

THE MILITANT

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW
Cuba and the Coming
American Revolution

— PAGES 9-12

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'We produce the wealth! We demand our rights!'

Rallies in California back fight of immigrant workers

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

SACRAMENTO, California—Nine hundred people, most of them immigrant workers, converged on the Capitol here May 7 to demand equal rights for immigrants. A week earlier more than 1,000 people marched in San Jose, California, around this issue, demanding the right to obtain drivers licenses. The state of California has begun requiring a Social Security number in order to obtain one.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, an overflow crowd of 1,000 people turned out at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church May 6 to let police and state officials know that they want the state law reversed that requires proof of legal residency in order to obtain a drivers license.

The spirit of the marchers, along with their demands, demonstrate the confidence growing numbers of immigrant workers have in asserting their rights as part of the working class in the United States.

The flyer for the April 28 action in San
Continued on Page 15



More than 1,000 people marched in San Jose, California, demanding the right to obtain drivers licenses. "We work hard, give us our green card!" chanted the marchers.

Communist movement organizes to win members to Young Socialists

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"Many of the young people we've met who are interested in communist politics and the Young Socialists came from setting up sales tables and participating in political events, including demonstrations," said Young Socialists leader Jason Alessio. "One of the youth we met at the May Day march plans to go with us to a meeting at Hunter College to discuss preparations for the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange that will take place in July." Several people interested in the Young Socialists have attended the weekly Militant Labor Forum in New York's Garment District, and others have attended marches or rallies together with YS members.

Alessio, who is a garment worker in New York, said, "Our chapter discussed how we want young people we meet to come to the Militant Labor Forum, read the *Militant* each week, and participate in study classes. That's how we get our political education."

Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists members across the United States are stepping up their weekly efforts to introduce youth and working people to the communist movement. Both organizations and their supporters have launched a campaign to double the membership of the Young Socialists. Finding increased interest in and sales of the revolutionary books and Marxist titles published by Pathfinder Press among youth, workers, and farmers involved in struggles today, the SWP and YS are taking steps to meet the opportunities to win a new generation to the need to build a proletarian party and communist youth organization.

For branches of the Socialist Workers Party—whether or not there are any Young Socialists currently in the area—this means systematic political work to build up the number of people they are in contact with who want to learn more and become involved in the socialist movement. This is a key aspect of the current drive to win new

subscribers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* through June 10.

In New York, an important aspect of this effort has been organizing regular Militant Labor Forums, preforum dinners, and mak-

ing phone calls to remind people about the weekly public meetings. The forums are weekly free-speech events where workers, students, and others can come to discuss the
Continued on Page 5

Cincinnati protesters condemn leniency for killer cop

BY VAL LIBBY
AND OSBORNE HART

CINCINNATI—Hundreds of people outside the courthouse expressed their anger at the May 7 decision of the Hamilton County grand jury to charge Cincinnati police officer Stephen Roach with two misdemeanor offenses for killing 19-year-old Timothy Thomas April 7.

Protesters then marched on the police headquarters to express their determination to see justice done. Roach is charged with negligent homicide and obstructing official business, the least-serious charges that could have been filed against him. The cop, who has been assigned to desk duty, has plead not guilty.

"It's very hard for me to call for peace because there is no peace inside of me," Angela Leisure, mother of Timothy Thomas, told the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "I don't want anyone to be in the same situation as me. This [indictment] says, 'That's OK, well, you did this. We're going to give you a time-out. It's not severe.'"

The next day 150 people participated in what became a four-hour protest through the downtown streets and at city hall. "No justice, no peace; no racist police!" young people chanted during the roving protest.

The indictment is "a slap in the face to
Continued on Page 18

Berbers in Algeria demand justice, jobs

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In one of the largest antigovernment protests in years, thousands of people mobilized in the capital of Algeria May 3 to condemn police violence and repression in the Berber region of Kabylia. The protest also demanded jobs, better housing, and steps to end the rising impoverishment of growing layers of workers and farmers. The action, which organizers said drew 25,000, was sponsored by the main opposition party, the Socialist Forces Front.

The rally was called in response to the killing of some 80 young people by the police over the course of a week of protests in Kabylia, located in the northeast of the country. Widespread demonstrations were sparked by the death of an 18-year-old Berber high school student April 18 while in police custody.

"We're here to pay homage to the victims of the repression in Kabylia and to make sure it never happens again," stated one student demonstrator at the May 3 action to a *Reuters* reporter.

Prior to the start of the demonstration,
Continued on Page 6

NEW YORK CITY ♦ SUNDAY, MAY 20

In Defense of Leninism: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today

**Cuba and the Coming
American Revolution**

*Campaigning to Use New
Pathfinder Book*

Mary-Alice Waters

Socialist Workers Party National Committee

**Pathfinder Reprint Project at
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*On to 100% and Expanding Production
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Tom Tomasko, Steering Committee of
Pathfinder Reprint Project

**Doubling the Membership of the
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Campaign**

Member of the YS National Executive
Committee

**Report from Socialist Workers Party
National Committee Meeting**

Jack Barnes

National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

Hosted by: Brooklyn SWP, Tel: (718) 567-8014; Garment District SWP, Tel: (212) 695-7358; Newark SWP, Tel: (973) 643-3341; Upper Manhattan SWP, Tel: (212) 740-4611; Young Socialists, Tel: (212) 695-1809. Or E-mail: nygd@usa.net

♦ Acting on the growing receptivity to communist literature—from Western coalfields, to fighters against cop brutality in Cincinnati, to workers districts and farm communities across North America ♦ Raúl Castro's Answer to Washington's Assault on China ♦ Lessons from the Cuban Revolution on the habits of discipline necessary to fight the capitalists effectively and win ♦ The implosion of the Communist Party USA: In defense of Lenin and building a party of worker-bolsheviks

**Reception: 1:00 p.m.,
Meeting: 2:00 p.m.**

Dag Hammarskjöld Room,
6th Floor, 420 W. 118th St.
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Columbia University campus)

*The meeting will include a
fund appeal for the \$100,000
Pathfinder Fund*

Sponsors: Socialist Workers Party
National Committee, Young Socialists
National Executive Committee

California raisin farmers demand payment for crop

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

SAN FRANCISCO—More than 30 farmers and their supporters picketed at the Embarcadero here May 1 to demand a fair price for their raisins. The farmers, who have not been paid for the 2000 crop owing to a deadlock between packers and growers over prices, held the picket in front of the office building where an arbitration hearing was going on over the dispute.

The pickets gave out 1,000 leaflets and small boxes of raisins, along with some recipe booklets, to promote raisins and inform people about their plight. A good number of passersby stopped and asked what they could do to help.

The action was organized by the California Raisin Reform Association (CRRRA), formed by farmers last December after a bumper crop led the packing companies to cut the price paid to growers. Most of the growers have already delivered the raisins to the packers, who are selling them. Some packing companies made advances to growers of between \$325 to \$360 per ton.

The leaflet handed out by the farmers described the CRRRA, how raisins are made, and how the packers are allowed to make money while farmers face bankruptcy and the loss of their farms.

"The packers want to pay growers only \$700 to \$800 on 53 percent of their delivered raisin crop. This is equivalent to \$371 to \$441 per ton on 100 percent of their crop, which as you can see, results in a huge loss to growers," read the leaflet.

Explaining that expenses "generally range anywhere from \$600 to \$700 per ton," the leaflet emphasized that "without a price of at least \$750 per ton, growers cannot break-even!"

'Where is our money?'

Growers held signs reading, "Packers sold our raisins, where is our money?" "Buy California raisins," and "Can you live on 53 percent [of your wage]?"

The hearing was closed to the public and

to farmers. The Raisin Bargaining Association, which represents growers, was allowed one representative, its president, its chief executive officer, and a lawyer, while the 16 packinghouses involved in the dispute each had a representative and a lawyer. On May 3, after three days of hearings, the arbitrators set the field price for last year's raisins at \$877.50. This is down from the \$1,100 per ton that the Raisin Bargaining Association, which represents growers, was asking for. In 1999 farmers received \$1,425 per ton of raisins. In each of the previous three years the price exceeded \$1,200 per ton.

Remarking on the protest, Mike Jerkovich, the president of the CRRRA, said, "This is the best thing that we could have done. It was very educational for me and for the people in San Francisco. I didn't think it would turn out as good. Next time there will be more farmers."

"The main goal of this organization," explained Rick Logoluso, a third-generation grower, "is to educate and inform the growers themselves about the industry developments and to make the public more aware of what raisins are, how they're produced, and why we're not getting paid. A lot is at



Militant/Ned Measel

Raisin farmers picket in San Francisco May 1. Big packing companies are taking advantage of a bumper crop to drive down the price they pay to growers.

stake in this struggle. We could lose our heritage, the property we were on since the early 1940s," he said.

A 'man-made crisis'

"Of the raisin farmers about 30 percent are Sikh," said Navdep Sran, who owns 650 acres of land. This year, as part of a diversion program to reduce the size of next year's crop, he pruned 60 acres of his vineyard so they won't produce fruits this season. "This crisis is a man-made crisis," he said, "because it did not happen overnight,

they knew what was going on."

Kuldip Kaleka, who has been cultivating raisins since 1975, said, "If things continue like this a lot of growers will be out of business."

He and the four other farm workers on the bus, all of whom are originally from Mexico, have been out of work for three months.

Rollande Girard is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in Selma, California. Ned Measel, a meat packer in Fresno, contributed to the article.

South Carolina unionists call rally to demand: 'Drop all charges against the Charleston Five'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—Members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and other unionists will march and rally Saturday, June 9, at the South Carolina state capitol in Columbia to demand that all charges against the "Charleston Five" be dropped. Five members of the ILA in Charleston, South Carolina, are facing felony charges of "inciting to riot" for their participation in a union protest that was brutally assaulted by the po-

lice. If convicted, they could be sentenced to up to 10 years in prison.

The case stems from the dockworkers' fight to stop union-busting by the Nordana Lines shipping company, which began using a nonunion stevedoring outfit to service its ships in Charleston in late 1999. ILA members had several peaceful pickets, but on Jan. 20, 2000, some 600 police in riot gear mobilized to prevent their protest action. A number of workers were injured in the police attack. Nordana eventually agreed to hire ILA members to work its ships, but state officials have persisted in prosecuting five of the unionists. No trial date has been set so far. In the meantime, the indicted workers are denied the right to be outside their homes at night except for work, union meetings, or by special permission of the courts.

"We're going to march on Columbia again," said Kenneth Riley, president of ILA Local 1422 in Charleston in a May 4 phone interview. Just two days before the police assault on their picket line last year, many of the dockworkers had taken part in a Martin Luther King Day rally to demand the removal of the Confederate flag from atop the South Carolina statehouse. Riley reported that the march in Columbia is being

'built broadly not only in Charleston but among other AFL-CIO unions nationally. The South Atlantic and Gulf Coast regional ILA meeting will take place in Charleston June 8, and participants plan to march in the state capital the next day, he said.

Some of the framed-up workers, along with Riley, have been speaking at events around the country to win support for their fight. Riley also told a gathering in Detroit April 21 that resolutions had been passed by Longshoremen's unions on the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts of the United States, as well as several other countries, vowing to shut down ports in their respective areas if the case against the Charleston Five should ever come to trial.

Marchers will gather at Memorial Park (corner of Gadsden and Hampton) in downtown Columbia. The march will begin at 11:00 a.m., and end with a noon rally outside the statehouse. Information is available at www.scpnet.com, or call 888-716-7362.

Naomi Craine is a textile worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Chuck Guerra, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876 in Detroit, contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

'Worker rights are human rights!'

On May 1 immigrant workers in the United States took the initiative to organize marches and rallies in many cities, celebrating a holiday the U.S. rulers tried to get rid of. The 'Militant' features regular coverage on the labor and immigrant rights movements. Don't miss a single issue.



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Shop floor skirmishes build union at Dakota

BY BOBBILYN NEGRÓN

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Workers at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse here have organized a number of protests recently against attacks by the company.

The workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789, voted in the union last year but the company so far has refused to recognize the election or enter into contract negotiations.

One skirmish on the plant floor is called by the workers the “War of the Stickers.” In response to a majority of workers in the kill department deciding to wear a union sticker on their hard hats, the company asked workers to place a sticker with the company logo on their helmets.

The war was started by a worker from the kill department, José Flores, who began distributing stickers to kill-floor workers following his return after the company suspended him for one month. Flores had been accused early in March of a safety violation in the plant. However, the company never produced any evidence. “I never did what the company accused me of,” Flores told the *Workers’ Voice*, the in-plant newspaper of the union. “The only reason the company suspended me is because I support the union,” he said.

Flores has worked in the kill department for three years and is a member of the union’s communications committee. In response to this company attack, 30 workers went up to the office in support of Flores, who is known as a strong defender of the union. The mobilization of workers was the largest in-plant action since the sit-down strike last June when workers gathered in the company cafeteria and refused to work until the company met with workers’ representatives and agreed to improve some conditions in the plant. The seven-hour sit-down strike began a union organizing drive.

The mobilization of workers at the office was organized by Enrique and Obdulia Flores. “Before the kill-floor workers went downstairs to change in the morning I was at the entrance door telling them that we had to go up to the office,” said Enrique Flores. Thirty workers went to the office, but the plant manager, Esteban Cortinas, was not in his office for the day, so it was decided to return the following day. Fifteen workers formed a delegation to talk with Cortinas the next day.

At first, the company tried not to rehire José Flores, but finally relented under the pressure of the workers. The issue of the *Workers’ Voice* that featured information on the fight to defend Flores was well received by workers in the plant.

Another skirmish took place in mid-April after the company placed an experienced worker in the kill department on a job for which he had not received training. He could not keep up with the job because of his lack of training and the line speed. The worker raised the situation with fellow union members and within minutes a delegation of 40 workers marched up to the office of the plant manager to demand the worker be returned to his previous job. While the worker went into the office and spoke with Cortinas, union leader Enrique Flores told the 40 workers that no one would go back to the kill floor until the worker came out of the plant manager’s office. There was an overflow of workers in the hallway because of

the small size of the available space.

Workers in both the boning and kill departments also went into action around the company’s lack of consideration of a doctor’s restrictions placed on an injured worker. A worker in the kill department, Pancho Bazan, stabbed his hand with his knife because of the speedup and the brutal pace of work in the plant. After reporting his injury to the company, he was told to drive himself to the doctor. “The following day,” Bazan said, “My supervisor called me at home. The doctor’s instructions restricted me from working on a knife job for 10 days. However, the supervisor told me to present myself for work. He said if I didn’t, I would be fired. When I presented myself for work

I was put back on the knife job.”

Bazan’s case was featured in a new issue of *Workers’ Voice*. The newsletter was passed out by supporters on Thursday morning April 26. Within an hour of the start of his shift, plant manager Cortinas was personally driving Bazan to the medical clinic. The doctor found that the hand has a massive infection. Word of this has spread around the plant, reinforcing for many the importance of the union in defending workers from company attacks.

Bobbilyn Negrón is a meat packer and a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 in South St. Paul. Tom Fiske also contributed to this article.

Communist League fields meat packer in May 16 British Columbia elections

BY STEVE PENNER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—“Our campaign aims to present a fighting, working-class voice against the assault of the bosses and their government on our wages, unions, and democratic rights,” said Joe Young, the Communist League candidate in the May 16 British Columbia provincial elections. Young, a meat packer, is running in Vancouver-Langara.

Young has joined rallies and picket lines of 3,000 bus drivers, mechanics, and clerical workers on strike, and meat packers at Fletcher’s Fine Foods and Superior Poultry. “At the center of our campaign is discussing with working people involved in such fights how we can utilize the potential power of our unions to better defend working people from the assaults of the ruling rich,” Young said in an interview.

The Communist League candidate explained that the unions need not only to build solidarity with all striking workers but also to champion the interests of all of the oppressed and exploited. “The labor movement should oppose the rulers’ campaign against Chinese immigrants,” he stressed. “We should demand the deportations cease and those who were jailed be released,” he said.

Young also called on working people to oppose the call by the Liberal party for a British Columbia-wide referendum on Native treaty rights. “This is a thinly veiled attack on the right of Native people to national self-determination. It goes hand in hand with the federal government’s refusal to recog-



Militant/Roger Annis

Striking bus drivers rally in Vancouver against concessions demanded by company

nize the right of the Quebecois to freely decide their own future, for example, through organizing a referendum on Quebec independence.”

A struggle against the bosses and the capitalist government in Canada, Young said, can only be victorious if it also opposes imperialist war and aggression around the world, and builds solidarity with battles of workers and farmers in other countries. This is true from defending China’s workers and peasants against U.S. military probes and aggression to supporting the Palestinians fighting for national self-determination against the brutality of the Israeli capitalist regime.

Revolutionary perspectives

“Our campaign points to the necessity and the possibility for workers and farmers in Canada to build a mass social movement capable of waging a victorious revolutionary struggle to establish a workers and farmers government and join the international fight for socialism,” the Communist League candidate said.

Young announced his campaign at an April 20 Militant Labour Forum here that featured workers involved in several of the important struggles in the area.

“I am happy to have a place like this where I can talk to people so that if what happened to us happens to you, you will know what to do,” said Ian McLean, a picket captain during the almost eight-month lockout at Fletcher’s Fine Foods. Two other workers from Fletcher’s attended the meeting, along with four other meat packers and a striking bus driver.

McLean reviewed the drive by the meat packing companies in Canada for concessions over the last few years, including at Maple Leaf, Quality Meats, and Smithfield. “They have all gotten together,” he said. Workers at Fletcher’s “were the last step.”

During the lockout workers leafleted supermarkets like Safeway, encouraging people not to buy Fletcher’s products. According to McLean, “We had to leaflet and take away customers from the company. It was the only way we could get out and be understood. People were very receptive to our struggle. They knew that Safeway and

other companies have been bringing in the two-tier system” where new hires are paid less than other employees.

Chris Symes, a striking bus driver, said the transit company is demanding the union agree to a three-tier wage structure, which would weaken and divide the union. Symes asked “if there is a kernel of a political organization” that workers can support in the British Columbia elections May 16.

Communist League member Steve Penner, one of the panelists, said the New Democratic Party (NDP), a party based on the unions, “is the one mass party not owned and controlled by big business. By voting NDP workers and farmers can express their opposition to the bosses’ parties. At the same time the NDP is a party whose leadership and program supports capitalism.”

Penner pointed to the Communist League election campaign in the provincial election as “the only campaign that helps advance the fights of working people while pointing to the need to transform the unions into more effective weapons of struggle. In the process we will lay the basis for a mass movement that can fight to establish a government of workers and farmers, as Cuba’s working people did through their socialist revolution.”

At the end of the forum McLean pointed out how workers at Fletcher’s have changed. “Before in the plant there were many nationalities. They would go to lunch and speak their own language. People were separate and not talking to each other. Now we’ve all been out on the line talking for eight months. Now we’re together. The prejudice has died down a lot. We are stronger. We are going to look at what the company is doing and not bow down.

“When I see a picket line now I’m very interested,” he said. “I can’t go past a picket line without finding out and supporting them. This is how we can get the unions together.”

Philippine leader jails opposition figures

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

Philippine president Gloria Arroyo moved quickly May 1 to put down a protest of tens of thousands of people who marched to the presidential palace in support of former president Joseph Estrada, who was arrested several days earlier on corruption charges. Some 3,000 soldiers and other security forces fired on the protesters, killing some and injuring more than 100.

Following Estrada’s arrest, crowds of more than 100,000 people gathered for several consecutive days at a traditional religious site in the city, listened to speeches by a number of prominent political figures calling for Arroyo’s resignation. On May 1 a section of the crowd marched to the palace, breaking through several roadblocks on their way before reaching their destination where they dispersed in the face of deadly fire of the military.

Declaring a “state of rebellion,” Arroyo ordered the arrest without warrants of 11 opponents associated with Estrada and the protests. They are charged with inciting rebellion. One of the accused, Sen. Miriam Santiago, filed a petition with the Supreme Court to stop her arrest. “Philippine democracy is now in its death throes,” she said. By May 2 four people on the list had been detained. The most prominent of these was Juan Ponce Enrile, a 20-year veteran of the administration of Ferdinand Marcos, and of Corazon Aquino—the politician who headed the “people’s power” rebellion that overthrew the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

In January, Enrile and 10 other senators voted against admitting crucial evidence in the impeachment proceedings against Estrada on charges of corruption, a move

that forced Estrada’s opponents, who had been campaigning for months to remove him from office, into the streets.

Arroyo, then the vice president, headed massive protests in which capitalist organizations and members of the church hierarchy played a prominent role, along with trade unions and other organizations associated with the labor movement. Many working people participated in the actions, along with better-off middle-class layers.

The announcement by armed forces chiefs that the military would not act against the rebellion was a decisive moment. Estrada was removed from office, still protesting, on January 20.

Aquilino Pimentel, the president of the Senate, raised a voice of caution, noting “The administration seems to be pursuing some shortcuts in restoring order.” He added that the two mobilizations, held with backing of various wings of the wealthy rulers, could open up the “danger now that if you amass 100,000 or 1 million people on the streets, it can topple the government. We cannot afford to have a ‘people power’ three or four in this country.”

Senator Santiago also called on the Commission on Elections to postpone local and congressional elections scheduled for May 14, saying that the opposition campaign had suffered with the crackdown.

