

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Book on Cuban Revolution gives you confidence to change world'

St. Paul event promotes book by Chinese-Cuban generals
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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APRIL 24, 2006

2 million rally for immigrant rights

Many down tools to join actions across U.S., saying: 'We are workers, not criminals! Legalization now!'

Half million in D.C.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—In the largest mobilization held as part of the National Day of Action for Immigrant Justice, more than 500,000 people rallied here April 10. The huge crowd, swelling some 10 blocks down the National Mall from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, was full of groups of hotel and restaurant workers, construction workers, parking lot attendants, and others who said they either left work early or took the day off entirely.

Actions were held in more than 100 U.S. cities. The protest here was organized by the National Capital Immigration Coalition—comprised of unions, immigrant rights organizations, churches, and students groups.

It came on the heels of a giant protest in Dallas the day before that drew half a million people. The largest rallies held that day included ones that drew 50,000 in San Diego; 30,000 each in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Fort Worth, Texas; and 25,000 in Salt Lake City.

In addition to Washington, massive actions took place in a number of cities on April 10. About 125,000 rallied in New York; 100,000 in Phoenix; 75,000 in Ft. Myers, Florida; and 50,000 in Atlanta and Houston. Actions in about a dozen other cities drew between 10,000 and 20,000. In all 2 million people were involved in the events nationwide (see chart on page 6).

The overwhelming majority of those
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Top: More than 500,000 immigrant workers and supporters march in Washington April 10 to oppose measures criminalizing undocumented. Bottom: Diana Gómez (center) and Mercedes García (right) at rally of half a million the day before in Dallas.

AP photos by Mannie García (top); Erin Trieb (bottom)

125,000 in New York

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

NEW YORK—"Legalization now!" and "Amnesty!" were among the most popular chants as 125,000 protesters converged on City Hall here April 10. The demonstration, filling Broadway north for half a mile, drew workers of many nationalities and backgrounds.

Opposition to House Resolution 4437, known as the Sensenbrenner bill, was the focus of many speeches from the platform and signs in the crowd. The bill, passed by the House of Representatives in December, would make it a felony—punishable by jail—to live in the United States without proper papers, and would mandate the building of a fence along the border with Mexico. There are an estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in

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Miners' union holds convention

BY PAUL MAILHOT

LAS VEGAS, Nevada, April 12—Some 850 delegates and guests are meeting at the United Mine Workers of America convention here April 10–13. The convention is taking place as the union prepares for negotiations with most major eastern U.S. coal companies. The Bituminous Coal Operators Association contract expires December 31.

Three days before the gathering, two
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"A practical lesson for the working class on how to fight and win"

Our History Is Still Being Written

"Why is this book important outside Cuba, and in the U.S. above all? The simplest answer is the most accurate. Because it is needed by those on the front lines of the class struggle, wherever they may be."

— **Mary-Alice Waters,**

editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*,
at February 2006 Havana International Book Fair
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For more information, contact listings on page 8

Venezuela takes over some oil fields, as youth of ruling party holds congress

BY NATALIE DOUCET
AND OLYMPIA NEWTON

TACARIGUA DE LA LAGUNA, Miranda, Venezuela—Nearly 400 delegates assembled here March 31–April 2 for the Third Patriotic Council of the Youth of the Fifth Republic (JVR)—the youth group of the governing party, the Move-

ment for the Fifth Republic (MVR).

The second day of the conference, the government of Venezuela, headed by President Hugo Chávez, took over oil fields operated by two energy giants—Total of France and Eni of Italy—after they challenged government rules giving the

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Help 'Militant' win 2,000 new readers and raise \$90,000

Letter from the editor

Dear Reader,

On April 8, as the massive outpouring for immigrant rights was getting under way in the United States, the *Militant* launched a seven-week circulation campaign and fund drive.

Join the effort to win at least 2,000 new
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Chicago cops oppose ‘Fred Hampton’ street

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

CHICAGO—In February Alderwoman Madeline Haithcock, with the support of Congressman Bobby Rush—a former Black Panther—and members of the Hampton family, proposed renaming part of Monroe Street after Fred Hampton. A leader of the Black Panther Party, Hampton was brutally slain by Chicago cops on Dec. 4, 1969.

Monroe Street is where Hampton lived and where he was murdered. In addition to killing Hampton while he lay asleep in his bed, the cops also murdered Mark Clark, another young leader of the Panthers. The police officers wounded four others in the assault. In addition, three other individuals were arrested on charges of attempting to murder the invading cops.

Nearly 1,300 streets in Chicago have been renamed to honor individuals in this city with little controversy. In this case, however, the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) launched a campaign to stop this effort as part of continuing the cops’ cover-up of their cold-blooded murder of Hampton.

On the FOP website the cops claim that in 1969 they went to Fred Hampton’s home to execute a search warrant and while doing so “the Law Enforcement Officers were fired upon and the ensuing gun battle left Hampton and Mark Clark dead and others on both sides of the battle wounded.” In a letter sent to all 50 alderman, FOP head Mark Donahue defended the cops accused of murdering the Panthers. “Based upon irresponsible allegations at the time Hampton was executed, a federal investigation was conducted which cleared those accused of wrongdoing,” Donahue wrote. “A later civil suit which garnered the families of those killed and wounded in the incident a monetary award, absolutely does not justify the continued allegations of any

criminal act.” It is notable that Donahue, perhaps accidentally, used the correct term, “executed,” in referring to how Fred Hampton was killed.

Undisputed facts going back to the 1960s, however, exposed the cops’ lies in 1969 and they show that the FOP and Donahue are not telling the truth today.

To counter the lies of the cops and government authorities, the Monroe Street apartment was opened to the press and others right after the police raid. The Illinois State Attorney’s office had released a photo at the time that supposedly showed bullet holes proving the Panthers had fired at the police. But the photo was exposed by reporters and others visiting the scene of the killing as showing holes made by nails, the Dec. 26, 1969, *Militant* reported. A federal grand jury, despite its clear bias against Hampton and the Panthers, admitted in May 1970 that at least 82 shots were fired into the Monroe residence and that only one was “apparently” fired by someone inside.

The brutality of the cop attack and their blatant lies at the time led many groups to speak out. These included the Chicago NAACP, local officials, and even the Afro-American Patrolmen’s League.

Cointelpro: The FBI’s Secret War on

Political Freedom, a book published by Pathfinder Press, explains that depositions in a later civil suit revealed “that the chief of Panther security and Hampton’s personal bodyguard, William O’Neal, was an FBI infiltrator. O’Neal gave his FBI ‘contacting agent,’ Roy Mitchell, a detailed floor plan of the apartment, which Mitchell turned over to the state’s attorney’s office shortly before the attack. . . . For his services, O’Neal was paid over \$10,000 from January 1969 through July 1970, according to Mitchell’s affidavit. . . . O’Neal incidentally, continued to report to Mitchell after the raid. He was taking part in meetings with the Hampton family and discussions between lawyers and clients.”

An examination of Hampton’s body revealed a high dose of a sleeping drug, indicating that he had been drugged before the police raid.

Protests on campuses and in the Black community broke out in Chicago and across the country immediately after the Dec. 4, 1969, police assault. A memorial rally at a church at Chicago’s west side drew 3,000 people with an overflow crowd of 1,000 outside.

Fred Hampton grew up in Maywood, a western suburb of Chicago. As a high school student he joined the NAACP and



Black Panther leader Fred Hampton, who was killed by Chicago cops Dec. 4, 1969.

became the president of its West Suburban chapter. He led a fight to acquire a swimming pool for the Maywood Black community. He later moved to Chicago where he was a student at Malcolm X City College and became a leader of the Black Panther Party.

Mary Johnson, a longtime activist in Chicago’s Black community and a fighter against police brutality and for the rights of the wrongfully convicted, told the *Militant*: “We have a right to honor Fred Hampton. He didn’t do anything except help people. The cops should be ashamed to even respond. It’s proven that they out-and-out lied. They should be held accountable.”

