

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

May 1961 speech by Che Guevara on Bay of Pigs

— PAGE 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 65/NO. 13 APRIL 2, 2001

## Farmers rally across Canada for aid now

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER AND JOHN STEELE

PICKERING, Ontario—In their largest protest in decades, thousands of farmers and their supporters held a National Day of Action across Canada March 14. Through marches, caravans of farm vehicles, and rallies in a number of cities, farm organizations and grass roots groups demanded increased emergency aid from the government at both the provincial and federal levels.

"We're living in 1930s conditions and farming in 2001," fourth-generation cattle and cash crop farmer Michael O'Hara, told the *Militant* at a rally of 350 farmers here. O'Hara, 45, was with his teenage son Scott. "He should be the fifth generation, but there is no future for him in this," O'Hara said of his son.

Gerald Demers, 51, who has been farming for 32 years, explained, "In 1966 my father could buy a pickup truck for \$2,200. Today we are getting 1972 prices for our crops, but a pickup costs \$30,000."

Hog producer Don Carruthers from Coburg accused the government of backing giant companies like Maple Leaf Foods at the expense of farmers. The family that owns the company "controls the [food] chain from the farm to the supermarket," said

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## Workers, students protest austerity plan in Argentina

Economy minister forced to resign, more actions planned

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Workers and students throughout Argentina took to the streets in response to a massive new round of austerity measures aimed at slashing the social wage, holding mass demonstrations in the capital and other cities March 20–21. Their actions, in addition to a crisis in the government of President Fernando de la Rúa, forced the resignation of the new economy minister who announced the moves.

In a nationally televised address March 16, Ricardo López Murphy, economy minister for only two weeks, announced plans to drastically reduce government spending by some \$8 billion by 2003. This includes nearly \$2 billion to be eliminated from this year's budget and an estimated \$2.5 billion in 2002. Among the areas facing the biggest cuts are funding for the university, teachers' wages, the social security system, and funds provided by the central government to the provinces. Long-protected subsidies for tobacco and fuel were also to be ended.

The education sector would be hit the hardest with a reduction of \$900 million in its budget. More than half the spending cuts were aimed at state universities and the state school system. The rulers' aim is to siphon these funds out of programs benefiting workers and farmers so that they can meet



Maricé Maser/Buenos Aires Herald

Some 25,000 people rallied March 20 at Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires to demand halt to government's latest announced plan to slash the social wage.

the mounting interest payments on the country's huge foreign debt.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, even before López "finished announcing deep spending cuts, which were widely hailed by

foreign investors and the International Monetary Fund, half of the president's cabinet members said they would resign, and the main opposition party appeared poised to

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## West Coast meeting discusses lessons of 1961 Cuban victory at Bay of Pigs

BY MAGGIE TROWE

SEATTLE—A West Coast meeting of 170 people at the Garfield Community Center here celebrated the 40th anniversary of U.S. imperialism's first military defeat in the Americas, the victory of the Cuban people in defending their socialist revolution by routing a U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary invasion at the Bay of Pigs—an event iden-

tified in Cuba as Playa Girón.

The meeting, held a week following an East Coast event attended by 270 people in New York City (see last week's *Militant*), also marked the 40th anniversary of the successful mass campaign to wipe out illiteracy in Cuba, which made 1961 the Year of Education in that Caribbean nation.

And, like the New York event, the Seattle

gathering was an opportunity to celebrate the publication of Pathfinder's newest book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, in English and Spanish. The meetings launched a campaign to read, study, and sell the book, along with *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*

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## Garment strikers stand firm in Los Angeles

BY ELIZABETH LARISCY

LOS ANGELES—Garment workers on strike against Hollander Home Fashions here have been mobilizing to stop the company's attempts, backed by the cops and courts, to get their plants running with replacement workers. Through picket lines, teams to the temporary agency Labor Ready, and appeals to workers being bused into work at the two struck plants, the unionists have stood firm in the second week of their walkout.

The 450 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), most of them immigrants, produce pillows, comforters, and other home textiles. They are among a small unionized component of the garment industry in this city, estimated to employ nearly 100,000 workers. The two Hollander Home Fashions plants here are in Vernon, an industrial center near downtown which is incorporated as a separate city. In the town's five square miles, 55,000 workers are employed in garment, textile, meatpacking, and manufacturing industries. The company also has plants in Georgia, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Illinois, and in 1999 reported \$165 million in sales with 1,300 employees.

Rosa Pena, who leads spirited chants outside the company's plant on Seville Avenue, said on the picket line, "We hope this will be resolved soon but we are fighting with all our strength to get justice." Striker Blanca

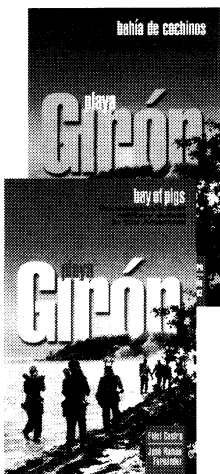
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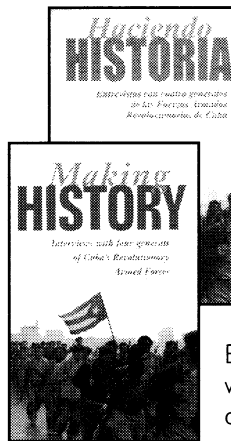
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Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

Macedonian gov't launches assault on Albanian forces — page 7

# Congress overturns new workplace rules

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Congress voted March 6 to repeal a new workplace rule aimed at reducing on-the-job injuries from repetitive motion.

The rule that was repealed—an ergonomics regulation issued last November by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration under then-president William Clinton—would have covered about 100 million workers at 6 million workplaces.

The measure, originally slated to take effect in October 2001, would have required employers to provide workers with information about possible injuries and risk factors, review complaints, redesign workplaces if they were found to cause problems, ensure access to medical care, and provide compensation for disabilities. It also had provisions that in some cases would have forced employers to pay disabled workers higher payments for a longer period than is required by state workers' compensation laws.

The vote in both the House and Senate was largely along party lines, with all Republicans and six Democrats voting for repeal in the Senate, and a 223-206 vote in the House in which 16 Democrats and all but 13 Republicans backed the repeal.

The AFL-CIO issued a statement condemning the vote.

Business leaders from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers, American Trucking Associations, Food Distributors International, and other groups applauded the repeal. They asserted that the rule would have put compliance costs as high as \$100 billion.

Labor organizations had been actively lobbying against the bill. When Vice President Richard Cheney met with 1,700 members of the National Association of Manufacturers in Washington the week before the vote, a group of 200 union members and others held a sidewalk demonstration outside the meeting.

Labor Secretary Elaine Chao said she will seek a more "comprehensive approach to ergonomics, which may include new rulemaking" to "provide employers with achievable measures that protect their employees before injuries occur."

Some 1.6 million repetitive stress injuries

are reported every year, and 600,000 cause workers to miss time on the job. These figures represent only what is reported, and it is likely that company intimidation results in hundreds of thousands of cases going unreported and untreated.

The U.S. Labor Department, basing its data on employers' reports, published data showing that workplace injuries and illnesses declined 4 percent from 1998 to 1999. The same report shows a steady increase since 1986 of "cases with days of restricted work activity only." Many companies pressure injured workers to report for "restricted" or "light" duty.

One notorious case of company attempts to intimidate workers and downplay the brutal reality of working conditions was the initiation by the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Corp. (BNSF) of secret genetic testing of some railroad workers to try to prove "genetic predisposition" to carpal-tunnel syndrome.

Carpal-tunnel syndrome is a painful and often permanently crippling disorder of the hands and wrists caused by repetitive motion. The repetitive motion causes swelling of the tendons in the wrist, which in turn puts pressure on and can damage the nerves that are bundled with the tendons in the same "tunnel."

After unionists filed two lawsuits, the railroad bosses had to back down, and announced February 12 they would stop the tests. In a March 1 letter BNSF's president and chief executive officer, Matt Rose, apologized to employees for the testing.

The Labor Department classifies carpal tunnel syndrome and noise-induced hearing



**Poultry plant in the United States. Many workers face speedup on production lines imposed by bosses, leading to greater risk of injury.**

loss as illnesses. There were 372,000 newly reported cases of occupational illnesses in 1999, 60 percent of them in manufacturing. Carpal-tunnel syndrome and noise-induced hearing loss accounted for 245,000 of the 372,000 total "illness" cases reported.

A number of recent labor struggles have centered on demands for improved health and safety conditions. Workers at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, conducted a seven-hour sit-down strike last year to protest the speed of the production line and a rising injury rate. Out of this strike the workers won some concessions on line speed and went on to vote for union representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Meat packers at the Excel beef cut-and-kill plant in Fort Morgan, Colorado, carried out a strike February 26 to protest job conditions that are injuring many workers. One of the strike leaders, Adan Morales, 28, has had wrist surgery and lost movement in his hands. "We cannot continue to work under the conditions we now have," he said.

More than 1,600 members of the International Association of Machinists struck Frigidaire in St. Cloud, Minnesota, last year, raising objections over the increase of the line speed from 550 units per shift to 1,300 units per shift over a three-year period. Their new contract provides for two full-time union officers in the plant, one to handle safety concerns and another to deal with issues such as production speed.

## Coal miners, taxi drivers stage strikes in China

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Some 2,000 coal miners blocked roads and fought with police in the northern Chinese city of Datong March 8 to protest layoffs, cuts in health care, and inadequate severance pay, according to an Agence France Presse dispatch. In an ensuing clash, cops beat one miner and took him to the local police station. Miners then proceeded to

surround the station, forcing the police to release the injured worker.

The workers were reacting to the announced closure of the Baidong mine in Shanxi province. The 3,500 miners employed there were told that along with losing their jobs, health-care coverage would also be cut. They were being offered severance pay of 20,000 yuan (\$2,400), which many felt would be inadequate to pay their medical bills for various work-related health problems.

Like other state-owned industries in the Chinese workers state, there is a government-backed union at the mine. Union official Wang Xiaohu claimed that only 200 workers had petitioned the mine bureau, and is quoted as saying, "the miners are very sensitive. They are a little extreme and are uncultured."

A police spokeswoman denied that there had been any protest, but said 100 officers had been dispatched to keep order.

Shanxi is the center of China's coal mining industry, with some 500,000 miners employed around the Datong area. China, which is the world's largest producer and consumer of coal, announced plans to lower production to 900 million tons this year, from a peak

of 1.3 billion tons in recent years.

A couple of days earlier in Shanghai, thousands of workers at the Shanghai Zhengtai Rubber factory protested the company's plans to lay off older employees and transfer a number of others. The workers blocked the busy thoroughfare outside the factory March 6.

Pointing to the demands for concessions being placed on the workers, an article in the *Financial Times* reported that the 2,200 workers at this plant "are already facing many of the pressures that will escalate when China joins the World Trade Organization, likely this year."

In the northern Chinese city of Lanzhou, some 5,000 striking taxi drivers surrounded the Gansu province government offices March 13, according to an Agence France Presse news report. Some 300 cops clashed with the protesters.

The drivers were demonstrating over an increase in fines that can be charged by the police, rising road taxes, and regulations requiring taxis to be outfitted with metal cages separating drivers from passengers. Among the new costs of driving a taxi would be a \$300 road fee.

## THE MILITANT

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## The Militant

Vol. 65/No. 13

Closing news date: March 21, 2001

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Published weekly except for two weeks in August and one week in 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](http://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.

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# Hundreds demand ‘Killer cops must go!’

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—“Killer cops must go!” chanted Dorothy Elliott as she spoke to some 200 people who attended a public hearing on police accountability at the St. Paul Baptist church here March 15. Her son, Archie Elliott, was killed by Prince George’s County cops in 1993. He was shot 14 times while handcuffed and seated in a patrol car.

The meeting was held in the wake of the trial and acquittals of four Prince George’s County cops on charges ranging from involuntary manslaughter to violation of civil rights. In one case Officer Brian Catlett was tried and acquitted by a circuit court judge of charges of involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment for the November 1999 fatal shooting of 19-year-old Gary Hopkins Jr.

“I don’t speak for my son tonight,” said Marion Hopkins, mother of the slain youth. “Nothing I can say will bring him back. I am speaking out so that no other mother will have to go through what I went through,” she said.

Prosecutors initially argued that Catlett and officer Devin White singled out Hopkins because of a run-in with the cops a year earlier. During that confrontation Hopkins objected to the officers striking a friend. Catlett told Hopkins to “shut up or you’ll get some of the same.” The judge barred the prosecution from presenting testimony about that incident.

On the night Catlett killed Hopkins, White was the first back-up cop on the scene and used his cruiser to block the car in which Hopkins was riding. The cops claimed they were acting on an “anonymous” tip that someone in the car had a gun. In spite of that “tip” witnesses testified that one man got out of the car and was allowed to walk away. When Hopkins stepped out, White quickly stuck a gun to his head.

Catlett and defense witnesses claimed that Hopkins attempted to take White’s gun and that Catlett fired to protect his partner. They presented an FBI crime lab’s claim of finding traces of Hopkins’s DNA on the gun sight of White’s weapon to support their case.

The prosecution countered that White’s gun was not taken by the FBI until four months after the shooting leaving time for tampering. Witnesses testified that Hopkins repeatedly attempted to brush the gun away from his head, but had his arms up at the time he was shot.

Three other county cops, one of them now an FBI agent, were also tried and acquitted by a jury of charges of unleashing an attack dog upon two homeless, immigrant workers.

On Sept. 21, 1995, Ricardo Mendez, a Mexican immigrant worker, and Jorge Herrera-Cruz from El Salvador, were sleeping on the roof of a printing shop in Takoma Park. They were ordered off the roof by officers Stephanie Mohr and Anthony Delozier. While Mendez and Herrera-Cruz stood with their hands raised, Delozier reportedly shouted to another cop, “Hey sarge, got a new dog here. Mind if it gets a bite?”

The States Attorney’s office brought charges against the cops in response to protests against a string of police brutality cases. But the prosecution of the cops was less than

aggressive. Thomas Ruffin, a board member of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, summed up the prosecution of Catlett by saying, “They tried. They didn’t try hard, but they tried.”

In the past 13 months Prince George’s County cops shot 12 people, killing five. The most recent, that of Howard University student Prince Jones, sparked protests by stu-

dents at the campus. Jones was shot and killed by an undercover cop who followed him from Maryland, through Washington, D.C., and into Virginia. Two others died of injuries sustained while in police custody.

Early last year, two federal juries found cops violated Freddie McCollum’s civil rights after three police officers beat him severely during a traffic stop in 1997.

McCollum was awarded \$4 million. Salvadoran immigrant Nelson Robles won \$650,000 in damages after Prince George’s County cops handcuffed him to a pole and left him there to await pickup by Montgomery County cops.

*Sam Manuel is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.*

## Oil workers protest deaths, environmental damage from rig explosion in Brazil

BY RÓGER CALERO

Five days after three powerful explosions crippled a supporting pillar of the world’s largest offshore oil platform in Brazil’s Campos Basin, desperate attempts by a team of experts trying to salvage the rig failed when it “shifted suddenly” and sank with 400,000 gallons of crude and diesel fuel. This is the third major oil spill in less than 15 months for the Brazilian oil giant Petrobras, owner of the platform.

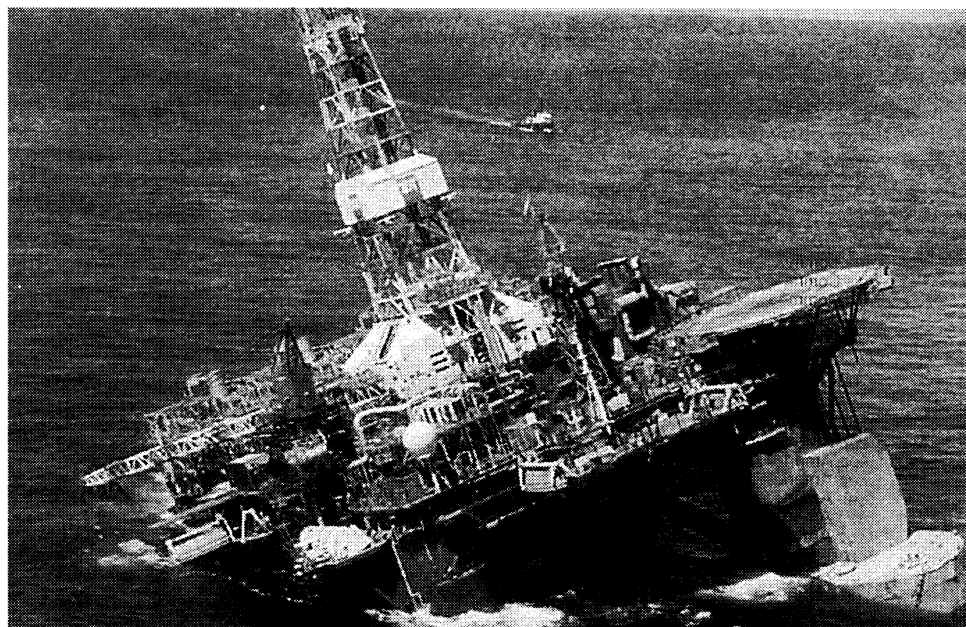
Ten workers died from the explosions and fire that occurred March 15. Brazilian oil workers throughout the country organized protests, demanding tighter safety conditions and an end to job subcontracting in the industry.

In a report issued by the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine, and General Workers Union, Mauricio Franca Rubem, coordinator of the Brazilian oil union federation, said that Petrobras is “clearly responsible” for the series of disasters. Petrobras has had two major spills in the last 14 months and 81 workers have died in accidents in the last three years before the latest disaster.

Franca Rubem reported that the Campos Basin holds the record for accidents in Brazil’s oil industry. He added that of the 81 workers who have been killed on Petrobras sites, 66 of them were subcontracted workers. “That is an average of two human lives lost every month,” he said.

Petrobras, in its drive to boost profits and compete with private and foreign companies that have entered Brazil’s oil industry after a 50-year monopoly, has slashed its work force to 34,000 from around 62,000 at the beginning of the 1990s and has cut corners in proper training for subcontracted workers. “The brutal subcontracting implemented within the company” and the “criminal cutbacks in the regular work force [has] multiplied the risks already inherent in this sector,” said Rubem in the union update.