In the wake of the recent shootings and arrests of opposition figures, broad sections of the ruling class have moved to consolidate Arroyo’s grip on the country’s highest political office. While she retains the backing of the military brass and of the majority of the most privileged layers in the coun-

Continued on Page 19

THE MILITANT

www.themilitant.com

YS in Tucson sets pace for subscription drive

The Young Socialists is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information write to the Young Socialists, Times Square Post Office, P.O. Box 33, New York, NY 10108. Tel: (212) 695-1809. E-mail: youngsocialists@attglobal.net

BY LOUIS TURNER

The Tucson Young Socialists and other supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* kicked off the eight-week subscription drive for the two publications on the Navajo Nation Reservation in the Southwest. We spent two days there, introducing the *Militant* and titles published by Pathfinder Press to the workers, farmers, and youth in the area.

Several YS members had participated in teams last year to Tse Bonito, New Mexico, during the three-month victorious fight by members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at the Pittsburg and Midway Coal Co.'s McKinley mine. The union fought against the bosses' attacks on the eight-hour day, health care, and overtime pay.

Julian Santana, Layne Mostyn, and myself of the Tucson YS joined the team for the first two days of the five-day effort. One day we set up a table at a flea market with *Militants* and literature from Pathfinder Press. In a short time we were able to sell a *Militant* and one of the pamphlets, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes. We spent the rest of the day meeting with the other seven team members and planning what we would do for the rest of the week.

The issue of the *Militant* that week featured an article, "Uranium miners fight government for funds." The article explained that more than one-fourth of the uranium mines in the United States were established on the Navajo reservation and employed many Navajos. This fact was supported by the team's experiences. Many people came up to the tables after seeing signs about the article and told us how they used to be uranium miners or they knew of friends and relatives who were.

On the second day of our team we did door-to-door sales in Window Rock, Arizona and Gallup, New Mexico. People purchased 32 single issues of the *Militant* and four subscriptions to the paper. Overall, the team was a success. Eight people signed up to subscribe to the *Militant* and 148 bought single copies. We sold two of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* pamphlets, one *Pathfinder Was Born with the October Revolution*, three of *Fertile*



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Young Socialists leader Jacob Perasso introduces the *Militant* to participants in April 22 abortion rights rally in Washington. YS members are joining struggles of workers and youth, as well as teams to sell socialist press and titles distributed by Pathfinder.

Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia, and one Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs; Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas.

On April 24, in conjunction with a rally in Washington, D.C., the Tucson YS participated in an abortion rights rally of 200 people organized by the Consciousness Raising Collective at the University of Arizona. The rally's main issues were equal access to abortion for all and against forced sterilization. At the conclusion of the rally 50 protesters marched around the campus carrying signs and chanting various pro-choice slogans. We sold two copies of the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and the pamphlet titled *Women and the Nicaraguan Revolution*.



BY ARRIN HAWKINS

CHICAGO—Members of the Young Socialists in Chicago participated in a May Day action here to demand amnesty for undocumented immigrant workers living in the United States. The protest also called on Washington to get the U.S. Navy out of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. Several hundred people lined the streets hand in hand as 100 marchers began the demonstration chanting, "U.S. Navy out of Vieques!" Another crowd gathered in the plaza on Milwaukee and Ashland avenues with Latin American and Polish flags.

As the crowds grew, workers and other customers emerged from stores and restaur-

rants that dot the street, some joining in with the chanting and the line. Truckers and drivers of cars honked their horns in solidarity with the action, and passengers in city buses waved at the participants as they went along.

The May Day action was organized by Centro Sin Fronteras (Center Without Borders) and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, along with other community organizations, schools, and churches. Around 30 laundry workers, members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), participated in the action and joined the line in front of the UNITE union hall.

Kimberly Martínez, a seventh grader at Lozano School, said she found out about the May Day event during a class field trip to Centro Sin Fronteras. Martínez explained it was important to be at the action on May Day to demand better conditions for immigrant workers and an amnesty. "Today is workers day, the day for all workers," she said.

Angela Lopez, a packinghouse worker who saw the line near her workplace in the meatpacking district, said she "wanted to take a picture because it is a part of history." She described a line of people holding hands of all nationalities, including Poles and Mexicans with red and white flags chanting "Amnesty, amnesty." The Young Socialists, along with supporters of the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press had a literature table at the event. We sold one Spanish-language *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*, five *Militants*, and nine *Perspectiva Mundials*. We meet sev-

eral young people interested in participating in the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, taking place in Havana July 22-30.

The Chicago YS also held a small event April 28 to kick off the YS fund drive where we raised \$35. We've planned an event May 13 that will include a class on *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*, followed by a dinner.



BY RACHEL FISCHER

WALLINGFORD, Connecticut—About 200 people from Connecticut and neighboring states showed up here April 2 to protest a meeting of the white supremacist group, the World Church of the Creator (WCO), and its leader Matthew Hale.

Founded by Hale in 1996, the WCO's headquarters is in East Peoria, Illinois. Members consider themselves atheists and believe that their race is their religion and is noted as an anti-Christian, anti-Semitic, and racist outfit.

Some of the 200 protesters picketed Hale when he arrived at the local train station, then they marched to the picnic area where the WCO was meeting. Many members of local churches and the community joined the demonstration. There were about 50 members of WCO and 150 police officers present, some in riot gear with K-9 units. Others were undercover. The KKK had security guards present as well.

Two fences and a line of cops separated the protesters from the WCO. Police surrounded the protesters at one point by lining the parking lot with K-9 units and two rows of other police officers.

Adam Davis of Connecticut Global Action Network said of the police presence, "They were there to protect the Nazis. It is ridiculous that they would be fighting anti-racists for the benefit of Nazis. It just shows how racist our government and criminal injustice system is and how far we have to go to eliminate racism and fascism."

The undercover police officers arrested five people. One was suspected of starting a fight and several were arrested for possession of weapons.

Kristen Perrault of Connecticut Citizen's Action Group said, "I knew there were going to be people confronting the white supremacists, and I wanted to be there in solidarity. I wasn't convinced that it was something I wanted to do but was glad I went, [and] that it remained low key and no one got hurt." Despite the heavy police presence, the message came through clearly: racism will not go unanswered.

'They fear the example of this little island'

The following is based on an interview with Nilda Medina, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. Medina was in the San Francisco Bay Area April 24-29 to participate in a series of meetings and protests against the U.S. government's continued use of the Puerto Rican island in its training of naval battle groups.

Barbara Bowman: Why has the U.S. Navy resumed maneuvers on Vieques at this time?

Medina: They use Vieques to prepare for war and test new weapons. Every time they go to war we know. Before they invaded Grenada in 1983 we saw the ships and the exercises. Then we read in the newspaper the very poetic names they call their exercises and invasions. And we knew when they were preparing to go to the Balkans. I think they have started the bombing now to show us that they are the ones who will determine what happens with Vieques. It is a demonstration of imperialist arrogance.

Bowman: Why should people oppose the U.S. bombing of Vieques?

Medina: First is the welfare of the people of Vieques. The Navy has been destroying our land for 60 years. That's enough! Sixty years of destroying our air, ocean, soil, coral reef, and other natural resources. They have destroyed all we gave them. They contaminated our land and even our bodies. We have nothing else to give. It is time for them to stop so we can begin to recover.

In addition, the people of Vieques are ashamed that their land is used by the U.S. government to practice for wars they carry out against other countries. We see pictures of the children and their suffering. They become orphans. Women and families are made homeless. We do not want to be accomplices in this. We do not want to be responsible for this in any way. If we let them continue to prepare for wars in our land, knowing they destroy other people, and we do nothing to stop them, that is psychologically very dangerous for us.

Bowman: What kind of international solidarity work has the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques [CRDV] been able to do?

Medina: For 60 years we have tried to bring our struggle to other people. In the last seven years the CRDV has gone to people with the same problems [with the U.S. military] in Okinawa, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Korea. We have sent people to Spain and many cities in the United States. We also received people from all over the world in Vieques. We learn from their struggles and try to strengthen ours.

For instance, in Hawaii the Navy bombed places where the people held religious ceremonies. One of the leaders was killed. The people occupied the land. We have no indigenous ceremonies because the colonization of Puerto Rico was so thorough. So we thought about what issues would give the people of Vieques the same power to pro-



Militant/Bernie Senter

Nilda Medina, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, speaking in the Bay Area.

test. We organized around the protection of the environment and our health.

Bowman: What changes have you seen in the movement and what lessons have been learned in the last few years around the fight against the U.S. bombing of Vieques?

Medina: The struggle has been my life, but before Vieques it was unusual to see women involved. But now a lot of women are active. And the youth weren't organized. Some were into drugs and alcohol. Many were indifferent. But now they are organized. They hold meetings at the university and they work with the community in Vieques.

The progressive people of Puerto Rico, such those in the Independence Party and

the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, have always supported the struggle in Vieques. But now everybody is supporting us—all the churches, unions, political parties, and artists. The community is organizing groups by interests. This struggle for Vieques has given the people of Puerto Rico the opportunity to organize progressive groups.

The struggle is more mature. We don't criticize each other and we don't fight each other. We have learned from the past. We know about the "dirty tricks" that the Navy used to divide us. But we don't let them do that. We give support to the ones being attacked.

The Navy, with all its gigantic boats, looks very weak to us. They use the same strategy as in the past. We can read them, we can tell what they'll do. There's going to be jobs for one or two months, until the struggle is done. Then there will be no jobs. They're going to promise everything and carry out nothing. The people don't believe them any more.

And the people are more powerful. For me the struggle is about the empowerment of the people, for us to feel our power, the power to determine our own fate. We are a small, little island. But we have caused big problems for the Navy. They fear the example of this little island. And I know when we win it will make a big difference in many parts of the world. Our victory will give power to others struggling to get the U.S. Navy out of their lands.

Communists organize to win recruits to YS

Continued from front page

political questions facing working people, farmers, and young people today. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation are welcome to attend and participate in the discussions. Many who attend forums first met SWP and YS members at sales tables or through door-to-door visits in workers districts, on picket lines, and at political events.

"Since we began to establish ourselves in the New York Garment District and to reach out with Pathfinder books, the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the forums, we noticed people were anxious to get on our mailing list, including workers from West Africa and Latin America," said Andrés Pérez, from the SWP branch in the Garment District. "This has been a tremendous boost to attendance at the weekly Militant Labor Forums, and we have turned to using our forum series as a main recruitment tool. This includes a well-prepared meeting, having a lively discussion period, and organizing monthly dinners before the forum as a fund-raiser and a more relaxed way to get to know people. Recently, several people wanted to talk more and we've gone to a nearby restaurant to continue the discussion.

"Our recruitment efforts include dividing up the 40 to 50 names on the mailing list among party and YS activists so that each person has one to three names to call to invite someone to the weekly Friday evening forum," Pérez said. "We are giving our forums mailing list a lot of attention. Many of the people who signed up have purchased books and subscriptions to the *Militant* and *PM*. One of our regular forum participants, a man from West Africa, has brought some of his friends around who are from other West African countries."

Forums picking up across the country

With a new YS chapter in Pittsburgh, said Chris Remple, the party branch has stepped up joint efforts to build the weekly Militant Labor Forum series, "including posting leaflets on campuses, which has helped our efforts to bring new people to the forums. With this work we have expanded our reach."

SWP and YS members work together on the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription drive, he said. This has included several trips to Penn State University "where Black students recently organized protests against racist death threats aimed at leaders of the Black student organization on the campus."

The Militant Labor Forums are picking up across the country, attracting students, political activists, and people from the job. A student who is from Argentina met socialists at a protest action in Washington, D.C., several months ago, Mary Martin reported. "He met us again at a literature table on his campus and came to the Militant Labor Forum on revolutionary Cuba's defeat of Washington's mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. After the forum he joined us again on campus the next week and helped out at the literature table we set up, calling students over to look at the books and pamphlets displayed. He is planning to come to the next forum, which will discuss the U.S. Navy bombing of Vieques, Puerto Rico. He said he wants to go to the May 20 meeting in New York advertised on the front

page of the *Militant*."

"A Haitian co-worker from a meatpacking plant where a couple of us work came to our forum on immigrant rights after a discussion with socialists at work," Martin added. "He is reading a pamphlet he got at the Pathfinder bookstore on the writings of Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara, whom he admires greatly."

Ernie Mailhot, who works in meatpacking plant in Seattle, said party and YS members, along with several young people, worked together to remodel the local Pathfinder bookstore and SWP headquarters. "The Young Socialists are leading our subscription drive here, partly by involving another young person interested in socialism in the sales effort. We have gone together to a series of one-day strikes by state workers and a public event in Seattle marking the 40th anniversary of Cuba's victory at the Bay Pigs," he said. "Three young people are participating on a series of classes around the *Communist Manifesto*."

In Grand Junction, Colorado, socialist workers have contacted high school students near Denver who are involved in political activities and plan to meet with four students from Colorado College in Colorado Springs who attended the recent national congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. One of them is a new subscriber to the *Militant*. They are planning a public meeting to discuss their experiences in Cuba.

"We're also planning to meet with a student activist at Mesa State College who bought a copy of the *Militant*," added one of the socialist workers in Colorado. "She gave the *Militant* to her grandmother, who decided to buy a subscription because of its coverage of the struggle for compensation by uranium miners and those who were downwind of nuclear testing. The *Militant* has gained respect among those in the area who are confronting the callous disregard for uranium miners shown by the government."

Opportunities to meet revolutionary-minded workers and students were apparent at the rally for immigrant rights in Sacramento, California, May 7. Socialist workers from San Francisco set up a Pathfinder literature table that was a constant center of discussion. "Several people came over to the table and remembered us from previous immigrant rights actions," reports Deborah Liatos. "There was big interest in anything by Ernesto Che Guevara. We sold five subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*, including one for a year, and five copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* by Jack Barnes."



Militant/Sarah Katz
Participants at immigrant rights action in Sacramento, California. Sales of revolutionary books have increased among youth and workers involved in struggles.

Militant/PM subscription drive to win new readers April 14-June 10 (week 3)

Country	Militant			PM		Pamphlet	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden	12	7	58%	5	7	20	1
United Kingdom	35	10	29%	10	3	90	4
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	4	40%	1		20	6
Christchurch	8	2	25%	1		10	2
N.Z. total	18	6	33%	2		30	8
United States							
Seattle	25	13	52%	8	2	55	15
Washington*	27	14	52%	26	16	60	13
Twin Cities	35	16	46%	25	11	50	9
Grand Junction	25	11	44%	5	2	35	15
Chicago	35	15	43%	25	11	75	21
Newark	40	16	40%	25	12	100	23
Omaha	15	6	40%	18	2	20	6
Houston	35	13	37%	15	3	75	4
Los Angeles	50	17	34%	25	17	80	7
Allentown	18	6	33%	5	2	20	2
Fresno	9	3	33%	9	1	20	
Upper Manhattan	70	18	26%	50	20	125	19
Charlotte	12	3	25%	4	1	25	2
Detroit	20	5	25%	5	2	40	11
Tampa	8	2	25%	6		15	5
Tucson	8	2	25%	5		6	
Des Moines	30	7	23%	20	7	45	15
Miami	22	5	23%	20	8	75	12
NY Garment Dist.	70	15	21%	55	18	150	18
Brooklyn	75	16	21%	40	10	150	17
Atlanta	30	6	20%	15	6	50	1
Birmingham	25	5	20%	3	2	55	6
Boston	25	5	20%	8	5	30	4
Cleveland	20	4	20%	6		30	15
Pittsburgh	40	8	20%	5	1	65	6
Philadelphia	30	5	17%	10	1	60	8
San Francisco	50	7	14%	25	10	100	2
U.S. total	849	243	29%	463	170	1611	256
Australia	12	2	17%	2	1	25	7
Iceland	6	1	17%	1		35	31
Canada							
Vancouver	15	2	13%	2	1	35	3
Montreal	12	2	17%	5	1	40	12
Toronto	20	2	10%	3	1	40	10
Canada total	47	6	13%	10	3	115	25
Int'l totals	979	275	28%	493	184	1926	332
Goal/Should be	1000	375	37%	500	185	1900	703
IN THE UNIONS							
New Zealand							
NDU	2	1	50%			2	1
MWU	1	0	0%			1	0
Total	3	1	33%			3	1
United States							
UMWA	25	5	20%	1		25	0
UFCW	65	7	11%	80	25	170	27
UNITE	35	0	0%	30	10	70	2
Total	125	12	10%	111	35	265	29
Australia							
MUA	2		0%			3	1
Meat workers							
Total	2	0	0%				
Canada							
UFCW	10	2	20%	2	0	15	2
raised goal*							

Mexican bill limits indigenous rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Mexican Congress approved an indigenous rights bill April 28 containing last-minute amendments that severely weaken the Indian peoples' right to self-determination, autonomy, and legal control over their lands.

Thousands of indigenous people protested passage of the watered-down version of this law in Mexico City and Chiapas May 1. In Mexico City, some 5,000 demonstrators organized by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) marched to the Zócalo—the city's central square—where they joined a May Day rally of 200,000 workers.

The fight for an indigenous rights law became a national focus of political attention as members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) organized a caravan through southern Mexico February 25–March 11, demanding passage of a bill guaranteeing constitutional rights for Mexico's Indian communities.

Among their demands was the right to conduct their own political and economic affairs according to tradition and custom. Thousands turned out in cities the caravan passed through to back this fight. A culminating rally in Mexico City drew 100,000 people.

Mexico's 10 million indigenous people—who speak 62 different languages—confront abysmal living conditions, resulting from both national oppression within their country and the superexploitation of this semicolonial nation by U.S. imperialism.

The amendments passed by Congress limited the rights granted to indigenous people by giving the state legislatures final say over Indian autonomy. State governments would have the power to set conditions for self-government, making it impossible for Indian groups, many of which span several states, to maintain unified recognition of their people.

The original version of the bill would have established Indians' communal rights to land and natural resources. Congress, however, inserted language protecting private land holdings in Indian areas and said Indians would have preference, but not sole rights to resources in their territories.

A *Washington Post* article pointed out that "the original legislation would have given Indians commercial control of lumber and other key natural resources on vast areas of their land." The bill actually passed stated that "natural resources could be tapped by the Indians, as long as they followed federal and state laws, which say no one can cut timber without a permit. That means the resources are still fully controlled by the government."

In response to passage of this bill, the EZLN suspended informal talks with the government of President Vicente Fox, which had begun a month earlier. The CNI, the largest group representing Mexico's Indians, called the constitutional amendments "a simulation" of its original form and "a door to war."

Mexican president Fox initially called passage of this bill "a great step forward," adding, "What we have to see is the part of the glass that is full, and not the small part that remains empty." However, in response to growing opposition to it, he quickly backtracked, admitting it was "insufficient."

Because the bill requires a change in the Constitution, it must now be approved by a majority of state legislatures to go into effect.

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Berbers demand justice and jobs in Algeria

Continued from front page
some 3,000 students, according to witnesses, also marched. They chanted "government, murderers, gendarmes, criminals" in Arabic and in French.

The protests that had swept through the five provinces of the Kabylia region faced massive police repression. The May 5 *Economist* noted, "The streets of the two regional capitals, Tizi Ouzou and Bejaia, turned into battle zones as young men clashed with the riot police. In towns and villages throughout the region, protesters attacked and destroyed government buildings and tried to overrun police stations." Barricades were set up on the roads linking Tizi Ouzou to Algiers.

The demonstrators are demanding withdrawal of the gendarmerie from the region and backing for their long-standing demand for including the Berbers' Tamazight language alongside Arabic as one of Algeria's official languages. Berbers comprise 30 percent of Algeria's 30 million people.

Many of those killed in the sustained protests were shot with live ammunition by the police. Hospital workers said some of those killed and injured were shot in the back. According to official government figures, in addition to those killed, 484 civilians and 388 police and gendarmes were injured in the clashes.

Clashes broke out again May 3 between young Berbers and the cops. In Bejaia, the police threw tear gas canisters near the university to prevent hundreds of students from marching into the center of the city. Fearing the spread of the protests beyond the Kabylia area, the cops a few days earlier forced student demonstrators in Algiers organizing solidarity demonstrations to remain inside the university campus.

The Kabylia region "is the country's most politicized region," stated the *Economist*, and "had been chafing at the authority of the central government ever since the early years of Algeria's independence in the 1960s, always pressing to have the Berber language and culture recognized."

The massive response to the police repression forced the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), a smaller Berber-based party, to withdraw its two ministers from the coalition government of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Roots of protest

"The radicalised Kabyle-youth" commented the *Financial Times*, "were protesting against repression and social deprivation and appeared to have little faith in their political representation."



March in Algiers May 3 demanding a halt to police violence in the Berber region of Kabylia. Police have killed more than 80 people in protests against death of Berber youth in police custody.

Some 30 percent of Algeria's population is unemployed and nearly one-quarter of the population is living below the official poverty level, as defined by the government. With an annual Gross Domestic Product of \$48 billion, the country is saddled with a \$30 billion foreign debt owed to banks in the imperialist centers.

According to a CNN report, "more than 1,000 public enterprises had gone bankrupt and 50 percent of industrial jobs had disappeared during 20 years of disinvestments in Algeria." Hoping to head off further social unrest, the government announced plans to launch a \$26 billion public works program, which Interior Minister Noureddine Zerhouni said is mainly aimed at attracting foreign investment.

Bouteflika was elected president in De-

ember 1999 with strong backing from the military. He has been presiding over a civil war in the country that since 1992 has resulted in the killing of more than 100,000 people. This conflict began when Paris, the country's former colonial ruler, collaborated with the regime in Algiers to annul the national elections won by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a bourgeois opposition party that promised to be less subservient to the French imperialists. After a military junta took control in Algeria, Paris supplied the new regime with attack helicopters and other war materiel.

