

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Revolutionary continuity in Cuba's leadership**

Remarks by Cuban president Raúl Castro —PAGE 6

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 72/NO. 16

APRIL 21, 2008

## Anti-China protests mark Olympic relay

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

Anti-China protests in Greece, France, England, and the United States have disrupted the Olympic torch relay, which began in late March. Demonstrators are using the recent Chinese government crackdown against protests in Tibet to demand a boycott of the Beijing Olympics this summer.

Anticommunist and liberal activists have turned the 21-country torch relay into a platform to attack China for its human rights record, environmental policies, and political system. "The Chinese government hopes to use Beijing 2008 to gain recognition and acceptance as a legitimate world power, on the same footing as other democratic countries that have hosted the Games," protests the website of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), one of the main groups involved.

Demonstrators briefly interrupted the lighting ceremony in Athens. In Paris, the actions drew groups like Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders, as well as an underground antigovernment Chinese political party and Taiwanese nationalists. Local gov-

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## Miami event held on book by Chinese Cuban generals

BY BERNIE SENTER AND MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—"What other country can point to greater selflessness than Cuba?" asked Edmund Abaka, a history professor and director of the Africana Studies Program at the University of Miami. "This is detailed so well in the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*."

Abaka was the chair of an April 6 panel discussion about the book held here and attended by more than 100 people. The book consists of interviews with three Chinese Cubans who joined the 1956–58 revolutionary war that brought down the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in Cuba. The three—Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—all became generals in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and continue to shoulder important leadership responsibilities today.

As the book describes, Choy, Chui, and Sío Wong each took part in Cuba's

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## Support builds for Chicago May 1 action

Noon rally to demand 'Legalization for all!'



Militant/Illona Gersh

Some 140 people attend April 5 press conference by sponsors of May Day march in Chicago demanding legalization for all immigrants. Jesse Jackson, of RainbowPUSH Coalition, is at the microphone, flanked by leaders of immigrant, Black, labor, and student organizations.

BY DENNIS RICHTER

CHICAGO, April 5—Some 140 people attended a press conference today at the South Side headquarters of the RainbowPUSH Coalition. The organization's president, Rev. Jesse Jackson, called for "organizing a massive demonstration here in Chicago and around the country on May 1."

"Martin Luther King was for massive direct action," Jackson said. "We honor his memory today by building this march." The press conference followed an event honoring King on the 40th anniversary of his assassination.

The Chicago action, which calls for legalization for all and an end to deportations, is set to begin at noon. As

**May Day actions around the country — Page 9**

in previous years, thousands of workers are planning to take the day off work to participate. It is one of dozens of similar May Day actions called across the country.

Also addressing the press were repre-

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## Socialist candidate joins Memphis march



Militant photos by Jeanne FitzMaurice

MEMPHIS, Tennessee, April 4—Alyson Kennedy (pictured in inset), Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, joined a march of thousands here today commemorating the 40th anniversary of a strike by Black sanitation workers, members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1733. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated April 4, 1968, a day after addressing a strike rally.

Sanitation workers told Kennedy that today they do not have a pension and that the city has hired many temporary workers who cannot join the union.

The march ended with a rally at the National Civil Rights Museum, site of the Lorraine Motel where King was shot. Republican presi-



dential candidate John McCain was among the speakers, and he apologized for voting against a bill that would have made King's birthday a holiday. After he spoke, a number of people began to chant "No justice, no peace."

—JEANNE FITZMAURICE AND LORETTA VAN PELT

## 571 'Militant' subs in 2 weeks

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

An eight-week campaign to expand the *Militant's* circulation proceeded at a steady pace in its second week. Supporters of the paper are slightly behind schedule, having sold 571 subscriptions out of international goals totaling more than 2,400.

Protest actions organized by work-

## Uptick in protests aids Militant Fund

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Each week brings news of more demonstrations being planned on May Day to demand legalization for undocumented workers. Our lead story this week is a report on new developments with the Chicago march, which has won significant support from that city's labor movement.

On page two we feature a report by Alyson Kennedy from inside the cab of one of the trucks in a Georgia convoy during the truckers' strike April 1 to

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ing people against the impact of the capitalist economic crisis are a great place to sell subscriptions. "We decided to raise our goal because of continued opportunities and the hearing we are getting," writes Angel Lariscy, a garment worker from Newark, New Jersey, where supporters of the paper raised their quota by 30 over the weekend. "Workers are hungry to discuss politics and appreciate the concrete demands raised by the Socialist Workers campaign that the *Militant* is

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# Truckers in Georgia convoy explain why they protest

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

ATLANTA—"We cannot continue to run on \$4 fuel," said log truck driver Brandy Thompson April 1. "Out of each paycheck, 46 to 53 percent out of what we make goes to pay for diesel fuel. We cannot take it any more."

Thompson, 31, was one of more than 30 independent owner-operators who circled I-285 in Atlanta as part of a nationwide truckers' strike. She invited me to ride along in the convoy.

Big wooden signs across the back of some of the logging trucks said "More pay for fuel increase."

Drivers pulled onto the shoulder several times so truckers in the rear could catch up.

"What are all those loggers doing on the shoulder?" a passing truck driver yelled over his CB radio.

"Driver, join the convoy," a member of the convoy responded back. "We're protesting the high cost of diesel fuel."

Another passing truck driver yelled, "Driver, you know this is not going to do any good. You can't fight the big money in Washington. You can't fight the lobbyists. Driver, this won't do any good. We can't change anything."

Another passing trucker began yelling racist and sexist taunts to the convoy over his CB radio.

In response, convoy members patiently explained what the protest was all about. "We cannot feed our families any longer with these high prices. We need to take a stand. Ride with the convoy for awhile and join our protest."

At one point the convoy was two to three lanes deep. It grew to more than three miles as more truckers joined.

"Convoy, pull on the shoulder," a driver said over his CB. "We have been stopped by state troopers." The troopers cited about a half dozen drivers for impeding traffic. State police hurriedly escorted the convoy to I-75 South.

"We asked for an escort but the state troopers never returned our phone calls," said Thompson. "We tried to get a permit to drive to the state capitol building, but the troopers refused. So then we decided to circle I-285."

Thompson started driving at age 16. **Continued on page 4**



Militant/Bill Arth

Log truck drivers who took part in April 1 convoy in Georgia to protest rising costs

## Greenspan on home ownership and 'property rights'

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Boosting the ranks of "homeowners" in the United States was "worth the risk" to the economy that the subprime mortgage market posed, argued Alan Greenspan, former Federal Reserve head, in memoirs published last year.

"Protection of property rights, so critical to a market economy," Greenspan wrote, "requires a critical mass of own-

### AS I SEE IT

ers to sustain political support."

In other words, workers who think of themselves as "property owners" are less likely to rebel.

In a collection of three pamphlets published in 1872 and 1873, Frederick Engels, a founder of the modern communist movement, wrote about this. The articles were later printed in a booklet titled *The Housing Question*.

"For our workers in the big cities freedom of movement is the prime condition of their existence, and landownership could only be a fetter to them. Give them their own houses, chain them once again to the soil and you break their power of resistance to the wage cutting of the factory owners," Engels explained. "The individual worker might be able to sell his house on occasion, but during a big strike or a general industrial crisis all the houses belonging to the affected workers would have to be put up for sale and would therefore find no purchasers or be sold off far below their cost price."

Today, as the financial and debt crisis deepens, nearly 9 million homeowners' debts to the banks are equal to or higher than the value of their property. It is now, on average, twice as costly to own a home as it is to rent.

Many facing foreclosure bought homes over the past decade with high-interest loans extended to millions of workers previously denied credit.

Since the early 1990s, home ownership has increased from 64 to 69 percent of households. The increases were even greater among oppressed nationalities and national minorities who historically have been denied credit.

