

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Textile workers in Mahalla, Egypt, talk about their fight  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 17 MAY 2, 2011

## Cuban revolutionary veteran tours UK, Ireland

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—“What we were defending at Playa Girón was the socialist character of the revolution. Those who fell died defending the socialist revolution,” declared Víctor Dreke, a Cuban revolutionary leader from the historic generation that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and opened the socialist revolution in the Americas.

Dreke was speaking to 180 people at a public meeting at the headquarters of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) here April 12. The packed event, organized by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC), was called to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the victory of Cuba’s workers and farmers over the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs. The final battle was fought at Playa Girón (Girón beach) less than 72 hours after the mercenaries landed.

Dreke commanded two companies at Playa Girón, where he was wounded.  
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## U.S. rulers chip away at rights with ‘terror’ trials

BY CINDY JAQUITH

U.S. president Barack Obama reiterated April 17 that he doesn’t intend to close the U.S. prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and that he would have preferred to try some Guantánamo prisoners in U.S. civilian courts—a plan that was dropped by the White House earlier this month.

What’s important for working people is how all the administration’s shifting moves fit into the government’s ongoing campaign to chip away at workers’ rights under the guise of “fighting terrorism.”

Attorney General Eric Holder reported April 4 that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four others incarcerated at the U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo will now face military tribunals, not civilian trials as he had proposed in November 2009. The five are charged with major responsibility for the 2001 World Trade Center bombing.

Holder, who told *New Yorker* mag-  
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## All out for May Day actions across U.S.!

Defend our unions and immigrant rights



Militant/Eric Simpson

Laborers International Union contingent at March 26 labor rally in Los Angeles

Build and defend fighting unions! Legalize undocumented workers! We urge workers, working farmers, and young people to mobilize under that dual banner on May Day this year.

It is becoming easier for working people to see that these are both part of one and the same struggle to defend the interests of our class against deep-

sin and elsewhere defending the right of public workers to have unions. A contingent of farmworkers from the Farm Labor Organizing Committee in Ohio joined the “We are one” action in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, initiated by the United Mine Workers union to protest the antiunion campaign in Wisconsin and other states. May 1 actions defending immigrant workers in Milwaukee and Los Angeles are being sponsored by the AFL-CIO.

The bosses need to keep us divided, to prevent us from waging an effective fight as they seek to shore up their declining profit rates on our backs. They try to convince U.S.-born workers that foreign-born workers are  
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## EDITORIAL

ening attacks by the bosses and their government. Both battles are fought under the same watchword—Solidarity in action.

Defenders of immigrant rights joined in the union actions in Wiscon-

## Prounion rally in Wisconsin outnumbers antilabor action

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MADISON, Wisconsin—Countering a rally called by Americans for Prosperity that featured former Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, some 5,000 union members and supporters marched in the bitter cold and snow here April 16 in yet another protest at the capitol.

Over the past two months, union mobilizations often numbering in the tens of thousands have converged at the capitol in defense of public unions and workers’ rights, drawing support from unionists, farmers, students, and others across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and other parts of the United States.

The Americans for Prosperity “Tax Day” protest was one of many organized by tea party groups across the country. The Wisconsin event drew about 600 from different areas of the state, many to hear Palin speak. Some carried signs

that read: “Welcome Sister Freedom,” “Stand with Walker,” and “Public Workers—the Party is Over!”

While prounion forces organized a counterrally on the opposite side of the  
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## ‘Militant’ well received in Wisconsin towns, rural areas



Militant/Paul Mailhot

David Gundersen in Stoughton, Wisconsin, subscribed to *Militant* when socialists Alyson Kennedy, left, and Betsy Farley visited his home to discuss politics April 17.

BY PAUL MAILHOT

STOUGHTON, Wisconsin—“People are starting to think about unions again, and that’s positive,” said David Gundersen, a high-school custodian and unionist in this town of 13,000, some 40 minutes southeast of Madison. Gundersen has joined the demonstrations at the Wisconsin state capitol every week. He was talking to a group of socialist workers going door-to-door in his neighborhood introducing working people to the *Mili-*

*tant* newspaper.

Gundersen explained that the state government is pressing ahead with its assault on the unions. “It’s going to be a long fight,” he said, still hoarse from chanting at a protest the day before.

Gundersen was one of 37 workers who bought subscriptions to the *Militant* over the April 16–17 weekend. Socialist workers followed up on initial contacts made through the recent mobilizations in Madison and  
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# Activists speak out on FBI raids, harassment

BY JANET POST

WASHINGTON—Since last September the FBI has raided the homes of 23 antiwar and political activists, visited their workplaces, and pored over their telephone calls. FBI agents seized documents, computers, cell phones, and passports.

Three of the activists who have been subpoenaed to appear before federal grand juries spoke at a workshop at the Latin American Solidarity Coalition Conference held here April 9–10. They represented the Committee to Stop FBI Repression. All 23 people subpoenaed have refused to testify before federal grand jury hearings, invoking the Fifth Amendment.

Sarah Smith, a Palestinian solidarity activist from Chicago, described a December 3 call she received from the FBI. She had traveled with two Palestinian American friends on a delegation to Israel and the West Bank earlier in the year. The agents asked to sit down for a “friendly talk,” telling her, “You don’t need a lawyer; you’re not in trouble—we just need 30 minutes.”

Smith refused, and immediately called her two friends just before FBI agents arrived at their homes to deliver subpoenas. “The grand jury is hand-picked by the prosecution to get indictments,” Smith said. “You cannot talk to your lawyer. They can omit evidence; there is no rebuttal.”

“Moreover,” she added, “They press you to name other people, name other organizations.”

Another panelist was Meredith Aby, a teacher and member of the Twin Cities

Anti-War Committee and the Colombia Action Network, whose home was raided by eight FBI agents September 24 last year. Among the things taken from her home were sign-up sheets from literature tables set up by the School of the Americas Watch, an organization that protests U.S. military intervention.

“The government agents also want us to say where we have traveled in the U.S. and abroad, and who we associated with on those trips,” Aby said. “This is a fishing expedition.”

Kosta Harlan, of Durham, North Carolina, reported that four FBI agents also came to his home September 24. Harlan repeatedly refused to talk to them without a lawyer. “They tried to intimidate me. Finally, I just closed the door and told them, ‘I’m done.’ Then they posted a surveillance truck outside my house to see who would come to visit me.”

Harlan pointed to the three demands the committee is raising: call off grand jury hearings; return belongings seized in the raids; and end the FBI raids, as well as harassment calls at home and work.

According to a March 26 *New York Times* article, a U.S. Justice Department document says that from December 2008 to March 2009, the FBI initiated 11,667 “assessments” of individuals and organizations. Speech, religion, and ethnicity are factors that can be used to single out those “assessed.” Sending informers into organizations, photographing people, and interviewing others about the targeted individual are all legitimate “assessment” techniques.

## Houston picket counters antiabortion group



Militant/Amanda Uрман

HOUSTON—Supporters of abortion rights picketed in front of the Hyatt-Regency Hotel here April 9 to protest the rightist outfit Heroic Media, which was organizing a fund-raiser inside. Heroic Media and its affiliate Life Always have sponsored antiabortion billboards at locations across the country, many of them targeting Black women. Titled “Sowing Seeds for Life,” the fund-raiser included a fashion show with clothing provided by Dillard’s department store.

“I have problems with anyone telling me what I can and can’t do with my body, and that goes for telling anyone else—especially when the responsibility for child rearing falls disproportionately on the shoulders of women,” Kat Herrera, 24, told the *Militant*. “This comes at the same time as cuts to programs that provide health care for uninsured women.”

