970s to close the U.S. military base in that country and end Iceland’s membership in NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance.

Much-needed contributions also continue to arrive to help cover legal and other costs. Wendell Young III, one of three international union vice-presidents who endorsed at the recent Change to Win union conference in St. Louis, Missouri, sent in \$50. Young is an officer of the United Food and Commercial Workers from Pennsylvania.

‘Militant’ subscription drive

Continued from front page

week, bringing the total sold to 1,671, on schedule to win 3,000 new readers by November 20.

A number of working people attracted to the *Militant*’s coverage of labor struggles and world politics are also taking steps to back SWP tickets in the November elections.

“Because your campaign supported us I am going to support you any way I can,” Ron, a cab driver in Broward County who recently was on strike, told SWP campaign supporters in Miami. On his own initiative, he made 300 copies of the campaign leaflet publicizing the Socialist Workers ticket of Omari Musa for mayor and Eric Simpson for city commissioner in Miami’s District 5, and distributed them in the city’s Little Haiti neighborhood. Ron said he looked forward to meeting with the candidates and discussing the campaign further.

In many cities, socialist campaigns

are organizing special plant gate visits to introduce socialist candidates to workers who have been buying the *Militant* regularly. Such efforts can net new subscribers, not only in the United States but other countries too.

“Four subs have been sold to meat packers at Primo where we have been doing a regular plant gate sale, with increased interest in the paper as a result of a fight going on there against the company taking back a paid meal break on Saturdays,” wrote Linda Harris from Sydney, Australia, in an October 11 e-mail.

In a follow-up note two weeks later, Harris added, “We got a good response from miners at the Appin mine last week, also meat packers at Primo, selling 14 single copies and getting promises for subs.”

Six members of the United Auto Workers union at the Delphi auto parts plant in Fitzgerald, Georgia, subscribed during an October 22 visit there by *Militant* readers from Atlanta. The company had announced a week earlier it was entering bankruptcy proceedings and seeking to slash wages. Two of the new subscribers asked to get together with socialist workers in coming weeks to continue the discussion on how to resist the unrelenting attacks by the employers on the working class.

At the picket lines outside the giant Lakeside Packers plant in Brooks, Alberta, where a battle for union rights has been raging, 18 strikers have subscribed (see front-page article). Dozens more have purchased copies along with 11 books and pamphlets on revolutionary politics.

Three *Militant* supporters in the United Kingdom had good results in reaching out to workers October 21–22 at two meat plants in York and Haverhill, lorry (truck) drivers in the area, and students at Leeds University. They netted seven subscriptions and 23 copies, with most of the subs sold on campus.

Every reader can help. You can order a bundle at 70 cents per copy to sell subs to friends, relatives, co-workers, or fellow students. Or you can join others in subbing teams (see directory on page 8). Feel free to call the *Militant* any time with questions on what’s needed to make the sub drive a smashing success.

Pace of collection picks up for \$90,000 Socialist Workers party-building fund

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey—Nearly \$12,000 was sent in last week for the Socialist Workers party-building fund—the highest weekly amount so far. While still behind schedule, supporters of the fund have steadily increased collections to close the gap.

The fund helps finance the work of the Socialist Workers Party.

Fund-raising meetings, especially those organized in the first half of the drive, have helped to reach out to workers, farmers, and youth for new pledges and contributions.

In Atlanta 32 people attended a program October 23 where Tom Leonard, a party veteran, spoke on “War and the Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialism: Some Experiences from World War II and the Korean War.” Bill Arth reported that \$2,323 was collected—\$905 of that in new pledges or contributions. “Pledges now total \$6,480,” said Arth. “And since our quota is \$5,500 we will be discussing in the next few days how much to raise it.”

Jacob Perasso, a leader of the Young Socialists, spoke October 21 in New York on “The Revolutionary Party and Working Class Resistance.” The program included Dan Fein, SWP candidate for New York City comptroller, who described the increased receptivity to the *Militant* among working people. Those present donated \$2,200, including \$400 in new contributions and pledges.

Michael Ellis, a Young Socialist from Chicago who recently returned from visits to the United Kingdom and Sweden, spoke October 22 at a similar forum in Des Moines, Iowa. Zakaria Ibrahim, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 401 on strike against a Tyson-owned slaughter-

house in Brooks, Alberta, addressed the meeting through a phone hookup. “We have the picket line up 24 hours a day,” he said. “There are 1,000 workers who participate. We are fighting for basic rights at Lakeside Packers.” (See front-page article.) Edwin Fruit, a member of UFCW Local 1149 at the Tyson plant in Perry, Iowa, had joined the strikers on the picket line at Brooks and spoke from there through the phone hook-up too. Joe Swanson said those present made new pledges amounting to \$455 and contributed \$360.

Please send payments on local quotas or individual donations to the SWP at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Make checks or money orders payable to SWP.

Fall 2005 ‘Militant’ Sub Drive September 17–November 20 Week 5 of 9			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh*	30	18	60%
London**	80	48	60%
UK total	110	66	60%
UNITED STATES			
Price, UT*	80	56	70%
Salt Lake City*	45	31	69%
Pittsburgh*	100	65	65%
New York**	450	289	64%
Des Moines*	150	94	63%
Seattle*	100	61	61%
Washington*	100	59	59%
Boston*	120	69	58%
Newark**	270	155	57%
San Francisco*	95	54	57%
Philadelphia*	125	70	56%
Birmingham*	75	41	55%
Atlanta**	115	62	54%
Chicago*	115	62	54%
Twin Cities*	160	85	53%
Los Angeles*	185	96	52%
Miami*	120	61	51%
Houston*	125	59	47%
Detroit*	20	9	45%
U.S. total	2,550	1,478	58%
CANADA*	110	61	55%
AUSTRALIA*	40	21	53%
SWEDEN	30	16	53%
NEW ZEALAND			
Auckland	30	15	50%
Christchurch	20	8	40%
N.Z. total	50	23	46%
ICELAND	22	6	27%
Int’l totals	2,912	1,671	56%
Goal/Should be	3,000	1,667	56%

