

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban pilots at Bay of Pigs  
'fought for socialism'

— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 65/NO. 19 MAY 14, 2001

## Kerrey justifies massacre by Navy unit in Vietnam

*"Under the unwritten rules of Vietnam, we would have been justified had we not been fired upon. You were authorized to kill if you thought that it would be better. If you thought it would be better to bring them out you were authorized to bring them out.... We were instructed not to take prisoners."*

—former U.S. senator Robert Kerrey commenting on killing of unarmed Vietnamese civilians on Feb. 25, 1969, by the Navy SEAL squadron under his command.

**SEE EDITORIAL  
page 14**

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Recent revelations in the media about former U.S. senator Robert Kerrey's role in the killing of civilians in Vietnam 32 years ago are once again shining a spotlight on Washington's 16-year-long war against the people of that country in the 1960s and '70s.

An article prepared by Gregory Vistica that appeared in the April 29 *New York Times Magazine* under the title "One Awful Night in Thanh Phong" broke the story about a massacre conducted by a Navy SEAL unit commanded by Kerrey in the peasant village, located in Vietnam's eastern Mekong

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## Workers at Hollander walk out in Pennsylvania

**UNITE members join strikers in California and those honoring picket lines in Georgia**

BY CANDACE ROBBINS

FRACKVILLE, Pennsylvania—"I'm for the strike. I'm a single mom. But if I crossed I'd be supporting the company and I can't do that," said Mary Ann Subick, member of UNITE Local 133-1 on strike against Hollander Home Fashions here. Subick, along with a majority of the 125 workers at the Hollander plant, set up a picket line May 1 in a celebratory mood as they shut the company down in their fight for a contract.

The strikers here have extended the contract fight by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) against Hollander. More than 450 members of UNITE have been on strike since March 8 at Hollander's plant in Vernon, California, located in downtown Los Angeles (see

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## Puerto Ricans mobilize to demand 'U.S. Navy out!'

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—The decision of the U.S. Navy to resume its military exercises and bombings on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques has touched off protests in Puerto Rico, in the United States, and as far away as Italy. Thousands of people rallied at the capitol here April 26 to condemn Washington's move and to back actions over the next days on the Vieques firing range organized to force the Navy to halt its operations.

At the time of the rally leading figures in the fight had already gone into the Navy restricted zone, covering about half of Vieques, with plans to reveal themselves once the bombardment began April 27.

Among the first to go onto the range was Mirta Sanes, sister of David Sanes, a civilian guard employed by the Navy who was killed in 1999 by a bomb dropped from a U.S. jet. Sanes's death set off a series of protests and galvanized Puerto Ricans around this issue. Local fishermen, who have been in the forefront of the movement, joined several groups on the range, as did Norma Burgos of the New Progressive Party; Rubén Berrios, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), and Dámaso Serrano, the mayor of Vieques.

The call for the Navy to end its bombing is receiving wide support from celebrities, officials of Puerto Rican political parties,



Militant/Shirley Peña

April 30 protest in Oakland, California, condemned U.S. Navy's bombing of Vieques.

and a number of Democratic and Republican party politicians in the United States. Since World War II, Washington has used the island as a joint forces training base for Navy fleets, including live-fire bombings, until recent protests forced the government

to make some concessions. Some 9,000 people are resident on Vieques.

The April 26 rally, called by several religious groups, drew thousands of students and workers. The University of Puerto Rico

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## Bush says Washington will pursue 'boost phase' antimissile arms system

BY GREG McCARTAN

U.S. president George Bush said in a May 1 speech that Washington will move to deploy a "boost phase" missile intercept weapon that would increase the effectiveness of an initial system to be set up within a few years.

He affirmed that the U.S. government will move ahead to "replace" the Antibal-

listic Missile (ABM) Treaty in order to develop "effective missile defenses that could protect the United States, our deployed forces, our friends, and our allies."

The cost of developing the weapons would go beyond the initial \$60 billion projected under the Clinton administration for an antimissile system. The plan is envisioned to include ship-borne radar and missile fir-

ing systems as well as airborne or space-based lasers. Bush, who had informed imperialist allies of his plans prior to the speech, said he will dispatch top aides to explain Washington's goals to Asia, Australia, Europe, and Canada over the next several weeks. Bush reiterated his plan to substantially reduce the more than 7,000 active

Continued on Page 12

NEW YORK CITY ❖ SUNDAY, MAY 20

### In Defense of Leninism: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today

**Cuba and the Coming American Revolution**  
Campaigning to Use New Pathfinder Pamphlet  
**Mary-Alice Waters**  
Socialist Workers Party National Committee

**Pathfinder Reprint Project at Halfway Point!**  
On to 100% and Expanding Production of New Titles  
Representative of Steering Committee of Pathfinder Reprint Project

**Doubling the Membership of the Young Socialists: A Movement Campaign**  
Member of the YS National Executive Committee

**Report from Socialist Workers Party National Committee Meeting**  
**Jack Barnes**  
National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

Reception: 1:00 p.m. ❖ Meeting: 2:00 p.m.  
Dag Hammarskjöld Room, 6th Floor, 420 W. 118th St.  
at Amsterdam Ave. (on the Columbia University campus)

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

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

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

Workers at Northwest Airlines discuss contract— page 15

# Nationwide strike in Greece protests attacks on pensions

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN AND NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS, Greece—In the largest labor mobilizations in two decades, 100,000 workers, students, and members of professional organizations rallied here April 26 as part of a nationwide general strike. Tens of thousands of working people also participated in other cities and towns throughout the country. The actions demanded the government retract its plans to slash pension benefits for workers who retire after the year 2007.

The strike was called by the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY). After the massive rally in central Athens in front of the GSEE headquarters, workers marched to parliament. The turnout was organized on five days' notice.

As the preparations for the protests gathered steam, the social democratic Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) government declared it would suspend its attack on pension benefits. Following the strike it called for unconditional negotiations with the unions.

Citing what it characterizes as the "insolvency" of the social security funds, the government proposes to raise the age at which people are to receive retirement benefits, among other measures. Currently workers become eligible for retirement after 35 years of service or upon reaching the ages of 65 and 60 for men and women respectively. Under the current system the average retirement age is 58.

The new proposals would make retirement applicable at age 65 or after 40 years of service for both men and women. If a worker reaches age 65 and has put in less service, he or she will not be entitled to the full benefits.

The new proposals would slash monthly benefit payments by an estimated 29 percent, by calculating payments on the last 15 years on the job, rather than the last five years, which tend to be the highest in wages. Benefits received would also be excluded

from the calculation.

The proposals also attack gains made by miners, construction workers, chemical workers, and others laboring under particularly hazardous conditions. Under the current system these workers are entitled to full early retirement. While the new proposals would not do away with these categories, the government has raised the right to review and "consolidate" them.

'an unacceptable outrage'

"This is an unacceptable outrage! They will have us work until we are 68 or 69 before we can retire in order to get a full pension. We should work at getting maximum participation at the general strike and demonstration," said a young electrician to this reporter on his work site prior to the strike. The worker wished not to be identified.

These proposals follow 15 years of austerity and gradual erosion of wages for workers here, with unemployment holding at 11 percent. They come less than a year after the passage of "labor flexibility" legislation that—in the name of increasing labor productivity and competitiveness—attacks the eight-hour day, among other conquests.

Working people celebrated the strike as a major success. Unions organizing telephone, power plant, rail, air transport, transit, metal, shipyard, and construction workers, sailors, stevedores, municipal workers, teachers, bank workers, and many others struck. Many shops closed. A number of professional organizations joined the protest, such as those representing lawyers and journalists. Demonstrations were organized in Thessaloniki, Patra, Pireas, in Crete, and other places.

As all public transport came to a halt, the GSEE organized coaches from each neighborhood to the march location. Unions arranged for buses to carry local contingents.

In discussions at the city's airport, the focus of many union members shifted from how to cope with the effects of the proposed changes in retirement laws to how to get to the rally once the strike call was issued. In



May Day march in Athens. Some 15,000 workers rallied at parliament to oppose pension cuts after organizing a one-day general strike April 26. Morale was high as workers sensed what they had accomplished with the mobilizations.

work sites where there are no unions organized, workers talked out how to stop work. As a result, many thousands of unorganized workers participated.

In the city of Lavrion, for example, the Labor Center informed janitors and other unorganized workers that it would protect them should they strike. These workers had approached the trade union body for advice. "We just decided that we would close the office and come to the demonstration," said Maria, a teacher at an unorganized computer school, who was part of a contingent of young women.

Morale was extremely high as workers sensed what they had accomplished with the mobilization. Contingents chanted, "Sold out social security! Sold out all the people!" and "It will not pass!"

Many union banners called for "Full, compulsory, social security!" Up to a million immigrant workers as well as Greek-born workers have been forced by the bosses to work without any social security or health insurance, a phenomenon known here as "black labor."

The huge turnout was unaffected by the 11th-hour proclamation by the minister of labor that the government would put a

"freeze" on its social security proposals and engage the union federations in "social dialogue." The night before the strike 21 PASOK members of parliament and 42 members of the party Central Committee signed a letter calling for an emergency Central Committee meeting. They complained of the "void between PASOK and its social base."

"The government has not simply been defeated," over social security reform, stated an April 28–29 editorial of *Kathimerini*, the main big-business daily, "but also on the broader political level. [Prime Minister Kostantinos] Simitis' prestige has been irreparably tarnished.... From now on he will find it increasingly hard to rule effectively."

The presidents of GSEE and ADEDY characterize the government withdrawal of its proposals a "maneuver" and assert that the unions will continue the fight to guarantee public, compulsory social security for all. The two federations have called for another general strike May 17, as well as for mass participation in the May 1 rally to continue the protests.

Natasha Terlexis is a member of the Federation of Air Transport Employees. Georges Mehrabian is a chemical worker.

## Students demand retention of professor

BY JENNY BENTON

ST. CLOUD, Minnesota—More than 250 students and faculty at St. Cloud State University showed their support for Laurinda Stryker, a professor in the history department with an emphasis on Holocaust studies.

The rally, held April 18, was organized by SCAR (Student Coalition Against Racism). Students and faculty have accused the university of not retaining Stryker because she has supported Jewish faculty members in their complaints of anti-Semitism. Organizers of the rally are demanding that Stryker be retained at the university.

Members of SCAR have organized support for Stryker with buttons, literature, and

petitions to the Minnesota state legislature. They see the struggle as a fight much broader than St. Cloud State. Damon Quade, a member of SCAR, stated, "We want Dr. Stryker to stay, but the big picture is that this is happening all the time." SCAR organized a protest last year in response to an insert in the campus newspaper. The insert, titled, "The Revisionist," was 24-pages and claimed the Holocaust was a hoax. The group also sponsored an event at the university for two Cuban youth leaders who were on a national speaking tour April 14.

Jenny Benton is a member of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers union.