The protest was organized by Pro-Choice Houston and the University of Houston Student Feminist Organization.

—AMANDA ULMAN

## D.C. protest opposes cutoff of Planned Parenthood funding

BY NED MEASEL

WASHINGTON—Three thousand supporters of women’s right to abortion and access to health clinics rallied in the National Mall here April 7. Buses came from as far away as New York and North Carolina.

In February the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill eliminating all funding for Title X and Planned Parenthood. The Title X program funds birth control, patient education, counseling, cancer screenings, testing for sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy testing. The Hyde Amendment, passed by Congress in 1976, prohibits the use of federal money to fund abortions.

Planned Parenthood has sought to downplay its abortion services and emphasize others in its campaign to main-

tain government funding.

Leah Gallant, a student at Swarthmore College, told the *Militant*, “Ninety-seven percent of Planned Parenthood funds are used for nonabortion services. But it’s also important to talk about abortion itself as a right—that it’s up to women to make their own decisions.”

A week after the demonstration here, Congress finally reached a compromise budget deal. Supporters of cutting off funds for Title X and Planned Parenthood agreed to drop those demands. In return, the Democrats agreed to ban all government funds for abortion in the District of Columbia.

In another blow to legal, safe abortions, the governor of Idaho April 14 signed into law a bill banning abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy. Idaho is the third state to adopt such legislation.

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Ronald Bell handcuffed to hospital bed after he was beaten by Chicago cop.

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# Hundreds in S.F. turn out for film defending Cuban 5

BY LEA SHERMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—It was standing room only April 16 as more than 350 people packed into the Brava Theater here for the West Coast premier of the documentary *Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up!*

“This documentary will be an important tool to free the Cuban Five,” Alicia Jrapko, of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, told the crowd. She introduced the filmmaker Saul Landau.

Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González—known as the Cuban Five—were framed up and railroaded to prison by the U.S. government for monitoring the activities of paramilitary groups in South Florida that have carried out violent actions and sabotage against Cuba. The five have spent more than 12 years in U.S. prisons.

The 80-minute film depicts the more than 50 years of U.S. efforts to overthrow the Cuban Revolution, including an interview with longtime CIA operative Luis Posada Carriles. He was indicted in both Cuba and Venezuela for the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner that killed all 73 people on board, and boasted to the *New York Times* that he masterminded hotel bombings in Cuba in 1997. Never charged with these crimes, Carriles was recently acquitted of perjury charges in a U.S. federal court.

The film includes an interview with Hernández, falsely charged with “conspiracy to commit murder” for the Cuban government’s decision in 1996 to

shoot down two aircraft of the counterrevolutionary Brothers to the Rescue group from South Florida that had provocatively and repeatedly invaded Cuban airspace. He is currently serving two life terms plus 15 years.

Well-known actor Danny Glover, who has visited Hernández in prison, is in the film. He urged the audience to support the fight to free the five.

The Cuban Cowboys performed the theme song “El Danzón de Noventa Millas,” which they wrote for the documentary.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Audience at April 16 showing in San Francisco of *Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up!* a documentary by Saul Landau exposing U.S. government frame-up of Cuban Five.

## Víctor Dreke speaks in UK and Ireland

Continued from front page

ed in battle. The following year, he headed special operations against U.S.-backed counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains. He was second in command to Ernesto Che Guevara in the Cuban internationalist mission aiding anti-imperialist forces in the Congo in 1965, and headed the Cuban combatants aiding the independence movement in Guinea-Bissau in 1966–68. Over the years he has held various diplomatic responsibilities in Africa and is today president of the Africa-Cuba Friendship Society.

Other speakers were Cuban journalist Reinaldo Taladrí; Kevin Courtney, deputy general secretary of NUT; and Andrew Murray of Stop the War Coalition.

As CSC secretary Bernard Regan, who chaired the meeting, pointed out, the imperialist invasion was well prepared and conceived. What the mercenaries lacked was a just cause—they lost their will to fight before they ran out of bullets. Regan cited the social composition of the invaders: 194 ex-military personnel and henchmen, 100 owners of large landed estates, 24 large property owners, 67 landlords of buildings, 122 large merchants, 179 idle rich, 35 industrial capitalists, and 112 lumpens.

Regan welcomed participants, including Esther Armenteros, Cuban ambassador to the United Kingdom; María Aleida del Riego of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP); national presidents of the NUT and University and College Union; and the general secretary of the National Union of Journalists, Jeremy Dear.

Courtney encouraged people to get a copy of Dreke’s book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* to learn the story of his life and through it the story of the Cuban Revolution. “I bought it many years ago and have read it a number of times,” he said. (See excerpt from book on page 8.)

Dreke, Taladrí, and del Riego were also featured speakers at a “Girón 50” conference in Dublin, Ireland, April 16 at the headquarters of the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU). The event, which attracted 120 people, is one leg of a nine-city Ireland tour of the three Cubans organized by the Irish Friends of Cuba Coalition.

Taladrí pointed out that there had been many imperialist invasions in Latin America before. “This was the first invasion that was defeated,” he said.

“Our people had fought over many years and, led by Fidel Castro, finally tri-

umphed on Jan. 1, 1959,” Dreke said. “Some 20,000 lost their lives at the hands of the Batista dictatorship, including sugar and agricultural workers, farmers, young people. . . . The victory allowed peasants to get land and opened a fight to end discrimination—against Blacks, against women, against people living in the countryside—and for rights for working people.”

Dreke talked about Fidel Castro’s speech given on the eve of the invasion at a mass funeral rally for seven Cubans who were killed in a U.S. bombing raid days earlier. It was there that Fidel Castro publicly proclaimed for the first time the socialist character of the revolution. “Many people didn’t know what socialism meant,” said Dreke. “So Fidel asked us, ‘Do you agree with this law or that enacted by the new government, like the nationalization of foreign businesses, like the ending of racial discrimination?’ Those are socialist measures, he explained. ‘We’ve made a socialist revolution right under the nose of imperialism. And we’re going to defend it, rifles in hand.’”

That’s why, Dreke continued, “the mobilization met with such a united mass response: newly trained pilots, young people who staffed the anti-aircraft batteries—we called them the artillery children—militia volunteers, the armed forces, and others who carried out whatever task they were responsible for.”

Pointing to Reinaldo Taladrí, born three months after the victory at Playa Girón, Dreke said, “His presence shows the continuity of the revolution. It took us to fight in the Congo, to aid the Lumumbist forces there. It took us to Angola to repel the South African invasion of that country. Today the spirit lives on in the voluntary international



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Veteran Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke speaking at April 12 London meeting celebrating 50th anniversary of Cuban workers’ victory at Bay of Pigs.

health, literacy, and other brigades. It’s the socialist revolution that we’ve been defending against the blockade, through the Special Period—the period of sharp economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union—and what our people are preparing ourselves for today, to resist and win.”

“What we have done in Cuba can’t be mechanically copied in other countries,” Dreke said. “But examples have no frontiers.”

“It was great to hear and meet Víctor Dreke,” Lucien Mambu Guillaume told the *Militant*. One of five workers from the McVities biscuit factory who attended the London event, Mambu arrived in the United Kingdom from the Congo a decade ago. “I knew nothing about the Cubans in the Congo,” he said. “Dreke has taught me about our common history.”