Now that many of these loans are going unpaid, banks and lenders are trying to avoid being stuck with the homes when they're foreclosed on. Under the guise of helping out "Main Street," not "Wall Street," politicians are pushing legislation to help the banks refinance and keep workers paying their mort-

gages.

"Many Americans are walking away from their homes, which hurts property values . . . and aggravates the credit crisis," Democratic presidential frontrunner Barack Obama said in a March 27 speech. He called for "meaningful incentives for lenders to buy or refinance existing mortgages. This will allow Americans facing foreclosure to keep their homes at rates they can afford."

Touting similar reforms, Republican presidential candidate John McCain said, "The past decade witnessed the largest increase in home ownership in the past 50 years. Home ownership is part of the American Dream."

Engels explained that workers pay a very high price for the illusion of being part of the propertied classes. "[T]ake a look at the French peasants and at our own small peasants in the Rhineland," he wrote. "Their houses and fields are loaded down with mortgages, their harvests belong to their creditors before they are reaped, and it is not they who rule with sovereign power on their 'territory' but the usurer, the lawyer and the bailiff."

For further reading

### The Housing Question

by Frederick Engels

\$5

Order from:  
www.pathfinderpress.com or  
distributors listed on page 8.

### Support the truckers' fight!

When truckers organized to stay off work April 1 to protest the high cost of fuel, the 'Militant' was there at the truck stops and on the highways to get the story in their own words. Keep up with the truckers' fight by subscribing today.



Militant/Willie Cotton

Protesting drivers at Vince Lombardi truck stop on the New Jersey Turnpike April 1.

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306 W. 37TH ST., 10TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10018.

### The Militant

Vol. 72/No. 16

Closing news date: April 9, 2008

Editor: Olympia Newton

Managing Editor: Cindy Jaquith

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

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Published weekly except for one week in January, two weeks in July, and one week in August.

The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 244-4899 Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: for one-year send \$35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S.

bank, to above address.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: Send \$65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

Canada: Send Canadian \$45 for one-year subscription to the Militant, 2238 Dundas St. West, Suite 201, Toronto, ON. Postal Code: M6R 3A9.

United Kingdom: £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

Republic of Ireland and Continental Europe: £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London at above address.

France: Send 76 euros for one-year subscription to Diffusion du Militant, P.O. Box 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris.

Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: Send 400 Swedish kronor for one year to Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov, Stockholm, Sweden.

New Zealand: Send NZ\$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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Pacific Islands: Send NZ\$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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# Miami Cuba meeting

**Continued from front page**  
internationalist mission to Angola in the 1970s and 1980s to help beat back an invasion by the South African apartheid regime. The audience here broke into applause when Abaka read a quote from a 1991 speech South African leader Nelson Mandela gave in Cuba.

“The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa,” Mandela said. “The Cuban internationalists have made a contribution to African independence, freedom, and justice, unparalleled for its principled and selfless character.” Excerpts of the speech are included in *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

The program was held at the Veye-Yo community center. Veye-Yo is a Haitian rights organization based in Miami. Other sponsors included the African-New World Studies Program at Florida International University, and Alianza Martiana, a coalition of groups opposed to Washington’s embargo and travel restrictions against Cuba.

Tony Jeanthenor from Veye-Yo told the crowd, “Cuba went to many places in Africa—Africa with all its diamonds and gold. And the Cubans returned with nothing but their dead. Others who went to Africa took the gold. Cubans returned with their heads held high.”

### Anti-Chinese exclusion laws

Winnie Tang, president of the south Florida chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, explained that there is a history of the Chinese in the United States that is not told in textbooks. “Chinese Americans face a lot more hardship than most people realize,” she said.

Tang described the 19th century exclusion laws “that prevented our families from joining us over here,” and laws prohibiting immigrants from China, and other countries of Asia, from owning land. These racist measures were written right into the Florida Constitution. After many years of effort by Asian community activists and their supporters, revocation of the section of the constitution forbidding “aliens ineligible for citizenry” from owning property will be on a state referendum in November. If adopted, Florida will be the last state in the Union to rescind such laws.

“The most important contribution this book makes,” said Andrés Gómez from Alianza Martiana, “is to show how Cubans of Chinese descent were part of

forging the Cuban nation and the contributions they made to the revolution.”

“Those who hope for a transition from socialism to capitalism in Cuba are absurd,” Gómez said. “What is happening today in Cuba is not because Fidel has retired but precisely because of what Fidel taught us.” The revolution is stronger today, he explained, noting steps under way to increase access to universities for youth from the poorest sections of the population, a high percentage of whom are Black.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*, explained that Cubans who made the revolution nearly 50 years ago were young people who “didn’t start as communists or socialists.”

This book, she said, like many of the nearly 60 other titles on Cuba that Pathfinder has published, is the story of young people who wanted to create a greater degree of social justice. “That was what lay behind the revolution’s early measures—land reform, a literacy campaign, the laws barring discrimination based on the color of one’s skin, and the expansion of jobs for women,” Waters explained.

As the revolution carried out these measures, it confronted the property and privileges of U.S. capitalist families whose government, she said, initiated the aggression against the Cuban revolution that continues to this day.

Waters paid tribute to some of the



Militant/Nancy Cole

**Panel at meeting in Miami April 6 on *Our History Is Still Being Written*. From left: Mary-Alice Waters, Winnie Tang, Edmund Abaka, Andrés Gómez, and Tony Jeanthenor.**

latest targets of Washington’s determination to crush Cuba’s example, “the five heroes of the Cuban revolution who have spent nearly a decade in U.S. prisons held hostage by the American government to punish the Cuban people for having made a socialist revolution, for their refusal to surrender.” The five are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, Antonio Guerrero, and René González.

“The book,” Waters explained, “is not about the past, although it is rich in history. It is about the struggles we are involved in today. Through it we can understand better why millions are in the streets in the United States demanding legalization for immigrants, fighting for

a world without borders, for a day when we whose labor transforms nature and produces the wealth of the world can cross borders as freely as capital crosses borders.”

### Setback for rightists

Prior to the meeting, *El Nuevo Herald*, the mass circulation Spanish-language daily newspaper, ran an article about the program quoting Félix Ismael Rodríguez, the president of the Association of the Veterans of the Bay of Pigs (Brigade 2506), the band of CIA mercenaries who assaulted Cuba in 1961, and Huber Matos, a well-known enemy of the Cuban revolution. Both denounced

**Continued on page 4**

## Anti-China protests mark Olympic relay

### Continued from front page

ernment officials hung a banner outside city hall reading, “Paris defends human rights everywhere in the world.”

“If the Chinese government wants acceptance from the international community, it must immediately stop its baseless attacks on the Dalai Lama and start working toward a meaningful solution to the Tibetan issue,” said Conall Hon, 26, a member of SFT in the United Kingdom, in an April 5 press release.

While taking their distance from the boycott call, most imperialist powers have lined up behind the “Free Tibet” campaign and the Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibet’s ousted feudal aristocracy. A March 29 meeting of European Union foreign ministers called for a dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama but played down any suggestions of a boycott. U.S. president George Bush called Chinese president Hu Jintao to urge him to negotiate with the Dalai Lama. France’s president Nicolas Sarkozy suggested he may boycott the opening ceremony.

The Chinese bureaucracy’s anti-working-class policies—including brutal repression of the religion, language, and cultural rights of oppressed nationalities like Tibetans—have given the imperialist powers a handle in their long-term campaign to isolate the workers state. At the same time, China is strategically and economically important to the imperialist powers, as they try to maneuver with the ruling bureaucracy for political stability and greater trade and investment.

Protests broke out in Tibet and other parts of China in March. Buddhist monks were arrested during an attempted rally marking the 49th anniversary of a landlord-inspired uprising against the Chinese Revolution. The protests spread and included rioting that target-

ed Han Chinese who have migrated to the region.