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# Media blitz tags day care kids as 'aggressive'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The ruling class has launched a propaganda campaign in the media against women who put their children in day care. The coverage parallels similar efforts to scapegoat "unmarried women" and "broken families" for the social ills in capitalist society today.

"Researchers Find a Link Between Behavioral Problems and Time in Child Care," read a recent headline in the *New York Times*. An article in the *Washington Post* declared, "Child Aggressiveness Study Cites Day Care." Both headlines are misleading from the start.

The articles covered a report released by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a government institution and a branch of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The report, called the NICHD Study of Early Child Care, was based on a study of 1,300 children at 10 sites across the country since 1991. Of the 13 million preschoolers in child care in the United States, including infants and toddlers, nearly 30 percent are in child care centers, 15 percent are with family child care providers, and 25 percent are cared for by relatives.

The NIH study defined day care as supervision of children for at least 10 hours a week by anyone other than the child's mother. Roughly 75 percent of all preschoolers are in some form of day care, according to the Children's Defense Fund, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C.

The *Post* said the report is "bound to rekindle the debate over child care" on questions such as, "How should people balance work and family? And how should parents, especially mothers, resolve the demands that are placed on them to be both breadwinners and Supermoms?"

## Professor targets day care

A news conference releasing the report and earlier press coverage focused on the opinions of one of the lead researchers, Jay Belsky, a professor at the University of London. Belsky, a developmental psychologist and former professor at Pennsylvania State University, has promoted the view for the past 15 years that it is better for mothers to stay home to care for their children. Belsky presented the results from the "comprehensive" study at an April 19 meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development in Minneapolis.

"There is a constant dose-response relationship between time in care and problem behavior, especially those involving aggression and behavior," he told the press of the report.

Children who spend more than 30 hours a week in child care "scored higher on items like 'gets in lots of fights,' 'cruelty,' 'explosive behavior,' as well as 'talking too much,' 'argues a lot,' and 'demands a lot of attention,'" Belsky said.

The *New York Times* summed up the conclusions this way: "The more time young children spent being cared for by someone other than their mothers, the more likely they were to be aggressive, demanding, and disobedient as kindergartners." Belsky proudly told the *Times* that he has "a reputation for being a difficult person." The article did not report how much, if any, time he had spent in child care.

Belsky's conclusion: "Reduce the time in care. Extend parental leave and part-time work."

With these kinds of statements and con-

clusions in the big-business media, what exactly do the researchers say their study revealed?

In answers by parents, teachers, and caregivers to questions such as those listed by Belsky above, children were given a "behavioral rating." The report says that 17 percent of the children in child care for more than 30 hours a week received answers classifying them as "aggressive," compared with 6 percent for children in child care for less than 10 hours a week. News reports did not comment on what percentage were deemed aggressive for "talking too much," "arguing a lot," or for "demanding a lot of attention." Nor did the health and well-being of the other 83 percent of children get much play in the coverage.

Despite the widespread media attention, the *Times* admitted the study has not "undergone the rigorous scientific evaluation known as peer review." Both Ellen Galinsky, of the Families and Work Institute, and Claudia Wayne, former director of the Center for the Child Care Workforce, said other circumstances, such as the quality of the child care or longer working hours of parents, could account for the results, rather than the amount of time in child care.

At the press conference announcing the report, Sarah Friedman, coordinator of the project for NICHD, clashed with Belsky over his statements. "NICHD is not willing to get into policy recommendations. There are other possibilities that can be entertained" to explain the results of the study, she said. Friedman noted that the children's behavior was "in the normal range" and did not mean they needed medical treatment.

Several news articles briefly mentioned that the study also found children in child care more than 30 hours a week displayed better intellectual skills in language and memory. No headlines featured that aspect of the study.

Last year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 60 percent of women with children under three years old held jobs outside the home. The number of single-parent households, the overwhelming majority of which are headed by women, has increased rapidly from 12.7 percent of all families in 1960 to 32 percent in 1998.

The 1996 "welfare reform" act signed

into law by former president William Clinton with the support of Democrats and Republicans in Congress, eliminated federally guaranteed Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and cut off food stamps for many working people.

Meanwhile, state officials across the country are eliminating thousands of women

from welfare assistance. In New Jersey 11,000 women who are single and solely responsible for their children are being targeted. In 1997 Gov. Christine Whitman signed legislation dubbed "Work First New Jersey," under which 55,000 women have already been dropped from government-guaranteed assistance.

## New York mural honors Amadou Diallo



Militant/Brian Williams

Above, a new mural in the Bronx, New York, in memory of Amadou Diallo, who was gunned down by four police officers in February 1999. The painting, unveiled April 24, is located a few doors away from where Diallo was killed. It depicts cops in Ku Klux Klan hoods, the U.S. flag in flames, a skeletal Statue of Liberty holding aloft a pistol with a pile of skulls at its feet, alongside a portrait of Diallo, under heading "The American Dream." Four days later Police Commissioner Bernard Kerik announced that the four cops—acquitted last year in a criminal trial—will not face disciplinary action. "This has sent a signal that a Black child's life has no meaning," said the slain man's mother, Kadiatou Diallo.

Cops reacted with hostility to the 20 by 35 foot mural, pressuring the property owner to have parts of it removed. After someone painted over the depiction of the cops several days later, the artist, Hulbert Waldroup, 33, restored their images. "Thugs may come and whitewash my mural in the night," he said, "but they cannot whitewash the memory of what happened here." Onlookers gave him donations toward the cost of the paint as he worked. The mural has become a gathering place in the neighborhood. Inset, resident uses photographs and diagram to show path of 41 bullets fired by the cops at Diallo.

# London marchers counter fascist rally

BY HUGH ROBERTSON

LONDON—Hundreds of people took to the streets the first two weekends in April to protest marches led by the fascist National Front (NF). The antifascist actions were organized by Southwark Trades Union Council, the local trade union federation, and were made up mainly of youth and trade union members.

The NF demonstrations, held in the south London locality of Bermondsey, each attracted about 30 rightists, including some support from young people in the area. The city mobilized more than 1,000 cops to protect the fascists. The police surrounded the marchers to keep the protesters away. Those in the NF march carried the British Union Jack and the English St. George's flag, and chanted "rights for whites." NF organizers cited the cops' refusal to allow them to carry a banner stating "keep Bermondsey white" as the reason for the marches and have called an action for May 12. The Southwark Trades Union Council announced it will organize another counterdemonstration as well.

Speakers at a rally during the first protest

included Trevor Phillips, Labour Party chair of the Greater London Authority; Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament (MP) for the local constituency North Southwark and Bermondsey; Stephanie Elson, Labour Party leader of Southwark Council; and Paul Davies, Communist League candidate for the local constituency in the upcoming general election. All the speakers except Davies concentrated on urging the city to ban NF marches as the way to maintain the "multicultural nature of the area."

Two racist attacks occurred in the area following the first NF march in Bermondsey. In one, a 24-year-old Asian man was assaulted by a gang of youths waving the St. George's flag. In the other, a 40-year-old Black man and a 27-year-old Asian man were attacked by two white men who slashed them with a knife. Eight youths in their teens have reportedly been arrested in connection with the first incident.

The big-business media is giving play to police allegations that there are "no-go areas" for white people and a claim that 60 percent of racially motivated attacks in Oldham were against whites.

The fascists' marches come in the midst of increasing attacks on immigrants and appeals to nationalism by capitalist politicians. Since its election, the Labour government has enacted a number of oppressive measures against immigrants seeking to enter the country. These include the arbitrary and prolonged jailing of many asylum seekers in detention centers and prisons while their claims are examined. Immigrants cannot by law take paid employment for six months after their arrival. They receive board and lodging, vouchers worth £30, and £10 per week "pocket money" to live on (£1 = US\$1.43). Jack Straw, Labour Party home secretary, said he is seeking to deport 30,000 "failed asylum seekers" in the next year, more than a threefold increase over the 9,000 immigrants expelled during the last 12 months.

Recent surveys estimate conservatively that immigrant minorities make up about 6 percent of the population of the United Kingdom. That figure rises to 30 percent in inner London. The cities of Leicester and Birmingham are expected to have nonwhite majorities within 20 years if current trends continue.

Combined with a spate of layoff announcements, an increased number of immigrants are being used as scapegoats in a chauvinist campaign by both the Conservative and Labour parties that provide openings to the small fascist forces.

William Hague, Conservative Party leader, told a party conference in March, "Let me take you to a foreign land—to Britain after a second term of [Labour Prime Minister] Tony Blair." John Townend, from the right-wing fringes of the Conservative Party, said at a local party meeting, "Our homogenous Anglo-Saxon society has been... undermined by the massive immigration, particularly the Commonwealth immigration, that has taken place since the [Second World] war."

Entering the debate on whether or not there is a native "island race," Labour Party official and foreign secretary Robin Cook argued that the country needed immigrant workers to meet labor demand and defended "legitimate immigration." Cook declared the "British are not a race but a gathering of countless different races." Continuing in his nationalist theme, the foreign minister said a dish called "chicken tikka massala"—a variant on Indian curry—was "a true British national dish."

In a speech to one of the antifascist rallies, Communist League candidate Paul Davies said the "climate in which the NF operates is created by government attacks on immigrants," and that "the fighting experience of immigrant workers strengthened the working class in the United Kingdom." He opposed calls for a ban on fascist marches "as this would simply strengthen the cops and the government and be used as a precedent against the working-class movement itself."

## New International: magazine of Marxist Politics and Theory

No. 10

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- What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold
- Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution by Mary-Alice Waters
- The Curve of Capitalist Development by Leon Trotsky \$14.00



No. 11

- U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War by Jack Barnes
- The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today by Mary-Alice Waters
- Socialism: A Viable Option by José Ramón Balaguer
- Young Socialists Manifesto \$14.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12

# Hundreds of unionists rally for strikers at Titan Tire in Iowa

BY KEN DAVIS  
AND SIMONE BERG

DES MOINES, Iowa—A broad range of unionists from throughout the Midwest joined members of the Steelworkers union to mark the third year of their strike against Titan Tire here April 28.

The crowd of 500 began by commemorating Workers Memorial Day beside a plot of small white crosses, each with the name of one of the 55 workers who died on the job in Iowa last year.

Speakers at a rally and cookout held in a nearby park included a representative of the United Methodist Church, Iowa governor Thomas Vilsack, regional and international representatives of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) and the AFL-CIO, as well as Larry Ginter, a hog farmer representing Iowans Concerned for Community Improvement (ICCI).

The 670 members of USWA Local 164 walked out of the Titan Tire plant May 1, 1998. The unionists struck over forced overtime, and health and pension benefits cuts demanded by the company. Titan workers were regularly scheduled to work 26 days in a row before getting a day off, many times working 12-hour shifts. The union and company recently met for the first time in over a year. "We're in negotiations right now," local president John Peno told the *Des Moines Register*, "and we'll continue to meet as long as we can."