A series of protest demonstrations called by the oil union federation included “go-slows” and a moment of silence for the victims of the explosion. Petrobras workers hung a huge black banner from the company’s headquarters in downtown Rio the day after the blast, and workers at the Reduc refinery, one of the largest in the country, held a two-hour protest wearing black arm bands before punching in, according to a CNN report.



Damaged offshore oil rig that sank March 20 about 75 miles off coast of Brazil

## New York school board undercuts bilingual education program

BY HILDA CUZCO

NEW YORK—In a February 27 meeting the New York City Board of Education unanimously ended a long-standing program where students who speak little English are automatically placed in a bilingual education class. As a way of emphasizing the political thrust of the new measure, Schools Chancellor Harold Levy said the Office of Bilingual Education will be renamed the Office of English Language Learners.

In addition to ending automatic placement, the new policy limits students to three years in the bilingual program and eases testing requirements in order to get students out of bilingual classes sooner. Currently there are 160,000 students in the program out of a total school enrollment of 1.1 million.

The changes adopted by the Board of Education came at the initiative of a panel appointed by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. Top officials of his administration have stated that they had hoped to overturn the bilingual program as a whole, as was done in California and New Mexico. But they ran into widespread support for the program,

which was won through struggles in the 1970s. A 1974 court-sanctioned consent decree mandated school boards in the state to enroll students who are not proficient in English into a bilingual program.

The city instead took the tack of limiting how long students can stay in the program, and adding on an “English immersion” track as a substitute for bilingual programs. Parents can currently enroll children in bilingual classes, English as a second language (ESL) courses, or a dual language program, where courses are taught one day in English the next in Spanish. Levy is increasing the \$169 million bilingual education budget by \$75 million—44 percent—to expand the dual-language program, to hire and train teachers, and to create an intensive English-language program.

The Board of Education’s rush to approve the bill got bogged down when some board members pointed out that the new program may violate the 1974 consent decree. Board president William Thompson added the language, “The chancellor is directed to inform parents that they are entitled to bilingual education and their right to opt out of bilingual education,” and declared the provision in conformance with state law. Giuliani appointee Ninfa Segarra called the final changes in the bilingual program “a real compromise.”

Assessing the outcome of the effort to erode bilingual education in New York, conservative columnist Carol Iannone said press coverage about parents who want their children to learn both English and their native language came as a “shock” to her. In a column, “Bilingual Ed Exposed” published in *National Review Online*, Iannone wrote that she was appalled that bilingual programs are seen not only as a way to learn English but “as means of retaining the first language.” She attacked the dual language system as one that promotes this goal and raised the alarm, “What is to prevent the dozens of language groups across New York from demanding it?”

Iannone also worried about the “sheer numbers of Spanish-speaking immigrants” who are “creating a qualitatively different situation from anything America has seen before,” including Spanish becoming “the primary language in many parts of America.” This, she warned, has led to “self-contained Spanish language enclaves,” that, “could mean disunity and divisiveness ahead.”

## Youth in Sweden rally against cop killing of immigrant

BY DANIEL AHL

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Seventy young people rallied in front of the Södermalm police station here March 15 to protest the police killing of Idris Demir, a 25-year-old Kurdish immigrant from Turkey. Demir was shot and killed by a cop in Jönköping in southern Sweden March 10. Participants carried banners saying, “Disarm the police” and “No human being is illegal.”

“I am not surprised over the murder,” said Ida, who joined the action. “I know how the police view people. We must not accept it or give in to it.” Protests were also held in Jönköping, Malmö, and other towns.

On the night he was killed, Demir and a friend were stopped by two traffic police at about 11:00 p.m. Finding he did not have a driver’s license, the cops followed Demir to an apartment in Råslätt, a working-class immigrant suburb. Demir, who already had two appeals for asylum turned down and was facing deportation, ran out of the apartment trying to get away from the cops. A neighbor told the newspaper *Jönköpingsposten* that Demir was halfway down the stairs when he was shot in the back. “Idris

never threatened the police,” she said.

Within hours of the killing, the Jönköping police department issued a statement saying the 56-year-old officer opened fire on a man who attacked him with a knife. This story was repeated the following day by Lennart Wennblom, a cop-appointed press spokesperson for the department. Chief Prosecutor Ulf Barck-Holst, who heads a so-called internal investigation of the killing, expressed irritation with the response, saying the Jönköping police “said too much. They didn’t have to make statements in such detail. The internal investigation hadn’t even started.”

Lars-Gunnar Carlsson, who since December 2000 has been the legal representative of Demir and his brother, Süleyman Demir, told the media about a phone call he received from the officer in charge at the Jönköping police station. The cop told him that the cops had an “official version” that the officer had been attacked with a knife and had shot Idris Demir in self-defense. But afterwards, Carlsson told the press, the cops said “the real version was that the victim was escaping and the policeman stood five, six steps up the stairs and shot him from behind. He

then said that he told this off the record and that it would stay between us.”

A friend of Idris Demir told the paper it would have been out of character for Demir to attack the police, and that “they would never have fired had it not been an immigrant.”

After identifying his brother at the morgue, Süleyman Demir was held for 19 hours in a police cell to await deportation, but the immigration authorities later decided to temporarily delay the proceedings.

Demir is the sixth person killed by police in Sweden since 1999, bringing the total since 1990 to 11. The Swedish government has not issued a statement about the latest cop attack, but on March 12, Minister of Justice Thomas Bodström said Stockholm is increasing its funding of the police by 1.1 billion kronas this year. “It is the biggest investment in police ever,” he said. Bodström also said the government will start a “new, third police academy in southern Sweden.”

*Daniel Ahl is a member of the Industrial Union in Stockholm. Dag Tirsén contributed to this article.*

# Thousands of farmers protest in Canada

Continued from front page

Carruthers. "He sets the price we get."

At the rally here, tractors, combines, flatbed trucks, and other farm machinery filled the parking lot at the Metro East Trade Centre. Many had traveled 300 kilometers from Windsor in a 20 kilometer-long convoy on Highway 401, Canada's busiest highway (1 kilometer = .62 miles).

The convoy was organized by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) which represents 40,000 farmers. At the short rally sending off the convoy, Bill Mailloux, OFA vice president, said, "Today we are sending out an SOS, which means Show Our Solidarity. Many farmers are selling their crops below the cost of production. The federal government needs to support us. We need a level playing field with farmers in the U.S. and Europe."

The overwhelming support for the farm protest was shown by truckers honking in solidarity and by farmers and other working people with tractors or pickups lining overpasses to greet the convoy even in the most remote rural areas.

Kipp Stratatichuk, a fourth generation grain farmer out of Amherstberg, said in an interview that farmers "need a level playing field with farmers in the United States. Then we will be able to compete fairly. Farmers in the U.S. get subsidies for not planting, which we don't have. The Chicago board of trade controls the pricing and we don't stand a chance. The federal government needs to do something. That's why we're here."

Edward Hansen, a 24-year-old farmer from Brooklin who brought three tractors to the protest, grows corn, canola, wheat, and soybean and raises emu. "The most important thing is to educate the general public about the situation farmers face," he said, "which is the only way we will force the issue on the government. My father, who is retired and in Florida, met some farmers from Nebraska, so I know that farmers in the states face the same kinds of problems that Canadian farmers face."

Dairy farmer Allan Thompson helped organize a group of farmers who went to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation building in downtown Toronto to ensure the farmers' message was covered by the media. Twenty trucks and five floats with tractors on them converged on the CBC building, reported Thompson. After meeting with

ground for a rally, according to the *National Post*. "Canadian farmers cannot put a crop in and break even," Alain Leduc, an Ottawa area farmer who grows corn and soybeans, told the crowd, the *Post* reported. "If the federal government continues to ignore agriculture, the farmers will mobilize and become more militant. My son doesn't understand why we are doing this," said Leduc who has been farming for 19 years. "My daughter says the farm is a drag, why don't we get rid of it. We are losing a generation."

At the provincial legislature in Regina, several hundred Saskatchewan farmers rallied in the heart of Canada's grain belt. "If you stand shoulder to shoulder from coast to coast, they'll have trouble getting by us. We're standing united across the country," Lee Cook, a Bengough-area farmer and an organizer with the Pro West Rally Group, told the Regina *Leader Post*.

Yorkton-area farmer John Makowetski decided to protest, the *Leader Post* reported, because the aid packages like the Agriculture Income Disaster Assistance (AIDA) don't work. "I applied under AIDA two times and all I got was a \$400 bill from my accountant," he said. A number of farmers burned Vanclief in effigy. "Mr. Vanclief self-destructs once more," yelled Court Linford, a Semans farmer and protest organizer as he set the gasoline-soaked effigy on fire. Farmers also rallied in the Saskatchewan cities of Swift Current and Saskatoon.

According to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, hundreds of grain farmers drove their farm vehicles and pickup trucks to the Manitoba legislature in Winnipeg, rallied for federal and provincial aid, then marched through the downtown area. A sign on a combine parked in front of the legislature read:



Militant/Heidi Rose

Ontario farmers participating in March 14 National Day of Action. "We're living in 1930s conditions and farming in 2001," said one farmer.

"Farming is everyone's bread and butter—without any doubt." Thirty of the farmers entered the legislature and held a sit-in, leaving on March 16.

The newspaper also reported that in response to the nationwide protests, "all parties in the [federal] House of Commons paid homage to farmers yesterday—and then the politicians promptly took turns accusing one another of callously disregarding the country's food producers." Prime Minister Jean Chretien boasted about the \$500 million in aid pledged by his government in February, but refused to commit his government to more.

"This action really began with the January 29 protest at the opening of Parliament," Saskatchewan grain farmer Bob Thomas told the *Militant* in a phone interview. Thomas is the chairman of the On to Ottawa Trek Committee. "We're happy to support farmers in Ontario and Quebec and other provinces. These protests are going to intensify. The tears have dried. Now there is bitterness and anger."

Chris Hoepfner from Detroit and John Steele from Toronto are meat packers and members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

## Canada miners end strike, ratify contract

BY ANNETTE KOURI AND TONY DI FELICE

TORONTO—Mine, mill, and smelter workers voted February 20 to end their six-month strike against Falconbridge Ltd., one of the world's largest producers of nickel, after the company withdrew some of its most onerous concession demands on the union members. The strike took place at the company's facilities in Sudbury, Ontario.

The 1,250 workers, members of the Mine Mill/Canadian Auto Workers Local 598, voted by an 87 percent margin to approve the new contract. During their fight the union members organized protests and rallies, faced cop attacks and court orders to limit their picket lines, and won solidarity from unions in the area and Falconbridge workers in Norway.

Gilbert Herard, a smelter worker, explained that he learned during the fight that a union "is not just about dues." He described the efforts made through union structures to make sure that strikers had basic needs, including formula for small babies, as "fantastic."

Darin Nicksy, also a smelter worker, felt that the struggle they had waged "strengthened the union 10-fold. The members were closer together, stronger. All the support we got showed that we're a strong union town."

The strike began August 1 when Falconbridge demanded major concessions that would have gutted seniority rights, rolled back health and safety provisions by cutting the number of union representatives on the job, and increased contracting out of work. Many workers felt that Falconbridge was out to break the union.

In the new contract, seniority rights are maintained and the company agreed that there would be no loss of "credited service or seniority" for the period of the strike. This was particularly important for newer people, workers explained.

The agreement includes a \$2,000 signing bonus, a wage increase of 50 cents an hour in the first year of a three-year contract, and a 57 cents cost-of-living raise. There is no wage increase the second or third years of the contract. The pact also includes a substantial increase in monthly pension payments and supplementary insurance benefits. The company announced it intends to cut the workforce in Sudbury by 10 percent but says it will do so through normal attrition, not by layoffs. Falconbridge agreed that no striker would be fired for strike-related activity and that the company will not seek compensation for any damages sustained

during the strike.

The new agreement includes important concessions, such as the right of the company to hire contractors to perform work not able to be done by unionized employees. The union also agreed not to file any grievances during the first month of the new contract. Company-paid union positions are reduced from seven to five.

Workers who spoke with the *Militant* said they thought the settlement was good given what the union was up against. For example, the courts granted a company request to limit pickets to 20 at each gate in the third month of the strike and prohibited strikers from having any contact with scabs going through their lines.

Falconbridge was able to get the courts to further reduce pickets to five in a February 16 ruling. The bosses hired additional security from a Toronto-based agency to escort the scabs in and out of the plant and increased surveillance of the picket line. Through the use of scab labor and manage-

ment personnel, the company says it was able to keep some of the mines operating and the smelter running at 60 percent capacity.

Solidarity for the striking nickel miners came from across Ontario but was especially strong from nearby unions. Fellow Falconbridge miners from Timmins in Northern Ontario gave monthly financial contributions and helped with broader actions. Nickel miners at INCO, organized by the Steelworkers, gave generously at plant gate collections. The strikers' main picket shack had a flag of Norway flying in front of it in recognition of the solidarity shown by the 500 workers at Falconbridge's refinery in Norway. The members of the Norwegian Chemical Workers Union waged a five-day sympathy strike and sent monthly financial contributions.

Annette Kouri and Tony Di Felice are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers at Quality Meats in Toronto.

## Mine union leaders killed in Colombia

BY BOB TUCKER

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Coal production came to a grinding halt at Drummond Company's Loma mine in northern Colombia after union president and vice president Valmore Lorcarno Rodriguez and Victor Hugo Orcasita were yanked from an unmarked company-chartered bus and executed on March 12, some 30 miles from the mine site. More than 1,200 unionists—members of Colombian mine workers union Sintracarbón—organized the action. Colombia is the fourth-largest coal exporter in the world.

Drummond Ltd., a U.S. coal company based in Birmingham, Alabama, operates a large strip mine, railway, and port in Colombia, with some 1,300 employees. Last year 9 million tons of coal were produced there and Drummond plans to expand operations significantly. The company retains one large underground mine in Jefferson County, Alabama, employing 500 workers.

"We strongly condemn these assassinations of our trade union brothers," said United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) vice president Jerry Jones. "The UMWA's prayers and condolences go out to the families, friends, and co-workers of Brothers Lorcarno and Orcasita, and we offer our full support and solidarity to the Colombia mine workers union."

Reuters, as well as big-business press agencies in Colombia, say they can not discern whether the assassinations were carried out by paramilitary forces or by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). But a press release issued by the UMWA reports that some of the gunmen were dressed in military uniforms, commonly sported by paramilitaries.

"Since 1995, 1,522 labor leaders have been killed in Colombia, mostly by paramilitary groups, according to figures by the country's leading labor organization, the United Labor Confederation," Reuters reported. "In 2000 alone, 116 labor leaders were killed." Paramilitary groups in Colombia, according to Reuters, have grown ninefold to 8,000 troops in eight years. Some activists accuse the Colombia government of having ties, which they deny. Washington has pumped nearly \$1 billion dollars in military aid into that country, under the guise of combating drugs, in collaboration with that nation's president, Andres Pastrana.

Nearly eight months ago 700,000 working people in Colombia staged a 24-hour national strike against government austerity moves, a 20 percent unemployment rate, and the military expansion. The war purse handed over to the Colombian rulers will fund 60 military helicopters, 500 troops, military training, and a beefed-up spy network.



One of the March 14 caravans.

the media they joined the Pickering rally. "We have unified ourselves across Ontario and across Canada. This has never happened before," he said. Thompson reported that 700 farmers had rallied at Guelph, a farming center an hour west of Toronto.

OFA officials speaking from a flatbed truck in the bitter cold called on Lyle Vanclief, the federal minister of agriculture and agri-food, to raise federal farm aid from a promised \$500 million to \$900 million. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), representing 200,000 farmers, and the Union des producteurs agricoles du Quebec (UPA), which represents 50,000 farmers, are demanding \$1.5 billion in immediate aid from both the federal and provincial governments. Farm protest leaders point out that the \$500 million promised by Ottawa, plus funds that are supposed to be paid by the provincial governments, would only amount to \$830 million in aid nationally, a far cry from what is needed.

In Ottawa, Canada's capital, protesters drove some 5,000 farm tractors and trucks past the parliament building then to the fair-



# Meat packers strike Illinois hog plant

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

ROCHELLE, Illinois—Meatpacking workers at Rochelle Foods, a subsidiary of Hormel Foods Corp., went on strike March 16 after overwhelmingly voting down a proposed contract.

The 870 strikers are members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1540. Rochelle Foods slaughters approximately 7,000 hogs per day. The last time workers went out on strike was in 1986.

The company's first offer was a 70-cent raise over four years, a proposal voted down by a 99 percent margin by workers who also authorized the union to strike if needed. The company's next offer, an increase of only 10 cents, was opposed by 92 percent of union members voting.

"We deserve more. We can't accept that—it wouldn't even pay for a tank of gas," said Norah McKean, a packager in the hot dog department for eight years. Her wages are now \$10.25 an hour.

A worker with three years experience in the kill department, who requested that his name not be used, said the union representatives reported in their meeting that the company justified its meager wage increase by pointing to the composition of the workforce. "They told us the management said Latinos can get by just fine with that little." Most production workers here are Latino.