Help ‘Militant’ win 2,000 new readers, raise \$90,000

Continued from front page
readers by May 28 and raise \$90,000 to help us continue reporting from the front lines of the class struggle!

Hundreds of workers and others subscribed to the *Militant* April 8-10 at the immigrant rights mobilizations (the total is not known yet since subs purchased then continued to come in as this issue went to press), giving the circulation effort momentum from the get-go.

Selling *Militant* subs is an integral part

of efforts by supporters of the paper to help build an April 26 protest by farmers who are Black in Washington, D.C., walkouts and rallies for immigrant rights planned for May 1 across the United States, the May 20 marches in Washington and Los Angeles demanding “Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba,” and other work in the labor movement and beyond.

Many readers are asking for an in-depth explanation of what’s behind the momentous changes in world politics under way. That’s why, along with subscriptions, *Militant* supporters are selling the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism* and the book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, both by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, at the deeply discounted prices of \$1 and \$5, respectively. Other specials with a sub are \$25 for the two most recent issues of the Marxist magazine *New International* and \$15 for *Our History Is*

Still Being Written (see front-page ad).

The \$90,000 we are seeking to raise is needed to allow the paper to continue sending reporters around the world—from Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela to every nook and cranny of the United States and other countries where workers are resisting the bosses’ onslaught. It’s also needed to meet other operational costs like rent, utilities, printing, shipping, and equipment maintenance. The big-business media is financed by its corporate sponsors, who lavish millions on ads in dailies and on commercials in radio stations and TV channels. But the *Militant* depends on people like you to keep publishing week after week.

To order a bundle, join sub sales teams, or donate to the fund drive, and to discuss how to involve others in these activities, contact us (see below), or approach our distributors nearest you (see directory on page 8). Glad to have you on board.

Sincerely,
Argiris Malapanis, Editor

THE MILITANT

Immigrant rights rallies aid all workers

The ‘Militant’ brings you the news showing how the mass protests for immigrant rights benefit all working people. Don’t miss a single issue!



Militant/Michael Baumann
Some 30 students walked out of McNair High School in Jersey City, New Jersey, April 10 to join immigrant rights rally there.

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Editorial volunteers: Arrin Hawkins, Martin Koppel, Paul Pederson, and Brian Williams.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*’s views. These are expressed in editorials.

First shift in U.S. foreign policy since end of Cold War

How the ‘peace dividend’ ended

(Second of three articles)

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—The current shift in U.S. foreign policy and the resulting transformation of Washington’s military began in the late 1990s with the end of the so-called peace dividend. Recognition grew among the rulers that they could no longer count on the aid of Stalin’s heirs in Moscow to help police the world’s workers and farmers, as they had done during the Cold War period. U.S. imperialism had to prepare to more directly fight the resistance by working people to the effects of the deepening world capitalist crisis and to confront sharper competition with its rivals in Europe and Japan.

This article is the second in a series on the first major shift in U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. It reviews Washington’s slowness in recognizing the consequences of the new international balance of class forces that resulted from the end of the Cold War and in making adjustments to respond to them. The first article, explaining the origins of the U.S. government’s policy of “containment” of the Soviet bloc and its allies during the last half of the 20th century, appeared last week (see “Why was Cold War perceived as ‘cold’?” in April 17 *Militant*).

For about a decade after the end of the Cold War, with the collapse of the bureaucratic regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Washington acted as if it had less need to wage war. During Congressional hearings on the Pentagon’s 2007 budget, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld said that in the post-Cold War drawdown, U.S. military spending dropped to 4.8 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). By comparison, it had averaged around 10 percent of GDP during the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, he said.

Under the senior Bush and Clinton administrations, military spending was cut nearly a third—by \$135 billion. Contrary to liberal mythology, the “peace dividend” did not free up funds for education, food stamps, unemployment insurance, and other social programs. Spending on each of those was reduced during the eight years of the Clinton presidency. Talk of the “peace dividend” occurred simultaneously with the U.S. rulers’ first major assault on the social wage of working people: the elimination of “welfare as we know it,” pioneered by William Clinton.

Instead, reductions in war spending were used to help hold down interest rates, prop up a “strong” dollar, and line the pockets of wealthy bondhold-

ers. The U.S. billionaires hoped to avoid having to make cuts so deep in social benefits as to risk a social explosion.

It took the U.S. rulers about 10 years to get over the denial of the so-called peace dividend period and to implement a shift in their foreign policy under the banner of fighting the “war on terrorism.”

Evidence had mounted over a decade and a half that the center of wars imperialism would fight would be in the Middle East and central Asia. But Washington was slow to recognize the *pattern* in a string of attacks on U.S. installations and their implications. These included: the 1983 car-bombing in Beirut of a U.S. Marines barracks that killed 241 soldiers; 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center; 1996 truck-bombing on the Khobar towers, a residence for U.S. military personnel in Saudi Arabia; 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; and the attack on the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000.

Break with ‘cut and run’

Looking back on these events in a Sept. 6, 2004, speech, Vice President Richard Cheney said the so-called Bush Doctrine was a break from the course followed for a quarter century—under Democrats and Republicans—of responding to “terrorist” attacks as matters to be dealt

with through police actions seeking to put individuals in prison.

Reagan withdrew U.S. troops from Lebanon a few months after the 1983 bombing attack in Beirut. Many individuals accused in the other attacks were arrested, tried, and sentenced to death or long imprisonments.

“What were the consequences of these attacks?” asked Cheney in an August 2004 speech in Missouri. Not much. “We fired off a few cruise missiles once. Basically they struck us with impunity and got away with it.”

Cheney said the Bush Doctrine means that any government or individual deemed to be protecting “terrorists” will be targeted, and Washington will not wait for another attack but will take “preemptive” military action.

1998: A turning point

A turning point in U.S. ruling class circles over the need to make a radical shift in the direction of foreign policy came well before the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.

Conservative magazines like William Kristol’s *Weekly Standard*, and his Project for the New American Century, a conservative foundation, and think tanks such as the Milwaukee-based Bradley Foundation advocated an “aggressive” foreign policy to reshape the Middle East by overthrowing, if necessary, governments in the region seen as a threat to U.S. imperialist interests.

As early as 1997, a cover story in the *Weekly Standard* proclaimed, “Saddam Must Go.” While Kristol and others, known as “neoconservatives,” were among those who pioneered this push, the course toward regime change in Iraq predominated among most in the ruling class and became official government policy soon. Early next year, the *Weekly Standard* featured a letter signed by 18 prominent bourgeois figures urging the Clinton administration to overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. Eight of the letter’s signers would later join the Bush administration in top positions, among them Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Defense Policy Board chairman Richard Perle, John Bolton and Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. ambassadors today to the United Nations and to Iraq, respectively, and Richard Armitage, who served as deputy secretary of state between 2001 and 2005.

In a Feb. 18, 1998, speech to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, President Clinton said that aggressive action was needed to ensure that the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein is not allowed “to develop his program of weapons of mass destruction.”

Later that year top Democratic congressmen such as John Kerry, Patrick Leahy, and Christopher Dodd cosponsored a resolution with Republicans like Chuck Hagel that urged the president

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Venezuela: Youth of Fifth Republic holds congress

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state a majority stake in 32 such fields. Days earlier, Venezuela’s energy minister, Rafael Ramírez, had told the press that the U.S. oil giant ExxonMobil was not welcome in the country.

Many delegates at the JVR congress were involved in programs promoted by the government that provide basic literacy, high school education, and university courses for working people. Others were part of the effort to establish neighborhood clinics—staffed by thousands of Cuban volunteer doctors—in working-class and rural areas that previously had little access to medical care.

The JVR has set as a primary goal for this year winning 10 million votes to reelect Chávez in the December 3 presidential elections. How to mobilize to achieve this was a central theme of discussion in workshops and plenary sessions.

“Right now, it appears the opposition’s strategy will be to boycott the elections and demobilize the electorate,” said MVR leader William Lara, minister of communication and information, at a plenary session. “If only a small percentage of the electorate votes, U.S. imperialism can say Chávez is not legitimately elected and use it as a pretext to attack us. We need to prepare for any strategy they come up with. The JVR should organize voting patrols in the neighborhoods to convince people to vote, as they did during the recall referendum in August.”