Workers and farmers in Algeria have a tradition of militant struggle. Over an eight-year period from 1954-62 they successfully waged a revolutionary war for independence from French colonial rule. As a result of this

victorious struggle, a workers and farmers government came to power in 1963 under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella of the National Liberation Front (FLN). However, two years later a right-wing grouping within the FLN carried out a military coup, overthrowing the political rule of the workers and farmers.

In response to the latest protests and police repression in Algeria, French foreign minister Hubert Vedrine announced to the country's National Assembly May 2, "We cannot remain silent in the face of such events and in light of the violence to crush" the demonstrations.

However, while French officials were piously proclaiming their opposition to violence and brutality in Algeria, the media was carrying a major story about a newly published book that details the torture, assassinations, and death squads organized by the French rulers against Algerians fighting French colonial rule in the 1950s.

In the book entitled, *Special Services: Algeria 1955-57*, Gen. Paul Aussaresses, now 83, recounts instances of summary executions by the military brass against these independence fighters. Describing one of these experiences in 1955, Aussaresses writes, "We took a hundred odd prisoners who were killed on the spot."

The author also details how knowledge about these activities were known and backed at the highest political level. He writes, "As for torture, it was tolerated if not recommended. François Mitterrand, the justice minister, in fact had an emissary with Massu (the general in charge of Algiers) in the person of Jean Bérard who covered for us and knew exactly what was going on at night (in the torture center). I had the best possible relations with him and hid nothing from him." Some 1 million Algerians were killed during the course of the eight-year war for independence.

Protest in New Jersey condemns police killing

BY AMY HUSK AND SARAH HARRIS

IRVINGTON, New Jersey—"The more they attack, the more we resist!" and "No cover-ups! No cover-ups!" chanted 200 protesters picketing the police department here May 5. The action was called by the NAACP and People's Organization for Progress (POP), an anti-police brutality group, to protest the killing of Bilal Colbert by the local police.

Local residents gathered that morning at the memorial site in the working-class neighborhood and marched to the police

station for a spirited noon rally and picket line, then marched through downtown.

On the morning of April 30 Irvington police officer William Milton shot and killed 29-year-old Bilal Colbert as he was driving two children of his companion, Tashonda Boyd, to school. Boyd and Colbert also had a three-month-old baby. Colbert was stopped at a corner store in a working-class neighborhood near where the two girls' grandparents live, while Shaquita Boyd, age 10, went inside to get some snacks to take to school. Eight-year-old Shanice Henry was in the car with Colbert. According to witnesses, including Luis Santana, the manager of the grocery store, Milton approached the car and ordered Colbert to get out of the car. When Colbert didn't comply with the order Milton shot him in the neck and killed him.

According to Irvington police department spokespeople, Milton said he approached Colbert because his car had a stolen license plate and then shot him because he was backing the car up as if to get away. Milton's lawyer, Patrick Toscano, even claimed that the cop was protecting his own life and the lives of the children in the car. He said that Colbert, who was unarmed, struck Milton with the car door when he backed up the car and that one of the children was also struck by the car. Both Milton and the child were taken to the hospital and found to have no injuries.

Some neighborhood residents told reporters and leaders of the NAACP that the cop had been threatening Colbert for some time. "Everybody around here knows this cop was after Bilal," said neighborhood resident Ayesha Fleming.

In 1997 Milton shot and killed 24-year-old Keion Williams at a traffic stop only a block away from where he killed Colbert. A grand jury in that case took no action against him.

At the rally, William Rutherford of the NAACP called for Milton to be immediately suspended without pay. The cop has been on paid medical leave since the shooting.

Larry Hamm, a leader of POP, called for an independent prosecutor to investigate the incident and "an independent civilian review board with subpoena and prosecutorial pow-

ers" to oversee the Irvington police. He pledged support to Rutherford, who has been threatened with a libel suit by Milton's attorney for publicly denouncing the cop as "racist," "murderous," and "deranged."

Willie Humbert, Colbert's brother, described how his life has changed since the murder. "I played basketball with the Irvington police department and then they go and kill my brother. I don't care if I lose my job" as a city employee, Humbert declared, "something should have been done four years ago and I am going to make damn sure it's done this time."

Besides Colbert's family, several family members of earlier victims of police brutality made brief, deeply felt statements.

"Nothing was done when my son was killed," said Patricia Williams, Keion Williams's mother, who flew in from Fayetteville, North Carolina, for the demonstration. "Had something been done [before], we probably wouldn't have to be here today."

"We've got to start standing up, my sister," stated Maretta Short, representing the National Organization for Women. "Black women are under attack again" from assaults on abortion rights to police brutality against our children.

Demonstration organizers distributed leaflets to onlookers during the march and many motorists loudly showed support for the marchers, who closed two lanes of traffic on the busy downtown street.

"What he [Milton] did was wrong," said Tammy Daniels, a young Irvington participant and friend of Colbert's family. "They're supposed to protect us and they're killing us."

"The police have no rules and they do what they want," explained Oran Murray, 24-year-old machine operator from Newark, New Jersey, who carried a handwritten sign saying, "I want to know are they troopers or Klansmen?"

Democratic Party politician Albert Sharpton arrived at the end of the protest saying, "They must understand that when you shoot one of us you shoot all of us. We are not antipolice. We are antipolice brutality."

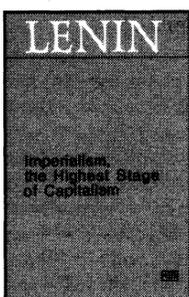
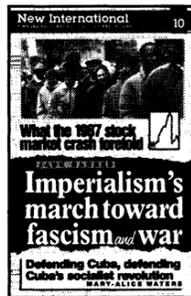
Further actions were announced including a statewide demonstration in Trenton May 16.

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Pathfinder supporters broaden reach of revolutionary books

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

From Greece to Canada to the United States, supporters of Pathfinder are scoring some initial gains in their stepped-up effort to sell revolutionary books.

Mary Ellen Marus wrote to the *Militant* to describe how Pathfinder supporters in Vancouver promoted the new title *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, making the most of heightened interest in the history of the Cuban Revolution generated by publicity and discussion about the 40th anniversary of that battle.

"At a monthly meeting of Pathfinder supporters the need for a timely, concerted effort to sell the new book was discussed, and within days a work party was organized," she wrote. "Fifty kits containing advance information about the book, and media reports of the March 22-24 Havana conference on the Bay of Pigs invasion titled 'Girón: 40 Years After' were mailed to a number of bookstores in British Columbia and the nearby provinces of Alberta and Manitoba. Follow-up phone calls led to some books being placed immediately."

This special effort "advanced the promotional work overall," wrote Marus. "We organized a two-day tour to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia and a city of around 300,000 people. We met buyers at two large

stores there. One looked closely at Pathfinder's range of titles addressing questions of women's liberation and explained she planned to make a Mother's Day display featuring feminist titles!"

Adding to their tally, a buyer at a city library ordered six titles. "These are the kind of results we need to reach the goal of \$23,000 in Pathfinder sales in Canada this year," wrote Marus. "That requires an average monthly sale of \$1,900 per month. In the first quarter we have sold a monthly average of \$2,360."

Katy Lerougetel, a Pathfinder supporter in Toronto, recently discovered one yardstick by which librarians judge a book's quality and popularity.

On May 7, Lerougetel told the *Militant* how she prepared for her April 25 visit to a major library in the city by calling the heads of committees for "research and reference books, and for adult and teen nonfiction." The work bore fruit when the head of the nonfiction committee asked her to drop off a catalog.

'Sign of a good book'

Lerougetel arrived early to check the library's computerized index.

"When we met, I pointed out that multiple copies of several titles by Malcolm X were listed as 'missing' or 'lost.' The librar-



Militant/Peter Thierjung
Pathfinder literature table with displays for *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* set up in Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan.

ian smiled and said that Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara was always going missing, too: "It's the sign of a good book."

"She assured me she would recommend a number of titles for the library's shelves," reported Lerougetel. "It's good to have views from the left wing," she said. "It balances out the selection, which is more weighted to the other side."

From Greece, Georges Mehrabian reported a similar reaction by the buyer for a large bookstore in Athens. "We have recently made a decision to have a broad spectrum of publishers with a broad spectrum of ideas. Your books definitely have a place in that spectrum," he told Mehrabian and another sales representative as he ordered 30 books and pamphlets.

The volunteers in Greece supplemented the Pathfinder catalog with a list of 7 Pathfinder titles in Greek, published by Diethnes Vima. "Of the 70 bookstores we called," reported Mehrabian, "around 30 said they would welcome a visit. Twelve of them placed orders. In a number of cases, discussing and confirming the order involved up to three visits."

One bookstore placed an order for 20 books and pamphlets, including the *Second Declaration of Havana*, and *Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government: 1848 to Today* by Mary-Alice Waters—excerpted from the third issue of

New International, magazine of Marxist politics and theory.

These Greek-language titles proved popular among bookstore buyers overall. Dozens of copies of Diethnes Vima's *Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War* by Jack Barnes, *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* by Doug Jenness, and *Yugoslavia, the Roots of the Conflict* by George Fyson and others were also placed.

Elizabeth Lariscy in Los Angeles reported sales of \$1,800 of Pathfinder books at the April 28-29 *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books at the University of California. "More than 100,000 people have attended the fair each year since it began 5 years ago," she wrote.

Participants purchased 71 of Pathfinder's books on the Cuban Revolution, wrote Lariscy, including 16 copies of *Playa Girón* and 13 of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

"We also sold more than 100 Pathfinder catalogues, and signed up nine new subscribers to the *Militant* and one to *Perspectiva Mundial*," said Lariscy, a volunteer at the Pathfinder booth.

The sales flowed from the political and into involving the volunteers and the many people who stopped by the booth. Lariscy reported that "discussions on Cuba, socialism, and the world political and economic crisis went on nonstop for the two whole days."

Pathfinder Fund at \$25,000 mark

BY PAT HUNTER

BROOKLYN, New York—Over the last week supporters have sent in more than \$8,400 to the international Pathfinder Fund, bringing the total collected to \$25,623. As the pace of contributions picks up, supporters elsewhere may want to emulate those in Pittsburgh, who raised their target by 20 per-

cent to \$6,000. San Francisco supporters also raised their goal by \$1,000 to \$9,000 in anticipation of a fund-raising event on May 13.

Building the May 20 meeting in New York City, "In Defense of Leninism: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today," is another way to win broad support for the fund. Pathfinder supporters are encouraged to consider making a generous contribution to the work of the revolutionary publishing house at the meeting.

Dick Geyer sent a message that 30 people attended a May 6 meeting in Chicago to celebrate the publication of Pathfinder's new book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*. Participants in the event contributed more than \$1,700 to the fund. Among those attending the meeting and making contributions were two young people attracted to Pathfinder's revolutionary books during the recent tour of Cuban youth leaders, and several Mexican and Chicano participants in a "human chain" protest for amnesty for undocumented workers and against the U.S. Navy's bombings in Vieques.

Luis Juárez, who was active in the recent Cuba Youth Lectures Committee, said, "We have to share with new generations what happened in fights in the past, such as Playa Girón. These lessons inspire us to try to change things, to think we can do it."

Gisela López of the Chicago Cuba Coalition spoke of her experiences as a supporter of the July 26 Movement in Chicago at the time of the Cuban Revolution. Young Socialists member Marlén Ortega pointed out, "The Cuban Revolution not only belongs to the Cuban people but it belongs to all people who are exploited in every country in the world."

The featured speaker was Elizabeth Stone of the Socialist Workers Party. She spoke on her experience in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee at the time of the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba and the rapid defeat of the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion by the revolutionary mobilization of Cuban workers and peasants.

The increased goals in Pittsburgh and San Francisco show the potential for meeting the fund goal of \$100,000 in full and on time. Checks can be made out to Pathfinder Press and sent to Pathfinder at 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Pathfinder Fund 2001			
Country/City	goal (\$)	paid	%
New Zealand	800	515	64%
United States			
Philadelphia	3,000	1,595	53%
Twin Cities	4,000	1,993	50%
Chicago	6,500	3,112	48%
Boston	3,750	1,495	40%
Washington D.C.	2,200	873	40%
Charlotte	2,700	1,055	39%
Detroit	2,500	970	39%
Seattle	8,000	2,500	31%
Upper Manhattan	3,300	1,000	30%
Houston	3,500	930	27%
Brooklyn	4,000	876	22%
NY Garment Dist	4,000	854	21%
San Francisco	9,000	1,900	21%
Pittsburgh	6,000	1,258	21%
Los Angeles	6,000	1,095	18%
Atlanta	3,200	565	18%
Tampa	600	100	17%
Newark	3,000	380	13%
Des Moines	1,400	175	13%
Omaha	250	24	10%
Birmingham	2,500	235	9%
Miami	2,000	160	8%
Grand Junction	2,400	150	6%
Cleveland	1,250	25	2%
Allentown	900	0	0%
Fresno	225	0	0%
Other		507	
U.S. Total	86,175	23,827	28%
Australia	900	0	0%
Canada	5,000	1,206	24%
Iceland		25	
Sweden		50	
Int'l Total	\$92,875	\$25,623	26%
Int'l Goal/Should be	\$100,000	\$37,500	37%

Construction workers in Sweden win demands after two-day strike

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—"It is good to be back at work, especially since we won," said construction worker Stig Sundberg as he and his co-workers went back to work April 25. Sundberg is currently employed at the construction project to build Kista Tower in a suburb north of Stockholm. He was one of more than 4,000 construction workers across Sweden who went out on strike April 23 to gain a national contract. The strike is estimated to have cost the employers 80 to 100 million Swedish kronas (US\$8 to 10 million).

"The employers backed off completely," Sundberg said. On April 26 the union had refused to sign a contract, which did not include increasing the prepayment of expected piece-rate wages from 85 percent to 90 percent of the total that construction workers traditionally receive. "It was not really about money," said Sundberg, "but about us getting more of our wages a little earlier." The rest of the piece rate pay is paid out between three and five months later after the rate has been settled.

The Construction Workers Union signed a three-year contract covering 60,000 construction workers in Sweden, which included an 8.5 percent wage increase during the three years. Holiday pay will be paid for all holidays, which was not the case before. The contract also includes a small reduction in work hours during the last year of the contract.

"The unity behind our strike is total," explained Lasse Widlund, one of the pickets at Kista Tower on the first day of the strike. Two other workers, Jocke Franzén and Jukka Savela, were picketing outside the construction site of what will become a new embassy for Finland in central Stockholm. "A strike is quite okay," said Franzén. "We are quite united behind our demands."



Militant/Catharina Tirsén
Stig Sundberg and co-worker as they go back to work at the construction site of Kista Tower on April 25.

There has been a decade-long conflict between the employers and the construction workers union around how wages are paid. The employers favor individual wages and the construction workers union wants to maintain the piece-rate wages that are paid out equally to the whole team working on a certain job. A lower percentage of the wages paid out before the rate is settled was looked upon by the union as a step towards favoring the kind of wage system advocated by the employers.

Catharina Tirsén is a member of the Metal Workers Union at Ericsson Radio Access in Kista, Stockholm.

Cuban Revolution is irreversible, Guevara told Kennedy advisor

1961 secret memo to White House shows Washington's difficulties in overturning first socialist revolution in the Americas

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Reprinted below is an August 22, 1961, memorandum written by Richard Goodwin, a top advisor to U.S. president John F. Kennedy, on a meeting Goodwin held five days earlier with Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution. The meeting occurred during the August 1961 ministerial conference of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Punta del Este, Uruguay, attended by government officials from around the Americas.

Goodwin's memo was one of several declassified U.S. government papers made available at the March 22-24 Cuba-U.S. conference in Havana marking the 40th anniversary of the Cuban victory at the Bay of Pigs against a U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary invasion force. In less than 72 hours of combat, Cuba's volunteer militias, Rebel Army troops, air force, and revolutionary police crushed the 1,500 mercenaries of "Brigade 2506," who surrendered on April 19, 1961, at Playa Girón (Girón beach).

The document was declassified in 1993 and publicly released three years later. It gives a glimpse of the problem the U.S. capitalist rulers confronted then, and still confront today, in their unceasing efforts to undermine the Cuban Revolution: their inability to intimidate, buy off, or divide the revolutionary leadership, and the determination of Cuba's working people to defend their democratic and social gains in face of Washington's aggression.

Goodwin, like John F. Kennedy, a Harvard graduate and Democratic Party liberal, became a speechwriter for Kennedy and special assistant to the president. On numerous occasions over the years he has described his August 1961 conversation with Guevara. These later accounts, however, reveal a casual disregard for the facts.

In a July 5, 2000, op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, for example, Goodwin wrote, "I want to thank you for the Bay of Pigs," Che Guevara told me in Uruguay during an unexpected meeting at a party for a Latin American diplomat in 1961. "It solidified our rule and discouraged our middle-class enemies."

No one can believe that Guevara said "Bay of Pigs." In Cuba the battle is universally identified as Playa Girón, where the victory was won—and not the Bay of Pigs, the term used in the United States and other countries to refer to the invasion.

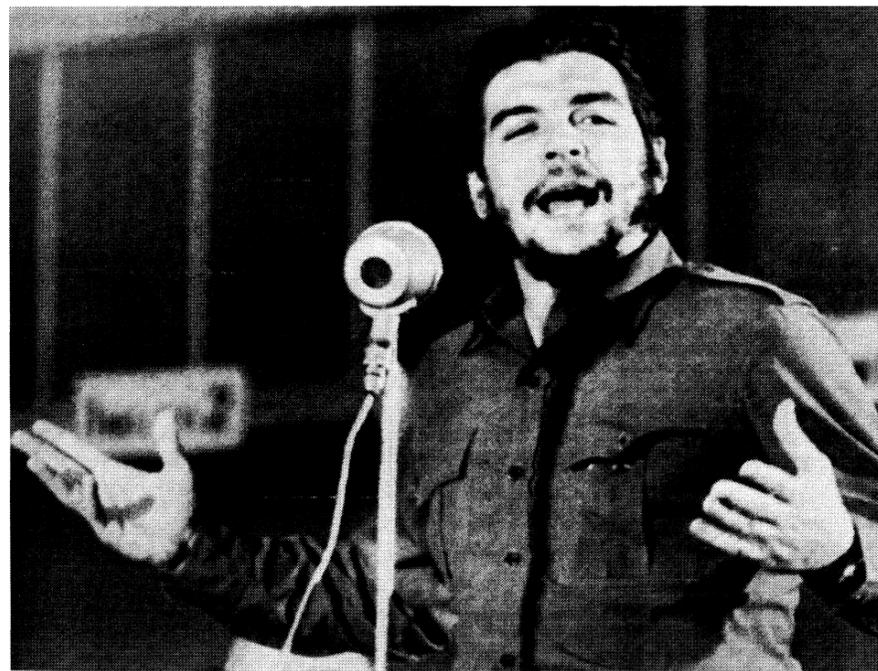
Goodwin's later version of the conversation, moreover, has Che referring to "our middle-class enemies," a phrase not in the 1961 memo reprinted below. At that time, Goodwin wrote that Guevara "then went on to say that he wanted to thank us very much for the invasion—that it had been a great political victory for them—enabled them to consolidate—and transformed them from an aggrieved little country to an equal."

Quite a different version, both in what Guevara is reported as saying and what is omitted in the later account! One is a report addressed to the president marked "secret," and with the author's memory still fresh. The other is an account for public consumption, aimed at prettying up the Kennedy administration and bolstering anticommunist

prejudice against Cuba.

Goodwin claims that after Washington's defeat at the Bay of Pigs, and the October "missile" crisis a year and a half later, Kennedy sought to improve relations with the Cuban government. In the *New York Times* piece published last July, Goodwin suggests that Kennedy was looking for "some rapprochement" with the Cuban government but that such efforts were cut short by Kennedy's death in November 1963.

In fact, the Kennedy administration never let up its attacks on the Cuban Revolution, which included economic, military, and diplomatic pressure. Washington used the summit conference in Uruguay to get the OAS to rubber-stamp the launching of the Alliance for Progress. The U.S.-sponsored program allocated \$20 billion in "development" loans to Latin American governments over a 10-year period in exchange for their cooperation in opposing Cuba's revolutionary government. It aimed to isolate Cuba and undermine the rise in working-class and peasant struggles throughout Latin America that gained inspiration from the example of



Che Guevara speaks at OAS conference in Punta del Este, Uruguay, Aug. 8, 1961.

proposal to organize a "command operation" against Cuba and recommending it be headed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy, the president's brother. This became Operation Mongoose, a covert campaign of U.S.-organized terror and attempted assassinations. The program was organized directly out of the White House under the direct supervision of John and Robert Kennedy.

The administration also began organizing preparations for a direct military invasion, which culminated in Washington bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war with the October 1962 "missile" crisis. What stayed the warmakers' hand was a massive mobilization of Cuban working people in defense of their revolution.

After the October 1962 events, during the period Goodwin claims it was seeking a "rapprochement" with Cuba, the Kennedy administration continued to organize terror actions against the island. In 1963 the White House set up a counterrevolutionary unit, based in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, that carried out commando raids on Cuban shore facilities. At the initiative of Robert Kennedy, Manuel Artime, a leader of the mercenary force defeated at Playa Girón, was put in charge of the operation, which also involved two other leaders of Brigade 2506, Erneido Oliva and José Pérez San Román. Another participant in the terror operation was Félix Rodríguez, a CIA agent who in October 1967 in Bolivia, when Che Guevara was captured in combat by government troops there, helped direct the execution of the revolutionary leader.

At the August 1961 summit in Punta del Este, Guevara, who was head of the Ministry of Industry and president of the National Bank at the time, led Cuba's delegation. On their arrival, the Cuban revolutionaries were met by a crowd of thousands of supporters. In his speech to the gathering Guevara reviewed the U.S. record of aggression against Cuba. He explained why the Alliance for Progress would not bring development to Latin America and how it was aimed against Cuba and its example for workers and peasants throughout Latin America. The full text of the speech is available in *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder.

