

# THE MILITANT

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leadership meeting

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## 'Cuban revolution is the achievement of millions'

Cuban youth leaders speak to U.S. students, farmers

BY ARRIN HAWKINS  
AND BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO—"The Cuban revolution is the achievement of millions of youth," said Javier Dueñas Oquendo at a meeting of 100 people at Loyola University here. The Cuban youth leader pointed to examples of the young age of the fighters who brought the

### REPORT ON BAY OF PIGS CONFERENCE IN HAVANA

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revolution to power in 1959, youth participation in the campaign against illiteracy in 1960-61, the age of the combatants at the victorious battle at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and in defeating South Africa's invasion of Angola, and the role of youth in developing health and education systems available to all in Cuba.

Dueñas, along with Yanelis Martínez Herrera, began three weeks of speaking engagements in the United States with talks at Loyola and the University of Illinois in Chicago on "Youth in Cuba."

Martínez, 22, is a fifth-year law student at the University of Havana and a member of the National Secretariat of the Federa-



Event in Chicago of the Cuba Youth Lectures Committee to welcome Cuban youth leaders Javier Dueñas, kneeling, center, in white shirt, and Yanelis Martínez, standing directly behind Dueñas. They began a speaking tour at Loyola University in Chicago.

tion of University Students. Dueñas, 28, is a professor of journalism at the University of Havana and a member of the National Bureau of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba.

A major goal of the visit of Dueñas and Martínez is to build the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange planned for Havana from July 22 to 30. Issues to be discussed

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## Macedonian gov't drives at Albanian positions

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Using tanks, artillery, helicopter gunships, and infantry, the Macedonian armed forces launched a ground offensive against the National Liberation Army (NLA) March 25. Washington and the European powers have given full backing to the assault, directed at NLA positions in the mountains north of the city of Tetovo, near the country's border with Kosova.

Around 10,000 people marched in the Kosova capital of Pristina the next day to condemn the military action. They carried banners reading, "Stop Macedonian terror against Albanians" and "Freedom for Albanians in Macedonia." A previous demonstration March 21 drew thousands of young people, reflecting the widespread anger among Albanians in the region at the national discrimination they face.

Macedonian prime minister Ljubco Georgievski boasted of success late on the first day of the offensive. "We have taken all key points," he said. "The centers from where [the guerrillas] acted will be eliminated." Reports indicated that the rebels had retreated from Seclé, Gajre, and other villages that they had captured. Three days later, Skopje opened a fresh attack on a broader front to "clear out the terrain," according to army sources. U.S. helicopters monitored the assault from the border area.

The Macedonian government says its

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## Sewing shop strikers in Los Angeles win support

BY NAN BAILEY

VERNON, California—"Hollander escucha, estamos en la lucha!" (Hollander listen, we are fighting!) chanted UNITE members on the picket line here as their strike against Hollander Home Fashions entered its third week.

The 450 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) struck the company's two plants here in the middle of Los Angeles March 8. Daily picket lines remain spirited and sizable, with 75 strikers at each plant, the limit imposed by a court-ordered injunction. The bosses continue to bus in replacement workers recruited by the temporary agency, Labor Ready, in an attempt to break the walkout.

Strikers are taking their fight across the country and winning support from workers at other Hollander plants. Eighty union members and strike supporters picketed the corporate headquarters of Hollander Home Fashions in Boca Raton, Florida, March 21 in support of the walkout. Workers at Hollander's plant in Tignall, Georgia, continue their strike in solidarity with the striking workers here. The Tignall workers are

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## Defense at Miami trial exposes anti-Cuba lies

*Five face frame-up charges of spying for Cuba; one charged with conspiracy to commit murder in shootdown of Brothers to the Rescue planes in 1996*

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI—The trial here of five men accused by the FBI of spying for the Cuban government in southern Florida during the 1990s is nearing its fifth month.

Recent testimony by witnesses called by the defense has shed further light on Washington's policy of providing a base of operations on U.S. soil for counterrevolutionary forces carrying out provocations against Cuba.

Retired U.S. Air Force colonel George Buchner testified at the trial March 21 as a defense witness. Buchner answered questions about two Cessna planes flown by pilots belonging to the Miami-based Brothers to the Rescue group, which repeatedly violated Cuba's air space and were shot down by the Cuban Air Force Feb. 24, 1996.

The former U.S. military officer presented evidence from records of the U.S. government's National Security Agency. His testimony showed that the planes, which took off from Florida, were about six miles inside Cuba's air space when they were shot down five years ago. The Brothers to the Rescue pilots had ignored repeated warnings from Cuban authorities.

"The trigger was when the first aircraft crossed the 12-mile territorial limit,"

Buchner said. "That allowed the government of Cuba to exercise their sovereign right to protect its airspace." A third plane flown by Brothers to the Rescue leader José Basulto also violated Cuban air space but turned back and was not hit. Buchner testified the Cuban MiG pilot tracking Basulto's plane "showed restraint" by breaking off pursuit.

Buchner is a former commander of the

North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), which was charged with overseeing nuclear "missile defense" over U.S. territory.

Buchner's testimony contradicted earlier U.S. government statements and a report issued by the United Nations Security Council in 1996 alleging the planes were shot

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## Socialists prepare to launch eight-week sales campaign

BY GREG MCCARTAN  
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

Socialist workers, Young Socialists, and other working people and youth will be discussing plans and goals over the next two weeks for an eight-week drive, from April 14 to June 10, to expand the readership of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and other revolutionary literature.

The campaign includes sales of a new pamphlet in preparation by Pathfinder Press entitled, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution: Organizing to Win the Inevitable Battles* by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Campaigners will also take goals to sell two other recent pamphlets: *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Barnes, and *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution* by socialist leader Mary-Alice Waters.

The campaign comes at a good time, as *Militant* supporters are joining with workers and farmers involved in a number of

struggles. These include fights by unionized meat packers and organizing drives by those without union protection. Workers are on strike at the Hormel plant in Rochelle, Illinois, and 1,600 packinghouse workers in Fort Morgan, Colorado staged a three-day strike in February to protest intolerable working conditions imposed by the bosses.

Garment workers organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) are picketing Hollander Home Fashions in Los Angeles, while UNITE-organized laundry workers have waged successful efforts to win union recognition in several areas.

Coal miners, seeking ways to defend their lives and their union, have held meetings over the past several months to advance their demand for medical and pension coverage for miners suffering from black lung, as well as for the widows of miners who have died from the disease. This is part of a broader movement in mining communities against

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Immigration fuels rise in U.S. population— page 15

# Bust of Klan founder removed from public property in Alabama

BY PATTI IYAMA

SELMA, Alabama—Workers and farmers in Alabama won a victory February 28 when, after months of debate and protests, a bust of Confederate Gen. Nathan Forrest, a founder of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), was moved off Selma city property. The monument to the racist figure was placed in a nearby cemetery.

Built with mostly private funds and owned by the Friends of Forrest, the bust was set up on public property in October 2000 on a five-ton granite base in a majority Black neighborhood.

Two days after the monument was moved to the Unknown Confederate Soldiers section of the Old Live Oak Cemetery, the city of Selma hosted its annual commemoration of the 1965 Bloody Sunday voting rights march. Several thousand workers, farmers, and young people attended, including some who came from other states to be part of the weekend's events.

Two busloads of union members from Detroit, sponsored by the United Auto Workers union, were present and joined a several-day caravan to important sites from the civil rights era.

The annual event salutes the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march that helped lead to the passage of the federal Voting Rights Act. On March 7, 1965, civil rights marchers set out for Montgomery some 50 miles away, but did not make it past the Edmund Pettus Bridge on the edge of downtown Selma. They were attacked with tear gas and nightsticks by state troopers and county lawmen on horseback. Many were left with fractured skulls and broken limbs.

Television images of this brutal attack on unarmed protesters demanding the right to register to vote were broadcast around the world, bringing home the reality of life under Jim Crow segregation.

Two weeks after the marchers were attacked, voting rights activists set out again from Selma, their ranks swelled this time by thousands of supporters who had poured into Alabama to help ensure the success of

the march. Four days later, 25,000 marchers arrived in Montgomery. The Voting Rights Act was passed soon after.

## 'Insult to the Black community'

The Forrest monument has been the center of controversy since it was erected. As Selma City Councilman Samuel Randolph stated at a January city council meeting, "The monument is an insult to the Black community and over 95 percent of the people in my district want it removed. Forrest murdered hundreds of Black soldiers, as well as founding the KKK."

Confederate general Forrest was defeated in Selma in April 1865 by Union Gen. James Wilson. Wilson was part of Gen. William Sherman's March to the Sea from Atlanta, Georgia, which sealed the defeat of the Confederacy in the U.S. Civil War. Forrest had been a slave trader, as well as plantation owner, before the war. In 1864 his troops massacred several hundred Black and white Union soldiers, including their commander, who had surrendered at Ft. Pillow, Tennessee.

Survivors testified later that many of the Black soldiers were buried alive. Forrest was found to be responsible for the massacre by the U.S. Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War in 1871. He was also the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, which he helped to found in Tennessee in 1866.

The bust of Forrest had been approved by the previous Selma mayor, Joe Smitherman, but was not unveiled until last October, a few days after James Perkins Jr. was installed as Selma's first Black mayor. The bitterly contested September mayoral election had won considerable attention, because Smitherman had been in office 35 years, including during the 1965 voting rights march. Both Perkins and Smitherman are in the Democratic Party.

In 1964, when Smitherman was first elected, only about 150 Blacks were registered to vote in Selma. Like his mentor, late Alabama Gov. George Wallace, Smitherman



Militant/Rachael VanRiper

**Protest in Selma, Alabama, January 15 against statue of Confederate general and Klan founder Nathan Forrest. Controversy over monument reflects polarization in city.**

later apologized for his segregationist past and made Black appointments to several offices. Although the city has been mostly Black for decades, he was able to win previous elections by getting most of the white votes and enough votes from middle-class Blacks to achieve a majority.

Many workers and farmers who are Black in the Selma area were heartened by Smitherman's defeat, and are hopeful that the new administration may make it possible for some positive changes to be made. But the controversy over the Forrest monument reflects the polarization which continues in response to a city administration headed by even a moderate Black political figure.

The Selma City Council voted to remove the monument to Forrest by December 11, but reversed itself after a November 19 march in support of the monument by nearly 300 people waving Confederate battle flags and singing "Dixie." The City Council indefinitely extended the deadline to move the

monument, a decision that was met with protests, including one of 150 on Martin Luther King Day.

In response to the removal of Forrest's bust to the Confederate soldiers' cemetery, the Confederate Heritage Association is now pushing a bill in the Alabama State House to prevent any monument on state-owned property from being relocated, removed, disturbed, obscured, or desecrated. The director of the heritage group, Michael Chappell, told the *Birmingham News* that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference have on their national agendas "to wipe out Confederate heritages."

*Patti Iiyama is a garment worker and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Susan LaMont, also a member of UNITE, contributed to this article.*

## Miami cops indicted for lying

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI—Five cops from the SWAT unit were indicted by a federal grand jury here March 14 on charges of lying and fabricating evidence in the 1996 slaying of Richard Brown. Police fired more than 120 bullets at Brown, a 73-year-old retired seaman who was Black. The cops claimed he was a drug dealer and was armed when they broke into his home. Their bullets left a six-foot-high swath on the walls.

Chanting "Justice for all! We did nothing wrong," some 400 cops and their supporters staged a march in downtown Miami March 19 to defend the SWAT team members.

Al Cotera, president of the local Fraternal Order of Police, said, "The community should know we will not sit by quietly while this abuse is going on by the U.S. Attorney's Office. This is a slap in the face to all officers who go out every day and risk their lives."

Two of the cops indicted, Jose Acuña and Arturo Beguiristain, were already on admin-

istrative leave for their role in another shooting, the 1997 killing of a homeless man in Coconut Grove. Rafael Juan Fuentes, also charged, beat a prisoner with a set of handcuffs in 1995. A fourth indictee, Alejandro Macias, was suspended from the force in 1989 for his part in the clubbing of a doctor who was jogging in a park after closing time.

Police internal reviews and investigations of the Brown shooting at the time cleared the cops involved. They claimed they only fired on Brown after he shot at them. But Brown's family, including his great-granddaughter Janeka, an eyewitness to the shooting, continued to press for justice. Last year the city of Miami paid \$2.5 million to Janeka Brown to settle a lawsuit charging that the cops had planted a gun on Brown and had also planted cocaine outside his apartment.

The federal grand jury has not yet released specific details of the cop cover-up. The police, meanwhile, are threatening more demonstrations.

## THE MILITANT

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# Bush's tax plan aims to boost big business

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The debate around President George Bush's tax cut and budget proposals show the efforts the wealthy ruling class and both big-business parties are making to reverse a sagging capitalist economy at the expense of working people.

Bush is promoting a \$1.6 trillion tax cut proposal as a needed economic stimulus and a boon for working people. "The American family had a victory today," Bush announced to a large crowd March 8 in Fargo, North Dakota, when news came that the House of Representatives had passed the tax cut.

The tax bill, however, will allocate 43 percent of reductions to the richest 1 percent of the population, many of whom already pay few taxes due to extensive loopholes and shelters provided in federal and state tax law. For the one-third of workers and farmers in the country whose earnings are so low that they are eligible to pay no income taxes, the plan would have no effect.

The Bush tax cut proposal comes after a decade of growing earnings and shrinking tax liability for the superwealthy few. From 1989 to 1998, the incomes of the wealthiest 1 percent of the population, adjusted for inflation, grew eight times as fast as the bottom 90 percent. In addition, the share of their annual income—which averaged \$816,189—that the top 1 percent paid in taxes was 27.1 percent in 1998, down from 28.9 in 1996.

## 'Too small and too slow'

For some, however, these advances for the wealthy are not adequate in the face of the slowdown in the economy and the sharp decline in stock values on Wall Street and in other exchanges around the world. "We hate to be a spoilsport," the *Wall Street Journal* editors exclaimed February 8, but "someone has to point out the emerging danger that whatever passes Congress could be too small and especially too slow." Bush's plan would bring the top tax bracket down from 39.6 percent to 33 percent over five years. The *Journal's* editors urged immediate adoption of the rate cuts and repeal of the estate tax, also part of the Bush measures. The paper called for elimination of the "alternative minimum tax," which the editors called "onerous." This tax is applied when people with large tax deductions reach a certain low level of tax payments.

In a March 23 editorial titled "The Beltway Fiddlers," the *Journal* editors took a more strident tone. Pointing to the sharp fall in stock prices, they called for a more generous and immediate tax cut for the higher bracket payers. "Washington is fiddling while the economy burns," the editors fumed, and for members of Congress, "the moribund state of American manufacturing, the earnings meltdown or a Charles Schwab [stock brokerage firm] announcing 3,400 layoffs, and P&G [Proctor and Gamble] 9,600 more, is like radio signals from far-away galaxies."

House conservatives are proposing a \$2.2 trillion tax-cut package that includes cuts in taxes on capital gains.

## Manufacturers in hard hats

Bush is not the only one trying to put a pro-working class spin on the tax cut. The National Association of Manufacturers sent out a memo encouraging members to attend a tax cut rally outside the Capitol March 8, urging people in a memo to be "DRESSED DOWN, appear to be REAL WORKER types, etc." The memo continued, "We plan to have hard hats for people to wear. Other groups are providing waiters/waitresses, and other types of workers."

The National Association of Manufacturers is one of four groups leading the Tax Relief Coalition, an association of nearly 100 trade associations and companies lobbying for tax cuts for big business. The other three leading groups in the coalition are the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors, and the National Federation of Independent Businesses.

In addition to tax reductions, Bush's budget includes proposals to increase military spending by 4.8 percent to \$310.5 billion, and to cut \$17.9 billion from the Department of Agriculture budget and \$7.3 billion from the Environmental Protection Agency. Farmers at the March 2-5 convention of the National Farmers Union voiced concern that the proposed cuts in agriculture spending will be aimed at reducing the substantial

emergency aid that farmers have fought for to compensate for below-cost prices for their commodities.

Most Democrats opposed Bush's tax cut proposals during the 2000 campaign, but many now favor most elements of the plan. Tom Daschle, the Senate's Democratic Party leader, announced support March 23 for the immediate \$60 billion tax cut proposed by Republicans. Many Democrats oppose the extent of the tax rate cuts at the higher brackets, some of the budget cuts that would affect social programs and aid to farmers, and Bush's repeal of some of Clinton's last-minute regulations.

The framework of all tax cut proposals before Congress is a continuing budget surplus. But in light of a falling stock market and a gloomy economic forecast, some politicians are expressing doubts that revenues will sustain a surplus. In the Senate, where no majority exists on any tax plan, a dozen senators from both parties introduced a 10-year tax cut plan with a "safety valve" that would delay cuts in years when no budget surplus is predicted.

Bush is making other moves to ease up regulations on mining, manufacturing, and energy companies, also in the name of stimulating the economy.

## Looser regulations on big business

The administration is responding to energy blackouts in California by calling for massive tax breaks for the energy companies and other measures, including lifting the prohibition on oil and natural gas drilling in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and other federally protected lands. Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, in a speech to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, said failure to carry out such measures "will threaten our nation's economic prosperity, compromise our national security, and literally alter the way we live our lives."

Frank Murkowski, a Republican senator from Alaska and author of a bill to overhaul U.S. energy policy, cites U.S. national security interests in his push to open up the Arctic to drilling. "American dependence on foreign oil threatens our national security and our freedom," said Trent Lott, Senate major-

ity leader, in supporting the bill. Murkowski's bill aims to reduce U.S. dependence on oil imports by 50 percent, particularly from Iraq and Iran, who he describes as "unstable nations." The U.S. companies buy 750,000 barrels of oil a day from Iraq.

Widespread sentiment against despoiling the environment exists in the United States, however, and Republican leaders in the House decided to withdraw the Alaska drilling proposal from the budget package.

Democrats responding to Abraham's attack on the Clinton administration's track record on energy, pointed out that Clinton permitted more leasing and exploration on public land than any previous president.

In other measures to ease up protective environmental regulations, Bush announced March 13 that he would not regulate carbon dioxide emissions, which are thought to contribute to global warming. During his campaign for president last year, Bush said

he supported reduction of emissions. Christine Whitman, his Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) director, had indicated in February that the administration was moving toward regulation.

On March 20, Whitman announced the EPA was withdrawing federal standards reducing by 80 percent allowable levels of arsenic in drinking water. "I want to be sure that the conclusions about arsenic in the rule are supported by the best available science," Whitman said. The National Academy of Sciences has concluded that arsenic in drinking water causes bladder, lung, and skin cancer, and might cause liver and kidney cancer.

Bush has indicated he wants to block a new regulation requiring hard-rock mining companies to post a bond guaranteeing they will clean up the environmental damage they cause, and a recent ban on new roads and almost all logging on 58.5 million acres of national forest.

## Immigrant workers protest in Korea



Immigrant workers protest living conditions and demand equal rights in south Korea. Of the 290,000 immigrant workers in the country, an estimated 67 percent lack legal status. Immigrant workers from China, India, Thailand, Burma, and other Asian countries work in south Korea.