Tibet, historically separate from China but ruled for centuries by Chinese emperors, had a feudal system led by a religious hierarchy headed by the Dalai Lama. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army entered Tibet in 1950 after the triumph of the Chinese Revolution. The oppressive property relations in Tibet increasingly came into conflict with the Chinese workers state. In 1959, imperialist powers backed a revolt by landlords trying to reassert their control. The defeat of this uprising was a setback for imperialism.

Since that time imperialist powers and liberal hangers-on, including a slew

of celebrities, have used the “Free Tibet” campaign as a wedge against China. The recent spate of protests—which went beyond Tibet and included some participation from social layers other than Buddhist monks—have been the largest in 20 years.

In the last ten years the Chinese government has invested billions of dollars to develop infrastructure in Tibet, including building roads and a railway. As in other rural areas, the Chinese leadership is using capitalist methods to spur foreign investment and development. The accompanying social inequalities are creating a powder keg not only among Tibetans, who face national oppression, but amongst Chinese toilers as a whole.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**At the River I Stand: Video of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Strike.** Fri., April 18. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel: (515) 255-1707.

### FLORIDA

#### Miami

**Hear Róger Calero, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for U.S. President.** Sun., April 20. Program, 3 p.m. 8365 NE 2nd Ave., 2nd Fl. Tel: (305) 756-4436.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Malaysian Elections Show Social Divisions, Capitalist Instability.** Speakers: Baskaran Appu, Communist League; Mike Tucker, Communist League. Fri., April 18. Program, 7 p.m. Donation \$3. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu. Tel: (09) 276-8885.

### Panel Discussions on

## OUR HISTORY IS STILL BEING WRITTEN

**The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution**

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

Thursday, April 17

**Time:** 6:30 p.m., followed by reception.

**Place:** Room 103, Pigott Building, Seattle University.

**Speakers:** Saheed Adejumobi, assistant professor of history, Global African Studies Program at SU; Kan Liang, director of International Studies and associate professor of history at SU; Marc McLeod, director of Latin American Studies and associate professor of history at SU; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

**For more information:** Alexandria DeLong, delonga@seattleu.edu.

### IOWA

#### Ames

Thursday, April 24

**Time:** Reception: 6 p.m. Program: 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Gallery Memorial Union, Iowa State University.

**Speakers:** Isela Guzmán, activities chair of Latinoamericanos; Christopher Hudson, president of Minorities in Agriculture (MANRRS); Mack Shelley, professor of political science and statistics; Aaron Bleich, Socialist Club; Juan Luís Vivero, auditor of Latinoamericanos; Keith King, public relations chair of MANRRS; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written*.

**For more information:** Tel: (787) 243-9127 or isela13@iastate.edu.



‘Our History’ in Miami

Continued from page 3

the book and the meeting.

“It is a book of communist propaganda that they have the freedom to present here, taking advantage of the liberties of a democratic society, something we cannot do in a totalitarian society such as that existing in Cuba,” Rodríguez said. Matos said, according to *El Nuevo Herald*, that the book launching was “an attempted diatribe’ by partisans of the government of Raúl Castro.”

Over the past decades, right-wing opponents of the Cuban Revolution have attempted, and sometimes succeeded, in mobilizing large forces to disrupt and break up political and cultural events they perceived as favorable to the revolution.

Truck convoy

Continued from page 2

19. “My grandfather drove a truck for 30 years and this is something I always wanted to do,” she said. She was one of three women truckers in the convoy.

In a phone interview following the protest, Thompson said there are drivers throughout Georgia who are continuing the strike. At the port in Savannah, Georgia, the truckers strike had slowed traffic by 50 percent.

Thompson passed the phone to her husband Grady, 42, who also drove in the convoy. “When I was younger I bought a truck because I wanted to have a good life,” he said. “Today I am in worse shape. I have had to get loans to pay for truck repairs. If I had a truck break down today, I couldn’t afford to fix it. I might as well go broke at home, instead of making Exxon or BP rich.”

Alyson Kennedy is the Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. vice president.

‘Militant’ subscription drive

Spring ‘Militant’ Subscription Drive March 22–May 18 ♦ Week 2 of 8			
Country	Quota	Sold	%
SWEDEN	25	9	36%
NEW ZEALAND	65	22	34%
AUSTRALIA	55	13	24%
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	75	20	27%
Edinburgh	45	9	20%
UK Total	120	29	24%
UNITED STATES			
San Diego	8	6	75%
Newark, NJ*	160	65	41%
San Francisco	125	39	31%
Twin Cities	150	45	30%
Des Moines, IA	140	40	29%
Houston	90	23	26%
New York	325	80	25%
Chicago	120	28	23%
Washington, D.C.	140	32	23%
Miami	130	28	22%
Albuquerque, NM	10	2	20%
Philadelphia	85	16	19%
Doraville, GA	130	23	18%
Carrollton, GA	145	25	17%
Seattle	115	19	17%
Boston	60	9	15%
Los Angeles	110	16	15%
U.S. Total	2,043	496	24%
CANADA	105	2	2%
Int’l Totals	2,413	571	24%
Should be			25%
* raised goal			

Organizers of the meeting on *Our History Is Still Being Written* were well prepared to assure that would not happen this time. Despite the front-page article in *El Nuevo Herald*, the meeting took place without incident, a registration of the expanding political space and shifting relationship of forces in Miami.

Responding to a question by a reporter from the *United Chinese News of Florida* about political differences among Chinese Cubans in different regions of the island, Waters explained, “The Chinese population in Cuba was class divided, like other sectors of Cuban society. Some were wealthy and fled to places like Miami and New York after the revolution. Others, especially those who were among the poorer layers of the working class, supported the revolution. *Our History Is Still Being Written* addresses this real class struggle in Cuba.”

Abaka closed the meeting saying, “We all need to learn each other’s languages,” and called for applause to those who translated the program from English into Spanish and Creole and from Spanish into English and Creole. “We should try to organize meetings like this every month,” he added, to enthusiastic applause.


Boston: socialists petition for ballot status

BY LAURA GARZA

BOSTON—“I want to thank my supporters who went out today and collected nearly 500 signatures to place the Socialist Workers Party on the November ballot,” William Leonard said as he welcomed people to an April 5 Militant Labor Forum.

Leonard, a meat packer and union supporter, is the Socialist Workers

Cuban revolutionary leader speaks in Mexico



Militant/Tom Baumann

MONTERREY, Mexico, April 8—Nearly 200 students and faculty attended a meeting here April 8 to hear Armando Hart, a historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, speak on “Karl Marx and José Martí: Roots of the Cuban Revolution,” held at the School of Philosophy and Arts of the Autonomous University of Nuevo León.

From left to right: Martín Koppel; a writer for the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press editor; Eulogio Rodríguez, Cuban consul in Monterrey; Jorge Cuéllar, president of the José Martí Cultural Society in Monterrey; Armando Hart; José Reséndiz, director of the School of Philosophy and Arts; Eloísa Carreras; and Raúl Rojas.

Koppel presented the Pathfinder edition of Hart’s book *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*. Cuban researcher Eloísa Carreras and Mexican editor Raúl Rojas presented other titles by Hart recently issued by the Mexican publishing house Plaza y Valdés.

The meeting was part of a week-long speaking tour by Hart in Monterrey and Zacatecas, Mexico. Members of the audience purchased dozens of copies of *Aldabonazo* as well as Hart’s *José Martí: Apostól de América* (José Martí, Apostle of the Americas), Carreras’s book about Armando Hart, and other titles.

—MARTÍN KOPPEL

candidate for State Senate in the Second Suffolk District in Massachusetts. The district, one of two within the city of Boston, includes the overwhelming majority of African Americans who live here.

Protests aid Militant Fund

Continued from front page

protest the high cost of fuel, insurance, and vehicle maintenance.

Kennedy also joined sanitation workers who turned out April 4 in Memphis to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.