Footnotes are by the Militant.

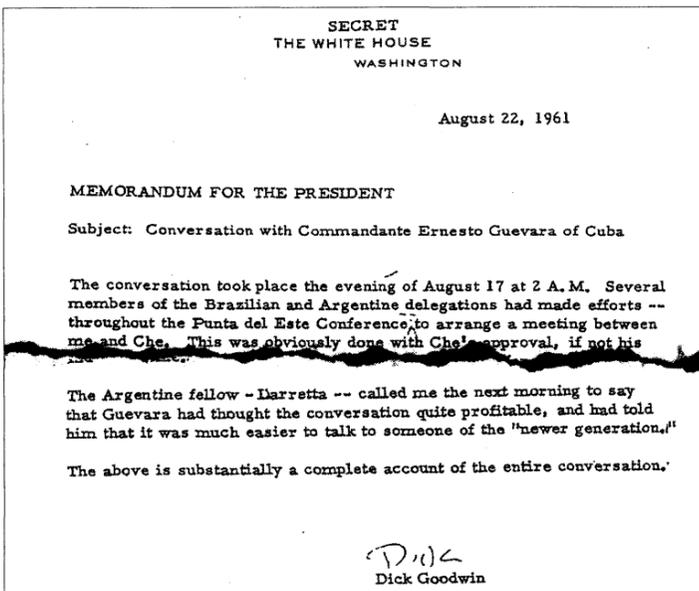
SECRET
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 22, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
Subject: Conversation with Commandante Ernesto Guevara of Cuba

The conversation took place the evening of August 17 at 2 A.M. Several members of the Brazilian and Argentine delegations had made efforts—throughout the Punta del Este Conference—to arrange a meeting between me and Che. This was obviously done with Che's approval, if not his urging. I had avoided such a meeting during the conference. On Thursday we arrived in Montevideo and I was invited to a birthday party for the local Brazilian delegate to the Free Trade area. After I arrived, and had been there for about an hour, one of the Argentines present (who had been on the Argentine delegation) informed me they were inviting Che to the party. He arrived at about 2 A.M. and told Edmundo Barbosa DaSilva

Continued on Page 16



the Cuban Revolution.

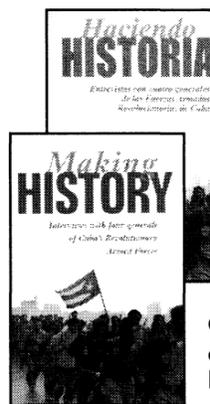
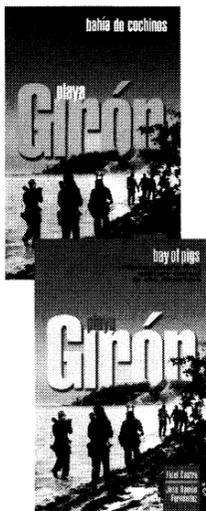
In January 1962 the OAS—which Guevara called "the United States Ministry of Colonies"—did Washington's bidding and expelled Cuba from its ranks.

Washington simultaneously escalated its campaign of counterrevolutionary terror and sabotage, as well as economic pressure. Another document presented at the conference in Havana earlier this year was a second memo from Goodwin to the U.S. president, dated November 1, 1961, outlining a

New From Pathfinder

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

In less than 72 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. **Special offer \$15**



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. **Special offer \$12**

Special offer

For members of the Pathfinder Readers Club

Both titles for \$25

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

'There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba.'

—Fidel Castro, March 1961

BY JACK BARNES

In September 1960, addressing the United Nations General Assembly, Cuban prime minister Fidel Castro announced to the world: "In the coming year, our country intends to wage its great battle against illiteracy, with the ambitious goal of teaching every single illiterate person in the country"—one million Cubans, roughly one-third of the adult population—"to read and write." And that's exactly what they did, as some 100,000 young people, most of them teenagers, went to the countryside and lived and worked alongside peasant families.

Today we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary of that historic conquest.

On April 15, 1961, when the Yankee-organized mercenaries announced their imminent invasion by simultaneously bombing three Cuban airfields, the revolutionary government mobilized the people's militias and other military units. In the declaration announcing that state of alert, Fidel Castro called on all Cubans to "occupy their assigned posts, whether in a military unit or a workplace"—and he added, in the same sentence, "with no interruption in production, the literacy campaign, or a single revolutionary task."

Four days later, when the counterrevolutionary forces had been defeated, the communiqué signed by Fidel reporting that victory to the Cuban people was demonstratively dated: "April 19, 1961, Year of Education."

You can find both documents in the new Pathfinder book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, whose publication in English and Spanish we are also celebrating here today.

Nineteen sixty-one in Cuba was the Year of Education in all the meanings of that word—the capacity to learn, to produce, to become a more disciplined revolutionary soldier, to create, to develop. The Year of Education meant making culture more accessible. It meant bravery in serving the highest human goals. It meant extending a hand of solidarity to anyone fighting against injustice and oppression anywhere in the world. It meant offering your life to achieve these goals.

Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and other leaders of the Cuban Revolution were very much aware that the greatest obstacle to the line of march of the toilers is the tendency, promoted and perpetuated by the exploiting classes, for working people to underestimate ourselves, to underestimate what we can accomplish, to doubt our own worth. That's why revolutionists in Cuba were so proud that the literacy effort had continued with minimal disruption as the battle against the invaders—a battle for the very life of the revolution—was fought and won. "The literacy campaign has not stopped even during these days," announced Fidel Castro in his April 23 report on the victory to the Cuban people.

Whatever any particular individual was doing over those three days, April 17–19—whether deployed at the front, working in the fields or factories, or helping someone learn to read and write—the Cuban people felt the bond of a common battle waged by equals. A common bond that provided a basis for discipline, a basis for the shared joy of construction, the joy of creation, and the joy of victory in battle over those who sought to destroy everything their revolution was making possible.

What a moment for the people of Cuba to announce to the world the socialist character of the revolution!

About this article

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution will roll off the presses in a few days. An international campaign to get this latest Pathfinder Press title into the hands of workers, farmers, and youth will be launched at the May 20 public meeting in New York City, "In Defense of Leninism: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today."

The author of the new book is Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, who is a featured speaker at the May 20 meeting. The preface is by Mary-Alice Waters, a member of the SWP National Committee, who will also be speaking at the New York event.

The first of two items by Barnes in the book, entitled "1961: Year of Education," was initially published in the March 19 issue of the *Militant* and served as the foreword to Pathfinder's recent title, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández.

It is largely based on the activity of members of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee at Carleton College in Minnesota in the months leading up to, during, and after

the Cuban people's lightning victory over a U.S.-organized invasion at Playa Girón near the Bay of Pigs in April 1961.

As a result of those events four decades ago, many students at Carleton were won to the communist movement in the United States; Barnes and Waters are among the dozen who remain active in that effort to this day, or did so for the rest of their lives.

The new book itself will be a powerful instrument in meeting the expanding opportunities today to recruit to the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party. It is part of expanding the reach of communist ideas—essential to forging the kind of party that can lead the coming American revolution—as widely as possible in working-class communities, in factories and at plant-gates, on picket lines, in rural areas, on campuses, at social protests, and elsewhere.

Above we are printing excerpts from the concluding item in the book. It is based on talks presented by Barnes March 18 in Seattle and March 11 in New York City to some 450 participants in meetings celebrating the 40th

A little more than a year later Che Guevara told the congress of the Union of Young Communists (UJC)—in a speech you can find in Pathfinder's *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*—that young communists had the responsibility to be "the first in work, the first in study, the first in defense of the country." And he congratulated them for the three words they had put on the emblem of their organization—study, work, and the rifle.

These are the emblems of all Cubans, Che said, permanent emblems, not just momentary ones.

The rifle, because no progress toward the liberation of toiling humanity is secure unless the exploiting classes know we are ready to defend those gains by any means necessary. That was the truth confirmed once again at Playa Girón.

Work, often depicted by a shovel or a machete, because the transformation of nature by human labor, social labor, is not only the source of all wealth but the foundation for all culture. Without the shovel and machete, there's nothing for the rifle to defend.

And study, depicted by a pencil, a symbol of the literacy campaign, because the capacity to read and write gives access to the cumulative conquests of all previous human endeavor and opens the doors to workers and farmers to participate as equals in every

aspect of social and political life. It makes them better able to transform production and the conditions of life and work, better able to take control of their own destiny.

The literacy campaign was central to strengthening the worker-peasant alliance on which revolutionary Cuba was founded; it was central to narrowing the gulf between toilers in city and country—

Continued on next page



Above, literacy brigade volunteers, many of them teenagers, join December 1961 "Rally of the pencils" in Havana to celebrate completion of year-long campaign. Above right, headline of the *Militant* in April 1961 in response to Bay of Pigs invasion. Right, Black youth in Cincinnati protest cop killing of 19-year-old Timothy Thomas in April. Barnes explains how the U.S. government's unleashing of its "counterrevolutionary assassins and torturers against the literacy campaign volunteers helped young people in the United States understand the class reality that cop beatings, frame-ups, and executions on the streets are part of the everyday life of working people, bearing down disproportionately on oppressed nationalities."



anniversary of Cuba's successful campaign to wipe out illiteracy and the victory at Playa Girón.

The title of that talk, taken from a statement by Fidel Castro just a few weeks prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion, is: "There Will Be a Victorious Revolution in the United States before a Victorious Counterrevolution in Cuba." The excerpts above, selected from several different portions of the talk, bear on both aspects of that revolutionary judgment, which are of pressing interest to working people not only in the United States and Cuba but the world over. We're convinced that readers' interest will be whetted in the remaining two-thirds of Barnes's talk, as well as the other material in *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*.

The 128-page book contains an index, plus a 16-page photo insert. For the duration of the spring and summer campaign to sell it, *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* can be bought for \$10.

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—STEVE CLARK

Continued from previous page

side. Peasants and their families in pre-revolutionary Cuba had virtually no educational opportunities. Nor did women, especially in rural areas. So the literacy campaign struck a mighty blow for the emancipation of women, too.

A central part of the education of every revolutionary-minded person is coming to recognize the terror, violence, and degradation on which the landlords and capitalists base their rule. That's one of the lessons underlined by José Ramón Fernández, commander of the main column that repelled the invaders at Playa Girón, in his July 1999 testimony before a Havana court during the trial of a lawsuit brought by the people of Cuba against the U.S. government for the thousands of deaths and massive physical destruction caused by Washington's decades-long effort to destroy the Cuban Revolution.

In 1961 the literacy campaign volunteers were among those in Cuba against whom the U.S. government unleashed its counterrevolutionary assassins and torturers. As we explained in the foreword to *Playa Girón*, for young people in the United States during those opening years of the revolution, the press dispatches and photographs depicting "Cuban teenagers lynched for the crime of teaching peasant families to read and write" offered a graphic representation of the motives, the real character of the contending class forces confronting each other not just in Cuba but the world over.

Such images confirmed what young people in the United States in the early 1960s were learning here at home about the lynchings, night-riding terror, and police violence, both local and federal, against Blacks and civil rights fighters. It helped us understand the class reality that cop beatings, frame-ups, humiliations, and, yes, executions on the streets are part of the everyday life of millions of workers—daily horrors that bear down disproportionately on Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and other oppressed nationalities. And it opened our eyes over time to recognizing that the capitalist rulers will organize and unleash fascist terror in face of a challenge to their rule by workers and farmers.



The victory at Playa Girón reminds us of the price toilers must be ready to pay to win our freedom from exploitation and oppression and then to defend it. We can't help but be affected by the fearlessness displayed by tens of thousands of Cuban workers and peasants, many of them very young—by their courage and determination in face of death. That's one of the qualities of a people engaged in a profound revolutionary transformation of their circumstances and themselves.

What's so striking about Cuban revolutionists, however, is not their courage and determination in face of death. *It's their attitude toward life.* That, above all, is what the élan, the discipline, the bravery that ensured the triumph at Playa Girón were all about.

That's why, as José Ramón Fernández says in his testimony, there was such surprise in Washington in April 1961 "at the scope of the Cuban people's victory." The outcome, he says, "can be explained only by the courage of a people who saw the January 1 [1959] triumph as the genuine opportunity to determine their own future. This is why they proudly wore the militia uniforms and were on alert, and willing to fight, with the firm conviction they would win."

That's what the U.S. rulers did not understand—and even more importantly, *can never understand.* They do not and cannot understand the scope of the capacities of workers and farmers engaged in struggle, *revolutionary struggle above all.* They cannot understand human beings like the militia members in that wonderful photograph



Top, Bohemia

Top, members of First Company, 134th Militia Battalion, celebrate victory at Playa Girón. Bottom, Teamster Local 544 Union Defense Guard, 1938, formed to meet growing threats by employer-financed fascist forces during massive labor battles in Minnesota. "The U.S. rulers do not and cannot understand the scope of the capacities of workers and farmers engaged in struggle, revolutionary struggle above all."

the *Militant* newspaper ran this week of the First Company of the 134th Battalion celebrating their victory at Playa Girón.

If this weren't true—if the ruling class could understand what propels workers and farmers into revolutionary action; if they understood what we are ready to fight and die for, or could *learn* to understand it—then socialist revolution would be an illusion. But they do not and cannot.

In order to rationalize the legitimacy of their exploitative system before the eyes of society as a whole, the rulers rely on *ideology.* Contrary to the bourgeoisie's pretensions to civilization and culture, there are no "great ideas" or scientific social theories whose inexorable conclusion is that a handful of property-holding families must forever grow wealthy off the labor of the majority of humanity, maintaining their class dictatorship by whatever force and violence is necessary. That's not a law of nature.

The capitalists in the United States are particularly pragmatic. They have no theories or ideas. They just do what they must to maintain their class rule, and then promote ideological justifications for it. They market these as buzzwords, hack phrases, and coarse Americanism, through "news" shows, "news" analyses, "newspapers," and talk radio and TV.

But bourgeois ideology is not a conspiracy. It's not

some clever plot they hatch up. The closer the rulers' rationalizations come to something with a family resemblance to social thought, the more impossible it becomes for them and their children to disentangle what they, as a class, *want* and *claim* to be true from the truth itself. The same ideological illusions hold sway among the middle-class and professional layers who look to the bourgeois rulers and act on their behalf.

In *Capital*, in the chapter called "The Fetishism of the Commodity and Its Secret," Karl Marx observes that the very foundation of capitalist social relations—the fact that all profits originate from the exchange of commodities whose value is solely the creation of human labor—is camouflaged behind what goes by the name of "economics," but is in fact vulgar apologetics for bourgeois rule. But these ideological self-rationalizations are believed by the capitalists and those they hire to propagate them, Marx says.

"These formulas," Marx writes, "which bear the unmistakable stamp of belonging to a social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the opposite, appear to the political economists' bourgeois consciousness to be as much a self-evident and nature-imposed necessity as productive labour itself."

Because the bourgeoisie and their servants believe their own ideology, they end up making

political misjudgments about the capacities of working people—about the toilers whose courageous actions allow them to begin escaping the domination of these ghosts. At decisive moments, the rulers make big miscalculations. That's why, in the end, they will lose.

Over the years, I've frequently heard the question: "Didn't most top CIA and White House officials really know there would be no uprising by the Cuban people in response to the Bay of Pigs invasion?" The answer is, no. It's not that simple. And it's worth taking a few minutes to discuss why.

A good place to start is the judgment by José Ramón Fernández that "from a strategic and tactical point of view, the enemy's idea was well-conceived." We should take that assessment as dead serious. But it contradicts all the most common evaluations promoted for forty years by the U.S. rulers and their propagandists to rationalize Cuba's stunning victory. They point to the CIA's supposed blunders, or to Kennedy's claimed vacillations, or to a combination of both.

Fernández rejects this. "The mercenaries came well organized, well armed, and well supported," he says. "What they lacked was a just cause to defend. That is why they did not fight with the same passion, courage, conviction, valor, firmness, bravery, and spirit of victory as did the revolutionary forces."

Che Guevara made the same point just a few weeks after the victory at Playa Girón. It's in a talk he gave on May 8 to a gathering of electrical workers and militia members in Havana. I read it on the plane flying out here from New York. The *Militant* is planning to run the talk as a feature in the April 2 issue. Don't miss it; it's pure pleasure.

The U.S. government's "operation was well conceived from a military point of view," Che said. "They did their mathematical calculations as if they were confronting the German army and coming to take a beachhead at Normandy." They organized the invasion at the Bay of Pigs "with the efficiency they display in such matters.

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

The U.S. rulers, Che said, figured they needed only 1,000 men to carry out a successful invasion and hold a beachhead in Cuba. "But they needed 1,000 men there who would fight to the death," he emphasized, and that they did not have. "Someone whose daddy had 30,000 acres of land, and who comes here solely to show his presence so the 30,000 acres of land will be returned to him—you can't ask him, simply because his acreage was taken away, to die at the hand of a peasant who had nothing and who has a ferocious desire to kill him...."

"They have always been wrong about us," Che concluded. "They have always arrived late. And they have never done anything that did not serve instead to strengthen the trust of the people in their government, to

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make the revolution more militant: in short, to strengthen us more."

The U.S. rulers *were* wrong about the workers and farmers of Cuba. Officials in the CIA and White House expected the invasion force, after a few days, to spark some uprisings against the revolutionary government. They anticipated some divisions among the officers of Cuba's armed forces, too. By analogy, the imperialists saw the government in Cuba as some tropical variety of a Stalinist regime, with the same inherent brittleness. And they saw the cadres of the Revolutionary Armed Forces as some sort of Latin American officer corps, comparable to those they had been used to dealing with for decades.

Up until just five weeks before the invasion, the CIA's plan had been for the mercenary brigade to land near the city of Trinidad. Trinidad lies at the foot of the Escambray mountains, where counterrevolutionary bands had been most active. A CIA memo assured the Kennedy administration that a relatively large and determined invasion force in that area would, "it is hoped, demoralize the militia and induce defections ... impair the morale of the Castro regime, and induce widespread rebellion. If the initial actions proved to be unsuccessful in thus detonating a major revolt, the assault force would retreat to the contiguous mountain area and continue operations as a powerful guerrilla force."

But Kennedy scotched the Trinidad plan on March 11 and insisted that the CIA come up with an alternative. An invasion near a city with a substantial population was too risky politically. The hopes for a rapid uprising were offset by the possibility of an even more stunning defeat. What's more, 40,000 members of Cuba's revolutionary militia had recently completed a successful "cleanup" operation in the Escambray that had greatly diminished the numbers and latitude of the counterrevolutionary bands that might otherwise have been called on by the mercenaries for help.

That's when the invasion site was switched to the Zapata Swamp area near the Bay of Pigs. The plan then became to land on a sparsely populated stretch of beach, win the initial battles, start making some progress in gaining popular support, foment divisions, and declare a provisional government. If that proved unsuccessful, then the invasion force was expected to at least hold the beachhead and small airfield long enough to call for support from the Organization of American States, under cover of which the U.S. government and its closest Latin American allies could directly intervene.

Meanwhile, the urgency in the Kennedy administration to take action was being ratcheted up by CIA reports that Cuba's revolutionary government and armed people were growing stronger. As one agency memorandum put it, time was not on Washington's side. So with each passing day the White House pressed forward its plans, making constant alterations.

Kennedy was counting on the brigade to hold the beachhead long enough to breed hoped-for resistance in Cuba and buy the U.S. government some time. Washington itself was not yet prepared militarily for an invasion. In October 1962, when the Pentagon was ready, it had begun assembling a 90,000-strong force to do the job. The mobilization then was so extensive that journalists began asking about the convoys and troop concentrations across the South, which couldn't be kept entirely under wraps. But in April 1961 Washington had only some 2,000 combat-ready U.S. marines on ships off Cuba—far from enough to carry out an invasion.

The U.S. rulers displayed a class blindness to the revolutionary capacities of ordinary workers and farmers in Cuba (and still do). But small groups of young people in a number of U.S. cities and on college campuses didn't. From the moment we learned of the invasion, we confidently asserted that, CIA-planted press dispatches to the contrary, the U.S.-organized mercenaries would be defeated. And we were reinforced in that conviction by the experienced communist workers, members of the Socialist Workers Party we had begun working alongside and had come to know and trust.

This confidence in the victory of the Cuban toilers was not just a matter of youthful enthusiasm for a revolution we deeply identified with. It was based in *fact*. And even if we couldn't explain it at the time, we *acted* on the recognition that the Kennedy administration was operating on the basis of ideology, *not* fact.

Understanding this reality of class politics is something that comes only through struggle, and then studying, absorbing, and generalizing the lessons of many struggles that came before. As working people begin to recognize the degree to which we ourselves are victims of bourgeois ideology, we also take strides toward greater class consciousness.



One sentence in the foreword to *Playa Girón*, more than any other, captures politically what I hope each of us takes away from this meeting today. It's from a March 13, 1961, speech by Fidel Castro, given as Washington was accelerating its campaign of terror aimed at overturning the Cuban revolution. The talk marked the fourth anniversary of the armed assault organized by the Revolutionary Directorate on the Presidential Palace of



January, 1959: working people in Havana take to the streets to defend and celebrate revolutionary victory over the U.S.-backed Batista regime. "What's so striking about Cuban revolutionists is not their courage and determination in the face of death. It's their attitude toward life."

the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista in which student leader José Antonio Echeverría was killed.

There is one thing the Cuban people "can tell Mr. Kennedy," Castro said to the cheering crowd. "A victorious revolution will be seen in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba."