In September of 1998 USWA members in Natchez, Mississippi, were locked out after Titan owner Maurice Taylor bought the plant and refused to honor the union contract. Thomas "T-Bone" Bradley, the president of USWA Local 303L from Natchez, told the rally that the 330 members of his local "are as strong as the 670 members [of Local 164] here."

Workers at Firestone plants in the region attended the rally, as did steelworkers locked out by AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio. Larry Pugh, one of the locked-out workers there, told the *Militant* that none of the union members have crossed the line in Mansfield. He said that the company is hiring replacement workers on a daily basis because of the high turnover rate in the plant.

UWSA members on strike here at Titan Tire maintain a round-the-clock picket line and have traveled across the country to win support for their fight. During a recent visit to McCook, Nebraska, striker Terry Elockner and his wife Peggy said they distributed information on the Titan strike to workers at Valmart, a company that manufactures irrigation systems. The company uses Titan products on the equipment.

"The workers there said we came on the right day," Peggy Elockner said. The plant is nonunion and the company had fired several workers that day. She said that workers told them that conditions were bad in the plant, and they were interested in finding out more about organizing a union. "Workers took flyers we had on the strike, and one of them posted a flyer on the bulletin board in the plant," she added.

## Berbers protest cop killing of student in Algeria



Cops in Algeria attack protesters in Tizi Ouzou, the Berber capital of Algeria. Demonstrations began when a Berber high school student was killed April 22 while in a police station. Berbers, who face discrimination in the country, played a key role in Algeria's war of independence against the French colonialists. So far 50 people have been killed by police.

## Students with drug convictions denied aid

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

U.S. education secretary Ronald Paige has tightened the enforcement of Clinton-era legislation that bars federal aid to college students who have been convicted of a drug-related offense. Tens of thousands of people, including those found guilty of misdemeanors, could be denied student loans as a result.

According to the April 25 *Wall Street Journal*, the legislation "denies federal financial aid to anyone convicted of a drug crime, whether smoking marijuana or trafficking heroin. The length of ineligibility varies according to the gravity of the offense and the number of convictions."

For example, a person convicted of marijuana possession is denied aid for a year from

the date they were found guilty. Three drugs convictions of any type disqualifies a student from ever receiving federal aid—unless he or she completes a treatment program and is prepared to submit to random drug tests.

Student groups have joined college administrators in opposing the law since its inception. A repeal bill, considered to have little hope of success in the Congress, has been endorsed by student governments at 59 campuses.

Ariel Neuman, the president of the student government at Columbia University in New York, said in an April 30 phone interview that the university's student government association "passed a motion a couple of months ago calling for the law to be rescinded." He explained that relatively few Columbia applicants would be affected since "students here are generally younger and the measures apply to people convicted as adults. But we thought that Columbia should be open for everyone."

The 1998 law—incorporated in a bill on federal education spending—"was passed with scant debate," reported the *Journal*. The following year the education department added a question about drug convictions to financial aid applications, and 9,000 applicants acknowledged having a drug record. They were all denied assistance.

The 279,000 people who did not answer the question, however, were not penalized. Government officials then added a sentence to the form stating the question must be answered. Last month Paige announced that the government will deny funds to anybody who failed to respond to the question.

To date, with around one-third of applications in hand for the coming school year, some 26,000 people appear ineligible for the assistance. One student, Kristopher Sperry, told the *Journal* that he was forced to drop out of school this semester because he could not afford the hundreds of dollars in tuition fees previously covered by the government. Sperry, a former factory worker, has two misdemeanor marijuana convictions—one for possession of the drug, and one for possession of a water pipe.

Prison inmates who try to enroll in college courses while doing time will be hit hard by the government's approach. The restrictions will reinforce the impact of a 1994 decision by Congress to deny workers behind bars any benefit from the government's main program of student aid, the Pell grants.

## May Day rallies demand rights for immigrants

BY HILDA CUZCO

NEW YORK—On May 1, when working people around the world celebrate International Workers Day, 300 demonstrators here marched and rallied to demand amnesty for all immigrants. Similar actions took place in several other cities.

The Organizing Committee for Workers Rights (OCWR) and the Coalition for Dig-

nity and Amnesty organized the action, which began at Union Square. Participants marched to the Garment District carrying banners and handmade signs demanding justice and amnesty for immigrants. After a short rally they marched on to the offices of the International Monetary Fund.

The action took place the day after the expiration of a deadline for those immi-

grants with relatives or employers as sponsors to apply for residency in the United States without having to return to their country of origin.

Some religious groups, immigrant rights organizations, and Democratic and Republican party politicians have requested an extension of the deadline for the many people unable to meet it. The Spanish-language New York daily *Hoy* reported May 2 that President George Bush has asked Congress to approve an extension.

Louie Felix, originally from Manila in the Philippines, was among a contingent from the Filipino Workers Center that joined the march in the Garment District. He said the current immigration law "only favors those undocumented who have relatives or employers who can petition for them—it is not for everybody." Others present in the march shared Felix's opinion. "It is deceiving, it's a fraud," said Germán Flores, a 39 year-old construction worker, who thinks a general amnesty is needed.

Among the marchers were some youth who learned about the action through acquaintances or fliers. "We are all friends in support of the cause," said 14-year-old East Side middle school student Lilith Dollard.

In Newark, New Jersey, more than 500 demonstrators demanded justice for immigrant workers at the steps of the federal building, and then marched to the Performing Arts Center to back a union organizing drive by janitors at the facility.

In Boston, 1,500 people marched and rallied to demand a general amnesty for all immigrant workers. Signs in English and Spanish explained, "No Human Being is Illegal." Multicolored signs produced by the AFL-CIO demanded "Amnesty" in four different languages.

Hundreds of union members wore union T-shirts and caps. The rally was addressed by AFL-CIO president, John Sweeney and Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson. Sweeney declared, "The only thing fair, the only thing just, is a general amnesty."

Ted Leonard, a meatpacking worker in Boston, contributed to this article.

## YS to kick off fund drive

BY JASON ALESSIO

NEW YORK—The Young Socialists are kicking off a national fund drive May 6 to ensure that the YS can be an independent, self-financing, revolutionary youth organization. The eight-week drive will conclude July 1.

YS members in nine cities have already taken goals in the drive toward the national goal of \$2,400. Chapters or members in Chicago; Los Angeles; New York; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Tucson, Arizona; Tuscaloosa, Alabama; Twin Cities, Minnesota; and Seattle have set local fund-raising goals that add up to more than \$2,000.

The money will be raised through the weekly political activity of the YS and is used to pay the operating expenses of the organization, including for a national office in New York City and the day-to-day political functioning of the YS on an international scale.

In meetings over the past several weeks, YS chapters discussed the fund drive, set plans on how to raise funds, and decided on a local goal. Roberto Guerrero, a leader of the YS in New York, said the chapter plans to raise its goal of \$700 "by first of all winning new members to the YS who want to be a part of a revolutionary youth organization." He added, "We will raise the funds through the political work we carry out, such as defending the Cuban Revolution, discussing world politics from a working-class point of view with young workers and students, and by reaching out to working-class resistance. By doing this we will meet youth who will be convinced of why they too

should help finance and join the YS." The New York chapter plans to have a kickoff dinner, as well as classes, raffles, used book sales, political film showings, and a social as part of their fund-raising efforts.

In Los Angeles, the YS has set a goal of \$450. One idea they came up with is to make political T-shirts with a photo of Malcolm X and Fidel Castro at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem, taken when Castro came to speak before the United Nations in 1960. On the back, a quote by Malcolm X says: "The young generation of whites, Blacks, browns—you're living at a time of revolution, a time when there's got to be a change. People in power have misused it, and now there has to be a change and a better world has to be built."

In Chicago, a fund-raising event is already planned by the YS with help from the local Socialist Workers Party branch to help get the drive off to a good start. A YS member will speak at the event and give a fund pitch.

Over the next eight weeks there will be regular coverage of the fund drive, including a chart listing where we stand in each city and nationally. Articles by YS members in the "YS Around the World" column in the *Militant* about the campaign to reach the \$2,400 goal are welcome.

Anyone interested in making a contribution to the YS can send checks to: Young Socialists, Times Square Post Office, PO Box 33, New York, N.Y. 10108. For questions or comments about the YS fund drive call Jason Alessio at (212) 695-1809 or write to youngsocialists@attglobal.net.

This publication is available in microform from University Microfilms International. Call 1-800-521-3044, or mail inquiry to University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

# Big push needed to get sales drive on track

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The international subscription drive is picking up steam in a number of areas where partisans of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are taking the two publications out in workers districts, talking politics on the job with co-workers, getting to protest actions and to workers on picket lines, and selling at plant gates. A glance at the chart shows that while we've sold 174 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 110 *PM* subscriptions and 226 pamphlets, we're slipping behind schedule. Some areas like Los Angeles report that a number of their subs not recorded on this week's chart are in the mail to the *Militant* Business Office.

Partisans of the two publications in Miami are setting an example by planning a concentrated week of sales activi-



Militant/Ilona Gersh

**Auto workers at DaimlerChrysler Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio, buy copies of the *Militant*. Workers are angry about bosses' plans to eliminate 1,000 jobs at assembly plant.**

ties May 5-12 as part of a local target week to get on track.

Socialist workers in the city recently sent a sales team to Stuart, Florida, where residents organized protests against the killing by the cops of Stacey Scales, a 32-year-old Black man. They sold five copies of the *Militant*, a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* pamphlet, and a one-year *Militant* subscription to a woman in the NAACP who has been involved in organizing protests against the cop violence.

Actions by working people against police brutality and racist attacks are happening in a number of cities across the United States. Those involved in these protests are interested in the *Militant* and other communist literature. In Pittsburgh, Frank Forrestal, a coal miner there, said, "One of the highlights of our sales last week was at State College in central Pennsylvania where a fight led by Black students against racism has broken out at Pennsylvania State University. We sent two teams there, which sold two *Militant* subscriptions, 30 papers, and some \$80 worth of Pathfinder literature."

Brian Williams from New York reports, "This past weekend we set up a literature table in the Bronx across the street from the new mural honoring Amadou Diallo, who was

slain in a hail of 41 bullets by New York cops. Many people came by to view the mural and take pictures through the course of the day, given the controversy with the police who demanded the picture on the mural of four cops with Klan hoods be removed. Interest was quite high in the *Militant* articles on the fight against police brutality in Cincinnati and Florida. We sold two subscriptions to the *Militant* and one to *PM* there."

## Sales on the job and at plant gates

"A meat packer at the Swift plant in Marshalltown, Iowa, bought a subscription to the *Militant* from a socialist co-worker after seeing the paper being sold at the plant gate," wrote Edwin Fruit from Des Moines, Iowa. Fruit said he visited the home of one of his co-workers at the IBP packing plant where he works and talked for an hour about a "variety of issues, from the state of the trade unions to the Cuban Revolution. He bought a copy of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* and the new Pathfinder book *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*. We also met one co-worker at his home while going door-to-door who already had a subscription blank that was given to him at work. It was filled out and he bought the *PM* subscription on the spot."