The *Independent*, a major London daily, interviewed Dreke and ran an extensive article about him in its April 17 edition. Dreke “is living Cuban history,” the paper said. “His belief in the socialist system remains resolute.” The article concluded by quoting Dreke: “Cuba will never go back to capitalism. The young people didn’t live it, but they know how it was, they have values.”

### Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs \$22

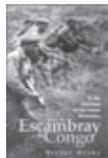
Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas



by Fidel Castro, José Ramón Fernández

Fifty years ago, in less than 72 hours of combat, Cuba’s revolutionary armed forces defeated a U.S.-organized invasion by 1,500 mercenaries. In the process, the Cuban people set an example for workers, farmers, and youth the world over that with political consciousness, class solidarity, courage, and revolutionary leadership, one can stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds—and win.

### From the Escambray to the Congo \$17



In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution by Víctor Dreke

Dreke, second in command of the internationalist column in the Congo led by Che Guevara in 1965, recounts the creative joy with which working people have defended their revolutionary course—from Cuba’s Escambray mountains to Africa and beyond.

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## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**Challenge Facing Unionists: Answering State and Local “Budget” Scams.** Speaker: Carole Lesnick, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 29, 7:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.

### TEXAS

#### Houston

**Legalize All Workers Now!** Speaker: Amanda Ulman, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 30, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W 34th St. Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**The Working Class Takes Center Stage.** Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 30, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 5418 Rainer Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Egypt: After Mubarak’s Fall, Workers Use Opening to Organize and Act in Politics—A Firsthand Account from ‘Militant’ Reporting Team.** Speaker: Dan Fein, participant in *Militant* reporting team to Cairo. Sat., April 30. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 143 Kennedy St. NW, Suite 15. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.

### CANADA

#### Montreal

**Communist League Campaign: Working-Class Alternative in the Federal Elections.** Speaker: Joseph Young, Communist League candidate in Papineau riding. Sat., April 30, 7 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

# 'My campaign stands in solidarity with workers'

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL—"Whether we are in Wisconsin or Canada, we have the same interests as workers," said Joseph Young, Communist League candidate from the Montreal constituency of Papineau in Canada's May 2 elections, at an April 8 campaign event. "A worker at a recent international labor solidarity rally near the U.S.-Canadian border said this and it's very true."

Young was referring to an April 2 union rally his campaign participated in of some 1,500 U.S. and Canadian workers in Blaine, Washington.

"My campaign stands in solidarity with all working people fighting attacks on our class by the bosses and their government, like the workers at four Couche Tard convenience stores fighting to unionize," Young said at the April 8 event. The company decided to close one of its busy Mon-

real stores after workers there voted March 14 to join the CSN labor federation.

Working people need class solidarity to confront the deepening worldwide economic crisis, Young explained. "Some 1.5 million workers in Canada are unemployed. The average household owes 1.5 times their annual income to the banks, and we face rising prices for gas and food."

Young outlined some of the demands the Communist League platform raises: guaranteed unemployment insurance at union scale for all the unemployed, a massive federally funded public works program, and adjustment of all wages and social benefits to a cost-of-living scale set by the unions.



Joseph Young, left, Communist League candidate in Montreal constituency of Papineau in Canada's May 2 election, campaigning at international union rally on border of Washington State and British Columbia, April 2.

## 'Militant' in Wisconsin towns and rural areas

Continued from front page

also found new people interested in a working-class newspaper. Five new subscribers, including Gundersen, bought *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes.

Workers are drawn to the description on the back cover that says the book "aims to show why only the working class can lead humanity out of the social crisis endemic to capitalism in its decline. It shows how millions of workers . . . will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society."

The April 16-17 weekend is the beginning of a weeklong door-to-door effort in towns and rural areas throughout Wisconsin, where the working class has been going through an experience of resistance to government austerity moves and union busting. Starting April 23 socialist workers throughout the United States and in a number of other countries will begin a six-week subscription campaign to win 2,000 new readers. That campaign will build on the successful effort over the past two and a half months that has netted more than 1,000 new subscribers.

"We are tired of the government

dumping the world's problems on working people," was what one worker who picked up the *Militant* said. This reporter is joining socialist workers from throughout the Midwest tapping into that sentiment.

"You can have a different type of discussion now about communist politics," explained Dennis Richter, a worker from Chicago who was selling the *Militant* in the rural town of Spring Green, west of Madison. "One worker who said he didn't want the newspaper, began to explain what he and his coworkers are doing in his plant to defend themselves against their boss," said Richter. "Before long he realized he was talking about the exact things the *Militant* is writing about. He still didn't want a subscription, but he ended up donating \$5 to help get the paper around to others."

"Many people we talked to in the Madison area had placards from recent union protests in their windows," reported Maggie Trowe from Des Moines, Iowa. Those were good neighborhoods to start discussions on what way forward for the labor movement.

"One man who works at the University of Wisconsin first bought an introductory subscription to the *Militant*," said Trowe. "Later, as I was walking down the street with Randy Jasper, a local farmer on our team, the guy drove up and said, 'I decided I want to buy that book, the big one,' pointing to *Changing Face of U.S. Politics*."

Trowe asked him what made him decide to get the book. "Well, I really sympathize with your ideas," he explained. "And I read that article in the *Militant* about the guy who bombed the planes and got off in U.S. courts. That's just not fair." He was referring to Luis Posada Carriles, the CIA-trained Cuban counterrevolutionary recently acquitted in federal court.

Another team on Sunday, April 17, sold door-to-door in the Madison neighborhood where the Oscar Mayer Kraft food plant is located. Seven subscriptions to the paper and two copies of the *Changing Face of U.S. Politics* were sold.

Door-to-door sales allow for a relaxed discussion and exchange of views. Socialist workers in Wisconsin this week are getting a feel for a broad range of opinions that exist among working people.

Some support the state government's antiunion measures as a way to get the economy going again and produce jobs, and are taken in by arguments about "shared sacrifice." Others point to what they consider the poor record of the unions in fighting for the rights of workers. Still others are discouraged that the protests have not turned back the anti-union assault.

It's a discussion and debate socialist workers are keenly interested in and the *Militant* newspaper is an important part of.

## Readers give to Militant Fund

BY SETH GALINSKY

"Keep the change, it's for the cause," a new reader in Madison, Wisconsin, said when she bought a 12-week introductory subscription and a copy of the book *Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes from socialist workers going door to door in her neighborhood.

Supporters of the *Militant* around the world have pledged to raise more than \$115,000 for the weekly socialist newspaper (see fund chart).

"A union organizer we met in Madison who also bought the subscription-book combination added an extra \$10 to his check, when we told him about the fund drive," said Willie Cotton, one of those going door to door with the paper in Wisconsin.

The fund covers printing and mailing expenses and allows the *Militant* to send correspondents to cover working-class struggles around the world, from Egypt to Wisconsin.

Supporters of the paper in New York City have adopted a goal of winning 15 first-time contributors. "We've already won six new contributors, two of which pledged \$50," said Dan Fein, the local fund director in the city. "One long-term subscriber, Nana Adu-Amankwa, said he likes the *Militant's* position against the U.S. and NATO bombing of Libya and is bringing his first contribution to the next Militant Labor Forum."

Supporters of the fund in Twin Cities, Minnesota, organized a public fund event April 15 where speakers included Paul Mailhot and Natalie Morrison, who both just returned from a reporting trip to Egypt.

"Just like in Madison," said Morrison, "working people in Egypt wanted to discuss a way forward. With the *Militant* and Pathfinder books we were able to talk concretely about the workings of capitalism, the potential of the working class, and the example of Cuba and other revolutions." The meeting raised \$1,130 in new pledges.