We're convinced that sentence remains as accurate today as it was in 1961. It's not a prediction: it's not an encouraging clap on the back. It's the recognition of how capitalism works, of the line of march of working people, and of the communist caliber of the revolutionary movement in Cuba. For revolutionists in the United States, in Cuba, and around the world, it sharply poses Lenin's famous question: What is to be done?

Fidel's assertion makes quite a statement about the Cuban Revolution—even more so forty years later, if you think about it, than it did at the time. And it was quite a statement in 1961! Today we know that the revolution in the United States will take place *after* Fidel and the generation that organized and led the Cuban Revolution are no longer part of the leadership in Cuba. So when we say the statement remains true today, we're saying something about the continuity of revolutionary leadership not only in Cuba but its interconnection with the continuity and renewal of communist leadership in the United States and around the world.

In Richard Bissell's memoirs [Bissell was the CIA official in charge of the Bay of Pigs operation], he reports that during top-level White House discussions of the invasion plans in 1961, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, drawing on much experience, used to ask "whether something couldn't be done with 'silver bullets'"—in plainer words, wasn't it possible to buy off a substantial number of Cuban leaders? "His impression was that even in a well-run covert operation one should try to bribe one's enemies rather than fight them."

Bissell then comments, with no explanation, that "unfortunately, this would not have worked in Cuba."

He was correct, but why wouldn't it have worked? The reason has everything to do with Yankee imperialism's misestimation of the workers and peasants of Cuba.

The U.S. rulers were functioning on the basis of false analogies at every level. They were acting based on the distortions viewed through the lens of their class. That fact helps us understand why the course of the Cuban Revolution and prospects for the coming American revolution have been hitched together so closely for more than four decades. It underlines the indispensable continuity of the revolutionary workers movement going back to the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia and, even further back, to the founding of modern communism and the work of an internationalist communist party in the time of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels 150 years ago.

Above all, if the "silver bullets" could have worked in Cuba, then we'd have to conclude that Fidel's March 1961 declaration to Mr. Kennedy was not a statement of fact but an article of faith, not a course of revolutionary action but an exhortation, just bravado. Just bidding up the price.



Given the capitalist class's unchallenged domination of politics, the mass media, and education, together with the nationalist perspectives of the union officialdom, it's very easy for workers and farmers to think and function entirely within the framework of the legislation,

court rulings, and executive orders of the twin bourgeois parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

Right now, for example, you can't turn on the television or open a newspaper without being barraged with Bush's tax cut proposal and modified versions of it promoted by various Republican and Democratic members of Congress. Given all the red tape in which the income tax has become increasingly wound up over the past half century—the instruction booklet for the simplest federal income tax form, *the very simplest*, is 33 pages!—it's no wonder many workers and farmers are attracted to the idea of a "flat tax."

Working people know the tax brackets for the wealthy are officially set at higher percentages—but we also know the law is intentionally crafted to resemble a piece of Swiss cheese. High-priced accountants and lawyers happily offer their services to those with wealth and readily utilize all the hidey-holes and shelters purposely written into the fine print throughout thousands and thousands of pages of tax code. The result, just as millions of workers suspect, is that no one with capital pays taxes at anywhere close to the rates we read about in the big-business dailies or hear about on TV. Many pay nothing.

Farrell Dobbs taught us that one of the high crimes of the labor officialdom is their collusion with the employing class in tangling up workers in red tape instead of mobilizing union power to protect workers' interests. Wage rates, hours, and conditions should be straightforward and transparent, Farrell said. No contract worth a damn needs to be more than a page long, two at most. Then organize the ranks to enforce it.

It's a similar story with taxes. Whenever the capitalist politicians start talking about "income tax reform," workers know they always end up with the short end of the stick. So the bourgeois nostrum that everyone should pay at the same rate, whether your income is ten thousand dollars or ten billion—with no deductions, no exemptions—gets a hearing among working people. The simplification and transparency alone make it seem appealing, even if working people pay at the same rate as those better off.

The illusion, of course, is that there is some way—be it a "flat tax" or some other "tax reform"—to make the owners of capital pay without taking state power out of their hands through a revolution and establishing a workers and farmers government. Short of that, the capitalists will always find ways to shift the tax burden onto our shoulders.

Communist workers are for a heavily progressive or graduated income tax, as we have been ever since that demand first appeared in the *Communist Manifesto* more than 150 years ago. But under capitalism the concept of a graduated income tax has become so corrupted that nobody except a small number of class-conscious workers recalls that the bold, revolutionary demand raised by the modern workers movement was never meant to apply to wages or the modest earnings of working farmers, fishermen, or other toilers. *To the contrary*. The graduated or progressive tax, as raised in the *Communist Manifesto*, is a levy not on wages but on *income* from profits, dividends, interest, or rents, including the elevated salaries of middle-class professionals, supervisors, and managers. Workers and working farmers were to pay no taxes; the "graduation" was to begin at the lower end of those who live differently from the proletariat as a result of capital's exploitation of the labor of the great majority.

The truth is that between the time the federal income tax was first introduced in 1913 and the beginning of World War II, 95 percent of the U.S. population paid no income taxes. Working people were exempt. But all that changed nearly overnight with legislation introduced at

Continued on next page



Militant/Brian Williams

Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party members march to defend a woman's right to choose abortion in Washington, D.C., April 22. The members of the revolutionary youth organization "look to the program and traditions of the communist party in this country, the SWP, as their guide."

Continued from previous page

the opening of the war by the Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt and adopted by the bipartisan Congress. By 1943 income tax withholding—to finance “our” war—was showing up for the first time on our wage stubs, and the rulers never looked back from there.

Working people under capitalism always appear to be confronted with the dilemma of choosing between two (or sometimes more) bourgeois candidates, two or more bourgeois solutions. Lesser-evilism is what the rulers, backed up by the labor fakers and middle-class misleaders of civil rights and women’s organizations, present as the be-all and end-all of politics.

That’s why it’s important that communist workers right now find ways to present some very basic, immediate demands to defend the conditions and solidarity of the working class and other toilers in face of rising joblessness, deepening indebtedness, and the ever-present danger of ruinous bursts of inflation or financial panic. These are what worker-bolsheviks can offer our class as a proletarian alternative to being whipsawed between choices presented by the Democrats and Republicans as a matter of “take it or leave it.”

Workers should demand a massive program of government-funded public works to ensure jobs for all at union-scale. In addition to providing productive work to the jobless, such a program is needed to build housing, schools, hospitals and clinics, daycare centers, public transportation, libraries, gyms, pools, parks, and other social infrastructure the capitalists are allowing to crumble rather than fund out of their profits.

Labor must demand a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, binding on all employers as federal law. This would spread the available work around and allow workers, not just the capitalists, to enjoy the benefits of any advances in the productivity of our labor.

The working class must fight to increase the minimum wage. Even with the increase in 1996, the buying power of the minimum wage today is still lower than it was in 1960—and a full \$2.25 below its high point in 1968. Given the competition for jobs under capitalism, wage levels are set from the bottom up, not from the top down.

Moreover, this minimum wage must be *universal*, one that no worker is denied, whether in a factory or in a prison. Everyone must be guaranteed full health, disability, and pension benefits. That—not demanding a halt to “prison work programs that unfairly compete with free labor,” as the AFL-CIO bureaucracy raises today—is the only way to fight the bosses’ abuse of prison labor. That is the only way to promote working-class unity and solidarity, not sabotage it.

Labor must demand, once again as federal legislation,

that all wages be covered by full and automatic cost-of-living protection. The capitalists’ efforts to pull themselves out of a downturn in sales and profits can spark sudden and unexpected inflationary explosions that devastate the living standards and any small savings of working people. The same automatic adjustments must be guaranteed for all pension, health, workers comp, welfare, and unemployment benefits.

Labor must reach out for allies among working farmers, as well. We must join with farmers to demand a halt to all foreclosures. Instead of being driven more deeply into debt slavery, small farmers must have access to government-funded cheap credit. They must receive price supports from Washington large enough to cover their full production costs and guarantee a



Above right, members of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Los Angeles organize strike picket against Hollander in March. Right, farmers in Washington, D.C., demand living income at Rally for Rural America, March 20, 2000. Above, Indians, workers, and peasants storm government building in Quito, Ecuador, in January 2000. “It’s important that communist workers find ways to present basic, immediate demands to defend the conditions and solidarity of the working class and other toilers here and around the world.”



decent and secure living for themselves and their families.

The working class and labor movement in the United States must demand that Washington and other imperialist government and financial institutions immediately cancel the foreign debt that has been imposed on the semicolonial countries. Total Third World debt today is over \$2 trillion, much higher than at the worst point of the debt crisis of the 1980s.

As international finance capital has squeezed more and more wealth from the toilers of Asia, Africa, and Latin America to bolster their sagging profit rates, one hundred countries—a quarter of the world’s population—have experienced a decline in per capita income over the past fifteen years; in sub-Saharan Africa per capita consumption is 20 percent lower than it was in 1980! More than 45 percent of the population of the earth survives on less than \$2 a day, and 20 percent on less than \$1 a day.

Workers and farmers in the United States should demand that Washington lift all tariffs and other obstacles to trade and travel erected by the U.S. rulers. This includes the elimination of all “anti-dumping,” “fair labor,” “environmental protection,” and other trade weapons wielded with often devastating consequences by the U.S. government under the banner of “free trade.” This must be labor’s demand, not support for the protectionist policies of finance capital and ever more onerous trade restrictions aimed at semicolonial countries and imperialist rivals, as proposed today by U.S. union officials and the middle-class leaderships of various environmentalist and so-called anti-sweatshop organizations.

The elimination of all tariff and nontariff barriers erected by the U.S. government has nothing in common with the rulers’ demagoguery about guaranteeing a “level playing field for all”—exploiters and exploited alike. Instead, by demanding cancellation of the Third World debt and opposing all measures used by the propertied classes to magnify the unequal terms of trade intrinsic to the world capitalist market, working people in the United States can strengthen our unity with the toilers of these countries in the international battle against our common enemy, the imperialist ruling families who exploit us all to maintain their wealth and power. We can deepen the effort to transform our unions into revolutionary organizations of the working class that will inscribe these internationalist demands on our battle flag.



It’s appropriate that this public celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the victory at Playa Girón and the victory of Cuba’s literacy campaign coincided here in Seattle with a two-day working meeting of the national leadership of the Young Socialists. The members of that revolutionary youth organization look to the program and traditions of the communist party in this country, the Socialist Workers Party, as their guide. And the worker-bolsheviks in our party keep reaching out to these new generations with communist politics and with common activity as equals—just as V.R. Dunne and others reached out to those of us who first came to revolutionary conclusions at the opening of the 1960s.

And it’s also important that joining us here in organizing this celebration are members of our organized supporters movement. As volunteers for the Pathfinder Reprint Project,

they shouldered decisive responsibilities over the past month in producing *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas*—translating material from Spanish to English and from English to Spanish; scanning items to be run in the book; preparing the graphics; and formatting and proofreading the pages.

From locations in cities and towns across North America and around the world, some 200 supporters are now taking on the digital preparation of new Pathfinder titles, in addition to the work they’ve been doing for more than two years, to help keep the communist movement’s entire arsenal of some 350 titles in print. And they are joining SWP and YS members in the effort to get these titles onto the shelves of bookstores, other retail outlets, and public libraries, as well.

These revolutionary books and pamphlets—the lessons earned with struggle and blood by working people the world over during the past century and a half—give the communist movement tremendous political leverage. With the sea change in working-class politics, and the historic weakening of Stalinism worldwide, we can take communist ideas to people in struggle virtually anywhere in the world and gain a hearing.

This is what’s changing. A vanguard layer of workers and farmers in this country is becoming more confident from their common fighting experience and thus more open to considering radical ideas, including the program and strategy of the modern communist movement. Whether they know it yet or not, their own experience in life and struggle is bringing them closer to that of the workers and peasants of revolutionary Cuba.

As growing numbers reject in practice what the bosses have so long sought to convince us of—that it’s futile to struggle, we’ll only be weakened and crushed—more and more members of a workforce in ongoing transformation will take a lead from the example set by Cuban workers and peasants forty years ago. As the back cover of the new book puts it, they taught us that with “political consciousness, class solidarity, unflinching courage, and a revolutionary leadership that displays an impeccable sense of timing, it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds—and win.”

Those who have fought for, defended, and advanced the Cuban Revolution for more than four decades, are ordinary working men and women. Likewise there was nothing special about the young people in this country who in April 1961 stood up to bourgeois public opinion and said with courage and confidence: “The Cuban people will win!”

What is special is never the human material, but the times we live in and our degree of preparation. If we’ve worked together beforehand to build a disciplined, centralized workers party—with a program and strategy that advances the historic line of march of our class worldwide—then we’ll be ready for new opportunities in the class struggle when they explode in totally unanticipated ways. We’ll be prepared to build a mass proletarian party that can take on the capitalist rulers in revolutionary struggle and defeat them.

That is the most important lesson that every one of us can draw. That is the reason to become part of the communist movement, to join the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party.

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Cuban unionists address pressing social needs

BY MAGGIE TROWE
AND RÓGER CALERO

HAVANA—The 18th national congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), marking the political strengthening of the revolution here, focused on steps to address a range of important social questions—from reviving the construction and repair of badly needed housing, to training more schoolteachers in order to assure equal opportunities even in the most remote rural areas. The CTC is the national trade union federation in Cuba.

The deliberations by the more than 1,600 elected union delegates, who met April 29 and 30, were informed by a five-month period of discussion by 2.5 million workers in factories and other workplaces around the island. The discussion centered on a resolution known as the Theses, submitted by the national union leadership, that took up some of the main questions facing working people.

The congress registered the progress in Cuba's recovery from what is known here as the Special Period—the economic crisis triggered a decade ago by the sudden loss of aid from and preferential terms of trade with the Soviet bloc countries, brutally compounded by Washington's intensified economic war. In the battle for sheer economic survival, most projects to meet pressing social needs were halted.

As Cuban working people have successfully fought their way through the most difficult years of the Special Period, the revolutionary leadership has been able to devote more efforts to combating the resulting social inequalities, as well as political initiatives to win a new generation to communism—which in the CTC Theses is described as "the war of ideas."

Training more schoolteachers

The congress took up a range of important questions, from workers' efforts to maximize the use of their labor and resources in industry and agriculture, to maintaining the military training and preparedness of working people in defense of the revolution in face of U.S. threats.

The delegates also made several decisions to address some of the major social questions facing working people. One of the main decisions was to extend paid maternity leave from six months to one year, effective immediately (see article in the May 14 issue of the *Militant*).

In his report to the union congress, CTC general secretary Pedro Ross highlighted several other broad initiatives to meet social needs. One of these is the effort to train more teachers and upgrade educational fa-

cilities throughout the island. This sparked considerable discussion by delegates.

Lázaro Martínez, a member of a contingent of volunteer teachers in the area of San Cristóbal, in the western province of Pinar del Río, explained efforts he and others were making to turn around a shortage of teachers and educational resources.

Martínez, the director of five elementary schools in that isolated mountainous area, said they have been carrying out a successful campaign to recruit 12th grade students to a teacher training program in their own communities. They have also been able to provide TVs, videocassette players, and computers—in some cases run on solar power—in every school, even those in small communities that have no more than five students.



April 30 rally at closing session of national congress of Cuban Workers (CTC). Unionists discussed initiatives to address needs of working people, from a revival of housing construction and repair, to training more schoolteachers even in the most remote rural areas. One decision was to extend paid maternity leave from six months to one year.

"Next year 80 young people are joining" the teaching program, he said, "and we just completed the last of the solar panel systems, which means that 100 percent of the schools now have audiovisual equipment."

Joining in the discussion, Cuban president Fidel Castro asked Martínez why there was a shortage of teachers in the region. He pointed out that the problem also existed in more populated areas such as Matanzas and Havana provinces, where there are an average of 40 students per teacher. Castro said that in these areas "tourism has stolen away teachers" because workers in tourist-related jobs gain greater access to hard currency.

Martínez replied that the same had happened in his province. He said the solution he and others had found was to politically convince young people in the area to become teachers as a way to contribute to society. In addition, the government recently increased wages of teachers, and has given them prioritized access to housing as further incentives to remain in that rural area.

Castro said the goal is to make sure that even in the most remote mountainous areas there is no student without a teacher or lacking a television and computer. He reported that beginning in September, all teacher training schools will have courses in computer use.

Student brigades in poor neighborhoods

Hassán Pérez, president of the Federation of University Students (FEU), also participated in the discussion. He spoke about a campaign, discussed at the union congress, that is being led by the FEU and the Union of Young Communists (UJC). It involves organizing brigades of university students and UJC cadres to go to some of the poorest working-class neighborhoods in Havana and other cities, talk with residents, find out about their most critical problems, and work together to propose solutions.

The students go to workers' homes and visit the local schools, pharmacies, and neighborhood committee organizations.

In one neighborhood, Pérez said, "we found a household of 23 people with only four beds. They were living on the income of three adults, and one older woman, who has cancer, cares for 12 children." He said the students helped organize to make more beds available, made sure the sick woman received medical care, and worked with the unemployed workers in the household to find jobs.

When the student volunteers find children who are underweight, they work to identify the problem, which in most cases is lack of proper nourishment or illness, he said.

"We work every day, and 10 hours on Saturdays," Pérez said of the student brigade movement. "We're in love with our work. We visit patients in the hospitals, we volunteer to tutor students—all things that wouldn't happen if we didn't have a socialist society." These experiences are deepening the revolutionary consciousness of thousands of young people, he noted.

Renewed housing construction

Another major topic of discussion at the union gathering was the stepped-up efforts to build housing and repair existing houses and apartments.

Carlos Lage, secretary of the executive committee of the Council of Ministers, noted that before the Special Period, Cuba had been building about 100,000 housing units a year, but that the shortages had brought the program to a virtual halt. More resources are now available to begin to turn around the situation, he reported.

Delegates discussed how a movement of volunteer construction brigades, known as minibrigades, is being revived. These are made up primarily of workers and others who volunteer to be released from their regular jobs for a period of time in order to build housing and other social projects. A related project makes subsidized construction materials and credit available to families to build their own houses, where most of the construction work is done by family members, friends, and neighbors volunteering after work and on weekends.

After the CTC congress, when a group of visiting garment workers from the United States toured the Confecciones Gala clothing plant in Havana, Faustina Pedro, a leader of the light industry workers union in Havana province, said, "Last year our union helped three workers and their families get houses." Workers building a house with their family and friends are joined by union members "who pitch in on the big jobs like pouring the foundation," she said.

The union, Pedro said, also helps workers apply for home repair materials and organizes volunteers to help do repair work on weekends.

In 1999, Lage reported, eight construction minibrigades were organized in Havana, and today there are 70. Last year, resi-

dents of 309,000 apartments and houses received assistance for repairs, often in the form of construction materials.

May Day celebration

The day after the congress, delegates joined 600,000 other Cuban working people in a May Day march and rally. It was a massive reaffirmation of support for the socialist course of the revolution and rejection of the economic warfare waged against revolutionary Cuba by Washington.

Officials of labor organizations in Argentina, Uruguay, Spain, and other countries brought greetings. Those from Spain and Argentina, among others, denounced their governments for having voted in favor of a U.S.-backed resolution condemning Cuba for "human rights violations" at a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, which met in Geneva at the end of April.

Students from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa, who are among the 3,000 students enrolled at the Latin American School of Medicine, were among those joining the celebration. One of them, William Aguilar, 22, from Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, noted that he was studying on a scholarship provided by Cuba and said, "It is my dream to return home after my training and practice medicine among the rural poor."

In his speech to the rally, Castro hailed the Cuban people's resistance to 42 years of U.S. aggression and economic warfare. This tenacious resistance, strengthened by the fact that Cuban working people have made a socialist revolution, he noted, is an example for others in the world facing the same imperialist enemy.

"Today," he said, "we confront an adversary who is powerful in every way except in ethics and ideas, who has no message or response to the serious political, economic, and social problems afflicting today's world."

The Cuban leader added, "Imperialism, on the edge of a deep political and economic crisis, cannot escape its own shadow. It is condemned to increasingly plunder the

Continued on Page 18

U.S. striker addresses international meeting

HAVANA—Marta Bonilla, 62, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) from Los Angeles, received enthusiastic applause from other participants in the International Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba and Against Neoliberal Globalization. Bonilla described the conditions that made her, along with 575 others at three plants, decide to go on strike against Hollander Home Fashions, a company that produces pillows, down comforters, and other household products across the United States and in Canada.

Bonilla said that in the strike "the police are on the side of the company." She and other workers were arrested for violating an injunction won by Hollander that restricts the number of pickets at the plant gate. "When I was in jail," she said, "I told the police, 'As soon as you let me out, I'm going back to the picket line.'"

"The company has done everything it can to defeat us," the UNITE member said. "They pay the scabs much more than they paid us. The supervisors tell us, 'You have a check waiting inside,' but we tell them, 'Outside the plant we have food. We are gaining weight!'"

The majority of the 450 Hollander workers in Los Angeles, who walked out March 8, are Mexican and Central American immigrants. Bonilla explained how inspired they were when the 100 workers in Tignall, Georgia, who are Anglo, honored their picket line, and when their fellow unionists in the Frackville, Pennsylvania, plant walked out May 1.

National leaders of the Cuban Union of Light Industry Workers, which organizes garment and textile workers, sent a message of solidarity to the Hollander strikers, and invited Bonilla and others from the U.S. delegation to visit the Confecciones Gala clothing plant in Havana, where 200 workers produce uniforms for workers in tourism.

—M.T. AND R.C.