*raised quota **raised quota more than once

\$90,000 SWP Party Building Fund Sept 11–Nov 20: Week 6 of 10			
	Pledge	Collected	%
Salt Lake City*	850	700	82%
New York*	14,000	8,296	59%
Newark	4,000	2,251	56%
Los Angeles*	9,500	5,100	54%
Houston	3,500	1,350	39%
Twin Cities	4,500	1,697	38%
Atlanta*	6,500	2,345	36%
Philadelphia	3,000	1,090	36%
Seattle	7,000	2,485	36%
San Francisco	9,500	3,030	32%
Des Moines	1,500	460	31%
Chicago	5,000	1,405	28%
Price, UT	1,700	456	27%
Miami	1,700	443	26%
Boston*	3,300	835	25%
Pittsburgh	3,500	870	25%
Washington	3,000	540	18%
Birmingham*	2,300	290	13%
Other	2,011	1,267	63%
TOTAL	86,361	34,910	40%
Goal/should be	90,000	54,000	60%

* raised quota

Socialist Workers campaign in California

Continued from front page

wars against fellow workers and farmers in the Middle East and elsewhere—are an obstacle to such struggles, Forrestal continued. “The same two parties that are in cahoots in carrying out the most far-reaching transformation of the U.S. military in six decades to wage such wars abroad under the banner of the ‘war on terrorism,’ are helping the bosses intensify attacks on working people in this country,” he said. “More workers are beginning to see this and are becoming open to also seeing the need to break from these two main parties of capitalism and form our own party, a labor party based on the unions.”

The Socialist Workers Party is running five candidates in local races: in Los Angeles, Diana Newberry for City Council District 14 and Seth Dellinger for City Council District 10; and in San Francisco, Romina Green for Treasurer, Laura Anderson for City Attorney, and Gerardo Sánchez for Assessor-Recorder.

Response by working people

At both forums, SWP candidates and many of their supporters reported on the response they are getting from workers at plant gates, on the job, in working-class neighborhoods, and on picket lines.

Seth Dellinger spoke at the October 21 forum in Los Angeles about a visit earlier that day at American Apparel, a nonunion garment factory that employs more than 4,000 workers. “Workers listened with interest to what we had to say about mobilizing union power to defend working people,” he said. Dozens took campaign literature and nine purchased copies of the *Militant*.

Laura Anderson pointed to the appeal among local truckers to the Teamsters’ initial success in organizing independent owner-operators in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Many of these workers are also open to what the SWP candidates present, she said at the San Francisco forum.

Over the last two weeks, 11 truckers have subscribed to the *Militant* and more than 100 have bought copies of the paper at the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports, Forrestal added.

Another sign of the changing political situation discussed at these meetings was manifested three days later. Workers at the Foster Farms poultry plant in Livingston, California, some 120 miles southeast of San Francisco, walked out October 25. Organized by the Independent Workers of San Joaquin Valley, which recently affiliated with the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the 2,400 workers are fighting years-long harassment and suspension of unionists by the company and the bosses’ claim that their union’s affiliation to the IAM is illegal. Socialist candidates are organizing to visit the picket lines of these poultry workers to offer their solidarity and discuss the SWP campaign platform.

Universal, lifetime health care for all!

From General Motors, to Delphi Corp., most major airlines, or the Asarco copper giant in Arizona, “we see the existing system of health care—where medical coverage is a fringe benefit in union contracts or simply tied to the profits and ‘competitiveness’ of the boss—beginning to unravel,” Forrestal said. At the same time, the number of

uninsured is growing as costs for a regular medical checkup, let alone prescription drugs, are skyrocketing, he said.

The number of those without any medical insurance has grown from 32 million in 1987 to nearly 46 million last year, according to figures of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “There are 6.5 million Californians, excluding those over 65 years of age, who don’t have any health-care coverage today,” Forrestal noted at the San Francisco meeting. At some 20 percent of the nonelderly state population, this represents the sixth-largest proportion of uninsured in the country.

Democratic and Republican administrations in the country’s most populous state have been cutting funds for public hospitals and other medical facilities and laying off personnel, Forrestal said. Over the last two years, the California Nurses Association has successfully resisted attempts by Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, which have bipartisan support, to roll back a state law mandating a 5-to-1 patient-to-nurse ratio at hospitals.

“These and other attacks pose the need to break from the system of medicine-for-profit, where only a limited number have any coverage to rely on and where those who do are becoming less confident they’ll have any health insurance tomorrow,” he said.

Forrestal described how working people in the United Kingdom won socialized medicine—providing universal, lifetime coverage at no cost for all medical services and drugs—in the aftermath of a labor upsurge in the closing months of World War II.

“It took decades before the British ruling class could touch some of what working people in the UK conquered there through determined struggle,” Forrestal said. (An article in next week’s issue will more fully describe this experience.)

“As more workers turn to their unions to fight, it becomes easier to see that the labor movement can and should fight for such a goal here, today, for everyone,” Forrestal said.

The SWP is calling for a no vote on Proposition 78 and taking no position on Proposition 79, both of which are on the California ballot in the November 8 elections.

Both of these initiatives present alternative plans to provide drug discounts

for people below a certain income. Prop 78 invites pharmaceutical firms to offer drug discounts on a “voluntary basis” with no government penalties if they choose not to do so. Prop 79 would set needs-based criteria—estimated at incomes below \$38,000 for individuals—for those not covered by Medicaid or other health insurance to receive a prescription discount. It includes penalties by the state against drug companies that refuse to offer any discounts.