At a workshop on international relations, Fadi Al Aisami, a delegate from Mérida, said, “There are 3.5 million immigrant workers in Venezuela who we can reach out to and include in the social programs. My father, who was born in Syria, lived in Venezuela for 26 years and never voted. We can win over people like him.”

International guests came from the Socialist Youth Front of Denmark, Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC),

Young Communists of Colombia (JUCO), Clement Payne Movement of Barbados, October 8 Revolutionary Youth in Brazil, and Young Socialists in Canada and the United States.

“Denmark has the most fascist government in all of Europe,” said Bjorn Hansen from the Socialist Youth Front of Denmark.

“But there is hope, as shown by the strikes in France. Venezuela gives hope to the entire left, because it proves socialism can be built.”

“Millions of immigrant workers and their allies have marched in the United States recently to demand their rights and defend themselves against anti-immigrant attacks,” said Olympia Newton, representing the Young Socialists in the United States. “We are aided in our struggles by the anti-imperialist struggles of our Venezuelan brothers and sisters, as we have been aided by the living example of the Cuban Revolution for the last 47 years. That is why the Young Socialists has joined with dozens of organizations to build marches on May 20 in Washington and Los Angeles to demand ‘Hands off Venezuela! Hands off Cuba!’”

Edwin Frías from Barinas proposed organizing marches across Venezuela to coincide with the May 20 U.S. actions. Delegates at that workshop adopted this proposal unanimously.

“There is an international media campaign against Venezuela saying that we are following the road of the Cuban Revolution,” said Lenin Pérez, a student from Caracas. “We have to counter that and explain that we are building 21st century socialism, not Cuban socialism.”

Dreyser Ojeda, a student from Carabobo, expressed a different view in an interview with the *Militant*. “We have



Militant/Olympia Newton

Delegates at JVR congress in Miranda state, Venezuela.

a lot to learn from the Cubans,” he said. “They have accomplished so much in their revolution because people there are mobilized to advance. They can teach us a lot.” Ojeda is one of several thousand Venezuelan youth who have studied or are studying medicine, social work, or other subjects in Cuba.

Delegates here did not discuss the latest decision to extend state control over the country’s oil resources, since they were announced as the conference was ending.

The takeover of the two oil fields operated by Total and Eni came about after the National Assembly voted at the end of March that PDVSA, the state-owned oil company, will take a 60 percent stake in all joint ventures with foreign investors, which account for a fifth of the country’s oil production. Some 16 foreign companies accepted the new terms, but Total and Eni demanded a larger stake.

ExxonMobil has refused to abide by these rules and sold its stake at one of the disputed fields to Repsol of Spain. But Exxon still holds a 42 percent stake in a much larger heavy-oil project.

Last year, Caracas increased royalties foreign investors had to pay from 1 percent to 16.6 percent. In early April, the government said it plans to increase taxes for investors in oil to 50 percent from 34 percent.

NEW DATE



Celebrate life & political contributions of SWP leader Clifton DeBerry

May 6, San Francisco

(previously set for April 29)

SEE CALENDAR ON PAGE 9 FOR DETAILS

Mass protests force Paris to rescind antilabor law

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

French president Jacques Chirac announced April 10 plans to scrap a new labor law that allows bosses to fire workers under 26 for any reason during their first two years on the job. Over the last two months, millions of students and workers joined nationwide strikes and other protests across the country to oppose this law, called the First Employment Contract (CPE). College and high school student groups and all major trade union federations backed these actions.

Chirac's decision came the day before marches scheduled by student organizations. Unions and student groups had also set a deadline of April 17 for the government to rescind the law or face a new round of protests.

In an interview with the French daily *Le Monde*, French employment minister Jean-Louis Borloo said the CPE will be replaced with new measures that include financial incentives to employers to hire people under 26 who face "difficulties."

"The CPE is dead, the CPE is well and truly finished," student leader Julie Coudry told the *Times* of London.

'Peace dividend'

Continued from page 3

"to take all necessary and appropriate actions to respond to the threat posed by Iraq's refusal to end its weapons of mass destruction programs."

In his last years in office, Clinton laid the basis—through steps such as accelerating "missile defense" and laying the groundwork for use of the military inside the United States—for the more radical changes in the organization of the U.S. armed forces implemented under his successor.

"Regime change" in Iraq soon became official government policy. On Oct. 31, 1998, Clinton signed into law the "Iraq Liberation Act," which said: "It should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime."

Government officials under Clinton made it clear how that was to be done, even after George W. Bush took over in the White House. "The United States has no choice left but to invade Iraq itself and eliminate the current regime," wrote Kenneth Pollack in the March/April 2002 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, one year before the U.S. invasion. Pollack was Director for Gulf Affairs on the staff of the National Security Council the last two years of the Clinton White House.

By that time, September 11 had provided most of the U.S. rulers, liberal and conservative, with the rationalization for the assault on Iraq and the broader "war on terrorism."

The process of transforming the U.S. military to carry out the new foreign policy course was accelerated by 9/11. This "transformation," as the Pentagon dubbed it, and what the U.S. rulers recently described as a "long war" to safeguard their interests for decades to come was outlined in three articles earlier this year. (See "Pentagon: Washington faces 'long war,'" "Pentagon renews focus on Africa, Latin America, and China," and "Transformation of U.S. military hasn't failed, it has advanced," in the March 13, March 20, and April 3 issues, respectively.)

In the fifth nationwide protest since February, at least 2 million demonstrators took to the streets in 195 cities on April 4. Union officials said 700,000 people marched in Paris, while government authorities claimed the crowd was 84,000 people. The actions included strikes by teachers, rail and airline employees, and postal workers. Walkouts by students at more than 50 of the country's 84 universities and at some 300 high schools continued into the next day.

"I'm here to demonstrate against the government, which never listens to us," Adler Innocent, 22, the son of Haitian immigrants, who lives near Paris, told the *New York Times*.

Last August, French premier Dominique de Villepin succeeded in putting into effect a version of the disputed law—the New Employment Contract—applying to companies with fewer than 20 employees. In January, Villepin announced

United Mine Workers union holds convention

Continued from front page

more coal miners were killed on the job in West Virginia. Another miner in Alabama died April 10 from injuries received in a roof fall 12 days earlier. This brings this year's death toll to 24, more than the 22 who died during all of 2005 in the United States. This mine safety crisis and the ongoing fight to force the U.S. government to preserve and

3 miners killed in W. Virginia, Alabama

BY TONY LANE

PITTSBURGH—Two coal miners died on the job in separate incidents in southern West Virginia April 7. Another miner, Garry Jones, died April 10 from injuries he received in a roof fall 12 days earlier at the Jim Walters Resources No. 4 mine in Brookwood, Alabama. Their deaths bring the toll to 24 coal miners killed in a little over three months this year, surpassing the total of 22 for all of 2005 in the United States. Eighteen of these miners have been killed in West Virginia mines this year, the highest number since 1991. Last year three miners were killed in that state.

Jackie Lee Toler, 53, was killed on or around a continuous mining machine—which is used to remove coal from the coal face underground and load it on a conveyor belt—at Mystic LLC's Candice No. 2 mine near Wharton in Boone County, according to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). The mine is organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

Robert Runyon, 48, the second miner to perish on the job last week, was operating a locomotive at the Jacob No. 1 mine near Naugatuck in Mingo County, when rock and roof-support materials fell on him. Runyon was employed by a contractor at the mine, which is nonunion. Federal inspectors have given 14 citations for safety violations to this mine since February.

UMWA president Cecil Roberts said that the latest deaths bring to 46 the number of miners killed since Feb. 1, 2005. On the eve of the union's convention, which is taking place April 10–13 in Las Vegas, Nevada, Roberts called on the government to "strengthen laws, regulations and oversight" of



Militant/Claude Bleton

March 28 protest in Paris against law forcing those under 26 into a two-year probation.

his plan to extend this two-year probation period to all workers under 26.