# Communists in UK defend working farmers

**The Militant is setting aside space this week to reprint excerpts from a statement issued by the Communist League of the United Kingdom. The following statement was issued by Paul Davies, who will be the Communist League's parliamentary candidate in the Southwark and Bermondsey constituency in the forthcoming UK general election.**

The response by the government to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the United Kingdom is in effect tightening the screws on farmers who are already devastated by the worst crisis in agriculture in 60 years. In addition to preventing livestock movement, the government has imposed restrictions on the movement of working people in rural areas. These measures are backed up by the courts, cops, and British army. All this is being done in the name of wiping out a disease that rarely kills animals and cannot kill human beings.

Working people need to demand massive aid to farmers facing these government restrictions. No farmer should lose his or her land as a result of the steps being taken by the government to prevent the movement and sale of livestock.

Contrary to the picture presented in the big business media, working farmers are not the source of the crisis in agriculture—they are its victims. It is the workings of capitalism that turns crises like the outbreak of diseases and flooding into social and economic catastrophes for working people.

London's approach to combating foot-and-mouth disease has nothing to do with meeting the needs of working farmers, but is driven by the capitalist rulers' fight for markets for their products abroad. For decades British bosses used the "disease free" status awarded to British livestock to gain an edge on its rivals, particularly to dominate markets in countries oppressed by imperialism, where the disease remains prevalent. The British government ended a mandatory vaccination program to prevent outbreaks of this disease a number of years ago.

Working farmers are being caught between rising costs of farm inputs like fuel and fertilizers and sharply declining prices for the livestock and crops that they produce. This cost/price squeeze imposed by the capitalists and their government is driving record numbers of farmers into ruin and off the land.

As farmers in Cumbria begin to resist the government's policy of slaughtering animals that are not infected with the disease, workers should stand with them as they fight to defend their livelihoods. If workers are to be successful in their struggle against the capitalist class we will have to build a revolutionary movement based on a fighting alliance with working farmers to take power out of the hands of the rulers and establish a workers and farmers government.

The labor movement has a vital interest

in preventing the ruin of working farmers. It should demand;

- Immediate compensation to cover the full costs of production for all farmers hit by the restrictions on livestock sales and movement and the government-imposed slaughter policy!
- A guaranteed market for farmers' crops and livestock with prices adequate to meet production costs and provide a decent living!
- Abolish small and medium-sized farmers' debts owed to the banks and the government!
- Cheap credit to working farmers who need it!
- Guaranteed government-funded crop and livestock insurance with 100 percent protection against virus outbreaks, floods, and other so-called natural disasters!

## Pilots strike regional airline Comair

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After three years of contract talks the 1,350 pilots employed by Comair Inc. went on strike March 26. The pilots are seeking a company-funded retirement plan, more rest time between flights, higher pay, and the right to be paid for all hours they are on the job, not just actual flying hours.

Comair, which is based out of the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky International Airport, serves more than 8 million passengers annually. It operates 815 flights to 95 cities in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas.

Comair was founded in 1977 and acquired by Atlanta-based Delta Airlines in 1999. The pilots are seeking salaries closer to those earned by pilots flying on Delta's mainline operation.

A recent contract offer by the company, which was rejected by the pilots, called for increasing the pay of top-scale pilots from \$66,000 to \$96,000. But only the 40 pilots who have at least 18 years of experience would be eligible for this pay rate. The 420

pilots with two years of experience or less would receive less than \$30,000 annually.

President George Bush, who said recently that he would "take the necessary steps" to prevent strikes at the nation's airlines, did not receive a request from the National Mediation Board to intervene. "They did not give me the right to move in on the strike," stated Bush during a visit to Kansas City, Missouri. "And therefore the parties are going to have to settle it themselves."

Delta has assured its mainline pilots that it would not try to service the struck routes with aircraft from other company operations. The airline is also facing possible strike action by members of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) who fly for Delta and Delta Express.

ALPA must decide by March 29 whether to accept an offer to arbitrate its contract dispute with Delta. A refusal by the pilots to accept arbitration would trigger a 30-day cooling-off period that would leave ALPA free to strike the nation's third largest airline in late April or early May.

# YS leaders discuss openings to do mass work

BY ROBERTO GUERRERO  
AND JASON ALESSIO

SEATTLE—Young Socialists leaders meeting here the weekend of March 17–18 discussed the opportunities open to the revolutionary youth organization to do mass work and to recruit and widen its influence through building the communist movement.

Delegations to the National Leadership Council from Chicago; Los Angeles; New York; Tucson, Arizona; and St. Paul, Minnesota, were joined at the meeting by YS leaders from Canada, Iceland, and Sweden, and a delegation from the Socialist Workers Party.

The meeting focused on two reports that were given by Jacob Perasso and Olympia Newton, members of the YS National Executive Committee (NEC). Perasso opened the meeting by reporting on a victory won the previous day when Cuban youth leaders Yanelis Martínez and Javier Dueñas received their visas to travel to the United States.

YS members have been an active part of organizing the visit of the two young communists from Cuba, who began a three-week speaking visit to college campuses in Illinois, Minnesota, and southern New England March 23 on invitation of a number of professors and student organizations. Winning the visas in order to have an exchange between young people in the United States and Cuba—something the U.S. embargo of the island and its travel ban seeks to prevent—is a victory for all working people, Perasso said.

Perasso explained the importance of the work by the YS over the years to help bring Cuban youth to speak in the United States, distribute books and newspapers that tell the truth about the Cuban revolution, and organize actions against the U.S. government's assaults on Cuba. This has deepened the understanding of the Cuban revolution among youth and working people and strengthened the political relationship between young

leaders of the Cuban revolution and a layer of revolutionary-minded young people in the United States.

Coming out of the leadership meeting, the YS NEC has decided to make building the upcoming Second Cuba/U.S. Youth Exchange, to be held in Cuba July 22–30, a central part of its work. Sponsored by Cuban student and communist youth organizations, the exchange will be an opportunity for young people in the United States to learn how workers and peasants made the revolution and the challenges and opportunities facing the Cuban revolution today. It will also be a chance for young people in Cuba to learn about the class struggle in the United States.

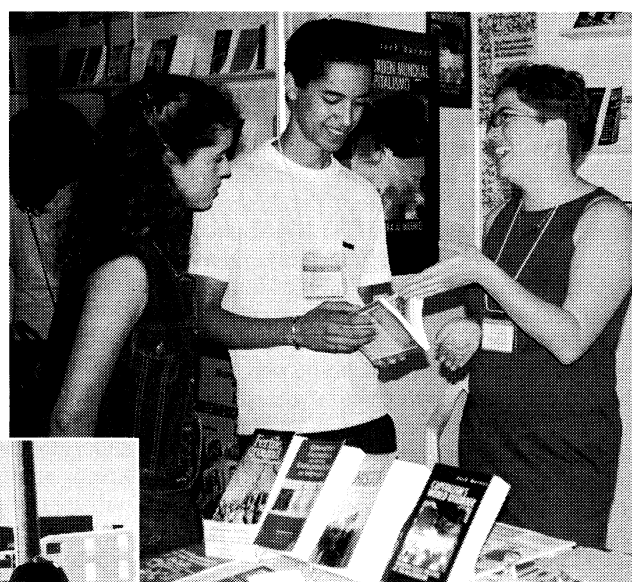
Through building the youth tour, organizing participation in the July exchange, setting up street tables with revolutionary literature, and joining social protest actions, strike picket lines, and other struggles, Young Socialists members will also find revolutionary-minded youth interested in participating in the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students (WFYS) that will be held this August in Algiers, Algeria. The WFYS is a gathering of thousands of young people from organizations around the world who want to fight imperialism. Several Young Socialists representatives participated in an International Preparatory Meeting for the WFYS in Rome as part of this effort.

The Young Socialists also decided to launch in the coming weeks an eight-week national fund drive. Raising funds for the national treasury of the YS is an essential component of building an organizationally independent communist youth organization, Newton said.

The drive will be intertwined with building the Cuban youth speaking tour and the July conference, and winning revolutionary minded youth to the communist movement. Individual members of the YS will be mak-

ing pledges to the fund along with organizing weekly fund-raising activities, such as classes, socials, and raffles. Chapters and members at-large of the Young Socialists are planning to set local goals by the end of March.

Discussion by a number of participants in the meeting, led by a YS member from Iceland, pointed to the importance of sending articles into the *Militant* and reestablish-



Left: Militant/Rose Ana Berbeo  
Above: Jonathan Silberman

Left: YSer Lawrence Mikesk walks the picket line to protest U.S. bombing of Iraq. Above: YS leader Olympia Newton, right, at Pathfinder booth at Havana International Book Fair.

the world closer together and gives those interested in the YS a better idea of the kind of revolutionary organization they can become part of.

Newton opened her report with a description of the recent three-day strike by a majority of the 1,600 meat packers employed by Excel Corp. in Fort Morgan, Colorado. The workers, who are mainly from Mexico and Central America, demanded a three-year contract, regulated line speeds, union representation on the floor, a lower insurance deductible, and the end to the company's abusive behavior against the workers.

The communist movement responded by rapidly sending a sales and reporting team to Fort Morgan, which met with a number of participants in the strike. At the same time, a team of socialist workers visited coal mine portals and met with supporters of the *Militant* throughout the coalfields in Colorado.

Through the course of the political discussions over the weekend, the YS leadership meeting decided that a few of its members should move to Colorado to join with members of the Socialist Workers Party there in reaching out to students, coal miners, and other workers who are looking for answers to the increased attacks by the bosses and the world crisis of capitalism.

The National Leadership Council elected a National Executive Committee of Jason Alessio, Olympia Newton, Roberto Guerrero, and Jacob Perasso.

The meeting adjourned March 18 in time to join 170 other participants from up and down the West Coast in a meeting to commemorate the 1961 victory of workers and farmers in Cuba who defended their socialist revolution by routing a U.S.-backed invasion of the island. The meeting celebrated the publication of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* and launched a campaign to sell that book, together with *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*, through June 10. YS members plan to throw themselves into the campaign.

## UNITE strikers in Los Angeles gain support

Continued from front page

honoring a picket line set up March 13 by three workers from the Vernon plants.

Vernon striker Ruby, just back from meeting with union members at Hollander plants in Chicago and Dallas, reported to workers on the picket line about the positive response she received in those cities. Workers already knew about the strike, she said, before she arrived and expressed their support and solidarity.

Union contracts are up at the plants in Chicago and Dallas in coming months, Ruby said, adding an extra importance to the outcome in Los Angeles. In Chicago, she met with union members in the plant lunchroom, and workers at the two plants in Dallas met at a nearby hotel. Hollander also has plants in Pennsylvania and Canada.

While the company reported \$165 million in sales in 1999, strikers learned this week that the company's sales figures grew to \$205 million in 2000. Letters distributed by the company since the strike began urge workers to return to the job, outline the disadvantages of 401 (k) pension plans, and encourage them to save money for retirement. One of the letters, written in Spanish and signed by Hollander chairman Leo Hollander, says, "And what is the union doing? They are making problems for the manufacturers of America and forcing us to move to other countries." Another says, "UNITE, leave our people alone."

"I'm not going to gain much from this because I'm going to retire soon. But here I am," said 62-year-old Marta Bonilla, speaking of the strikers' demand for a pension plan. The unionists point out that salaried employees have a pension plan and that union members are entitled to one, too. Other workers close to retirement expressed the same attitude as Bonilla. "The retirement plan will perhaps not help me much, but it's for the younger workers," said Rigoberto Castellanos, who has worked at Hollander Home Fashions for 27 years.

"Just one mistake was made in the first *Militant* article on our strike," said UNITE member and striker Maria Solario. One worker was quoted in that article saying that the company provides no masks or safety protection from the dust and filth in the air as workers stuff pillows and comforters with feathers and other material. "They do provide us with masks, but they're not the right

kind—that's our complaint," said Solario.

Another striker, who overheard her describing the unsafe working conditions and other injustices faced by workers on the job, added, "There is so much injustice. It sometimes seems like we're in the Third World. And we're supposed to be in the number one democracy in the world!"

"We're on strike for equality, primarily," striker Alberto Pantoja said, "And for a 401 (k) retirement plan. And to protest the reduction in pay that came when they changed the piece rate. Before, one person would weigh and the other would stuff as we ran the machine. Now one person has to do both jobs."

### How union was won

Pantoja has worked at Hollander Home Fashions since 1974. His job for the entire 27 years has been running a machine that stuffs cotton into pillows. He is one of a handful of workers still working at the plant who were part of the fight to establish a union at Hollander. Pantoja started working at the plant at age 19, not long after arriving in Los Angeles from his native Mexico.

"A truck driver friend who worked for Hollander talked to some of us about the union," Pantoja said. "He told us what a union would mean. He had learned about unions from other truck drivers. I liked the idea. All of us he spoke with agreed. The rest of us started spreading the word to other workers. We told them how being in a union would help us. We asked them if they agreed to bring in the union without letting the boss know because if the boss found out before the union sent a letter to begin negotiations we'd all be fired. Everyone I talked to agreed."

"The same truck driver friend gave us the name and address of a union—the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU)," he said. "We started to meet with them to discuss what we wanted. There were 50 or so workers who went to these meetings. Some of the things we wanted were a raise in pay and more vacation time. Before having a union, the vacation time given was one week no matter how long you'd worked here. We also wanted family health insurance, instead of for the individual only, and more holidays."

"Right before the vote was to take place at the plant on getting a union, the company called [the INS] and 21 workers were ar-

rested. The company was trying to stop them from being able to vote," Pantoja said. "But the union got them out on bail so they could come to vote in the plant. Immigration had come to the plant before and we found out from the union lawyers who learned it from immigration officials that the company had called them to come and make arrests whenever they needed to lower the number of workers. They did it this way rather than have a layoff or fire people."

"But after getting out on bail, all 21 were able to participate in the vote. The vote was 58-13 for the union. After the votes were counted it was announced in the plant by a union representative and we all applauded," he said. "It didn't take long to win a contract." Workers at Hollander became members of ILGWU Local 482 with that vote. The union later merged with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union to form UNITE.

The union is asking supporters to contact Hollander Home Fashions to voice support for the strike demands. Call 1-800-BEDROOM, write the corporate headquarters at 6560 W. Rogers Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33487, or fax (561) 997-8738.

## 15,000 rally in Hungary against longer workweek

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In one of the biggest labor protests in Hungary in years, some 15,000 workers demonstrated in the streets of Budapest March 24, the Reuters news service reported. The action was organized in opposition to legislation being put forward by the government to change the country's labor laws to give employers more power to extend working hours.

The new regulations would allow employers to reduce weekly rest time and compensate for it later in a single installment. This would in effect raise the 40-hour workweek to 48 hours. According to a statement issued by the country's Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Unions (VDSz), the new rules would eliminate the daily work break, oblige employees to work six days instead of five days per week, increase the maximum amount of overtime from 144 hours to 300 hours per year, reduce the weekly rest period by two hours,

and considerably expand the definition of seasonal work.

Government officials in Hungary, a deformed workers state, are promoting these proposals in a bid to join the European Union in 2003 or 2004.

"I came here so that the government would not approve an amendment which hurts employees," said a 50-year-old worker from a spinning factory in Miskolc, in northeast Hungary, who attended the protest, to a Reuters reporter.

"In several workplaces within the chemical industry, the weekly working time is 36 hours," said VDSz president Gyorgy Paszternak. "The employers encouraged by the government proposals, decided to increase weekly work times to 48 hours. So in these cases working hours will increase by more than 30 percent.... But wages will remain the same." Parliament is to debate the proposed legislation at the end of March, a final decision is expected in mid-April.



# Socialists to launch sales drive April 14

Continued from front page

the offensive by the coal operators and their government.

Socialist unionists recently organized a *Militant* sales team to visit the coalfields in Colorado and Wyoming, where they sold 25 copies of the paper to miners during a morning shift change at a mine portal of the Pittsburg & Midway Coal Co.

Ferment among workers in the airlines industry is growing. Ramp workers, flight attendants, mechanics and other airline workers, and pilots at Northwest, Southwest, American, and United Airlines are involved in contract fights. Their unions are running up against anti-union laws, all the way up to the no-strike order by U.S. president George Bush.

Farmers across North America are organizing meetings and protests to resist the consequences of the tightening cost-price squeeze that is throwing them more and more deeply into debt and driving many off the land. Thousands of farmers and their supporters, for example, took part in a March 14 day of action across Canada.

Struggles such as these heighten interest among working people in the root cause of the economic and social crises they face under capitalism. These fights lay a firmer foundation for solidarity with those engaged in battles against racist discrimination and cop brutality, assaults on immigrants, and mounting attacks on the conditions of women that fall heaviest on those in the working class.

Such resistance increases interest in revolutionary literature such as the *Militant*, *PM*, and Pathfinder books and pamphlets not only among the workers and farmers engaged in these struggles, but also among youth and students who sense the political importance of such battles and are attracted toward them.

## Cuban Youth Tour

Meetings now under way for Cuban youth leaders who are speaking at college campuses and to other audiences in both the United States and Canada provide more opportunities to find students, workers, and others interested in the facts about the socialist revolution in that country and the reasons for the U.S. rulers' unrelenting eco-

nomie, political, and military pressures against Cuba.

During the tour, and continuing throughout the spring, members of the Young Socialists will also be joining with other young people to build the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, to be hosted by student and youth organizations in Cuba in July 22-30.

The exchange will be an opportunity for young people in the United States to visit Cuba and learn firsthand about the revolution. Out of these and other activities, YS members are encouraging fellow youth to participate in the World Youth Festival scheduled for later this year in Algeria.

Finding others interested in the conferences is part of the struggle to construct a worldwide anti-imperialist youth movement.

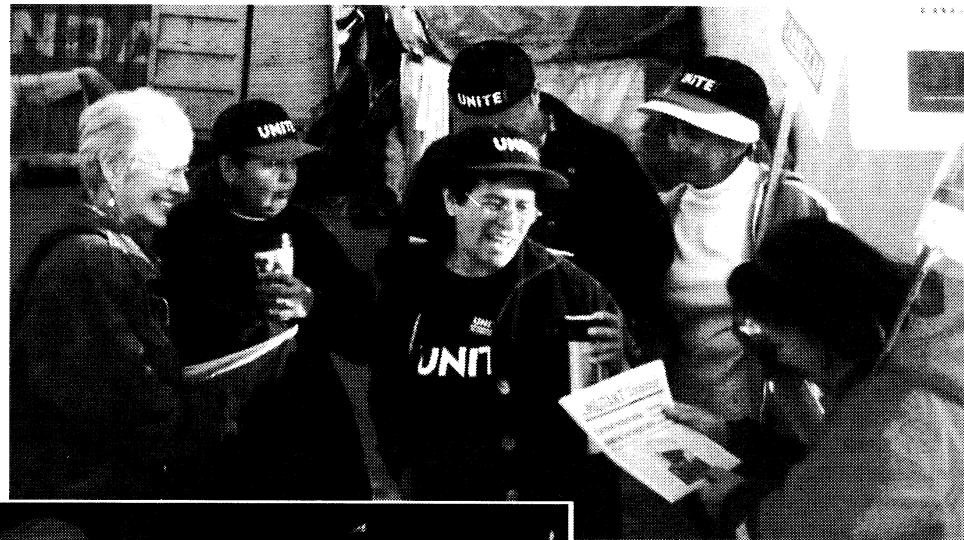
Organizing to publicize and take part in the public meetings of the Cuban youth leaders is part of preparing for the spring socialist sales campaign. Efforts to spread the truth about what the workers and farmers of Cuba have accomplished increases the numbers of young people attracted to emulating that example here and expands the openings to recruit young people to communism.