“Each of these propositions is backed by sections of the ruling class,” Forrestal said. “Some are proposing measures to rein in a bit the super-duper profits of the pharmaceutical barons to make sure they maintain super-super profits, while painting the fake picture they are doing some good for the working class. None of these initiatives does anything to address the real needs of working people who don’t have the means to see a doctor or buy needed medicine.”

Nationalize the energy industry

To confront skyrocketing gas prices, rising heating bills forecast for this winter, and the ongoing threat of blackouts, the SWP candidates are calling for the nationalization of the power companies and electrical distributors, taking them out of private hands and running them as public utilities, Forrestal said.

During discussion in the San Francisco forum, Romina Green said that a fight to nationalize the energy industry must include “opening the books of these energy trusts—gaining knowledge for the working class and public at large about everything that big business and the capitalist government hide from us.” The workers should shine a spotlight on the so-called business secrets, the behind-the-scenes deals and swindles, how the rulers’ preparations for war and carrying out of wars affect us, she said. The labor movement must be mobilized to expose contrived shortages and hidden stockpiles, to get at the truth behind the disastrous breakdowns inflicted on the population under capitalism.

The nationalized energy companies must be run under workers’ control, Green continued. “This includes not just public exposure of their books, but actual control on the job—control over the pace of production, control over how the job is organized, control over safety at work and for the broader public.” This becomes a school for the working class in preparing to manage and plan the



Militant/Robert Kopec

Gerardo Sánchez (right), SWP candidate for San Francisco Assessor-Recorder, campaigns September 5 among unionists on strike at Northwest Airlines.

entire economy under a workers and farmers government.

Forrestal pointed out that the SWP is taking a “not voting” position on Proposition 80.

This initiative is backed by the Democratic Party, other liberal forces, and their radical followers. Its supporters claim it will help cut energy prices and prevent blackouts through regulation of the market by the state—organizing “competitive bidding” between various energy providers.

An article in the *People’s Weekly World*, for example, the newspaper of the Communist Party USA, said in the paper’s October 6 issue: “Prop 80 would enforce oversight of California’s energy producers, ensuring cleaner, more affordable energy for all Californians.”

“Nothing can be further from the truth,” Forrestal said. “Prop 80 is a fake and a fraud. Manipulating the capitalist market won’t result in lower rates nor end the danger of blackouts. Demands for regulation of the energy monopolies are aimed at protecting the profits of the wealthy families who control them, not at benefiting the majority.”

The SWP is also calling for a no vote on five other propositions on the California ballot. Four of them are being promoted strongly by the governor and have backing from many in the ruling class.

“We ask working people to vote no on these measures because they undermine the interests of our class,” Forrestal said. “But the main thing we are doing is asking workers, farmers, and youth to vote for the SWP candidates, to support the socialist platform, and to continue campaigning for such a revolutionary working-class program with us after November 8.”

Socialist Workers Party candidates in 2005 elections

City/State	Candidates	City/State	Candidates
Atlanta	James Harris, Mayor Lisa Potash, City Council president* Eleanor García, City Council	New Jersey	Angela Lariscy, Governor* Michael Ortega, State Assembly District 28*
Birmingham	Clay Dennison, City Council District 8* Jeanne FitzMaurice, School Board District 8* (Election in Birmingham held October 11)	New York	Martín Koppel, Mayor* Dan Fein, City Comptroller* Arrin Hawkins, Manhattan Borough President* Sarah Katz, Bronx Borough President
Boston	Margaret Trowe, Mayor Laura Garza, City Council At-Large*	Pittsburgh	Jay Ressler, Mayor* Cynthia Jaquith, City Council District 8 Ryan Scott, City Council District 12
Des Moines, Iowa	Edwin Fruit, City Council At-Large*	Philadelphia	John Staggs, City Attorney Rebecca Crysdale, City Controller
Houston	Anthony Dutrow, Mayor* José Aravena, City Controller Amanda Ulman, City Council At-Large-1	San Francisco	Romina Green, City Treasurer Laura Anderson, City Attorney Gerardo Sánchez, Assessor-Recorder
Los Angeles	Diana Newberry, City Council District 14* Seth Dellinger, City Council District 10	Seattle	Chris Hoepfner, Mayor* Cecelia Moriarity, King County Executive David Rosenfeld, City Council, Position 2
Miami	Omari Musa, Mayor* Eric Simpson, City Commissioner District 5*	St. Paul, Minnesota	Jacob Perasso, Mayor* Rebecca Williamson, School Board*

*On ballot (All remaining candidates have write-in status)

'To read is to grow' is banner at book fair in Central African nation of Equatorial Guinea

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

MALABO, Equatorial Guinea—Several hundred students, teachers, and others took part in the First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair, October 17–20. The event was hosted by the university at its campus here in Malabo, the capital of this country on Central Africa's west coast.

The four-day cultural event was organized to encourage reading and to promote literature and writers, from Equatorial Guinea in particular. It featured book presentations, seminars, poetry readings, art displays, book sales, and ended with a skit written and performed by students.

Along the university's outdoor hallways were tables with books on Equatoguinean culture and history, as well as titles produced by Cuban publishers, books from New York-based Pathfinder Press, literature from the Catholic publishing house Ediciones San Pablo, works of art, and other materials.

The literary festival was timed to coincide with Equatorial Guinea's national independence day. Several days of celebration culminated October 12 in a massive and spirited march, an expression of national pride, held in the town of Evinayong, a provincial capital on the continent.

The book fair's success led organizers to announce they are already planning the second national book fair for a year from now, most likely to be held at the university campus in the city of Bata. Some of the professors

lowing the 1884–85 Berlin Conference, the country came firmly under the boot of Spanish colonialism, gaining independence in 1968.