Señora Escatel, who works in hams, said the bosses' response was typical of the in-

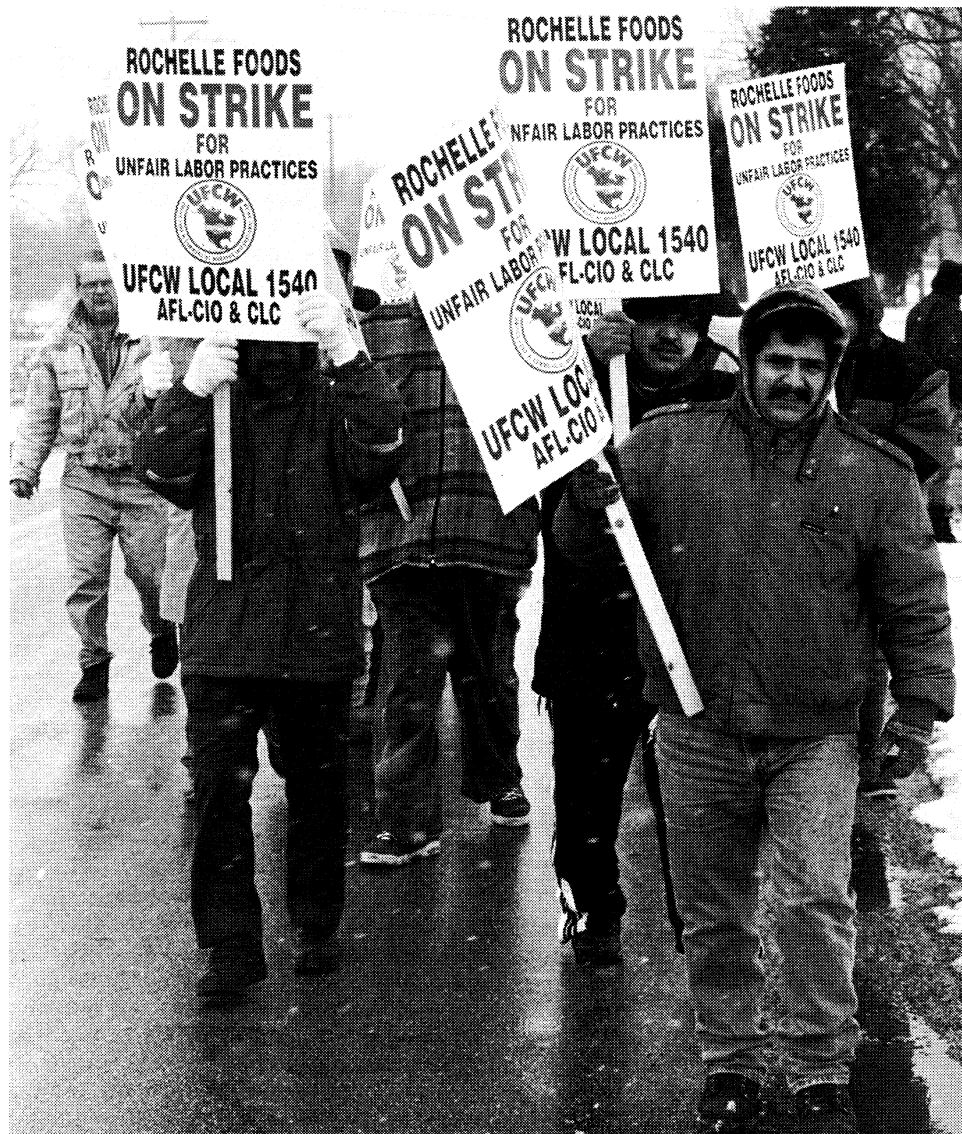
sulting and humiliating treatment the company has meted out for the 12 years she has worked there. "They are always trying to speed up the lines. When one of us gets hurt, they won't let us go to the nurse. If the belt stops working, they just expect us to push the meat on down the line, and it's heavy!... This treatment is discrimination. It has made us all mad."

A bacon-line worker, Angelica, added, "They're more willing to sacrifice us than the animals they're slaughtering." She described how she had to fight the company in order to get treatment for carpal tunnel syndrome. "I tell everyone, don't be intimidated. Keep fighting. They can't get away with treating us like this. We're out here because we have to support our families."

Frank Rubio, a union steward, said workers who get injured are forced to come to work but do not get more than 36 hours of work. He said most workers do double shifts without overtime premium pay.

One worker who has worked in the plant's cutting department for six years expressed pride at the fact that the parking lot is empty and the strike has been so solid. "They don't want to give us a raise, but the bills keep on going up. Gas is 100 percent higher than last year. Our pay doesn't last the month. Each month we fall further behind. That's why we're out here."

Pattie Thompson is a meat packer in Chicago.



Fred Johnsen/Rochelle News-Leader

Workers picket Rochelle Foods meatpacking plant. "It wouldn't even pay for a tank of gas," said one striker of company's proposed wage increase.

## Cuban youth leaders to visit Canadian provinces...

BY CHRISTIAN COURNOYER

TORONTO—Cuban youth leaders Alfredo Bárgaza Sánchez and Yamila Lafourí Ochoa will address a public meeting at York University here March 21, the first stop in a cross-Canada speaking tour on "Youth and the Cuban Revolution Today." They will also speak in Vancouver, British Columbia; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Montreal, as well as several cities in southern Ontario.

A law graduate, Bárgaza is a staff member in Havana of the National Secretariat of the University Student Federation (FEU) of

Cuba. Lafourí is a student at the Higher Institute of Medicine in Santiago de Cuba and a member of the National Committee of the Union of Young Communists (UJC). They have been invited to speak to a wide spectrum of student organizations, professors, unions, and Cuba solidarity groups.

Tour organizing committees across the country launched an emergency campaign to get prominent individuals and organizations to fax letters to the Canadian ambassador in Havana in order to get the two Cuban youth into the country. The Canadian embassy in Havana had refused to issue vi-

sas to Bárgaza and Lafourí and told them to return to the embassy on March 20—four days after their tour was to begin—when their request for visas would be considered again. The two youth leaders were granted visas March 20.

Bárgaza and Lafourí will speak at public events in the Toronto area March 21-23, Vancouver March 24-28, and in Winnipeg March 28-30.

The Montreal leg of their trip will be from March 30 through April 6. The tour committee in Toronto is working at reorganizing some meetings in southern Ontario later

in April that had to be canceled because of the embassy's action.

At the same time, Canada's minister of External Affairs, John Manley, confirmed Ottawa's opposition to the Cuban government's participation in the April 20-22 third Summit of the Americas to be held in Quebec City. Of the 35 countries in the Americas, only Cuba has been denied an invitation to the summit. Ottawa had supported the invitation of Cuba to the first two summits, held in Miami in 1994 and in Santiago, Chile, in 1998.

Cuba "should first of all show a little respect for democracy, it should tolerate the right to dissidence in the country, it should stop harassing those who have views different than those of the regime," in order to attend the summit, Manley said.

In a letter to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, Camilo Garcia, second secretary of the Cuban embassy in Ottawa, wrote "Cuba has not asked nor is asking to be invited to the Summit. The exclusion of Cuba, nevertheless, will indeed be a way of avoiding its point of view from being reflected in the debate of the Summit."

## ...and begin visit to colleges in United States

BY ROSE ANA BERBEO

Two Cuban youth leaders will be touring U.S. college campuses the last week in March and first two weeks of April, speaking on the topic "Youth in Cuba Today."

Yanelis Martínez Herrera and Javier Dueñas Oquendo received U.S. visas for the visit after they were invited by dozens of students and faculty at campuses in Illinois, southern New England, and Minnesota. The tour is being coordinated by the Cuban Youth Lectures Committee in Chicago.

Martínez, 22, is a fifth year law student, and a member of the National Secretariat of the Federation of University Students (FEU). She has served as president of the FEU at the University of Camaguey, and at its Law School. She was a delegate to the 9th Congress of Jurists of Cuba.

Dueñas, 28, teaches journalism at the University of Havana, where he has served as vice president of the Federation of University Students. He has traveled to Russia and Mexico, giving talks on youth in Cuba.

The youths' first stop will be Chicago. Their schedule includes the following: March 27, 9:30 a.m., University of Illinois at Chicago: Rafael Cintron-Ortiz Latino Cultural Center, 803 South Morgan St., Lecture Center B2. Sponsors: Rafael Cintron Ortiz Latino Cultural Center and the Latin American and Latino Studies Program. At 6:00 p.m., Loyola University: Crown Center Auditorium, Rogers Park campus. Sponsors include the Honor's Society of the Department of Communication, others.

March 28, 3:30 p.m., Columbia College: 624 S. Michigan, Room 1409. At 7:30 p.m., Northeastern University: Student Union, Room SU 214, 5500 N. St. Louis. Sponsors, Chimexla and others.

March 30, 7:00 p.m., "Noche Cubana," Casa Guatemala Celebrates Voices of the

Americas, Dulce Vida Cafe, 1338 W. Madison.

The youth will be meeting with farmers attending the Family Farm Defender's conference in Wisconsin during the first week of their stay and will be visiting campuses in southern New England, April 2-6.

In Minnesota, events are planned at St.

Thomas University, Hamline University, St. Cloud State, the University of Minnesota, and Gustavus Adolphus colleges from April 9-14.

The youth will also be visiting Hartford University in Connecticut, Brown University in Rhode Island, and Bridgewater State College in Massachusetts.

## San Francisco Pathfinder sales set brisk pace

BY PETER BUCH

SAN FRANCISCO—Socialist workers and Young Socialists here have sold \$850 worth of Pathfinder books and pamphlets over the first six weeks of the year—87 books and pamphlets, as well as 26 copies of the Pathfinder catalog—from street tables, at political events, and through the local Pathfinder Bookstore.

Sales have been spurred by Pathfinder's publication of *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia* by Rodolfo Saldaña, of which 20 copies have already been sold. Five copies of the new title were sold following a talk at the February 9 Militant Labor Forum on revolutionary Cuba.

The presentation included an explanation of the importance of the account by Saldaña of the attempt in the 1960s to forge a revolutionary leadership out of struggles underway in Bolivia capable of leading working people to extend the socialist revolution begun in Cuba.

The presentation also reported on the meeting at the Havana International Book Fair celebrating the Spanish-language edition of Pathfinder's *Making History: Interviews With Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. People attending the forum bought \$63 worth of books. At-

tending his first forum, a student from San Francisco State University purchased *Making History*, *Fertile Ground*, and several other Pathfinder titles.

Socialist workers participated in a march and rally on Martin Luther King Day, an immigrant rights demonstration January 27, and a week-long series of meetings on campuses and community centers in the San Francisco Bay Area and nearby Santa Cruz, to hear Puerto Rican independence fighters Rafael Cancel Miranda and Luis Rosa. People who joined these activities purchased a total of \$350 worth of Pathfinder titles from tables set up by socialists at each event.

The encouraging pace of sales is also due to people from the neighborhood around the Pathfinder Bookstore dropping in to look over the titles, a reflection of the fact that over the past year the bookstore has become better known at its new location. In addition, socialist workers have taken the books, pamphlets, and periodicals to sell to co-workers and at plant gates, supermarkets, and college campuses.

Also sold during this period were collections of speeches by Malcolm X, books on labor struggles in the United States, titles on the Puerto Rican independence fight, the *Jewish Question*, and *The Communist Manifesto*

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. A number of sales were to members of the Pathfinder Readers Club who were able to purchase their books at special discount prices provided to club members. Eleven readers of Pathfinder signed up to join the Pathfinder Readers Club as a result of these efforts.

### 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



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12

# Seattle meeting celebrates Cuban victory at Bay of Pigs and its impact on U.S. workers

Continued from front page  
Forces and Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia.

The meeting was hosted by the Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles branches of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists. Participants came from up and down the West Coast, and from Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota, and Utah, including a good number of young people, some of whom were attending their first socialist meeting.

The branch of the Communist League and the Young Socialists from Vancouver, British Columbia, helped make the meeting a success and brought nearly 20 people to the event. Carlos García, a leader of the Young Socialists in Canada and a garment worker in Vancouver, welcomed participants to the event and introduced SWP leader Norton Sandler, who chaired the meeting.

Sandler explained that the Young Socialists had just completed a two-day National Leadership Council meeting in Seattle. He introduced Jason Alessio, Roberto Guerrero, Olympia Newton, and Jacob Perasso, the members of the newly elected YS National Executive Committee, who were seated on the platform, as well as international guests from Sweden, Iceland, and Canada who participated in the YS leadership meeting.

The first featured speaker was Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder president, editor of *Making History* and *Fertile Ground*, and coeditor of *Playa Girón*, together with Steve Clark.

*Playa Girón* features excerpts of several speeches by Cuban commander-in-chief

plained that the revolutionary forces captured almost the entire invading force.

Most of all, she said, the victory at the Bay of Pigs was a tremendous political victory, which proved the Cuban people were ready to fight, not just against that invasion, but against a larger one Washington was on a course to carry out. The U.S. rulers prepared well for the attack, but they did not and could not calculate the moral factors. "They weren't crazy or stupid," Waters explained, but "they couldn't see the men and women from nowhere who made the revolution."

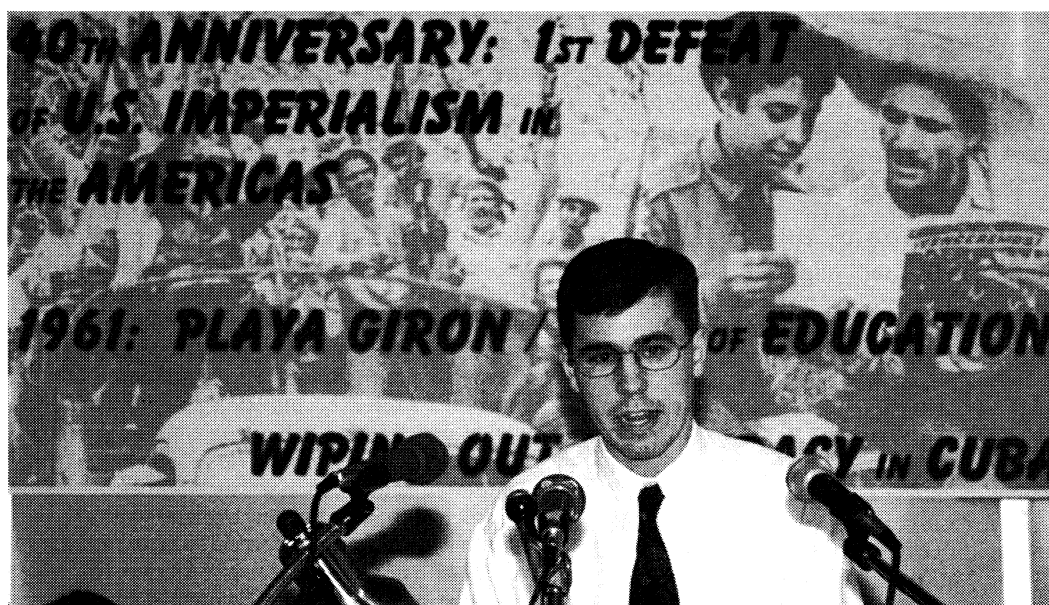
## Book produced in eight time zones

Volunteers who worked to rapidly prepare *Playa Girón* for publication carried out their coordinating effort via the Internet and across eight different time zones, Waters noted. "We can say 'the sun never sets on the Pathfinder volunteers,' from the other side of the class line of those who claimed that 'the sun never sets on the British empire.'"

Volunteers hastened to produce *Playa Girón* simultaneously in Spanish and English to be available now, Waters said, so that supporters of Pathfinder can get copies of the book into bookstores, making them available as the publicity around the anniversary creates a heightened interest over the next months.

The collective effort that goes into every aspect of the production of books such as *Playa Girón*, Waters said, is one of the best examples of mass work that is being done by the socialist movement.

Jack Willey, organizer of the New York City Socialist Work-



Militant/Monica Jones

SWP leader Jack Willey described efforts to build August world youth festival in Algeria

Cuban youth leaders Yanelis Martínez Herrera and Javier Dueñas Oquendo have received visas to come to the United States to begin a speaking tour the following week on campuses in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Chicago, and New England. The Young Socialists have been active in working with professors and student organizations who are hosting this academic tour.

The final speaker was Jack Barnes, author of the foreword to *Playa Girón* and SWP national secretary. One of the central lessons of the events described in the new book for revolutionaries in the United States who defend the Cuban revolution and are building a communist movement, Barnes said, "is a tendency for us to underestimate what we can accomplish and what we will be capable of doing."

During the 1961 Year of Education, Barnes said, the campaign to wipe out illiteracy was launched as one of the many conquests of the Cuban revolution. It drew thousands of youth, some as young as 14 years old, into the countryside, many for the first time. The unarmed literacy brigade members faced threats and some were murdered in the counterrevolutionary "battle for democracy" organized by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Photos of the bodies of slain 14-year-old brigadistas published in the United States had quite an impact on youth and workers here, he said. Barnes also noted that the fight for literacy was closely tied with the fight for women's rights.

In explaining the relationship between the cultural advances the revolution was making and the determination Cuban toilers showed in fighting the invasion, Barnes noted that the worker-peasant Rebel Army organized poetry readings, plays, and art exhibits for soldiers stationed in the la Cabaña fortress in Havana, which had been used before the Cuban revolution for torture and imprisonment of working people who resisted the repression of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship.

The Kennedy administration made political decisions in their assault on the Cuban revolution, not military ones, Barnes said. Within eight days of the Bay of Pigs defeat, the White House began reformulating their counterrevolutionary efforts. Less than two

years later, in the "missile crisis" of 1962, Kennedy took the United States to the brink of nuclear war in demanding that missiles from the Soviet Union be withdrawn from Cuba. When advisors told the president and his colleagues that a U.S. invasion of Cuba would cost the lives of as many as 18,000 GIs in the first 10 days, they decided against it. When Cuban veterans hear the figure of 18,000, Barnes added, they often respond that the real figure would be double or triple that number.

## 'A stronger set of gravediggers'

Barnes said politics in the United States today is at a turning point. While what is called the American labor movement is based on traditions that make it utterly unprepared for responding to the deepening crisis of capitalism, he said, it is important to remember what is special about the United States. It is the only country in the imperialist world where the working class is not getting rapidly older, Barnes said. Figures from the 2000 census show the populations of New York, Chicago, and several other major U.S. cities increasing. This is a result of a wave of immigration from many countries that is transforming what "American worker" means and enriching what workers and farmers will gain from each other through common experiences in the class struggle.

This immigration flow is a perfect example of how the U.S. capitalist rulers attempt to draw in and use the creativity and productivity of the world in their own interests. But instead, Barnes said, they have created "a stronger set of gravediggers" of capitalism in the United States.

Barnes reviewed a number of aspects of the bipartisan offensive in the United States over the last decade. He noted the latest series of assaults by the Bush administration against working people at home and abroad, including against the Cuban revolution, are in every instance a continuation of, not a break from, what was prepared and carried out by the Clinton administration.

For example, in Clinton's final days in office, Barnes noted, he signed a bill creating an "intelligence czar" who will draw together all intelligence agencies and work with private business to define which "national assets" of industry need to be guarded by increased business and government secrecy and by intelligence efforts to pinpoint those guilty of supposed industrial espionage.

Few thought the Cuban revolution could last this long without a single socialist revolution anywhere else, but it has proven possible, Barnes said.