These all point to an upswing in political resistance by working people that is good news for our efforts to win new subscribers to the *Militant* and more donors to the Militant Fund.

We remain behind in gathering funds for the paper. As of this week, we have received \$15,756, but we needed \$25,000 to be on schedule. A few areas still have not sent in any contributions.

Our goal is to raise \$100,000 by May 18. There is a gap of \$3,240 between that goal and the goals local areas have set thus far.

An important opportunity to raise funds and talk with new subscribers will be the fund meetings planned in local areas. These benefits for the *Militant* will focus on world politics today—the tightening squeeze on working people with the spreading capitalist economic crisis; the increase in resistance by workers, documented and undocumented, in the United States; the U.S. presidential race; and the place of the Cuban Revolution.

Joining the platforms will be *Militant* readers who are part of the vanguard of the working-class resistance who can explain why the

paper is important to them.

In Newark, New Jersey, an April 25 meeting to benefit the fund will feature Ben O’Shaughnessy, spokesman for Young Socialists for Calero and Kennedy.

\$100,000 ‘Militant’ Fund Drive March 22–May 18 ♦ Week 2 of 8			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
FRANCE	260	180	69%
AUSTRALIA	2,000	510	26%
NEW ZEALAND	3,200	664	21%
UNITED STATES			
Seattle	7,000	2,725	39%
Los Angeles	8,500	2,568	30%
New York	15,000	3,387	23%
Twin Cities	5,200	1,100	21%
San Francisco	12,000	1,485	12%
Miami	3,000	325	11%
Carrollton, GA	4,700	445	9%
Washington, D.C.	4,300	390	9%
Boston	2,800	250	9%
Chicago	7,000	620	9%
Newark, NJ	3,700	262	7%
Doraville, GA	4,000	100	3%
Des Moines, IA	2,000	5	0%
Houston	2,500	0	0%
Philadelphia	2,500	0	0%
U.S. total	84,200	13,662	16%
CANADA	4,500	640	14%
SWEDEN	1,000	100	10%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	600	0	0%
London	1,000	0	0%
UK total	1,600	0	0%
Int’l total	96,760	15,756	16%
Goal/Should be	100,000	25,000	25%
*raised goal			



## San Francisco nurses strike over understaffing, cuts

SAN FRANCISCO—Waving signs saying “Patients Before Profits” and “Retirement With Dignity,” striking Bay Area nurses rallied here March 30 in front of the California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC).

The demonstration marked the end of a 10-day walkout by nurses at 11 Bay Area hospitals owned by Sutter Health. The nurses, members of the California Nurses Association, are fighting understaffing, takebacks in medical and pension benefits, and moves by Sutter to close St. Luke’s Hospital.

This is the third and longest strike by the nurses in six months. Sutter Health has kept the hospitals open during the strikes by hiring scabs to replace the nurses picketing outside.

In contract negotiations that began last spring, a central issue has been Sutter’s refusal to provide relief for nurses during meals and rest breaks. “This is huge,” said Therese, a 20-year veteran in the intensive care unit at CPMC. “When you don’t have people covering you, it’s a danger to the patients.”

The announcement of plans by Sutter Health to close St. Luke’s has been met with outrage. St. Luke’s is one of two hospitals in the southern, working-class area of the city. In the northern section there are 11 hospitals.

To emphasize the real-life impact of the moves against St. Luke’s, the striking nurses lead a New Orleans jazz-style funeral procession to the hospital on March 24, followed by a candlelight vigil.

—Betsey Stone



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Houston janitors, food service workers, and groundskeepers march for union rights April 3.

## Aramark workers rally in Houston for union rights

HOUSTON—More than 100

janitors, food service workers, and groundskeepers from the city’s convention centers, stadiums, ball parks, and the University of Houston marched through downtown streets and rallied outside city hall April 3 demanding union rights. The workers are part of a national drive by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and UNITE HERE to organize Aramark, one of the largest companies in the world that provide these services.

“We need decent wages and health care,” Vernita Williams told the *Militant*. She explained that she was making less than \$7 an hour housekeeping at the George R. Brown Convention Center before she was fired last month for union organizing. “They do not treat us with respect,” said Antonio Gómez, who is also a housekeeper at the center.

“Many people here have to work two, or even three jobs to make ends meet,” said Carlos Alvarado, who has worked as a sous chef at the convention center for 16 years.

At the spirited rally, two workers from Aramark facilities in Philadelphia and New York City were greeted with loud cheers and chants of “*Si se puede!*” (Yes we can!). These Aramark workers are joining rallies across the country on a tour that will finish in New York City April 10 at a rally outside Goldman Sachs, one of the four firms that control Aramark.

—Jacquie Henderson

# Bosses, not workers, at fault for unsafe meat

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

NEWARK, New Jersey—Rafael Sánchez, a worker at the Westland/Hallmark slaughterhouse in Chino, California, has been sentenced to six months in jail, to be followed by deportation.

His supervisor, Daniel Ugarte, has pled not guilty, and, according to an Associated Press report, “could be offered a plea bargain.”

## UNION TALK

No charges whatsoever have been filed against owner Steven Mendell.

One more example of the finest standards of U.S. justice? Yes, and something more too.

Under pressure to maintain production, Sánchez and Ugarte were caught in a video showing them forcing sick cows to their feet to “pass” a federal regulatory test.

The video was taped secretly by a member of the Humane Society of the United States. While working in the pens he filmed scenes of cows being forced to the slaughter chute with electric shocks, the blades of a forklift, and hoses used to simulate drowning. This took place despite the daily presence of five inspectors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In response to the outcry the images produced, U.S. officials ordered the slaughterhouse to shut down February 4. On February 17 officials forced it to recall all meat it had produced in the last two years—a record 143 million pounds.

At least one inspector and one veterinarian were suspended by the USDA.

Westland/Hallmark specialized in buying old cows from local dairies, grinding them into hamburger, and selling the resulting less-than-stellar meat to the federal government.

It was, before suspending operations, the second largest supplier to a federal program that provides meat to more than 100,000 schools and child-care facilities as well as to the elderly and impoverished.

In theory there is a ban on using meat from cows too sick to walk. According to the USDA’s own reports, such cows have much a higher incidence of “mad cow” disease. They are also more susceptible to bacterial infections such as E. coli and salmonella.

The response of the ruling rich was summed up in an editorial in the *New York Times* February 21.

After a jab at the Republican administration of George Bush for “cutting budgets” and “filling top jobs with industry favorites,” the pro-Democratic Party *Times* offered three proposals to address meat safety: stronger inspections, bigger fines, and creation of a food-safety superagency.

But, as meat packers and other workers know, it’s not so simple.

The heart of the problem is not government regulation. It’s that under capitalism, bosses try to force us to do things that protect their profits at the expense of the safety of working people. The threat, spoken or unspoken, is that you do what you are told or you will suffer the consequences.

How can we respond these pressures?

In my view, we have to look for openings, no matter how small, to take the moral high ground against the bosses’ greed, to use it as a weapon against them.

Westland/Hallmark is a graphic example of employers’ lack of concern for anything that gets in the way of profits. But workers in packing plants and

other workplaces across the country face countless smaller examples every day—from skipping a sanitary procedure to using meat everyone knows is questionable.

We can use these examples to explain the connection between defending our own health and safety on the job and defending other workers and their families who will be eating the meat we produce.

We can explain that both are part of building a stronger union. And that building a stronger union is a necessary step to gaining a political voice, to creating our own political party, to putting ourselves in a position to take on the bosses outside the factory as well—where the real decisions are made.

We can explain that Rafael Sánchez is not the real criminal here. We can explain that a working-class party, a labor party based on unions with some teeth, would fight the deportation of this fellow worker. It would demand his bosses be jailed instead.