Send your contribution directly to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018, or contact a distributor near you, listed on page 8.

<i>'Militant' fund drive</i>			
April 2-May 30 (week 1)			
Country	Quota	Paid	%
UNITED STATES			
San Francisco	\$14,000	\$3,575	26%
Des Moines	\$3,400	\$365	11%
New York	\$21,000	\$1,967	9%
Houston	\$3,000	\$211	7%
Miami	\$3,000	\$155	5%
Boston	\$4,000	\$200	5%
Twin Cities	\$7,000	\$225	3%
Atlanta	\$7,800	\$250	3%
Chicago	\$10,000	0%	
Seattle	\$8,600	0%	
Los Angeles	\$8,500	0%	
Washington, D.C.	\$8,500	0%	
Philadelphia	\$4,000	0%	
Other			
Total U.S.	\$102,800	\$6,948	7%
Canada	\$6,400	\$1,100	17%
New Zealand	\$3,500	\$996	28%
United Kingdom	\$1,600	0%	
Australia	\$1,500	0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$115,800</b>	<b>\$9,044</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Should be</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$13,750</b>	<b>13%</b>

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*Pathfinder Press*

# Teachers, students rally against education cuts

## Tamarac, Florida

Hundreds of teachers and other union members rallied here April 14 outside the Broward Teachers Union hall. They lined the street during rush-hour traffic to protest attacks on wages, benefits, and working conditions by the Broward County School Board and the state government.

Teachers said they have not received raises for at least two years. At the same time their health insurance rates are skyrocketing. Hector Varas, a middle school teacher and member of the union executive board, pointed to a "merit pay" law signed last month by Gov. Richard Scott. "It will tie our pay to student performance. How will that be judged?" he asked. At the same time the school board is discussing cutting programs such as music and art.

Meanwhile, in neighboring Miami-Dade County, the school board voted to cut 200 facilities department jobs, and impose a 20 percent pay cut on hundreds of maintenance workers.

—Naomi Craine

## Long Beach, California

More than 1,000 students rallied here April 13, a day of statewide protests throughout the 23-campus California State University system. These schools lost \$500 million in funding this spring. Last fall, tuition rose by 15 percent.

"I'm speaking for a significant number of us who are denied financial aid because we are immigrants," Sabrina Jeon told the *Militant*. "At \$3,000 a semester, it's ridiculous."

"The cuts turn a state school for the working class, for Blacks, and for the poor, into a business," said Carina Galustian, a sociology and women's studies professor who participated in the rally.

At San Francisco State University, several hundred participated in a teach-in, picketed on campus, and marched to the administration building. A few hundred also participated in a noon rally at California State University Dominguez Hills.

Still deeper cuts are scheduled for the fall semester.

—Arlene Rubinstein

## Des Moines, Iowa

Three hundred people rallied at the state capitol here April 13 to protest Gov. Terry Branstad's budget proposal for a zero percent increase in education fund-

ing. The rally was called by the Iowa State Education Association (ISEA), which represents teachers in the state. The crowd was mainly teachers, with a few students and parents attending.

The ISEA demands were "Say no to larger class sizes!" "Say no to more pink slips!" and "Say no to cuts in music, art, language, and PE programs!" Some held signs saying, "End the war on local schools."

Sean Brenhurst, a junior at Hoover High in Des Moines and a member of the group Students Beyond War, told the *Militant*, "I am here to protest the war and help get a better school budget. This really is not about money, it's about priorities."

—Helen Meyers

## Hamilton, New Zealand

Some 200 people marched here April 9 to demand the government reverse funding cuts to early childhood education. Since February, the government has cut NZ\$285 million (US\$226 million) by paying for only 80 percent of staff to be fully qualified. Early childhood education took one of the biggest



Militant photos by Naomi Craine, above; Eric Simpson, inset

Above, April 14 protest by teachers in Tamarac, Florida. Inset, students rally April 13 at San Francisco State University as part of statewide actions against cuts to California schools.

hits in the 2010 budget, with cuts affecting more than 2,000 services and 93,000 children.

The march was organized by the World Organization for Early Childhood Education, with support from the New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa, the union organizing early childhood teachers.

Many participants were early child-

hood teachers. Diane Roach, who teaches at the Park Early Childhood Education Centre of the Waikato Kindergarten Association, explained, "The center has a huge deficit now and it has had to increase fees and look at ways of getting fees from parents. Now even if a child is there for only one hour they have to pay for the full day."

—Annalucia Vermunt

# Prounion rally in Madison, Wisconsin

## Continued from front page

at the capitol, thousands of union supporters intermingled with the tea party protest. They chanted and yelled prounion slogans, and rang cowbells. At times the chanting was so loud that it drowned out the speakers. Many of the union placards promoted the recall of Wisconsin Republican governor Scott Walker.

"I'm in Madison because this is where real courage and real solidarity can be found," said Palin. She told the crowd that she herself had been a union member and that she had many teachers in her family. Governor Walker is "not trying to hurt union members," Palin said. "He's trying to save your jobs and your pensions."

Those arguments held little sway among the thousands of pro-union demonstrators who have seen firsthand

the effects of the governor's attacks on working people in this state.

While applauding those who have backed the governor's antiunion assault, Palin also made clear her disdain for working people who have mobilized repeatedly over the past two months to defend their rights and their unions. Addressing the tea party demonstrators she said, "You saw these violent rent-a-mobs trash your capitol and vandalize businesses. You held your ground. Your governor did the same thing. And you won."

The Wisconsin antiunion legislation Palin points to as an example guts union collective bargaining by public workers over anything beyond wages. The bill was signed into law by Walker March 11. Dane County Circuit Judge Maryann Sumi issued a temporary re-

straining order March 18 halting implementation of the law.

Palin also took aim at President Barack Obama for not supporting deeper cuts in government spending, and announced "the 2012 elections begin here."

Playing to the hometown crowd of supporters that turned out, Palin said that Republicans and especially the tea party stand stronger for their ideals and fight harder for their goals, similar to the national champion University of Wisconsin's women's hockey team.

Among the union members protesting for workers' rights at the capitol, Palin's appearance did little to deter their commitment to keep fighting. "I think they know we are going to keep going and not let up," Kimi Ishikawa, a local teacher, told the press.

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



### May 2, 1986

State and local governments in Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and other oil-producing states are carrying out savage attacks on medical care, education, child care, jobs, and other human needs and preparing bigger cuts.

The pretext for the cuts is declining tax revenues, a result of the rapid decline—from \$28 a barrel to \$14 over the last three months—in world oil prices.

The government of Oklahoma has stopped purchasing medicines for Medicaid patients or aiding families where the breadwinner is suffering a serious illness. The state of Texas has abolished eye care for 110,000 people under Medicaid and placed a one-month cap on hospitalization.

These moves are intended to establish a pattern for bigger cuts to come: any budget problems are to be resolved at the expense of working people.



### May 1, 1961

The day after President Kennedy's saber-rattling speech against Cuba before the convention of newspaper publishers, Dr. Raul Roa, Cuba's Foreign Minister, read the following ironical telegram in the course of the UN debate on the invasion of his country. The sender was Robert F. Williams, militant Negro leader from North Carolina and a founder of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

"To Dr. Raul Roa, United Nations. Please convey to Mr. Adlai Stevenson this message: Now that the United States has proclaimed military support for people willing to rebel against oppression, oppressed Negroes in the South urgently request tanks, artillery, bombs, money, use of American air fields and white mercenaries to crush racist tyrants who have betrayed the American Revolution and Civil War. We also request prayers for this noble undertaking."