Marta Bonilla, second from left, member of Los Angeles local of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) on strike against Hollander Home Fashions, talks with garment worker at Confecciones Gala clothing factory in Havana. Manuel Ríos, left, and Héctor Fajardo, second from right, both leaders of the National Union of Light Industry Workers, organized the tour of the plant by Bonilla and other international unionists who attended the CTC congress.

Strikers at Hollander fight for wage hike, pensions, and dignity

BY BETH FINEAS

FRACKVILLE, Pennsylvania—After the first week of their walkout against Hollander Home Fashions, strikers here are standing firm in their demands for increased wages, a pension plan, and dignity on the job.

The company is a manufacturer of pillows, comforters, mattress pads, and other home products. Most of the 125 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) walked out on May 1, joining strikes underway at two of the firm's plants in Vernon, California, and workers in Tignall, Georgia, who are honoring a picket line set up by the California workers.

On Friday, May 4, a busload of strikers joined with supporters from the Philadelphia area to visit the North American headquarters of IKEA in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania. They distributed leaflets to shoppers that read, "We make products for IKEA under unsafe conditions. We are on strike against poverty wages and no retirement plan." Workers at Hollander currently earn between \$5.75 and \$8.50 per hour.

Strikers also met with a representative of IKEA management, who promised to arrange a full meeting with company executives next week.

Several cars full of strikers who had been on the IKEA trip returned to the picket line in front of the plant Friday evening. "We passed out flyers to anything that was breathing," reported Mary Ann Subick to an impromptu meeting that was organized on the line to report back on the day's events. "We had to be out there in force for them to see us," added Geraldine Dyszel, chief steward for the Frackville plant.

Alice Davis, who had been on the line all day, reported that members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3879 brought hoagies to the picket line. Members of the Pennsylvania Social Services Union (PSSU) and workers from the nearby City Shirt sewing factory, who are also members of UNITE, joined strikers on the line as well. Congressman Tim Holden also visited the strikers.

Most truck drivers who normally deliver materials to the plant continue to honor the



Militant/Connie Allen

Several members of UNITE Local 1501 from Kannapolis, North Carolina, joined striker from Los Angeles (far right) April 20 on picket line in Tignall, Georgia, outside Hollander Home Fashions plant. Workers in Tignall are honoring the union picket line.

picket line. The few who have come through have been held up by the strikers for as much as two hours before entering the plant.

Subick said the Hollander plant has been here for 10 years. "This is our first time on strike, but I was for striking three years ago over our last contract," she said. "It's as if they're saying to us that this is a depressed area. If you don't like what we're paying, you can leave." The Frackville Hollander plant sits in the middle of Pennsylvania's anthracite coalfields, where tens of thousands of miners and other workers were thrown out of work as coal production declined dramatically beginning in the 1950s.

The company is trying to get production going by using office personnel, temporary workers, and the few workers who didn't join the strike. Some of the temporary workers who crossed the line the first two days of the walkout have not been back, but strikers report that a bus from New Jersey transported scabs into the plant. Subick explained, "This would normally be their busiest season, with mandatory overtime of 56 hours per week."

Gina McGinnis added, "It has made us stronger to be out here on strike. We're all meeting people we never spoke to in the plant. Hollander has created a Frankenstein!"

The union began 24-hour picketing May 5. "There's trucks at night, and we're going to picket around the clock," said David Greenleaf, an organizer for UNITE.

Conviction won in 1963 racist bombing

BY HARRIS RUTH

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Almost 38 years after the deadly bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church here, Thomas Blanton, 62, was convicted May 1 for taking part in the attack.

Four young Black women—Denise McNair, 11, and 14-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Cynthia Wesley, and Carole Robertson—were killed on Sept. 15, 1963, by a bomb that was placed against the church wall. Blanton, who was only the second person to stand trial out of four suspected bombers in the case, was sentenced immediately to four consecutive life terms.

"I feel that justice has been served," Jesse Horn, a retired hospital worker, told the *Militant* the night after the verdict. Horn was one of more than 400 people who filled the street for a candlelight vigil in front of the church. "I have always felt that the case would come to closure," he said. "Regardless of how long it's been, murder is murder." Speakers at the event, sponsored by the National Conference for Community and Justice, included religious leaders, Black and white, some of whom were veterans of the anti-segregation battles of the 1960s. Federal prosecutor Doug Jones also spoke. Marvin Hicks, a retired worker, told the *Militant*, "The verdict yesterday was a good one, but long overdue."

Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, one of the key leaders in the civil rights struggle, spoke from the platform. "It took 14 years to bring the lead killer to justice," and 24 more years to put Blanton in prison, he said. "Justice that took that long is not true justice."

The stone and brick stairs and archways of the 16th Street Baptist Church lead into the meeting hall of what, by the fall of 1963, had become a symbol of the rapidly escalating fight against Jim Crow segregation. Many of the mass meetings held to organize the protests took place there, and from it marchers set out for the demonstrations that became known as the Battle of Birmingham.

For 15 years, starting in the late 1940s, the Ku Klux Klan, with the full knowledge and protection of the ruling class in the city, used bombing as a common terror tactic. Homes of Blacks in the neighborhood of North Smithfield were so frequently blown up that it was called "Dynamite Hill." In 1962, after 15 bombings, 75 volunteers from the area formed the North Smithfield Protection Association. The men armed themselves and followed any unfamiliar cars in the neighborhood. Leroy Gaillard, one of the founders of the group, told the *Birmingham Post-Herald*, "After the organization of the patrols, there was not another bombing in this neighborhood."

The bomb at the 16th Street Baptist Church was the first that had killed anyone, though not because the rightists had not



Above, demonstrators in Birmingham during civil rights struggle in early 1960s face police with high-pressure water hoses. Right, 16th St. Baptist Church after 1963 racist bombing that failed to stem the growing movement against Jim Crow segregation.



tried. Rev. Shuttlesworth faced several assassination attempts, including a bomb that went off directly behind the bed he was lying in, on Christmas night, 1956.

Birmingham's mine, foundry, and steel mill owners, led by the capitalists of the United States Steel corporation, had kept wages and working conditions poor for many decades through the legal division of the working class called Jim Crow segregation.

Far from intimidating the civil rights movement, the bombing galvanized support for the struggle around the country. After the Birmingham killings, young people came from many states to back the fight for voting rights and to tear down the brutal Jim Crow system. The growing social movement of working people, who faced murderous attacks by the police and rightists, would force the federal government to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In the aftermath of the bombing, local, state, and federal cops—all of whom had ties through paid agents, common interests, and common membership lists to the KKK and other rightist outfits—conducted "investigations" of the attack. The government did not prosecute anyone at the time.

William Baxley, former attorney general of Alabama, wrote in a May 3 op-ed column in the *New York Times*, titled, "Why Did the FBI Hold Back Evidence?" that he reopened the investigation of the murders in 1971. "After a few false starts, my staff and I identified" Blanton, Robert Chambliss, Bobby Frank Cherry, and Herman Cash, all members of a Ku Klux Klan group, as the bombers. "These individuals had been iden-

tified by the FBI when the 1963 bombings occurred," Baxley wrote.

The former attorney general said that in requesting information he was "repeatedly stonewalled" by the FBI, which only began to share evidence after the Washington bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times* "went to the officials at the Justice Department and threatened to reveal the FBI's refusal to cooperate with our investigation." Baxley won a conviction of Chambliss in 1977, but not of the other three. "The bottom line," he told the *Times*, "is the FBI handed Tom Blanton a get-out-of-jail-free card that was good for 24 years, and they handed one to Cherry that may be good for more than that."

Baxley was not told of tapes held by the FBI that had been secretly recorded in Blanton's home in which he spoke to his wife of a meeting to "plan the bomb." According to press reports, evidence presented in the recent trial of Blanton was entirely circumstantial and relied heavily on the tape recordings, done at the time without a warrant.

Direct testimony linking Blanton to the murders was scant, as witnesses and codefendants have either died, could not testify due to ill health, or said their memory of Blanton being at the church the day before the bombing was hazy due to the passage of time. Chambliss died in prison in 1985, Herman Cash died without facing prosecution, and Cherry, who was indicted for murder last year at the same time as Blanton, has been ruled mentally incompetent to stand trial.

BY ELIZABETH LARISCY

VERNON, California—Confidence on the picket lines in front of Hollander Home Fashions's two plants here is high as workers enter their third month on strike. Their fight against the company has been reinforced by union members at Hollander's plant in Frackville, Pennsylvania.

"This is good for us all. We are stronger now," said Rosalio Mercada at the Boyle Avenue plant as strikers took turns beating drums and chanting, "I went on strike because I don't like injustice. Now I feel stronger to confront it."

"It makes us stronger," said Bennie Chandler, picketing at the Seville Avenue plant, who was commenting on the spreading of the strike. "It sends a message to the company when we all come out."

"I changed a lot during this strike. I was a member of the union but I wasn't involved before," said Martina Vasquez who has worked at a job filling pillows for five years. "Now I know you have to fight for what's right. With the Pennsylvania strike we are getting stronger every day."

Vasquez spoke at a recent rally in Boca Raton, Florida, in front of Hollander's headquarters and also traveled to Tignall, Georgia, to picket the Hollander plant there where 80 workers are honoring the strikers' picket line.

Antonia Velasquez, a sewing machine operator for five years, enthusiastically described the trip she and 100 other strikers made to Ikea home furnishing stores in Los Angeles this week. "We went to tell people not to buy Hollander pillows and comforters," she said. "We were chanting 'No Justice, No Peace' and giving out flyers. One man came out and after he read the flyer he went back in to return a pillow. Then a lot of police came. They had helicopters overhead and at first some were nervous that it was immigration, but then we felt good. We went to another Ikea store too. It's too bad we have to fight but we have to."

Gabriel Paniagua, 23, also said the walkout is stronger now. "We never had a strike before and we didn't know what it was all about. But we are motivated by a good cause."

Elizabeth Lariscy is a garment worker in Los Angeles.

Correction

In the article on the strike in Frackville in the May 14 issue of the *Militant*, "Workers at Hollander walk out in Pennsylvania," the quote, "I'm for the strike. I'm a single mom. But if I crossed I'd be supporting the company and I can't do that," was incorrectly attributed to Mary Ann Subick.

'We create the wealth! We want our rights!'

Continued from front page

Jose was addressed to state governors, the U.S. Congress, and President George Bush. "We, millions of working people, produce more than \$30 billion dollars to maintain the economy of this country," it read, "and you deny us the right to live in peace and dignity."

José Sandoval, a central organizer of the protest, echoed this sentiment when he told the rally, "We, the people, produce the wealth and should get the benefits!" The action was sponsored by Centro Azteca de Información and the Barrio Defense Committee.

"Se acaba la paciencia, queremos la licencia," (Patience has ended, we demand a license), "Duro, duro, con licencia es más seguro" (Strength, strength, with a license it's more secure), "Somos un pueblo sin fronteras" (We are a people without borders), and "Si se puede!" (Yes we can!) were chanted by the march through the streets of San Jose.

Among the many handmade signs at the rally were ones that read, "We work hard, give us a green card," "We need a good social security number to get a license," "Todos pagamos impuestos" (We all pay taxes), "Don't leave my parents without papers," and "Stop police brutality." Many people said they heard of the march by word of mouth or through their church.

Demands raised by the protesters and speakers included the right to a drivers license and a Social Security card, for legal status in the United States, and for an end to police brutality and jailings of immigrants. Denial of a drivers license, many marchers explained, adds to the difficulties of getting to and from work every day, of getting family members to the hospital or clinic in case of a medical emergency, and opens workers up to more police harassment.

Another action to press for changes in state laws to allow immigrants to get a drivers license is planned for May 12 in Redwood City at 4:30 p.m.

Participants in the May 7 Immigrant Day 2001 at the state capital came in buses and in cars from Bakersfield, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Riverside/San Bernardino, and other cities.

The action was organized by the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative (CIWC), a statewide coalition of five immigrant rights organizations. CIWC was formed in 1996 in response to attacks by the federal and state governments on the right of immigrants to health and welfare coverage in California. Among the 60 endorsers listed were several Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Latino organizations; the California Labor Federation/AFL-CIO; several locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers union and the Service Employees International Union; the American Civil Liberties Union; and the California Council of Churches.

The organizations calling the rally urged passage of several bills currently in the Cali-

fornia legislature. One would maintain the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI) regardless of their date of entry into the United States. Both programs were created to provide assistance to legal immigrants who were no longer eligible for federal benefits after passage in 1996 of the "welfare reform" law. CFAP provides food stamps to working families and CAPI provides cash assistance to seniors and persons with disabilities who are no longer eligible for Supplemental Security Income benefits. Without new legislation, immigrants who entered the country on or after Aug. 22, 1996, will lose this assistance this coming September.

Other bills raised at the rally would allow high school graduates to pay in-state tuition and qualify for financial assistance

to attend public colleges and universities, regardless of their immigration status, and enforce requirements for state and local agencies to offer their services in languages other than English if there is a significant need.

Omar Ruiz, a student at John Marshall High School in Los Angeles, said students from five area high schools coming to the rally filled two buses. "Going to college costs so much because we are not considered residents of California," Ruiz said. "It's not fair that we have to pay so much more than residents. Our families can't afford the money we have to pay. Getting a drivers license affects my father because without one he can't work his job as a chauffeur," Ruiz added.

Claudia Reyes attends Hayward High School and came on one of the buses orga-

nized by Mujeres Unidas of Oakland and San Francisco. The issue of education is the most important for her. "Recently the school's security guards and the Hayward police have stepped up security at my school. Sometimes they lock the doors at 8:00 a.m.," she said. "The presence of so many police is intimidating to many students."

Haena Cho, who is a community organizer for the Korean Resource Center and a member of Young Koreans United, said she is most concerned about the CAPI program. In discussing the right to a drivers license, she pointed out, "People work hard and they will drive to work one way or another to support their families."

Deborah Liatos is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 120.

Penn State students respond to racist threats

BY CHRIS REMPLE

STATE COLLEGE, Pennsylvania—Students at Penn State University (PSU) here won a victory May 2 with the university administration's agreement to expand the African and African American Studies Department, set up an Africana Studies Research Center, and to take steps to protect leaders of the Black Caucus and others who have been subject to racist death threats.

The students began their most recent round of protests April 24 at a university-sponsored march attended by 4,000 people. The march against "hate" was called because of death threats against Lakeisha Wolf, the president of the Black Caucus, an umbrella organization for Black students.

When administrators tried to begin the march, though, Black Caucus leaders asked the crowd not to proceed because the administration had not addressed the demands of the Black students. Hundreds of supporters went to the Robeson Cultural Center in the Hetzel Union Building (HUB) to get university officials to take steps to ensure the safety of those targeted with death threats. Talks broke off at 10:30 that night, with university officials calling the students' demands unreasonable.

In protest, scores of students occupied the building, with some going on a hunger strike.

Three days earlier, after being denied permission to address the crowd at a football game, 26 members and supporters of the Black Caucus seized the field right before kickoff to make their demands heard. They were arrested and charged with misdemeanor criminal trespass.

Wolf has received four death threats, including one saying the graduation ceremonies would be bombed. Although each threat has been reported to university authorities, students said no action had been taken nor had adequate security been provided for Wolf. In October, three PSU students, parents of athletes, and one member of the PSU Board of Trustees also received threatening letters in the mail.

In addition to seeking security for the stu-



Students at Penn State University protest administration inaction around death threats directed at leader of Black Caucus student group and others on campus.

dents, the Black Caucus raised proposals to strengthen affirmative action and in defense of the African and African American Studies Department. The department is currently autonomous and has four core faculty and 14 affiliate faculty members. The university had planned to consolidate its offices and office staff with Women's Studies and one other department. The students also demanded that the office of Vice Provost for Educational Equity be given the authority to withhold 2 percent of the budget of schools or departments that fail to make progress in meeting already-agreed-to diversity goals.

Of the 40,571 students on campus less than 4 percent are African American. Of 2,791 faculty members, only 2.7 percent are African American.

The occupation of the HUB was spirited. When students learned of the New York police department's decision to clear the cops who killed Amadou Diallo of any departmental charges, they organized an impromptu rally of several hundred to denounce the ruling and demand justice for Diallo. In response to the resumption of the bombing of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques by the U.S. Navy as part of its war exercises, supporters of the struggle to get the Navy out put up signs in the HUB calling for an end to the bombing.

Alumni, parents, religious figures, and members of the NAACP joined the students in the HUB during the protest action. The majority of the people in the building were not Black students, but students who wanted to be part of fighting against racism. Lisa Raposa, a sophomore, said, "I am here to support the efforts of the Black Caucus and to offer all my help in the fight against the racial climate at our university."

After several rounds of negotiations, the administration released a document May 2 agreeing to most of the demands of the students, including the creation of an Africana Studies Research Center and increasing tenure-track faculty in the African and African American Studies Department from six to 10 over three years.

While the students did not win the demand for withholding funds from departments that had not met diversity goals, the administration did agree that the Vice Provost for Educational Equity will have the authority along with the provost to approve the annual budgets for the colleges and that

"certified progress on the diversity plans of each college will influence this budget review and approval process."

Lastly, officials agreed the Vice Provost for Educational Equity "will be responsible for ensuring that investigations of bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes are initiated and followed up on," according to the university document.

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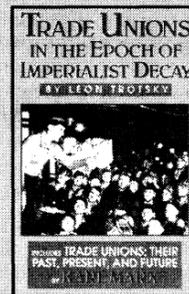
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May Day rallies across the world



Above, some 10,000 Taiwanese workers demonstrated in the streets of Taipei on May Day demanding jobs and the resignation of top government officials. In Seoul, South Korea, 20,000 workers rallied against job cuts. May Day rallies also took place across France, in Norway and Iran. In Matamoros, Mexico, more than 70,000 workers marched, displaying banners against a tax on food and medicine proposed by Mexican president Vicente Fox. "Workers are always up for a fight to benefit our people," said one of the protesters.

Che: The Cuban Revolution is irreversible

Continued from Page 8

of Brazil and Horatio [Horacio] Larretta of Argentina that he had something to say to me. The four of us entered a room, and the following is a summary of what took place. (The Argentine and Brazilian alternated as interpreters.)

Che was wearing green fatigues, and his usual overgrown and scraggly beard. Behind the beard his features are quite soft, almost feminine, and his manner is intense. He has a good sense of humor, and there was considerable joking back and forth during the meeting. He seemed very ill at ease when we began to talk, but soon became relaxed and spoke freely. Although he left no doubt of his personal and intense devotion to communism, his conversation was free of propaganda and bombast. He spoke calmly, in a straightforward manner, and with the appearance of detachment and objectivity. He left no doubt, at any time, that he felt completely free to speak for his government and rarely distinguished between his personal observations and the official position of the Cuban government. I had the definite impression that he had thought out his remarks very carefully—they were extremely well organized. I told him at the outset that I had no authority to negotiate my country's problems, but would report what he said to interested officials of our government. He said "good" and began.

Guevara began by saying that I must understand the Cuban revolution. They intend to build a socialist state, and the revolution which they have is irreversible. They are also now out of the U.S. sphere of influence, and that too is irreversible. They will establish a single party system with Fidel as Secretary-General of the party. Their ties with the East stem from natural sympathies, and common beliefs in the proper structure of the social order. They feel that they have the support of the masses for their revolution, and that that support will grow as time passes.

He said that the United States must not act on the false assumptions that (a) we can rescue Cuba from the claws of communism (he meant by other than direct military action); (b) that Fidel is a moderate surrounded by a bunch of fanatic and aggressive men, and might be moved to the Western side; (c) that the Cuban revolution can be overthrown from within—there is, he said diminishing support for such an effort and it will never be strong enough.

He spoke of the great strength of the Cuban revolution, and the impact it had on liberal thought throughout Latin America. For example, he said, all the leftwing forces in Uruguay were joining forces under the banner of Cuba. He said civil war would break out in many countries if Cuba were in danger—such war might break out in any event. He spoke with great intensity of the impact of Cuba on the continent and the growing strength of its example.

He said that in building a communist state they had not repeated all/any of the aggressive moves of the East. They did not intend to construct an iron curtain around Cuba but to welcome technicians and visitors from all countries to come and work.

He touched on the matter of the plane thefts. He said he didn't know if I knew but they had not been responsible for any hijackings.¹ The first plane was taken by a young fellow who was a good boy but a little wild and who is now in jail. They suspected that the last plane was taken by a provocateur (a CIA agent). He is afraid that if these thefts keep up it will be very dangerous.

He began to discuss the difficulties of the Alliance for Progress. He asked me if I had

heard his speech at the closing of the conference. I said that I had listened to it closely. He said that it explained his viewpoint on the Alliance for Progress. (In this speech he said the idea of the Alliance was fine, but that it would fail. He spoke also of the play of historical forces working on behalf of communism, etc.—that there would be either leftists revolutions or rightists coups leading to leftist takeovers, and there was also a strong chance that the commies would get in through popular election.) He then said he wished to add that there was an intrinsic contradiction in the Alianza—by encouraging the forces of change and the desires of the masses we might set loose forces which were beyond our control, ending in a Cuba style revolution. Never once did he indicate that Cuba might play a more direct role in the march of history.

He then said, now that he had discussed our difficulties he would like to discuss his own problems—and he would like to do so frankly. There were in Cuba, he said, several basic problems.

1. There was disturbing revolutionary sentiment, armed men and sabotage.
2. The small bourgeoisie were hostile to the revolution or, at best, were lukewarm.
3. The Catholic Church (here he shook his head in dismay).²
4. Their factories linked naturally to the U.S. for resources, especially spare parts and at times the shortage of these resources made things very critical.
5. They had accelerated the process of

¹ In his speech at the Punta del Este conference Guevara reported that several Cuban planes had been hijacked and flown to Miami, and that Washington had refused to return them.