The majority of Guineans speak Spanish and some also French, the two official languages here. In addition, most speak Fang, Bubi, pidgin English, or other Bantu languages. As a result of these centuries of colonial and imperialist domination, Equatorial Guinea is one of the most economically underdeveloped countries in Africa. Over the past decade, however, the discovery of huge petroleum and natural gas reserves in the Gulf of Guinea has led to major investments by U.S. and other imperialist-controlled oil companies. Most of the capital has poured into building offshore petroleum platforms, and steps to create the infrastructure necessary to sustain the extraction of oil. The town of Luba, an hour south of Malabo, is the site of a massive, 10-year project to create a deep-water port serving as a hub for the oil industry throughout all of West and Central Africa.

Punta Europa, an industrial as well as administrative and support center of the oil operations, has become virtually an American city. Off limits to



Above: Militant/Martín Koppel
Left: Bernardino Ndze Biyoa

Above, Rosendo-Ela Baby presents book on history of Equatorial Guinea by his father, well-known writer Rosendo-Ela Nsue Mibui, at book fair. Left, part of the audience at October 17 presentation.



and other participants expressed surprise—and delight—in witnessing the thirst among young people for books on culture and politics in Equatorial Guinea and the world. A number said they hoped the fair would lead to establishing the country's first bookstore, and that next year's event would have even more books by Guinean authors.

Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea is a country of some 400,000 inhabitants, bordered by Cameroon and Gabon, former French colonies. It is made up of a continental region—the largest city of which is Bata—and several islands including Bioko, where Malabo is located. Strategically positioned as a base for the lucrative slave trade that lasted well into the 19th century, ports of the country were ruled at one time or another by Portugal, Holland, Britain, and Spain. With the division of Africa among European colonial powers fol-

lowing the 1884–85 Berlin Conference, the country came firmly under the boot of Spanish colonialism, gaining independence in 1968.

Initial steps to pave some of the country's main roads, improve the electrical and telecommunications systems, and build hotels, offices, and modern housing complexes for those who can afford them are, at the same time, laying the foundations for a nascent Guinean working class.

'Foster culture of reading'

The book fair, held under the banner "To Read Is To Grow," was opened by Carlos Nse Nsuga, rector of the National University of Equatorial Guinea. This was the first time such an event was being held in the country, he emphasized.

Also on the platform were Joaquín Mbaná, the vice minister of education; Trinidad Morgades and Pedro Ndong



Bernardino Ndze Biyoa

Students browse display at National University of Equatorial Guinea in Malabo. Book fair was marked by hunger among youth for literature on culture and politics.

Asumu, vice-rectors of the university campuses in Malabo and Bata, respectively; Cuban ambassador Víctor Dreke; and Hwangbo Ung Bom, ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The audience included students from both the university and secondary schools.

The fair aims to promote reading, said poet Carmela Oyono Ayíngono in her introductory remarks. Reading and access to books are "indispensable for cultural development," she said. Every Guinean household needs a small library "to foster the culture of reading from an early age."

Two books presented the opening day helped set the tone of the entire event: *Historia de Guinea Ecuatorial: Período pre-colonial* (The history of Equatorial Guinea: Precolonial period) by Rosendo-Ela Nsue Mibui, and *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Víctor Dreke. The Cuban embassy in Equatorial Guinea was one of the sponsors of the event, which also coincided with Cuban Culture Day on October 20.

The opening day program also included a well-received presentation by Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters introducing Pathfinder Press to participants at the fair. On behalf of the five-person team taking part in the fair and staffing the Pathfinder stand, Waters said, "Our presence here helps underline that there are ordinary people in the United States who do not start from a desire to protect the relative wealth and abundance of resources consumed in the most economically developed countries.

"There are many, like ourselves, who understand that American and European development exists in substantial part because billions the world over live in crushing poverty," Waters said. "We start with the world and how to transform the international economic order, which is the source of this reality" (see talk on page 7).

Rosendo-Ela Baby spoke about *La historia de Guinea Ecuatorial*, written by his father, a well-known historian. "This book explains events that led to the formation of our country," he said. It presents a wealth of facts on the

period of preclass society—including the migration to Central Africa by the Fang, Bubi, and other Bantu-speaking peoples—that preceded the imposition of European colonial rule and the slave trade in what is now Equatorial Guinea.

Dreke presented *From the Escambray to the Congo*, an account of his five-decade-long record as a revolutionary fighter, published by Pathfinder Press. Visibly enjoying the opportunity to interact with a responsive audience of Guinean youth, Dreke outlined some of these experiences, from his involvement as a teenager in the revolutionary war that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in Cuba in 1959, to his role as a commander of the volunteer units of workers and farmers that defeated CIA-organized counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba in the early 1960s.

"In 1965 I had the tremendous opportunity of coming to the African continent—to the Congo—to fight with Commander Ernesto Che Guevara and a group of 130 Cuban *compañeros* under the command of the Congolese liberation movement," said Dreke, who was second in command of that column of Cuban internationalist volunteer combatants. Most of the professors and many students in the audience knew of Dreke as the Cuban ambassador to their country, but knew nothing about his participation in African liberation struggles.

He pointed out that Cuba not only has some 140 internationalist volunteers—mostly medical personnel—serving in Equatorial Guinea today, but that "our goal is that our doctors, agricultural technicians, and others be replaced by Equatoguinean *compañeros*." Some 70 Guinean youth are currently completing their sixth year of medical studies in Cuba and in the Cuban-led medical school in Bata.

Dreke said the Cubans working in Africa today are not there to extract the region's oil wealth. "The only thing we have taken with us is our dead—the more than 2,000 Cubans who have perished in combat in several African countries—and the hearts of the majority of Africans," he said to

Continued on page 8

'We start with the world and how to transform it'

The following presentation by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, was given on the opening day of the First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair. The fair was held October 17–20 in the capital city of Malabo. Copyright © 2005 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

On behalf of Pathfinder Press, I would like to express our appreciation to the rector of the National University of Equatorial Guinea for the initiative that has been taken by the young and vital institution he heads to organize the first national book fair of Equatorial Guinea under the banner "*Leer es Crecer*" [To read is to grow].