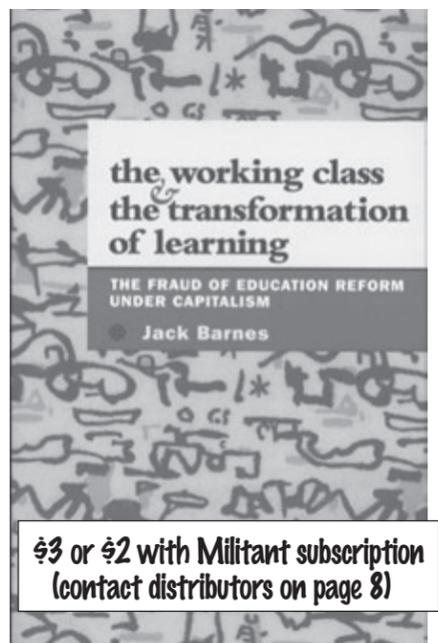
### May 2, 1936

Celebrating the Fiftieth anniversary of May First, hundreds of thousands of workmen will march in the citadels of capitalism as this issue goes to press.

In New York, where [there is] a more inclusive united front of political and labor tendencies than has been seen for years, a monster parade will take place. New York will be decked in red, its streets will resound with the marching tread of labor's legions.

In Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, San Francisco, and all the great industrial centers of the country, workers will march or demonstrate in meetings against capitalist oppression.

Shorter hours, more adequate relief, social insurance, freedom for class war prisoners, and struggle for a workers world will appear on thousands of banners and be shouted from thousands of proletarian throats.



£3 or £2 with Militant subscription (contact distributors on page 8)

Pathfinder Press

# Dockworkers defend their right to solidarity

BY ERIC SIMPSON

SAN FRANCISCO—Eight container ships docked here April 4 and the shipping companies wanted them unloaded. But no longshore workers were available. Up and down the port's main street, Maritime Way, truckers waiting to pick up and drop off containers were backed up, idled.

The longshore unionists were doing what they were supposed to do, as many union members told the *Militant*, responding to a call from the AFL-CIO and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) to stand in solidarity with public workers in Wisconsin on the 43rd anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King.

Some hung Wisconsin flags from several giant gantry cranes at the port to symbolize their solidarity. Many participated in rallies in San Francisco and in Oakland. Five members of the ILWU Local 10 Drill Team went to the April 4 labor rally in Madison, Wisconsin.

The bosses of the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) are hopping mad. They've slapped a lawsuit against Local 10 and its president, Richard Mead.

In response, the San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution April 11 calling for a mass mobilization of Bay Area labor councils and unionists in front of the PMA headquarters here April 25 to defend Local 10 and call on the bosses to drop the lawsuit. The labor council initiated a defense committee, which met April 14 at the Local 10 union hall. About 75 people participated in the meeting. Unionists were urged to pass resolutions in solidarity with Local 10 and build the April 25 action.

"I'm working at a truck dock at the Port of Oakland, and because of the union action the second shift was told not to report to work," Carole Lesnick told the meeting. "I was happy not to work, and went to the solidarity rally instead. Local 10 is not alone—thousands demonstrated in solidarity with Wisconsin across the country and will stand with Local 10 against the bosses' attacks."

"I've been working since I was eight years old," ILWU member Andre Dawkins said, "and I have learned that it's the people who change things. I don't like what's going on in Wisconsin,

and I don't like what's going on against my union. Labor solidarity works. For example, the Co-Op coal miners from Utah came to our union hall to ask for support in 2004, and we went to Utah and stood with them in the snow. They were fighting to win the union at their mine. We can force the companies to back down."

"We have to ensure that Martin Luther King did not die for nothing," Trent Willis, former Local 10 president, told the meeting. "So we stood by on the anniversary of his assassination."

## Locked-out workers in Illinois: 'We're not alone'

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

HENRY, Illinois—"The labor rallies in Wisconsin give us reassurance that we are not alone out there," said Brett Wiedman, lead union steward at Emerald Performance Materials here. Forty members of Teamsters Local 627 have set up an informational picket outside the plant after they were locked out for rejecting a union-busting contract.

Henry is a town of 2,500, 30 miles from Peoria and surrounded by farms. Workers rejected the company's proposed contract March 20 in a vote of 35 to 5. The next day at 3:30 p.m. the company told everyone they were locked out and walked them to their cars.

"We started negotiating with the company in January and on March 16 they gave us their 'last, best, and final offer'—a 30 percent wage cut, elimination of all personal and sick days, and taking away two weeks' vacation for senior employees," said Wiedman, a chemical operator at the plant for 22 years.

Workers on the picket line explained that about six weeks before the lock-out, the company brought in replacement workers from International Crisis Management and Disaster Response, a union-busting outfit in Ohio. Many of these workers are still in the plant along with some temporary workers from the surrounding area.

The workers handle hazardous and deadly chemicals on a daily basis, from acids to caustics to toxic gases. They make chemicals that go into jet engine lubricants, antifreeze, plastics, and rubber used in making tires.

The plant has changed owners a cou-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Longshore workers were among those who took off work April 4 in San Francisco to support Wisconsin fight and commemorate anniversary of Martin Luther King assassination.

ple of times in the last decade. It is now owned by Sun Capital, a private investment firm out of Boca Raton, Florida.

"Every time they switched owners, the new owners would take things away," said Wiedman. "They just kept hacking away. They began making threats and one plant manager said we are basically at-will employees. We saw the handwriting on the wall." The work-

ers started organizing a union in 2006, voted for the Teamsters in 2007, and won a union contract a year later.

Several of the unionists participated in an April 4 labor rally in Ottawa, Illinois. Wiedman said he found out about a fight by locked-out corn processing workers in Keokuk, Iowa, from an officer of the Teamsters union who has visited the picket line in that town.

## Bosses' profit drive kills three rail workers in Washington

BY CHRIS RAYSON AND GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

SEATTLE—Nearly 500 people, including hundreds of rail workers, attended the funeral here April 2 of Tom Kenny, a 58-year-old railroad engineer killed on the job as a result of the rail bosses' drive for profit.

Kenny, who had been employed at the BNSF Railway for 22 years, was well respected by his coworkers and will be deeply missed. He was widely known as "Tommy Two Notch" because he resisted railroad management pressure to run trains faster than he thought was safe.

Kenny's tragic and unnecessary death was one of three that occurred on the afternoon of March 23. Also killed in the accident was conductor-trainee Christopher Loehr, 28, and crew shuttle driver Steven Sebastian, 60. The shuttle van they were traveling in was struck by a loaded grain train as it crossed the tracks in Longview, Washington. Conductor Dwight Hauck is hospitalized

with serious injuries.

The rail crossing, like so many others, is not equipped with lights or gates to protect pedestrians or vehicular traffic. Crews had complained about this to the company. Bystander Jason Mickelson, who was at the scene of the accident, told Associated Press that other crossings in this high freight area were also inadequate. "Somebody died in another crossing without a signal on it," he said.

The BNSF and other railroads refuse to properly safeguard thousands of crossings across the country. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, in 2009 there were nearly 2,000 rail crossing accidents, causing 245 deaths and 708 other injuries. Crew shuttle vans were, at one time, primarily operated by unionized railroad employees. The BNSF and Union Pacific railroads now subcontract most crew shuttle services to nonunion companies that provide low wages, poor working conditions, and inadequate training.

Chris Rayson and Geoff Mirelowitz are members of United Transportation Union Local 845 in Seattle.