*Michael Baumann works on the line at Thumann’s in New Jersey and is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1245. Carole Lesnick, who also works at Thumann’s, contributed to this article.*

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 22, 1983

Plans for the Fifth National Women Coal Miners Conference, and its endorsement by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), were announced April 1 at a news conference at UMWA District 5 headquarters.

The conference, which is sponsored by the Coal Employment Project (CEP), is to be held June 24–26.

CEP was formed in 1977 to help women get and keep coal mining jobs.

Michele Miller, CEP Pennsylvania representative and financial secretary of UMWA Local 1197, told reporters that women still make up less than 3 percent of the coal industry’s workforce. And, as a result of the economic crisis, 41 percent of these women are laid off, she said.



April 21, 1958

Government figures released two days ago show that the present recession is the deepest since World War II, which pulled the capitalist economy out of the great depression. In March, total national production had dropped 17 index points or 11.7 percent below what it was in August when the recession began.

In Michigan 1,000 a day are being dropped from the unemployment insurance rolls because they have exhausted their benefits.

Federal action to extend the period of unemployment benefits is being given the slow treatment in Congress. In Michigan 4,000 unemployed unionists went to Lansing on April 8 to demand action on the jobless compensation law.



April 15, 1933

Tens of thousands of American boys are being herded into regular army camps, presumably for forestry training. The 1,800 supposedly homeless youths from New York who boarded the buses for Fort Slocum are the first victims of a novel brand of efficiency known as the “New Deal.” The “investigators” of the New York Home Relief Bureau of the Department of Public Welfare are instructed to supply 7,500 unmarried young men between the ages of 18 and 23 from off the relief list. Do the men actually receive the \$30 per month that they are promised? Not at all. \$25 of every \$30 earned by the worker is to be deducted and turned over to the Home Relief Bureau which promptly deducts that amount from the family budget, plus \$1.50 per week from the food budget.



# Revolutionary continuity in Cuba's leadership

## Remarks by Raúl Castro nominating first vice president, head of army

*Below we reprint remarks by Cuban president Raúl Castro at the February 24 session of the National Assembly of People's Power. The article "National Assembly elects Cuban leadership" in the March 10 issue of the Militant reported extensively on that meeting, which elected a 31-member Council of State and elected Raúl Castro as its president.*

*In Castro's closing remarks to the session, he discussed adjusting the structures of the Cuban state, government, Communist Party, and mass organizations to bring them in harmony with the shifting objective circumstances and class needs of workers and farmers in Cuba and their international obligations to toilers around the world.*

*The excerpt below is from Castro's intervention in the discussion on the decision to nominate Julio Casas Regueiro as minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and José Ramón Machado Ventura as the first vice president of Council of State and vice president of the Council of Ministers. Castro explains that these proposals are based on discussions in the Political Bureau and Central Committee Secretariat of the Communist Party of Cuba (CCP).*

*Castro's description of the two men's political histories provides insights into why, at this juncture, Cuba's revolutionary leadership chose them for the high-ranking posts.*

*The translation is from the March 2, 2008, Granma International, with slight stylistic and editorial revisions by the Militant. Subheadings and footnotes have been added by the Militant.*



### BY RAÚL CASTRO

I must immediately give up my post as minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [MINFAR], which I have carried out since October 1959. Of course, I think that I have the right to put on my uniform now and again, as is the right of my friend Juancito [Almeida], Guillermo [García], Ramiro [Valdés],<sup>1</sup>

1. Juan Almeida, Guillermo García, and Ramiro Valdés are the three combatants who fought in the Sierra Maestra mountains during the Cuban Revolution who hold the rank of Commander of the Revolution. On July 26, 1953, 160 revolutionaries under the command of Fidel Castro launched insurrectionary attacks on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba and a garrison in Bayamo. While the attacks failed, they opened the door to the armed struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. In June 1955 participants in the Moncada attack, together with revolutionary youth from other organizations, founded the July 26 Movement. In 1956, July 26 Movement cadres initiated a revolutionary war against Batista after returning to Cuba from Mexico in the *Granma* yacht. Almeida, a bricklayer, and Valdés, a truck driver, participated in the Moncada attack and the *Granma* expedition. Today Almeida is president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. Valdés was the Minister of the Interior from 1961–68 and 1979–85. García, a peasant, helped organize the regroup-

and the other comrades of the Armed Forces; and, in virtue of the position to which you have just elected me, I also have maximum responsibility on questions of the country's defense. And for that post, the comrades previously mentioned, who discussed the first proposal that I have just made to you,<sup>2</sup> propose General of the Army Corps Julio Casas Regueiro, first deputy minister of the MINFAR [Applause].

I can see that you know him, that you have seen his biography: He was a founder of the Frank País Second Eastern Front.<sup>3</sup> In 1959, a founder, along with other comrades of Column 6 of that front, and of the Revolutionary National Police. With that institution he fought at Playa Girón.<sup>4</sup>

He moved on to the FAR, where he had different and ascending responsibilities: he was a substitute, among others, for the Minister of the Economy and Logistics, in which he worked brilliantly; chief at one stage of the Anti-Aircraft Defense and the Revolutionary Air Force, when we had a vacancy and there was no one to appoint, and he worked equally well in that complex type of armed forces; chief of an army, the Eastern Army; first deputy minister when there were three first deputy ministers—now there is just one and that's enough.

He fulfilled a combat mission in the Republic of Ethiopia in Africa.<sup>5</sup>

He was elected as a member of the Political Bureau [of the CCP] in the 4th and 5th Congresses of the party;<sup>6</sup> he has been a deputy [in the National Assembly] since 1981; and a member of the

ment of Rebel Army forces in December 1956. He was Cuba's Minister of Transportation from 1974–85 and is a member of the Council of State.

2. The first proposal Castro made was to postpone filling all the positions in the government in order to take time to study and develop proposals on the structure and functioning of the government and to return to those questions at a National Assembly meeting later this year. He explained the proposal was based on a discussion in the CCP Political Bureau, including with Fidel Castro.
3. Frank País was vice president of the Federation of University Students in Oriente province and later the central leader of the July 26 Movement there. País was murdered by Batista's forces on July 30, 1957.
4. Playa Girón, known in the United States as the Bay of Pigs, refers to the April 1961 U.S.-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba and the subsequent battle, in which revolutionary militias, armed forces, and police defeated the counter-revolutionaries in less than 72 hours.
5. In 1977 the Cuban government responded to a request by the government of Ethiopia to help defeat a U.S.-backed invasion by neighboring Somalia. Washington planned to use a Somali victory to begin turning back land redistribution and other measures that followed the 1974 overthrow of the landlord-based monarchy of Emperor Haile Selassie there.
6. The 4th Congress of the Cuban Communist Party took place Oct. 10–14, 1991. The 5th Congress took place Oct. 8–10, 1997.



Top: AP/Javier Galeano, Middle: Tricontinental, Bottom: Granma

**Top:** Members of Cuba's newly elected Council of State at February 24 National Assembly meeting in Havana. **Bottom row, from left, Raúl Castro, vice presidents Juan Almeida, José Ramón Machado, Abelardo Colome, Carlos Lage, Esteban Lazo, and Julio Casas.** Machado was elected first vice president and Casas was elected minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. **Middle:** Machado (third from left, in cap) with other Cuban internationalists in the Congo, 1965. Also pictured are Ernesto Che Guevara (seated, with beard), Emilio Aragónés to Che's right, Harry Villegas (standing), and Ulises Estrada (at center, facing sideways). **Bottom:** Combatants who helped defeat a U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Casas fought in the battle with the Revolutionary National Police, which he helped found.

Central Committee [of the party] and the Council of State since 1998.

General of the Army Corps, as we said, since 2001, the same year he was decorated with the honorary title of Hero of the Republic of Cuba and the Playa Girón Order.