As protests mounted, Chirac called for modifications in the law. In a March 31 nationwide address, the French president asked legislators to cut the probation period to one year and require employers to give a reason for any dismissal. He also requested that employers not issue contracts under this law until these changes are made. However, he then signed the

original bill into law. The Socialist Party introduced legislation in parliament April 5 calling for its repeal.

Unions and student groups promptly rejected Chirac's proposal and turned out in force for the April 4 marches and strikes. "If we don't get what we are seeking, we'll start making preparations for further mobilization," Jacky Dintinger, secretary-general of the CFTC trade union federation, told Reuters.

expand health care for UMWA retirees and their dependants were prominent in the major presentations to the gathering by UMWA president Cecil Roberts and other speakers.

The convention proceedings also took place as nearly 2 million immigrant workers and their supporters marched across the country demanding legalization of the undocumented.

coal mines.

Federal officials have told a U.S. attorney that they believe criminal conduct was involved in the January fire on the coal conveyor belt at Massey Energy's Alma mine in Logan County, West Virginia, where two miners were killed. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* had earlier reported that federal inspectors had found two walls missing after the fire. The walls were to separate the belt tunnel from fresh air coming into the mine. The two miners died from carbon monoxide poisoning after being separated from the rest of their work crew. Freda Hatfield, widow of Ellery Hatfield, one of the miners killed, said, "I talked with the people in the state, but they wouldn't tell me anything." The UMWA was not allowed to take part in the investigation at Alma, a nonunion mine.

Commenting on the possibility of criminal charges being filed against Massey, Dell Maynard, a UMWA member who works at the Guyan surface mine, said, "I hope they [federal inspectors] lay it to Massey, they can do better with their safety."

At a test facility in Pennsylvania, scientists are planning to recreate the January 2 blast at the Sago Mine, where 12 miners were trapped underground after an explosion and subsequently died, reported the April 6 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. The aim is to find out why the walls built of Omega foam block that sealed unused portions of the mine where the blast originated were destroyed in the explosion, leading to the death of the miners. The UMWA has opposed the use of Omega block—which is allowed by MSHA—as too flimsy to withstand the pressure of explosions and has insisted that only concrete block be used instead.

"Large immigrant rights rallies across the country today are writing history," said Richard Trumka, former UMWA president and current vice-president of the AFL-CIO in addressing the convention. Noting that AFL-CIO president John Sweeney would be speaking at the Washington rally that day, Trumka said, "The labor movement is not going to let immigrants be treated as second-class citizens."

Mike Dalpiaz, international vice president from District 22, the union's western region, said in opening the convention that many immigrant workers "put down their tools and took to the streets. Something we have to do all over the country."

The delegates discussed campaigns for union recognition and the fight for safety and better wages and working conditions. Coal miners on the Navajo Nation involved in the organizing drive among Head Start workers were featured at the convention. Also highlighted were the ongoing struggle of workers who have fought for the UMWA at the Co-Op coal mine in Huntington, Utah; the campaign to win the union at Peabody, one of the country's largest and increasingly nonunion coal operators; and the fight of Rockspring miners in West Virginia for union recognition. A special union-organizing presentation gave prominence to these struggles.

A delegation of three miners involved in the Co-Op struggle staffed an information table and sold solidarity T-shirts as part of the convention. UMWA president Cecil Roberts referred to Bill Estrada, one of the leaders of that struggle who was on the stage for the union-organizing session. "The Co-Op mine owners think they can pay underground coal miners \$5 to \$7 an hour in this day and age because they are immigrant workers," Roberts said. "That is wrong. We started supporting this struggle three years ago, and we will continue to do so."

Democratic Party politicians John Edwards and Jesse Jackson addressed the convention.

Joe Shirley, president of the Navajo Nation, also spoke.

Contract battles are looming at two coal operations on the Navajo Nation as agreements with Pittsburg and Midway Coal expire this August, and with Peabody Coal in August 2007.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

University of Miami janitors win higher wages after strike

MIAMI—After a five-week strike against UNICCO, the Boston-based contractor that employs them, University of Miami (UM) housekeepers and groundskeepers have won higher wages. UNICCO and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 11 are still negotiating over the workers' demand for union recognition. Ten striking janitors along with eight UM students began a hunger strike April 5 to protest "ongoing and unchecked abuses and civil rights violations committed by UNICCO," the SEIU said.

On March 20 university president Donna Shalala announced that the minimum hourly wage for all 900 employees of contractors would immediately increase to \$8.00 per hour. Housekeepers who previously had a starting hourly wage of \$6.40, Florida's minimum, now start at \$8.55. Groundskeepers' wages will jump from \$6.40 to \$9.30 per hour.

On April 3 UNICCO workers held a rally and march at the entrance to Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale. A busload of UM janitors participated. The union is seeking to organize the 260 UNICCO workers there.

—Maggie Trowe

Chicago: Rallies at McDonald's back farm workers' fight

CHICAGO—Some 200 protesters rallied outside several McDonald's restaurants here April 1 to demand higher wages for farm workers. Among those organizing the protests is the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, based among farm workers in southwest Florida. Dozens of these workers and their supporters traveled to Chicago for the event. They are demanding that McDonald's pay 1 cent more per pound for tomatoes they buy from Florida tomato growers, with the increases to go directly to wages.

Workers report pay for a 32-pound

bucket of tomatoes has basically remained unchanged over the past 30 years. At 40–45 cents per bucket, they have to pick nearly two tons a day to earn \$50. Most of these workers are originally from Mexico, Guatemala, and Haiti.

—Rollande Girard

N.Y. judge orders jail term for transit union leader

NEW YORK—A New York State Supreme Court judge ordered a 10-day jail term for Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 president Roger Toussaint April 10. The 34,000 members of Local 100 carried out a three-day strike here last December against Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) attacks on their medical and pension benefits. They de-



Militant/Rollande Girard

Protesters march April 1 outside McDonald's restaurant in Chicago to back farm workers' fight for improved wages.

fied the Taylor Law, which bans strikes by public employees in New York.

Bus and subway workers will be completing a revote April 18 on the contract they narrowly rejected in January. They had voted it down because of the inclusion of first-ever payments for medical coverage and as a chance to say no to the MTA bosses and city and state officials who had labeled them as thugs.

—Michael Italie

Sudanese doctors in Canada discuss what they learned in Cuba

The following is an article that first appeared in the March 27 Calgary Sun—a daily published in Alberta, Canada—under the headline "Long road home: Children who fled Sudan will return to help survivors." It is reprinted by permission.

BY BILL KAUFMANN

Some of us struggle to find meaning in life.

Others labour exhaustively to live up to a meaning that's long been apparent, but seemingly beyond reach.

Last Tuesday, three young Sudanese physicians studying in Calgary demonstrated the latter, told through epic odysseys of death, deliverance, sacrifice and hope.

As pre-teens, they joined a harried exodus from their home villages of southern Sudan, shortly after the resumption of a half-century's war in that troubled east African nation.

"I was nine years old and three of my aunts had been killed by government soldiers ... I had to flee with another aunt," said Michael Tut Pur of the 1984 escape.

After a week's march, they arrived in Itang refugee camp in a region of Ethiopia where countrymen Daniel Thon Duop and Martha Martin Dar would also seek safe haven.

There, orphaned children were outfitted with AK-47s by the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement to battle their genocidal oppressors from Sudan's North.

"They were going to the war, to lose their lives with no future," recalls Dar.

Dar and her two compatriots were selected to leave behind the misery and conflict of the camps, to set sail for Cuba and schooling with the hope they'd one day return to help.

"My mom didn't want me to go—I was too young," says Dar who nonetheless left behind her family at the age of 13.

"She said 'maybe one day you can find me, you can take care of yourself and support your brothers.'"

With a pact between Fidel Castro and Ethiopia's Marxist regime, the three boarded Soviet passenger ships.

It was a voyage from the other side of the Cold War divide that belied perceptions coloured in black and white.