Campaigners for the *Militant* and *PM* in Chicago went back to the plant gate at Rochelle Foods in Illinois after the meat packers there won their strike. In two days of sales at the factory and going door-to-door in the community, they sold 12 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*, 5 *Militants*, 2 *PM* subscriptions, and 2 copies of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* in Spanish.

Two socialist workers in Detroit drove to Toledo, Ohio, to sell the *Militant* at the factory gate of the Jeep assembly plant, which is being replaced by a new facility on the other side of town. Many jobs will be cut because the bosses at Chrysler announced that they will need about 1,000 fewer workers than anticipated.

"We met a supporter of the *Militant* at the old plant, and talked to workers leaving the factory at two different gates and sold 16 papers," said Ilona Gersh, an auto worker. "One young worker appreciated the truthful coverage in the *Militant* of the protests against police brutality in Cincinnati. He said he had some friends there who had participated in the demonstrations. I called him back and he said he had decided to buy an introductory subscription. He told me he liked the *Militant's* coverage of union struggles. 'I wish the union would do something about these layoffs,' he said."



## BY STU SINGER

WASHINGTON—Two of us went to Delaware, in the area where there are a number of poultry plants, to sell the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to workers there. We visited a small Latino store in Georgetown where the owner took a placement of two copies of the Spanish edition of *Playa Girón/Bay Pigs* we had with us and also ordered \$233 worth of books from Pathfinder. A young Mexican immigrant who works in the store bought a *PM* subscription.

We sold a few copies of *PM* at the plant gate of the Mountaire plant in Selbyville. One worker who bought a *Militant* subscription the last time we were there came over to say how much he likes the paper. He said he just got the issues with coverage on pro-

tests in Cincinnati.

Back at work at the Smithfield packing plant outside Washington, we sold a *PM* subscription and the English and a Spanish versions of *The Transformation of Learning* to a co-worker. Each weekend of the sales drive so far we have gone to visit a co-worker at home to discuss politics with them and their families, and then have gone selling door-to-door in the neighborhood.



## BY NAN BAILEY

LOS ANGELES—We have sold 18 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 17 to *Perspectiva Mundial* so far. Seven strikers at Hollander Home Fashions near Los Angeles have bought subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*. The *PM's* coverage of both this strike and of the Cuban Revolution attracted the interest of two co-workers in a local garment factory who also subscribed to the magazine.

We also sold nine *Militant* subscriptions and one *PM* subscription at the Los Angeles Times Book Fair April 28-29, which was held on the UCLA campus. Pathfinder has been an annual participant in the fair since it began in 1996. People who attended the gathering purchased 17 copies of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*.

About 150 people participated in an April 19 event held at California State University in Los Angeles to celebrate the anniversary of the Cuban victory at the Bay of Pigs. We sold two *Militant* subscriptions, one to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and four copies of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs* at the meeting.

## Militant/PM subscription drive to win new readers

Country	Militant			PM		Pamphlet	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden	12	6	50%	5	6	20	
United Kingdom	35	8	23%	10	2	90	4
United States							
Seattle	25	11	44%	8	2	55	12
Twin Cities	35	15	43%	25	8	50	9
Washington	27	10	37%	13	6	60	13
Houston	35	12	34%	15		75	4
Allentown	18	6	33%	5	2	20	2
Chicago	35	9	26%	25	3	75	14
Detroit	20	5	25%	5	1	40	8
Newark	40	10	25%	25	9	100	2
Tucson	8	2	25%	5		6	
Miami	22	5	23%	20	5	75	3
Omaha	15	3	20%	18	2	20	5
Upper Manhattan	70	13	19%	50	15	125	19
Atlanta	30	5	17%	15	6	50	1
Charlotte	12	2	17%	4		25	2
Des Moines	30	5	17%	20	4	45	6
Birmingham	25	4	16%	3		55	6
Grand Junction	25	4	16%	5	1	35	3
Brooklyn	75	9	12%	40	7	150	17
Fresno	9	1	11%	9		20	
Cleveland	20	2	10%	6		30	11
NY Garment Dist.	70	7	10%	55	11	150	4
Philadelphia	30	3	10%	10	1	60	8
San Francisco	50	4	8%	25	7	100	2
Los Angeles	50	4	8%	25	8	80	7
Pittsburgh	40	1	3%	5	1	65	6
Boston	25	0	0%	8		30	4
Tampa	8	0	0%	6		15	1
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>1611</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>							
Auckland	10	2	20%	1		20	4
Christchurch	8	0	0%	1		10	
<b>N.Z. total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>30</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Canada</b>							
Vancouver	15	2	13%	2	1	35	3
Montreal	12	1	8%	5	1	40	6
Toronto	20	1	5%	3		40	6
<b>Canada total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Australia</b>	12	1	8%	2	1	25	5
<b>Iceland</b>	6	1	17%	1		35	30
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1926</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>1900</b>	<b>475</b>
<b>IN THE UNIONS</b>							
<b>United States</b>							
UMWA	25	5	20%	1		25	0
UFCW	65	5	8%	80	13	170	18
UNITE	35	0	0%	30	8	70	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Australia</b>							
MUA	2		0%			3	1
<b>Meat workers</b>							
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>				
<b>New Zealand</b>							
NDU	2	0	0%			2	0
MWU	1	0	0%			1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Canada</b>							
UFCW	10	0	0%	2	0	15	0

# Court rulings deal blows to rights

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

During the last week in April the U.S. Supreme Court issued two rulings that dealt blows to democratic rights. One involved a further assault on the Fourth Amendment protection against illegal search and seizure. The other undermined defense against discrimination under the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

On April 24 the court ruled that cops can handcuff and arrest people for misdemeanors, such as a failure to wear seat belts, which are normally punished by a citation. The 5-4 court decision responded to an incident in 1997 involving Gail Atwater, a respiratory therapist. Atwater was arrested for driving without a seat belt with her two children in Lago Vista, Texas, during a search for a toy that had dropped off the vehicle onto the street.

"There was no one else on the road and I was going so slowly, I thought it would be O.K. But as soon as I saw the police car I knew I was going to be stopped," said Atwater. When the cop approached, she added, "he stuck his finger in my chest and started yelling about what a terrible mother I was and how I was going to jail."

The cop arrested Atwater for the seat belt violation, handcuffed her, and took her to the police station. Fortunately a friend came by to take care of her crying children, after the cop refused to let her take them to a neighbor's house. Her pickup truck was towed away. Atwater was placed in a jail cell for an hour until she posted a \$310 bond. After pleading no contest to the seat belt charges she paid a \$50 fine.

Atwater later sued the city of Lago Vista, the police chief, and the cop who arrested her for violating her constitutional rights. The suit was thrown out in the federal district court in Austin, Texas, and reinstated by a three-judge panel

of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. It was later dismissed by a divided vote of the full Fifth Circuit court before being sent to the Supreme Court.

"If someone like me, a soccer mom, can be humiliated and handcuffed in front of her children, what happens to the poor migrant worker or minority when they're stopped?" Atwater asked.

## Civil rights legislation weakened

In another decision that "divided along ideological lines," the *Wall Street Journal* reported that the Supreme Court dismissed a suit by Martha Sandoval, stating that a 1990 Alabama state law making English the official state language violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Under the law written tests for drivers' licenses were available in English only. Sandoval, an immigrant from Mexico who speaks little English, couldn't take the test.

According to the *Journal*, the ruling asserted that the act does not guarantee protection against "unintended discriminatory effects." All government or private enterprises that receive federal funds are covered by the legislation, which instructs agencies that implement the regulations to also be responsible for enforcing them.

Sandoval's lawyer, Richard Cohen, said that the court ruling could affect other aspects of the civil rights law, including sex discrimination and discrimination against disabled persons in programs that receive federal funding. "Historically, the agencies haven't been vigorous enforcers of this legislation," he said.

# Kerrey justifies massacre by Navy unit in Vietnam

Continued from front page

Delta on the South China Sea. Around midnight on Feb. 25, 1969, "Kerrey's Raiders," as the unit's soldiers were known, killed from 13 to 20 unarmed women and children.

Kerrey has made a name for himself as a Democratic politician who is "one of America's most prominent war heroes," according to the *Washington Post*. Since January he has been president of the New School University in New York. He served a term as governor of Nebraska and two terms from 1988–2000 as a U.S. senator. He also sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 1992, and was under consideration by some for another possible run for the office in 2004.

Thirty-two years ago Kerrey was a 25-year-old lieutenant who quickly made a name for himself as a gung-ho soldier, known for boasting that he was ready to take Hanoi with "a knife in my teeth," according to Vistica. Kerrey, who had arrived in Vietnam a month earlier, was the leader of a Navy SEALs (Sea-Air-Land) unit, which, according to Vistica, was "trained to operate behind enemy lines, collect intelligence, and carry out assassinations."

Vistica began investigating this incident around 1998 after several members of Kerrey's SEALs team began speaking about the mission. Vistica undertook an examination of thousands of pages of classified and unclassified SEALs reports in the Navy's archives. The *New York Times Magazine* together with the CBS news program 60 Minutes II coordinated their reporting on the story. The 60 Minutes II program aired a segment on the massacre on May 1.

The revelations have sparked a polarized debate in newspaper columns, on radio talk shows, and by government officials, with some expressing condemnation of the killings and others speaking in defense of the actions of Kerrey's squad. The response underlines how the outcome and character of U.S. imperialism's war against the Vietnamese people remain bound up with Washington's continuing military aggression today. The story also illustrates how the Pentagon's officer corps and "special forces" units—U.S. Rangers and the Green Berets, among others—carry out war against working people around the world.

Washington's assault on Vietnam, which included an invasion force that reached about half a million soldiers, was aimed at driving back the Vietnamese people's fight for self-determination and unification of their homeland, and stemming the spread of anticapitalist revolutions in Asia. Through the course of the war the U.S. rulers unleashed more bombs against Indochina—Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos—than had been dropped in all previous wars combined.

Millions of inhabitants of Vietnam were killed. Close to 60,000 U.S. troops also died in the conflict.

## Massive use of firepower

Kerrey's military unit first entered Thanh Phong on Feb. 13, 1969, searched several hooches (huts,) and "interrogated 14 women and small children," according to a SEALs after-action report. They claimed they were looking for the "village secretary."

On the evening of February 25 they returned to the area. They killed the residents of one dwelling with knives, regarding them as "security, as outposts," according to Kerrey.

Then, said Kerrey, his men heard shots—at a distance of 100 yards—and responded with massive firepower. "We had reliable information that there was going to be an enemy force operating in that area and there was a high-level meeting going on," stated Kerrey. "We received fire and we returned fire. But when the firing stopped we found that we had killed only women, children, and older men." In a later interview with Vistica, Kerrey admitted it may have not been shots that he heard, but just "noise."