He added that the statement of Fidel Castro in 1961 that "a victorious revolution will be seen in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba" remains true, with one amend-

Continued on Page 7



Militant/above left, Monica Jones; above right and below, Lisa Ahlberg

West Coast meeting was attended by 170 people, including young people from many states. Above left, Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder president and coeditor of *Playa Girón*/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas. Above right, Jack Barnes, author of foreword to the book, and national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

Fidel Castro before and after the battle, and also the July 1999 testimony of José Ramón Fernández before a Havana court detailing the background to the April 1961 victory. Fernández, who is retired from active duty, holds the rank of brigadier general in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. He is currently vice president of the Council of Ministers. He commanded the main column of the Cuban forces that defeated the U.S.-organized invasion.

Fernández explains in his testimony in the new book that "from a strategic and tactical point of view, the enemy's idea was well-conceived.... What they lacked was a just cause to defend."

In her presentation, Waters pointed to a similar assessment drawn by Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara in a May 1961 speech shortly after the defeat of the invasion. Guevara cautioned that Cubans shouldn't exaggerate the scope of the military victory at the Bay of Pigs, Waters said, because it was the defeat of "nothing more than 1,000 or so gusanos" (see Guevara's speech on page 8). As proof, Guevara ex-

plained that the revolutionary forces captured almost the entire invading force. Most of all, she said, the victory at the Bay of Pigs was a tremendous political victory, which proved the Cuban people were ready to fight, not just against that invasion, but against a larger one Washington was on a course to carry out. The U.S. rulers prepared well for the attack, but they did not and could not calculate the moral factors. "They weren't crazy or stupid," Waters explained, but "they couldn't see the men and women from nowhere who made the revolution."

Jacob Perasso, organizer of the newly elected Young Socialists National Executive Committee, reported to applause that



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

Reception before West Coast meeting to mark anniversary of Cuban victory at Bay of Pigs.



# Macedonian gov't launches assault on Albanian forces

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

On March 20, army and police units of the Macedonian government opened fire in the city of Tetovo with tanks and artillery against Albanian nationalist guerrillas operating in the Sar Planina Mountains to the north. The use of the heavy weaponry registered an escalation of the conflict.

The imperialist governments, which maintain tens of thousands of troops in Yugoslavia under the NATO banner, from Bosnia to Kosova to Macedonia itself, are backing Skopje in the fighting. Washington has led the way in providing military and financial assistance to the government of President Boris Trajkovski.

Until the clashes began in February, Macedonia had escaped the wars that had broken out in different regions of the Yugoslav federation over the last decade, involving the armed forces of Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, as well as Albanian nationalist forces in Kosova.

Long-standing national grievances by Albanians are at the center of the volatile situation. Their struggle to gain language rights and to overcome discrimination in employment and education in Macedonia is part of

of Macedonia's population of 2 million. The majority of the population is identified as Slav. Between 60 and 80 percent of the 200,000 people in Tetovo are Albanian, a figure typical for the northwest of the country.

Skopje governments have their own record of abuse and violence against Albanians. In one instance, the former mayor of Gostivar, Ruzi Osmani, was jailed for one and a half years in 1997 for insisting that the Albanian flag be displayed alongside the Macedonian flag in the southern city. Albanian organizations have raised the demand for schools to be established offering instruction in the Albanian language. The once-outlawed university of Tetovo was granted permission to teach in the Albanian language only last year.

Along with Kosova, Macedonia—formally independent since 1991—is the least developed region of the Yugoslav federation. Official unemployment today stands at 30 percent; among Albanians it is double that. The country's present coalition government, elected in November 1998, includes the Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA), and is pledged to address such inequalities.

The government's failure to make progress on these issues has undermined support for the official Albanian parties.

The leaders of the insurgent forces have raised similar demands to those espoused by the DPA. The *New York Times* reported that the National Liberation Army "and some of its commanders have demanded that equality of ethnic Albanians be included in the constitution, that Albanian be made an official language in Macedonia, and that Albanians have representation in government and police structures.... The police and army are dominated by Slavs, even in the Albanian-populated western part of the country."

"The rebels argue that the politicians have tried for 10 years to achieve these demands through the political process, but have failed," continued the report.

While condemning the violence, the DPA's leaders have tried to shore up their popularity by distancing themselves from aspects of the government's military mobilization. On March 16 the party's leader, Arben Xhaferi, threatened to pull out of the coalition if a proposal to declare a nationwide state of emergency was carried through.



Macedonian police in Tetovo join assault on Albanian nationalist forces, March 20.

"We are going to hold on until civilians start getting hurt," said Xhaferi as Skopje's offensive got under way on March 20. "If the situation degenerates, we will have no other option but to withdraw from the government."

The *Financial Times* reports that "Menduh Thaci, deputy leader of the DPA [has warned] that his party's popularity has slipped since the current round of violence started last month."

The flare-up of armed clashes has alarmed some better-off Albanians in Macedonia. "I really thought we had rid Macedonia from politics of ethnic extremism, but now I'm very worried," said Iso Rusi, who edits an Albanian-language magazine in Skopje. "I don't want somebody from the outside to come and liberate me."

Many Albanians around Tetovo, on the other hand, have made their opposition to the government's stepped-up military presence clear. They have reportedly formed armed self-defense groups in several villages. The NLA has also had success in recruiting local residents to its ranks as the fighting has intensified.

The NLA leaders and many of its cadre gained experience fighting under the banner of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA). The two organizations share the "UCK" acronym in the Albanian language. The KLA won a wide following in Kosova for its armed fight against the invading forces of the Serbian military in 1998. Its leadership welcomed and collaborated with the 1999 U.S.-led air war against Serbia, and afterwards with the occupying NATO forces.

Reflecting its political vulnerability, Skopje coupled the preparation of its military assault with the promise of a "package of reforms designed to increase minority rights for the ethnic Albanians and weaken the appeal of extremists wanting to break

up the multiethnic republic," drawn up in consultation with European Union officials, reported the *Financial Times*.

As it opened its artillery barrage, the government issued an ultimatum giving the NLA forces 24 hours to withdraw or "face being wiped out." An NLA spokesperson said the rebels would ignore the deadline, claiming that "our ammunition is plentiful, and casualties are light." The insurgents reportedly control six villages within 10 miles of Tetovo, including Selce, which serves as their headquarters.

The reported casualties have been modest during the clashes of February and March, with one civilian dead and a number wounded. Thousands of people have left Tetovo. According to the *New York Times*, "More than 3,000 ethnic Albanians have left Macedonia for Albania and Serbia, and more than 7,000 ethnic Albanians and Slavs have been displaced in Macedonia."

The imperialist powers have increased their aid to the Macedonian government. NATO secretary general Lord Robertson has called for 1,400 troops to be sent to Kosova's southern border. "NATO is committed to tightening control of the border and troops will be put in place to do that," he said on March 19, adding that "the number of troops in the border region will be adequate and the objective will be pursued with considerable vigor." The aim of the action was "to cut the ethnic Albanian rebels' supply routes," reported a Reuters correspondent.

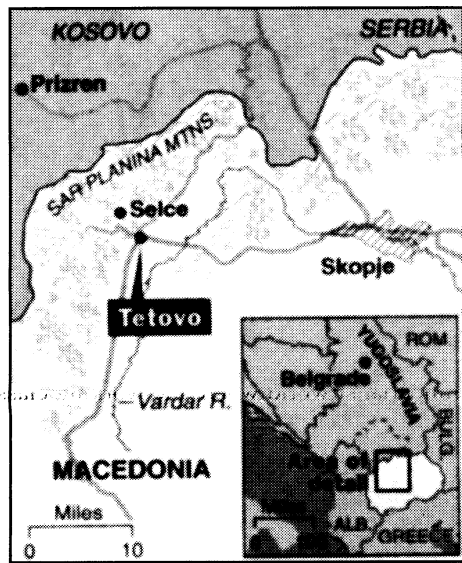
When fighting began in February, 150 U.S. troops were moved to the border zone between Macedonia and Kosova, a sector of the NATO occupation which falls under Washington's control. The U.S. command has passed on photographs taken by pilotless reconnaissance planes of NLA strongholds to the Macedonian army.

Discussions in Washington, according to the *New York Times*, have "focused on supplying money to the Macedonian government and on giving it the mettle to hold back the guerrillas." The Bush government, speaking for the dominant power in NATO and its Kosova occupation force (KFOR), has for the time being ruled out sending its troops into Macedonia. "We'll work with NATO to develop a strategy that will help Macedonia protect herself," said Bush on March 20.

While no government has called for such intervention, several European powers, "including Austria, Greece, and France, suggested KFOR's mandate should be changed" to permit a more active role, according to the *Financial Times*.

German troops are among the NATO forces already stationed in Macedonia as backup for the KFOR occupation of Kosova. A German logistics base close to the scene of the fighting around Tetovo was hit by stray gunfire on March 16. "We are prepared to act resolutely...and with heavy equipment," said German defense minister Rudolf Scharping in response. Four Leopard Two battle tanks, described as "German's most potent battlefield armor" in a CNN report, were moved to the camp from Kosova for "protection."

Russian prime minister Vladimir Putin has called for "decisive political and, if the need comes, military actions by the international community [to] prevent the conflict from spreading over the whole Balkan region." The Russian foreign minister condemned the "extremism" of the Albanian insurgents, while the Ukraine government donated four military transport helicopters to the Macedonian military.



their historic fight for national self-determination in Yugoslavia. That struggle is not confined to Macedonia's borders, but has also involved Albanians in neighboring Kosova and in the region near its border with Serbia.

Albanians constitute around 35 percent

## Meeting discusses Bay of Pigs lessons

Continued from Page 6

ment: the socialist revolution in the United States will take place when the revolutionaries of Castro's generation are no longer in active leadership.

### Learn to do mass work

A proletarian party in the United States can't consider meeting the openings before it today, Barnes continued, without a youth organization that is communist, that reaches out to young workers and farmers in both the United States and Cuba. Building the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party as two independent organizations in one political movement is possible, Barnes said, but only "if we learn to do mass work and follow the natural lines of resistance."

A communist party can also face the challenges and opportunities ahead, Barnes said, "by learning to leverage the work of the volunteers" who produce and make it possible to keep in print the Pathfinder arsenal of revolutionary books. Leveraging that work means effectively organizing to get the books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder out to as wide an audience of working people as possible, both in the United States and around the world. Successfully carrying out this work transforms the possibilities for building a mass revolutionary workers party and leadership out of the struggles and class battles ahead.

Barnes recalled that several years ago a

party supporter from California told him she and dozens of others could organize to digitize the books in order to keep them in print, and that if they didn't, the greater and greater demand for the books could not be met. His first response, he said, was that the proposal was not realistic. However, Barnes continued, "you learn to listen to what people want to do" and "trust each other with the patrimony of your struggle and existence."

Norton Sandler made an appeal for contributions to the \$80,000 Pathfinder Fund, launched the previous week in New York. He explained that money is needed to make possible the expanded production and circulation of books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder.

"Volunteers in Pathfinder's printshop have produced 26 books since the beginning of the year," Sandler noted, "and the reprint volunteers are closing in on their goal of having 50 percent of all the books in digital form by May Day, 2001. All of this costs money." Participants in the meeting pledged a total of \$14,166, of which \$1,830 was collected. Combined with results of the March 11 New York City meeting, the Seattle fund-raising brings the total pledged nationally to \$37,793.

The March 18 meeting was the culmination of a weekend of activities. A March 17 Militant Labor Forum on "The Crisis Facing Working Farmers" drew 115 people. And more than a dozen people participated in a

class led by Bill Kalman, a meat packer from San Francisco, on the "Second Declaration of Havana," a document signed by more than 1 million workers and peasants in Cuba and presented to a mass rally by Fidel Castro in 1962. The document assesses the lessons of the Cuban revolution and calls for continent-wide revolutionary struggle. The class took place at the new Socialist Workers Party headquarters, where volunteers are completing renovation work.

A reception before the Sunday meeting provided an opportunity for people to talk, buy books, and partake in a buffet prepared by Seattle-area supporters. Participants purchased a total of 47 copies of *Playa Girón* by the end of the meeting.

One person decided to join the Young Socialists during the weekend and young people attending the events included a high school student from Los Angeles, a University of Washington student, and two young people from Vancouver, British Columbia. Rose Keurdian, 21, a student at the University of British Columbia who is part of a committee organizing a tour of Cuban youth to Canada, attended all the events. Keurdian said she had come to Seattle for the weekend to learn more and because "I'm very passionate about Cuba. It's the only country I know where communism is working, even under the pressure of the United States, the Helms-Burton and Torricelli acts, and more than 40 years of blockade and propaganda."

# 'Our people showed their determin

## Speech by Che Guevara on worldwide impact of defeat of Washington's invasio

The *Militant* is reprinting here major excerpts from a May 8, 1961, speech by Ernesto Che Guevara.

On April 17, 1961, three weeks prior to Guevara's speech, 1,500 Cuban counter-revolutionaries invaded at the Bay of Pigs on Cuba's southern coast. The mercenaries—organized, trained, armed, and deployed by Washington—aimed to rally the Cuban people the U.S. rulers said were awaiting liberation and, if this proved slower in realization than projected, to establish and hold a beachhead on an isolated stretch of Cuban territory. The invading force would then declare a provisional government to appeal for direct military intervention by the U.S. government and its closest Latin American allies.

Within 72 hours, however, the invaders were routed by Cuba's popular militia, Revolutionary National Police, and Rebel Army. The "people" never showed up, and neither did the invaders' courage. On April 19 the last mercenaries surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach).

Two days prior to the invasion, the U.S.-organized forces had conducted bombing raids from a base in Nicaragua against airfields in Havana, San Antonio de los Baños, and Santiago de Cuba. The following day, at a mass rally called to honor those killed or wounded, Cuban President Fidel Castro publicly pointed to the socialist character of the revolution in Cuba and called the people to arms in defense of the revolution.

With the invasion imminent, central leaders of the revolution were dispatched to various regions to take command of the military forces there. Guevara took command in Pinar del Río on the eastern end of the island; his April 15 call to arms to the people of that province is included in Pathfinder's new book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández.

The speech by Guevara printed below was given at a ceremony three weeks later to mark the anniversary of the death of Antonio Guiteras, a leader of the 1933 revolution that overturned the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado. Guiteras became interior minister in the new government. A leader of the anti-imperialist forces in the revolution, on January 14, 1934, Guiteras announced the takeover of the Cuban Electric Company, a subsidiary of the U.S.-owned Electric Bond and Share Company. The following day he was ousted by a U.S.-backed coup led by Fulgencio Batista. Guiteras was assassinated on May 8, 1935.

Following the expropriation of the Cuban Electric Company in August 1960 by the revolutionary government, the newly nationalized enterprise was named in honor of Guiteras.

The meeting Guevara addressed was held at the enterprise's plant in Havana, sponsored by the revolutionary administration and the electrical workers union. It was attended by electrical workers and their families, as well as members of the Revolutionary National Militias.

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### BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

[In the months directly following the triumph of the revolution in January 1959] we already began to see the seeds of something that later was more clearly spelled out by Fidel, but which at that time appeared to us simply as a struggle of good

against evil. It actually was a struggle of good against evil, but it was also something else—it was the class struggle, the sharp contours of which were beginning to surface in Cuba. It was the struggle of the exploiters, who had lost power, against the exploited, who had taken power and were eliminating the other class. [Applause]

All of you remember the campaign for the agrarian reform, which is fresh in our memory. The owners of large landed estates donated ten thousand head of cattle, and the *Diario de la Marina* warmly supported the reform. Carbó and all the other journalists of that time were head over heels in praise of the agrarian reform. It was going to be a "conscientious" agrarian reform, a "just," "rational" agrarian reform. It would give the peasants marabú land,<sup>1</sup> and the former owners of the marabú would be paid as if it were excellent land of the highest quality.

But that's not how it turned out. It turned out that the agrarian reform not only went after the large landed estates whose owners were Cuban-born, but mercilessly went after the big U.S.-owned plantations as well. And from that day forward, two camps have been clearly marked out: on this side, the people; on the other side, imperialism and all its domestic servants and allies—importers, plantation owners, big industrialists, bankers—all of whom formed a common front.

Here in Havana at one point, there was a fairly well-known man who should have been easy to capture. This was the former minister of public works [appointed in 1959], Manuel Ray. Nevertheless, Ray continued living in Havana for a while, although not for long because he is not all

Sierra Maestra of those who oppose us: Cubanacán and a number of other neighborhoods of the former possessors of all Cuba's wealth. And these layers functioned with a class spirit.

We could not penetrate there, because ours is a popular revolution. Our entire defense apparatus and all our ministers come from other social layers. We did not know [the residents of these neighborhoods]; there were no ties.

And when the struggle between antagonistic social classes becomes a struggle to the death, then it's hard to find traitors. On their side it's even harder, since their political consciousness is very "clear." What is there to betray, inasmuch as their aim is to hold on to everything they have, while the government's aim is to take everything in excess away from them?

Naturally, under these circumstances this man was able to hold out for several months. By then we were seeing an ever-widening breach between the great mass of Cuba's people and this small group of the formerly privileged. Later, with the passage of time, came laws such as the urban reform,<sup>2</sup> which solved this problem in a radical manner—since each one of these gentlemen conspirators had ten, fifteen, twenty houses.

This breach could be seen with the group that invaded [at Playa Girón]: every one of these gentlemen who came had property—10 houses, 27,000 caballerías of land, 2 banks, 5 mines, 70 factories, 10 sugar mills. They had economic power in their hands; they were the owners of the means of production, which in the capitalist system becomes the means of exploiting the people.

That is what they came here for, and all of Cuba's people know it. One group came in search of spoils in the form of the means of production. While the spoils the other group came in search of was to again place themselves at the service of those who had once owned the means of production and to create a new repressive apparatus against the people—these were all the former members of the Batista army who came.