## Plans for subscription drive

Supporters of the *Militant* and *PM* are encouraged to plan the first week of the subscription drive as an all-out effort to get out the socialist press as broadly as possible.

Doing so will help systematize the political work in workers districts by branches of the Socialist Workers Party and YS members. Consistent sales of Pathfinder literature help finance the halls and bookstores where socialist workers and YS members meet to discuss and organize participation in the class struggle and political activity.

Workers carrying out communist trade union and political work in various industrial unions will also take goals to sell literature on the job, at union meetings, and



Militant/top: Al Duncan. left: Ilona Gersh Above, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Los Angeles Wendy Lyons campaigning with the *Militant* on the picket line of UNITE strikers at the Hollander Home Fashions sewing shop. Left, *Militant* campaigner introduces paper to participant at farmers action in Canada March 14. Sales drive will increase readership of among fighting workers and farmers who are hungry for revolutionary ideas.



*PM* for the first time will be publicized in these pages soon, along with local and national sales goals for them.

*Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* will include the foreword by Jack Barnes to the recently published book *Playa Giron/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández.

The new booklet will also include major excerpts from the talks given by Barnes at recent meetings in New York and Seattle to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Cuban victory and of the 1961 literacy campaign in that country; an excerpt from the book *Capitalism's World Disorder* describing the campaign by the SWP and Young Socialists in October 1962 to oppose the U.S. drive against the Cuban revolution during the so-called "missile crisis" that year; and a preface by Mary-Alice Waters.

## Winning the inevitable battles

As emphasized on the back cover of the book *Playa Giron*, Cuba's workers and farmers 40 years ago showed in practice that "with political consciousness, class solidarity, unflinching courage, and revolutionary leadership that displays an impeccable sense of timing, it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds—and win."

That political lesson is also at the heart of the new pamphlet—"organizing to win the inevitable battles," as the subtitle puts it—as well as at the heart of every issue of the *Militant* and *PM* and the entire range of Pathfinder pamphlets and books.

It is a message of great interest to every worker who's been told there's no point to fighting because they and their unions will only be weakened and crushed.

To every farmer who's been told they're on their own up against the banks and agribusiness.

To every working person who's been told there's no alternative to "tightening their belts" in face of the bipartisan offensive against social entitlements and democratic rights.

To every young person who's been told that it's just "human nature" to "look out for number one" and turn your back on human solidarity.

Join us in campaigning for socialism in the weeks to come!

# 'I have to have a copy of that book!'

BY GREG McCARTAN AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

Pathfinder supporters are getting rolling on a campaign to sell *Playa Giron/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

Participants in street tables and political events already report keen interest in Pathfinder's new titles.

"I have to have a copy of that book!" said one person who saw *Playa Giron* on a litera-

ture table in Queens. "Cuba has done so much for Africa," said a woman from West Africa as she purchased a copy in Washington Heights—one of seven people who purchased the book in either Spanish or English from tables set up in New York on March 25.

Two workers in Manhattan's garment district looked over *Playa Giron* and *Making History* at a street table but didn't have enough money to purchase the book. They bought a \$10 Pathfinder Readers Club membership instead in order to receive the special discount on the titles when they visit the local Pathfinder Bookstore later in the week.

Thirteen participants in a March 23 Militant Labor Forum on the Irish freedom struggle in San Francisco bought the book, bringing the total sold there to 35.

These responses show the interest among working people in revolutionary literature, such as *Playa Giron* and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. The campaign to sell the two titles, launched at East and West Coast meetings reported in the last two issues of the *Militant*, got a boost with the international coverage of a March 22-25 conference in Cuba on the 1961 victory of workers and peasants there over a U.S.-backed invasion (see article page 8).

Pathfinder supporters took advantage of the big-business media's coverage of the conference to encourage its supporters to start organizing to place the two books in as many bookstores as possible. "While the opportunity extends over coming weeks through the end of April, the next few days can be the key to beginning a sustained month-long effort," said Pathfinder editor Mike Taber in a letter to the publishing house's distributors.

Pathfinder supporter Fred White in At-

lanta reported that he visited a bookstore at the city's airport. "I talked with the store's book buyer about the importance of the new book and described the conference that took place in Cuba the previous weekend. He had heard something about it and became quite interested." The store ordered 40 books totaling \$725, including 10 copies of *Playa Giron*. "I also talked to him about *Capitalism's World Disorder* and its comprehensive analysis of world politics and he ordered four copies." A team to another airport store several days later sold 20 copies of *Playa Giron*, 15 in English and 5 in Spanish, plus a range of other books published by Pathfinder.

Mary Lipman from Santa Cruz got right on the phone calling stores in her area and had "quite an exciting day, including getting some orders over the phone for the new titles." Three stores purchased seven copies of *Playa Giron*, one of *Making History*, and two of another new Pathfinder title, *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia*.

## Workers at Royal laundry win union drive

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

MIAMI—Five hundred laundry workers gained union recognition in mid-March, after a months-long campaign at Royal Linen industrial laundry. The company agreed to recognize the United Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) at plants in Miami, Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco, and Los Angeles after the union turned in authorization cards signed by a big majority of workers. Laundry workers at Royal Linen in New York had already won recognition. Workers at the laundries clean blankets and other

linens for American Airlines.

This victory comes on the heels of others won by laundry workers over the last year, including a successful strike for union recognition at Five Star Linen in Chicago and a militant strike for a contract at Tartan Textile in Pompano Beach, Florida. UNITE has reached a tentative contract agreement with Royal Linen, and a vote on the contract is expected in the next weeks.

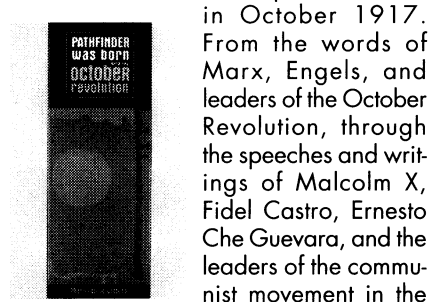
Michael Italie is a garment worker. Lisa Potash, a member of UNITE in Chicago, contributed to the article.

### for further reading

#### Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution

Mary-Alice Waters

Explains the origins of Pathfinder Press as part of the forces that arose on a world scale to defend and emulate the first socialist revolution of our epoch in Russia



in October 1917. From the words of Marx, Engels, and leaders of the October Revolution, through the speeches and writings of Malcolm X, Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and the leaders of the communist movement in the

United States today, Waters writes, "Pathfinder lets revolutionaries speak for themselves, in their own words." Also available in Spanish. \$3.00.

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

# Argentine rulers shift austerity moves in face of mass protests

BY RÓGER CALERO

Following mass protests by working people and students March 20–21 against government austerity measures that target social spending, Argentina's wealthy capitalist rulers quickly moved to back alternative proposals put forward by the new economy minister, Domingo Cavallo.

Cavallo asked Argentina's Congress for emergency powers to try to pull the country out of a nearly three-year recession and to generate funds needed to make interest payments on what the World Bank reports is a \$150 billion foreign debt owed to U.S. banks and other financial institutions. Cavallo says he will reorganize state agencies, restructure the tax system, privatize state banks and enterprises, and directly attack the working class by altering the labor code and pensions, and firing or cutting the wages of state workers.

Cavallo, the third person to occupy the ministry post in less than a month, was appointed by Argentine president Fernando de la Rúa after Cavallo's predecessor, Ricardo López Murphy, was forced to resign after his proposed austerity plan was met with protests by workers and students and the resignation of several government ministers.

Cavallo's new economic plan, called the Competitiveness Bill, will sharpen trade disputes among South American nations as the government aims to cut imports and boost exports. Tariffs on imports of consumer goods from outside the Mercosur trade bloc, which includes Brazil, Paraguay, and Uru-

guay will be increased up to 35 percent, while taxes on imported capital goods will be eliminated as an incentive to encourage foreign investment. Cavallo says he aims to boost industrial productivity by 20 percent as part of this drive.

Cavallo traveled to Brazil to meet with his counterparts. The instability of Argentina's economy, the lack of economic growth in Brazil, and a slowdown in the U.S. economy have forced the Brazilian government to take steps to stabilize its weakening currency.

"The best gesture of our neighbors has been to understand the emergency that Argentina is in and to give full support to the measures we are taking," said Cavallo, referring to the Brazilian government's response of support to Cavallo's plan. Before leaving Brazil, Cavallo also rejected rumors circulating about President De la Rúa's resignation due to the political turmoil.

Hugo Moyano, a leader of the dissident wing of the Confederation of Labor (CGT), which led what the *New York Times* called a "damaging 24-hour strike" March 21, said unions would not stop their protests. "I don't believe Cavallo's policies will remove the country from its crisis," he said. "They always postpone the social needs of the people."

Cavallo claims that his plan would result in strong economic growth this year and would reduce unemployment and the foreign debt. Argentina's official unemployment rate is currently at around 15 percent. Some 30



Some 50,000 people, including mothers of the "disappeared," rallied in Buenos Aires March 24 to mark 25th anniversary of military coup that unleashed terror in Argentina. Some protesters compared government repression to current austerity policies.

percent of the population lives below the government designated poverty line.

Cavallo also claims that he will carry out his economic measures without devaluing the peso or ending the decade-old currency board system, which he was responsible for introducing under the government of Carlos Menem in the early 1990s. This system pegged the peso to the dollar at a one-to-one exchange rate. Given the strength of the U.S. dollar on world markets, Argentina's exports have become relatively expensive.

## Debate on extent of powers

The divisions inside the Argentine government that came to the fore in the face of

popular resistance after former economy minister López introduced what some politicians now call a "ridiculous plan," continued in the debate over granting minister Cavallo sweeping executive powers.

After more than 14 hours of debate in congress, the legislature granted limited emergency powers to de la Rúa, not to Cavallo. The measure did not include the authority Cavallo sought to privatize state enterprises, modify labor laws and state pensions, or to fire state employees or cut their wages.

Despite reassurances by the Argentine government that it would not default on its debt payments, wealthy imperialist investors are clearly worried. The *Buenos Aires Herald* reports a Bear Stearns analyst saying that the Argentine government has the money to meet a payment of \$400 million due on March 30. But after that, all bets are off.

On March 24 an estimated 50,000 people marched to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the military coup that brought to power a bloody dictatorship that was responsible for the death of an estimated 30,000 people. A *Financial Times* article observed, "Many draw comparisons between the military coup of 1976 and the market-based economic model that has followed the return to democracy." One banner read, "The coup—terror of blood. The market—terror of hunger."

A 36-hour national strike called by the country's labor federations is set to occur April 5–6. With López's resignation, the Argentine government and media have attempted to demobilize the workers and students by calling the protests "illogical" since they were aimed at a plan that had already been rejected when Cavallo came into office.

The *Financial Times* article stated, "Left-wing parties, trade unions, and community groups that organized the Saturday [March 24] march blame him [Cavallo] for the job losses and austerity that accompanied reform."

## NOW calls national march for abortion rights

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The National Organization for Women (NOW) has called a national action to defend abortion rights to take place Sunday, April 22, in Washington, D.C. Nearly 60 groups are sponsoring the event, including Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL), the National Black Women's Health Project, the Feminist Majority, Catholics for a Free Choice, and the National Asian Women's Health Organization.

The rally will assemble at 11:00 a.m. in Upper Senate Park at Constitution and Delaware Avenues.

Some NOW chapters and other groups which support women's rights are organizing buses to travel to the event. Meetings to organize publicity and participation are taking place in Chicago, New York, Pittsburgh, and other cities. Information on the event, as well as a fact sheet in English and Spanish and a flyer, are available at NOW's web

site at [www.now.org](http://www.now.org).

Under successive Democratic and Republican party administrations on both the state and federal level, legislators have passed many laws restricting access to abortion. These measures include mandatory delay and biased counseling laws, funding restrictions, and forced parental consent and involvement laws. In recent years, many states have passed bans on an abortion procedure that opponents of women's rights call "partial birth abortion."

These restrictions hit working-class women in disproportionate numbers. Since 1976, when the Hyde Amendment was passed by Congress, virtually no federal Medicaid or other federal funds may be used for abortion. As a report by the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy explains, the "ability to obtain an abortion, especially early in pregnancy when the procedure is safer, is directly related to the capacity to afford one. In effect, many indigent women

were deprived of their right to choose."

In addition, the wholesale bipartisan assault on working people has had a disproportionate impact on workers and farmers who are women. For example, the elimination of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, a key plank of former president William Clinton's policies, has increasingly pushed workers, in particular single women with children, into a precarious existence.

Shortly after taking office, President George Bush reinstated a policy which eliminates international funding to organizations that offer abortion counseling or lobby their governments in favor of abortion rights.

In a victory for women's rights, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled March 21 that a public hospital cannot administer drug tests to pregnant women without their consent. The 6-to-3 decision held that tests of pregnant women for cocaine, conducted by the staff of the Medical University of South Carolina in collaboration with Charleston, South Carolina, police, violated constitutional protections against illicit search and seizure. All but one of the 30 women arrested under the policy were Black.

## Chicago socialists protest break-in

BY JOEL BRITTON

CHICAGO—Lisa Potash, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress in the 5th district here last year, protested the "possible politically motivated break-in" that took place March 24 or 25 at party's offices.

Filing cabinet drawers were left open by whoever forced their way through the front door of Pathfinder Books & Libros, which rents space to the SWP, the Socialist Workers Campaign Committee, and the Young Socialists.

The Militant Labor Forum holds regular free speech forums at the store, open to the working-class public. The forum a week before the break-in featured Illinois farmer Don Brown Jr., a leader of the fight of working farmers to stay on the land. Brown, a diversified farmer and past president of the Illinois Grasslands and Forage Council, had expressed interest in helping meat packers on strike at Rochelle Foods, a subsidiary of Hormel, in Rochelle, Illinois. Brown normally sells his hogs to nearby Rochelle Foods but agreed that if the company moves to bring in strikebreakers, farmers should demonstrate their solidarity with the strikers and seek other markets for their hogs.

A small amount of cash in the offices'

refreshments stand was undisturbed and a TV, computers, and other items of value were not taken.

In a statement released to the media on March 26, Potash pointed to "the recent court ruling that lifts some restrictions on the right of the Chicago police to spy and harass political activists. The decision helps create an atmosphere where such attacks can more easily take place." Potash, a garment worker and union member, was referring to the 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on January 11, which substantially reversed the provisions of a 1981 federal consent decree that had placed limited restrictions on the actions of the Chicago police department's "red squad."

Another tenant in the building reports that several days before the break-in, a man and woman were noisily shaking the door to the socialists' offices and, when confronted, spewed anti-communist rhetoric before departing.

The break-in occurred a couple days after two Cuban youth leaders had arrived in Chicago for a speaking tour on area campuses. Members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party are active participants in a broad committee organizing the tour.

## NY to pay \$8.6 million in Louima case

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The New York City government and the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association agreed to pay a combined \$8.6 million to Haitian immigrant Abner Louima, who was tortured in a Brooklyn police station in 1997. Attorneys for Louima announced the tentative settlement March 22.

Two policemen assaulted Louima on Aug. 9, 1997, in the bathroom of the police precinct station house where one cop, Justin Volpe, forced a broken broomstick into Louima's rectum while another cop, Charles Schwarz, held him down. Volpe then shoved the stick into the man's mouth.

Louima incurred severe internal injuries including a ruptured bladder and colon. After being tortured he waited more than two hours before an ambulance took him to the Coney Island Hospital for treatment.

The news of the assault sparked a firestorm of outrage and protests by Haitians and other working people in the city.

Some 7,000 people rallied in New York one week after the police violence to de-

mand justice. The demonstrations forced city prosecutors to file criminal charges against the cops involved in the attack on Louima.

U.S. District Judge Eugene Nickerson, who presided over the federal trial of Volpe remarked, "Short of intentional murder, one cannot imagine a more barbaric act...and the deep depravity of this crime...through the use of force."

Volpe was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in federal prison while Schwarz was convicted and given 15 years for pinning the man down during the attack and lying about his actions. Four other cops were convicted of covering up for Schwarz or lying about the case.

Initially Volpe pled not guilty in his federal trial, but changed his plea to guilty and confessed to the bestial act when four cops testified they saw him waving a stick around the time of the attack. "I took a man down tonight," he bragged to other cops. At his trial Volpe admitted, "I threatened to kill [Louima] if he told anyone."



# October Crisis and the U.S. class struggle

Reprinted below is an excerpt from remarks made by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, during the discussion period at a Militant Labor Forum entitled "The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's Culture War: What the 1992 Elections Revealed." The forum, at which Barnes was the featured speaker, took place in New York City on Nov. 7, 1992, four days after the U.S. presidential elections. The entire presentation is printed in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY JACK BARNES

Last month many of us watched television specials marking the thirtieth anniversary of what is called the "Cuban missile crisis" in the United States. In Cuba it is called the October Crisis, since it was not really about missiles; it was about Washington's unsuccessful effort in October 1962 to destroy the socialist revolution in Cuba. I think there were five network specials on the crisis last month. The three I saw were extremely interesting. It would be useful for communist workers to get the videotapes of a couple and play them for fellow workers; many productive political discussions would result.

The interviews, documents, and other materials used in these programs confirm things that many of us have long believed to be true, things that have generally been covered up or denied by the U.S. rulers and their bipartisan political spokespersons. Above all, they establish once and for all that an invasion to crush the socialist revolution in Cuba was being prepared by Washington, by the Kennedy administration. Previously secret government documents that have been recently released bear out what communists in Cuba and in the United States have explained for three decades—and what has been obvious to any objective observer of what the U.S. government has *done*, no matter what it has *said*. Using these records, the TV documentaries reported on the rising economic sabotage against Cuba in the early 1960s; the campaign of U.S.-organized terror and attempted assassinations carried out under the code name Operation Mongoose; and the large-scale preparations for a U.S. military assault aimed at doing what the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion had miserably failed to accomplish—crushing the revolution.<sup>1</sup>

But I was struck in watching all of these documentaries by an inaccuracy that gave me a new insight into the importance of the political leverage communists have today through the use of our propaganda arsenal. Each of them portrayed what was happening in the United States at the time as universal mass hysteria. But if you lived through the missile crisis as a political person, as a revolutionist, you know that was not true.

The TV specials showed residents of the United States running into grocery stores to buy canned goods, taking them home, putting them in shelters, and carrying out air raid drills in schools and workplaces. The idea that everybody in the United States in 1962 joined together as "we Americans" and just waited in a patriotic panic for the Kennedys to incinerate the world is utterly inaccurate.

I lived through those days as a young per-



Above, Granma. Right, Militant Above, Cuban militia members load artillery shells during the October 1962 missile crisis. Right, picket line at United Nations in New York demanding "Hands off Cuba" in the same month. Marching are SWP candidates for public office in New York, Sylvia Weinstein, Richard Garza, and Allen Taplin. Working-class vanguard participated along with tens of thousands of others to oppose threatened U.S. invasion of Cuba, and organized to use and defend political space in the working class.

son and as a relatively new member of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party. I know from my own experience that there were thousands of people in the United States who worked round the clock to stop Washington from invading Cuba. We did not stock up on canned goods. In fact, we did not buy much of anything. We were too busy—we hardly had time to eat. We were organizing people to come down to the picket lines. I remember marching in downtown Chicago across the street from a Woolworth store, for example, where we had picketed earlier in support of civil rights sit-in fighters. Some people who worked at the store came out and supported the picket line.