² The Catholic Church hierarchy, which had been a staunch defender of the old bourgeois-landlord order, responded with hostility to the social and political gains made by workers and peasants, opposing their encroachments on the prerogatives and privileges of the former ruling classes, such as the expansion of public education and the land reform.

³ On Aug. 6, 1960, in response to escalating U.S. economic aggression and sabotage, the workers and farmers government in Cuba, following massive popular outpourings, nationalized major U.S.-owned companies. Later that year the revolutionary government nationalized foreign- and Cuban-owned banks.

⁴ The U.S. government maintains a naval base on Cuban territory at Guantánamo Bay, against the will of the Cuban people. It has served as a launching pad for numerous U.S. provocations against the Cuban Revolution.

development too rapidly and their hard currency reserves were very low. Thus they were unable to import consumer goods and meet basic needs of the people.

He then said that they didn't want an understanding with the U.S. because they know that was impossible. They would like a *Modus vivendi*—at least an interim *modus vivendi*. Of course, he said, it was very difficult to put forth a practical formula for such a *modus vivendi*—he knew because he spent a lot of time thinking about it. He thought we should put forth such a formula because we had public opinion to worry about whereas he could accept anything without worrying about public opinion.

I said nothing, and he waited and then said that, in any event, there were some things he had in mind.

1. That they could not give back the expropriated properties—the factories and banks—but they could pay for them in trade.³
2. They could agree not to make any political alliance in the East—although this would not affect their natural sympathies.
3. They would have free elections—but only after a period of institutionalizing the revolution had been completed. In response to my question he said that this included the establishment of a one-party system.
4. Of course, they would not attack Guantanamo.⁴ (At this point he laughed as if at the absurdly self-evident nature of such a statement.)
5. He indicated, very obliquely, and with evident reluctance because of the company

in which we were talking, that they could also discuss activities of the Cuban revolution in other countries.

He then 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.

Guevara said he knew it was difficult to discuss/negotiate these things but we could open up some of these issues by beginning to discuss subordinate issues. He suggested discussion of the airplane issue. (presumably, we would use the airplane issue as a cover for more serious conversation.)

He said they could discuss no formula that would mean giving up the type of society to which they were dedicated.

At close he said that he would tell no one of the substance of these conversation except Fidel. I said I would not publicize it either.

After the conversation was terminated I left to record notes on what had been said. He stayed at the party, and talked with the Brazilian and Argentine.

The Argentine fellow—Larretta—called me the next morning to say that Guevara had thought the conversation quite profitable, and he told him that it was much easier to talk to someone of the "newer generation."

The above is substantially a complete account of the entire conversation.

s/Dick
Dick Goodwin

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Abolish the Death Penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Jail the Killer Cops! Panel discussion. Fri., May 18, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 3926 Mission. Donation: \$5 program, \$5 dinner. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution. Speaker: Olympia Newton, Young Socialists National Executive Committee, and volunteer at Pathfinder booth at Havana International Book Fair in February. Sun., May 13, 4:30 p.m. Reception 4:00 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave. Donation: \$7 (includes dinner). Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Upper Manhattan

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution.

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@earthlink.net **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.

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

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

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

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

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern

Speaker: Róger Calero, *Militant* staff, just returned from Cuba. Fri., May 11, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 540 W. 165 St. Donation: \$4 program, \$5 dinner. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Oppose Cuts in Compensation for Injured Workers. Speaker: Doug Cooper, Communist League. Sun., May 20, 4:00 p.m. 176 Redfern St., Redfern, 1st floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: 9690 1533.

BRITAIN

London

Communist League Election Campaign Meeting. Meet Paul Davies, parliamentary candidate of the Communist League. Fri., May 18. 47 The Cut, Waterloo. Tel: 0207 401 2409.

—IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

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SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

—CALENDAR—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Freedom and Justice for the Palestinian People. March and rally. Sat., May 19, 1:00 p.m. Westwood Federal Building, 11000 Wilshire Boulevard. Organized by the Coalition for a Free Palestine. For more information, call (714) 636-1232, or (213) 387-3664 (in Spanish).

OHIO

Middletown

Support Steelworkers' Struggle; Join Members of USWA Local 169, Locked Out of AK Steel's Mansfield Plant Since Sept. 1, 1999. Speakers: Leo Gerard, USWA President; Dave McCall, USWA District One Director. Sat., May 12. Corner of Breiel Blvd. and Lefferson Rd. Tel: (419) 522-9375.

Progress—“PHOENIX, Arizona—After 16 months and exhaustive inspections, Arizona officials will approve the repairs to



Harry Ring

be done under an initiative to bring all schools up to state-approved standards. The state expects to spend more than \$1 billion to fix such problems as bad roofs and broken heating and cooling systems.”—News item from *USA*

Today, April 30.

Perish the thought—Washington, D.C., officials called a screeching halt to renovation of a 19th Century firehouse to be used for a shelter for homeless women. The stop order came when they realized the building would soon be surrounded by a slated luxury apartment complex.

In India, do they love the bastards?—From a veteran reader comes word of a web-site item. Economy-minded officials in the United Kingdom used prison inmates to input into a computer the info from the 1901 census. Then they found that all references to prison wardens had been changed

to “bastards.” The correction project has been outsourced to a company that pays low wages to workers in India.

Crackdown—The Consumer Product Safety Commission slapped an \$850,000 fine on Federated Department Stores for having “knowingly” sold flammable children’s pajamas and robes. The agency said it was the stiffest penalty it has ever imposed. Federated operates 440 department stores, including Macy’s and Bloomingdale’s. Maybe the company will have to run fire sales to raise the levy of \$2,000 for each store.

How about some for civilians?—Cops in Concord, Califor-

nia, have raised \$7,000 to outfit their nine-member K-9 unit with bulletproof vests. They say an average of two police dogs are killed each year.

You want the mayor to fly coach?—In Atlanta, Mayor William Campbell charged “political harassment” when a judge subpoenaed him to testify about why a construction company executive hired private jets to take him to boxing matches in New York and Las Vegas.

Militant sub anyone?—“Healthy” and “robust” were the adjectives of choice of the *Los Angeles Times* in its April 26 report on the record profits piled up by the

drug barons. The next day, the paper reported that the Gray Panthers are suing Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. for blocking less expensive generic versions of anti-anxiety drugs. The article describes the generics as “cheap knockoffs.”

Where have we seen that before?—“Gap between rich and poor widens.”—Headline, the *Times*, London.

See, no problem—In Woonsocket, Rhode Island, some 1,000 gallons of fuel oil leaked out of an underground storage tank at a former mill complex. Fortunately, officials said, most of the fuel soaked into the ground before reaching a nearby river.

Trade conflicts grow among imperialist powers

The following is an excerpt of “Imperialism’s march toward fascism and war,” a report that was discussed and adopted by the Socialist Workers Party’s August 1994 national convention and published in *New Internationalist* no. 10. The article is based on talks given by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes at educational conferences in Chicago, New York, and Miami. Copyright © 1994 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

Rising inter-imperialist conflicts, combined with resistance by workers, working farmers, and youth, will further undermine the myth of a “common Europe.” Even as the European Union—the new name of the European Community—grows in numbers, increased rivalry among these capitalist powers themselves will continually disrupt any steps toward a single currency or a common central bank, let alone toward a common foreign policy, armed forces, or “European government.” That hope, which bubbled over decades and reached a crest verging on mania in the closing years of the 1980s, is now definitively behind us.

Instead, the European Union will be just



Threatened with loss of their jobs as airlines face bankruptcy, workers at AOM and Air-Liberté participate in May Day demonstration in Paris. Barnes writes, “The freer flow of goods and capital exacerbates contradictions resulting from massive overproduction and redundancy of productive capacity throughout Europe and...the world. This gives an added impulse to layoffs, plant shutdowns, and restructuring.”

Stock market and real estate prices have plummeted in Japan since the opening of the 1990s. Its banking system, a big chunk of whose capital base is held in land and common stocks, is the most vulnerable of all the major imperialist powers. This Japanese bubble is yet to burst.

The deepening economic crisis is breaking up long-established capitalist parties and patterns of bourgeois politics in Japan. And there will be growing working-class resistance there too, although workers have more obstacles to overcome. Since the 1930s they have been subjected first to a semifascist imperial regime; then to Washington’s anti-labor occupation government under General MacArthur; then to the U.S.-organized Liberal Democratic Party’s governments that succeeded in dealing blow after blow to the union movement in the fifties, sixties, and seventies. But as the pressures we’ve been describing build up, and layoffs and other assaults keep mounting, the myth of a permanent labor/management truce—punctuated by a ritual spring “labor offensive” at contract time—will come unstuck, sometimes explosively.

Cheap-labor “export platforms” in Asia can help slow falling profits rates for a time in Japan, but they don’t resolve the fundamental conflict between capital and labor “at home,” which will sharpen. Driven to export capital more deeply into Asia, moreover, the Japanese rulers will inevitably pursue an increasingly assertive foreign and military policy to protect their growing interests, bringing them into more frequent conflict with Washington and Wall Street and with governments throughout the region.

Protectionism and ‘trade talks’

There is enormous overproduction in capitalist agriculture as well as industrial goods. There is world overproduction in rice, in wheat, in soybeans, in sugar. That doesn’t mean an end to starvation and famine in Africa or elsewhere, of course. (Under capitalism, overproduction is not measured in relation to social needs, but what can be sold at a price high enough to realize a competitive profit.) Nor does it mean that the prices of particular farm commodities won’t jump because of a flood or weather conditions or massive commercial convulsions.

But the general pressure on prices of ag-

ricultural goods is downward today. U.S. capital is determined to bash down barriers to exporting its rice, apples, and meat products to Japan, Taiwan, and Korea; it’s determined to push up the price of grain sold by its competitors in France, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. Over the past fifteen years, the capitalist rulers in Western Europe, especially France, have challenged

their U.S. rivals’ world market share in wheat and some other farm products, but agricultural productivity remains much lower than in the United States, and European governments have had to bear much greater relative costs in subsidies to capitalist farmers.

The “trade talks” that go on around the GATT world tariff agreement and between Washington, Tokyo, Paris, Ottawa, and others—rough as these talks sometimes get, even publicly—are just polite cover for the real use of muscle to advance the interests of conflicting national ruling classes. U.S. military might stands behind its pressure on the capitalists in Europe, on its competitors in France, Japan, and elsewhere....

Every time we hear about one of these so-called trade deals on TV, or read about them in the papers, what we’re watching unfold is the growing use of political and military clout

to achieve economic ends. None of this has anything to do with advancing free trade, remedying unfair competition, or any of the other high-flown rationalizations emanating from the White House and bipartisan Congress. It’s the use of power to drain surplus value from wherever it’s produced by workers and toiling farmers into the pockets of capitalists in the United States.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

that: a customs union, a common market within which capital, commodities, and labor will flow more freely across borders. For now, that setup advances a common interest of the national ruling classes in Europe in their competition against the U.S. capitalists, who enjoy a huge internal market and easier access to markets in Canada, Latin America, and the Pacific and much of Asia. Even these lowered trade and capital barriers within the European Union, however, are taking much longer than initially planned to implement, while those that have been put in place already have their rough edges. What’s more, the freer flow of goods and capital exacerbates contradictions resulting from massive overproduction and redundancy of productive capacity throughout Europe—and throughout the world—in steel, auto, and other industries. This gives an added impulse to layoffs, plant shutdowns and restructuring, and employer demands for greater “labor flexibility.”

The downsizing and cost-cutting process in Japan will be even more explosive, but it will also be more difficult and take longer to unfold. Nonetheless, over the past year the layoffs have been accelerating there too, notwithstanding the supposed “cultural tradition” of “lifetime jobs” we’ve all heard so much about. Toyota, Toshiba, Nissan, Komatsu, Nippon Steel, and other of the biggest Japanese companies have all begun carrying out extensive layoffs over the past year, as that country founders in its worst recession since World War II.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



May 21, 1976

LOS ANGELES—Jerome Ducote, a former sheriff’s deputy and leader of the John Birch Society, pleaded guilty April 19 to charges stemming from seventeen political burglaries he committed in Northern California during 1966 and 1967.

A major aim of the break-ins was to destroy the United Farm Workers union led by César Chávez. The black-bag jobs were at least partly financed by major growers and agribusiness organizations.

The guilty plea, entered in Santa Clara County Superior Court, effectively short-circuited a trial that threatened to implicate the FBI, CIA, growers, politicians, the local cops, and the utilities companies in the crimes and a subsequent cover-up.

The burglaries came to light last December when Ducote was accused of defrauding several growers of \$30,000.

Ducote freely admitted having committed the burglaries in the mid-1960s, apparently believing no charges could be filed against him because the statute of limitations on the break-ins had already run out.

He described how he and two accomplices had broken into the offices of labor, civil libertarian, and radical groups and individuals, in some cases at the behest of an anti-UFW grower, who was seeking the derogatory information about the union.

Ducote also implicated at least two members of Congress, the FBI, the CIA, and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company as among those who had been given access to stolen property or information.



May 21, 1951

Under the irresistible pressure of the Iranian masses whose revolutionary ferment is rising to a fever pitch, the Majlis, Iran’s Parliament, is carrying through the measure nationalizing the British-owned oil industry. The Laborite flunkies of British imperialism employed every device to balk the nationalization and are now threatening to occupy the oil fields. Defense Minister Shinwell, who had previously hurled one threat after another, has issued an alert order to British parachute troops. The Iranian press has responded with a counter-threat of “holy war” against Britain.

The Iranian crisis, precipitated by the nationalization move, is aggravated by the highly strategic importance of this country and its vast oil reserves in the Middle East.

At stake for British imperialism is its largest remaining foreign investment, valued at well over one billion dollars. The Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which Iran is now preparing to take over, supplies one-third of Britain’s total oil needs and keeps the British Navy running.

Britain’s exploitation of Iran has been ruthless. Production costs in the Near East oil industry are the lowest in the world and Iranian costs and wages are at the bottom of this wretched scale.

It has been British policy to keep Iran in degradation precisely in order to keep oil costs “nominal,” that is, continue to extract fabulous wealth while paying little or nothing in return.

Build the communist movement

At street book tables, sales at factory and mine gates, protests and picket lines, and Militant Labor Forums, Socialist workers and Young Socialists report similar experiences. As a result of the offensive by the government and the employers, and the resistance to it by working people around the world, there are more young people, workers, and farmers who want to read and study revolutionary literature and consider becoming part of the communist movement.

These experiences bode well for the campaign undertaken by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists to double the size of the revolutionary youth organization. That effort has already begun with the international circulation drive to expand readership of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* and to sell Pathfinder pamphlets and other activities. It will be a feature of the meeting in New York on May 20 entitled "In Defense of Leninism: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today."

The Pathfinder title *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, which will be available next week, provides a new tool in this effort. Socialist workers and Young Socialists across the country can begin to map out plans to sell and distribute this new book widely, as well as to organize classes and discussions on it. Excerpts of the book

printed in this week's *International Socialist Review* will give readers a taste of the political questions and perspectives presented in the new book.

Those who stop by the tables to discuss politics and to buy the books sense their value not only in providing a scientific explanation of the workings of the capitalist system, but also in providing a perspective of why a revolutionary struggle by working people for power is both necessary and possible. By reading Pathfinder books, attending Militant Labor Forums, and joining in strikes and protest actions, the need for joining and building revolutionary organizations capable of leading that struggle becomes clearer as well.

The questions taken up in Pathfinder books and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are not the product of cloistered study. Essential works such as the *Communist Manifesto* are the product of struggles waged by the modern working-class movement. Distributing these books and publishing new titles such as *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution* are the tasks of a living movement today—a movement comprising parties of worker-bolsheviks, youth organizations, and their supporters. For students and young workers this movement offers, as no other even pretends to do, an opportunity to work at political ideas, and also to act on them.

Immigrants strengthen our class

Immigrant workers are taking an increasingly important part in fighting for the unity of the working class. At May Day rallies and marches this year, immigrant workers' organizations were responsible for a spirited turnout in support of amnesty for all immigrants.

The U.S. capitalists have done everything they can to get rid of the observance of May Day, an international workers holiday celebrated around the world that originated in the 19th-century U.S. labor movement's fight for the eight-hour day. It is a sign of the changing face of working-class politics in the United States that workers from Latin America, in the words of a Spanish-language daily newspaper headline, have rescued May Day.

In recent protest actions in California and Minnesota, hundreds of immigrant rights supporters expressed fierce opposition to moves by state governments to deny a drivers license to applicants who cannot show proof of legal residency. In face of the brutality of the capitalist rulers and their stepped-up harassment of immigrants through raids and deportation by the hated Immigration and Naturalization Service cops, English-only laws, union-busting activities, and attacks by police against people of color, immigrant workers are taking the moral high ground. The self-confident tone of these class brothers and sisters is expressed not only in the growing size and frequency of protest actions but in the strength of statements such as, "We produce the wealth and should get the benefits!" and "We work hard—give us a green card!"

As the U.S. economic boom—which some capitalists bragged was unstoppable—slumps into stagnation, and the speculative frenzy of stock investment contracts, the rulers' assault on our wages, working conditions, and social benefits will deepen. Simultaneously they will reach

for every tool to divide us—employed against unemployed; whites against Blacks, Latinos, and Asians; native-born against immigrants. As layoffs mount, the employers and the government that does their bidding, along with the rightists they give the green light to, will try to play on the insecurities of workers and farmers affected by the capitalist crisis. They will work to pit different sections of our class against each other, to weaken and divide the labor movement.

This has been the aim of the bipartisan offensive which the Clinton administration advanced with the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996. That legislation built the INS into the largest federal police agency, eliminated constitutional protections in order to speed up deportations, and led to a rise in the number of immigrants arrested and expelled from the country. The same year Clinton issued an executive order barring federal contracts to companies that hire undocumented workers, asserting that "American jobs belong to America's legal workers." The Bush administration is moving to build on these measures, including proposing a "guest worker" law that would protect the bosses' ability to superexploit Mexican workers and shut off avenues to permanent residency.

The militancy of immigrant and other workers organizing unions in slaughterhouses, laundries, and other plants around the country and resisting the brutal conditions the bosses try to impose on them, and the growing boldness of the movement for immigrant rights are signs that the rulers have a problem, however. All workers and farmers should stand shoulder to shoulder with these struggles by immigrant workers that advance the interests and unity of all working people.

Stand up to cop brutality

The actions against police brutality in Cincinnati and Newark, New Jersey, as well as the protests at Penn State University against racist death threats, highlight the growing outrage and willingness among working people and youth, especially Blacks, to stand up to these attacks.

The cop killings and death threats underscore the racist nature of class society under capitalism and every institution of the capitalist state. As Malcolm X explained one month before he was assassinated, "there's no such thing" as race. Racism, he pointed out, was a concept concocted by agents of the colonial powers in order to "justify the European domination over the Africans and the Asians." The wealthy rulers use racist divisions to superexploit workers and farmers of oppressed nationalities and to bolster their assaults on affirmative action and other social gains won by working people through the civil rights battles in the 1950s and '60s.

Since 1995 some 15 Black men in Cincinnati have been gunned down by the cops, with Timothy Thomas being the fourth slain since November. The slap on the wrist given to his killer shows how the capitalist government and its agencies are racist institutions that support the unceasing brutality meted out by the police. They cover up and defend the perpetrators of racist attacks, whether by the cops, KKK, or other reactionary elements.

For example, it took 38 years to convict one of the Klan members accused of bombing the Birmingham church where four girls were killed. Bombings were common tactics used by racists to terrorize and intimidate partici-

pants in the civil rights movement. The convictions have nothing to do with a "new" FBI. That secret police agency remains one of Washington's repressive arms that's used against working people. Nor do any of the claims about dramatic progress in eliminating racial discrimination that government officials put forward to justify attacks on affirmative action have any merit. Every police agency in the United States remains an enemy of working people.

The ruling class and their political servants—both Democrats and Republicans—have nothing to offer except more cop violence, more racist violence, and terror as they deepen their assaults against working people at home and abroad. In the last decade thousands of working people were executed on the streets by the cops and millions more have been thrown behind bars. As governor of Texas, George Bush presided over one-fifth of all executions in the United States since the death penalty was reinstated and his predecessor in the White House was responsible for two federal laws that expanded capital punishment after carrying out a string of executions in his home state of Arkansas.

The demonstrations in New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania advance the fight against racism and point to the social solidarity that can be mobilized against racist attacks. The labor movement needs to speak out against every manifestation of racism and cop brutality. The road to ending racism, which cannot exist without exploitation and oppression, is the same road as the fight for governmental power by working people.

Cuban unionists

Continued from Page 13

world—and to promote discontent and rebellion everywhere."

Castro condemned U.S. imperialism for promoting the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA) in order to strengthen its economic domination over Latin America. He said that the effort to impose the interests of U.S. capital on these nations was tantamount to a move to annex them to the U.S. empire. Castro called on the workers movement in Latin America and the Caribbean to campaign for a plebiscite to reject their governments' decision to sign the FTAA.

The following day, the CTC hosted an International Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba and Against Neoliberal Globalization. Most of the more than 600 international guests to the congress, from 58 countries, took part in the meeting, which was also attended by Fidel Castro, Pedro Ross, Foreign Minister Felipe Pérez Roque, and other Cuban leaders.

Oswaldo Martínez, director of the Cuban Center for the Study of the World Economy, gave a presentation on the world capitalist economic crisis. Noting the growing layoffs in the United States, he said the slowdown in the U.S. economy is the prelude to a greater international crisis. He cited similarities between the conditions before the 1929 stock market crash that announced the Great Depression and today's situation, pointing out the devastating impact the U.S. economic downturn has on countries of the semicolonial world. Today, Martínez said, the foreign debt owed by Third World countries to the imperialist banks is \$2.5 trillion, up from \$580 billion in 1980.