"We didn't have help from the West, so

at the very beginning we had help from the Communists," says Pur.

He'd spend 15 years in Cuba, a place where he nurtured an awareness of the island's authoritarianism but also a humane social system that schooled him in advanced medicine.

"Their political system may not be right, but their health system is very good... they gave us what they could," he says.

"They graduated 7,500 doctors in 2001, with 1,500 from Africa."

But the plan to repatriate them back to Sudan came to grief when some of their number who'd returned weren't able to pursue their chosen profession and were pressed into battle.

When some were killed, the decision was made, through a UN program to instead disperse the educated refugees to the U.S., Australia and Canada.

Due to a lack of qualifications, the Cuban-trained doctors were forced to settle for jobs outside the medical sphere; Duop and Dar toiled at Alberta

meat-packing plants.

"At first, I was so frustrated—I couldn't imagine myself working at that place," says Dar, adding the multi-ethnic complexion of the Lakeside Packers staff redeemed her time there.

Fortune aligned with a year-old ceasefire in southern Sudan and a partnership between evangelical charity Samaritan's Purse and the University of Calgary.

Their goal of one day returning to help the survivors of genocide was resurrected. Following a six-month refresher course at the U of C, they'll return to Sudan in June.

Pur says he's even willing to venture into violent Darfur, cognizant the intelligentsia would be in the crosshairs of government-backed Islamic militias.

"I don't care if I am a first target, if I can help, it's a worthy cause even if I die," says Canadian citizen Pur, who expects to work at a charity-run hospital in southeastern Sudan. "The government of Sudan doesn't do anything in the South."

—25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO—



April 24, 1981

Negotiations on the 1981 contract between the Bituminous Coal Operators Association and the United Mine Workers of America resumed April 14.

In a March 31 vote the 160,000 miners covered by the contract decisively rejected the first proposal by more than two to one after reading and discussing its provisions.

In a statement released by the UMW headquarters in Washington, union President Sam Church said: "In the union's democratic process, the rank and file have spoken."

In an April 13 article, the big business mouthpiece, the *Wall Street Journal*, refers to the coal miners as "UMW's rambunctious rank and file."

The newspaper quotes a coal executive: "We gave them a settlement too quickly."



April 23, 1956

Stalinist sources in Poland and New York have now confirmed Leon Trotsky's charge that Stalin's murder-machine in the Soviet Union systematically committed the most monstrous anti-Semitic outrages. The Jewish paper, *Folksstimme*, published in Warsaw, Poland, on April 4 revealed the tragic facts of the mass slaughter of the leaders of Jewish cultural and political activity in the Soviet Union.

In another development, the Moscow Trials of 1934–38, in which all the old leaders of the Bolshevik Party under Lenin were liquidated with Leon Trotsky as the principal accused, were admitted to have been frame-ups with Stalin as the master architect. This admission comes from Khrushchev in his speech at the closed session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union last February.



May 1, 1931

The Negro worker has always been subjected to the most ruthless forms of exploitation by the American boss class. Driven by the double whip of capitalist robbery and violent race hatred, flouted two-fold for being a worker and for being a negro, the American negro worker represents the most oppressed section of the working class.

The case of the nine young workers framed up by the bosses in Scottsboro without any evidence is a flagrant example of this vicious method of the American ruling class. The frame-up of the nine young negro workers in Scottsboro is part and parcel of the bosses campaign to divide the ranks of the American working class. It must be unmasked and defeated. Against the bosses' campaign of legalized lynching, the entire working class must stand up as one man, in the defense of the nine negro youths, for the defeat of the Scottsboro frame-up.

N.Y. immigrants protest

Continued from front page
this country.

The mood was celebratory as tens of thousands of people, many taking part in their first demonstration of any kind in the United States, were buoyed by the massive turnout and their sense of potential power.

“*Si se puede*” (Yes we can) kept reverberating down the 12-block march route. Thousands chanted and waved signs demanding legal residence in order to live and work in this country without fear of firing or deportation, to travel freely to and from their home country, and to reunite with loved ones.

“We cook while you eat,” one worker pointed out with her hand-lettered placard.

“When we leave, who’s going to build your fence?” another sign asked, mocking proponents of HR 4437.

Many carried banners declaring, “We’re workers, not criminals.” Or simply, “We’re workers.”

In a variation on another popular slogan, a young woman declared, “Ya llegamos, y trabajamos, y solo muertos nos llamamos” (We’re here, we’re working, and we won’t shut up until we’re dead).

“We are America!” “Legalization for all!” “We are *not* aliens!” were among the multitude of slogans displayed.

It was overwhelmingly a working-class demonstration. Restaurant workers, nannies, construction laborers, hotel workers, sewing-machine operators, food industry workers, and taxi drivers were among the many who marched. Some people left work early or took the day off to join the demonstration.

Most of the marchers were immigrants from Latin America, the most numerous of which were Mexican-born. But many hailed from China, Pakistan, Ireland, Korea, Philippines, Haiti, West Africa, or the English-speaking Caribbean. Restaurant and garment workers were part of a large contingent that came from Chinatown. Signs were visible in English, Spanish, French, Chinese, Urdu, and Arabic.

March organizers had pressed demonstrators to bring U.S. flags and passed them out by the thousands. Many people also brought their own native flags: from Mexico, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Colombia, Poland, and elsewhere.

A number of trade union contingents marched with their banners: the Laborers International Union in their orange T-shirts, Local 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), UNITE HERE, Transport Workers Union (TWU), several locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), and SEIU Local 1199, which organizes health-care workers.

SEIU Local 32BJ is planning a mass rally April 18 in preparation for a possible walkout by 28,000 residential building workers when its contract expires two days later.

“Without papers, we can’t demand better pay or rights on the job. We want to live without fear, not in the shadows,” said restaurant worker José Adán, 32.

“What we need is amnesty for all,” said Elda Sandre, 26, originally from Puebla, Mexico. “I came here to show

that there are a lot of us.” A domestic worker, she carried a hand-lettered sign in Spanish that read, “We are the power.”

Mamadou Diallo, a seasonal worker on a commercial fishing ship, said, “I’ve lived here in the United States for 10 years. I’ve never committed a crime. We’re not criminals.” Diallo, who was born in Mali, added, “We’re here for papers for all immigrants.”

Many of the marchers were immigrants with residency papers who supported the legalization of the undocumented. One of them, Kelvin Santana, 26, a member of UFCW Local 888, works at a Goya Foods plant in Secaucus, New Jersey. “We’re a United Nations there,” he said. “I’m here to show that we’re willing to fight for the same rights—and not just Hispanic immigrants.” About 60 UFCW members from Goya were at the march.

Griffin Smith, 21, said he was one of a large group of New York University students at the march. “I don’t like any of the immigration bills in Congress. Personally, I’m for open borders,” he noted.

“We have to support each other, whether we’re here legally or illegally,” said 27-year-old Darwin Coronel, a waiter born in Ecuador. All the immigration proposals “are more or less restrictive, but I prefer the McCain-Kennedy bill as the best option.”

A measure sponsored by U.S. senators



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

The New York march on April 10 drew 125,000, among the largest in the country.

John McCain, a Republican, and Edward Kennedy, a Democrat, would institute a “guest worker” program that would force millions to work for six years as temporaries, dependent on their bosses, before being eligible to apply for residency. It would also beef up police agencies on the border.

The April 10 demonstration here, like a similar march of 25,000 held nine days earlier, had been built on a daily basis by the Spanish-language media, church and community groups, several major unions, and the offices of some Democratic politicians.

Speakers at the rally included numerous officeholders, such as senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer, state attorney general and Democratic gubernatorial front-runner Eliot Spitzer, and Congresspeople José Serrano, Nydia

Velázquez, and Charles Rangel. Many of them spoke in favor of the McCain-Kennedy bill, touting it as a “path to citizenship.”

Also speaking were Chung-Wah-Hong, executive director of the New York Immigration Coalition; May Chen, vice president of UNITE HERE; and Roger Toussaint, president of TWU Local 100, as well as representatives of organizations of day laborers, domestic workers, and Haitian, Dominican, Filipino, and Middle Eastern immigrants.