We want to thank the vice-minister of education and the government of Equatorial Guinea for their support.

To the minister, the rector, the vice-rector, the dean, the members of the organizing committee, and so many others at the university here, we say thank you for the opportunity to share this moment in history with you. It is an honor.

Pathfinder Press, which is based in the United States, accepted the invitation to participate in this event for two reasons.

Most important, for us it is an opportunity to learn. Even though our presence at this book fair here in Equatorial Guinea is a first, it is not unusual. Whenever possible Pathfinder takes part in book fairs and similar cultural events not only throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe, but around the globe—from Harare to Tehran, from Guadalajara to Havana, Caracas, and Buenos Aires. What we learn from our experiences here—such as the October 12 Independence Day celebration in Evinayong marking the end of colonial rule, a visit to the port of Luba yesterday to learn another part of the history, and future, of the country, and participating in this first Equatorial Guinean book fair—will help us transmit the reality of the world in which we live more accurately and more richly through the books and pamphlets we publish.

Transforming world order

The second reason we welcomed the invitation to participate in this exchange is that our presence here helps underline that there are ordinary people in the United States who do not start from a desire to protect the relative wealth and abundance of resources consumed in the most economically developed countries. There are many, like ourselves, who understand that American and European development exists in substantial part because billions the world over live in crushing poverty. We start with the world and how to transform the international economic order, which is the source of this reality.

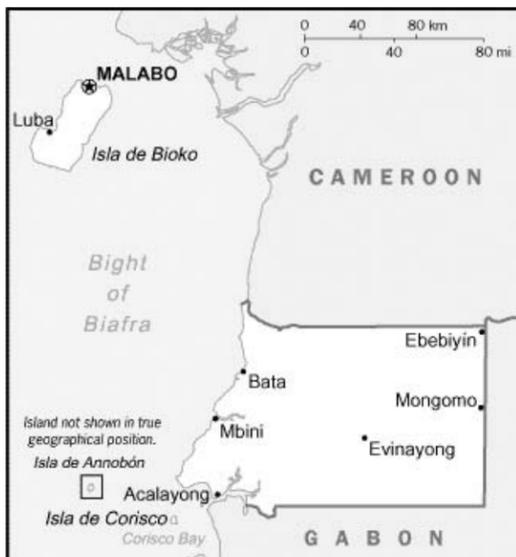
We also hope to underline by our presence that you are not alone in your efforts to transform your country. To make it part of a world in which *all* have access to the benefits of electricity,

including the ability to read and study at night, safe water to drink, paved roads that are passable year round, and modern means of communication. The installation of each new tower extending the cell phone system here is indeed a cause for celebration.

You are not alone in your efforts to assure that health care is accessible to all, as well as the kind of education this university strives to assure. To put it in the words of one of Pathfinder's most popular titles, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, "Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity."

It is to this end that Pathfinder's publishing program is organized.

The books we publish—history, sociology, philosophy, culture, politics in the modern world—are directed first and foremost at working people and



Equatorial Guinea is on western coast of Central Africa. Capital city Malabo is on Bioko island.

youth within the United States. The largest part of these books are edited and printed in English, but more and more frequently our new titles are published in Spanish and sometimes in French as well. The growing numbers of Spanish-speaking immigrants from throughout the Americas make this a necessity, while the swelling ranks of immigrants from numerous countries of West and Central Africa are among the most eager readers of our titles in French.

To introduce Pathfinder Press to you today, I want to mention four other titles, all available here during the book fair, that are indicative of who we are.

Four titles

First. *How Far We Slaves Have Come!*, which features the speech given by Nelson Mandela when he visited Cuba in 1991 to thank the Cuban people for their irreplaceable contribution to the struggle against the apartheid regime of South Africa. It also includes the response to that speech by Cuban president Fidel Castro.

As Mandela expressed it on that occasion: "We in Africa are used to being victims of countries wanting to carve up our territory or subvert our sovereignty. It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us."



Militant photos by Martín Koppel
Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, speaking at First Equatorial Guinea Book Fair, held October 17–20 in city of Malabo. Others on platform, from left: Carlos Nse Nsuga, rector of National University; Cuban ambassador Víctor Dreke; Ana Morales, first secretary of Cuban embassy, behind Waters; Pedro Ndong Asumu, vice-rector at campus in Bata; and Trinidad Morgades, vice-rector at Malabo campus. Inset, women marching during October 12 Independence Day celebration in town of Evinayong.



The defeat of the white-supremacist South African army in the historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale, for which the Cuban internationalists at the side of the Angolans were primarily responsible, said Mandela, "was a milestone in the history of the struggle for southern African liberation." And he steadfastly affirmed his admiration for "the sacrifices of the Cuban people in maintaining their independence and sovereignty in the face of a vicious, imperialist-orchestrated campaign to destroy the impressive gains made in the Cuban Revolution."

How Far We Slaves Have Come!, published in both English and Spanish, is one of Pathfinder's titles that is most widely read and used in the United States, including in university and high school classes.

Second. Pathfinder has published and kept in print for nearly twenty years (something most publishers don't do for their soon-out-of-print titles) several collections of speeches by the Burkinabè leader Thomas Sankara. In English we have the book *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, and in French *Oser inventer l'avenir*, as well as smaller selections of speeches available in three languages.

Without a doubt, the most popular is *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle*, Sankara's powerful speeches to the women of Burkina Faso, published in French, English, and Spanish. As Sankara said on International Women's Day, March 8, in 1987, "The struggle of the Burkinabè women is part of a worldwide struggle of all women, and beyond that, part of the struggle for the rehabilitation of our continent."

Opening a window on Cuba, Africa

Third. *From the Escambray to the Congo* will be presented here this afternoon by its author, who is known to many of you—Victor Dreke, today Cuba's ambassador to Equatorial Guinea.