### Class composition of mercenary army

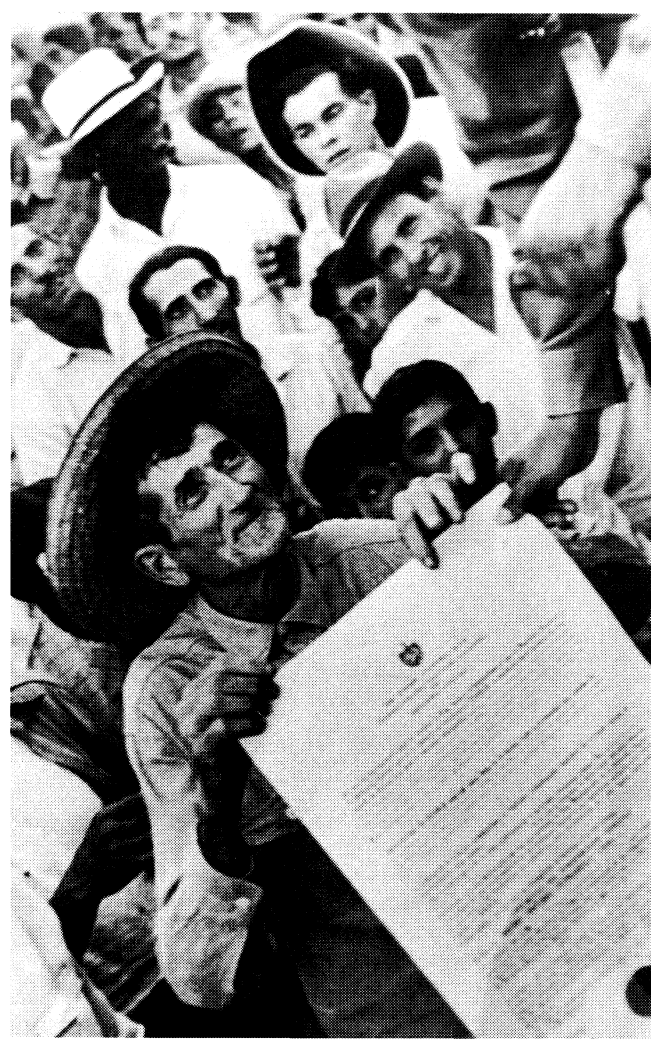
The class composition of this mercenary army is also clear. Almost everyone must have seen on television when Compañero Fidel asked who among them had cut sugarcane. If the ministers of our government had been captured, every one of us could have raised our hand. [Applause] I'm speaking strictly hypothetically in saying we might have been captured, since we believe in always fighting to the last drop of blood, fighting to the death. [Applause]

But among them all, only one young man raised his hand. He was a poor man, who, due to one or another of the many big problems here in Cuba, ended up in the United States. Perhaps, for the best of reasons, he was motivated by hunger. Or maybe by the notion of being a commander in the new army, or of getting some cushy job—or becoming more than a commander, since we've limited it to commander but they can go up to five-star general, right? But something like that motivated him to come.

All the others, in a fit of sincerity, didn't

<sup>1</sup>Marabú is a dense, thorny shrub that grows wild in Cuba.

<sup>2</sup>The urban reform law, enacted October 13, 1960, nationalized housing and guaranteed Cuban working people the right to their dwellings.



Granma  
Cuban farmers receive title to land after passage of agrarian reform law. Guevara said these moves by the new revolutionary government "not only went after the large landed estates whose owners were Cuban-born, but mercilessly went after the big U.S.-owned plantations as well."



Granma  
September 1960 demonstration in Havana supporting nationalization of U.S. banks. Sign says, "Blow for blow: For two planes, 20 Yankee banks."

that courageous. We knew him well since he had been with the Civic Resistance Movement during Batista's time, and had been well-rewarded for all his efforts. At the same time, he had helped in some ways, back when he thought the revolution would simply amount to a change of faces.

So he lived for a time in post-revolutionary Havana. And after having been removed from office and gone underground as an agent for a specific group, he could not be located. Why not? Because of the class struggle once again.

He functioned, as Fidel put it, in the

raise their hands. They don't know what a canefield is. They don't know what hunger is. They don't know the desperation of a peasant, shunted off to a *guardarraya*,<sup>3</sup> with almost nothing to give your children to eat, with children who die of all kinds of diseases that modern science could be used to save them from, with barely a few pennies, with no one to turn to. They don't know what it means to be an unemployed worker, in the same desperate situation in some barrio like Las Yaguas, in those terrible barrios surrounding the cities.

What they know of the people comes from a social circle—always sterile, occasionally with good intentions, arrogant and scornful of those who are from the people—and from certain books. Among them were philosophy professors, writers, some with facile pens, others aspiring to be serious writers. There were many sons of ranchers, industrialists, and bankers—many with an acute class consciousness who knew very well what they came here to get.

It is for this reason that the two polar extremes of this revolution have become so clear. Conditions in Cuba are becoming clearer and are progressing so rapidly, however, that not only have the two extremes become very clear—on one side the people, immense, powerful; on the other side, a small group of exploiters. It also became very clear that the people were advancing on the positions of the exploiters and gradually eliminating them, to the point that today they have become barely a caricature of a force.

### What a social revolution is

Today the forces of reaction have no strength beyond what comes from a misunderstanding of what a social revolution is and what it creates, giving rise to certain fears on the part of classes that in political economy are called petty bourgeois, to use a social term. And they also have some strength among remnants of a layer of ex-

<sup>3</sup>*Guardarrayas* were tracts of land located between canefields or on the edge of landed estates. During the months of unemployment between sugar harvests—known as the "dead time"—many agricultural workers stayed in shacks on these lands trying to survive.



# ation to fight'

## on of Cuba at Bay of Pigs in 1961

exploiters still in Cuba—perhaps to fight desperately to recover their former existence, or perhaps to continue living in their homeland since they continue to have interests here. All the rest of the exploiters have disappeared.

Therefore, the sole task of the people of Cuba is to continue advancing, to eliminate these contradictions. The task is to continue creating the new social conditions in order to transform each and every person into someone who earns his bread from his work—let's leave aside his sweat, but with his work. We should try to make the work as easy, as humane, as interesting as possible—with technical improvements to put machines to work for people; with culture, with sports transformed into an educator of the masses, trying to make the world into the real earthly paradise we all dream of. Of course, for everyone to be part of this paradise, it is necessary to eliminate from all parts of the world the exploiting layers, who are the aggressors. [Applause]

And they know this very well. They know that every country that frees itself is not an isolated battle lost. It's a battle lost that is part of a war to the death, where imperialism's field of action becomes smaller and smaller.

That's why they are so aggressive.

That's why every time they lose a pawn they used to move at their fancy, and a people becomes free, they throw their whole repressive apparatus at it.

That's why a short time ago, a democracy even newer than ours—that of the Congo—was brutally trampled and Patrice Lumumba was assassinated.<sup>4</sup>

They know that no manifestation of the people's freedom, or of the people's attainment of their great aspiration to control the means of production—which means controlling the wealth, which ultimately means controlling the state apparatus and which means the people's self-determination—no such manifestation can be good for the imperial powers.

So imperialism immediately tries to annul it. But of course the world goes on, and its development toward more just social systems is clear.

The people of all countries understand more clearly every day the need to throw off the imperial power, so ignominious, in addition to the power of its local servants. But even more: the people see more clearly every day the possibility of doing so. They see tangibly that there are ways of doing so.

And they see something else that is new in Latin America and in all the oppressed countries of the world—something of which Cuba is a living example. They see that when a country achieves its sovereignty, and an entire people rises up to show imperialism that it is capable of preserving its sovereignty even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices, not only does the effective solidarity of all the peoples of the world come to its side, but so too does the solidarity—including military—of the most just and mighty powers of the world. [Applause]

And this is very important, compañeros. Not so much for us; we passed our test. We were dug in, defenseless but armed with our courage and our convictions, to oppose imperialist aggression.

Nevertheless, at that moment, when we needed it most, although we did not ask for it, we were given just aid—aid we needed, aid that stayed imperialism's hand for a time. That was last year. Since then there have been many proofs that this position of the socialist world was not mere show. And there are clearer and clearer demonstrations that the relationship of forces is shifting rapidly and consistently in favor of all the peace- and freedom-loving peoples.

<sup>4</sup>In January 1961 Patrice Lumumba, central leader of the Congo's independence movement, was murdered by imperialist-backed forces loyal to rightist figure Moïse Tshombe. Standing aside while Lumumba was deposed and arrested were United Nations troops he had invited in to halt mercenary attacks backed by Belgium.

It is important for us to know this. We are very grateful. We are more confident, more certain of victory, more enthusiastic. We can dedicate ourselves more calmly to our work. We don't have to think with such a heavy load bearing down on our subconscious—with the fear that everything we do tomorrow would be destroyed, and destroyed in vain, because neither we nor a social system like ours would remain to rebuild from the ruins.

Today we know this is impossible—that if tomorrow they destroy what we build today; that if tomorrow we disappear in the maelstrom of a new war, the social system we are helping to implant will remain, to raise up again what was built, and to better create this social system. [Applause]

### Example of Cuban revolution

In addition to us, however, there are many peoples on the earth. And there are more peoples on the earth who are in the sad, pitiful state we were in before 1959 than there are those like ourselves who have proudly achieved a completely sovereign nation. Here in Latin America there are many such peoples.

Every day some form of struggle breaks out against the government of some country of Latin America. And always we saw the same thing. We saw struggles that were limited, timid, cautious; struggles to take a baby step, and, aware of one's weakness, to ensure that this step would be a conquest that could not be snatched away the next day.

Nevertheless, the Cuban revolution served not only as an example but also as a catalyst for all the progressive forces of Latin America. In the name of Cuba, for the first time in many years, forces that



Protests in Brazil in April 1961 against U.S.-organized invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. "The Cuban Revolution served not only as an example but also as a catalyst for all the progressive forces of Latin America," stated Guevara.

wanted the same thing politically but differed on tactics and had thus become great enemies thanks to imperialist-sponsored discord, are uniting for big demonstrations, to conduct great struggles throughout Latin America in defense of our revolution.

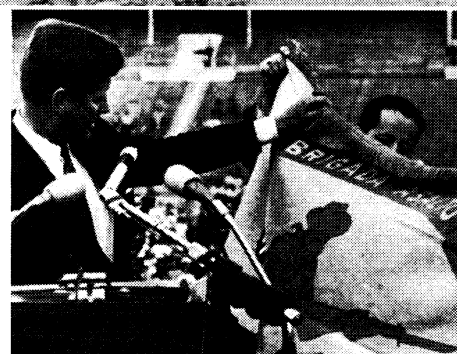
We have not only been an example; we have also been a catalyst.

We also see how every day struggles in Latin America are more inflamed, more violent, and more audacious, because the masses now know what is possible. They know that through sustained struggle, full of sacrifices, demanding enormous heroism, even requiring years, that through all this they can achieve victory. And the masses fight harder and harder to demand what belongs to them.

Up until recently we were the example of what a people could do against imperialism's local servants, against the



Above, U.S.-backed Cuban mercenaries surrendering during April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Right, President John F. Kennedy accepts battle flag of mercenary force. In the invading army, "everyone one of these gentlemen who came had property—10 houses, 27 caballerías of land, 2 banks, 5 mines, 70 factories, and 10 sugar mills," said Guevara. They "came in search of spoils in the form of the means of production" and "to create a new repressive apparatus against the people."



lackeys of imperialism such as Batista or Trujillo, those who murdered, who shackled the people for their own benefit, but fundamentally to the benefit of imperialism. To get a penny for themselves they gave a dollar, or more, to imperialism! The peoples could see from Cuba's action that it was possible to struggle against these local servants. And this is what produced the ever-rising mass struggle.

The peoples then began to ask themselves again, or to raise another question that has come up ever since Guatemala:<sup>5</sup>

And the U.S. newspapers expended torrents of ink to explain that the price of peaceful coexistence—as demanded by the premier of the Soviet Union and all the other socialist countries—had to be paid by the Soviet Union. And that the price of this coexistence—that is, the price of peace—was Cuba.

They maneuvered, they spread lies throughout Latin America. What's more, even in Cuba they spread the idea among those minds susceptible to imperialist propaganda that Cuba was going to be a bargaining chip in a deal between the two great opposing powers in the world.

We knew very well that this could not be, but not everyone knew it. And in Latin America people knew very little.

When this latest imperialist attempt [at the Bay of Pigs] was unleashed, we all know the torrent of lies that rained down—that I had shot myself, that I had failed as a communist, that everything was destroyed; that Fidel, I think it was, had taken asylum, or had been wounded in aerial combat; that Raúl, for his part, was dead; and finally that troops were advancing and had taken the "port" of Bayamo, had crossed Cuba. In short, that everything was a disaster.

A Mexican compañero working here, who happened to be in Mexico during those days, told us how alone he felt at that time. All his friends took their distance from him. And he recalled—because he is an old friend of the Cuban Revolution—what a difference it was from January 1, 1959, when he was presented with bottles of liquor, and mariachi bands came to play music, celebrating the victory. And now no one was at his side.

All the world—even our great friends, our good-faith defenders, our defenders to the death—believed that Cuba was in a very difficult position and on the brink of defeat.

Among all the peoples of Latin America it was the same. The protests were enormous; the popular masses went out into the streets. But many believed that a beautiful Latin American dream was being ended. That we were at the beginning of another sad stage, where imperialism would once again exert all its power, its conqueror's arrogance, all the power it can unleash against the peoples, as it had done in the destruction of Guatemala.

### Impact of victory

In barely 72 hours the hopes of the people were reawakened, and imperialism lost one of its battles with the most serious consequences in the entire world. We are heartened to say in the entire world, not just in Latin America.

We do so not to exaggerate what the battle was, because I tell you in all sincerity, although it angers them when we say so, it was nothing more than a thousand or

Continued on Page 14

## The class struggle and the emancipation of women

The following is an excerpt from "The revolution cannot triumph without the emancipation of women," published in *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution, 1983-87*. Sankara was the president of the popular revolutionary government established in 1983 in the West African country of Burkina Faso. He was assassinated in a counterrevolutionary military coup four years later. The occasion of this speech was a May 8, 1987, meeting in the capital of Ouagadougou of thousands of women from throughout the country held to celebrate International Women's Day. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY THOMAS SANKARA

Posing the question of women in Burkina society today means posing the abolition of the system of slavery to which they have been subjected for millennia. The first step is to try to understand how this system works, to grasp its real nature in all its subtlety, in order then to work out a line of action that can lead to women's total emancipation.

In other words, in order to win this battle that men and women have in common, we must be familiar with all aspects of the woman question on a world scale and here in Burkina. We must understand how the struggle of the Burkinabe woman is part of a worldwide struggle of all women and,

beyond that, part of the struggle for the full rehabilitation of our continent. Thus, women's emancipation is at the heart of the question of humanity itself, here and everywhere. The question is thus universal in character.

### 'Part of general system of exploitation'

We undoubtedly owe it to dialectical materialism for having shed the greatest light on the problem of the conditions women face, allowing us to understand the exploitation of women as part of a general system of exploitation.

Dialectical materialism defines human society not as a natural, unchangeable fact, but as something working on nature. Hu-

mankind does not submit passively to the power of nature. It takes control over this power. This process is not an internal or subjective one. It takes place objectively in practice, once women cease to be viewed as mere sexual beings and we look beyond their biological functions and become conscious of their weight as an active social force.

What is more, woman's consciousness of herself is not only a product of her sexuality. It reflects her position as determined by the economic structure of society, which in turn expresses the level reached by humankind in technological development and relations between classes. The importance of dialectical materialism lies in having gone beyond essential biological limits and simplistic theories about our being slaves to nature and having laid out the facts in their social and economic context.

From the first beginnings of human history, man's mastering of nature has never been accomplished with his bare hands alone. The hand with the opposable thumb reaches out for the tool, which increases the hand's power. It was thus not physical attributes alone—musculature or the capacity to give birth, for example—that determined the unequal status of men and women. Nor was it technological progress as such that institutionalized this inequality. In certain cases, in certain parts of the globe, women were able to eliminate the physical difference that separated them from men.

It was rather the transition from one form of society to another that served to institutionalize women's inequality. This inequality was produced by our own minds and intelligence in order to develop a concrete form of domination and exploitation. The social function and role to which women have been relegated ever since is a living reflection of this fact. Today, her childbearing functions and the social obligation to conform to models of elegance determined by men prevent any woman who might want to from developing a so-called male musculature.

For millennia, from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age, relations between the sexes were, in the opinion of the most skilled paleontologists, positive and complementary in character. So it was for eight millennia! As Frederick Engels explained to us, relations were based on collaboration and interaction, in contrast to the patriarchy, where women's exclusion was a generalized characteristic of the epoch. Engels not only traced the evolution of technology but also of the historic enslavement of women, which occurred with the appearance of private property, when one mode of production gave way to another, and when one form of social organization replaced another....

Humankind first knew slavery with the advent of private property. Man, master of his slaves and of the land, became in addition the woman's master. This was the historic defeat of the female sex. It came about with the upheaval in the division of labor and as a result of new modes of production and a revolution in the means of production. In this way, paternal right replaced maternal right. Property was now handed down from father to son, rather than as before from the woman to her clan. The patriarchal family made its appearance, founded on the sole and personal property of the father, who had become head of the family. Within this family the woman was oppressed....

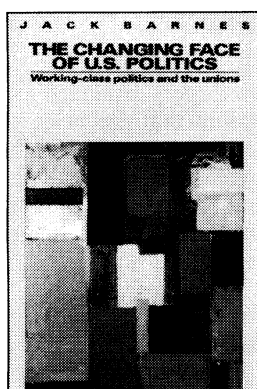
Inequality can be done away with only by establishing a new society, where men and women will enjoy equal rights, resulting from an upheaval in the means of production and in all social relations. Thus, the status of women will improve only with the elimination of the system that exploits them....

Her status overturned by private property, banished from her very self, relegated to the role of child raiser and servant, written out of history by philosophy (Aristotle, Pythagoras, and others) and the most entrenched religions, stripped of all worth by mythology, woman shared the lot of a slave, who in slave society was nothing more than a beast of burden with a human face.

So it is not surprising that in its phase of conquest the capitalist system, for which human beings are just so many numbers, should be the economic system that has exploited women the most brazenly and with the most sophistication.