Kerrey told Vistica his commanding officer Hoffmann "wanted hooches destroyed and people killed." Referring to the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C., he said, justifying his action, "There are people on that wall" who died because "they didn't realize a woman or a child could be carrying a gun."

Pham Tri Lanh, a Vietnamese woman who witnessed the massacre in Thanh Phong, gave CBS reporters a very different account of what happened. After hearing cries coming from one of the huts, Lanh, who was 30 years old at the time, snuck up on the scene of the killings. "I was hiding behind a banana tree, and I saw them cut the man's neck," she said. "The head was still attached to the back." Vistica wrote, "She says that she also saw the commandos kill what she remembers as a woman and three children with their knives."

In an interview with CBS News she added, "It was very crowded, so it wasn't possible for them to cut everybody's throats one by one."

"Two women came out and knelt down," she said. "They shot these two old women and they fell forward and they rolled over and then they ordered everybody out from the bunker and they lined them up and they shot all of them from behind."

An Associated Press dispatch reports on a second eyewitness to this massacre, Bui Thi Luom, who gave journalists her account for the first time on April 28. Luom, who



U.S. soldier with U.S. 1st Air Cavalry Division points automatic rifle at Vietnamese youth carrying child and followed by another child in jungle area south of Bong Son in Vietnam, February 1966.

was then 12 years old, described how the soldiers opened fire despite her grandmother's pleas for mercy. She was the only survivor in her hut of 16 people—11 children and five women, she said.

According to the AP story, Luom said that "as gunfire erupted, she fled into the dugout shelter. Before leaving, she said, they threw an explosive into the shelter. 'I just heard an explosion. I'm not sure if it was a grenade or gunfire. It hit my knee,' she said, pulling up a pant leg to show a scar on her left knee. 'I don't know if they knew I had escaped. I think they tried to kill anybody left in the shelter.'"

The accounts provided by these two Vietnamese women were consistent with that of Gerhard Klann, a member of Kerrey's SEALs unit. Klann reports that after the commando team arrived at a cluster of hooches, they proceeded to round up women and children for questioning. Vistica then writes, "Klann says that Kerrey gave the order and the team, standing between 6 and 10 feet away, started shooting—raking the group with automatic-weapons fire for about 30 seconds. They heard moans, Klann says, and began firing again, for another 30 seconds."

"There was one final cry, from a baby. 'The baby was the last one alive,' Klann says, fighting back tears. 'There were blood and guts spattering everywhere.'" According to one of the SEALs' after-action reports, the commando unit had expended 1,200 rounds of ammunition. Klann served in the SEALs for 20 years and was among a handful chosen for an elite counterintelligence unit established in 1980 after the Iranian revolution and the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran by students who exposed the facility as a base of CIA operations.

For this mission, the Navy awarded Kerrey the Bronze Star, the nation's fourth highest award for valor. The citation that accompanied the medal refers to the 21 Viet Cong killed in the operation. Viet Cong was a term

used by Washington to describe the Vietnamese forces who were fighting against the U.S. military invasion. Less than a month later, Kerrey led his SEALs on another such mission, in which he lost part of his right leg when a grenade exploded at his feet. In 1970 he was awarded the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military award.

With the story soon to break in the media, Kerrey began speaking out about the incident. In a speech April 18 at the Virginia Military Institute, Kerrey commented on the killings at Thanh Phong. "It was not a military victory. It was a tragedy, and I had ordered it. How, I have anguished ever since, could I have made such a mistake? Though it could be justified militarily, I could never make my own peace with what happened that night."

Several days later Kerrey attended a conference at the U.S. West Point Military Academy where, according to the *New York Times*, he "discussed the incident at Thanh Phong with Gary Solis, who is a war crimes expert who teaches the rules of war at the academy."

The *Times* quotes Kerrey as saying, "It's the first time I had read the rules of war. I certainly wasn't trained in them."

The Army's Field Manual, which represents U.S. policy regarding the law of armed conflict and is applicable to all the services, explicitly states:

A commander may not put his prisoners to death because their presence retards his movements or diminishes his power of resistance by necessitating a large guard, or by reason of consuming supplies, or because it appears certain that they will regain their liberty through the impending success of their forces. It is likewise unlawful for a commander to kill his prisoners on grounds of self-preservation, even in the case of airborne or commando operations, although the circumstances of the operation may make necessary rigorous supervision of and restraint upon the movement of prisoners of war.

The same day that the *New York Times Magazine* article appeared, Kerrey, together with five other members of his Navy SEALs team, released a statement which appeared in the April 29 *Washington Post*, denying that they knowingly killed civilians during the raid on the Vietnamese village.

In an interview with *Associated Press*, Kerrey charged, "The Vietnam government likes to routinely say how terrible Americans were. The *Times* and *CBS* are now collaborating in that effort."

In the interview with Dan Rathers on the 60 Minutes II program, Kerrey attempted to discount the account provided by Pham Tri Lanh. You have to "keep in mind that Lanh was a communist revolutionary during the war," he said, adding that "the eyewitness is at the least sympathetic to the Viet Cong or might have been Viet Cong herself."

Many Democratic and Republican party  
Continued on Page 11

## One-half of Pathfinder books are now digital

BY TOM TOMASKO

As of May 1, International Workers Day, one-half of all Pathfinder Press's books and pamphlets are fully digital. This means they can be printed, and when sold out, reprinted again in a matter of days.

The Pathfinder Reprint Project is an effort by supporters of Pathfinder Press to convert books that heretofore existed on film to compact disks. This measure allows Pathfinder to take advantage of leading-edge technology to publish titles cheaper, faster, and with less skill-intensive labor. This is crucial for a revolutionary publishing house that needs to respond quickly to developments in the class struggle.

The project is composed of about some 200 volunteers—150 are active in any given month—in seven countries who devote many hours each week to scanning, proof-reading, and formatting text, and preparing book covers and photos.

The work is done to professional standards so that each title maintains the high quality that Pathfinder Press sets and the working-class readers of its books deserve. In most cases the newly digital titles have

more attractive and easier to read text and sharper and more detailed photographs than in earlier editions.

Several months ago Pathfinder directors proposed to the reprint project's steering committee that the project take more responsibility for the quality checks previously done by editors in New York. Because the volunteers have developed their computer skills in the course of the work, this new responsibility was accepted by the volunteers with confidence they could take on the additional work. This in turn has freed up the editors to concentrate more of their time on editing and promoting new books.

### On-line promotional materials

Achieving the halfway mark allows the project to take on new responsibilities. The project's steering committee is beginning to organize the production of online promotional materials.

Many books are now sold via the Internet. Nearly all the on-line booksellers display miniature covers and have a synopsis of the book. Some allow entire chapters of a book to be online. Others also al-

low readers to write brief reviews of what they like or don't like about a book.

But up to now, these promotional materials have been lacking for Pathfinder's books sold online. The reprint project will soon turn this around by developing miniature covers and text to each online bookseller's specifications so those looking for books on the Internet can learn more about each of Pathfinder's titles of revolutionary and Marxist literature.

Because of the additional responsibilities for quality control and promotional materials, the steering committee asked Laurel Kelly to become a member of the San Francisco Bay Area-based committee. Other members are Peggy Brundy, Ruth Cheney, Jerry Gardner, and Tom Tomasko. Kelly has been instrumental in leading the indexing team of some 50 volunteers. The steering committee will soon be adopting a new date to have 100 percent of Pathfinder's titles in digital form. If you would like to volunteer for the effort to keep the lessons of the modern working-class movement in print, please write Ruth Cheney at: ruthchen@pacbell.net.

# London meeting on Bay of Pigs draws 300

BY ALAN HARRIS

LONDON—A meeting here to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Cubans' victory at the Bay of Pigs drew 300 people April 19. Featured speakers at the event were José Fernández de Cossio, the Cuban ambassador to Britain; Victoria Britain, a reporter for the national daily, the *Guardian*; and Labour Party Member of Parliament Jeremy Corbyn. The meeting was organized by the Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC).

In less than 72 hours of combat during April 1961 Cuba's revolutionary militia, police, and armed forces defeated an invasion by 1,500 mercenaries armed, trained, supported, and deployed by the U.S. government.

A feature of the April 19 program was a 30-minute film made by Cuban reporters and press photographers who were at Playa Girón (Girón beach) in 1961 to report on the battle. Girón is where the main force of mercenary invaders attempted to establish a beachhead, but were routed by tenacity of the Cuban revolutionary forces. The film also contains interviews with Cuban combatants who fought to defend their country in the historic conflict.

CSC national coordinator Steve Wilkinson, who chaired the event, welcomed the participants to the meeting and encouraged everyone to buy the two books displayed on the literature table in the foyer: *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, recently published by Pathfinder, and *Bay of Pigs and the CIA*, published by Ocean Press. Some 30 copies of each title were purchased by

those attending the meeting.

A week later some 40 people attended a meeting to launch the new *Playa Girón* title at the Pathfinder Bookshop here. The book features excerpts of several speeches before and after the battle by Fidel Castro, commander of the Cuban military forces, and the 1999 testimony by José Ramón Fernández before a Havana court detailing the background to the April 1961 victory. Fernández, currently Cuba's vice president of the Council of Ministers, is a retired brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. He commanded the main forces at Playa Girón that engaged and routed the mercenary invaders.

Manuel Rubido, first secretary of the Cuban Embassy, said in his remarks that although he had not been born in 1961, his generation hoped they too could have the opportunity to accomplish what their parents and grandparents did in defeating the U.S.-backed mercenaries.

Rubido pointed to the history of Washington's military intervention against Cuba since the rise of U.S. imperialism at the end of the 1800s, as well as its war against the people of Vietnam and its backing of the 1975 invasion of Angola by the apartheid regime in South Africa. The Cuban government responded to a request by the newly independent Angolan government for military assistance over the next decade to repel the invasions.

Rubido, who during this time was a young reserve officer, said the call by the Angolan government gave men and women of his

generation in Cuba their chance to emulate what earlier generations achieved. "The struggle in Angola took longer than the battle at Playa Girón," he said, "but we were also victorious following the historic battle at Cuito Cuanavale. It made me appreciate better the revolutionary changes we have made in Cuba."

Jonathan Silberman, a car worker and a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union, spoke for Pathfinder. Silberman said the U.S. administration of John F. Kennedy in ordering the invasion in 1961 proceeded from the same reactionary class interests defended by successive administrations—their need of the superwealthy U.S. ruling class to overthrow the Cuban revolution and destroy the example it sets

for working people around the world.

The book helps workers, farmers, and young people "learn from the revolutionary experiences of working people in Cuba and to see it's possible to take on the imperialist rulers and win," he said.