## Join May 1 rallies for immigrant rights

Below are announcements of May Day actions sent in by readers. All are scheduled for May 1 unless otherwise noted.

### Tucson, Arizona

Assemble 9 a.m. at southeast corner of 4th Ave. and 36th St. March to Armory Park. [www.tucsonmay1st.org](http://www.tucsonmay1st.org)

### Los Angeles, California

Assemble 10 a.m. at Broadway and 11th. [scarranza@launionaflcio.org](mailto:scarranza@launionaflcio.org)

### San Francisco, California

Assemble 11:30 a.m. at 24th and Mission; 1 p.m. rally at Civic Center.

### Hartford, Connecticut

Rally at Bushnell Park Pavilion 1 p.m. (860) 305-7728

### Chicago, Illinois

Assemble 2:30 p.m. at Union Park, corner of Lake St. and Ashland Ave. Rally 5 p.m. in Little Village.

### Hempstead, Long Island, New York

March starts at North Franklin St. and Front St. 11 a.m. (516) 565-5377; [www.workplaceprojectny.org](http://www.workplaceprojectny.org)

### Bronx, New York

Assemble April 30 at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Park. (718) 292-6137

### Manhattan, New York

**Union Square**, 14th St. and Broadway. Noon. (212) 633-6646; [www.may1.info](http://www.may1.info)

**Foley Square** at Worth St. 1:00 p.m. (212) 239-7323

### Hightstown, New Jersey

Assemble at Memorial Park at noon. 203-278-2729

### St. Paul, Minnesota

Assemble at Cathedral St. 4 p.m. March to capitol. For more information contact [May1Minnesota@gmail.com](mailto:May1Minnesota@gmail.com)

### Salem, Oregon

Assemble 10:30 a.m. at capitol. March 11:30 a.m. (503) 488-0263

### Houston, Texas

Assemble 2 p.m. at Renwick and Bellaire.

### Mount Vernon, Washington

Assemble 10:30 a.m. in Maiben Park. March to Skagit Valley College. (360) 941-1509; [jesq09@yahoo.com](mailto:jesq09@yahoo.com)

### Seattle, Washington

Assemble 12:30 p.m. at Judkins Park near St. Mary's Church. March to Memorial Stadium. (206) 324-6044

### Madison, Wisconsin

Assemble 1 p.m. in Brittingham Park, 401 West Shore Dr.

### Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Assemble 1:30 p.m. at Voces de la Frontera (5th St. and Washington). March to Veterans Park for 3 p.m. rally.

### Support locked-out workers

#### Morristown, New Jersey

Join members and supporters of United Steelworkers Local 7-669 protesting outside the Honeywell shareholders meeting at 101 Columbia Rd., April 25, at 9 a.m. Honeywell has locked out Local 7-669 members at its uranium processing plant in Metropolis, Illinois, since last June when they voted down a union-busting contract.

#### Brooklyn, New York

Supporters of Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ will rally at the Flatbush Gardens apartment complex at Foster and New York Avenue, April 26, at 5 p.m. Building workers there have been locked out since November, when they refused a 30 percent wage cut.

# 'Strikes turned into rebellion against regime'

## Egyptian textile workers press fight for political space to organize and act

BY PAUL MAILHOT

MAHALLA, Egypt, April 6—"Textile workers had been at war against the Hosni Mubarak regime since 2006," explained Kamal Fayoumy in an interview with the *Militant* newspaper, describing scenes of mass struggles in the mill towns of Tonton, Shebeen, and Mahalla over the past several years.

Fayoumy and four other textile workers who are part of the workers' leadership at the Misr Spinning and Weaving Company, and represent the workers in negotiations with the government, spoke to a *Militant* reporting team visiting this textile area in early April. Like many large-scale industries in Egypt, the plant of 21,000 workers is run by the government. Up until recently, so has the union.

With the fall of the dictator in early February, after sustained mobilizations throughout Egypt pressured the military to push Mubarak aside, workers throughout the country have been pressing for greater freedoms to organize, better pay and working conditions, decertification of unions that were tied to the government, and formation of independent unions.

The struggle to bring down the Mubarak dictatorship was given tremendous impetus by the struggles of the 100,000 textile workers in this region north of Cairo, particularly since 2006. It has put workers in a stronger position today to continue fighting for their rights.

"On April 6, 2008, we had our own January 25 revolution in Mahalla," explained Fayoumy, referring to events in January and February 2011 that led to Mubarak's fall. "The workers' strike and protests here in 2008 turned into a rebellion against the regime. There was a gigantic picture of Mubarak in the Mahalla town square. We tore it down. Our struggle had turned into a fight not just for better working conditions, but for dignity and freedom as well."

Fayoumy has worked in the Mahalla plant for 28 years. In 2008, like many other leaders of the textile workers, he was imprisoned by the military in an attempt by the government to turn back the workers' protests.

The textile workers interviewed by the *Militant* described their struggles beginning in 2006. "There has been a no-confidence vote by the workers here against the regime for some time," said Fayoumy.

Many of the early protests and strikes were to raise pay, which was below 300 Egyptian pounds (\$50) a month in 2006,



Nasser Nouri

Textile workers in Mahalla, Egypt, stomp picture of dictator Hosni Mubarak during 2008 strike.

according to workers we interviewed.

"There have always been fights by the textile workers," said Abdul Kader Ahmed El-Deeb, who has worked at the plant some 26 years. "But in December 2006 the government announced the yearly bonus would be a paltry 100 pounds (\$16), and to heap further insult on us they were going to deduct 10 pounds for insurance!"

"This was such an outrage that we began to organize a mass boycott campaign against the bonus thinking that if we all refused to accept it the company would raise the amount. But the company didn't do anything. They acted like we didn't want the bonus and so they would just keep it in their pockets.

"The company couldn't believe we would do anything further. Then we went out on strike. The whole factory. Even though it was a short strike, that is when the rebellion here started."

### Strike forces gov't to back down

The workers described how the government relented and agreed that it would give every worker the equivalent of two months' pay as a bonus. Having won that pledge the workers went back to work.

"In September 2007 we had another strike. This time we raised the ceiling of our demands," explained El-Deeb. "We wanted more labor rights. We demanded a minimum wage because the pay was so low. We were supposed to get a meal during work hours, but we weren't getting it so we demanded that. This was a profitable company, but we weren't enjoying any of those profits. We won some of our demands again and went back to work.

"We were starting to learn the only way to get anything from the government was to go on strike. That was an important change among the workers."

The workers described how the big strike and mass protests that began on April 6, 2008, were organized, as opposed to previous struggles that were more spontaneous. "We timed this to put ourselves in the best position to succeed," said El-Deeb. "Workers are paid their monthly wage on April 5. There had just been a local election and we knew as usual all of the Mubarak cronies would be swept into office, angering workers

throughout the region. And by April the weather was getting better."

"Our slogans were becoming more political by this time and we were becoming more organized," agreed Fayoumy. "We wrote up demands and printed flyers. We passed them out in the central square, even though we were often harassed by the police and the military for doing so.

"When we struck on April 6, thousands of workers flooded the central square chanting 'Down with the Mubarak regime.' The giant poster of the dictator was ripped down. Don't forget this is April 6, 2008, three years before the events in Tahrir Square."

Fayoumy and other leaders of the textile workers were put in jail in an effort to break the resistance of the workers.

Even though the strike and open rebellion that began April 6, 2008, was eventually suppressed by the government, it inspired other workers and the younger generation in Egypt. The road to the Jan. 25, 2011, revolution and the fall of Mubarak began with the struggles in Mahalla, the workers here proudly point out.