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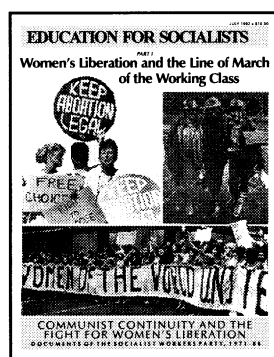
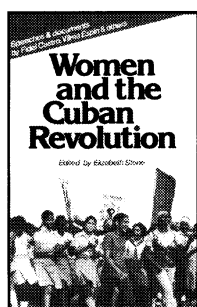
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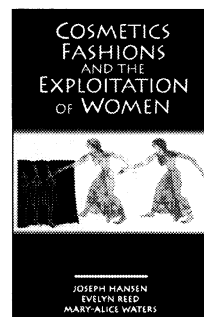
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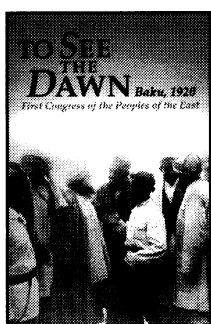


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# UNITE strikers stand firm in Los Angeles

Continued from front page

Toxqui echoed her sentiment, saying, "We are fighting and are not going to give up until we get justice."

Esperanza Lopez, who has worked as a sewing machine operator at Hollander for 10 years, said, "We're asking for what's just: higher wages and pensions. Why should the company give it to [salaried employees] and not us?" In addition to increased wages, workers are demanding a pension plan from the company, a benefit received by management and office personnel.

"As a young person I know we have to fight for a better future," said Maria Palacios, a young Salvadoran. "This strike is for all workers, not just us."

In a March 14 press release, UNITE reported that the company's plant in Georgia is on strike after union members from Los Angeles set up picket lines there. Strikers in Los Angeles also report slowdowns at Hollander plants in Chicago and Dallas.

Since March 8 when the strike began, large numbers of pickets have filled the sidewalks in front of the plants here, holding signs and chanting in Spanish and English for "respect," "dignity," and a pension plan and other benefits. The union members have been able to keep production to a minimum, despite company efforts to hire large numbers of scabs.

Strikers at the Boyle Avenue plant, the larger of the two, estimate that 20-25 union members have crossed the picket lines but that none have crossed at the Seville Avenue plant six blocks away.

The biggest challenge is the bosses' push to use temporary-agency workers contracted from Labor Ready, which organizes vans

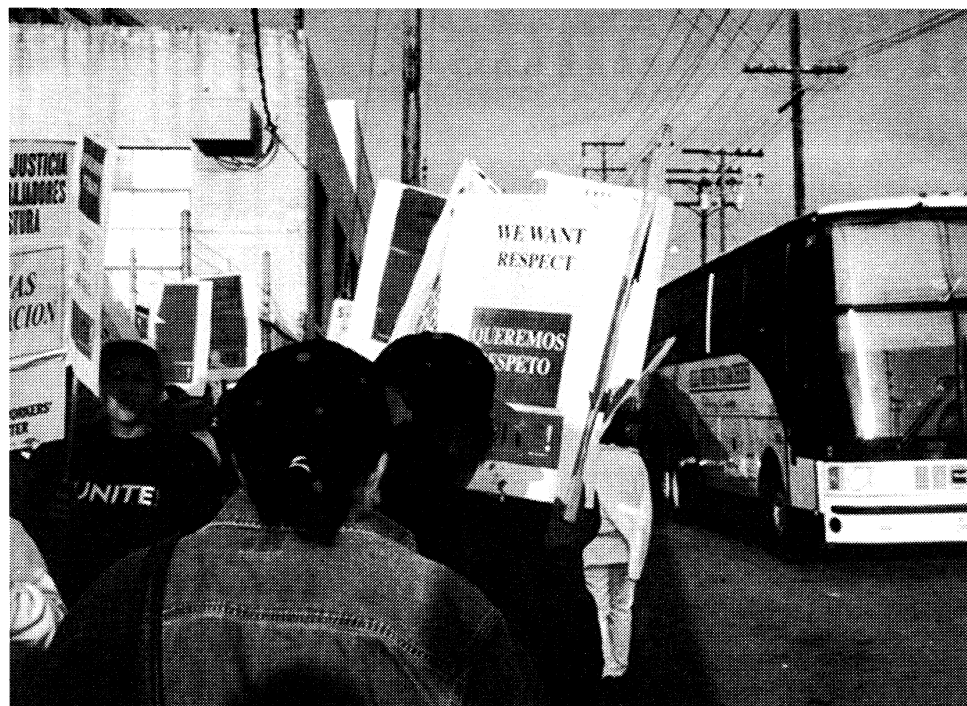
and buses to bring workers to the plants. A few workers hired by the temporary agency, arriving at the job on their own, have been convinced to leave. Most say they were not told there was a strike by the agency. Others have gone into work only to leave after a couple of hours.

Facing this challenge from the company, strikers decided to go to the agency office to let applicants know about the walkout. The union produced a flyer in English and Spanish that says, "We are here today to make sure you hear the truth about the work you are being asked to perform at Hollander Home Fashions today. We understand that you have been informed that you will be working at a new or recently opened factory today. The truth is that if you are assigned to work at Hollander Home Fashions, you are being asked to work as a strikebreaker."

Dora Arriaza, a UNITE organizer who visited the Labor Ready offices, told the *Militant* that Labor Ready "is telling temps that Hollander pays regular workers \$12.50 per hour and pays temps \$8 per hour. After we explained our situation to Labor Ready officials they told us that it is not their problem and that they have nothing to do with labor disputes."

Ignacio Abunis, who has worked at Hollander for five years, said, "The truth is many of us make only minimum wage, while others just earn \$6 or \$7 an hour. And the company wants us to go lower and lower." For example, he said that a few workers at each plant who were able to make higher pay on piece rate recently had their wages cut.

In response to these union actions, the company deployed guards from Huff Master Crisis Management with pepper spray



Militant/Elizabeth Lariscy

**Garment strikers confront bus with workers from temporary agency. Workers have organized a series of actions to push back company attempts to recruit scabs.**

canisters and video cameras at both plants March 19.

The following day strikers at the Boyle Street plant refused to open the driveway and to allow a busload of temporary workers to pass. Unionists on the picket line spoke to the agency workers through a megaphone, asking them to honor the strike. After a 20-minute standoff, cops moved in and pushed the strikers back, opening the line to allow the bus to pass.

Cops read a restraining order to union representatives at the Seville plant on the same day, limiting the number of pickets in the driveways to five and the total on the line to 75. Later in the morning Raquel Garcia, who has worked in the plant for 27 years, was arrested along with a UNITE organizer. "I was trying to stop a worker

from crossing," Garcia said later. "At that point, a security officer came out, began yelling at me, pushed me away, and told me to leave right now. The bosses told the police that I was harassing the security officer and so they arrested me."

A week earlier strikers held their ground against several cops who attempted to allow cars into the plant. The cops backed off, but later arrested 14 strikers after they linked their arms to defend the line. They were held for part of the day and were back on the line soon after. On March 17, a striker's foot was run over by a scab's car, requiring him to be taken to the hospital.

*Elizabeth Lariscy is a garment worker in Los Angeles. Francisco Cipriano contributed to the article.*

# U.S. rulers worried about recession in Japan

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As Washington acknowledges an economic slowdown in the United States, ruling-class figures are also expressing growing worries over the impact of continuing economic stagnation in Japan. "The downturn here feeds the pessimism in Japan," an unnamed Bush administration official told the *New York Times*. "And the faster Japan drops, the more it undermines confidence here." Several White House officials say this "scary dynamic" could exacerbate economic problems in both countries and spread around the globe.

Japanese prime minister Yoshiro Mori met in Washington with U.S. president George Bush March 19 where the two released a joint statement declaring that Tokyo would "promote vigorously structural and regulatory reform to revitalize the Japanese economy." Japan is the world's second largest economy after the United States and together the two countries account for 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product.

As Mori met with Bush, the Bank of Japan announced it effectively lowered short-term interest rates to zero and had adopted measures to expand the money supply to help stimulate the economy. Bank officials said the move was in response to the slowing global economy and "pervasive deflation that is eroding prices, wages, and asset values here," in the words of the *New York Times*, and will remain in effect until the consumer price index stops falling for a period of time.

Bush pressed Mori not to take advantage of a weaker yen to get the economy going by boosting exports to the United States, a move that would heighten competition and undercut U.S. businesses at home. An senior administration official said Bush "emphasized, and the two leaders agreed, that the answer is strong domestic growth brought about by deep, structural reform." Japanese officials said two hours later they had made no such deal, but added, "We are not aiming at export-led growth."

Several articles in the bourgeois media reporting on the recent sharp drop on the U.S. stock exchanges pointed to Japan's economic woes as one of the factors causing jitters among Wall Street investors. It was the "deepening malaise in Japan" that helped to "darken the outlook on Wall Street," the *International Herald Tribune* stated March 15 after the Dow Jones industrial average fell

below 10,000—a 15 percent drop from its record high in January 2000.

Japanese firms and institutions own some \$350 billion worth of U.S. Treasury bonds, nearly 25 percent of all such holdings outside of the United States. Japanese enterprises also own about \$150 billion in direct investments in the United States as well as hundreds of billions of dollars worth of other U.S. stocks and bonds. With the U.S. economy "headed for recession, European growth is slowing," wrote Jeffrey Garten, dean of the Yale School of Management. "Further deterioration of the Japanese economy could finally have a serious effect."

## Finances 'on the verge of catastrophe'

Teetering on the edge of another economic slump, Japan has never recovered from previous recessions in 1997 and 1998. After a March 13 cabinet meeting Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa said, "It's obvious the economy is showing trends of deflation." One week earlier the finance minister stated that the country's finances are "on the verge of catastrophe."

Some of the factors highlighting the country's dismal economic condition include:

- The Cabinet Office releasing a report March 16 declaring the economy in a state of deflation. The country is in the midst of the worst downturn since World War II, after recently recovering from a decade-long slump, the report said.
- The jobless rate is at a record postwar high of 4.9 percent.
- The banking system is choking on bad debts that total a staggering \$531 billion.
- The Nikkei Stock average closed March 12 at 12,171.37, its lowest since April 1985.

The inability to resolve the economic malaise underlies the political crisis and scandals that have marked the Japanese government for the past 10 years. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed the country since the mid-1950s, has become a symbol of rudderless leadership full of corruption, bureaucratic paralysis, and patronage. In the face of the country's economic problems Mori announced plans to step down March 10 after being in office just 11 months. He is Japan's 10th prime minister in 12 years, and there appears to be no rush by anyone to become number 11.

On March 15, Mori announced the formation of a cabinet-level task force that

would work out a plan for addressing the crisis. Japan's capitalist rulers have been debating how to shrink excess manufacturing capacity, close down unprofitable banks, lay off massive numbers of workers, and eliminate public works projects for which it has spent \$1 trillion since 1992.

The government and employers have so far been cautious about launching an assault on working people along the lines that their U.S. rivals carried out in the 1990s. Although it would increase their profit margins, the Japanese rulers fear such moves could spark broad working-class resistance. "Bringing in completely American-type principles of competition would take all air out of the employees" of Japanese companies, warned senior LDP legislator Shizuka Kamei.

Several Japanese companies have responded to intensified price competition by closing plants in Japan and building up manufacturing bases in other Asian nations as a way to increase productivity and reduce labor costs. Nissan Motor Co., Mazda Motor Corp., and Mitsubishi Motors Corp. have each announced plans to shut down assembly plants and factories. Executives at Honda Motor Co. are considering importing motorcycles from Honda plants in other Asian countries, which reportedly would allow the company to slash sticker prices on some bike models by 30 percent. "Rival Japanese motorcycle makers...fear they may have to cut jobs in Japan and move production overseas to stay competitive," the *Wall Street Journal* reported March 16.

## Piles of bad loans

Japanese officials are divided over what to do about the country's banks, which are sitting on piles of bad loans. One scheme considered by government officials involves establishing a government agency to buy up the "nonperforming loans." The international ratings agency Fitch announced March 14 it had placed 19 Japanese banks on "rating watch negative." Among them are Japan's largest, including the Bank of Tokyo, Mitsubishi, Fuji Bank, Sumitomo Bank, and Sanwa Bank. A collapse of some of Japan's large banks would rock world financial markets if they defaulted on obligations to foreign banks.

Much of Japan's bad loans were made during the 1980s when overvalued land was offered as collateral for loans. In the early

1990s the real estate bubble collapsed and land values dropped sharply. Major banks approached bankruptcy and several financial institutions, including Yamaichi Securities, went belly-up. Bank of Japan's governor, Masaru Hayami, and other government figures have been pressing for Japan's banks to write off bad loans.

Imperialist investors around the world are worried about the long-term political and economic turmoil in Japan. Finance ministers from countries in the European Union said at a March 12 meeting in Brussels that they were concerned about the health of Japan's financial system.

Bourgeois figures in the United States have differed over how to press Tokyo on measures needed to resolve its economic crisis. The Bush administration "hasn't publicly lectured the Japanese as the Clinton brain trust was wont to do," opined the editors of the *Wall Street Journal*. The paper's editors called for Tokyo to slash government spending on social programs and urged banks to write off bad loans, force non-profitable companies into bankruptcy, and dismiss "high risk borrowers." "So far," noted *Business Week*, the LDP government "hasn't had the stomach" for pushing through these "structural reforms."

In the 1990s the booming U.S. economy, which absorbed 30 percent of the world's total economic output, offset the economic crisis in Asia and other parts of the world. The U.S. bosses also increased their profits rates through productivity increases squeezed from the blood and bones of U.S. workers.

With more economic indicators showing signs of a slowdown in the U.S. economy, that buffer is not available this time around. According to the Associated Press, output at U.S. factories, mines, and utilities dropped by 0.6 percent in February—a figure twice as large as estimated by the Federal Reserve Board. Also the amount of utilized operating capacity fell from 80.1 to 79.4 percent in February as companies cut back because of weaker demand.

While described as a "temporary slowdown," U.S. investors are nervous that the profit squeeze affecting technology companies is only beginning to spread. "A lot of things that are being said in this country now were being said in Japan 10 years ago," said Richard Koo, chief economist of Nomura Research Institute in Japan.

# Thousands protest austerity in Argentina

Continued from front page  
try to block the cuts."

Immediately after the austerity package was announced protests began to erupt around the country. Hundreds of jobless workers threw up roadblocks around Buenos Aires, the capital, as university students staged sit-ins and joined in blocking traffic on major thoroughfares. The major trade union federations called for a general strike March 21. Opposition parties distanced themselves from the plan, stating they would not join a national unity government as long as this proposed package was on the table.

In response to the growing opposition both inside and outside the government, López resigned March 19. He was replaced by Domingo Cavallo, who had served as economy minister in the early 1990s in the administration of former Peronist president Carlos Menem. Cavallo vowed to institute his own cutback plan, but without elaborating much on the details.

Despite the resignation, some 25,000 people rallied in Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires and the country's largest teachers union began a 48-hour strike, closing schools throughout the country. The union representing university staff joined the walk-out. The university federation of Buenos Aires said the 13 schools in the system had been peacefully occupied and public classes were held in the streets to protest the cuts. A national education march has been called for March 28.

The three main labor groups had called for a general strike March 21. Officials from the General Labor Confederation (CGT), however, decided not to participate after meeting with Cavallo, who promised that the measures announced by former economy minister Murphy would not be applied. The dissident CGT and the Argentine Workers Congress (CTA), however, went ahead with the action, which shut down transportation throughout the capital city. A 36-hour national strike called by the labor federations is still set to occur April 5-6.

Protests occurred throughout the coun-



Protests occurred throughout Argentina in mid-March such as this in pictured above in La Plata, south of Buenos Aires. Roadblocks went up in and around the capital.

try. According to a March 21 article in the *Buenos Aires Herald*, pensioners and unemployed workers set up roadblocks in the Greater Buenos Aires district of Avellaneda. Oil workers blocked roads outside Comodoro Rivadavia, in the province of Chubut, and tobacco growers and workers blocked roads in Salta. Unemployed workers also blocked roads in Mar del Plata.

## Large and combative working class

Argentina has the third largest economy in Latin America and a working class that is one of the biggest and most combative in Latin America. Along with farmers they have organized numerous protest actions against the drive by the capitalist rulers to reduce their social wage over the past several years. This has included three national strikes over the past 15 months.

The U.S. rulers are deeply worried about the spreading effects of the political and economic crisis in Argentina. Deepening concerns by capitalist investors about the

Argentine economy have sent stock markets throughout Latin America falling over the past several weeks. Brazil's currency, the real, plunged to its lowest level in two years.

A March 19 *Financial Times* article on Argentina commented, "The virtual collapse...of the governing alliance has increased the danger that Latin America's third biggest economy is about to enter a new and more dangerous period of turmoil."

Pointing to the larger global implications of developments in Argentina for the imperialist rulers, the British financial daily also pointed out, "After Turkey's devaluation last month markets have focused their attention on Argentina. Because of the large amount of debt outstanding, international financial officials worry that a potential default or devaluation could affect countries around the globe."

Argentine president de la Rúa is now calling on all Argentine political parties to form a national unity government. In a nationwide televised address March 19, he said

he will ask Congress to grant him "superpowers" to tackle the current "public emergency." The president stated, as reported by the *Buenos Aires Herald*, "There is no more margin to think about political interests. We are going through a situation of emergency. We can't waste time."

De la Rúa, who is in the process of reshuffling his coalition government for the third time in his 15 months in office, had earlier stated his intention to bypass Congress and implement the proposed austerity measures by presidential decree.

Cavallo, who the *Wall Street Journal* describes as "the country's economic white knight," led the move in 1991 to peg Argentina's currency, the peso, on a one-to-one basis with the dollar. He is currently the leader of a small conservative party, the Action for the Republic.

In one of his first pronouncements as economy minister, Cavallo vowed to boost the government's projected budget cuts for this year from \$2 billion to \$3 billion by, he said, combating "excessive bureaucracy, corruption, tax evasion, and waste." Cavallo is seeking backing from the Peronist Party for the new national unity government, though so far the Peronists are refusing to take part.

The Argentine economy has been mired in recession for the past 32 months. Thirty percent of the population lives below the government-designated poverty level, and the country is saddled with a \$123 billion foreign debt, owed to U.S. banks and other financial institutions. Last year this debt accounted for 54 percent of the country's gross domestic product, up from 41 percent in 1996.

Last December, in a move aimed at ensuring that interest payments on the debt keep flowing into the imperialist coffers, the IMF granted a \$40 billion "bailout" loan and demanded the regime impose austerity measures as a condition for receiving the funds. The government's latest announced measures are simply aimed at meeting this condition.