I want to take the occasion to thank the ambassador and the compañeros of the Cuban embassy here—who have done much to support and promote this event—for the opportunity to present *From the Escambray to the Congo* for the first time in a country of Africa. It is important, because even some of you who have met and talked with Amba-

sador Dreke are not aware of the history of his efforts on behalf of the liberation struggles of the continent. Those efforts began some forty years ago this year, with his place as second-in-command to Ernesto Che Guevara leading the Cuban volunteers who supported the anti-imperialist struggle of the people of the Congo.

I want to add only one point. *From the Escambray to the Congo*, which also opens a window on the struggles of the Cuban people to defend their independence and sovereignty—a struggle, as we are learning, with many links to the history and battles of the people of Equatorial Guinea—is used in numerous universities in the United States and has sold widely to thousands of young people of African descent especially. It is a measure of their deep interest in their own African roots, the history and legacy of slavery, and the struggles of the peoples of their historic homelands.

Fourth. It was the thirst for this knowledge that the outstanding American leader Malcolm X was responding to some four decades ago as he addressed those whose consciousness was being profoundly transformed by the mass struggle that brought down the apartheid-like system of racist segregation in the U.S. South. In one of his most famous speeches, which Pathfinder has published in *Malcolm X on Afro-American History*, he makes a powerful appeal to Afro-Americans to learn about and take pride in their African roots and the contributions of their ancestors—whose hands were "the hands that forged civilization."

To finish, we hope that above all the presence here of Pathfinder's books and its representatives—who are ourselves indicative of the diversity of historical origins of peoples of the U.S.—will help you have a richer comprehension of the political, historical, social, and class differentiations within the American reality.

We hope we will take with us a new knowledge of your history and reality today, and will be able to communicate that to a not insignificant number of people in the United States and around the world.

And we hope the activities we will share with you in the days to come will lead to new and even richer exchanges in the future.

Equatorial Guinea book fair promotes literature, culture

Continued from page 6

applause. (The text of these remarks will be published in a coming issue of the *Militant*.)

Lively discussions

Throughout the four-day event, the book presentations and seminars sparked lively discussions.

Rosalía Andeme, a professor at the university and part of the book fair organizing committee, spoke on "Folklore as an instrument of education and culture." She explained the origins of some of the Guinean dances and music in the resistance to the slave traders and colonial oppression.

Youth in Equatorial Guinea need to embrace their cultural heritage rather than be ashamed of it, Andeme argued. "Modernization does not have to mean Americanization or Europeanization of our culture."

Joaquín Mbaná, the vice minister of education and one of the authors, presented the book *De boca en boca* (By word of mouth), a collection of essays and a contribution to Fang oral history. With a great deal of humor, appreciated by the students in the audience, he explained that while the traditions recorded in the book are part of the country's cultural heritage, beliefs in sorcery and magic are not unique to Equatorial Guinea—they exist in Europe and elsewhere—and can be given

a historical explanation.

A panel of five professors discussed *Macías: Verdugo o víctima* (Macías: executioner or victim) by Agustín Nze Nfumu, currently the Equatoguinean ambassador in London. The book, published last year, is about a subject until now rarely discussed in public here—the 1968–79 reign of terror under President Francisco Macías Nguema, head of the first government following independence from Spain.

During the Macías years, tens of thousands fled into exile and many, including those distrusted as "intellectuals," were jailed, tortured, or executed. Macías, whose government developed close relations with Moscow and Beijing, cloaked himself in anti-Spanish and anti-imperialist rhetoric. He made himself president for life and at one point declared himself a "communist." On August 3, 1979, he was overthrown in a coup by young military officers and later tried and executed. The coup was led by Teodoro Obiang Nguema, today the country's president.

Another panel discussed *Mi vida por mi pueblo* (My life for my people), an autobiographical book by President Obiang.

In the discussions following these and other presentations, students asked probing questions of the panelists. Was Macías really a victim of his own personality, as the book suggests? What did they think about the state of democratic and union rights in Equatorial Guinea today?

In tribute to Cuban Culture Day, several presentations focused on Cuban history and culture, including the historical ties between the two former colonies of Spain.

A talk on "Black women as depicted in literature and art in 19th century Cuba," by Jassellys Morales, third secretary at the Cuban embassy, was one of the liveliest. She focused on slavery,

sexual relations, marriage, and the racial intermixture that mark Cuba's history. The presentation sparked an exchange with audience members on differences between Cuba and Equatorial Guinea on marriage traditions and responsibility for children, attitudes toward interracial marriage, and the forging of the Cuban nation.

Other special presentations included one by the Spanish Cultural Center in Malabo, another by the Pauline Sisters staffing the literature table of the San Pablo publishing house, and another on the transformation of education in Equatorial Guinea and in Cuba today.

Hunger for books

The hunger for books among youth and other participants in the fair was evident at the literature tables. At the Cuban publishers' stand, staffed by some of the half-dozen Cuban internationalist volunteers who teach at the National University here, students eagerly picked up books and pamphlets by authors ranging from José Martí and Ernesto Che Guevara to novelist Alejo Carpentier and poet Nancy Morejón.

At the Pathfinder stand, the titles most in demand, in addition to *From the Escambray to the Congo*, were collections of speeches by Thomas Sankara, the leader of the 1983–87 popular democratic revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso. Dozens of copies of Sankara's *We Are Heirs of the World's Revolutions* and *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* flew off the table—in Spanish, French, and English. Young women in particular were interested in Sankara's explanation of the struggle for women's emancipation.

Books by Nelson Mandela and about the movement that overturned the apartheid regime in South Africa were equally popular, followed by

Malcolm X Talks to Young People and *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks). Students also snapped up a range of Pathfinder titles, from *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes to issue no. 13 of *New International* magazine, featuring the article "Our Politics Start with the World."