I, who have criticized almost all of the generals of the Armed Forces and have also criticized myself in meetings, do not recall ever having made any weighty criticism of comrade Julio Casas in the last 50 years [Applause], except for that of being—as we Cubans say—very cheap [Laughter]. But that's where his successes on the economic front, and other activities in the Ministry of the Armed Forces, come from.

### 'A practical sense of saving'

He is an accountant; he was a bank employee in Santiago de Cuba before joining the insurrection. He has a body of experience, and one of his great virtues has been the fame that he has among all the generals of a practical sense of saving, to such an extreme that somewhere over there is an order of mine, signed and legalized, in which he is the only person to whom I once gave the faculty of vetoing my economic decisions, particularly in the early days of his occupying this last responsibility.

Lots of people didn't believe that, but, as usually happens on tours here and there, especially after the Special Period,<sup>7</sup> army chiefs and other heads

of large units—as subordinates often do—would take advantage of a moment of happiness or satisfaction, or the chief's good mood, and approach me and say: "Chief, minister, in the Special Period such-and-such a work of mine was halted," or "I have such-and-such a problem, etc." And I would order an aide: "Take note of that to sort it out." Afterwards, when I had given the order, it would reach Julio Casas, and on many occasions he came to see me and said: "Minister, we have 17 problems like this in the rest of the country and some more important ones; who are we taking money away from to give to this request of yours?"

And that's how I gave him the right. I came to the conclusion—it is written and circulated to the corresponding chiefs—that he had the right to veto any decision of mine that was outside of the plan. And for that reason, many chiefs, some of whose smiling faces I see here, commented among themselves that they had to make a plan to get rid of that veto [Laughter], a plan in which they were not successful. They got used to it, I got a lot a pressure taken off me, and then I passed them onto him and he said yes or

**Continued on page 7**

7. The Special Period is the name used in Cuba to refer to the sharp economic crisis precipitated in the early 1990s when Cuba abruptly lost most of its aid and favorable trade relations with the Soviet bloc countries.



# Cuban art exhibit in Miami reflects opening of political space

BY JIM KENDRICK  
AND MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—An exhibition here of paintings by Cuban artist Wifredo Lam registers again the opening space for discussion and dialogue on the Cuban Revolution in this city. As *Miami Herald* columnist Ana Menendez noted, “The show’s stop in Miami is especially poignant. Lam, one of the 20th century’s most important artists, was repeatedly snubbed here, having never hid his sympathies for Castro’s revolution.”

The exhibit runs here through May 18. It then shows at the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, California, from June 12–August 31. The final showing will be at the Dali Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida, from October 2–January 10.

Twenty years ago a painting by an artist from Cuba was burned in the streets here by counterrevolutionary Cubans determined to prevent discussion of and support to the revolution. These rightist elements hold far less sway today, including among more recently arriving immigrants from Cuba.

More than 800 people turned out here for the February opening of the “Wifredo Lam in North America” exhibit, and the collection has continued to attract crowds without incident.

Born in 1902, Lam was the son of a Chinese immigrant. His mother was Afro-Cuban. Lam became one of Cuba’s most renowned artists. A participant in the 1930s Surrealist movement, Lam reflected the powerful social and political conquests of the anticolonial revolution.

Featured in the exhibit are 64 paintings, drawings, and other works created by Lam between 1927 and 1975, along with a collection of documents and photographs chronicling the artist’s life and artistic development over five decades.

Lam left Cuba in his 20s for Spain. When the Spanish Civil War broke out in the 1930s, he fought on the Republican side.

Shortly before the defeat of the Republic by the Fascists, Lam went to Paris. There he became a longtime friend and collaborator of André Breton, leader of the Surrealist movement and an outspoken opponent of Stalinism’s impact on artists and intellectuals. Lam was also befriended and influenced by Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, who encouraged his interest in African art.

With the conquest of France by the Nazis, Lam went to the Caribbean, where he collaborated with Aimé Césaire in Martinique and contributed to his magazine, *Tropique*. Together with Breton, Lam visited Haiti where the artists observed Vodou ceremonies.

Of particular interest in this exhibit are several works from Lam’s 1940s “Cuban Period,” when he began drawing more directly on Afro-Cuban culture with its roots in Africa, slavery, and Santería ceremonies.

“I decided that my painting would never be the equivalent of that pseudo-Cuban music for nightclubs,” Lam said. “I refused to paint cha-cha-cha. I wanted with all my heart to paint the drama of my country, but by thorough-

ly expressing the negro spirit, the beauty of the plastic art of the blacks. In this way I could act as a Trojan horse that would spew forth hallucinating figures with the power to surprise, to disturb the dreams of the exploiters.”

Lam first returned to Cuba in 1941. Between 1941 and 1952 he lived and worked in Havana, New York, and Paris. He settled in Paris, but continued to visit Cuba often, contributing his artistic talents to public murals. In 1981, he was awarded the *Orden Felix Varela de Primer Grado* for his contribution to culture.

Lam died in Paris 1982. At his wish,

his remains were returned to Cuba, where he received a state funeral and was buried in the Armed Forces section of the Colón cemetery in Havana, honoring his participation along with other Cubans in the Spanish Civil War. Cuba celebrated a “Lam Centennial” in 2002.



Pro-revolution Cuban artist Wilfredo Lam’s *The Jungle* (1943).

## Cuban leadership’s revolutionary continuity

Continued from page 6

no, within the established framework of his responsibilities.

I don’t think that there is any need to say more about him, only that he is well experienced. Suffice it to say that since the Commander in Chief’s proclamation on July 31, 2006,<sup>8</sup> approximately 18 months ago, he has borne the principal weight of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. That’s it.

If you all agree, including the Council of State, we will proceed to sign the corresponding documents. But I prefer that, instead of voting on this case, it be the Assembly President who decides on how to do it, but I first ask that you allow me to speak.

The second issue or second exception that we believe we should make for the principal proposal, which was the first one I presented to you, is the appointment of the first vice president of the Council of Ministers.

### Ensuring unity in leadership

As you all know, the posts of first vice president of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers, which I represented until now, have been decided to ensure unity in the leadership—for obvious and very essential reasons under the conditions that our country is and has been in for almost half a century. I am referring to executive unity, not political unity, which we know is magnificent—in the face of any eventuality [involving] one of its top leaders, of accidents, attacks, or whatever it may be, so that continuity is maintained without interruption of any kind. And, therefore, we propose that the current first vice president of the Council of State be at the same time the vice president of the Council of Ministers, and, as everybody knows, that is nobody other than comrade José Ramón Machado Ventura (Applause).

Machado needs no introduction either, but not everyone knows his entire life story, his history, although you all saw a summary this morning.

I also met Machado more than 50 years ago in the Sierra Maestra<sup>9</sup> moun-

tains. We were both in the Commander in Chief’s Column One; [he was a] doctor by profession. We crossed [the country] together to open the Second Front and—it will be 50 years now—we arrived on March 11. And on the 27th, it will be 50 years since we promoted Almeida and myself to commander, and as we once commented: “It took so much work to become a commander, and so many years!”

In the Second Front, Machado was the head of medical services; he was a doctor and a combatant, a wounded combatant. There are those who are wounded by coincidence, because a stray bullet hits them in the rearguard, or a bomb dropped by a plane . . . Machado healed the injured on the forward edge of Batista’s<sup>10</sup> last offensive, on the Guantánamo front. He would send the wounded combatant to the rearguard, take away his gun and set himself to firing [at the enemy]. He was wounded, and I prohibited him from continuing to carry out those activities that were outside of his main function, which was to attend to the injured, make them better, and above all attend to the population that lived around the many field hospitals that were set up, some of them even with X-ray [equipment], despite the fact that in the places where we were, practically the majority of the people had never personally seen a doctor.