## Response by communist movement

This single-minded effort was the response of the overwhelming majority of Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance members of all generations. They responded to Washington's heightened war threats against Cuba with the immediacy of a revolutionary fighting instinct. This political course was discussed and decided by the party's Political Committee and the Young Socialist Alliance National Executive Committee and was carried in the news coverage, analysis, and editorial line in the pages of the *Militant*.

Pressures originating in bourgeois public opinion got translated into petty-bourgeois hysteria at such times, however, and these pressures are never without an echo inside the communist movement. The orga-



nizer of the Berkeley YSA, for example, literally jumped on his Kawasaki motorbike and rode off into the hills for several days in October 1962. The rest of the cadres noticed he was gone, but they didn't miss a beat. In the tense days following the assassination of U.S. President John Kennedy a year later, as the media was playing up reports that Lee Harvey Oswald was a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the same comrade went jelly-bellied again. Late one night he knocked on the apartment door of two other members of the chapter's executive committee and in a panicky voice informed them that, "as the new, young secondary leadership," they should be prepared to take charge.

But by then the Berkeley YSA was qualitatively stronger than a year before. The self-styled "primary leadership" was soon removed by decisive vote of the chapter's members and the "secondary leadership" became the new executive committee. The former organizer and the rest of the first string rapidly decided they had joined the wrong movement and went on their way.

The party went through a similar experience—and registered similar accomplishments—at the time of the near meltdown of the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor in 1979.

A bolshevik party is not and does not try to be monolithic. It does, however, strive for political homogeneity and common struggle experience to prepare for our inevitable responsibilities. In the crunch, it has had a helluva batting average.

## Political space inside working class

One of the most difficult things for capitalism's propagandists to understand and portray accurately is how a political vanguard of the working class reaches out to others to use and defend *political space*—as we did during the October missile crisis. Communists have no schemas or timetables. But we do know that the tensions inevitably rising from world capitalism's depression conditions and its inexorable march toward fascism and war keep leading not only to unanticipated crises, but also to resistance out of which vanguard workers can build a movement. Right now, we can anticipate that growing interest among working people and youth in radical ideas ignored by them in the past—or rejected without serious study—will keep ahead of the pace of mass popular struggles.

But these political realities cannot even be seen, much less understood, unless we recognize the space that exists inside the working class and the unions—space that can be used by revolutionary-minded workers to practice politics. This space is not seen or registered by anything in bourgeois public opinion. It can only be seen from inside the working class and the unions. It can best be seen by workers who are communists who are *using* that space to talk politics with other workers, to promote revolutionary literature, to bring co-workers and their unions into fights around social and political issues, and to participate in guerrilla skirmishes around conditions on the job. Without using this political space, the tensions just seem like tensions, the openings are missed, and the space will be diminished over time.

## Working-class vanguard, political space

As I was watching those television specials last month, I realized that as a young revolutionist during the missile crisis I had learned a little bit about using political space. I was not fully conscious at the time of everything I was learning, but it turned out to be very useful. That is why I was so struck by the inaccuracy of that aspect of the documentaries. There are people at this meeting tonight—not a whole lot, but not just two or three either—who became different people during those ten days in October 1962, and not because they went out and bought canned goods. They developed a deeper political relationship with others in the YSA and SWP who were working together unflinchingly along the same lines.

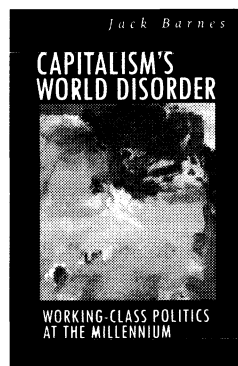
During the crisis, I never thought there was going to be a nuclear war. I am not misremembering—I genuinely never thought so. I did know that the U.S. rulers were driving to start a war to crush the socialist revolution in Cuba, and I knew that they would put the future of the world in stupendous danger if they did so. So, like thousands of others, I spent day and night trying to stop that from happening. We saw there was space to do this, and we used it. What is more, as we did so we won some new, young fighters to the communist movement who were strengthened and given greater staying power by the test of fire.

Today there are opportunities to win a new generation of revolutionists to the Socialist Workers Party. Many of them right now will not initially come out of a revitalized labor movement. Through the proletarian party, however, they can be won to join in building a leadership that can organize the working class to make a popular revolution and prevent the fascist devastation and world war that capitalism is dragging humanity toward. Fighters from this generation will reach out to find parties of revolutionists who are workers, revolutionists who have some experience in the class struggle. They will want to emulate communist workers who have learned to defend and use space within the organizations of the working class, and who can show them how to do politics—how to do *working-class politics*, a differentiation most of these fighters will not have thought about beforehand.

This is the kind of working-class experience that nobody will ever get through election campaigns. This is the kind of politics that for bourgeois public opinion does not exist.

<sup>1</sup> On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The action, organized by Washington, aimed to establish a "provisional government" to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. The invaders, however, were defeated within seventy-two hours by Cuba's militia and its Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the name Cubans use to designate the battle. The day before the abortive invasion, at a mass rally called to honor those killed or wounded in U.S.-organized attacks on airfields in Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and San Antonio de los Baños, Fidel Castro had proclaimed the socialist character of the revolution in Cuba and called the people of Cuba to arms in its defense.

From Pathfinder



## Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

Jack Barnes

"The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. They offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future."

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# 'We knew we were defending the gains of the Cuban Revolution'

## Cubans at conference: 1961 defeat of Washington at Bay of Pigs was not a U.S. victory

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

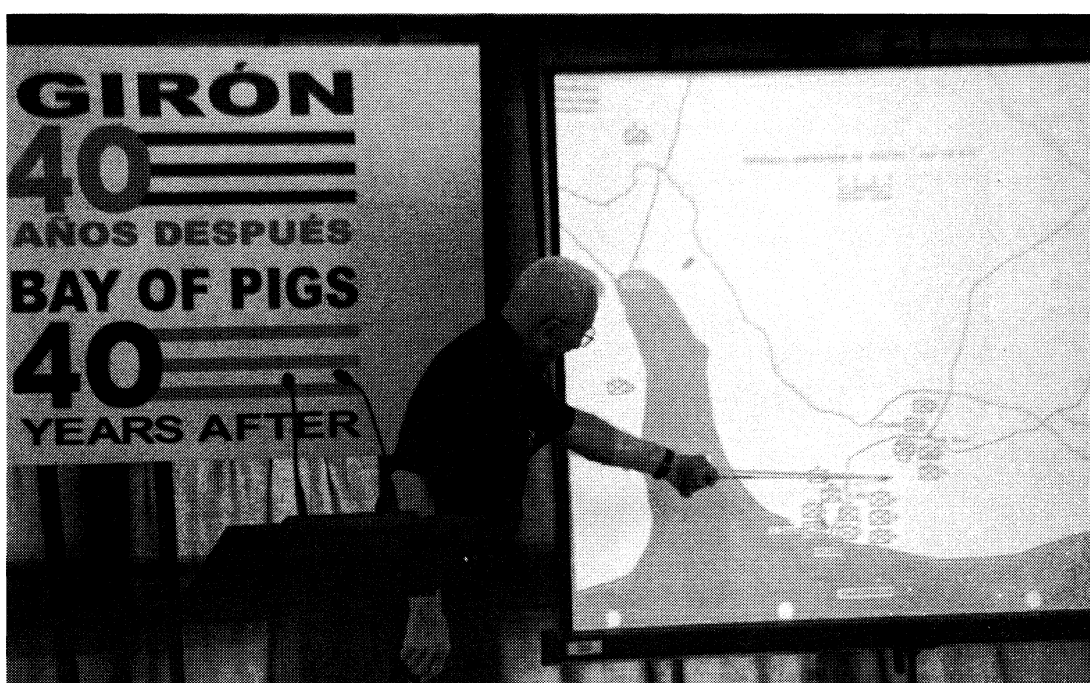
HAVANA—Alberto Fernández had never been in combat before facing the U.S.-organized invaders at the Bay of Pigs. But the then-22-year-old former crop duster flew nine missions between April 17 and 19, 1961. He and other members of Cuba's fledgling revolutionary air force shot down nine B-26 bombers flown by the invading Cuban exiles and sank two of their U.S.-organized transport and supply ships.

"We knew what we were fighting for—our sovereignty and the conquests of our revolution," said Fernández. "They were fighting to recover their lost properties."

Alberto Fernández was standing next to one of the Sea Fury planes used by the Cuban forces in the three-day battle repelling invaders at the Bay of Pigs—known in Cuba as Playa Girón, the beach where the main force of mercenary troops surrendered. The plane is in front of the Playa Girón museum, located at the scene of the battle.

The former pilot was one of the participants at a March 22–24 United States-Cuba conference hosted in Havana on "Girón: 40 Years After." The exchange was one of the events being held to mark the 40th anniversary of Cuba's victory, in which an invasion force of 1,500 Cuban counterrevolutionaries—trained, armed, financed, and deployed by the U.S. government—was crushed in less than 72 hours by Cuba's revolutionary militias, police, and Rebel Army.

Alberto Fernández's observation on why



Militant/Martin Koppel

José Ramón Fernández, vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers, describes battle of Playa Girón at closing of March 22–24 conference, "Girón: 40 Years After." Fernández, chair of the conference organizing committee, led the main column of Cuban forces that defeated the U.S.-organized invasion in April 1961. "What decided the victory and the defeat," Fernández told U.S. and Cuban participants, was that Cuban working people "knew they were defending the gains of the revolution."

revolutionary Cuba prevailed over Washington was reiterated by other Cuban participants during the course of the three-day event, which concluded with a tour of the Bay of Pigs area.

### Not a U.S. fiasco but a Cuban victory

Speaking at the end of the first day of the

conference, Jorge Hernández, head of the University of Havana's Center for the Study of the United States, noted that the U.S.-sponsored invasion at the Bay of Pigs is often attributed to CIA "blunders" and "vacillations" of the Kennedy administration.

It was not a battle lost by Washington, he insisted, but "a victory won by the Cuban people—organized and armed through their revolutionary militias and their revolutionary leadership."

José Ramón Fernández, vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers and chair of the conference organizing committee, spoke to the press prior to the conference about the main lessons of the battle at the Bay of Pigs. "What decided the victory and the defeat is that the militia forces and patriotic troops participating were strongly aware of what they were defending," said Fernández, who led the main column of the Cuban revolutionary forces in that battle.

"They knew they were defending the gains of the revolution, its factories, its sugar mills, its literacy campaign and education, its public health, social justice, the elimination of racial discrimination and the dignity of knowing they were the representatives and defenders of a sovereign people."

In contrast, Fernández emphasized, "The invaders were at a great disadvantage: they weren't coming to defend any achievements, they weren't coming to defend their country, they were coming to

try to regain their privileges, riches, and positions, and men are not prepared to give up their lives for those causes."

"The main factor in any armed conflict," he added, "more important than all its weaponry, is the human element and the reasons that impel people to fight."

At the end of the conference, speaking to participants during the visit to the Bay of Pigs, Fernández explained that "Playa Girón was an inevitable battle." He noted that "it was the culmination of a stage of the U.S. efforts to destroy the Cuban Revolution."

A year and a half of sabotage, assassination attempts, and other acts of escalating aggression by Washington against the Cuban Revolution and its leadership had begun soon after millions of Cubans overthrew a U.S.-backed dictatorship in January 1959 and embarked on a deep-going social revolution. Cuba's victory at Playa Girón was a bone in the throat for U.S. imperialism, however, and Washington immediately launched a new stage of aggression that culminated 18 months later in the October 1962 "missile" crisis and U.S. naval

blockade of Cuba. To this day, Fernández noted, Washington's hostility continues.

During the conference revolutionary Cuban combatants exchanged experiences and views about these events with some former Kennedy administration advisors, CIA officials, and members of Brigade 2506, Washington's Cuban-American invasion force. Professors and researchers from both countries also participated.

The gathering, organized as an academic event, was sponsored by the University of Havana through its Center for the Study of the United States as well as three other Cuban research centers. The U.S. delegation was organized by researchers Peter Kornbluh and Thomas Blanton of George Washington University's National Security Archive, which has worked since 1985 to declassify and publish government documents, including on the U.S.-Cuba conflict.

The Cuban delegation of several dozen participants included a number of revolutionary combatants who took part in the Bay of Pigs battle. Among them, besides Fernández, were Enrique Carreras, one of Cuba's ace pilots during the battle; Efigenio Ameijeiras and Samuel Rodiles, then commander and deputy commander respectively of the Revolutionary National Police; Angel Jiménez, in charge of the Militia Leadership School at that time; Pedro Miret, artillery chief of one of the columns; and Ramiro Valdés.

Cuban commander-in-chief, President Fidel Castro, took part in almost the entire conference and commented that this was the first time in 40 years all the leading Cuban officers involved in Playa Girón had themselves met together.

### U.S. delegation

The more than 50 U.S. participants included former Kennedy advisors Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Goodwin; ex-CIA officials Robert Reynolds and Samuel Halpern; and five former members of Brigade 2506, as well as two members of the Kennedy family. A dozen U.S. academics also attended, such as James Blight of Brown University, Philip Brenner of American University, Max Azicri of the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, and Jorge Domínguez of Harvard University.

The conference included panels on four topics: the U.S. government's actions leading up to the Bay of Pigs invasion, how revolutionary Cuba responded, how the battle unfolded, and its aftermath and lessons. While sessions were not open to the media, the organizers held several press conferences to report on highlights.

Schlesinger, expressing the view of some in the U.S. delegation, sought to downplay Kennedy's responsibility for the April 1961 invasion of Cuba by saying that Kennedy had inherited Republican



Granma

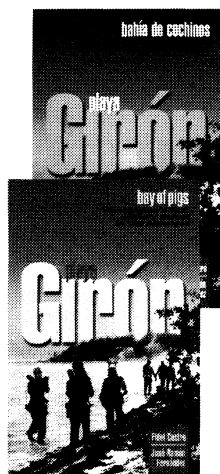
May Day 1961 rally in Havana, shortly after Bay of Pigs victory. Banner says, "Workers in power." In the battle against the U.S.-backed invasion, a turning point in the Cuban Revolution, "the Cuban people were fighting in defense of socialism," Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, told conference participants.

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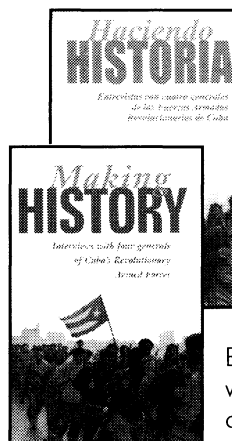


### Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas

In less than two hours of combat during April 1961 near the Bay of Pigs, Cuba's revolutionary militias, police, and armed forces defeated an invasion by 1,500 mercenaries armed, trained, supported, and deployed by Washington. In the process, the Cuban people not only transformed their country and themselves, but set an example for workers and farmers across the Americas and the world. With political consciousness, class solidarity, unflinching courage, and a revolutionary leadership displaying an impeccable

sense of timing, it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds—and win. Forty years later the U.S. rulers can still neither accept nor extinguish this example. Foreword by Jack Barnes. In English and Spanish. \$20.

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### Making History Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces

Interviews with Cuban generals Néstor López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, José Ramón Fernández, and Harry Villegas. Through the stories of these outstanding revolutionaries—three of them leaders of the Cuban forces at the

Bay of Pigs that defeated the invaders within 72 hours—we can see the class dynamics that have shaped our entire epoch. We can understand

how the people of Cuba, as they struggle to build a new society, have for more than 40 years held Washington at bay. With an introduction by Mary-Alice Waters. In English and Spanish. \$15.95.

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# of the revolution'

## .S. blunder but a Cuban victory

president Dwight Eisenhower's plans for such a military operation. "Kennedy was trapped and decided to let it go ahead," he asserted. If Kennedy had demobilized the mercenary brigade, Schlesinger added, he would have faced a "disposal problem" with its former members.

The Cuban hosts set a tone of civil exchange among the U.S. and Cuban participants in order to "discuss the viewpoints of each side in a respectful manner, with the aim of analyzing and clarifying the facts," as Fernández explained in opening the conference. He noted that members of Brigade 2506 during the conference would not be called mercenaries to avoid offending those brigade members taking part in the event. Some of the Cuban combatants admitted, with a wry touch, that they had a hard time finding another term to describe the U.S.-financed invasion force.

One exchange took place between Enrique Carreras and a former Brigade 2506 member, Mario Cabello. In the April 1961 battle, Carreras sank two U.S. transport ships off the Bay of Pigs, the *Houston* and *Rio Escondido*. Fidel Castro, commander-in-chief of the Cuban forces, had ordered the ships be sunk to cut off supplies to the mercenaries and to prevent them from escaping.

Cabello, who had been aboard the *Houston*, told Carreras it was a good thing he hit the ship below the waterline, because the U.S. vessel, smoldering from an earlier hit, was loaded with fuel and probably would have exploded if it had not begun to sink and fill with water. Castro remarked, "See, Carreras saved your life!" Carreras, now a division general, shook with laughter.

At one conference session José Ramón Fernández explained that he had ordered his soldiers not to fire on the two U.S. Navy destroyers off the coast in order to avoid a direct confrontation with Washington's armed forces. He had decided to hold fire before receiving such orders from Fidel Castro. Castro remarked that it was a good thing Fernández made that decision. Instead, the Cuban forces fired on the land-

ing boats and cut off the invaders' means of escape, while the U.S. warships withdrew and virtually the entire invading force was captured.

The meeting drew on several declassified documents related to the Bay of Pigs that were recently released by both the U.S. and Cuban governments. These documents do not reveal anything that alters previous understanding of the events, but rather, as Fernández noted, confirm that the revolutionary government has told the truth from the beginning, unlike Washington.

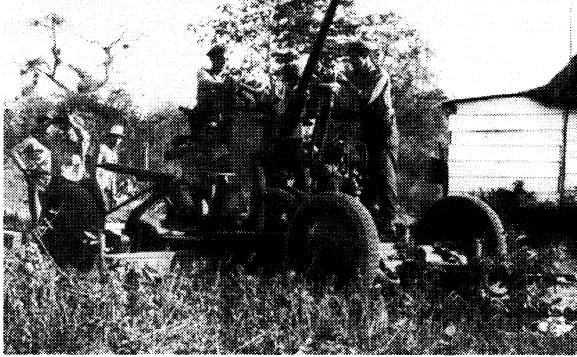
### Decisiveness of Cuban leadership

The several hundred pages released by the Cuban government include documents that are particularly interesting. One is a collective transcript of all the directives given by Castro to officers in the field—by telephone, in writing, and in person—from the early hours of April 17 through the defeat of the invading force two days later. They capture the Cuban leadership's decisiveness, timing, courage, and concern for the ranks, factors that helped ensure a rapid and overwhelming victory over the counterrevolutionary troops.

Another declassified document is a September 1961 report by Fernández to the central command detailing the operations by the Cuban armed forces against the invaders hour by hour. As part of its balance sheet, the report cites the weaknesses and errors of the Cuban forces, including his own. At the conference, Fernández noted that the commission reviewing the documents for declassification had proposed blacking out those sections of his report before releasing it. "I had my reservations about blacking them out, but I accepted the decision. However, it was the commander-in-chief, Fidel, who overruled the recommendation. He insisted that the entire report be declassified."