Several speakers called for holding a May 1 “day without an immigrant,” urging immigrants not to shop, to skip work and school that day, and to join local May Day marches. The call received an enthusiastic response from many in the crowd, who answered with chants of “*Huelga, huelga!*” (strike).

April 9–10 Actions for Immigrant Rights by State and City

ALABAMA		FLORIDA		MASSACHUSETTS		Salem (4/9)	
Birmingham (4/9)	3,000	Ft. Myers	75,000	Boston	8,000	Salem	10,000
ARIZONA		Ft. Lauderdale	1,000	New Bedford	500	PENNSYLVANIA	
Flagstaff	700	Homestead	3,000	MICHIGAN		Harrisburg	200
Phoenix	100,000	Lake Worth	5,000	Detroit (4/9)	100	Philadelphia	7,000
Tucson	15,000	Miami	5,000	MINNESOTA		Pittsburgh	100
ARKANSAS		Tampa	3,000	St. Paul (4/9)	30,000	RHODE ISLAND	
De Queen	300	GEORGIA		MISSISSIPPI		Providence	5,000
Little Rock	2,000	Atlanta	50,000	Jackson	500	SOUTH CAROLINA	
Springdale	5,000	Savannah	1,300	MISSOURI		Columbia	3,000
CALIFORNIA		IDAHO		Kansas City	3,000	Greenville	2,500
UC Berkeley	500	Boise (4/9)	4,000	St. Louis (4/9)	5,000	Charleston	1,500
Bakersfield	10,000	Boise (4/10)	300	NEBRASKA		TENNESSEE	
Chico	1,000	ILLINOIS		Omaha	10,000	Jonesborough	1,000
Concord	400	Bloomington	400	Lincoln	4,000	Knoxville	2,500
Fresno	10,000	Chicago	500	NEVADA		Nashville	9,000
Oakland	3,000	Urbana	1,000	Las Vegas	3,500	TEXAS	
Panorama City	1,000	Cicero	250	Reno	6,000	Austin	15,000
Richmond	300	Carbondale	100	NEW JERSEY		Brownsville	300
Sacramento	10,000	INDIANA		Jersey City	5,000	Dallas (4/9)	500,000
Santa Ana	300	Indianapolis	20,000	NEW MEXICO		El Paso	2,000
Santa Barbara	200	South Bend	5,000	Albuquerque (4/9)	500	Harlingen	100
San Jose	10,000	IOWA		Las Cruces	300	Houston	50,000
San Francisco	5,000	Des Moines (4/9)	5,000	Santa Fe (4/9)	2,000	San Antonio	30,000
Los Angeles	7,000	Sioux City	12,000	Sunland Park	300	Tyler	3,000
San Fernando Val.	8,500	KANSAS		NEW YORK		Fort Worth (4/9)	30,000
San Diego (4/9)	50,000	Emporia	1,500	New York City	125,000	UTAH	
Madera	150	Dodge City	2,000	Massapequa (4/9)	600	Salt Lake City (4/9)	25,000
Farmersville	100	Garden City	3,000	NORTH CAROLINA		Salt Lake City	5,000
Visalia	50	Liberal	120	Siler City	3,000	VIRGINIA	
COLORADO		Wichita	4,000	Chapel Hill	100	Richmond	4,000
Colorado Springs	1,000	Great Bend	200	Smithfield	200	WASHINGTON	
Denver	1,000	Topeka	1,000	OKLAHOMA		Mount Vernon	400
Grand Junction	3,000	KENTUCKY		Tulsa	50	Seattle	25,000
Pueblo	800	Lexington	3,500	OREGON		WISCONSIN	
CONNECTICUT		MAINE		Portland	5,000	Madison	10,000
Hartford	2,000	Portland	150			Washington, D.C.	
New Haven	1,500					500,000	

TOTAL = 1,915,000+ (OVER 100 CITIES)

The figures are taken from press accounts, police estimates, reports from organizers, and our own reporters’ count on the scene. Where conflicting figures were reported, the Militant used the lower estimate or a median figure. The list is partial, including only actions where we were able to verify attendance. In cities where protests took place on April 9, the date is noted in parentheses. According to organizers of the National Day of Action, no protests were planned in 13 U.S. states: Alaska, Delaware, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, or Wyoming. —The Editor

Hundreds of thousands skip work to join rallies

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Among the nearly 2 million people who mobilized across the United States April 9–10 to demand legal residence for undocumented immigrants, many left their jobs early or skipped work to join the rallies.

As demonstrators took to the streets, “employers across the country got their first taste of worker absenteeism,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported April 11. “Meatpacking plants in the Midwest and hotels and other businesses in the South were crippled by absenteeism among Hispanic workers.”

Packinghouse workers turned out in force throughout the Midwest, including at rallies of 6,000 people in Omaha, Nebraska, and 12,000 in Sioux City and 5,000 in Des Moines, Iowa.

A contingent from United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 222 led the march from South Sioux City, Nebraska, across the bridge to Sioux City, Iowa.

Because of the demonstrations, several packing plants in the region had to shut down for the day. In the Omaha area these included the Swift plant, organized by UFCW Local 271, and the nonunion Nebraska Beef facility. Four packinghouses shut down near Sioux City, including Tyson’s beef plant in Dakota City, Nebraska, whose 4,000 employees are organized by UFCW Local 222. Tyson also had to close its plants in Denison, Iowa, and Madison, Nebraska.

Nationwide, Tyson closed 10 of its 100 plants on April 10, company officials told the press.

At the Tyson plant in Holcomb, Nebraska, workers are fighting to organize into the United Steelworkers. When 14

workers, mostly from the plant’s kill floor, spoke out at a March 28 City Commission meeting in nearby Garden City to protest verbal abuse, lack of bathroom breaks, and dangerous job conditions, the bosses brushed off the charges, claiming the pro-union workers were an isolated minority. On April 10, however, so many of the 3,100 workers at the plant joined the immigrant rights rally in Garden City that Tyson had to shut it down.

Some 3,000 people protested in Garden City, a town of 30,000, including hundreds of high school students. At the local school, one-third of the 2,000 students skipped class, the principal complained to the *Garden City Telegram*.

In Arkansas City, Kansas, the owners of Creekstone Farms Premium Beef shut down their plant as workers joined a rally in a town of 12,000 inhabitants. Excel Corp., the nation’s second-largest beef processor, reported slowed production at its plants in Dodge City and Schuyler, Nebraska.

In Boston, unionists at the Kayem meat-processing plant told the *Militant* the second shift was canceled that day as employees joined a march of 8,000. Buses full of meat packers and other working people from Austin, Worthington, Owatonna, and other towns in Minnesota converged on St. Paul for a march of 30,000 on April 9.

“North Carolina, home to an emerging Latino community, was hard hit,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported. “A call by local immigrant groups for a retail boycott also prompted many Hispanics to stay away from work altogether.” At the Omni Hotel in downtown Charlotte, a housekeeping supervisor told the *Journal* that “more than 90 percent of my workers



AP/The Hutchinson News/Lindsey Bauman

Three thousand rallied April 10 for immigrant rights in Garden City, Kansas, a farming town of 30,000. Two weeks earlier, 14 meat packers from the nearby Tyson plant spoke out at a city commission hearing against verbal abuse and unsafe conditions in the plant. The workers are seeking union representation with the United Steelworkers. Tyson shut the plant down April 10 because many of its 3,100 workers skipped work for the rally.

are Latinas... They didn’t show up.”

In Siler City, a town of 6,000 in North Carolina, many of whom work in poultry and textile plants, some 3,000 people from the area rallied against criminalizing the undocumented. And in Claremont, a village of 1,000 in eastern North Carolina, Progressive Furniture Manufacturing had to close for the day because “of the company’s 600-person workforce, 161 did not come to work,” a company official told the press.