After the triumph, he was Minister of Public Health, and as I said in the Political Bureau—begging the pardon of previous ministers or the current one, [José Ramón] Balaguer—in my opinion, that of Fidel, and that of many other comrades, he was the best minister of public health that this country has ever had. [Applause]. He was there for seven years, from 1960 to 1967.

### 1970 sugar harvest in Matanzas

In 1968, there was a very complicated situation in Matanzas. The party was very weak; as we said on that occasion in a very vulgar way, there was a mess in the Party, and Fidel told him: “Leave this ministry and go over there,” because preparations were beginning for the 1970 sugar harvest. He went there, and under his leadership, the province of Matanzas

was the only one that met its target for the harvest—one million tons of sugar. There were six provinces at the time. Matanzas had extra sugar cane, which they had to send to Villa Clara and Havana province, which was a single province at the time. In fact, I remember the slogan that the people of Matanzas had: “Matanzas, one million, Henequeneros champion!” [Henequeneros was the name of the provincial baseball team at the time.] They fulfilled both.

I think that when [Esteban] Lazo<sup>11</sup> was there, on one or two occasions subsequently, they achieved one million. That must have been because of the sugar cane that Machado left planted there for you [Laughter]. That was another time. That’s where our friend Machado was, and in 1971, we were presented with the same situation with the party in Havana province, which was [then made up of] the two current Havana provinces. If, looking at them separately, each is quite a challenge—one, because it’s the capital, with its characteristics; the other, because it is one of the provinces with the most municipalities, 19—just imagine the two together. And Fidel asked him to come and attend to the party, which had a situation similar to that of Matanzas. I came to think, and I commented to him once: “Hey, Machado, you’re the fixer of parties or provincial [party] committees.” But he did both of those tasks well.

He has been a member of the Political Bureau since the First Congress and the party organizer since 1974; deputy and member of the Council of State since the first National Assembly.<sup>13</sup>

As most of you know, he is demanding; he is very demanding! To be sincere, at times I have personally told him that he is not always demanding with the best methods, at times. But he is demanding just like—without trying to compare them, not at all—Che [Guevara] used to be; they start by demanding more from themselves than they demand from others. [Applause]

11. Esteban Lazo, a farm worker from Matanzas province, joined the Association of Rebel Youth following the 1959 victory. He was first secretary of the CCP in the City of Havana province from 1994–2003, and has been a vice president of the Council of State since 1992. He has been in charge of ideological matters for the CCP since 2003.

13. The first CCP Congress took place Dec. 17–22, 1975. The first National Assembly was elected Dec. 2, 1976.



# Stalinism and roots of Yugoslavia's disintegration

*Below is an excerpt from The Truth About Yugoslavia, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. The articles in this book first appeared in the Militant. Written by a reporting team of socialist workers that visited Yugoslavia in 1992, the articles tell the truth about Yugoslavia, expose the role of the Stalinist caste in promoting national divisions in order to preserve their privileged status, and why working people should oppose imperialist military intervention. Copyright ©1993 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

**BY GEORGE FYSON  
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN**

The Yugoslav bureaucracy—like its counterparts in Russia and elsewhere—was from early on a breeding

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

ground for regional competition. The bureaucrats in the most advanced regions used nationalist demagoguery as a weapon for self-enrichment—demanding control of the spoils of foreign investment and of trade conducted across their international borders, for example.

In the 1960s and 1970s, a section of



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

**Antiwar protesters in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, part of hundreds of thousands who marched in Serbia June and July 1992 protesting the regime's role in the war in Bosnia and Croatia.**

the bureaucracy in Croatia called for income from the lucrative tourist industry of the Dalmatian coast area to be allocated entirely to the Croatian, not the federal, government. They resisted using such resources to even out the imbalances across Yugoslavia by advancing the less-developed regions.

Provinces and republics closed their markets to one another, seeking to become self-sufficient. This inevitably worked to the detriment of the least-developed regions. By 1985, for example, the income of the average resident of Slovenia was 70 percent higher than that of the average resident of Macedonia; by 1989, it was 125 percent more.

The historical roots of national divisions in Yugoslavia had been dealt huge blows by the revolution. But the bureaucrats began the process that they continue today—to do their utmost to revive the old nationalist causes, seeking to mobilize workers and farmers around their reactionary appeals, for the purpose of holding onto power and expanding the resources under their own control.

Their ability to do this has been limited by the deep-rooted gains of the Yugoslav revolution, which is seen in the extent to which, despite the appeals of the demagogues, large layers of working people do not see themselves as

“Croatian,” “Serbian,” or some other nationality, and refuse to endorse the chauvinist course laid out by the bureaucrats. A common response is, “We are Yugoslavs, not Croats or Serbs.”

In proportion as social inequality grew and tensions developed—between working people and the rising parasitic caste; between the rulers of different regions; and within the bureaucracy as a whole—the Yugoslav bureaucrats needed a powerful arbiter, standing over society as a whole, to secure their rule. In this situation Tito, a figure with great authority deriving from his identification with the revolution, was able to emerge as a Bonapartist leader. In this role he straddled the interests of the caste and the workers and peasants, keeping in check the interests of the bureaucrats, and functioning as the supreme arbiter within the caste itself.

Protests by workers and students in Yugoslavia emerged in the 1960s, focusing especially on the new privileges of the ruling social layer. The protests began to spread on a Yugoslavia-wide basis. Forty thousand students occupied the University of Belgrade in 1968, promoting a petition that opposed the rulers' privileges and calling for democratic rights. The petition was then signed by 200,000 students around the country. The students also opposed the U.S. war in Vietnam in the

face of official government neutrality.

Over the next four years a deep economic slump set in, the product of the slowdown in world capitalism and bureaucratic mismanagement.

Following the worldwide recession of 1974–75, the economic crisis intensified. Investment declined, the foreign debt escalated, production fell, and unemployment grew rapidly. By 1985 the average wage was only 40 percent of what was officially considered necessary to support a family of four at 1979 living standards. Inflation skyrocketed to an annual rate of 2,500 percent by January 1990.

From the end of 1989 to mid-1991, the Yugoslav economy contracted by more than 40 percent. A number of local governments and enterprises announced bankruptcy.

What led to the disintegration and resulted in the bloody conflicts that have raged since 1991 was not Tito's death in 1980, but the drastic economic decline. However, the Bonapartist ruler's demise did mark a turning point in the acceleration of the centrifugal forces in Yugoslavia.

These strains finally shattered the ruling Communist Party. The party was formally dissolved in early 1990. Many members left before its final breakup, declaring themselves to be Croatian nationalists, Slovenian nationalists, or some other variant. The caste in Belgrade demagogically advanced Serbian nationalist goals, often behind the cloak of being the defender of “Yugoslavia.”

This process has amounted to the bureaucracy restructuring itself—redividing and reapportioning the loot, the caste's pillage of the social surplus, among itself—and using workers and peasants as unwilling pawns in their bloody turf war.

At the same time as each wing of the bureaucracy has sought to gain control over more resources, they all cherish hopes of linking up with those they have the closest economic relations with among the imperialist powers. Depending on which wing of the caste and which region, this may be either the ruling capitalist families of Germany, France, or other countries.

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# For a labor party based on unions

There is an uptick in protest actions by working people in the United States. Independent truckers—facing soaring fuel costs—began rolling strikes and protest actions across the country on April 1.

Immigrant workers fighting against raids, deportations, and other forms of intimidation are fueling involvement in efforts to build May Day actions in dozens of cities.

Calls to protest indignities and brutalities produced by this crisis-ridden system—from imperialism’s expanding wars, to hospital closings and soaring prices—are getting a broader echo in the working class.

In Chicago, where more than 400,000 marched May 1, 2006, and more than 150,000 marched on May Day last year, this year’s march is gaining momentum. Broad support has built in the labor movement, among Black rights organizations, immigrant rights groups, and on the campuses.