Mark Ladbrooke, from the Cuba Solidarity Campaign, told the meeting about the work the CSC is organizing, such as a Trade Unions for Cuba Solidarity Conference scheduled in London later this year. Ladbrooke encouraged participants in the meeting to purchase and study the new Pathfinder title. Four copies of *Playa Girón* were sold at the meeting along with two subscriptions to the *Militant* and one to *Perspectiva Mundial*. The Pathfinder Bookshop in London has now sold 44 copies of *Playa Girón*.

## Events in Los Angeles, Philadelphia feature Cuban representatives

BY WENDY LYONS

LOS ANGELES—"Why was Playa Girón the first defeat for the United States on the continent?" asked Sergio Martínez, First Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, at a meeting of 160 people here. "The main factor was that the whole population was behind the social changes begun in 1959, and they were willing to defend the Cuban Revolution with their last drop of blood."

Martínez was the featured speaker at an April 19 event at Cal State Los Angeles entitled "The 40th Anniversary of Cuba's Victory at the Bay of Pigs: A Living Legacy."

"Forty years later the aggressive policy of the U.S. government is still in place," he said, explaining that Washington "still dreams of destroying the achievements of the Cuban Revolution."

Through the socialist revolution, said Martínez, Cuba has achieved one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world, the largest number of doctors and teachers per capita in the world, and free access to health care and education through the university level. He added, "Many still have not learned the lesson that the Cuban Revolution is indestructible."

Among the participants in the meeting were members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) on strike at Hollander Home Fashions. Ramón, a striker, explained the issues in the strike by the 450 workers.

The meeting was sponsored by the Cal State Los Angeles Latin American Society and Latin American Studies Department, and the Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba.

Martínez also spoke to meetings of 75 at Compton College and 45 at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA).

BY JOHN CRYSDALE

PHILADELPHIA—Washington hates the example of the Cuban Revolution, said Oscar Redondo, first secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, at a meeting here. "At the Bay of Pigs," he said, "the mercenaries were told thousands of Cubans would greet them with open arms. Instead, millions greeted them with arms—arms in hand. It showed that the Cuban people are prepared to defend their revolution."

Redondo and Jorge González, a member of the international section of the Cuban Ministry of Culture, spoke at meetings on April 17 and 18 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Cuban victory in 1961.

Students from Haverford College; Ramón Marmolejos, the head of Unidad de Latina, a Latin American Fraternity at the University of Pennsylvania; and members of the local Cuba Support Coalition organized events for the two Cubans that drew 80 students at Haverford and more than 100 at the University of Pennsylvania.

González explained to the audiences how the U.S. embargo of Cuba hampers cultural exchange between the Caribbean country and the United States. He described art and culture as the "shield and sword" of the Cuban nationality.

"In spite of this embargo for 40 years, we have established a system of cultural education we are proud of," he said. "During the crisis of 1989, when the USSR fell and we lost much of our trade, we fought to make sure that not one school closed. Compare our priorities to those in other coun-

tries where during economic crises schools and hospitals are the first to go."

The meeting at Haverford, a small college just outside Philadelphia, built on the success of a trip to Cuba over the spring break by 60 students from a political science class and the college baseball team. "We went there to play baseball and develop relationships with Cubans," reported Sara Wolf, one of the organizers of the trip, to a recent Militant Labor Forum.

Another student described how the man with whom they stayed proudly showed them his English practice notes from University For All, a televised educational series. Three students from Masterman High School also attended the forum.

Wolf and Marmolejos chaired the meetings at Haverford and Penn. They promoted the July 22-30 Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, sponsored in Cuba by the Union of Young Communists, the Federation of University Students, and other youth organizations.

"We encourage you to come on the Youth Exchange to see Cuba for yourself, because the youth in the United States are going to decide what the future will be," said Wolf.

John Crysdale is a garment worker and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

**Come to the  
Second Cuba-U.S.  
Youth Exchange  
Havana, Cuba  
July 22-30, 2001**

"The current generation carries in its hands, along the trail blazed by its forefathers, working America...the seeds of the new America!" —19th century Cuban revolutionary José Martí

Cuban youth are organizing an exchange that will give young people from Cuba and the United States time to join together in discussions and strengthen the solidarity between the people of both countries. The conference will challenge everything that keeps the youth of the two countries apart. It will be a way to stand together and show the world that unity is not a dream, and that if we fight with all our hearts to unite the divided peoples of the Americas, we can turn the dream of Martí into reality. —Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange Organizing Committee

For further information contact the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange Organizing Committee. Telfax: (537) 60 0225 or 67 0225. E-mail: [ujcri@ujc.org](mailto:ujcri@ujc.org) or [ri@ujc.org](mailto:ri@ujc.org)

Or contact the Young Socialists, Times Square Post Office, P.O. Box 33, New York, NY 10108. Tel.: (212) 695-1809. E-mail: [youngsocialists@attglobal.net](mailto:youngsocialists@attglobal.net)

## With generous response, goal of \$100,000 set for Pathfinder Fund

BY PAT HUNTER

BROOKLYN, New York—The Pathfinder Fund is off to a good start with more than \$18,000 received as the *Militant* goes to press. Supporters of the publisher of revolutionary and Marxist titles sent in some \$4,000 to Pathfinder this week. And pledges

in cities around the world add up to just shy of \$92,000, making it possible to set an ambitious goal of raising \$100,000 by June 10.

Supporters of the fund here combined an April 29 open house at the new Pathfinder Bookstore with a program and dinner featuring Martin Koppel, editor of the *Militant*.

A number of local residents took the opportunity to visit the bookstore during the afternoon and 19 people heard Koppel's presentation. Koppel made the point that titles like *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* and *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* are not so much history books as "lessons on what can and must be done in the United States."

Olympia Newton, a leader of the Young Socialists in New York, encouraged participants to contribute generously to the fund. A volunteer at Pathfinder's stand at the Havana International Book Fair, Newton said the response by young people in Cuba have a similar response—"I have to have that book!"—as those who see Pathfinder on street tables in New York.

Some \$585 was raised at the door and in contributions and another \$500 was pledged to the fund.

### Meetings in New Zealand

The Pathfinder Fund was kicked off in New Zealand with meetings hosted by the Militant Labour Forum in Auckland and Christchurch.

Felicity Coggan, a sewing machine operator and a member of the National Committee of the Communist League, spoke at both meetings. She explained the role of Pathfinder books and pamphlets in unraveling what underlies the disordered world of capitalism today, and in making available to working people and youth the lessons of revolutionary struggles. The meetings were also an opportunity to celebrate the publication of the new Pathfinder book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*, and to discuss the centrality of the Cuban Revolution for working people worldwide.

More than \$1,000 was pledged to the Pathfinder Fund appeal at the two meetings.

Michael Tucker from New Zealand contributed to this article.

### Pathfinder Fund 2001

Country/City	goal (\$)	paid	%
Canada	5,000	1,206	24%
New Zealand	800	176	22%
United States			
Philadelphia	3,000	1,520	51%
Twin Cities	4,000	1,793	45%
Upper Manhattan	3,300	1,400	42%
Detroit	2,500	920	37%
Seattle	8,000	2,500	31%
Houston	3,500	930	27%
Chicago	6,500	1,515	23%
Boston	3,750	845	23%
Brooklyn	4,000	775	19%
Los Angeles	6,000	1,095	18%
San Francisco	8,000	1,150	14%
Des Moines	1,400	175	13%
NY Garment Dist	4,000	454	11%
Newark	3,000	300	10%
Pittsburgh	6,000	563	9%
Washington D.C.	2,200	185	8%
Tampa	600	50	8%
Miami	2,000	160	8%
Atlanta	3,200	240	8%
Grand Junction	2,400	150	6%
Birmingham	2,500	110	4%
Charlotte	2,700	80	3%
Cleveland	1,250	25	2%
Allentown	900	0	0%
Fresno	225	0	0%
Omaha	250	0	0%
Other		257	
<b>U.S. Total</b>	<b>85,175</b>	<b>17,192</b>	<b>20%</b>
Australia	900	0	0%
Iceland		25	
Sweden		50	
<b>Int'l Total</b>	<b>\$91,875</b>	<b>\$18,649</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Int'l Goal/Should be</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>25%</b>

# Pilots at Bay of Pigs 'fought for socialism'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

In a recent opinion column in the *Wall Street Journal*, commentator Peggy Noonan gives her version of the lessons of the Bay of Pigs—the April 1961 U.S.-organized invasion of Cuba, which workers and farmers and their revolutionary leadership succeeded in crushing in less than 72 hours.

Forty years later, the U.S. rulers continue to be haunted by Cuba's victory, which today working people in that Caribbean nation are celebrating as they continue to stand up to Washington's hostility. In Cuba that victorious battle is known by the name of Playa Girón, the beach where the main group of invaders surrendered.

The main purpose of Noonan's April 12 piece, titled "Both Sides Blink," is to offer friendly criticism of President George Bush for not being tough enough with China in the conflict last month over a U.S. spy plane.

Noonan compares Bush's handling of the China conflict with President John F. Kennedy's involvement in the 1961 mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, which was organized and financed by Washington. She criticizes Kennedy for supposedly having sought "a minimum of political risk" and suggests he should have provided more air cover to the invading force, or even sent in U.S. troops, "when there was still a chance."

"It was, of course, a disaster, and was over in five hours," she writes. "The invasion troops were outnumbered and outgunned, hit hard by Soviet MiGs flown by Czech pilots."

Noonan repeats themes commonly presented by defenders of Washington's four-decade-long policy of aggression against the Cuban Revolution. There's just one problem with her facts.

They're not true.

The counterrevolutionaries were not outgunned. Cuba had no Soviet MiGs at that time. Nor were Cuba's planes flown by Czech pilots. The mercenaries had six times as many pilots as the Cubans. And the battle took not five hours but almost 72 hours of hard combat.

Cuba, in fact, had a tiny air force, with dilapidated planes and a shortage of spare parts. The invasion force, known as Brigade 2506, used 16 B-26 bombers and 14 troop transport planes that were well-maintained, with a plentiful supply of ammunition and spare parts, and backed up by the world's number one military power.

Yet the Cuban pilots, supported by the mechanics and technicians on the ground, quickly established air superiority. By the end of the three-day battle they had downed the majority of the enemy's planes.

How did this happen?

The extraordinary performance of the Cuban air force was characteristic of the overall response by Cuba's combat forces, which were made up of volunteer militias, Rebel Army troops, the air force, a battalion of the National Revolutionary Police, and a small patrol of the Revolutionary Navy.

"We knew what we were fighting for—our sovereignty and the conquests of our revolution. They were fighting to recover their lost properties," said Alberto Fernández in an interview during a March 22-24 Cuba-U.S. conference in Havana on "Playa Girón: 40 Years Later." A former crop duster who was 22 at the time, he was one of Cuba's ace pilots in the battle, flying nine combat missions between April 17 and 19, 1961.