Top: Militant/Martin Koppel. Left: Granma  
Top: Alberto Fernández, Cuban participant in conference on Bay of Pigs invasion, in front of plane flown in the battle. Fernández, a 22-year-old former crop duster in 1961, and other members of Cuba's fledgling revolutionary air force shot down nine U.S. bombers and sank two transport and supply ships backing them up. "We knew what we were fighting for—our sovereignty and the conquests of our revolution," he said. Left: Combatants at Playa Girón preparing for battle against invasion force.



Subsequent *Militant* coverage will report further on these Cuban documents.

One of the declassified U.S. government papers circulated at the conference is a report written by former White House advisor Richard Goodwin to President John F. Kennedy on an August 1961 conversation between himself and Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution. The meeting had been requested by Che at the time of an Organization of American States conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay. While the fact and content of Goodwin's account have long been known, and the memo itself was declassified in 1993, it had never before been publicly released.

Goodwin reports, "Guevara began by saying that I must understand the Cuban revolution. They intend to build a socialist state, and the revolution they have begun is irreversible. They are also now out of the U.S. sphere of influence, and that too

is irreversible."

At the end of the report, Goodwin says that Guevara "went on to say that he wanted to thank us very much for the invasion—that it had been a great political victory for them—enabled them to consolidate—and transformed them from an aggrieved little country to an equal."

At the conclusion of the conference at Playa Girón, Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, made a similar point. The most important lesson of the battle at Playa Girón, Alarcón said, was that Washington must learn that "the Cuban people will never renounce their struggle to defend their sovereignty and independence."

"The Cuban people were fighting in defense of socialism," Alarcón said, and that their victory marked a turning point in the Cuban Revolution.

This fact was apparent among working  
**Continued on Page 10**

## Conference event presents books on Playa Girón

HAVANA—Organizers of the March 22–24 conference on "Girón: 40 Years After" scheduled a presentation of several new books on the subject during the second afternoon of the gathering.

These included *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández, just published in English and Spanish by Pathfinder Press, as well as *The U.S. War Against Cuba*, by José Ramón Fernández and José Pérez Fernández, and a collection of excerpts from speeches about Playa Girón by Fidel Castro, both newly published by Ocean Press. All conference participants were given copies of these new titles, as well as books by U.S. organizers of the conference: *Bay of Pigs Declassified*, edited by Peter Kornbluh, and *Politics of Illusion: The Bay of Pigs Invasion Reexamined*, edited by Kornbluh and James Blight, both published in 1998.

José Ramón Fernández, vice president of Cuba's Council of State and chair of the conference organizing committee, presented the books. In his closing remarks, he said the new titles were contributions to the effort to explain the facts about the victory at Playa Girón, letting leading Cuban participants in those events speak in their own words.

Fernández pointed to the value of the efforts of those in the United States who get out the truth about the Cuban Revolution. These books, he said, contain "lessons for the new generations, both in Cuba and the United States who—40 years after these events—still look to us."

Brief remarks were also made by Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder president and co-editor of *Playa Girón*, and David Deutschmann of Ocean Press.

As part of their daily coverage of the conference, Cuban television news and the news-

paper *Granma* reported on the book presentation. TV cameras zoomed in on the striking cover of Pathfinder's *Playa Girón*.

Reprinted below are the remarks by Mary-Alice Waters. Her talk is copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

—MARTÍN KOPPEL

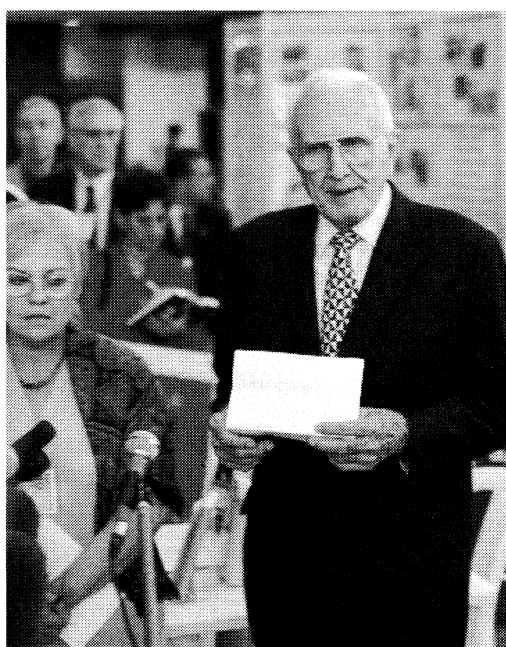
### BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The strength of *Playa Girón / Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* lies in its unique combination of speeches and documents by leaders of the Cuban Revolution, leaders deeply involved in the events of the time and whose actions were decisive in the victory of the Cuban people on the sands of Girón. Above all, Pathfinder hopes it will be a source of information and orientation for young people, in the United States and elsewhere around the world, born many years after the historic events that are at the center of this conference.

It is addressed to these new generations who are trying to understand what happened at the Bay of Pigs. Why, even 40 years later, do the U.S. rulers remain so ferocious in their determination to crush the Cuban Revolution? Why and how were the people of Cuba able to inflict a defeat on the Yankee empire so total and ignominious that it remains an example today that continues to inspire the oppressed and exploited the world over?

*Playa Girón* contains major excerpts from the speeches of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro immediately before and after the battle. In the heat of the moment, he explains what was happening in Cuba and the world, and the stakes for us all in "the inevitable battle."

In these pages we can read the war



Militant/Martin Koppel  
José Ramón Fernández, whose firsthand testimony on April 1961 battle is featured in new Pathfinder book *Playa Girón* speaks at event during Havana conference presenting several new titles.

communiqués of the revolutionary government and its armed forces. We read the calls to battle issued by Commanders Raúl Castro to the people of Oriente province and Ernesto Che Guevara to the people of Pinar del Rio on April 15, 1961, each within hours of the deadly sneak attacks on the Havana and Santiago de Cuba airfields that signaled the imminent invasion.

Those pieces of the historic record give readers a feel for the passion, intensity, and determination of the moment—for the confidence of the Cuban people in their socialist revolution and their leadership.

Truth, justice, history, and the vast majority of toiling humanity were on their side. They did not know what the cost would be, but they knew they would win.

Complementing the documents of the time is the second major component of *Playa Girón*, the testimony given before a Havana court nearly 40 years later by José Ramón Fernández, the captain who commanded the main column of revolutionary forces that defeated the U.S.-backed invading troops at Playa Girón. From the vantage point of his own responsibilities, Fernández's account, amplified with nearly two dozen maps and charts, provides a clear and concise picture of the battle as it actually unfolded.

But the power of this testimony is also rooted in the fact that Fernández draws extensively on the major accounts, memoirs, and evaluations written by those within the U.S. government and its agencies, including members of Brigade 2506, who organized, deployed, and participated in the invasion that was designed to be the opening wedge of direct U.S. military aggression against Cuba. Their assessments provide stark confirmation of the truths explained many times over by the revolutionary leadership of Cuba.

*Playa Girón* is a book whose major audience in the coming months and years will be young readers, especially in the United States. Addressed to them above all is the book's foreword describing the impact of the Cuban Revolution on a generation of young people within the United States at the time of Washington's first great defeat in the Americas.

That was a generation whose consciousness had already been forged in action supporting the rising mass proletarian struggle

**Continued on Page 10**

# Defense in Miami trial exposes anti-Cuba lies

Continued from front page  
down over international waters.

According to the Cuban government's account, corroborated in part by Buchner, the invasion of Cuban airspace on Feb. 24, 1996, was the second hostile incursion that day by the same type of aircraft, and the 10th such violation of Cuban territory over the previous 20 months, involving some 30 planes.

Throughout this period, Washington had known about these escalating provocations and permitted them to continue. Prosecution witness Charles Leonard, an aviation expert, said in cross-examination by defense attorneys March 1 that Brothers to the Rescue pilots repeatedly violated Cuban air space. He acknowledged that Havana had repeatedly warned Washington that the planes might be downed if they persisted in their provocative flights.

While the major national television networks, daily papers, and news agencies in the United States gave headline coverage for days in 1996 to White House allegations against Cuba, outside Miami they have virtually blacked out coverage of the testimony in a federal courtroom here that strikingly refutes earlier reports.

## Federal indictments

In September 1998 the FBI announced the arrests of 10 people in Miami, whom it accused of spying for Havana. These individuals were charged with attempting to "infiltrate" the U.S. Southern Command—which oversees Washington's military operations in Latin America, and was relocated from Panama to Miami in 1997—and other military installations, passing on "military secrets" to the Cuban government, and "infiltrating" and trying to disrupt Brothers to the Rescue and similar rightist Cuban-American groups in Miami. The government indicted another four people in absentia on similar charges.

One defendant, Gerardo Hernández, is also charged with conspiracy to commit murder in the Brothers to the Rescue case. Hernández is accused of being the main leader of what the government calls the "Wasp Network," the term the FBI uses to describe the 14 indicted in this case. If convicted, the defendants could face sentences of 15 years to life in prison.

Five of the individuals have pleaded guilty to some of the charges and are serving jail sentences of three-and-a-half to seven years. One of them, Joseph Santos, testified in January against those now on trial. Santos had been sentenced to five years. Prosecutors recommended he serve only four and U.S. District Judge Joan Lenard, who is presiding, has reportedly agreed.

The U.S. government's case against the five defendants is based almost entirely on

information allegedly contained in supposedly encoded messages the FBI copied from hard drives of computers in their residences.

## Washington's political aims

For the last two years, statements by U.S. authorities, articles in the big-business press, and more recently the prosecution case have been used by Washington to further its unrelenting "cold war" against Cuba. One goal of the U.S. rulers has been to attempt another political frame-up of Cuba's revolutionary government. A second aim is to cover up the political blow U.S. imperialism suffered with the shooting down of the Brothers to the Rescue planes, and more recently with the outcome of the Elián González case.

Defense attorneys have stated that the government has no evidence to back up its charges. On March 2 the attorney for

Gerardo Hernández asked that the charges against him of "conspiracy to commit murder" and "giving defense information to a foreign government" be dropped. "There is no clear evidence that the defendant knew the planes would be downed," attorney Paul McKenna stated.

William Norris, attorney for defendant Luis Medina, earlier submitted a motion for information from FBI investigations of right-wing Cuban-American groups. According to Norris's motion, "within the exile community there exist extremists [trying] to destabilize the Cuban government, and [their] acts have effectively been planned, financed, and carried out by organizations or individuals in the United States. Mr. Medina states he was in Miami investigating these individuals and organizations."

On March 27 defense lawyers brought to

the stand Rodolfo Frómeta, a former Alpha 66 member who later founded Commandos F-4. Both groups have been responsible for armed attacks against Cuba and defenders of the Cuban revolution in Miami in the past. Frómeta testified that his group's goal has always been to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro, minister of the Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro, and other Cuban government officials.

Commandos F-4 has taken responsibility for arson attacks on Cuban buses and vans, Frómeta testified. In 1993 and again in 1994 Frómeta and others were caught by U.S. government agents on boats carrying high-powered weapons near the Florida Keys heading south. They were not arrested either of those times. Later in 1994, Frómeta was arrested and served three years in federal prison for trying to buy weapons for a plot to kill Castro.

# Havana conference on Bay of Pigs

Continued from Page 9

people interviewed by the *Militant* in the Bay of Pigs area. At the Australia sugar mill near the town of Jagüey Grande—where in April 1961 Fernández established his column's command post—rail worker Lázaro Morales, 60, commented that the brutal U.S.-directed assault, as well as the Cuban leadership's response, had a lasting impact on his own life.

At the time he was a 19-year-old student. "Do you know what it is like to wake up to a bombing attack?" he remarked.

The revolutionary leadership called for a military mobilization without stopping production or the literacy campaign. As local sugarcane cutters joined their militia units to go to the battle front to fight the invaders, Morales and other youth took their places in the canefields—a proud and unforgettable moment, he said.

"At Girón I learned who we were and what we were defending—the literacy campaign, the land reform, the right to have enough to eat. And if they ever try to attack us again, we are even stronger today."



Inset: Granma

**Sinking of *Houston* during battle at Bay of Pigs. Inset: Enrique Carreras, today a division general of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, standing beside Cuban Sea Fury fighter plane around 1961. Carreras, an ace pilot, sank the *Houston* and another U.S. transport ship during invasion in successful effort to cut off supplies to mercenaries.**

# Conference event presents Playa Girón books

Continued from Page 9

for Black rights that was sweeping from South to North. They were young people imbued with growing contempt and hatred for government anticommunist witch-hunting agencies such as HUAC, the House Un-American Activities Committee, which had dampened political expression for more than a decade.

Written by Jack Barnes, who at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion was the organizer of one of the largest campus chapters of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, the foreword describes the political battle that groups of young people across the United States waged, together with veteran communists, trade unionists, and farmers, as we reached out to the broadest possible forces

with the truth about the Cuban Revolution. We explained not only why Cuban working people would never surrender their conquests, but why we inside the United States—if we were to win our inevitable battles—would have to organize to emulate their revolutionary course.

Pathfinder's editors hope that readers will also find the extensive photo pages and other graphics that are part of this volume to be of special value. Many of the photos reproduced as part of the book are the product of joint efforts by compañeros in Cuba and the United States to rescue from the crumbling pages of magazines and newspapers historic photos that would otherwise be lost because the corresponding negatives and other reproductions have long ago disappeared.

It is important for new generations not only to *read* the speeches and documents that are part of the real history of our Americas, but to *see* with their own eyes the changes wrought by the revolution along with the faces and actions of those who were willing to give their lives to defend it.

This is a book that will be promoted, distributed, and read around the world—not only in North America, but from Asia to Latin America, from Europe to Africa. It will be sold not only through bookstores and web sites, but from tables at factory gates, farm protests, university campuses, community centers, workers neighborhoods, and political events.

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

Pathfinder's editors will be all the more pleased if it is a book that also proves useful for those of you here participating in this signal conference, Playa Girón: Forty Years After.

—M.K. AND M-A. W.

# Yankee reporters get bad case of the crabs

HAVANA—On the last day of the conference "Girón: 40 Years Later," participants and press, all together, were taken on a day-long visit to Playa Girón, scene of the April 1961 Cuban victory over the U.S.-directed invading forces.

Conference host José Ramón Fernández warned us the evening before that our return trip would have to begin no later than 4:00 p.m. From that point on, he said, the coastal road would be covered by "literally millions of crabs" crossing from the Zapata Swamp where they live to the shores of the Bay of Pigs. The land crabs, indigenous to Cuba, migrate every evening in the spring

months to mate in the waters. At dawn they return to the swamp. The small hard-shelled natives of the Zapata Swamp will shred the tires of travelers who aren't careful, Fernández said.

One Mexican journalist chimed in to alert her colleagues: "I drove to Playa Girón the other day and had to fix flat tires 15 times. Watch out!"

Some U.S. members of the press corps, however, chose not to heed the warning.

When the visitors left Playa Girón at the end of the day's event, it was already 4:30 p.m. Most participants and reporters rode on buses provided by conference organizers. At first we noticed only a few crabs crossing the road. As the trip continued, however, the numbers kept growing, and within minutes Fernández's description materialized in living color and sound—an orange-pink sea of crabs covered the road for miles, as we listened to the crunching and cracking of the shells under the wheels. The highway was already littered with thousands of bodies of the little critters, crushed by vehicles that came before us.

The large tires on the buses rode over the sharp shells without undue damage, as our experienced Cuban drivers navigated the terrain. Some journalists, however, mostly from the U.S. media, drove their own private cars and "did not do so well," according to an article by *Washington Post* reporter Kevin Sullivan. But they did keep Santiago Acosta, a local tire-fixer or *ponchero*, busy

and happy.

"Acosta had to fix more than 20 tires from conference-goers alone," Sullivan reported. "Along one short stretch of road near the beach, at least five cars were pulled over with flats—some of them with more than one tire punctured, making a single spare useless. Journalists had to abandon crippled cars and hitch a ride in the back of a passing flatbed truck."

The impatient journalists, loaded with their sophisticated phone and camera equipment, paid for not listening to the local farmers and other residents. Two Playa Girón natives, Eberto Anca and Luis Acosta, sitting in an old truck near the beach, laughed. "Anca said locals know, from hard experience, that driving slowly is the best defense," the *Post* article reported.

"Indeed, conference participants speeding down the road passed many local cars poking along. Later, those same cars crawled past as foreigners changed their shredded tires—wily tortoisés in rusted-out Soviet-era antiques passing hard-luck hares carrying laptops and satellite phones."

*Militant* reporters, who traveled in the bus provided by conference organizers and returned to Havana without incident, enjoyed both the scenic drive and the marvelous highway replay 40 years later of the character of the contending forces of the battle of Playa Girón. *Plus ça change....*

## From Pathfinder Fertile Ground CHE GUEVARA AND BOLIVIA A firsthand account by Rodolfo Saldaña

Rodolfo Saldaña was one of the Bolivians who joined ranks in 1966–67 with Ernesto Che Guevara to forge a revolutionary movement of workers, peasants, and young people to overturn the military dictatorship in Bolivia and open the road to socialist revolution in South America. **\$9.95**

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.



# Cuban groups invite U.S. youth to Havana for summer exchange

BY RÓGER CALERO  
AND GREG McCARTAN

The words of Cuban revolutionary José Martí "are extraordinarily relevant today. It would seem that he was inviting us to the constant struggle for a united America, calling us to rise up as one people to believe that only the wealth that is created and the freedom that is conquered is what endures," says an invitation extended by seven youth and student organizations in Cuba to young workers and students in the United States to participate in the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange to take place in Cuba July 22-30.

Martí was a revolutionary anti-imperialist fighter who was killed in battle in 1895 in the war for Cuban independence from Spain.

"We invite you to a meeting that will strengthen the solidarity between both countries," the brochure states. "We hope this will be an opportunity for you to get to know the Cuban people, that this exchange will become an arena to condemn everything that attempts to separate us, and that all of us united can demonstrate to the world that unity is not a dream."

"Young Cubans are interested in having mutual knowledge about the realities of youth in the United States and Cuba," said Javier Dueñas in a March 28 phone interview with the *Militant*. Dueñas is a leader of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, one of the sponsoring organizations, and is currently speaking at college campuses during a three-week visit to the United States along with Yanelis Martínez, a member of the National Secretariat of the Federation of University Students in Cuba, another organization hosting the youth exchange.

During the last youth exchange in 1996, 144 young people from 26 states across the United States visited the Caribbean island, holding a range of meetings and activities with their counterparts in Cuba.

This year the program includes meetings with students and visits to universities, including the Latin American School of Medicine and the International Sports School, Dueñas said. The participants will also join in activities organized to celebrate the anniversary of the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada army garrison. The event marks the beginning of the revolutionary armed struggle that led to the defeat of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959.

"The most important activities around the July 26 anniversary will take place in the neighborhoods, organized by the Committees in Defense of the Revolution," said Dueñas. "They will be impressive mobilizations of the people," he continued, "but I will leave that to the judgment of the participants."

A flyer about the youth exchange, which is available in English and Spanish, provides details on the costs and other arrangements. It lists a series of planned workshops on

questions of national identity and culture, the current situation of the student movement and its role in society, as well as on environmental issues. Participants will also join in discussions on "U.S.-Cuba relations in the new millennium" and will have a chance to look over at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, one aspect of Washington's continued aggression against the Cuban people.