In Florida the largest of several demonstrations was in Ft. Myers, where 75,000 marched on the National Day of Action. In Plant City, 200 high school students ignored school officials’ pleas and walked out of class to attend a rally at city hall. They were joined by workers from Del Monte Fresh Produce. Forklift operator Carlos Palacios told the *St. Petersburg Times* that 90 of 100 workers there walked off the job at 6:00 a.m. When the general manager offered them double-time if they stayed, the workers refused. “It’s about principle,” said Palacios.

In Homestead, Florida, more than 3,000 farm workers and others rallied with chants of “No, no, we won’t go!” Many signed up to take part in a nationwide May 1 work stoppage promoted by rally organizers. A statewide demonstration calling for legalization of undocumented workers will take place May 1 in Orlando.

Meanwhile, 15 meat packers are fighting to win back their jobs after the bosses at the Wolverine Packing Co. fired them for attending a March 27 immigrant rights action in Detroit. The fired meat cutters, all Mexican-born women, are members of the UFCW. Twenty union representatives went to meet with company officials April 10 to demand they be reinstated.

Frank Forrestal, Edwin Fruit, and Joe Swanson in Des Moines, Iowa; Laura Garza in Boston; Nelson González in St. Paul, Minnesota; and Deborah Liatos in Miami contributed to this article. Fruit is a member of UFCW Local 1149 and works at the Tyson plant in Perry, Iowa.

‘Book on Cuban Revolution gives you confidence to change world’ Meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota, promotes new book by Chinese-Cuban generals

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—“The title of this book could not be better. It gives you confidence in the possibility of changing the world,” said Fidel Maldonado, a union meat packer from Austin, Minnesota.

Maldonado was addressing a public meeting here that discussed the new Pathfinder book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*.

The meeting, which featured Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the new book and member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, drew 75 people from the Twin Cities area and Austin, Minnesota; as well as Chicago; Des Moines, Iowa; and Detroit. The event followed similar regional meetings in Atlanta and Los Angeles. Among those in attendance were Seyon Nyanwleh, president of the University of Minnesota-based African Student Association, and other members of the group; August Nimtz of the Minnesota Cuba Committee; and Marty Knaeble, a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1833 and Northwest Airlines worker who built union solidarity with mechanics on strike against Northwest.

Rebecca Williamson, a leader of the Young Socialists here, opened the meet-

ing by urging those in the audience to join the ongoing protests by millions of workers to demand legalization of undocumented immigrants. The spirit of those actions, which drew 30,000 in St. Paul the next day, marked the entire meeting. Williamson also encouraged those present to build the May 20 march in Washington to demand “Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba,” and welcomed supporters of the demonstration who had a table in the back of the room to distribute information about this action.

“My generation has never seen demonstrations of the size and character we see today,” noted Jacob Perasso, a national organizer of the Young Socialists (YS). “*Our History Is Still Being Written* is for the thousands of young people leading many of the immigrant rights protests, like the ones we have seen in Chicago and Los Angeles,” he said. “They are writing their own history.”

Fidel Maldonado, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 9 in Austin, Minnesota, talked about the pride the Cuban people have in the participation of thousands of volunteers in missions of internationalist solidarity, particularly the role of doctors and literacy workers in Venezuela.

He pointed to a chapter in the new book titled “Cuba, Venezuela, and Latin

America” and described the success of Mission Robinson, which utilizes teaching methods and materials developed in Cuba and has revolutionized the speed at which Venezuelan students of all ages learn to read. Maldonado contrasted the Cuban government’s promotion of education for all to the approach of the U.S. capitalist rulers, who deal with problems of high dropout rates in schools by building more jails.

Gabriela Moreano, organizer of the YS here, pointed to the way Moisés Sio Wong, one of the generals interviewed in the book, described the “selfless leadership qualities” of Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara. How Guevara put the interests of Cuban working people first, above personal concerns, she said, had a big impact on her.

YSers are actively building the May 20 march in D.C., Moreano said, and will be in the streets tomorrow selling *Militant* subscriptions and revolutionary books and pamphlets to the tens of thousands of immigrant rights fighters.

“Above all, *Our History Is Still Being Written* is an introduction to the Cuban Revolution,” said Waters. “It shows what making a socialist revolution is all about. The U.S. rulers don’t understand it because they are incapable of understanding the capacities of the Cuban people,

just as they are incapable of understanding the capacities of working people in this country.” She pointed to the quote by Fidel Castro printed on the back cover of the Pathfinder book *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*: “There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba.” This statement, made a month before the defeat of U.S.-backed mercenary forces at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, is just as accurate today as it was then, she said.

Most of those at the event stayed to continue discussion for another couple of hours over a Mexican dinner. “One thing I got from the meeting,” said Sam Wegner, a Young Socialist, “is that lessons from the book can be applied here, including the fight today for immigrant rights and unionization.” Wegner, 20, works at Wal-Mart. He said most of his co-workers are originally from East Africa.

Christian Castro, 27, from Chicago, said the best way to absorb the book is to study it with others. He is participating in a class series on this title in Chicago. Young people at the St. Paul event met the following day to discuss the work of the Young Socialists.

Audience members contributed \$740 to help promote the book in the United States and around the world.

Bay of Pigs showed imperialists ‘always arrive late’

Below is an excerpt from Cuba and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. We are publishing it as part of celebrating the 45th anniversary of the Cuban people's victory in 72 hours of battle in April 1961 against the invasion of their country by 1,500 Cuban counterrevolutionaries armed, trained, scripted, and deployed by the U.S. government. Barnes is the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY JACK BARNES

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



Members of Cuba's First Company of the 134th Militia Battalion celebrate their victory over the U.S.-trained mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, April 1961.

that victory to the Cuban people was demonstratively dated: "April 19, 1961, Year of Education..."

Nineteen sixty-one in Cuba was the Year of Education in all the meanings of that word—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!...

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....

The U.S. government's "operation was well conceived from a military point of view," Che [Guevara] 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 fighting capacity of the opposing sides."

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 to die at the hand of a peasant who had nothing and who has a ferocious desire to kill him because they're coming to take the peasant's land away."

"They have always been wrong about us," Che concluded. "They have always arrived late."

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April

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

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8 The Militant April 24, 2006

A blow for all working people

The unprecedented mobilizations for immigrant rights in the United States are striking a powerful blow for all working people. Millions of workers, most of them immigrants, and many of them undocumented, have joined the actions, which also include a growing element of political strikes. Immigrant workers have downed tools and slowed or shut down production at slaughterhouses, poultry plants, garment shops, construction sites, hotels, and restaurants.

In Holcomb, Kansas, Tyson Foods was forced to close its nonunion beef processing plant on April 10 because so many workers joined a rally in nearby Garden City. The 3,100 workers at that massive slaughterhouse are fighting to unionize. This show of strength in a broader social struggle invigorated their organizing fight. It put a lie to the earlier claim by plant manager Paul Karkiainen that union supporters in the factory don't "represent the majority of our employees."

Such stories have been repeated at workplaces around the country. Many in the labor movement are pointing out that these walkouts are worth emulating.

And the bosses are getting uneasy. The April 11 *Wall Street Journal* noted that "employers across the country got their first taste of worker absenteeism and lower sales" from the April 10 rallies. "They're nervous. They could be crippled," David Whitlock, an Atlanta attorney for a number of bosses that employ immigrants, told the big-business daily. The paper warned that the demonstrations "could foreshadow what may be a bigger national boycott planned for May 1."

The sheer size and spread of these protests have forced a deadlock in the debate in Washington on the various immigration "reform" measures under discussion. The legislation that has galvanized the protesters, the Sensenbrenner bill, which would criminalize

all undocumented immigrants, has effectively been scuttled. Whatever law that is eventually passed will undoubtedly include restrictions favoring the employers. But Washington is hesitating on how far to go in face of what millions of workers are accomplishing through sustained mobilizations.

Richard Lowry, writing in the March 28 issue of the conservative magazine *National Review*, noted with alarm that the rallies are "ominous" because of "their hint of a large, unassimilated population existing outside America's laws and exhibiting absolutely no sheepishness about it."