Speaking for the wealthy imperialist investors who see the massive debts of semicolonial countries like Argentina as a lucrative asset enabling them to transfer vast wealth out of the country and into their own coffers, an article in the *Financial Times* stated, "Analysts say failure to implement the cuts would bring the country a step closer to a possible debt default, a prospect that worries other emerging markets, because Argentina's debt makes up nearly a quarter of the asset class."

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**Switching to energy?**—The February 28 clipping was small enough to get buried in our file. Hospitals nationwide are rationing tetanus



Harry Ring

shots for adults. So far, it said, there's still enough for children's vaccines, but the supply bears watching. Sup-

plies were already tight when in January Wyeth Ayerst Laboratories abruptly halted production. A spokesman said tersely that it was a "business decision."

**Have a happy April 15**—From 1989 to 1998, the top 1 percent of taxpaying moneybags saw their income swell eight times faster than the bottom 90 percent of taxpayers. Meanwhile the taxes paid by the rich continue to shrink.

**Try gas masks**—"LOS ANGELES—Air inside the big yellow buses used to shuttle children to and

from school can contain up to 8.5 times more diesel exhaust than people typically breathe in smoggy California.

**They do need training, and/or glasses**—A German trainee fighter plane crew fired seven rounds from a cannon before they realized they had mistaken a Dutch air force control tower for their practice target. Apparently they didn't see well enough to hit their "target" and no one was hurt.

**Speak sister**—In London, Olive Byrne, 65, lay on a gurney in the

corridor of a hospital emergency and accident ward for 98 hours. She was hustled into a ward the night before an inspection tour by the health minister. Byrne charged "a massive cover-up." Patients were being "bundled into wards" to keep the corridors clear.

**Imprecise headline, bum news**—From the *Times* of London headline—"Civilians to interview police suspects"—we thought civilians were going to start questioning cops. Nope. In a pilot project, the Wiltshire police are recruiting members of the public to interview

people suspected of crimes. This, they say, will give the cops more time on the beat.

**No 'zero tolerance' here**—There was the case of the Arkansas boy, 8, who was suspended for three days for violating the school's "zero tolerance" code. He had pointed a lunchtime chicken leg at the teacher and said, "Pow, pow." Then we read that in 1999 drug companies had sold 20.5 million pounds of antibiotics for use on poultry, cattle, etc. They claimed that most of it was to prevent or treat disease, not to enhance growth.

## Capitalism has entered long-term deflationary crisis

Printed below is an excerpt from "So Far from God, So Close to Orange County: The Deflationary Drag of Finance Capital," published in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The world capitalist economy has entered a long-term deflationary crisis, a contraction that cannot be fundamentally reversed by the ups and downs of the business cycle. With their profit rates under long-term pressure, the capitalists are in their "lean and mean" period, their "just-on-time" period, their "downsizing," "computerizing," and "de-layering" period. They are laying off workers and other employees, speeding up production, and raking in short-term cash in the bargain.

But the one thing the capitalists are not doing, and are incapable of doing, is expanding productive capacity to anywhere near the degree they need to fuel another gigantic boom, set industrial profit rates on a long-

term upward course, and accelerate capital accumulation. Even as capitalists temporarily boost their returns by cutting costs and taking a bigger slice of market share away from their rivals, the long-run profit expectations of capital are such that they are still not investing in new plant and equipment that draws more and more workers into expanded production.

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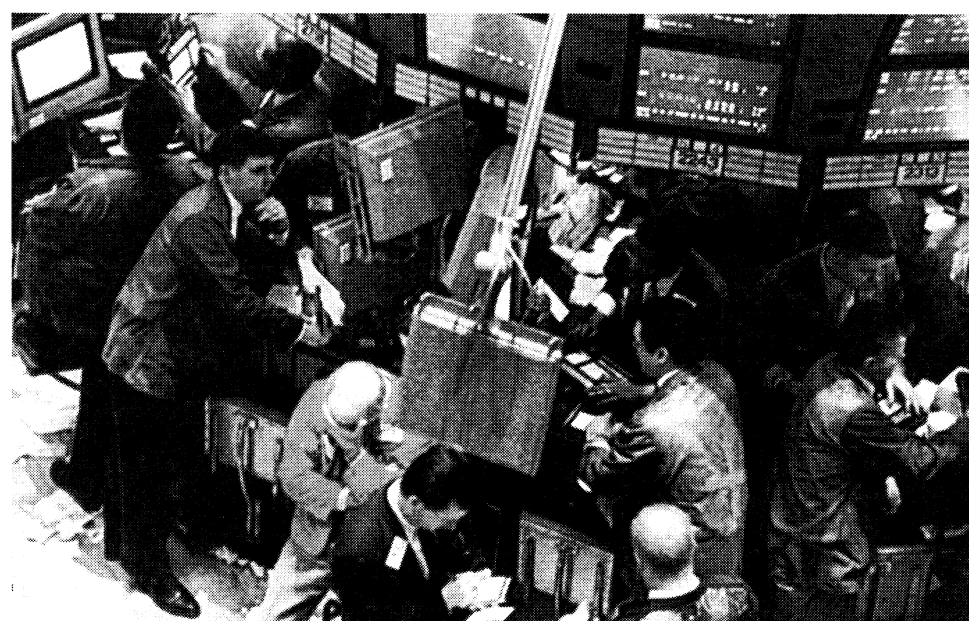
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Brokers on the floor of New York Stock Exchange as all three stock indexes went down more than 6 percent for week ending March 16. The Dow Jones had its worst decline since October 1989. "The world's propertied families," Barnes wrote, "have been fighting among themselves more and more to use credit to corner a bigger cut of the surplus value they collectively squeeze from working people. They have been blowing up great balloons of debt.... They have no way of knowing which balloon will go next."

Roach reports in a later article that computer hardware accounted for 57 percent of the growth in capital spending from 1994 to 1997. But the vast majority of such spending goes to replace obsolete equipment, not expand capacity. With the slowdown in the U.S. capitalist economy in late 1998, capital investment *excluding computers* was in fact declining.

<sup>2</sup>"One of the consequences of corporate restructuring," Wall Street economist Edward Yardeni told the *Barron's* financial weekly in March 1996, "has been to generate an enormous amount of corporate cash flow.... [Companies]

have hesitated to build new plant and equipment. Instead, they are to a certain extent buying their competitors—and by doing so they are basically buying back stock." In the third quarter of 1998, according to U.S. government figures, the withdrawal of shares from the market via buybacks and corporate mergers and acquisitions reached record levels, for a net shrinkage in shares—after accounting for stock newly issued—at an annual rate of \$234 billion. Since the early 1980s, the nearly \$2 trillion in stock that has disappeared from the market through buybacks and corporate takeovers is greater than that newly issued.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

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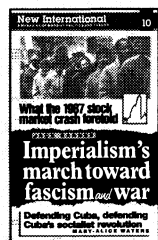
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New International no. 10

• Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War by Jack Barnes

• What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold • Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution by Mary-Alice Waters

• The Curve of Capitalist Development by Leon Trotsky \$14.00



Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

April 2, 1976

NEWARK—On Saturday, March 20, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and John Artis walked out of prison.

They are free on bail after serving nine and one-half years for a crime they did not commit—a 1966 murder of three people in a Paterson, New Jersey, bar. Carter and Artis are reunited with their friends and families because the New Jersey Supreme Court has overturned their convictions and ordered a new trial, saying that the prosecution withheld "material evidence favorable to the defense."

This victory was the culmination of a massive defense effort involving thousands of people in demonstrations, petitioning drives, and benefit concerts actively supported by Muhammad Ali, Bob Dylan, and other prominent figures.

Support for Carter and Artis has been aroused by the particularly arbitrary and racist nature of the frame-up.

Their 1967 conviction and life sentences were meted out by a white judge and an all-white jury, and based on the testimony of two white men, who later admitted they had lied on the witness stand.

Carter was a prime target for police harassment in 1966. At the time, he was the top contender for the middleweight boxing championship. He had made use of his prominence in the ring to speak out against police brutality in the Black community.

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

April 2, 1951

Gen. MacArthur, whose dream is to conquer all of Asia, renewed last week his unceasing efforts to extend the war in Korea to the Chinese mainland and thereby plunge this country and the whole world into World War III. His public statement of Mar. 24 is the most ominous in this connection to date.

Like MacArthur, the capitalist press has tried to palm off his statement as an "offer" to discuss "a truce" with Peiping's [Beijing] military commander in the field. Actually, this was no "truce offer" at all, but an arrogant demand for surrender, emphasizing the alleged military and economic weaknesses of the opposing armies in Korea.

Coupled with this is MacArthur's equally arrogant demand to unleash assaults on China's "coastal areas and interior bases" and thereby "doom Red China," allegedly bringing about its "imminent military collapse."

On top of this, MacArthur used the occasion to flatly reject any discussion with Peiping of either Formosa [Taiwan] or a seat in the U.N. These he announced were purely "extraneous matters." Here we have still another instance of how MacArthur openly flouts the declared policy of the UN, under whose jurisdiction he is presumably acting. Back in January this "world body" had pledged that both these issues would be discussed once a "cease-fire" had been arranged in Korea.

# 'Our people showed their determination to fight'

Continued from Page 9

so *gusanos*.<sup>6</sup> [Laughter] And the proof of it is that we captured the invading troop in its entirety, completely; they were all there. The only thing is that the troop was a little imbalanced in its composition, because there were a lot of "sailors" and "cooks" and "medical assistants." It seems nobody fired a shot.

But the troop is all here. [Applause]

This is why we must tell it exactly how it is. Our people showed their determination to fight, not against *this* invasion, but against a *real* invasion. Everyone mobilized. There were many deaths at Girón, many more than necessary, because people showed up there "on their own," so to speak, to fight in whatever way, in their eagerness to do something, without watching out for the planes—the enemy planes—that were still functioning on the first day.



Juventud Rebelde

Che Guevara speaks at event in solidarity with people of South Vietnam, December 20, 1963. "We can show our example proudly," he told electrical workers in May 1961 speech, "knowing that it is a contribution to the world."

And therefore we lost many compañeros unnecessarily.

For this reason, in truth, as a military victory we should not lie and say it was a big deal. To be sure, the operation on our side was very well conceived and led, under Fidel's direct command. [Applause] But when two armies with two such different morales fight, it's not a fight; it's more like shooting ducks.

Under these conditions, then, we can only say it was a victory of the people as a whole. But for our army and our militias, having defeated the *gusanos* is no particular glory.

The glory for our army and our militia was not in the action itself, but in having been ready to fight in the way they were ready to fight—and in the entire people of Cuba rising up to defend the revolution.

Thus, we don't need to attribute great importance to the action itself, except for two things.

One is to demonstrate how computers—electronic machines that do so well at calculating—are useless when it comes to measuring the human spirit.

They did their mathematical calculations as if they were confronting the German army and coming to take a beachhead at Normandy. "This many Germans have such and such weapons. We throw in so many men. We take this or that beachhead. We place mines here, organize things this way, that way, and there we have it." Everything's perfectly organized, with the efficiency they display in such matters.

But they failed to measure the moral relationship of forces. First, they mismeasured our ability to react, including not only our ability to react in the face of aggression, our ability to react in the face of a danger, and to mobilize our forces and send them to the site of battle—they mismeasured that. But they were also wrong in measuring the capacity for struggle of each one of the groups.

They calculated that 1,000 men would be sufficient to

resist. But they needed 1,000 men there who would fight to the death. In that case, we would still have gone in, but with a very high cost in lives. Because their operation was well conceived from a military point of view.

But someone whose daddy had a thousand caballerias of land, and who comes here solely to show his presence so the thousand caballerias will be returned to him—you can't ask him, simply because his caballerias were taken away, to die at the hand of a peasant who had nothing and who has a ferocious desire to kill him. [Applause] This is the part the electronic machines don't know how to calculate. This explains their capacity to make such huge, fantastic mistakes.

And up to now this reality has served us well. They have always been wrong about us. They have always arrived late. And they have never done anything that did not serve instead to strengthen the trust of the people in their government, to make the revolution more militant; in short, to strengthen us more.

Today, this propensity to error is dangerous. It is dangerous because if they are wrong about everything, we run the risk they will commit suicide at our expense. We therefore have to turn this island into a bastion, fill it with trenches, with cannon, with a determination to struggle. This must be visible from all sides—and I mean *very visible*, so that they do not make a mistake. [Applause] Because an error would be grave.

Clearly, it would mean the liberation of the whole world, but it would be very painful for us, and we have the duty, for ourselves and for the whole world, to struggle for peace, [Applause] to prevent imperialism from committing suicide on this island.

The U.S. invasion had yet another result. That same sadness of all our Latin American friends, who saw the revolution wiped out and their hopes dashed, revived with more strength than ever when they saw how easily the mercenary invasion was crushed. Because everyone knew it was the United States that had organized it, that had prepared the mercenaries. They themselves said so—those who sent the mercenaries to the beaches, those who bombed our cities two days before. The whole world knew it.

When the invasion occurred, and when they saw the news, the whole world saw the disaster being provoked by imperialism. But two or three days later, when they saw the definitive victory of the people, everyone in Latin America saw clearly that a great defeat for imperialism had taken place, even a military defeat. Imperialism had been defeated on all fronts in this action.

Furthermore, they saw the solidarity of the entire world and the militant solidarity of the socialist countries. This solidarity is not just a matter of demonstrations of sympathy or of throwing stones in front of an embassy, but of much more serious things.

The people now knew it was possible to make a revolution, and it was possible to take power against imperialism's servants.

## Acquired a new consciousness

The people have been conscious for some time that the exploiters must be removed from power by some means. But now they have acquired a new consciousness: that if the people succeed in expelling the exploiters from power, their survival as a sovereign nation is guaranteed. [Applause]

And this is very important indeed, compañeros. It is very important because without false modesty, we can say that not all peoples, not all parties, and not all leaders have the same resolve we do.

There are many who lack confidence in their strength, who fear imperialism. This includes those who knew, as everyone knows, that the empire's servants must be destroyed, but did not know how to do it. Later they learned that the will of the masses will be imposed, if not by peaceful means, then by violent means. And concretely in Latin America they learned that there is a way—certainly not the only way—but one that has shown its effectiveness, which is guerrilla warfare. So now the road has been opened.

After this, faced with the next question, which is whether we can survive as free nations, there is also the action of the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries, showing that the answer is yes. [Applause]

That is to say, we can show our example, proudly, with all our revolutionary modesty, aware of the limitations, but without false modesty, knowing that it is a contribution to the world. And we can say to Latin America: "Here is our revolution."

In this manner we show that the consciousness that exists among the people of the necessity for change needs to be clearly expressed in the mass struggle, until everyone understands the genuine possibility of change, and there occurs a change of government in those countries where the people are horribly oppressed.

Furthermore, we can say that after this, in the current world situation with the current relationship of forces, it should be clearly understood that any people that wants to be free will be free.

# Socialists back farmers' struggle in Canada

The following statement was issued March 20 by Michel Prairie, Communist League candidate in the April 9 Quebec by-election in the constituency of Mercier, and Derrick O'Keefe, Communist League candidate in the upcoming British Columbia provincial election.

The crisis facing farmers in the United Kingdom stemming from the refusal of the British government to compensate rural producers adequately for the destruction of their livestock and incomes as a result of its actions to stop the spread of hoof and mouth disease, vividly demonstrates the international character of the struggle of working farmers for survival. The deepening world capitalist economic crisis has pushed millions of working farmers into desperate depression-like conditions.

Through their massive March 14 National Day of Action farmers across Canada have thrown their weight into this struggle. The action was unprecedented in its Canada-wide scope, and striking in the fighting unity shown between Quebecois farmers and those from the rest of Canada. Working people and their unions should throw their weight behind the farmers' demand for \$1.5 billion dollars in emergency aid from the federal and provincial governments.

Through tractor convoys, demonstrations, sit-ins, and rallies, the farmers reached out to explain the conditions they face to workers in the major urban centers in order to put pressure on the capitalist governments in Ottawa and the provinces to act.

For several years, prices for most farm commodities have slumped globally. Under the capitalist system working farmers are forced to be price takers. The grain merchants and packinghouse bosses dictate the price farmers get for their products, and the farm implement corporations, energy, and chemical companies set the price for the inputs they need to work the land. The result is a cost-price squeeze in which working farmers do not receive enough of the value they create to survive.

The demands of farmers in the United Kingdom, Canada, and elsewhere for emergency aid and adequate prices to meet the costs of production are every bit as just as the demands of workers for a living wage, job security, and adequate benefits. Workers should also support a moratorium on bank foreclosures on the land of farmers.

Allying with working farmers strengthens the fighting capacity of our unions and reinforces the struggle of workers and working farmers against our common class enemies—Canada's ruling billionaire families and their government in Ottawa.

There is no solution to the devastation the capitalist system is bringing to the lives of working people short of a revolutionary struggle based on an alliance of workers and working farmers to replace capitalist political power in Ottawa with a workers and farmers government.

Socialist Cuba's workers and farmers government is the kind of government that farmers and workers in this country need. As a result of the conquests of the Cuban revolution, farmers in Cuba can count on security of land tenure, markets for their products, and prices that provide a decent income. It is Cuba's revolutionary example that explains why the Liberal government in Ottawa, which has turned a deaf ear to the demands the farmers raised March 14, has barred Cuba from participating in the April 20–22 Summit of the Americas in Quebec City.

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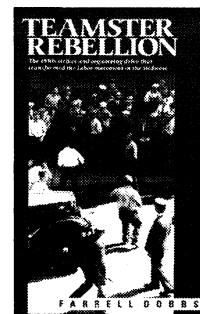
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<sup>6</sup>Gusanos (Spanish for "worms") is a term popularly used in Cuba for counterrevolutionaries.

<sup>7</sup>Guevara is joking about the claims of many of those captured.



# Farmers in UK devastated by livestock virus

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—In an attempt to stop the spread of the highly contagious foot-and-mouth disease, the British government has killed or has plans to slaughter 300,000 farm animals across the country. Officials and farm organization leaders say the total number killed could double in the weeks ahead. There have been 326 animals detected with the disease as of March 19 in Britain and Northern Ireland.