### Fight for independent union

Workers in the textile industry are still fighting for their rights. They say that although many conditions have improved because of their strikes and mobilizations, most workers must have

more than one job to survive. Many of the factory managers are holdovers from the old regime.

"There was a union in the mill. But it was a union that did not represent the workers. It was headed by an appointee of Mubarak. It acted against the workers," said Fayoumy. "Since the January 25 revolution we have taken the first step by getting rid of that outfit, now we are fighting to establish an independent union. In the Mahalla plant 5,000 workers have already signed a petition for an independent union."

The *Militant* asked Fayoumy about the antistrike law recently decreed by the government in Egypt banning work stoppages or protests that impede business activity. "Of course the workers oppose this," said Fayoumy, "but we struck under the repressive conditions of Mubarak so we are not paying much attention to the new law. Our answer is the thousand workers who were in the streets yesterday celebrating the 52-day strike at Shebeen Spinning." Fayoumy was referring to a recent strike at another textile mill demanding the removal of corrupt officials who were plundering the factory.

"Workers also don't yet have any political rights. Parliament is supposed to set aside a certain number of seats to represent them, but this is a sham. Those 'worker representatives' have been Mubarak supporters. And the media has perpetuated the fraud by reporting that the unions in Egypt have always been loyal to the regime.

"We are not opposed to seats being set aside in government for workers representatives. But no one should be fooled that this is what we have today."

The workers in Mahalla have received solidarity with their struggle from around the world. Now that space has opened up through their battles for broader contact with workers in other countries, the textile workers' leaders here are looking forward to deepening contact with others in struggle.

"We understand that workers in the United States and other countries also face some of the same problems we have," said Fayoumy. "We want communication with workers who are fighting for the same rights as we are. We are especially grateful for the solidarity we have received throughout our strikes and protests."



Militant/Natalie Morrison

Socialist workers from United States talk with textile workers from Misr Spinning and Weaving plant in Mahalla, Egypt, April 6. Counterclockwise from front left: Angel Lariscy, *Militant* reporter; Alaa Murad, translator for *Militant*; Abdul Kader Ahmed El-Deeb; Wael; Mohamed Saad Ibrahim; Rajab Ibrahim Mostafa; Paul Mailhot, *Militant* reporter; and Kamal Fayoumy.

## 'Their Transformation and Ours'



—Socialist Workers Party resolution, one of several articles in issue number 12 of *New International*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory

**\$16**

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# Fight against U.S.-backed bandits in Cuba

‘What the enemy thought would be a den of thieves became bulwark of revolution’

Below is an excerpt from the book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution* by Victor Dreke, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for May. In the 1960s Dreke commanded special units in Cuba's Escambray mountains cleaning out armed counterrevolutionary bands. Organized by Washington, the bandits were killing peasants, burning sugarcane fields, and attacking centers of production. Severely weakened by April 1961, the bandits were unable to aid the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs as Washington had planned—an invasion that was defeated in less than 72 hours. Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, interviewed Dreke. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



Granma

Above, militia members in Cuba's Escambray mountains learning to read, 1961, as they carry out military campaign against counterrevolutionary bands. Inset, working people of Trinidad, Cuba, join funeral procession for paper workers murdered by counterrevolutionaries, December 1963.



## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

WATERS: Outside Cuba, the fight against the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray in the first half of the 1960s is a little-known chapter of the revolution. Yet it's one of the decisive battles that molded the revolution. Knowing something about that struggle also helps explain why for more than forty years Washington has underestimated the strength of the revolution. And

why, in spite of their concerted military, economic, and political efforts, the U.S. rulers have been unable to crush it.

Who were the bandits? Where did they come from?

DREKE: When we were talking about the war of liberation, I mentioned a number of individuals who had participated in the revolutionary struggle who were in fact adventurers. There were others who were simply opportunist self-seekers, individuals out to grab power, who believed when the revolution triumphed they would trade places with the thieves who had been in control. They would trade places with the brothel owners and become the new owners of the brothels, prostitutes and all. . . .

When the first clean-up operation began in 1960, when the army arrived, when Fidel arrived, the peasants responded, and entire battalions of peasant militias from the Escambray were formed. The peasants asked for weapons and they defended the Escambray. So what the enemy thought was going to be a den of thieves was, by determined revolutionary combat, turned into a bulwark of the revolution. . . .

Tens of thousands of militiamen took part. How were we able to mobilize them? Because of acts like the murder of literacy volunteers, among them Conrado Benítez and Manuel Ascunce,<sup>1</sup> as

well as innocent peasant women and children—and all the other crimes the bandits had committed: burning down schools, rapes, robberies. The people rose up in indignation over these savage deeds. . . .

These bandits were dependent on imperialism. We can't look at the bandits in isolation, on their own, as just some group of crazies who took up arms. No, no, no. This was organized. They were

being organized as a fifth column to back an invasion by the United States. An important mission was assigned to these bandits by Washington.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the first clean-up, the mission for which the bandits were being prepared was to attack and seize the main towns when the invasion came—Trinidad and all those little towns there—and to take the highways. In addition, within the cities it was expected that organized counterrevolutionaries would take up arms when the moment came.

In other words, all this was being directed by imperialism.

What happened?

The commander in chief, Fidel, led the process of eliminating the bands prior to Girón. The murder and harassment of peasants had to be stopped. What's more, we knew an attack was coming. There had already been various types of sabotage actions by the bandits in different regions. For example, near Trinidad they blew up fuel tanks.

We made the effort to rapidly clean up the Escambray, so we wouldn't face a fifth column already armed and trained.

When the landing came at Girón, very few of the bandits remained. They were in flight. They were in hiding. They controlled nothing. This was part of defeating the U.S. invasion plan. The invaders were left without a rear guard.

1 Conrado Benítez, a 19-year-old literacy volunteer, was murdered by a counterrevolutionary band in the Escambray January 5, 1961, along with a peasant, Eliodoro Rodríguez Linares. Manuel Ascunce, a 16-year-old literacy volunteer, was murdered by counterrevolutionaries in the Escambray November 26, 1961, together with Pedro Lantigua, a peasant he was teaching to read and write.

Prior to the revolution, 23.6 percent of the Cuban population was illiterate. In the countryside illiteracy reached 41 percent, and if those who were semiliterate are included, the figure was over 80 percent. From late 1960 through the end of 1961 the revolutionary government organized a national campaign to teach one million Cubans to read and write. Central to this effort was the mobilization of 100,000 young people to go to the countryside, where they lived with peasants they were teaching. As a result of this drive, Cuba eliminated illiteracy.

2. This mission was described in a presidential briefing paper from August 1960, quoted by then CIA Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick in a balance sheet of the defeated Bay of Pigs invasion written in October 1961, but released only in 1998. The August 1960 Eisenhower administration memo said: "The initial phase of paramilitary operations envisages the development, support and guidance of dissident groups in three areas of Cuba: Pinar del Rio, Escambray and Sierra Maestra. These groups will be organized for concerted guerrilla action against the regime."

Kirkpatrick also cites a secret White House memo from March 11, 1961—four days prior to the Kennedy administration's decision to switch the proposed invasion from the Escambray region to Playa Girón. The memo reported that the revolutionary government "is making good use of the militia against guerrilla activities."

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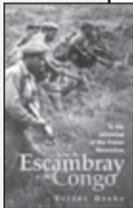
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# Join demonstrations on May Day

Continued from front page

taking “American” jobs, undercutting wages, and creating a “tax burden” to boot.