It is precisely "sheepishness" that bosses try to instill by keeping a large pool of immigrants with fewer rights than the rest of the working class. They know that large influxes of labor due to unceasing immigration increase competition for jobs and put downward pressure on wages—as the law of supply and demand dictates under capitalism.

At the same time, the masses of foreign-born workers entering the U.S. are enriching the political and union experience of the working class, broadening its historical and cultural horizons. U.S.-born workers are learning important lessons from the unity and determination immigrant workers have displayed in their recent walkouts and demonstrations. Foreign-born workers are strengthening the fighting capacity and battle experience of the entire labor movement, as they are themselves changing by beginning to shed anti-Black and other prejudices.

The struggle for legalization of all the undocumented is now intertwined with the fortunes of the U.S. labor movement. The next national mobilization is called for May 1. There is no better way to celebrate the international day of the working class than to join the May Day walkouts and rallies that Wall Street so fears.

Half million in D.C

Continued from front page

at the rally here hailed from Latin America. But many others had emigrated from countries in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

Many carried signs opposing HR 4437 a bill sponsored by Republican congressman James Sensenbrenner. The measure, which makes it a felony to be in the United States without proper documents or to aid undocumented immigrants, was passed by the House of Representatives in December.

Through their chants, banners, and signs most working people and others who turned out focused on demanding their rights now. "¡Amnistía ahora!" (Amnesty now) read many signs. Among the most popular chants were "¡Sí se puede!" (Yes, we can), "¡Bush escucha, inmigrantes en la lucha!" (Bush, listen, immigrant are fighting), and "¡Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos!" (Today we march, tomorrow we vote.)

Workers down tools

The rally also had the character of a walkout. Hundreds of thousands of workers nationwide were absent from their jobs—in many cases encouraged by their unions to down tools for a day and join the demonstration. Most of the marchers were from Washington, Virginia, and Maryland, registering the growing numbers of workers from Latin America now living in the area.

An article that appeared in the April 8 *Washington Post* described how organizers from the Laborers Union were building the rally by visiting worksites in the region to encourage workers to take off and instead attend the rally.

"Are we going Monday, guys?" union organizer Miguel Caballo asked workers as he leafleted for the rally at construction sites near Dulles International Airport, the *Post* reported. "I have papers, you understand," said Walter Salazar, a member of the union who took a leaflet from Caballo. "But I'm going to support those who don't."

"Whether you are a resident, a citizen, or undocumented—everyone needs to oppose these proposals," Ernesto Rivera, an International Union of Operating Engineers Local 99 shop steward, told the *Militant*. "Once they criminalize or impose certain conditions on one group of workers, they will do the same to everybody else."

"We won't be pushed around anymore," said Roberto Molina, a construction worker, standing with about 50 other workers wearing bright orange T-shirts that read Laborers Union in blue letters. "Latinos are leading the way. But we won't be far behind," said Jian Li, who left China with his parents in 1990.

Among union speakers were officials of the Service Employees International Union and United Food and Commercial Workers. AFL-CIO president John Sweeney also spoke.

Democratic senator Edward Kennedy, sponsor of an alternative "immigration reform" bill along with Republican John McCain, also addressed the rally. "They say you should report to deport," Kennedy said of HR 4437. "I say report to become American citizens." To obtain citizenship under the McCain-Kennedy bill, undocumented workers are required to pay hefty fines and application fees, and enlist in a pool of "temporary workers," dependent on their boss to stay in the country. They would also be required to maintain their job for six years, after which they could apply for permanent residency.

African-American presence at rally

"There are some who tell us you are my enemy," SEIU vice president Gerry Hudson told the crowd. "They say that immigrant workers are taking good jobs from Blacks." Hudson was referring to a theme that has been repeated in the press citing growing opposition among African-Americans to immigration. "But I remember that 400 years ago my ancestors were brought here by force also to work jobs that nobody else wanted to do," Hudson said to applause.

"There are a lot of students from our school," said Keisha Adams, who attends Cardozo High School.

"This has brought students together, Latino and Black," added her friend Gloria Morales, who was born in the United States but whose parents emigrated from El Salvador. Hundreds of students in schools in the region participated in walkouts to press demands for legal status.

"I came to show support for Javier," said Steven Richards, 28, a Black worker who attended the rally with a co-worker, Javier Acosta, from a landscaping company in nearby Fairfax, Virginia. "Somebody had to stand up for us against racism. Now its our turn."

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Celebrate Life and Political Contributions of Clifton DeBerry. Sat., May 6. Speakers: Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party; Young Socialists representative; Betsey Stone, organizer of SWP branch in San Francisco; others. Dinner, 5:00 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. UFCW Local 101 Hall, 208 Miller Ave. For more information: (415) 584-2135.

Los Angeles

"Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba." Sat., May 20 at 12 noon. Gather at the Downtown Federal Building, 300 N. Los Angeles. March to Pershing Square.

NEW MEXICO

Farmington

The Second Annual Changing Woman Conference. April 23–24. Henderson Fine Arts Center, San Juan College. Pre-conference banquet \$15, conference \$15. 4601 College Boulevard. Sponsored by International Union of Operating Engineers Local 953, University of New Mexico School of Law, and the Center for Regional Studies. For more information contact IUOE at (505) 598-6634 or Rosie at (505) 598-0418.

tion contact IUOE at (505) 598-6634 or Rosie at (505) 598-0418.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Free the Cuban Five! Thurs., April 20. Speaker: Leonard Weinglass, a lawyer for the Cuban Five. Columbia Law School, Jerome L. Green Hall. 435 West 116 St. For more information contact: www.freethefive.org.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Black Farmers March for Justice. Wed.,

April 26. Meet 10 a.m. at 1400 Independence Ave. noon march. Sponsored by the National Black Farmers Association, and Black Farmers and Agriculturalist Association. For more information contact John Boyd (804) 691-8528 or Gary Grant (252) 826-2800.

"Hands Off Venezuela and Cuba." Sat., May 20. 10:00 a.m. meet at 15th St. and Euclid N.W. and march to Lafayette Park. 2:00 p.m. rally in front of the White House. For more information contact (917) 887-8710.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Free Antonio Camacho! Speaker: Marshall Lambie, Young Socialists. Fri., April 21. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program 8:00 p.m. 3557 S. Archer. Tel.: (773) 890-1190.

FLORIDA

Miami

Legalize Undocumented Now! Speaker:

Omari Musa, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 21. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Ave, room 206. Tel.: (305) 756-4436.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

What are Stakes for Workers in Lyttelton Port Sale? Sat., April 22, 5:00 p.m. 287 Selwyn Street, Spreydon. Tel.: (03) 930-3373.

LETTERS

Cuba's baseball triumph

Tens of thousands of Cubans poured into Havana's streets after school and work on March 21 to cheer and welcome home their national baseball team, which came in second in the World Baseball Classic, after losing 10–6 to Japan in the final. In many ways the Cuban team was the true victor in this international competition pitting Cuba's "amateurs" against teams made up of professional players.

Their stellar performance in the Classic—beating Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, among others, all comprised of Major League pros, including MVPs—was seen as a vindication of the idea that Cuba promotes sports for the sake of

sports, unlike under capitalism where it's another for-profit business.

"We are a revolutionary team," left fielder Frederich Cepeda told reporters. "Baseball's value is not measured by the price of its players, but by the heart of its athletes."

*Rose Ana Dueñas
Havana, Cuba*

Mining disaster in UK

The article "Miners discuss Buffalo Creek disaster at film showing" in the March 13 *Militant* about the February 1972 slurry pond disaster in West Virginia that killed 125, took my mind back to when I was about 15. Disaster struck the Merthyr Vale colliery Aberfan in South Wales on Oct. 21, 1966. Coal bosses had built a slagheap on the site of a stream. It had

been raining for two to three days when the waste slid down Merthy Mountain. Twenty houses and a farm were destroyed. Virtually all of Pantglas Junior School and part of the adjacent senior school were demolished, killing 144 people—116 children 7–10 years old. Lest we forget the killing of miners and workers in other industries.

*Peter Petrou
London, United Kingdom*

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.