Altogether more than 300 Pathfinder books and pamphlets were purchased, including everything by Sankara, Mandela, and Malcolm X. To assure these titles remain available to students, Pathfinder made a donation of more than 125 books to the university, which the fair organizers said would be distributed among several libraries.

At the closing session, rector Carlos Nse Nsuga spoke with great pleasure about the book fair's resounding success. He thanked "those whose efforts made this possible," including the vice minister of education, the Cuban embassy, Pathfinder Press, and the many participating faculty members.

The event concluded with a comic skit in the campus courtyard put on by students at the law school. They enacted a trial in which one man accused another of the death of his sister in a traffic accident, claiming the accused had caused her death through *brujería* (witchcraft). With humorous exchanges in Spanish and Fang, the cast had the audience rolling with laughter and won a hearty round of applause when the defendant was acquitted.

At the end the students read a statement, saying their purpose in preparing the skit was to appeal to the government to develop a body of law to deal with the all-too-common charges of witchcraft brought before the courts. Their defense of materialism and the rule of law—versus superstition and traditions that hold back the modern development of Equatorial Guinea—was warmly received by the students and faculty in attendance.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

IOWA

Des Moines

Vote Socialist Workers! Use and Extend Union Power! Speaker: Edwin Fruit, SWP candidate for Des Moines city council, at-large. Sun., Nov. 6, 3 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Canadian Meat Packers Take on Bosses: Eyewitness Report from Tyson Lakeside Packer Strike. Speaker: Edwin Fruit, UFCW Local 1149 at Tyson, SWP candidate for Des Moines city council. Sat., Nov. 5. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation \$10 (\$5 program only). 113 Bernard St. E. Tel: (651) 457-3362

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Fight for Black Rights Today: From Washington, D.C., to Toledo. Speaker: Sam Manuel. Fri., Nov. 4., 8:00 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd fl. Tel: (973) 481-0077

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Organize and Strengthen the Unions! Build a Labor Party Based on the Unions! Socialist Workers Campaign Meeting. Hear SWP candidates in New York City: Martín Koppel for mayor; Dan Fein for city comptroller; Sarah Katz for Bronx borough president; and Arrin Hawkins for Manhattan borough president. Fri. Nov. 4. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation \$10 (\$5 program only). 307 W. 36th St. 10 fl. N. Tel: (212) 629-6649.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Support the Transit Workers Fight for a Decent Contract. Speaker: John Staggs, SWP candidate for district attorney. Fri., Nov. 4, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Tel: (215) 455-2682

SWEDEN

Stockholm

The New Political Situation in the United States. Speaker: Dag Tirsén. Sat., Nov. 5. Dinner 4:00 p.m., program, 5:00 p.m. Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov. Tel: (08) 31 69 33

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SWEDEN

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Vote Socialist Workers Nov. 8!

Continued from front page

Socialist Workers campaign platform, at least major parts of it, is getting a wider hearing.

This includes the socialists' call to support workers' struggles to organize and mobilize union power to defend ourselves and other working people from the bosses' attacks. Over the last year, union organizing has become the battle cry of growing sections of the working class.

SWP campaigners have run into this reality repeatedly—from independent truckers organizing into the Teamsters, to industrial laundry workers seeking representation by the UNITE union at Cintas and other companies, to meat packers in the Midwest and poultry workers in the South fighting to unionize with the United Food and Commercial Workers, and coal miners in Utah seeking union recognition for the United Mine Workers. Socialists are acting on the fact that every situation is a union situation, whether the union exists in a workplace yet or not.

The socialists have also been calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and other imperialist troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Korea, Colombia, and Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. And they have been exposing the drive by Washington and its allies to prevent nations oppressed by imperialism from developing nuclear power and other sources of energy needed to expand electrification necessary for economic and social advances.

Socialists are explaining that the bipartisan war party—the vast majority of both Democratic and Republican officeholders—has been expanding military operations and preparation for new conflicts abroad, with Syria in the forefront this week, as they step up antilabor assaults at home.

The transformation of the U.S. military necessary to carry out this course is accompanied by growing factionalism within the ruling class, what socialists have described as the pornographication of politics. The Monica Lewinsky/William Clinton scandal—with the impeachment investigation pursued fanatically by prosecutor Kenneth Starr—was a prominent manifestation of this phenomenon in the 1990s. This is now being repeated, perhaps with greater ferociousness, in the investigation of top officials in the Bush administration over “security leaks,” under new special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald. The destabilizing threat of the slowly, but surely, deepening polarization among the U.S. rulers is driven by the same dynamic ushering in a new political period for the vanguard of the working class.

Working people are resisting the effects of the employers' unrelenting offensive. Their growing readiness to fight back is bringing reinforcements to those in labor's vanguard, beginning to strip away illusions, and starting to increase class solidarity and political consciousness as the effects of the social catastrophe mount.

Elections always pose the question: Which class rules? In whose class interests? How do we advance the interests of working people?

Today, more working people are open to a clear explanation of the need for independent working-class political action. The need to break from the twin parties of capitalism and build our own party, based on our main defensive organizations, the trade unions, that can fight in the interests of workers and farmers 365 days a year.

In these elections, SWP candidates are also popularizing demands to nationalize health care—socialize medicine and make it a lifetime right for all—and the energy monopolies (see front-page article). These demands hold a more immediate significance today given the onslaught by the bosses on existing medical programs and the devastation of the livelihoods of farmers, truckers, taxi drivers, and other exploited producers by skyrocketing energy costs. More and more working people can see that we can fight for our unions to adopt such demands and champion them now. They are not pie in the sky. They are realistic goals to fight for in order to protect the toilers being ravaged by the normal workings of the profit system.