Seeking to garner support for their union-busting offensive in Wisconsin, we are told to believe that public workers are “overpaid” and don’t really work, and that “our” taxes are high because of their “Cadillac” benefits.

It is no coincidence that these arguments are similar. Both appeal to a fictitious group of “taxpayers” in order to obfuscate real class divisions and opposing class interests. Both arguments are aimed at sapping solidarity and class combativity.

The capitalist class needs to foster resentments among us to get us to take our eyes and our fire off the real problem: their system of exploitation. Winning the entire labor movement and the vast majority of our class to champion legalization of the undocumented will be decisive in the coming labor battles.

There is an “us” and a “them.” But it’s not immigrants vs. U.S.-born or public vs. private workers.

It’s the boss class, the capitalist class, backed up by their army, their cops, and their courts, on one side. And on the other side stands the working class, working farmers, and other allies—representing the overwhelming majority of society.

Like the law in Wisconsin against collective bargaining for public workers, the attacks on immigrants—the deportations, firings, and spreading anti-immigrant laws like the one just approved in Georgia—are also union-busting measures.

In 2006 millions of undocumented workers and their allies shut down factories and took to the streets to block federal anti-immigrant legislation,

to demand legalization, and to say “We are workers, not criminals.” May Day was reborn—a holiday of the working class that began in the United States in 1886 but had not been celebrated for decades. Every year since, marches and rallies have taken place across the United States to demand legalization, inspiring other workers to emulate their example.

This May Day, immigrant rights actions will take place in a new political situation. The mobilizations that began in Wisconsin this February have had an impact on working people. The spreading solidarity has increased our confidence. In the process working-class fighters are getting to know each other, establishing important connections with those we will be fighting alongside in the long, hard battles of the future. May Day will be another such opportunity.

What we are seeing today is the beginnings of a countercurrent developing within the working class to decades of business unionism, of collaboration with the bosses and support for their two-party system—a course responsible for declining unionization and the weakened state of the labor movement today.

All supporters of union rights should promote and participate in the upcoming May Day immigrant rights marches taking place across the country.

We must answer the bosses’ offensive by saying: wherever you were born, whatever language you speak, whatever religion you practice or don’t, you are part of the union fight.

Legalization for undocumented workers now! Organize unions and wield union power to defend the entire class! An injury to one is an injury to all!



Militant/Alex Huinil

Restaurant workers in Atlanta join rally at capitol March 24 against anti-immigrant bills before state legislature.



Protesters in Lansing, Michigan, demonstrate February 26 against union-busting assault in Wisconsin.

## No letup of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan

BY SETH GALINSKY

Washington’s frequent bombing and increasing use of spies and commandoes in northwest Pakistan is widely resented by the people of that country. But it remains a centerpiece of the imperialists’ war strategy in the region, a conflict raging now for nearly 10 years with no end in sight.

Two days after Lt. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha, head of Pakistan’s spy agency, called for a suspension in U.S. drone attacks and scaling back the presence of CIA agents in Pakistan, a U.S. aerial drone fired two missiles in the country, killing seven and wounding six.

Pasha made the request during an April 11 meeting at CIA headquarters in Washington, D.C., with CIA director Leon Panetta and Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff.

“If the message [of the new drone attack] was that business will continue as usual, it was a crude way of sending it,” a senior Pakistani intelligence official told the *New York Times*. The Pakistani foreign ministry lodged a “strong protest” against the attack.

The two governments “are locked in an uneasy embrace,” said Pakistan’s *Daily Times*. “They do not trust

each other but need each other’s help.” The Pakistani economy “is heavily dependent on aid from Washington,” the paper pointed out, referring to billions of dollars of military and economic aid Washington sends there every year.

The CIA station in Islamabad is one of the spy agency’s largest with hundreds of agents on the ground. There are also at least 120 U.S. Special Operations troops in the country, most working with the paramilitary Frontier Corps in northwest Pakistan.

Although the Pakistani government at times criticizes the drone attacks, it has collaborated with the CIA in locating Taliban targets and has asked for access to drone technology for its own use. At the same time, the CIA has increasingly established its own Pakistani contacts and has become less reliant on Pakistani intelligence, according to U.S. officials.

Last year 118 drone attacks were carried out, double the number in 2009 and more than in all the previous years combined.

On March 17 Pakistani officials say a drone strike killed more than 40 civilians, including tribal elders who were meeting about a dispute over a local mine. Washington, as usual, claimed all the dead were Taliban.

## Military tribunals

Continued from front page

azine last year that prosecuting the men in federal court would be “the defining event of my time as attorney general,” said April 4 that the trial was off. “Members of Congress have intervened and imposed restrictions blocking the administration from bringing any Guantánamo detainees to trial in the United States,” he said.

On his second day in office in 2009, President Barack Obama ordered Guantánamo closed within one year. He also suspended military tribunals for Guantánamo prisoners, under which the Pentagon appoints the judge and jury.

In November 2009 Holder announced that Mohammed and four others would stand trial in a federal court in Lower Manhattan, not far from the World Trade Center site. The proposal immediately unleashed a sharp debate in the U.S. ruling class. Not only many Republicans, but also some prominent liberal Democrats, such as New York senator Charles Schumer, denounced the idea.

While some opponents cloaked their arguments in complaints that a trial in New York was “insensitive” to relatives of those killed in the terrorist attack, others pointed to their more serious concern, the fact that Mohammed had been waterboarded 183 times while in U.S. custody that could make “evidence” derived from torture inadmissible in court.

In pushing for the trial the White House made clear what kind of treatment awaited the five Guantánamo detainees and how special restrictions would be used to rig the outcome—measures that would be used to set a precedent for undermining workers’ rights and further narrow political space for workers to organize against the bosses and their government.

The Guantánamo defendants would have no right to the presumption of innocence. Testifying before a Senate committee in 2009, Holder was asked what would happen if the men were not convicted. He replied, “Failure is not an option.” Obama went further, telling reporters that anyone offended by a civilian trial for Mohammed wouldn’t find it offensive “when he’s convicted and when the death penalty is applied to him.” His press secretary, Robert Gibbs, declared Mohammed is “going to meet his maker.”

Holder told the Senate committee that, like the military tribunals, defendants would be denied access to evidence used against them. Moreover, he said, Mohammed would not be permitted to express his political views in court.

The Obama administration has announced plans to establish a legal basis for holding some inmates indefinitely, without a trial, for cases where the administration is concerned it won’t win a conviction, either for lack of evidence or because evidence is based on “confessions” under torture.

Mohammed has been in U.S. custody since 2003. Charges were filed against him in 2008. He has still not gone to trial, either before a federal court or a military commission.

There are also inmates at Guantánamo who have been cleared of all charges but have not been released. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned an appeal April 18 by five Uighurs originally from China who remain behind bars even though Washington has cleared them of any terrorist charges. They asked the court to rule they could be resettled in the United States, but the justices refused to hear their case.

### Correction

In the article “L.A.: ‘Every gain won by labor and discipline of ordinary people,’” which appeared in the April 18 issue, the quote by trade unionist Laura Brown was not taken from a speech to the crowd, but from an interview with the *Militant*.

The article “Antigovernment protests challenge Syrian regime” from the same issue reported that Hafez al-Assad, the father of the current Syrian ruler, had taken power in 1963. While al-Assad was a member of the ruling Baath party and defense minister since 1966, he did not become president until 1970, when he staged a successful coup.