"This will be a special opportunity for young workers, students, farmers and farm family youth, and others to see the Cuban revolution for themselves," said Jacob Perasso, a leader of the Young Socialists. "Participants can get a firsthand understanding of the kind of society working people are capable of creating. The YS welcomes this opportunity to help bring information to young people in Cuba about what life under capitalism is like and the struggles and resistance of working people today," he said. "We will be building the youth exchange through all of our work over the next months and encourage the widest participation possible." Most immediately, Perasso said, the YS will be signing up to go to the Youth Exchange those who attend meetings to hear the two Cuban youth leaders speaking in the United States.

Jack Willey, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party, said party members will be collaborating with the Young Socialists to build a broad delegation to the youth exchange. Socialist workers will be spreading



Militant/Joel Britton

Javier Dueñas, center, and Yanelis Martínez, right, with Francis Goodman and Ana Goodman at Family Farm Defenders Conference in Wisconsin.

the news of the opportunity the youth exchange offers among younger generations they meet in factories, mines, and mills where they work. There is already interest, he said, among young farmers in visiting Cuba, indicating wider possibilities for several to become part of the visit to Cuba this summer. Getting out information at literature tables on street corners and at factory gates will also be a feature of the party's work.

Dueñas said that for Cuban youth, the exchange offers a way to "know what is happening in the United States and how young people are organizing themselves to confront social problems." The meetings will help participants "obtain knowledge about the realities of youth in the United

States and Cuba, and to learn how young people participate in making decisions in all aspects of society, including on issues of self-determination," he said.

The organizations who have called the Second Cuba/United States Youth Exchange in Cuba are: the Pioneer Organization "Jose Martí," the Federation of High School Students, the Federation of University Students, the Union of Young Communists, the "Hermano Saiz" Association, the Technical Youth Brigades, and the Youth Study Center. The organizing committee can be contacted in Cuba by e-mail at: [ujcri@ujc.cu](mailto:ujcri@ujc.cu). Those interested in participating can also contact the Young Socialists at PO Box 33, New York, NY 10018. Tel: (212) 695-1809.

## Cuba youth leaders speak to U.S. students, farmers

Continued from front page

include the situation of student movements and relations between Cuba and the United States. More than 25 students signed up for more information on the youth exchange in the first few days of Dueñas's and Martínez's visit.

"There is greater participation of youth in strengthening the revolution than a decade ago," Dueñas told the Loyola audience. "There is more confidence in the ideas of the revolution and youth are more involved in fighting for justice and against inequalities. Youth were the first to demonstrate for the return of Elián Gonzalez" he said.

Dueñas described a central campaign of the Union of Young Communists and the Federation of University Students to intensify the involvement of young people from poorer working-class neighborhoods. One aspect of this campaign is the attempt to draw youth convicted of petty crimes into revolutionary activity. Dueñas explained the goal was to bring young people who have committed petty crimes out of the prisons and to win more such youth to the Union of Young Communists.

The Loyola meeting was organized by the Honor's Society of the university's Department of Communication, and was also spon-

sored by International Studies, Social Justice Concentration in Communication, and Peace Studies.

Bren Murphy, chair of the communications department, opened the meeting. David Schweickart, professor of philosophy at Loyola who is coordinating the visit of Dueñas and Martínez, then welcomed them to Chicago. Citing statistics indicating Cuba's progress in areas of health, education, and life expectancy, Schweickart commented that not only has Cuba survived the recent years of economic difficulty, "but in some ways has even thrived."

Elizabeth Lozano, a professor of communications at Loyola, began the question period asking about the status of the media in Cuba. Dueñas answered that there has been a renaissance of journal and magazine publishing in recent years. He pointed to the youth involvement in a national campaign called "University for All," which includes television classes, accessible to all, on literature, art appreciation, history, public speaking, English, and music.

### Countryside visit

The two youth traveled to Wisconsin on the first weekend of their visit to attend the annual meeting of Family Farm Defenders.

They were introduced to the meeting by Randy Jasper, a Wisconsin farmer. In a presentation to the 60 participants, Martínez and Dueñas explained that unlike in Wisconsin, where six dairy farmers a day lose their land and many more live under the threat of foreclosure, a central conquest of the Cuban revolution is a thoroughgoing land reform that ended forever the possibility of farmers losing their land.

"Forty-one years ago when the revolution triumphed most of the best land and property was owned by corporations in the United States," Dueñas said. "We only had one crop, sugarcane." With the land reform, title to the land was given to the peasants who worked it and a rural infrastructure was created to expand access to education, culture, health services, as well as markets for the farmers' goods.

After their presentation, three farm youth came and spoke with Martínez and Dueñas and signed up for more information on the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange this summer.

On March 26 members of the Cuban Youth Lectures Committee, which was formed in Chicago to organize the national visit, held a welcoming potluck dinner and discussion with Martínez and Dueñas at Casa Guatemala here. Martínez thanked the group and explained that meetings like the one with the Wisconsin farmers "allowed us to not only explain the situation of farmers in Cuba, but also to learn what the countryside is facing here in the United States. It makes me appreciate more what the Cuban revolution has achieved," she said.

### Hear Cuban Youth Leaders

Yanelis Martínez

They will speak on "Youth and Cuba Today" at these campuses:

#### New England

**University of Hartford**  
**Hartford, Connecticut**

Mon., April 2, 7:00 p.m. Wilde Auditorium. Sponsored by Dept. of Politics and Government and African-American Studies Program and the Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba.

#### Massachusetts

**Bridgewater State College**

Thurs., April 5, Program 3:00 p.m. Moakley Auditorium.

**Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge,**

Fri., April 6, 7:00 p.m. Sponsored by July 26th Coalition of Boston. For information, call (617) 566-2861 or e-mail [july26@world.std.com](mailto:july26@world.std.com).

#### Minnesota

**St. Thomas University**

Mon., April 9, 7:00 p.m. Roach Hall Auditorium. Sponsored by Critical Pedagogy Project, Peace and Justice Center.

**Macalester College, St. Paul**

Tues., April 10, 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. 1600 Grand Ave. Sponsored by Adelante.

**Hamline University, St. Paul**

Tues., April 10, 8:00 p.m. 1536 Hewitt Ave., Gliddens Learning Center. Sponsored by Political Science Dept., Alma Latina, Multicultural Affairs. Call (612) 869-3194. E-mail: [wdiaz01@gw.hamline.edu](mailto:wdiaz01@gw.hamline.edu).

**St. Cloud State University**

Wed., April 11, 2:00 p.m. Sponsored by Student Coalition Against Racism, Organization for Prevention of AIDS in Africa. Call Holly Santiago, (320) 333-3274, or e-mail: [miss\\_lil\\_e@yahoo.com](mailto:miss_lil_e@yahoo.com)

### Javier Dueñas

**University of Minnesota, Minneapolis**

Wed., April 11, 7:00 p.m. Room 175 Wiley Hall, West Bank. Sponsored by Global Studies Program, Spanish-Portuguese department, Minnesota Cuba Committee, La Raza Student Cultural Center. Call (612) 624-1512, or e-mail: [Paul0324@tc.umn.edu](mailto:Paul0324@tc.umn.edu)

**Minneapolis Community and Technical College**

Thurs., April 12, 12 noon to 2:00 p.m., 1515 Hennepin Ave. Sponsored by Department of Anthropology, Global Issues.

**Gustavus Adolphus College**  
**St. Peter**

Thurs., April 12, 5:00 p.m.

**El Colegio High School, Minneapolis**

Fri., April 13, noon.

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# Illinois meat packers win support for strike

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

CHICAGO—Hundreds of meat packers rallied in a park next to Rochelle Foods in Rochelle, Illinois, March 23 to mark one week on strike against the company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hormel Foods Corp.

The 870 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1540 walked off the job after rejecting a contract proposal from the company that included what the unionists considered inadequate pay raises. Union officials at the event said messages of support and financial help for the striking workers were on their way from other UFCW locals, including workers at Hormel's plant in Austin, Minnesota, and UFCW Region 6. Twenty-six UFCW local unions have pledged support, they reported.

"With what they've lost in one week's production and paying for all the new security and cameras, they could have more than paid what we were asking and settled this already," said Kristy Dalen in a March 24 phone interview. Dalen, who has worked for Rochelle Foods for 18 years, was helping staff the union hall that day.

After workers rejected the company's proposed contract by a 99 percent margin on February 27, Rochelle Foods added five cents an hour to its proposal for each of the

last three years of the four-year contract. Dalen said many workers on the production line threw the letter with the final offer in the trash can. Some, however, paid a visit to the personnel office, dropping off a nickel as they left. By the afternoon, the safety supervisor was called to come and pick up all the nickels in the office and the hallway.

Delores Sandoval pointed out that the last contract four years ago hadn't included much in the way of wage increases either, "but we were taken in by the last minute offer of an \$800 signing bonus. Not this time! Out of that \$800, after taxes and deductions, most got barely over \$300."

Striking workers said that with inflation and company proposals to increase employee contributions to health insurance and prescription co-payments, the raise offered would have left them earning less at the end of four years than they are now.

"Many of those who come to visit the picket line offering support are former workers for Rochelle," said union member Lupe González. "The picket line is up 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many of the local businesses support us. We get coffee, sandwiches, hot chocolate, and donuts."

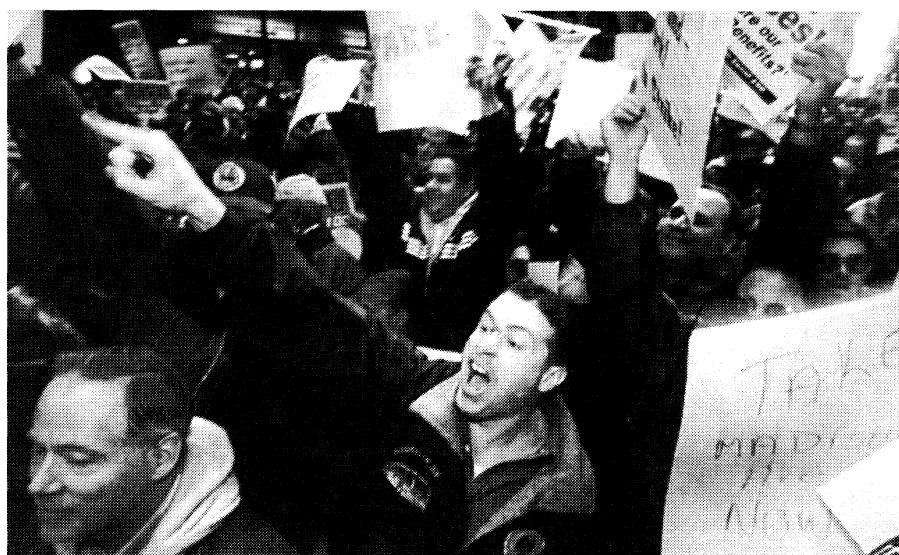
Many workers point proudly to their unity and multinational background. Only about a dozen workers have joined the supervisors and salaried personnel crossing the picket line. Speakers at the rally "spoke in English, Spanish, and Bosnian," Dalen said.

"We haven't had any problems so far with the police. We have been keeping everything peaceful," Sandoval said. "Picket shifts are four hours but some are out there all day every day, giving up everything to help win this strike," Dalen added. No negotiations

between the company and the union have been scheduled.

Messages of solidarity or donations can be sent to UFCW Local 1540, 315 Cherry St., Rochelle, IL 61068. Phone: (815) 562-4661 or fax: (815) 562-3761.

## Transit workers rally in New York



Some 3,000 conductors, bus drivers, and other workers held a demonstration in New York March 28 to defend health benefits in dispute with transit bosses.

### Anniversary of the Victory at Playa Girón

MIAMI

#### Conference: The Bay of Pigs

— 40 Years Later

Sat., April 14, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Speakers:

**Rafael Cancel Miranda**, Puerto Rican independence fighter and former political prisoner of the U.S. government

**Andrés Gómez**, national coordinator of the Antonio Maceo Brigade

**Mary-Alice Waters**, president of Pathfinder Press, editor of the recently released *Playa Girón: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*

**Luis Tornés**, editor of *Miami Post*

Holiday Inn, Coral Gables

2105 SW Le Jeune Road.

Donation: \$10.

For more information: (305) 343-1551.

Sponsored by: Greater Miami Free Speech Coalition • Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba • Antonio Maceo Brigade • ATC • Boricua Human Rights Network in Orlando.

### NEW YORK

#### Casa de las Américas Celebrate 40th Anniversary of the Victory at Playa Girón

Sat., April 14, 8 p.m.

33 West 14th Street

Donation: \$10

Sponsored by: Pastors for Peace • Vieques Support Campaign • Comité Pedro Albizu Campos • Frente Unido de la Revolución Dominicana • Working Group on Puerto Rico/ Socialist Front • Fuerza de la Revolución • Pro Libertad • Workers World Party • Freedom Socialist Party • Socialist Workers Party • International Action Center • Young Socialists

## — CALENDAR —

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Rally to Defend the Charleston 5 Dockworkers.** Speaker: Ken Riley, International Longshorement's Association Local 1422. Sat., April 21, 5:30 p.m. *UAW Local 22 Hall, 4300 Michigan Ave.* Tel: (313) 680-5508.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**March for the Right of Return of Palestinian Refugees.** Join the demonstration and rally to support the right of Palestinian refugees to return to homes and lands from which they were expelled. Sat., April 7, Noon. Assemble at Israeli Mission, 42nd and 2nd Ave. For more information, contact The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, P.O. Box 401, Hummestown, Pennsylvania 17036. Fax (717) 832-1173. Email: PRRC@mail.com

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**March for Women's Lives.** Sun., April 22. Assemble: 11 a.m. Senate Park. March: 12 Noon Step Off. Rally: 1 p.m. near Capitol. Sponsored by the National Organization for Women. For more information, call (202) 628-8669.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**The First Two Months of the Bush Administration: The Continuing Bipartisan Assault on Workers and Farmers.** Speaker: Maurice Williams, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., March 30, 7:30 p.m. **Working Farmers Worldwide Confront Crisis of Capitalism.** Fri., April 6, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 506 Springfield Ave. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

### NEW YORK

#### Brooklyn

**NATO Troops Out of Yugoslavia!** Speaker: Luis Madrid, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 30, 7:30 p.m.

**The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism.** Speaker: Róger Calero, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., April 6, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 372 A 53rd St. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

#### Garment District

**From Mexico to Argentina: Working People Resist Capitalist Crisis.** Speaker: Brian Williams,

Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 30, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave. 14th Floor. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

#### Upper Manhattan

**The World Wide Crisis Facing Working Farmers.** Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 30, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 540 West 165th St. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

### OHIO

#### Cleveland

**Grand Opening of the Pathfinder Bookstore. 40th Anniversary of the Victory of the Cuban People at the Bay of Pigs.** Sat., April 7, 7:00 p.m. Open House 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Buffet Dinner: 6:00 p.m. 11018 Lorain Ave. Donation: \$5. Dinner and program: \$10. Tel: (216) 688-1190.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Pittsburgh

**The First Months of the Bush Administration:**

6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

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

**NEW YORK: Brooklyn:** 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Mailing address: PMB 197, 655 Fulton St. Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 567-8014. E-mail: swpbrooklyn@yahoo.com **Garment District,** 545 8th Ave. Mailing address: P.O. Box 30. Zip: 10018. Tel: (212) 695-7358. E-mail: nygd@usa.net; **Upper Manhattan:** 540 W. 165 St. Mailing address: 3792 Broadway #250. Zip: 10032. Tel: (212) 740-4611. E-mail: swpuptown@usa.net; **Pathfinder Mural Bookstore:** 167 Charles St. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

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

**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** 5237 N. 5th St. Zip: 19120. Tel: (215) 324-7020. E-mail: PhiladelphiaSWP@yahoo.com **Pittsburgh:** 1003 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

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

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 3541 14th St. N.W. Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 722-6221. E-mail: dc-swp@starpower.net

**WASHINGTON: Seattle:** 126 SW 148th Street PMB #C100-189. Burien. Zip: 98166-0996. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: swpseattle@qwest.net

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879,

**Continuing the Bipartisan Assault on Workers and Farmers.** Speakers: Margaret Trowe, Socialist Workers 2000 vice-presidential candidate, staff writer for the *Militant*; Roberto Guerrero, National Executive Committee, Young Socialists. Sat., March 31, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 1003 E. Carson St. Donation: \$10. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

### BRITAIN

#### London

**Macedonian Government Attacks Albanian Forces; NATO Troops Out of Yugoslavia.** Fri., April 6, 7:00 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Christchurch

**Women and the Fight for Equality.** Fri., April 6, 7 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365 6055.

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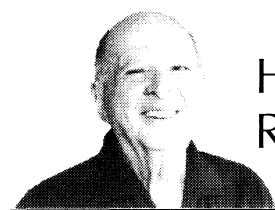
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**They kicked out the ones who passed?**—The Los Angeles police have been reluctant to follow the example of the cop departments



Harry Ring

elsewhere in giving lie detector tests to new recruits. Finally they decided to get with the program. The initial results: Of 59 candidates for membership in the force, 29 chose not to show up for the test. Of the

remaining 30, 13 flunked the test.

**Democratized dwellings**—A big-time realtor and 34 prestigious architects are planning a new housing tract in the Hamptons, the Long Island, New York, beach area where the big-bucks society folks have their summer vacations, yachts, and other amenities. The homes in the new tract will be limited in size and moderately priced. They won't be big enough to feature customary discos, gyms, servants quarters, etc. But they will be available for \$750,000 to \$2.5 million.

**We did chuckle**—A dialog between Dilbert and his boss: Boss: "I'm promoting you to president of

our dot.com subsidiary. Your job is to fire everyone." Dilbert: "Would I get a raise?" Boss: "How does a billion shares of stock sound?"

**Fast learner**—Combining salary, stock bonus, and perks, Kenneth Lay, top dog at Enron, a Texas energy peddler, was paid \$18.2 million for 2000. A company statement declared its "philosophy" on executive compensation was to reward performance. Lay apparently tripled his performance capacity rapidly last year. In 1999 he took home a mere \$5.96 million.

**More than meets the ear**—We didn't realize the social benefit of cell phones until we read a USA

Today headline: "Cellphones drowning out police radios."

**Like 'national security'?**— "Michigan: Lansing—New regulations prohibit materials in the state's 44 prisons that depict sex acts. Publications that contain nude photos are allowed if the model is of the opposite sex from the prisoner. Department of Corrections Director Bill Martin said the change was implemented for security reasons."

**And not as if they have other worries**—After we remembered who "Cheney" was, we were struck by the headline: "Cheney's health does not worry most Americans." This finding was the result of a

combined polling project by Gallup, CNN, and *USA Today*. They reported that 59 percent were not concerned about the vice president's ongoing heart problems.

**Getting chilly**—"Consumers increasingly delinquent on repayments—More people fall behind on mortgages and credit cards in a troubling sign of an already cooling economy"—*Los Angeles Times* business section.

**Thought for the week**—"I don't think that fine architecture should be limited to the very rich. It should be available to the upper middle class as well."—Hampton real estate operator Harry Brown.

## What is behind ongoing conflict in Yugoslavia?

Printed below are excerpts from *The Truth about Yugoslavia. Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention* by George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman. This excerpt can be found in the chapter titled "The roots of the conflict in Yugoslavia." Copyright © 1993 by Pathfinder, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY GEORGE FYSON  
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

Yugoslavia is gripped by a murderous conflict orchestrated above all by the regime in Serbia, as well as by leaders of Croatia and other republics. Yugoslav working people, who almost five decades ago began a mighty socialist revolution, are the ones who are paying with their lives.