This year, socialist candidates also took initiatives to defend political rights, important to working people fighting for union rights and those advocating changes in government. Accomplishments included putting on the ballot Jay Ressler, SWP mayoral candidate in Pittsburgh, who refused to sign an “anti-subversive” pledge that Allegheny County required; and the victory of the SWP ticket in Seattle in winning exemption from disclosing to the government the names of campaign donors, which could provide an “enemies list” to bosses, cops, and government agencies.

The socialists are urging working people not to vote for the individual, but for the program. They have been saying: “It's not who you are against (or what you are against), but what you are *for!*”

The socialist candidates are themselves workers who have been part of the resistance by working people to the bosses' offensive, which takes a toll on our life and limb. They have joined picket lines, championed union-organizing drives, and worked tirelessly to spread solidarity for many labor and other social struggles. These include: the strike by mechanics and other workers at Northwest Airlines; fights by nurses in California and New York to oppose decreasing the nurse-to-patient ratio at hospitals; the walkout by Machinists who pushed back Boeing's efforts to cut pension and health benefits; struggles by taxi drivers demanding a living income; efforts by working people who organized to assist each other in face of the capitalist-caused social disaster on the Gulf Coast; and the current strike by meat packers in Alberta, Canada.

Militancy on the picket lines—the starting point of labor solidarity—is beginning to transform workers who resist the bosses' attacks. This resistance is producing the seeds of coming battles and rebellions against the rule of the capitalist exploiters. This is what the socialists point to. Join us in supporting the working-class alternative on November 8 and beyond.

Packers' strike

Continued from front page

striking family. We're reaching out to our allies at other labor unions, community and religious organizations. Together, we are demanding a just and swift settlement for the Alberta Tyson workers.”

“I call on every working woman and man in Brooks, Alberta, to remain strong and to hold their solidarity,” said Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), in an October 19 statement in support of the strike. The CLC called on the government of Alberta “to intervene to uphold and protect the dignity of the workers at Lakeside Packers.”

A disciplined and committed core of about 900 unionists, from a workforce of 2,100, are maintaining the picket lines now. There is about an equal number of scabs, who include several hundred office employees and management staff.

The workforce includes more than 600 immigrants from 36 countries—from Africa to South America and Asia—speaking dozens of languages. Strikers are working hard to build unity, trying to convince line crossers to join them in picketing.

The strike has effectively crippled production at Canada's largest beef slaughterhouse despite tough picketing restrictions. Under a court injunction, the union is following a guideline of no more than 50 pickets per gate and a hold up time of no more than three minutes for vehicles trying to enter the plant.

While pickets danced to the beat of a Bob Marley song saying, “Stand up for your rights,” long lines of scabs have been held up for hours waiting to get in. As a result, production start-up times by Tyson have been late in the day. Scabs are often sent home after a few hours.

In response, Tyson has built 11 new access roads at the back of the plant in an attempt to speed up entry of strikebreakers. Union members are organizing to cover these gates as well.

A tragic car crash the evening of October 20 between two cars carrying strikers on the road to picket resulted in the deaths of two young strikers, both from Ethiopia. Four others were injured, two critically. As a sign of respect, the strikers are wearing their union bibs inside out and the picket line was pulled down for one day.

Striker Edil Hassan, 21, was furious seeing smoke billowing from the plant after the line was pulled down for the day of mourning. “I feel humiliated,” he said, referring to the Tyson bosses. “They have no sense of humanity.”

According to CBC News, production on October 25 was “halted for a second day, after federal food inspectors refused to cross the picket line, citing safety concerns.” The inspectors are members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada.

In other developments, the Alberta Labour Relations Board has banned Lakeside's head of security and chief of human resources from any further contact with pickets or union officers. They must stay at least 200 meters away from the picket line. Both face criminal charges after they and other company officials chased with their cars Local 401 president O'Halloran while he was driving near the plant. The bosses forced the unionist's car into the ditch, injuring him.

Meanwhile, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has begun to victimize strikers. RCMP cops have arrested and charged at least four workers with alleged acts of vandalism and “uttering threats.” One other has been charged with assaulting a police officer.

These events have hardened the determination of the strikers. The workers voted in the union over a year ago but have yet to get a contract with food giant Tyson. “It's not about the dollar,” bargaining committee member Peter Jany told the *Militant*. “They don't want the union in the plant.” Jany reported that through the organized efforts of strikers, in particular those of Sudanese origin, a significant number of scabs have walked out and joined the fight for the union.

Natalie Doucet and Edwin Fruit contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Wilma and ‘civilized hyenas’

Lenin once referred to capitalists as “civilized hyenas.” The October 20 *Chicago Tribune* gives a good example of why that's an apt description. In an article on Hurricane Wilma, which, as of that day's final edition, had winds of 155 mph and threatened serious damage to Florida's west coast, the reporter wrote the following: “Beyond that, *another ray of hope* [my emphasis] emerged: If Wilma rams into Mexico's Yucatan region, its anticipated right turn toward Florida could be significantly altered and the system's strength could weaken further.”

This is the mindset developed under capitalism. My co-workers and I were appalled at the barbaric view of the world signaled by the idea that a natural disaster befalling people in

Yucatan would be more desirable than one befalling Floridians.

*John Votava
Berwyn, Illinois*

Nationalize energy industry

Considering the recent crises and the indefensible position of the capitalists (especially their energy policy), wouldn't demands for nationalizing the energy industries be logical and acceptable to big layers of workers at this time, say for an editorial?

*Allan Grady
West St. Paul, Minnesota*

Thanks. We agree.

—Editor

Help for Gulf Coast teams

Find enclosed a check to help with the *Militant's* coverage of Katrina/Rita and other expenses. Your cover-

age of those social disasters has been excellent. And congratulations on the start of the sub drive. The response to the *Militant* and the struggles breaking out bode well for us!

*Phil Norris
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

Thanks for the contribution, which arrived along with seven others for a total of \$365. We urge readers to continue giving generously to help us send more reporting teams to the Gulf Coast.

—Editor

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.