Fernández was referring to the revolutionary gains that working people in Cuba began to make after overthrowing the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959: a sweeping land reform, a mass campaign that wiped out illiteracy in city and countryside, the outlawing of racist discrimination, the slashing of rents and utility rates, the formation of popular militias, the nationalization of major industries, and other deep-going measures.

## Obsolete planes, no parts

Washington, increasingly hostile to these revolutionary measures, organized a steady escalation of acts of sabotage and counter-revolutionary terror on the island. From the spring of 1960 on, it became clear that Washington was preparing a military assault on Cuba.

As part of Cuba's stepped-up preparations

to confront a U.S. invasion, commander-in-chief Castro assigned Enrique Carreras to train a new corps of pilots. Carreras, an experienced pilot in the Cuban air force before the revolution, had been imprisoned by the Fulgencio Batista dictatorship for refusing an order to bomb rebellious military units in Cienfuegos in September 1957. In January 1959, when Batista fled in face of the advancing Rebel Army, Carreras was freed along with other political prisoners.

In his book *Por el dominio del aire: Memorias de un piloto de combate, 1943-1988* (Controlling the air: memoirs of a combat pilot, 1943-1988), Carreras explains, "A group of youth from the Rebel Army who aspired to be pilots, technicians, and mechanics was selected" for training. At the newly established aviator school at the San Antonio de los Baños air base, courses also included basic education taught by volunteer teachers, Carreras recounts, "since most of the trainees had not yet achieved a sixth-grade level and others were semiliterate."

Washington had drawn up detailed intelligence reports on Cuba's military capacity. The Cuban air force "has very little operational capacity," a CIA report stated. It "has



Leading Cuban pilot Enrique Carreras (third from left) below bomb compartment of fighter plane during October 1962 "missile crisis." The previous year Carreras and other pilots of the Revolutionary Air Force played a key part in defeating the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs, dominating the skies despite the limitations of their aircraft and equipment.

been left without trained pilots and maintenance and communications specialists. The Air Force doesn't have organized squadrons or conventional units or flights. Rather, it depends on individual flights, which are controlled and dispatched from the general

headquarters in Havana. Most of the planes are obsolete and inoperative, due to inadequate maintenance and a lack of spare parts. The few planes that are operational are considered capable of taking off, but are not entirely combat ready."

In fact, Cuba's air force consisted mostly of planes inherited from the Batista regime. At the time of the battle of the Bay of Pigs, Cuba had 10 pilots—only 3 of them experienced—and 10 fighter planes: 4 U.S.-made B-26 bombers, 3 British-made Sea Furies, and 3 T-33 jet fighter-trainers, as well as some transport planes.

There were no Soviet MiG fighter jets in Cuba at the time of the U.S.-organized invasion. Those planes began arriving only after the April 1961 battle. Even former Brigade 2506 pilot Edward Ferrer, in his book *Operation Puma: The Air Battle of the Bay of Pigs*, makes no claim of MiGs being flown at the Bay of Pigs.

## Response to the invasion

On April 15, 1961, in a prelude to the invasion, eight B-26 bombers flown by counterrevolutionaries, leaving from their U.S.-run base in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, attacked airfields in San Antonio de los Baños, Santiago de Cuba, and Ciudad Libertad in Havana, seeking to wipe out Cuba's planes on the ground. The bombers, painted with the false insignia of the Revolutionary Air Force, destroyed two Cuban fighter planes.

What prevented further damage was the lightning response of the young anti-aircraft gunners, who immediately launched an intense barrage of gunfire that drove away the

Continued on page 12

## Cuban union congress takes political initiatives

BY MAGGIE TROWE

HAVANA—The 18th national congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), Cuba's trade union federation, opened here April 29. The 1,683 delegates, elected by their co-workers in factories and other workplaces around the island, came together to discuss some of the major questions facing working people here. The congress was capped by the May Day celebration, with a march by 600,000 workers in this capital city, in a massive show of support for Cuba's socialist revolution.

In a nationally televised roundtable discussion on the eve of the trade union gathering, CTC general secretary Pedro Ross outlined the main themes that the delegates would take up.

"The challenges for the union movement in the coming years are to maintain and consolidate the conquests of the revolution, the ideas of socialism, and to defend the power of the workers, students, and peasants," Ross said. In this framework, he added, working people in Cuba are seeking to maximize the productivity of their labor and efficient use of resources "without renouncing social justice, without layoffs, without neglecting workers' rights."

Ross also stressed the role of the unions in maintaining military preparedness to confront Washington's unceasing hostility and threats against the revolution. On the opening day of the CTC congress, many of the delegations marched into the convention center singing and chanting "*Cuba sí, yanquis no*" and other pro-revolution slogans. The crowd was a sea of olive green, with many delegates wearing the uniforms of the Territorial Troop Militias, to which hundreds of thousands of working people in Cuba belong.

"Why are we wearing the green uniform? The revolution that has been attacked by the most powerful government in the world cannot forget for one minute the defense of the country," Ross emphasized at the opening of the congress session.

The congress had been preceded by months of discussions in every workplace and union. A resolution known as the Theses, prepared by the CTC leadership for discussion by union members and presentation

to the national congress, was taken up at CTC conferences in all 14 provinces.

The CTC meeting took place in the context of the progress Cuba has made in recovering from an economic and social crisis, known as the Special Period, sparked by the rapid collapse between 1989 and 1991 of the regimes and parties that had governed the Soviet bloc countries. The abrupt end to aid from and trade at favorable terms with these countries exposed Cuba more directly to the unequal exchange imposed by the imperialist-dominated world market. In face of acute shortages of essential goods and the consequent economic disruption, most projects to meet pressing social needs were shelved.

The day before the opening of the plenary sessions of the congress was devoted to meetings of 10 working commissions established by the CTC National Secretariat. Each one was responsible for considering proposals made in the pre-congress discussion. The topics ranged from the role of workers must play internationally "in face of neoliberal globalization" to strengthening the cooperative farms known here as Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC).

In the main report to the congress, Ross pointed out that Cuba is economically and politically much stronger today than it was at the time of the last CTC congress in 1996. "Today we can not only talk about recovery. We can talk about development," he said.

## Paid maternity leave is extended

The congress delegates made several decisions registering this progress. One was to adopt a proposal to extend paid leave for new mothers from six months to one year, effective immediately.

In the discussion on child-care centers, delegates had pointed out that with the Special Period, child-care accessibility declined sharply and that, given the shortage of spaces, having only six months' paid maternity leave was a problem.

Cuban president Fidel Castro, who attended the entire congress, asked delegates if it wouldn't be better to have a one-year maternity leave. The response was loud applause. The congress unanimously adopted the proposal.

"To me, the one-year maternity leave was the most important thing we've done at this congress," said Elieser Fonseca Aguilar, CTC general secretary in the town of Cueto in Holguín province. Many of the women delegates were in a celebratory mood after the decision.

Another decision, also on a suggestion by Castro, was to commit the CTC to expanding computer training programs to elementary schools in the most remote areas of the island, and prioritizing the necessary resources to do so.

Participating in the congress discussion, Hassan Pérez, president of the Federation of University Students (FEU), described a political campaign the FEU and the Union of Young Communists are waging. He pointed to the importance of the student brigades that have made thousands of visits to families in the poorest working-class neighborhoods in recent months. These students get to know the young people there and their relatives, and work together with them to solve some of the economic and social problems, such as lack of housing space, beds, access to sports programs, books, or other needs.

One question delegates discussed was how to deal with petty crime. CTC leaders such as Ross have argued that workers should deal with theft and other acts of petty crime through the unions, when they happen on the job, or through "preventive" work with young people in neighborhoods—as opposed to sending people to jail.

"I think this is important," said Vladimir Cruz, who works as a guard in a tobacco warehouse in Sancti Spiritus, "because jail kills the human spirit. It's much better to talk to young people about getting their life together, getting an education. Our organizations—from the CDRs to the unions—are working together on this." The Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) are neighborhood-based mass organizations.

The congress concluded with the election of a National Council, a National Secretariat, and officers.

On May Day, besides the mobilization in Havana, hundreds of thousands of working people marched in cities across the island from Pinar del Río to Guantánamo.

# Cuban leader draws balance sheet on Bay of Pigs victory

As part of celebrating the 40th anniversary of revolutionary Cuba's victory at the Bay of Pigs, known in Cuba as the battle of Playa Girón, the *Militant* has been publishing articles and reprinting documents about that decisive event.

Between April 17 and 19, 1961, Cuba's militias, Rebel Army combatants, revolutionary police, and air force crushed an invasion force of 1,500 exiled Cuban counterrevolutionaries who had been armed, trained, financed, and deployed by Washington.

In last week's issue the *Militant* published the first part of a Sept. 18, 1961, report by José Ramón Fernández, who commanded the main column of Cuban combatants in the battle, to the general staff of the revolutionary armed forces, in response to a request that he prepare a detailed report on the operations carried out by the revolutionary forces against the mercenary invasion at Playa Girón. In that section Fernández gives an almost hour-by-hour account of the battle.

In this issue we publish the concluding section of Fernández's report, which draws a balance sheet on the difficulties the revolutionary forces encountered in the battle and how they attempted to solve them.

The report, previously classified, was among the documents publicly released by the Cuban government and made available at a Cuba-U.S. conference on "Playa Girón: 40 Years Later," held March 22-24 in Havana. Fernández, the main organizer of the conference, is vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers. Though no longer on

active duty, he is a brigadier general of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

At the conference Fernández noted that the commission reviewing documents for declassification had proposed they not release these final critical assessments of the Cuban forces. "I had my reservations about blacking them out, but I accepted the decision. However, it was the commander-in-chief, Fidel [Castro], who overruled the recommendation. He insisted the entire report be declassified."

The following translation, as well as the subtitles and material in brackets, are by the *Militant*.

## BY JOSÉ RAMÓN FERNÁNDEZ

As a result of the operations carried out, and in light of the experiences we gained and the successes and difficulties we confronted, the undersigned officer [Fernández] sent a note, dated April 29, to the head of operations of the general staff, summarizing the difficulties encountered and some of the solutions. They are as follows:

A) We confronted the problem that the command—that is, the undersigned—on being designated the head of a group of units involving several thousands of men, including no less than nine battalions or similar units, did not have an organized general staff, nor did he have people truly qualified for these tasks. As a result, it was necessary to designate several officers, some of whom had limited capacity for the work of a general staff, a situation that led to a loss of efficiency and other problems. With this in



Bohemia

Cuban troops march with tank in 1961 against U.S.-backed mercenary forces who invaded at the Bay of Pigs. After presenting a report on how Cubans defeated the invasion, commander José Ramón Fernández offered a frank assessment of deficiencies of the revolutionary forces, some of which led to unnecessary losses, in order to draw the lessons of three-day battle and prepare for future conflicts with imperialism.

mind, it is necessary to organize effectively the commands, and for the general staffs to act in coordination with the one in charge, so there can be a real sense of collective work and to avoid problems in similar situations.