Into this situation the rival imperialist powers of Europe and the United States are seeking ways to intervene, wield their forces, and place their stamp on the outcome of events. Acting through the United Na-

in the regions of the former Yugoslavia.

As in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, elements of the old Stalinist bureaucracy have discarded their previous verbal claims to "communism" as easily as a snake sheds its old skin. Now they are acting as would-be capitalists to grab as big a portion of the loot as they can, just as any mafia operates to protect and enlarge its turf. And they are competing among themselves for a poor cousin's place at the table of world capitalism.

The main aggressors on the Yugoslav battleground are the bureaucrats based in Serbia, the dominant republic in the former Yugoslavia, whose largest city, Belgrade, had been the federal capital. The regimes in Croatia and the other republics have shown themselves to be no less keen to plunder resources for themselves, as the Croatian regime's annexation of a piece of Bosnia-Herzegovina in July 1992 demonstrated.

None of the fights being waged by the regimes and their surrogate forces in Yugoslavia today are in the interests of working people there, whose parents and grandparents carried out a powerful revolution in the 1940s, a revolution that overturned the rule of the exploiting landlords and capitalists of different tongues and creeds, and forged a united Yugoslavia.

The conflicts since 1991 have been noteworthy for the inability of the regimes to mobilize large numbers of working people to fight; for the large number of desertions from the Yugoslav army; for the cases of fraternization between soldiers and those they were supposed to be fighting; and for the protests against the war, especially in Belgrade. In June 1992 alone, tens of thousands took part in protests against the war, including one rally of 100,000.

Despite the nationalist demagoguery of the would-be capitalists, what is taking place is not national, religious, ethnic, or tribal struggle. It is the *modern class struggle*.

The petty-bourgeois and aspiring bourgeois layers in Belgrade and elsewhere are interested only in safeguarding their own privileges, diverting workers from acting in their own class interests, and continuing the fruitless attempt to be welcomed as equal partners into the world capitalist system.

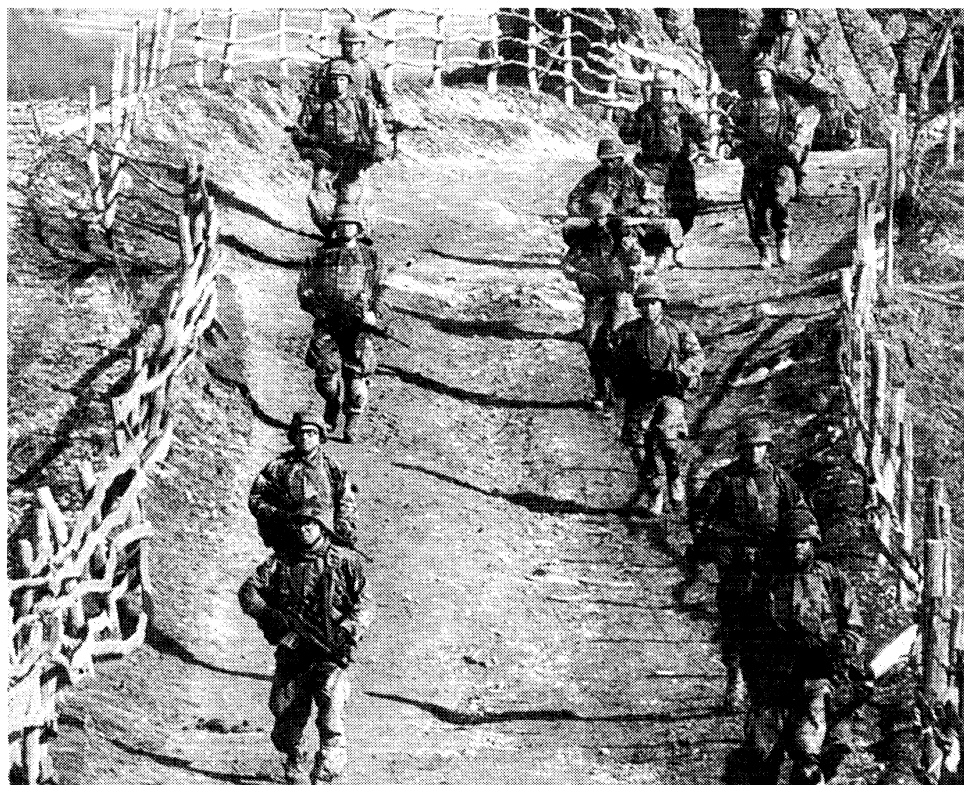
Today this is a less realistic perspective than ever. The world capitalist system is in the initial throes of a historic crisis. Instability, economic depression, social crisis, and war are what this system holds in store.

The events in Yugoslavia are not the product of communism. The Yugoslav crisis is one in a series that has gripped the deformed and degenerated workers states in eastern and central Europe and the former Soviet Union since the late 1980s, bringing down governments and shattering the ruling Stalinist parties.

Today the components of the former Yugoslavia have an enormous debt to imperialist banks and financial institutions, rampant inflation, and massive unemployment. Yugoslav workers have been forced to migrate in search of work. Even before the wave of war-generated refugees in 1992, there were 600,000 Yugoslav workers in Germany alone.

Different sections of the ruling stratum in Yugoslavia advance variations on a single approach to getting out of the mess the country is in. Although they drape their rhetoric in different "national" colors, they share the desire to shove the effects of the crisis onto the backs of working people.

Out of the class struggles that will inevi-



U.S. troops on patrol in Mijak, Kosova, near the border with Macedonia. "The world capitalist system is in the initial throes of a historic crisis. Instability, economic depression, social crisis, and war are what this system holds in store," write book's authors.

tably result, workers will have their chance to build communist parties capable of leading revolutionary anticapitalist struggles to establish governments of the workers and farmers and join in the worldwide fight for

socialism. The future battles that workers face in the former Yugoslavia, in overthrowing the parasitic caste that today presides over the bloody dismemberment of the federation, are *part* of this worldwide struggle.

## BOOK OF THE WEEK

tions, they placed an embargo on Serbia in May 1992 and at the beginning of 1993 were weighing the prospects of military involvement substantially beyond the UN forces already stationed there.

The military conflict in Yugoslavia began in June 1991, when skirmishes in Slovenia were followed by a devastating war in Croatia, where some 10,000 people were killed. In March 1992 the slaughter began in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Indiscriminate massacres of civilians and devastation of cities to a degree not seen since Washington's war against Iraq resulted in at least 7,000 deaths in the first three months of the year. (In mid-1992, the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina put the death toll as high as 50,000.)

The war had created as many as 1 million refugees in Croatia, and some 1.2 million in Bosnia-Herzegovina by mid-1992. The number of refugees in Bosnia-Herzegovina—estimated at one quarter of its population—is the highest anywhere in Europe since World War II. The former Yugoslavia had a population of 24 million.

### Not tribal or ethnic strife

Capitalist-minded political commentators argue that the current conflicts in Yugoslavia are the modern expression of centuries of tribal or ethnic strife that has gripped this part of the world. They use this claim to justify the need for outside intervention in the form of an economic embargo and possible military attack.

The truth is the opposite. Today's conflicts in Yugoslavia have nothing in common with the historic rise of nation-states that accompanied the bourgeois-democratic revolutions against feudal conditions in the period from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century. Nor are they similar to modern national liberation struggles against colonialism and imperialist oppression. Instead, what is involved is a crude drive for control over territory and resources between the conflicting bureaucratic gangs that rule

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 9, 1976

**CINCINNATI**—The three-day National Black Political Convention came to an end March 20 when U.S. Rep. Ronald Dellums, in the face of a strong desire by participants to launch an independent political campaign, declined the group's presidential nomination.

"I am unequivocal in my desire not to run. This is not my role and not my moment," the California Democrat told the 888 delegates and observers.... at the third biennial national Black convention hosted by the National Black Political Assembly (NBA)....

From the enthusiasm and anticipation displayed at the nominating rally, there was little doubt that people had come with the intention of drawing up a platform speaking to the urgent concerns of the Black community. Most of all they were looking forward to taking the bold step of launching an independent presidential campaign to challenge the decades-old racist rule of the Democratic and Republican parties....

Later that evening the platform was read to the delegates. There is a section favoring home rule for majority-Black Washington, D.C. Illegal surveillance and harassment by the CIA, FBI, and other government spy agencies were condemned. A proposal calling for "nationalization of all our means of production" was adopted.... In a section on education the platform reaffirms the right of Blacks to go to any school, but adds that the "highest priority should be on Black education in the Black community."



April 9, 1951

After three months of the "Great Debate," the Senate adopted on April 4 a resolution approving by a vote of 69 to 21 the shipment of four U.S. Army divisions to Europe. This resolution follows the main lines of the original administration "compromise" which had been denounced by the Republican opposition, in particular by Sen. Bricker as "a sham, a hoax, a fraud on the American people." It is exactly that.

The American people are being flim-flammed; their expressed wishes brazenly flouted. Truman and his associates are responsible. But the administration is not alone. Equally responsible is the Republican opposition led by Taft, Wherry, and their associates. There is not a single voice in either Senate or House that today speaks for the people, expressing their will and interests.

Poll after public poll has shown that the overwhelming majority are opposed to war and to the sending of more troops to Europe. This mass antiwar sentiment is what politicians like Taft are seeking to exploit in jockeying for advantages in the 1952 presidential elections....

Neither the administration nor the Republican opposition will protect the people's interests. An aroused people must assert itself and demand that it settle through a national referendum the whole issue of peace and war, including the sending of troops abroad.

# Build Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange

The visit to the United States of Yaniles Martínez and Javier Dueñas provides youth, working people, and others an important opportunity to learn the truth about the Cuban revolution and to explain their struggles and battles with the employers and their government in Washington. Defenders of the Cuban revolution throughout the Midwest and Northeast, along with those seeking information about Cuba across the U.S.-imposed embargo and travel ban, can make a priority of building and attending the meetings scheduled in New England and Minnesota.

The sizable meetings the first days of the visit by Martínez and Dueñas indicate the interest there is in a dialog and in overcoming Washington's decades-long stream of lies and aggression against the popular revolution made and defended since 1959 by workers and peasant of that Caribbean country. Building these meetings and joining the discussion at them is a must for workers and farmers who are engaged in protests, strikes, and demonstrations in defense of their rights, wages, and working conditions. Young people who are repelled by the brutality of U.S. imperialism both at home and abroad will be able to learn about Cuba's socialist revolution—the only alternative course to the dog-eat-dog world that capitalism has to offer.

Among those interested in attending the meetings will be students and youth protesting racist assaults and measures to roll back affirmative action, workers defending their union or marching for immigrant rights, women organizing protests in support of abortion rights, and young

farmers fighting to defend their land and livelihoods.

The July 22–30 Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange sponsored by the Union of Young Communists, the Federation of University Students, and other youth organizations in Cuba is a week of activities and discussion that revolutionary-minded youth in the United States can broadly build over the next four months. Revolutionary youth involved in this effort in the United States and Cuba are also building the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students, scheduled for this August in Algeria.

The call for the youth exchange invokes anti-imperialist and revolutionary fighter Jose Martí, who spent several years in the United States learning about the rising imperialist power and the struggles of working people from “inside the belly of the beast,” he wrote.

The reality of the imperialist monster Martí described is truer and more pervasive 100 years later than in its infancy at the end of the 1800s. But capitalism has also brought into being hundreds of millions of working people who are more able to unite across national boundaries and other divisions imposed by class society and are more capable of organizing, fighting, making a revolution, and winning against the final empire on the face of the earth.

Both events are part of hastening that day. We encourage all our readers to help spread information about the exchange and world youth festival to as many young people as possible as part of building a broad delegations to the two events from the United States this summer.

# Defend the right to choose abortion

The *Militant* urges its readers to help build and participate in the national action to defend abortion rights called for April 22 in Washington, D.C. The national protest, which is being organized by the National Organization for Women and sponsored by some 60 other groups, will be an important expression of the sentiment of the majority of working people in defense of a woman's right to choose abortion.

Over the course of the 28 years since the Supreme Court decriminalized abortion in its landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling, the capitalist rulers, under successive Democratic and Republican party administrations on both the state and federal level, have been whittling away at the availability of abortion, particularly for working-class women.

This has included the denial of Medicaid funds for abortion with the Congressional adoption of the Hyde amendment in 1976, the passage of laws subjecting young women to a “parental notification” requirement, and the imposition of waiting periods before being allowed to receive an abortion.

These actions all have a strong class bias, affecting working women in disproportionate numbers. In fact, as of 1998, some 86 percent of U.S. counties and one-third of U.S. cities had no abortion providers, adding the cost of travel and lodging to other obstacles confronting working-class women. While court rulings have reiterated the fact that *Roe* remains the law of the land, the bipartisan offensive has effectively denied access to abortion to a

growing number of working women.

Although top leaders of major women's rights organizations backed the Clinton administration for eight years, working women faced a different reality under the assault on working people by the government and the employers. Speedup on the job, declining real wages, the growth of temporary work and part-time jobs, the cutting of health care and pension programs, the lengthening of the workweek, and declining farm income are facts of life for millions of women. These are added to the brutal termination of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, dramatic cuts in the food stamp program, and other rollbacks in social programs that have also had a deep impact on women.

As the numbers of women in the workforce continue to grow, the fight to defend a woman's right to choose abortion becomes more central to forging a labor movement that fights in the interests of all the exploited and oppressed. Only with the right to control their own bodies can women begin to reassert their full human identity as productive human beings and join as equals in social and political life. This in turn helps to break down divisions in the union movement, and enhance its combat unity.

Protest actions like the April 22 demonstration and mobilizations by the labor movement—not reliance on the promises of capitalist politicians—point the road forward as the road to defend abortion rights and answer the rightist and other capitalist forces seeking to roll back this most vital of gains.

# For health and safety on the job

*The working class is being torn apart in the plants...literally. There are industries where thousands of immigrant workers and other workers who have become desperate for a job offer their limbs in exchange for a weekly wage. That is the bargain in more and more meatpacking plants in this country. The frequency of carpal tunnel and other repetitive motion injuries is staggering. Normal use of hands, shoulders, necks, vertebrae, and tendons is lost—sometimes forever. Not to mention injuries from knives and machinery. It is not just selling your labor power; it is selling life and limb.*

—From *Capitalism's World Disorder*, by Jack Barnes

This explanation of what the employers are forcing on working people rings even more true today for tens of millions across the United States and other countries. In March, President George Bush whisked a bill through Congress that repealed workplace safety regulations. While the regulations were among several last-minute decrees on environmental and worker-related question issued by former president William Clinton to burnish his liberal “legacy” after eight years in office, policies adopted under Clinton were “business-friendly,” to use a watchword of the Bush regime. The great “productivity boom” he hailed and the “longest economic expansion” Clinton took credit for were built on the backs of working people, as Barnes describes in *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

But workers, including a significant component of immigrant workers, are showing they will not accept the speed-up and restructuring that guarantees that many will be crippled at work. Workers at the Excel slaughterhouse in Fort Morgan, Colorado, recently carried out a strike which included a demand that the line speed had to be

lowered when workers were absent on the line. A worker on strike at the Hormel-owned Rochelle Foods in Rochelle, Illinois, explained the company is “always trying to speed up the lines. When one of us gets hurt, they won't let us go to the nurse.... It has made us all mad.” And rail workers at Burlington Northern-Santa Fe successfully pushed back the company's program to perform “genetic testing” in an effort to claim some workers are predisposed to carpal tunnel injuries.

“The exploiters under crisis conditions always attempt to push back the clock of history,” Barnes writes. In response, the labor movement must raise the banner of the right of every worker to leave the factory, mine, or office each day as healthy as when they entered.

This is part of the broader historic struggle for Social Security, which is not only the fight for the *lifetime* right of every worker to medical care, to workers compensation when injured, and to unemployment insurance for as long as a person is jobless. It is also combined with demanding jobs for all, affirmative action measures including raising the minimum wage, defense of immigrant rights, and a shorter workweek with no cut in pay as part of an international fight to defend working people.

Conditions of life for workers and farmers throughout the semicolonial world also push to the fore the pressing need for unions and other working-class and farmer organizations to demand: Cancel the Third World Debt!

By taking the moral high ground on these questions, the working-class movement will forge the unity needed to build a powerful movement that can take power away from the capitalist masters in whose crisis-racked system profit is everything and the dignity and physical well-being of workers and farmers are of no concern.

# Macedonian gov't offensive

**Continued from front page**

commanders have acted to minimize civilian casualties. The *Washington Post* shed a little light on the reality of the offensive, however, when it reported that “all males brought down [from villages to Tetovo] by the government were subject to paraffin tests to see if they had fired guns.” No casualty figures have been released.

Fighting has continued in areas further to the east and closer to Skopje itself. On March 26 two Macedonian policemen were wounded when their convoy came under machine gun fire north of the capital.

## NATO backs the offensive

Washington and the other imperialist powers, who stationed tens of thousands of troops in neighboring Kosova in 1999, swung into action in support of Skopje as the offensive was in preparation.

“I strongly commend the government of this country for the firm but restrained way they have reacted to the provocations of the last few weeks,” said NATO secretary general George Robertson in a visit to Skopje on March 26. Robertson, who was accompanied by the European Union security chief, Javier Solana, declared that “terrorism is not going to prosper.”

The collaboration was built on long-standing military and political links. It has been revealed that MPRI, a U.S. firm that trained the Croatian Army during the 1995 war with Serbian forces in Bosnia, has been training the Macedonian armed forces for several years under a contract with Washington.

London and Paris have joined their U.S. ally in deploying pilotless reconnaissance drones to the Macedonia-Kosova border to detect any materiel and troops flowing to the NLA.

British forces have also joined Scandinavian troops in forming a joint group of some 400 soldiers to reinforce patrols along the border in the zones of Kosova controlled by forces from Germany and the United States. These patrols have clamped down on crossings to and from Macedonia. On March 27, German officers reported that they had detained 100 people identifying as Albanian rebels as they crossed into Kosova, an action repeated at other points of the frontier. Eighteen of the 100 were still in custody at the time of the report.

## Powell: ‘Effective violence’

Imperialist spokespeople have advised Skopje to accompany their military crackdown with the dispensation of “political gestures towards Macedonia's ethnic Albanian minority,” in the words of the *Financial Times*. The British paper reported that in a March 23 statement U.S. president George Bush condemned “the ethnic Albanian rebel groups but [urged] the government in Skopje to move ahead with reforms to accommodate the aspirations of ethnic Albanians.”

“Macedonia is a close friend, a partner country of NATO, and a successful example of a democratic, multiethnic state in the Balkans,” said Bush.

Washington and its allies, along with Skopje, recognize that the NLA has won recruits from the Albanian population around Tetovo. The day before the offensive, U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell expressed concern that Albanian grievances give the rebels “a little bit of fertile ground. Effectiveness,” he said, “has to be not just raining down firepower on these extremists, but doing it in a way that does not cause more violence.”

The Macedonian government has promised talks after it wins on the field of battle. “We need to neutralize the terrorists, and then we will intensify dialogue with Albanian political leaders,” said government official Antonio Milevski. The *Washington Post* reported that on March 26, “a senior government official said the government was committed to various changes, including constitutional reform, although he was circumspect on institutionalizing bilingualism.”