Many international delegates addressed the gathering, touching on some of the themes raised by Martínez. Among them were Ty Collander of the oil workers union of Trinidad and Tobago, Angel Rodríguez, a national leader of the Bolivarian Workers Force (FBT) of Venezuela, and Marta Bonilla, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) from Los Angeles, one of more than 700 UNITE members on strike against Hollander Home Fashions in three states (see article on page 13).

The U.S. delegation was the largest international group. Nearly 100 unionists and others were present, including groups of members of UNITE and Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union.

Protesters condemn leniency for cop

Continued from front page

the Black community," said Allison Cox, a 25-year-old photography student. "It needs to be appealed and we have to be consistent...we have to be out here every day protesting."

"This problem is bigger than Officer Roach or Cincinnati," said Dion McClendon. "It's the whole state of Ohio and country. We have no right to self-defense against the cops. And the court system backs the cops."

Tyrone Stevenson agreed. "They don't treat us fair," he said. "The Tuesday after Timothy Thomas was killed, I was arrested for walking across a street," in the Black working-class community of Over-the-Rhine. "I wasn't throwing bricks or breaking windows, but they arrested me and made me sit in a van for five hours before they ever went to the station. I'm innocent. I go to trial on May 16 on a misdemeanor charge. Officer Roach got charged with a misdemeanor for killing someone."

Kimberly Jordan, a student at the University of Cincinnati, was helping to lead chants. "We need real change, and it's got to start with Officer Roach. I think Mike Allen should act like a prosecutor and not like officer Roach's defense attorney. How can he say the killing was unintentional when he shot him in the chest?"

When asked about future plans, Rev. Damon Lynch III, one of the organizers of the actions, said, "We plan to disrupt the city. There will be no business as usual."

An earlier demonstration on May 4 in front of the Hamilton County Justice Center and jailhouse demanded "Amnesty now!" for those still locked up during the rebellion against the police killing of Thomas. As the action proceeded around the jail, several of those who remain incarcerated responded from windows with clinched fists and chants.

"Amnesty for all those arrested during the rebellion," remarked Derrick Blassingame, a 14-year-old student at Frederick Douglas Jr. High School. Blassingame, president of the Black Youth Coalition Against Civil Injustice, was one of the more than 60 people at the Friday afternoon picket for the third consecutive week. Members of various youth groups and the Cincinnati Black United Front have participated in the actions.

Blassingame emphasized the days of protests and the mass outrage from the April 9 city council meeting following the death of Thomas—the fourth Black person killed by police since November—was not rioting but a "rebellion with a cause" and a demand for justice.

Demonstrators marched through downtown waving signs reading, "Stop police brutality!" and "Amnesty now!"

Osborne Hart is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876. He is also the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Detroit.

Pennsylvania residents protest toxic spill

BY BETH FINEAS
AND TOM MAILER

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania—One hundred angry residents of the Laurel Gardens neighborhood, wearing respirators and carrying signs, protested outside the Woodlands Inn and Resort in Plains Township April 23. Inside, Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge was the featured speaker at a \$50-a-plate Republican Party fund-raising dinner.

"What do we want? Buy out! When do we want it? Now!" and "Where is Governor Ridge?" were among the chants that rang out as protesters gathered across the street from the hotel.

Slogans on homemade signs included "EPA are Liars," "Let the EPA live in our houses," and "Stop executing people." Drivers in passing cars and trucks honked their support and some pumped their fists in the air.

Organized by the Group Against Gas, residents were protesting the April 20 announcement by Governor Ridge that the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) will not declare the gas spill neighborhood a disaster area.

It's "a stab in the back to this community," said Frank Tarantino, a leader of the group. "Ridge is 80 miles away and he's still not spoken with the residents.... He's a coward. However, this community will not go away quietly."

A 10-year-old fuel spill from underground storage tanks at Tranguch Tire Service and three other gas stations has been releasing toxic fumes containing benzene, toluene, MTBE, and ethylbenzene into more than 400 homes. The EPA estimates the size of the spill to be 50,000 gallons, which continues to spread through the sewer system, soil, and water in an old underground mine tunnel.

One resident died in 1999 from leukemia, and six others so far have been diagnosed with types of cancer that could be connected with the gas spill. Residents are demanding the government offer the option of buyout of the affected homes and relocation to those who want to leave, and that the spill be cleaned up.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has drawn fire from the residents because of its inaction on the spill and statements that it does not pose a health hazard. Currently the EPA is overseeing replacement of a small part of the sewer line in Hazle Township, where cracks allow the vapors into homes. Daria Komishock, a registered nurse who lives in the community asked, "If there is no health hazard or immediate danger, why are they wearing biohazard suits to work on the sewer system?"

For many of the protesters this was their first experience on a picket line. But one resident, Betty Lou Boyarski, explained she had organized a picket at the Jeddo Highland Coal Company's strip mine here some years ago. "My husband worked at the mine

and we lived right across the road. The trucks kicked up dust that got in the air and all over everything, and the company refused to water the road." Boyarski and other women in the neighborhood started a picket at the gate. Miners refused to cross for two days until the company gave in and agreed to water the roads. "It showed if you fight and stick together you can win," she explained.

Butch Boyarski, who recently retired from Jeddo, is also part of the fight against the gas spill. "The gas is in the mine tunnels and they're all connected," he explained. "We have maps showing the tunnels go from Hazle Township through the city all the way to downtown Hazleton. It's not just this neighborhood, but this whole area is one big Love Canal," he said.

In spite of the PEMA ruling, residents are continuing the fight for a government buyout. The Group Against Gas is holding regular organizing meetings, frequently attended by upwards of 200 people. On April 26 the Hazleton City Council voted to initiate legal action against the state Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency for their failure to inform residents of the health risks due to the spill.



Members of Group Against Gas of Hazleton, angry at delay in addressing concerns following gas spill, protest at meeting attended by Pennsylvania governor Ridge.

Harvard students, workers demand living wage

BY TED LEONARD
AND SARAH ULLMAN

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts—"I'm here because Harvard pays poverty wages," said Harvard freshman Madeleine Elfbein. "Harvard is a multibillion-dollar corporation that has been masquerading as an institution that serves to benefit humanity." Elfbein spoke out the window of Massachusetts Hall, which she and about 40 others are occupying. The building houses the offices of the president and provost of Harvard University. "We just can't treat injustice as an academic issue," she said.

On April 19 students began an "indefinite" sit-in in the building, demanding Harvard pay a "living wage" to workers at the university. They estimate that between 1,000 and 2,000 people working on the campus—janitors, kitchen staff, guards, and others—are paid less than \$10.25 per hour plus benefits.

In 1999 the Cambridge city council passed an ordinance setting the living wage at \$10.25. The Harvard Living Wage Fact Sheet distributed by the students explains, "Although living wage standards do, by definition, vary from region, they are all considerably higher than the federal minimum wage. This is because the minimum wage does not begin to meet the needs of working people or families anywhere in the country: in fact, it puts a parent with one child below the federal poverty line. A living wage aims to correct this by establishing, at a local level, a

more reasonable minimum wage."

The protest is being led by the Progressive Student Labor Movement (PSLM).

In Harvard Yard, which Massachusetts Hall faces, dozens and dozens of tents are pitched in a tent city.

Handmade banners and signs hang from rope between trees and on the sides of buildings expressing support for the occupation. "Society of Arab Students support PSLM," "Brandeis Students say 'Living Wage Now,'" and "Tufts supports PSLM," read several banners. "Si se puede" (Yes we can), said another. A sign in Creole, "Working

together with the students," reflects the majority Haitian and Hispanic composition of the workers at Harvard.

Seven hundred workers and students rallied in Harvard Yard April 30. Among the speakers were AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, and Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. "We will stand with you until Harvard University agrees to pay a living wage to the men and women who do all the tasks that are so important to running the university," Sweeney told the rally.

Ted Leonard is a meat packer in Boston.

Philippine leader jails opposition

Continued from Page 3

etry—reflected by a 4.1 percent jump in the index of Manila's stock exchange on May 2—her opponents were able to mobilize the support of many working people in Manila only 100 days into her presidency.

Calling the march on the presidential palace a "mob of protesters" who brought "mayhem" to the city, the *New York Times* said the conflict "underscores the depth of anger felt by many poor Filipinos, who adore Mr. Estrada despite his failings and who regard his arrest last Wednesday by armored police officers as a gross violation of his rights."

The March 20 *Wall Street Journal* expressed the hope of "foreign investors" in the new administration. They want, wrote Chen May Yee, "a return to the business-friendly policies" of the mid-1990s, before the "troubled tenure" of Estrada and "they want it fast." U.S. capitalists "wish list includes [the] continued liberalization of the telecommunications and banking industries," the paper said.

The devastating consequences of this kind of neocolonial dependency are reflected in the country's foreign debt. One-third of the country's budget goes to pay the annual interest on the total debt of \$40.6 billion.

LETTERS

'Capitalism in the raw'

It's the moment every worker dreads: arriving for work to be met with locked doors and handed a letter saying your employment is terminated and to clear out your locker under the eye of a security guard. That's what greeted us the morning shift at Qantas NZ April 21.

The closing of the country's second biggest airline, reported to have lost \$140,000 in March on top of debts in excess of \$20 million, means the loss of 1,180 jobs. At a union meeting they learned they will have to wait months for their final wages and holiday pay and that nobody will get redundancy money they are entitled to.

One worker at the meeting who blamed management "incompetence" for the collapse got the loudest applause. Some workers are angry that a leading investor, Alan Gibbs, reported in the *New Zealand Herald* to be worth \$200 million, could be causing such havoc and misery. "He won't be suffering," said one of my old work-mates, Chris Ivey, adding that he saw the collapse as "capitalism in the raw."
Malcolm McAllister
Auckland, New Zealand

Opposition to power plant

New York City residents, especially small children, are likely to be injured and killed by the startup of a large pre-regulation oil-fired power generator in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The plant was shut down years ago because it was found to be "too dirty." Now the hysteria about New York's "energy crisis" has caused the possible resurrection of this generator.

Two new power plants have been proposed for Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Situated within 10 blocks of each other on the East River—and as close as 100 feet to schools, homes, and parks—these power plants would emit hundreds of tons of airborne pollutants per year. Sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, benzopyrenes, and formaldehyde are just some of the chemical emissions.

Join us for a benefit on May 10 at Parkers' Box, 193 Grand Street in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

Tom Fitzgibbon
Brooklyn, New York

Evolution of German CP

Recently the *Militant* has reported on the rightward direction of

the German Green Party, the model of such organizations worldwide. The former ruling party of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), is undergoing a similar drift toward openly reactionary and pro-capitalist politics. On April 27 the PDS presented a new "political program," replacing one they had adopted in 1993.

The new program explicitly disavows "Marxism-Leninism," which of course the PDS had already done many years earlier, and states their hope to gain a share of governmental power along with the other major reformist parties, the SPD and the Greens. The new program also declares, in terms reminiscent of reformist leaders of the SPD who Rosa Luxemburg struggled against a century ago, that capitalism can be progressively altered "piece by piece."

Enrique Lister
Berlin, Germany

May Day in Taiwan

I was having lunch with a Taiwanese friend of mine and the Chinese language TV news was on. The station was covering a big protest march. My friend explained it was

in Taiwan and that the station was reporting that there were 10,000 people in the march. My friend explained it was a Labor Day (May Day) march and that 10,000 was bigger than Labor Day marches in recent years. He said that the Taiwanese economy is slowing down and that the marchers were protesting layoffs.

Walter Blades
Oakland, California

Enjoys web site

Today I discovered your web site and a very good day to find you—May 1. I work as a seafarer, and have done so for 30 years. During that time I have always been a member of a union, firstly the Seamens Union of Australia then the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).

I wanted to let you all know how much I enjoy your site. Please keep up the good work. You are playing an important role in helping to inform workers worldwide of the struggles fellow comrades are waging.

Alan
Australia

Pueblo crew 'held hostage?'

The April 23 *Militant* article

"Spy plane conflict highlights U.S. rulers' military threat to Chinese workers state" notes Washington's decades-long use of spy planes and ships, along with sophisticated electronic equipment in provocative actions against the Chinese and north Korean workers states. One question, however, comes to mind. The article describes the crew of the U.S. spy ship *Pueblo* as having been held hostage by north Korea for 11 months. They may have been prisoners of war, or charged as spies by north Korea in the manner that any country faced with a similarly staged attack might do. To refer to the crew as hostages places the burden upon north Korea for defending itself in the face of Washington's provocations.

Jim Altenberg
Oakland, California

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

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

Workers in France rally against layoffs

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—Buses, subways, and trolleys in more than 50 French cities ground to a halt May 2 in the fourth one-day strike in the last six weeks by mass transit workers employed by private companies. The workers are demanding their retirement age be lowered to age 55, the same as railroad workers at the state-run SNCF.

Bus and subway workers in Paris employed by the RATP, a nationalized company, did not strike, as they have retirement parity with the SNCF workers. The mass transit bosses have said it is "out of the question" to lower the retirement age in the private sector. The coalition of five transportation unions has announced two more one-day strikes for May.

As the combative transit workers continue their struggle, workers' attention has been increasingly focused on the growing number of layoffs and plant closures by big business.

More than 1,000 workers demonstrated outside the headquarters of Moulinex-Brandt April 25 against the company's decision to close three of its factories in France, as well as plants in Ireland, Germany, Spain, and Brazil. In addition, the workforce in another factory in Brazil and one in Poland is to be slashed. Some 4,000 workers will lose their jobs, 1,500 of them in France.

Moulinex-Brandt, which was formed as the result of a French-Italian merger in December, makes household appliances. The Moulinex management claims that their problems stem from "Asian competition." In response, officials of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the majority union at Moulinex, announced they are con-



Militant/Nat London

May Day demonstration in Paris with contingent of workers and family members from the Danone plant in Ris-Orangis outside of Paris. Danone has announced the closure of the factory. The workers were one of the lead contingents in the demonstration.

sidering a reactionary "intelligent boycott" of household appliances sold under European brand names but produced in Asia or South America.

The action by workers at Moulinex was joined by a large delegation of union members from the LU factories owned by Gervais-Danone. Danone, the largest food distributor in France, has announced the closure of two LU cookie factories in France plus layoffs in a number of other countries. Some 1,700 Danone workers will lose their jobs in Europe, 570 of them in France. An April 21 demonstration of more than 20,000 in Calais, called by the French Communist

Party, protested the Danone plant closures, and called for a law to stop layoffs and a boycott of Danone products.

One thousand workers from Air Littoral, Air Liberté, and AOM demonstrated at Orly airport April 24 against the threatened bankruptcy and closure of the three airlines. Some 7,500 workers risk losing their jobs. The same day, workers from the three airlines blocked the runways at Nice airport. Thirty-eight flights were canceled. One hundred workers also occupied the runways at Montpellier airport for an hour.

Under pressure from the workers' actions, Swissair, the principal stock owner in the group, agreed to put up 500 million francs (US\$70 million) to cover the airlines' losses over the next two months while they try to sell the three companies. Air France has announced that they will hire some of the workers.

Contingents of workers from the three airlines, along with unionists from the threatened Danone plants, led off the May Day demonstration of 20,000 workers here.

The department store chain Marks & Spencer, based in Britain, has announced the closure of 38 stores on the European continent, 18 of them in France. The firings at Marks & Spencer and at Danone have particularly outraged workers throughout the country as both companies have declared large profits. The 1,700 Marks & Spencer workers in France have also organized demonstrations, often together with the Danone workers.

Some 250 workers at the Pechiney magnesium factory in Marnac occupied the plant for 24 hours when Pechiney announced its closure. On May 3 they blocked a major highway near the factory for several hours and the next day shopkeepers throughout the town showed their support by closing up shop for the day.

Auto parts and telecommunications companies have also announced plant closings. Philips, Motorola, and Ericsson all plan to dismiss thousands of workers.

Economic slowdown

The layoffs are the latest sign of the gathering storm clouds on Europe's economic horizon. With the Japanese economy mired in an economic downturn and a declining rate of growth in the U.S. economy, a slowdown is underway here as well. France's economy has registered between 3 percent and 3.5 percent growth since 1998 and its high unemployment rate, which peaked at 12.6 percent in 1997, has been going down ever since, reaching 8.7 percent in March. But the new wave of layoffs has led some capitalists to demand action from the European Central Bank to limit the effects in Europe of the economic problems in Japan and the United States.

European Central Bank president Wim Duisenberg has so far refused calls by U.S. treasury secretary Paul O'Neill and IMF economist Michael Mussa to lower interest rates as a stimulus to economic growth, claiming that the U.S. slowdown will not

affect the European economies. "It would be a paradox," a French representative told the recent G-7 meeting in Washington, "if the zone with 1 percent growth [the United States] told the zone with 2.5 percent growth [Europe] how things should be done."

Nevertheless, Europe is not immune from the slowdown in other capitalist economies. The IMF dropped its 2001 projection for European growth from 3.4 to 2.4 percent and for growth in France from 3.5 to 2.6 percent. The French government's National Institute of Economic Studies and Statistics (INSEE) index of industrialists' production perspectives dropped 12 points in April after going up 5 points in March and 15 points in February. The IMF's semiannual perspectives report published April 26 warned that if the U.S. slowdown continued it could result in a "synchronized weakening" of all the world capitalist economies.

Demands to limit layoffs

In the recent wave of strikes and demonstrations here, workers have raised demands that the government take effective action to limit layoffs and plant closures. Among demands that have been widely discussed is enactment of laws to forbid layoffs by profitable companies and a proposal by the French Communist Party to give unions the right to oppose layoffs and refer them for decision to a labor court. The government has refused both proposals.

"We can not forbid layoffs," Socialist Party spokesperson Vincent Peillon said in response to these demands. "There is no other realistic proposition."

Labor Minister Elisabeth Guigou has proposed a law that doubles the minimum indemnity fired workers receive and reinforces job-training measures. "These measures won't change anything for us," answered a shop steward at Marks & Spencer.

French capitalists are increasingly uneasy about the deepening workers' struggles. In a March 26 editorial entitled "Social combativity," the financial daily *Les Echos* said that there are "many indications that would make us ask if there is not a reawakening of social combativity. This is clearest in the private sector, up to now well known for being relatively calm."

Private sector workers, such as coal miners, steel, auto, textile, and shipyard workers, suffered a series of defeats in the 1980s from which they have not yet fully recovered. *Les Echos* complained about the "growing solidarity between strikers and all other workers," and pointed to the 80 percent support by all wage earners for recent strikes by hospital workers and truck drivers.

Particularly worrying was the result of a public opinion poll that showed that 66 percent of workers say they are ready to go on strike and 36 percent to occupy their workplace if their interests are threatened, up by 11 percent from 1996.

Nat London works at a Renault auto plant in Choisy-le-roi and is a member of the General Confederation of Labor.

China protests Australian warships in Straits of Taiwan

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—On April 17 three Australian navy warships were challenged by a Chinese naval ship for steaming without permission through the Straits of Taiwan off China's coast. Officers of the two frigates and a supply ship refused to alter their course, despite a radio warning by the Chinese vessel. Beijing's embassy in Canberra issued a diplomatic rebuke to the Australian government in response.

The provocation came in the wake of a

tense standoff between Washington and Beijing over the collision of a U.S. spy plane with a Chinese fighter jet, and one day after U.S. president George Bush announced a package of military equipment for the government in Taipei, including destroyers, submarines, and advanced warplanes.

The conservative government of Prime Minister John Howard backed this belligerent stance by Washington toward the Chinese workers state. This led to an initial diplomatic warning from Beijing against interference in its bilateral relations.

The Australian flotilla was returning via Hong Kong from Pusan after joining in commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Korean War. The Australian government committed military forces to that U.S.-led imperialist onslaught, which sought to drive back the Korean revolution and threaten the Chinese revolution.

Canberra has asserted that its warships had a right of "innocent passage" through Chinese waters. Alexander Downer, the Australian foreign minister, has tried to claim there was no link between the spy plane and warship incidents. Beijing insists that its permission should be sought for all such passages by foreign vessels, particularly warships.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* ran an editorial April 30 expressing unease at the Australian government's involvement in an "argument between giants," despite Canberra's close alliance with Washington. It repeated the concern of Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock that accords against "illegal immigration" by "boat people" from China to Australia could be jeopardized. News articles in the big business daily pointed out that considerable trade and investment by Australian companies in the huge market in China were also at stake.

On May 7 Washington resumed its provocative spy flights, sending an Air Force RC-135 from Okinawa, Japan, to just off the northeastern coast of China.

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

Unionists at Camco in Montreal continue fight for a contract

BY JOANNE WALLADOR

MONTREAL—More than 500 strikers and their supporters marched April 27 around Camco to show their determination to win their demands against the company. The workers have been on strike since April 1. This was the second march they had organized in a week and they planned on having a contingent at the International Workers Day march May 1 organized by the union federations here.

Camco workers in Hamilton, Ontario, organized by the Canadian Auto Workers union, voted by a 92 percent margin on April 25 in favor of accepting the company's offer. The previous day the company had dropped concessions it was demanding from workers in Montreal on pensions, benefits, and a 12-hour, seven-day-a-week shift.

"They made a new offer that they wanted us to vote on," said Néré Dutil, vice president of the local. "But the offer was less than what they had offered workers in Hamilton and less than what we're asking for. It was an insult and we didn't even take a vote." On April 26 strikers were served with an injunction limiting them to seven pickets who must stay 30 meters (33 yards) away from each of three entrances to the plant.