After a "slaughter of 1,800 apparently healthy sheep as part of a massive preemptive cull of livestock that may have come into contact with the infection," the Associated Press reported March 18, many farmers "have complained bitterly about the plan to kill tens of thousands of healthy-appearing animals on the mere suspicion that they could have been exposed to foot-and-mouth disease."

The British government decided to order all sheep and pigs killed within a two-mile radius of any confirmed outbreak in Cumbria and southern Scotland where the disease is centered. As well, animals that passed through markets where the infection has been identified, and animals they have come in contact with, are also to be killed. Three-quarters of the country has been placed off limits to walkers. The government has also more severely limited movement of people in affected areas, confining many farmers to their farms.

The impact on farmers, small businesspeople, and tourism in rural areas, which has already been devastating, is expected to worsen. Many farmers explain to reporters that in addition to the immediate impact, they are losing irreplaceable herds and breeding stock that were the result of years of work. Although farmers are being compensated by the government for animals killed, there is no aid for lost sales due to a ban on exports, the cost of rebuilding herds, or future loss of revenue.

## Opposition among some farmers

The government's policy has divided farmers. Officials of the National Farmers Union have backed the cull as the only way to stop the spread of the disease. Others are questioning the need for the extensive slaughter and point to a slow response by the government as partly responsible for the crisis.

"I am going to resist any attempt to kill my animals if they do not have foot and mouth," said Scottish sheep farmer Frank Thorburn, according to the *Sunday Times*. "There is no proof that the cull will stop the disease from spreading." Farmers in Cumbria are reported to be preparing to erect barricades at their farms to prevent the Ministry of Agriculture from carrying out its mass cull.

Sheep and cattle farmer Chris Woods, from Cumbria, told the *Financial Times* that he understands "why the ministry is doing this, but had they got hold of the problem at the start, it may not have been necessary. We have been warning them for weeks that we had a problem but they kept on saying it was under control. It has been a disaster how it has been handled."

David Handley, a leader of Farmers For Action and coordinator of last autumn's fuel protests, told the *Guardian* that there "is no justification in killing them. We will go out and prevent that from happening. We will

stand in front of them to stop them from being shot. There is no scientific evidence to show that this is justified. If they show us scientific evidence which justifies it then we will allow them to do it."

In response, government officials have said they need to better communicate with the farmers, but that the cull would proceed. "The policy is to identify, quarantine, and destroy the herds and remove [the disease] by stamping out," James Scudamore, Britain's chief veterinarian and point man for the government, told the press. Government officials have threatened to arrest any farmers preventing the cull.

Farmers are also urging the government to quickly burn slaughtered animals, which have sometimes been left for more than a week lying on the ground. The animals need to be burned immediately because the virus is killed by heat.

## Restoring disease free status

Government officials explain their policy is aimed at restoring the country's "disease-free status" as quickly as possible. "The occurrence of even a single case of foot-and-mouth disease in a previously disease-free country results in an immediate ban on an economically valuable export trade," the *British Medical Journal* wrote.

The United States and countries in Western Europe monitor imports of animals and meat products and do not allow any to enter that are not from a country that is certified as disease free. In addition to the impact on working farmers who bear the brunt of the crisis, the loss of disease-free status hits capitalist farm enterprises and agricultural companies that depend on the export market as well.

Foot-and-mouth disease is a virus that can be carried on people's clothes, in tires, through direct or indirect contact with sick animals, or on the wind. Although usually fatal to young livestock, most animals survive the infection. It results in serious losses to farmers, since the animals lose weight and stop producing milk. The virus rarely passes to human beings and causes cold or flu-like symptoms when it does.

The World Organization for Animal Health reports that foot-and-mouth disease is present in more than 30 countries. In certain regions of Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East it is endemic because it is carried by wild animals. Argentina, which had regained disease-free status recently, has been combating a new outbreak of the virus since January. The government admitted the problem last week, prompting an immediate cutoff of exports valued at \$480 million a year. Six cases of foot-and-mouth have been reported in France. The disease has not spread beyond the initial animals, according to French authorities.

The ban on all imports of animals and animal products from Britain and the European Union by the United States, Canada, Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and other countries, justified on the basis of preventing the spread of the disease, also was part of the inter-imperialist competition and drive for markets. European Union spokesperson Beate Gminder criticized Washington's decision, calling it "not proportionate" and "excessive" because it was imposed on all European Union countries instead of just Britain and France, the only two with reported cases of the disease.

A debate over use of vaccines has come to the fore as the disease spread in Britain and threatened Europe. The *Financial Times* reported that agribusiness executives and European Union ministers were to consider whether or not to "abandon a 10-year-old policy preventing the inoculation of herds against the disease," and said the ministers "will need to consider the pressure building from the agricultural sector for that again to be permitted."

According to the *New York Times*, "Some British scientists have argued that killing huge numbers of animals is senseless because between 80 and 95 percent will survive the disease. Some argue for returning to the pre-1991 practice in some places in Europe of inoculating herds around quarantined ones."

Reuters reported that in response to a recent outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, the Iranian government announced it will import 2.5 million doses of vaccine and distribute it free to farmers.

Since foot-and-mouth comes in seven different strains vaccination against one strain will not prevent an animal from contracting the disease from another strain. Another problem posed with vaccination under the disease-free country requirements is that most equipment used to test animals cannot distinguish between antibodies

caused by the vaccine or the disease, according to the *Herald Tribune*, "which means that a country that resorts to vaccination loses its disease-free status." New equipment, not widely available, can detect the difference.

The British government has been stung by criticism from some big-business papers, pointing to the devastating impact that its restrictions on livestock movements are having on the tourist industry. In an attempt to scapegoat farmers, *The Observer* newspaper ran a front page lead story titled, "Now our tourist industry faces ruin. All because of farming." *The Times* carried an article that described the government's policies as "disproportionate" and "ludicrous," claiming that it was "protecting an ailing agriculture at the expense of an expanding but fragile tourist industry."

The government is also facing pressure to call off a general election tentatively set for May 3. Russell Brown, Labour member of parliament for Dumfries, explained, "If we are not on top of this in the next fortnight, I would be for pressing a delay in the election. I believe in free and fair open elections and that includes MPs being able to get to every part of their constituency."

Paul Davies is a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union in London.

## Palestinians protest Israeli roadblocks in the West Bank



Palestinians the siege of Ramallah in the West Bank by the Israeli government. All roads to many Palestinian towns were blocked with dirt barricades and tanks. At least 40 Palestinians were wounded and one killed by Israeli gunfire on March 12 when Palestinian students tried to reopen the road to Bir Zeit University to register for the spring semester. The Zionist soldiers shot rubber-coated bullets and lobbed tear gas in an attempt to stop a bulldozer operated by Palestinians from reopening the blocked road. "They want to break our bones and break our will," said Rima Tarazi, a member of Bir Zeit board of trustees. Since September, 3 million Palestinian civilians have been living under a state of siege imposed by the Israeli military occupation. The Palestinian economy has lost more than \$2 billion, poverty levels have doubled in five months, and unemployment has soared to 48 percent. Arab regimes in the region recently raised a \$300 million aid package to donate to the Palestinian Authority.

## LETTERS

### Take two copies with you

The second copy of *Playa Girón/ Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* I bought at the March 11 meeting in New York to launch the new book (see *Militant* issue no. 12) was for a friend who is in the hospital. Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters, two keynote speakers at the meeting, both signed it to him. I visited him after the meeting and gave him the book.

This morning I went back to the hospital, and while I was waiting, a member of the hospital staff who is Black asked me if I was reading anything interesting, and when I showed him the book he wanted to know where he could get it (Barnes & Noble? Revolution Books?). Finally, I had to sell it to him. He says

he has friends who will be interested as well.

My advice: don't go anywhere without at least two copies.

Marc Lichtman  
Brooklyn, New York

### Airline safety inspections

The March 6 edition of the *Wall Street Journal* points to another reason why working people must fight for our own government. Remember the EgyptAir crash, which was blamed on a suicidal pilot? The *Journal* had a small inside article concerning a Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) emergency directive which mandates "enhanced inspections of the elevator control systems in all Boeing 767 jetliners, after determining that special inspections mandated last summer are not ad-

equated to detect a potentially dangerous control problem."

More rigorous inspections have found weakened and cracked parts in the mechanical links that move the elevators, horizontal surfaces on the tail that move the nose up and down. Both the agency and Boeing deny that these problems are related to the investigation of the EgyptAir crash in October 1999, in which the jet careened wildly before crashing off the Atlantic coast.

For decades, Boeing denied that there were any rudder problems with the 737, believed responsible for at least two crashes which killed many passengers. While Boeing pays for a rudder modification now in the works, they still deny responsibility for those crashes. The aviation industry protects its profits, and

they are dangerous.

Kathleen Denny  
Oakland, California

### Honoring a co-worker

On Tuesday, March 6 at the morning break workers at one part of the assembly line at truck maker Scania in Södertälje, Sweden, got a message that one of their co-workers had died on Monday evening after leaving work. Instead of going back to work at 11:00 a.m. as if nothing had happened, the workers held a discussion about this specific worker and the working conditions we all face. The worker who died had worked at Scania for 35 years. He had told his co-workers during the day on Monday that he had been ill during the weekend but still went to work. The discussion touched on

the pressure from the company to go to work even if you don't feel well and that you lose pay the first day you are sick.

The bosses were unable to get the workers to go back to their jobs. So the assembly line was closed down for the rest of the day. This was the best honor we could give our dead co-worker who was an outspoken defender of workers' rights.

Birgitta Isacson  
Stockholm, Sweden

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.

## Rally backs paint workers in Australia

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Several hundred workers and students rallied March 8 in support of 28 locked-out workers at the Mirotone plant in the Sydney suburb of Revesby. Mirotone, an industrial paint manufacturing company with a major share of the market, has also locked out 12 workers at its Wacol factory in Brisbane, Queensland. The company's action at both plants began February 22 as part of its anti-union drive to get workers to give up a 35-hour workweek and to introduce individual contracts.

The company is trying to eliminate the workers' paid rostered day off (RDO) once every two weeks and extend the normal working hours each week from 35 to 38.75 hours. Currently, all workers in the paint industry work an extra 45 minutes every regular workday to accumulate the paid time off. A shorter workweek with rostered days off was the result of a national campaign of industrial action and rolling strikes by many unions starting in 1982. In recent years, this gain for workers has been increasingly eroded or lost.

The rally for the Mirotone workers followed a paid stop-work meeting of paint industry workers who are members of the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU), attended by up to 500 people from plants throughout Sydney. As well as solidarity for the Mirotone workers, the meeting discussed and adopted proposals to campaign against the growing practice of companies instituting casual (temporary) jobs in the industry.

This follows a recent ruling by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) against casualization in the metal and manufacturing industries. The main changes were to compensate for casual workers not receiving holiday pay or other benefits by increasing the minimum additional wages they receive from 20 percent to 25 percent above that of permanent workers. The other is that workers must be offered a permanent job after six months of continuous work. The LHMU meeting resolved to pursue these conditions for the paint industry to protect both casual and permanent workers.

The meeting was hosted by representatives of the National Union of Students at the Bankstown campus of the University of Western Sydney, near Mirotone. Ben Donnelly, the community liaison officer for the students association, explained to the *Militant* that he had spotted the Mirotone workers' picket line the day after it began. Student activists put out a support leaflet, got details into the local media, and brought fellow students to support the pickets. Donnelly said that when Bankstown students had occupied the campus offices for two weeks in 1999 against cuts in education funding, several unions supported them, "so we understand the importance of solidarity."

During contract negotiations begun last November, Mirotone showed it was determined to end the 35-hour week, calling for a secret ballot on the issue. At one stage, the company tried to intimidate the senior delegate into taking redundancy (layoff). As a result, the Mirotone workers held some brief protest stoppages.

Steve Bateman, an operator at Mirotone for 10 years, explained that when workers returned from holidays January 8, the unionists discovered that staff had been trained in their jobs. "We held a meeting and decided that we wouldn't go back to work until the company removed the staff from the floor." The company complied, but on January 22 withdrew from negotiations, signaling a showdown.

The lockout began when the company served all the workers with written notices telling them they couldn't enter the factory for two weeks. The workers responded with a sit-in on the site until police were called to remove them. The LHMU workers then set up an official union picket. On March 5, and again on March 15, the company extended its lockout by two weeks.

Mirotone is trying to keep up some production with staff and contract labor. However, several truck drivers have refused to cross the picket line, and customers are reported to be dissatisfied with color quality of the scab-produced paints and stains.

The company called for a meeting March 13 with the unionists, raising many workers' hopes that this would lead to a resolution. But only two hours before the scheduled mass meeting, the senior union delegate, Ken Phillips, a Mirotone worker for 16 years, together with a union organizer, was summoned to a meeting with management. He was told he had been made redundant. The unionists immediately responded to this provocation by canceling the later meeting.

According to John Shanahan, a color matcher who has worked at Mirotone "off and on" for more than 14 years, company management has been lying in press interviews that the lockout was over workers' industrial sabotage. Shanahan told the *Militant*, "We just want our jobs back the way it was. Why would we want to sabotage our own jobs?"

As part of its drive to weaken the union before the lockout, Mirotone "offered" individual contracts. After some curious workers went upstairs to look at the details, management boasted at negotiating meetings that several workers were interested in these union-busting individual deals. However, the union vote for picket action in response to the lockout was unanimous.

Michael Roddick, who has worked for more than 27 years in the paint industry, said in an interview that he started as a casual at Mirotone in 1996. "The AWAs [Australian

Workplace Agreements or individual contracts] have gone off the burner." The company appears to be backing off on demanding longer hours outside the paint services division and is instead pushing for the extended hours to be applied to new hires. But "if we give in there, it'll move through the whole factory and then the whole industry,"

he pointed out. Garry Pippin, with 13 years at Mirotone and now a leading hand in the mill section, voiced the widespread sentiment that "it doesn't matter how long it takes, we won't budge on the 35-hour week."

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

## Thousands rally for affirmative action



Militant/Shirley Peña

Thousands of students rallied March 8 at the University of California at Berkeley demanding the board of regents repeal the ban on affirmative action. On March 14 more than 1,000 protested at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), including high school students. "We live in such a diverse city, but our university does not represent that at all," said UCLA student Hiliana López. The numbers of those from oppressed nationalities enrolled at UCLA has dropped significantly since the board eliminated the school's affirmative action policy.

## Activists in Sweden protest cop brutality

BY DANIEL AHL AND DAG TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Adonis Hocheimy, 27, has been at the center of a campaign against increasing cop and security guard violence here since nearly being beaten to death in the subway by two private security guards. The assault in January 2000 took place after he allegedly failed to pay the fare. The guards are employed by Securitas, one of the largest security companies in the world.

Over the past few years the local government's increasing use of several security companies in the Stockholm subway has coincided with a significant rise in attacks by guards against working people. In 1999, for example, 813 people, overwhelmingly Blacks and immigrants, were charged by subway guards with "violent resistance," a method the cops use to counter assault charges by victims. The wider use of security guards can be seen in the annual hiring of 1,800 new guards. This is a 70-80 percent increase over five years ago, according to the manager of Våktarskolan (Guard School), which was hired by the government in 1997 to train and license all new guards.

Hocheimy's fight to expose the violence has won wide support, including from a protest leaflet issued by the Network for Adonis signed by dozens of political, immigrant, and religious organizations. Following a public meeting of several hundred last May to condemn security guard violence, High Prosecutor Jan Danielsson was forced to reopen a lawsuit Hocheimy had filed against the security guards.

Last July, however, Chief Prosecutor Bjarne Rosén came out in support of the guard's story, saying Hocheimy "injured himself by throwing himself to the ground."

Some 250 young people rallied in downtown Stockholm August 27, rejecting Rosén's slanderous claims. The following weekend, frame-up charges of rape were directed against Hocheimy to undercut his fight for justice. The charges were quickly withdrawn, but they served as fodder for the countercampaign led by Rosén.

In a February 21 interview with the *Militant*, Hocheimy described the new frame-up attempt. On September 3, he said, a group of cops in civilian clothes knocked on his door and told him he had been charged with rape. Two days earlier, a woman approached Hocheimy and followed him home from Tiger, a night club downtown. "The police said she had accused me of raping her. Then she pulled back the charges and now they are classified. My lawyer can't read them. And I don't know who she is," Hocheimy said.

After his arrest he was kept in a cell for 36 hours while the police searched his apartment. "They wrote in their report that I had put food on the higher shelves and that they had found a wheelchair. I was using another one at the time," Hocheimy said. The report, implying he was lying about being bound to a wheelchair, was used by Rosén, who told the media Hocheimy had undergone a "sensationally rapid recovery."

"I think the prosecutor is trying to delay the trial of the guards that attacked me," Hocheimy said. "But when the trial comes, they might use the rape charge as an argument against me. It's perfect for them—a Black guy and a rapist. I can't believe this is happening."

Rosén has also asked Socialstyrelsen, the Social Welfare Board, to reexamine Hocheimy's injuries in order to overturn a previous medical examination that said Hocheimy was immediately paralyzed dur-

ing the attack and not capable of the "violent resistance" the guards have charged him with.

Last year the Social Welfare Board was used to dismiss the well-known case of Osmo Vallo, 41, who died in a police cell in Karlstad in 1995. Contrary to a previous autopsy that proved Vallo was killed when a cop was standing on his chest, the board said Vallo died from "drugs and stress" and not police violence. The cops who killed Vallo received only a mild sentence for "causing body injury."

The state's campaign against Hocheimy received support from an article in the Journalist Union paper *Journalisten*, written by Stefan Wolters, which said journalists have been too supportive of Hocheimy. The right-wing content of the article was repeated in *Transportarbetaren*, the paper of the Transport Workers Union, which organizes drivers, airport workers, newspaper distributors, dockworkers, and security guards. The articles repeat the prosecutor's claim that Hocheimy has lied about his injuries and is perhaps also guilty of rape.

Hocheimy says that due to neck and other injuries he still suffers pain and remains partly paralyzed. "This journalist didn't even bother to talk to my doctor," he said.

Noting the interest Securitas has in preventing his case against the guards from proceeding, Hocheimy said he is "glad the witnesses have had the courage to tell the truth about what the guards did to me. Ever since they attacked me I've been telling people about it. I want to get even somehow. I want people to know the truth."

Daniel Ahl is a member of the Industrial Union. Dag Tirsén is a member of the Metal Workers Union.

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