The president of the Democratic Party for Albanians (DPA), Arben Xhaferi, has complained that the authorities have shut his party out of talks to resolve the crisis. The DPA is a partner in the coalition government of Macedonia. “If I have no important role in decision making, I have nothing to do in this government,” said Xhaferi on March 27.

While European security chief Javier Solana promised to press Trajkovski “to start the process of negotiation,” he added that, after all, “Xhaferi is part of the government.”

Xhaferi and other politicians won their electoral mandate by pledging to address the discrimination faced by Albanians in employment, government, education, and other facets of social life. In arguing for constitutional changes and other reforms, Xhaferi points to the threat of further armed resistance. “The readiness to continue the process of the affirmation of Albanian rights is the main thing that produces the fighters,” he said.

The DPA and the other official Albanian parties present themselves as the nonviolent alternative to the rebels. However, said Iso Rusi, editor of the Skopje-based Albanian magazine *Lobi*, “The government is marginalizing them and at the same time the party is losing support on the ground.”



# Immigration fuels rise in U.S. population

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Due to immigration and higher birthrates, the United States, alone among the major industrial countries, will continue to grow in population during the next half century if current trends continue, according to a United Nations report issued in early March.

"By 2050 the United States will be the only developed country among the world's 20 most populous nations," the *New York Times* reported. "In 1950 at least half of the top 10 were industrial nations. In 2000 there were still three, including Japan and Russia." By 2050 the population of semicolonial countries is expected to grow from 4.9 billion to 8.2 billion, while the imperialist countries will hold at 1.2 billion.

"After World War II, Europe accounted for 22 percent of the world population and Africa 8 percent," stated Joseph Chamie, director of the UN population division. "Today they are about the same, about 13 percent, but by 2050 Africa is expected to be three times larger than Europe."

India is growing faster than earlier predictions and, by extrapolating current trends, would eclipse China as the world's most populous nation within 50 years. Countries of the former Soviet Union and many in eastern Europe currently have negative population growth. For example, in Russia, births per 1,000 people are 8.37 while deaths are 14.63. Belarus, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Ukraine have similar figures. Russia's population of 145 million is predicted to drop to 136 million in 25 years if these trends continue. By contrast, Iran will grow from 67 million to 90 million, and Turkey from 65 million to 88 million in the same period.

"In 2000, the EU (European Union) had a natural increase of 343,000 people," Chamie said. "India achieved this in the first week of 2001. If you add immigration to Europe, the net growth would be about 1.2 million. India grew that much in the first three weeks of the year."

Statistics listed on the 2000 World Population Data Sheet project the U.S. population increasing by 46 percent over the next 50 years, while Japan sees a decline of 21 percent and Europe a decline of 10 percent.

The average age of Europe and Japan will continue to increase relative to that of the United States.

## Young and multinational

These facts point to some important changes already underway in the composition of the U.S. working class, which is younger and more multinational than ever before.

Figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau show that as a result of massive immigration to the United States in the 1990s, some 30 million residents—11 percent of the country's 281 million people—are foreign-born. The report said that 51 percent of these immigrants came from Latin America, 25.5 percent from Asia, and 15.3 percent from Europe.

In 1970, around 4.7 percent of the population was born outside the country. "Not since 1910 when a great exodus from Europe began waning and 14.7 percent of Americans were foreign-born has the percentage been so high," stated the *Financial Times*.

In the United States, the Hispanic population—primarily working people from Mexico and other countries in Latin America—increased 58 percent since 1990, from 22.3 million to 35.3 million, equaling the Black population, which rose 21 percent to 35.4 million. The Asian population grew by 74 percent to 11.5 million.

This huge increase in immigrants is largely responsible for the growth of major cities throughout the country. New York City's population grew 9.4 percent from 1990, topping 8 million, according to the



Workers at a packinghouse in Omaha, Nebraska. Many immigrants from Latin America are employed in U.S. meatpacking, garment, and other industries.

2000 Census. About 65 percent of the city's population is now classified as "minorities." The largest growth was in the numbers of Latinos and Asians.

For the first time since the 1950s, the population of Chicago increased, reaching nearly 2.9 million people, with Mexicans and other Hispanics comprising one-quarter of the people living there. Houston and

Dallas have seen population boosts over the past decade of 20 percent and 18 percent respectively. Every state in the nation increased its population. Only the District of Columbia experienced a decline.

Some of the biggest population increases over the past 10 years occurred in cities and towns throughout the South and West, spurred by the increased numbers of working people who hail from Mexico—as well as other countries in Central and South America like El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia. Working in meatpacking, garment, and other industries where the bosses have driven down wages and working conditions, they have become an ever more important component of the American working class, joining and leading struggles to build unions. Increases in the Latino population are 153 percent in Iowa, 117 percent in Indiana, 337 percent in Arkansas, and 108 percent in Oklahoma.

New census figures also indicate a rising number of undocumented workers in the United States. While U.S. officials had estimated their numbers at 6 million, it now appears the actual number is at least 50 percent higher—in the range from 9 million to 11 million.

Increased immigration has boosted the rolls of those attending public schools as well, equaling the all-time high of 48.8 million set in 1970 when the post-World War II baby boom generation was in school. In 1999, about 20 percent of the nation's students in the first through 12th grades were immigrants or children of immigrants.

While the population of large cities like New York have increased, so has the degree of residential segregation. Many of those new to the city confront housing discrimination at the hands of landlords and real estate brokers.

According to John Logan, a sociologist at the State University at Albany, "Neighborhoods that have real concentrations of minority-group members really are isolated enclaves, and very large shares of those groups live in those places."

## Longshore workers fight frame-up charges

BY JEFF ROGERS

ATLANTA—Longshore workers from Charleston, South Carolina, who are fighting frame-up charges stemming from a battle to defend their union, received a warm welcome here at a defense meeting sponsored by the Atlanta Labor Council, the Southern Region of the AFL-CIO, and the Brisbane Institute at Spelman College.

"We will keep on fighting until all the charges are dropped!" said Ken Riley, president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Local 1422, to the 100 participants at the March 9 meeting. Several members of the embattled local, including Elijah Ford and Charles Brave, two of the workers facing felony charges, joined Riley at the event. Ford, Brave, and the other three unionists under indictment have been under house arrest for more than a year.

Riley underlined the importance of this fight for all working people. South Carolina is the least organized state in the country, resulting in the low wages and benefits that attract companies to the area from all over the world.

Riley said the demonstration last year of some 50,000 people in Columbia, South Carolina, demanding the state government remove the Confederate battle flag from the capitol played a role in the dockworkers'

fight. Prior to the mass rally the ILA organized picket lines on the waterfront in Charleston to protest "vessel calls" by ships owned by the Nordana lines.

After 23 years of hiring union members to work its ships, the company began hiring nonunion workers. In response to the union's pickets, government authorities convened a law enforcement summit, Riley said, to mobilize police and a wide assortment of "antiriot" equipment, including armored personnel carriers, gunboats, and rubber bullets.

"The next ship was due in port just as the state flag demonstration occurred, which involved many dockworkers and other unionists," Riley said. "So port authorities were instructed to hold the ship outside the harbor a few days until things settled down." A large union picket line put up when the ship did come to port was assaulted by police. The state subsequently filed felony charges against the five workers, and the shipping company is pressing civil lawsuits against the union.

Speakers from the Atlanta Labor Council promised to send buses to South Carolina as soon as a trial date is set. Linda Chavez-Thompson, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO, also spoke.

After the speeches, the ILA Gospel

Singers performed while the crowd mingled and shook hands with the fighters from Charleston.

Elijah Ford said that during his house arrest, the authorities don't "even give you permission to take your kids out." He and the others expressed appreciation for the support they had received across the nation. "This is 2001," Ford said. "We're supposed to be moving ahead, not backwards. We need to get rid of the flag. I don't want my kids to live like it was in the 1930s."

Supporters of the longshoremen's struggle were fired up by the rally. Jason Joye, a youth who grew up in South Carolina and is a member of the Atlanta Mutual Aid Collective, looked forward to riding the buses. Leonard Turner, a retired auto worker, agreed.

Union members at the Hormel plant in Atlanta are supporting the struggle as well. One worker, Sabrina Williams, has been getting out information about the dockworkers' fight to her co-workers and plans to keep building union support in her local. "It's all about unity," she said. "When we stick together, there's nothing we can't do."

Jeff Rogers is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1996 at Hormel, in Atlanta.

### The Changing Face of U.S.

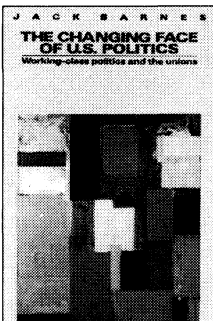
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JACK BARNES

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## LETTERS

### World Water Day

The South African Municipal Workers Union would like readers to focus on World Water Day (March 22) on the suffering caused by water privatization all over the world.

The UN has themed this year's World Water Day as "Water and Health." Yet more and more people are becoming unhealthy and dying from being denied access to water. Worldwide, more than 5 million people, most of them children, die every year from illnesses caused from drinking poor quality water.

The privatization and full cost

recovery policies of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), which have been imposed as conditions for loans in over 12 African countries, have led to people resorting to using unsafe water sources after they could no longer afford water. South Africa is a case in point. A cholera epidemic broke out after people's free water was cut and they were forced to drink from a river.

Spare a thought on World Water Day for the daily suffering of the millions of people who do not have water because the IMF, World Bank, and various multinational

companies are allowed to make profits while the rest of us are close to dying of thirst.

Anna Weekes  
Media Officer  
South African Municipal Workers Union

### Lack of health care

In his February 19 column on the 10-year prison term meted out to Robert Latimer, the Saskatchewan farmer who killed his severely handicapped daughter, Joe Young pointed out that working people like Latimer are left virtually alone to deal with the care and suffering of

children because of the lack of public services to help them.

The Montreal daily *La Presse* reported March 18 on a statement by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada that only 5 percent of dying people receive palliative care to reduce their suffering.

The next day, 14-year-old Chelsea Capra Craig, who was severely handicapped both mentally and physically, was found dead at home. Police have accused her mother of poisoning her with drugs, which she then ingested herself in an attempted suicide.

As the *Militant* article noted, such events underscore "the urgent need for the unions and the entire labor movement to organize a fight to make health care a right available to all and financed by the state."

Al Cappe  
Montreal, Quebec

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.

## French vote shows workers' discontent

BY NAT LONDON  
AND DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS—Transit workers in cities throughout France went on strike March 26 to demand the right to retire at age 55. Transportation in some 30 cities, including Marseille, Bordeaux, Lille, and Lyon was paralyzed. Of the major cities, only Paris, where workers can already retire at that age, was unaffected.

Following the successful stoppage, workers in Marseille voted to renew their action—initially planned for only one day—as an unlimited strike. The action followed by two months a mobilization by 300,000 workers across France to oppose proposals by the national employers' federation, since shelved, to raise the national retirement age from its present level of 60 years to age 65.

The action came a week after elections

for mayors took place in cities and towns throughout the country—elections that registered an overall decline in popular support for the Socialist Party-led ruling coalition.

Other workers have organized strikes and demonstrations to raise their demands. Several days after the ballot, 55,000 public sector workers mobilized to back their demand for a wage raise. The work stoppage was joined by from 25 percent to 40 percent of all teachers, 10 percent of postal workers, and 12 percent of all telephone workers. Last year, the government limited wages for the 5.4 million public workers to a 0.5 percent increase.

Meanwhile, some 7,000 wine growers from southern France demonstrated in Nîmes March 21 to demand immediate government aid to farmers who risk losing

their farms as a result of the collapse of the market for cheap table wine. It was their third such demonstration in seven months.

### Setbacks for governing coalition

The March 18 municipal elections saw historic victories for the governing coalition in Paris and Lyon, the country's first and third largest cities. Elsewhere, though, the coalition suffered a series of setbacks at the hands of the Gaullist Rally for the Republic (RPR) and its electoral partner, the Union for French Democracy (UDF). The national government, elected in 1997, is a coalition known as the Plural Left, made up of the Socialist Party (SP), French Communist Party, the Green Party, and the Left Radicals.

In Paris and Lyon, millions of workers' votes carried the SP candidates to victory in the face of a weaker challenge by the RPR

and its allies. Overall, however, the elections were notable for the number of workers who did not vote, registering their dissatisfaction with a government whose principal parties are traditionally based in the unions. The abstention rate of 38.7 percent in large cities was the largest on record for a municipal election.

On the other hand, significant numbers of workers voted for several smaller centrist parties, particularly Lutte Ouvrière and the Revolutionary Communist League, both of which averaged more than 5 percent of the vote in those towns where they were on the ballot.

Six government ministers who were candidates for mayor in the local elections were defeated. Plural Left administrations in 39 towns and cities went down to defeat.

Like the Socialist Party, the Communist Party suffered a number of setbacks in the provinces, losing its governing position in 12 cities. Other partners in the governing coalition have also lost some credibility. The leaders of the Green Party, which has campaigned as a voice for environmental concerns, have aroused the ire of working farmers by blaming farmers for environmental problems, and by leading the way in levying a special "pollution tax" on the agricultural sector.

Workers had high hopes in the Plural Left government when it was elected in 1997 in the wake of mass strikes and demonstrations that defeated efforts to raise the retirement age of public sector workers, adopt a subminimum wage for young people, and undermine the public health-care system.

In office the administration of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has attempted to slash public spending on health care, and to impose other cutbacks that have proved deeply unpopular among working people. The government has backtracked on some of its attacks in the face of protests and industrial action, but has not retreated from its overall anti-working class course.

Its much-heralded legislation to introduce a 35-hour workweek, for example, has in practice benefited the employers, who often use its "flexible" work provisions to move hours from one part of the year to another, avoiding the need to pay overtime. Bosses also frequently deduct paid lunch and coffee breaks from "real" work time, thus reducing the legal workweek without reducing the actual amount of time worked.

"The government was elected to do something for the workers," commented Roger Pouvreau to the *Militant*, in a commonly voiced opinion. In his 28 years as an auto worker at Renault, Pouvreau has seen a drop in real wages and a decline in conditions on the job. "Workers are disappointed and discouraged with the government," he said. "Many abstained in the elections. The government did not honor its election promises to give more power to workers, to raise living standards, and lower unemployment."

### Conservative parties suffer divisions

The conservative parties face their own problems in mounting a challenge to the government, including in general elections planned for next year. Their defeat in Paris and Lyon, where they have ruled for decades, point to important divisions among these forces. In both cities breakaway candidates from the RPR scored heavily.

Differences have broken out over how closely to ally these parties with the National Front and other similar organizations and figures, who seek to win a following through anti-immigrant demagoguery and other rightist planks.

The National Front did not win any new seats in this election. Despite a damaging split in its ranks in January 1999, however, the rightist formation succeeded in having three of the four National Front mayors who were elected in the previous 1995 municipal elections reelected this time, two of them in Orange and Marignane, with much larger votes than six years ago.

The National Republican Movement, which split from the National Front in 1999, was narrowly reelected in Vitrolles.

## ExxonMobil closes Indonesian gas field

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The Indonesian government has deployed 1,500 troops around three gas fields shut down by ExxonMobil since March 13. The oil company cited attacks on its vehicles and other assets in its virtually unprecedented decision to stop production. On March 23 officials of the state oil company, Pertamina, warned ExxonMobil that they will take over the operation if production does not resume by July.

The unexpected shutdown threatens to deprive the Indonesian rulers of \$1 billion in annual revenue from the lucrative field. The gas field is located in Aceh province on the island of Sumatra, one of the four major islands in the archipelago. A movement in Aceh calling for independence has won wide popular support, in part by exposing the exploitation of the area's resources to fill the coffers of foreign firms and their Indonesian co-exploiters.

The U.S.-based oil giant has complained that its pickups and vans have been hijacked 50 times since 1999, that its airplanes have come under fire, and that land mines have been planted alongside roads used by its vehicles. "Company buses carrying employees from town to the gas fields were stopped, the passengers expelled and the vehicles burned. When Indonesian soldiers in jeeps escorted the buses, they were attacked," reported the March 24 *New York Times*.

Discovered in 1971, the gas field at one point supplied more than a quarter of Mobil's worldwide revenue. *Times* journalist Wayne Arnold reported that "gas is hugely important to Indonesia, supplying a fifth of total exports and 5 percent of the government budget. But few of the riches have found their way back to Aceh."

"Especially in the early days," wrote Arnold, "all the best gas jobs tended to be filled by foreigners." The company claims that this policy has changed. "But some ill will remains over sore points like the relatively luxurious walled compound in Lhokseumawe where top employees are housed, the bars and brothels that have tended to crop up outside the gas plant, and several industrial accidents over the years that released toxic clouds and started fires," noted the reporter.

Many Acehnese accuse ExxonMobil's managers of collaborating with the military in its brutal crackdown on the independence movement. The company pays the soldiers that guard its installations and allows them to use its earthmoving equipment. According to human rights groups, these machines



Thousands demonstrate against Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid on January 29. As instability and crisis deepen, many have called for his resignation. Wahid's supporters have staged large and frequently violent counterdemonstrations.

have been used to dig mass graves for victims of military repression.

The 1,500 troops sent to Aceh on March 15 are the "biggest security deployment in Indonesia ever to defend a vital installation," said Indonesian security minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Since his election in 1999, Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid has promised a greater degree of autonomy to Aceh. At the same time, he has sanctioned a continued military crackdown, largely responsible for the deaths of some 6,000 people over the past decade, most of them civilians.

### Labor actions on the rise

Even though the decades-long military Suharto dictatorship has been swept aside, working people still confront the security forces when they organize to defend their rights and living standards. The Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union (SBSI), which claims a membership of more than 1 million, has assembled a list of 135 complaints of violence and harassment against workers by police, soldiers, and local government officials during last year. The incidents included police gunfire aimed at striking workers and the torching of SBSI offices. "Officially," said Muchtar Pakpahan, the organization's most prominent leader, "there is freedom to associate, freedom to bargain, freedom to express. But the law on the books is different from the law in the field."

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported "an incredible proliferation" of unions since Suharto's resignation. Government

officials state that 36 federations and 11,467 "syndicates" have registered with the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration since mid-1998.

In an action typical of many taking place in Indonesia, more than 250 employees of PT Nagamas Busana Tama, a sock manufacturer, rode in buses to the Jakarta City Council March 6 to demand recognition of their Independent Workers Union. The workers have been on strike since February 26. They wore black shirts and headbands and unfurled posters denouncing the company's management. "The firm even established a rival union last month instead of recognizing us," said the union's secretary, Juariah.

The workers reported that they had not received the new minimum monthly wage of 426,000 rupiahs (around US\$40) until February. In January, when the new level fell due, they were paid at the old rate of Rp344,000 (US\$1 = 10,400 rupiahs).

In the city of Bandung, further to the west on the most populous island of Java, garment workers at PT Biba Multi Jaya marched to the provincial legislature March 7 to "condemn a cut in their biweekly wages," from Rp120,000 to between Rp60,000 and Rp70,000, reported the English-language *Jakarta Post*. "We do not have any other source of income. We need to know why our wages have been cut," said Ai, a worker from the finishing department.

A hard-fought strike by workers at the Shangri-La Hotel in Jakarta has received widespread publicity outside the country. Around 500 employees out of a workforce of more than 1,000 struck the five-star hotel on December 22 and have maintained their stoppage in the face of police violence and the employer's use of replacement workers.