This is important. It shows that these aren’t “immigrant rallies” but vanguard actions of the working class. It makes it easier for workers to see how the battle to win legalization for 12 million undocumented

workers living in the United States is a life-and-death question for the entire labor movement.

This resistance is bubbling in the midst of an economic recession. The deepening financial and economic crisis of U.S. and world capitalism is in its early stages. Sections of the working class and exploited producers are already feeling the squeeze as prices rise, layoffs increase, and debts weigh heavier.

We are in for years of this. Before it is over, the standard of living of the toilers will decline in absolute terms.

More and more workers are beginning to recognize this fact and becoming more open to considering what political alternative there is to the Democrats and Republicans.

This is a good time to promote the need for the unions to break with the twin capitalist parties and form an independent labor party, based on fighting unions, that leads the struggle for cost-of-living increases in wages and benefits; a shorter workweek, with no cut in pay, to spread the available work to all; an end to raids and deportation and immediate legalization for all undocumented workers, with no conditions.

# Momentum building for May Day

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Momentum continues to build toward broad participation in working-class political actions on May Day. Marches and rallies have now been called in at least 24 cities (see list this page).

In the last week, activists called demonstrations in San Diego, Atlanta, and Dover, New Jersey.

In Minneapolis, a delegation of workers from D’Amico and Sons restaurant have joined the coalition building a May Day rally and march in neighboring St. Paul. The restaurant fired 15 workers after telling them that they had received social security “no-match” letters—an increasingly common tool of intimidation used by employers and the government against immigrant workers.

“It is important that all Latinos and others from different countries participate in the march because this is the only way we can pressure the government to pass an immigration reform,” Porfirio Onofre told the *Militant*. Onofre was fired at the restaurant after working there 10 years.

“There is a lot of discrimination,” said fired D’Amico and Sons worker Victor Taday. “Many don’t know of this situation. I believe it is important that this message reach everyone and that it be known that all workers have rights in this country.”

Last year a half million people rallied May Day in more than 100 cities. The movement to retake the day as an international workers’ day began in 2006. That year Congress was considering a bill

that would have criminalized 12 million foreign-born workers. In response, 2 million people took to the streets in 140 U.S. cities to demand legalization for all immigrants.

In Atlanta 16 people gathered at the offices of the Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR) April 7 to begin organizing an Atlanta May Day rally. In addition to GLAHR, representatives of Cajola United in Solidarity for Guatemala, International Action Center, and the Socialist Workers Party attended.

They decided to meet again the following week to build the action, which the coalition set for 4 p.m. on May 1.

Holding a long banner that read “Stop War/Legalization Now” in Spanish, organizers of the May Day action in San Diego held an April 5 press conference at Chuey’s restaurant in a working-class district of the city. Among the organizers were representatives of the immigrant rights group Sí Se Puede, Raza Rights Coalition, Activist San Diego, Border Angels, and activists involved in struggles by workers in Tijuana and Oaxaca, Mexico.

The San Diego action is the fifth called in a California city. Rallies are already being built in San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, and Los Angeles.

*Rollande Girard in Minneapolis, Rick Trujillo in San Diego, and Jacob Perasso in Doraville, Georgia, contributed to this article.*

# LETTERS

## Cuban art exhibit

An extensive exhibition on Cuban art is currently on show until June 2008 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. “Art and History From 1868 to Today” charts 150 years of the island’s history as seen through the work of visual artists. It brings together over 500 artifacts—paintings, sculptures, photography, posters, videos, installations—as well as a magnificent mural.

It is organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, with the participation of the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes and the Fototeca de Cuba, Havana. For more information, see [http://www.mbam.qc.ca/micro\\_sites/cuba/expo\\_en.html](http://www.mbam.qc.ca/micro_sites/cuba/expo_en.html).  
*Dodie Wepler*  
*London, United Kingdom*

## Literature for prisoners

I came across your address in a

book that was new but in the garbage. It was called *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, by Jack Barnes. I am writing this letter with the utmost respect and sincerity in hopes of obtaining the “Socialist Newsweekly, the *Militant*,” and any other literature that you can provide for prisoners.

*A prisoner*  
*Lincoln, Nebraska*

## ‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

## American Axle strike

I think *Militant* readers need a

report on the continuing strike by 3,650 American Axle workers in a number of plants in the United States. The strike began February 26. The workers, who are members of the United Auto Workers, are resisting efforts by their bosses to cut wages by up to 50 percent.

The strike has slowed or stopped production at 29 GM plants in North America. This includes a GM truck plant in Oshawa near Toronto and some auto parts plants in Ontario.

*John Steele*  
*Toronto, Canada*

**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.**

# Chicago May Day

Continued from front page

sentatives of the Latino Chapter of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, Pueblo Sin Fronteras, March 10th Coalition, and other groups building the march. “We cannot tolerate one standard of treatment for native-born workers and another for foreign-born workers,” Larry Davis, president of Teamsters Local 743, told the press.

Davis pointed out that International Workers Day began in Chicago with mass struggles for an eight-hour day. He pointed out that “many of the leaders of that movement were immigrant workers.”

New endorsers include a number of local union bodies: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2081, Teamsters Local 743, Teamsters Council 25, United Food and Commercial Workers Locals 881 and 1546, United Steel Workers Local 12775, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 21, United Electrical Workers Union, UNITE HERE, and the Chicago Federation of Labor.

Tania Unzueta, a student leader of the March 10th coalition, quoted from Martin Luther King’s 1966 letter from the Birmingham jail, that we have the “moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.” She announced a special meeting of students to build the May Day march on April 12, at the Hull House on the Chicago campus of the University of Illinois.

## May Day Actions for Immigrant Rights

*This is an initial list. The time and location of the marches are included where the information is available. Please send us information on actions in your area for inclusion in next week’s list.*

### CALIFORNIA

**Los Angeles** 2 p.m. rallies at MacArthur Park and at Olympic and Broadway, march to City Hall  
**Oakland** 3 p.m. rally in Fruitvale Plaza, march to City Hall  
**San Diego** 3:30 p.m. rally at San Diego City College, march to Chicano Park  
**San Francisco** 2 p.m. rally in Delores Park, march to Civic Center for 5 p.m. rally  
**San Jose** 4 p.m. rally at corner of King and Story, march to City Hall

### FLORIDA

**Florida City** (May 3) rally from 12:00 noon to 7 p.m. at Benito Juarez Park

### ILLINOIS

**Chicago** 10 a.m. assemble at Union Park, march at 12:00 noon

### GEORGIA

**Atlanta** 4 p.m. rally at state capitol

### MASSACHUSETTS

**Amherst** 12:00 noon rally at Amherst Common  
**Boston** 4:30 p.m. rally on Boston Common  
**Chelsea** 2:30 p.m. rally in Glendale Park in Everett, march to Chelsea

### MICHIGAN

**Detroit** 10 a.m. rally in Patton Park, march to Clark Park

### MINNESOTA

**St. Paul** 2 p.m. march through St. Paul to state capitol

### NEW JERSEY

**Dover** 6 p.m. Blackwell St.

### NEW YORK

**Hempstead** time and location to be announced  
**Manhattan** 12:00 noon rally at Union Square, 4 p.m. march  
**Rochester** 4:30 p.m. rally at Liberty Pole on East Main and East Ave.

### OREGON

**Portland** time and location to be announced

### TEXAS

**Houston** 2 p.m. Mickey Leland Federal Building, 1900 block of Louisiana

### WASHINGTON STATE

**Bellingham** time and location to be announced  
**Mount Vernon** time and location to be announced  
**Seattle** time and location to be announced  
**WASHINGTON, D.C.**

National Mall, time to be announced

### WISCONSIN

**Madison** 11:30 a.m. Brittingham Park

## Correction

The wrong location was given in last week’s issue for the April 24 panel discussion of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*. The meeting will take place at Iowa State University in Ames, not at the University of Iowa in Iowa City.