B) The command faced the problem that many subordinate officers acted on the basis of their own judgment, not strictly following the orders they were given. Sometimes this was through trying to improve on them, through lack of understanding, or through negligence and dereliction. On several occasions we discovered that orders that had been given to withdraw, to modify the attack formation, to halt a unit, or to deploy it at a given place, were not duly carried out by the subordinate officers. In some cases the individuals lacked authority, in others they were *compañeros* we could describe as intruders, with the resulting consequences that could be expected.

C) With regard to combat ability, numerous errors were observed, such as lack of control by the heads of subordinate bodies. This was due not only to lack of training but sometimes to the fact there were no heads of platoons, squads, or even companies who were qualified and had sufficient authority over their men to get them to obey orders.

Another problem was the men's inability to take positions, take cover, and generally take advantage of the terrain. Although in many instances the units advanced with exceptional bravery, they did not take adequate positions at the right moment and did not fire with the effectiveness and intensity that should have been expected. This was not from cowardice but from lack of training. Another thing that caused us innumerable difficulties was not keeping the enemy located and engaged. This meant that on sev-

eral occasions, after launching an attack on enemy positions while remaining at a distance from them, our units engaged them by trying to take their positions by storm and dislodge them. Instead of remaining engaged at a reasonable distance, keeping them under fire and observation, our forces would pull back to the approximate departure point. As a result, whenever a new attack was launched, we did not know whether the enemy had changed positions, and we were unable to keep them constantly under observation, as we would have wanted.

D) Communications: We lacked radios, telephones, and other adequate means of communication. In all cases we had to use messengers traveling on foot or riding in vehicles, with the accompanying delays and problems.

E) Vehicles: In general many people did not know how to drive the vehicles, where to go with them, how to camouflage or hide them, and so on. As a result, vehicles we might have saved were damaged or destroyed, and there were congested roads and points where the enemy planes were able to discover our points of concentration.

F) Camouflage: The infantry, artillery, tank, transport, command post, and other personnel often did not know the techniques and use of camouflage. They completely neglected and failed to use it, except when ordered by commanding officers, and in those cases they did so as little as possible.

G) The dispersal of forces is an initial, passive means of protection for all units. It was constantly neglected.

H) Orders: As previously noted, orders were sometimes not only given by unauthorized individuals—and, what is even more serious, obeyed—but frequently they were not clear and the appropriate channels were not used, creating much confusion.

I) Control: We lacked a military police or comparable force to control the evacuation, the moving of civilians from the front to the rear or vice versa, those falling behind, personnel who got lost, the adequate direction of traffic and orientation of units, as well as controlling and directing individuals who, whether because they were lost or for some other reason, tried to move toward the rear.

J) The 85 mm. cannon arrived with the shells not ready to be fired. This led to precious time lost in the face of enemy positions, and the pace of firing was one shot per minute or less, which appreciably hurt our operations, until it was possible to prepare a sufficient number of shells.

K) The artillery in general would take hours from the time it reached a position until it was ready to fire.

L) Tank units: First of all, they did not advance resolutely, and secondly, it appears the crews were not sufficiently trained to fire effectively [given] the capacity and limitations of the vehicles they manned.

M) The supply operation was completely disorganized. More than 24 hours passed before a quantity of food and water were received. Subsequently, they continued to arrive in a chaotic manner, which brought innumerable difficulties in feeding the troops.



Bohemia

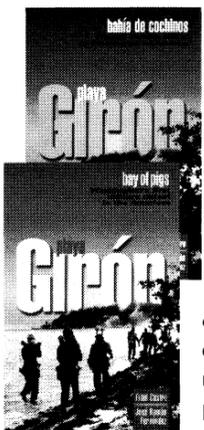
Cubans participate in nationwide campaign launched in 1961, the Year of Education, to eliminate illiteracy. In defending their revolution, it was not the military hardware alone that counted, but the fact that working people would not let the clock be turned back on the social and political conquests they had won.

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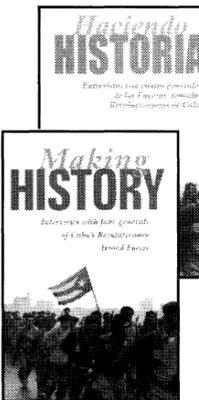
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# Raúl Castro responds to Washington's threats against China

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"We have a people organized and armed with weapons of every type, including anti-tank and antipersonnel mines, a people that desires and fights for peace, but that knows how to defend its national soil, come what may," said Raúl Castro, the Minister of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), April 15 in the wake of military provocations by U.S. imperialism against China.

Castro spoke to reporters after seeing off Chinese president Jiang Zemin at Varadero International Airport. Jiang was in Cuba as part of a four-day state visit, one of six countries he visited in Latin America and the Caribbean.

His visit came just as Beijing was releasing the crew of the U.S. spy plane damaged after colliding with a Chinese jet. The collision, which took place just off China's coast, sharpened tensions between U.S. imperialism and the Chinese workers state and highlighted Washington's military encirclement of, and continual provocations against, that country.

The *Granma* daily newspaper, published in Havana, said Castro reminded reporters that the United States has never renounced aggression against Cuba. "Sure they can invade," he said of Washington. "Sure they can occupy part of the country, and then what?" War "was the most terrible thing imaginable," he emphasized. As in Vietnam, he said, Washington would begin to understand this when its soldiers began returning home in body bags.

*Granma* reporters Ventura de Jesús and Arnaldo Musa wrote Castro said "that the Cuban defense budget is today 11 times smaller than at the end of the '80s, and that the army had been reduced by tens of thousands of men." However, "Today we are stronger," he said.

While the government has been forced to carefully husband its military and other resources, the country's defense preparedness has been increased through the training, equipping, and organizing hundreds of thousands of working people into the Territorial Troop Militias and through other popular organizations.

## Land mines are the arms of the poor

In the event of an invasion, he continued, "They are going to bomb us from above, and we are going to mine them from below. Land mines are the arms of the poor, and we have made every kind there is."

The *Granma* article stated that Castro "indicated that it is immoral to demand of Cuba that it not use mines to defend itself from a

U.S. invasion," referring to a campaign spearheaded by the government of Canada and various members of the European Union calling for the banning of these weapons.

The Cuban government's position on this campaign was explained by Nestor López Cuba, a division general in the FAR, in a 1997 interview published in Pathfinder's "Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces." While noting that "unfortunately this campaign...has broad backing among persons who are very progressive, very humanitarian," López Cuba said that "mines...are the weapon of those who don't have the resources to buy a B-52 bomber or an F-16 jet"

He continued, Cuba "cannot afford... expensive and sophisticated weaponry, nor are they particularly necessary if we take into account the popular character and strictly defensive purpose of our weapons, including the antipersonnel mines we have, which are not for use in another country.

"What can we use to resist?" asked the FAR officer. "Weapons that are the least expensive—rifles, mines, Molotov cocktails, antitank grenades."

Castro's other remarks also spotlighted the popular character of the country's defense preparations. The CNN news service

## Panama denies Cuba's request to extradite terrorist

BY RÓGER CALERO

The foreign ministry of Panama announced April 17 that it would not extradite CIA-trained terrorist Luis Posada Carriles to Cuba, where he is wanted for his involvement in several murderous attacks against the Cuban people and assassination attempts against Cuban revolutionary leaders.

According to an article that appeared in the Los Angeles newspaper *La Opinión*, Panama's foreign ministry explained the decision is based on "international agreements and reciprocity." Government officials said Posada will face trial in Panama and that if sent back to Cuba he could face the death penalty.

Posada Carriles and four other terrorists were arrested in Panama on November 17 at the start of the 10th Ibero-American Summit. Shortly after his arrival in the country to participate in the meeting, Cuban president Fidel Castro denounced the presence in the country of counterrevolutionary terrorists wanted for crimes against Cubans in other countries. In a meeting held an hour and a half prior to Castro's press conference,

nicate information and work together.

The punishment, known as an "admiral's mast," includes filing a punitive letter of reprimand and docking half the officer's pay for each of two months. Fargo immediately suspended the pay cut.

The Japanese government accepted Fargo's ruling. "We believe the decision on the punishments clarified former captain Waddle's responsibility," stated Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda following the U.S. admiral's announcement. Foreign Minister Yohei Kono told a press conference that Japan is not in a position to say "this or that" about the outcome. He said that he hopes the U.S. will live up to its pledge to bring up the wreck of the Japanese ship and to compensate the survivors and the families of the dead.

Relatives of those who went down with the ship had a less sanguine response. "I cannot help feeling that the way this has ended is a farce," said Kasuo Nakata, 55, father of high school teacher Jun Nakata, who was killed in the disaster. Ryosuke Terata, father of 18-year-old Yusuke Terata, another victim, said, "This is [racial] discrimination. Can you imagine Americans accepting this kind of lenient decision if the victims were fellow Americans?"



Left, Raúl Castro. Above, women's unit of the Territorial Troop Militia on May 1, 1982, in Havana. Cuba's defenses have been strengthened through the training, equipping, and organizing of hundreds of thousands of working people.

reported Castro saying that "entire cities and army divisions would fight from tunnels and shelters dug across the country over the last 20 years."

"Santiago, our second city, everything is ready so it can fit underground," Castro stated. The same was true, he said, for the city of Matanzas, which lies on the north coast of the country.

Castro also used the occasion to respond

to media figures and others in the United States who—according to the *Granma* reporters' summary—"frequently ask what will happen after Fidel [is gone], speculating about whether there will be an uprising, who will assume the leadership and whether they will be able to maintain the revolution. He answered immediately that, of course, we will maintain it."

CNN reported that Castro also affirmed "a January statement that the United States would be well advised to settle its differences with Cuba before Fidel Castro dies." The armed forces minister said, "The authority Fidel has, no one else will have. That's why it will be easier to work things out with him."

Cuban officials gave Panamanian security forces the addresses, phone numbers, descriptions, and aliases of a number of right-wing terrorists positioned to take part in an attack on the Cuban president if the time was right and the situation allowed. Panamanian authorities were asked to act as quickly as possible.

Given the public announcement that had already been scheduled, the Panamanian authorities had to either handcuff Posada Carriles or face public condemnation for allowing him to escape.

Posada had been previously arrested in Venezuela, but was allowed to escape in 1985 from a Venezuelan prison after serving eight years of a 27-year sentence for the bombing of a Cubana de Aviación airplane off the coast of Barbados. The attack killed all 73 passengers and crew.

According to Posada's own account in a 1998 *New York Times* article, he was recruited by the CIA to carry out assassination attempts against Cuban leaders, along with other terrorist activities, after the defeat of the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in 1961. He also worked as chief of operations for the Venezuelan secret police in the 1970s. After his escape from prison he worked closely with U.S. Lt. Col. Oliver North and CIA head

William Casey in the supply operation for the Nicaraguan *contras* organized out of the White House. They used El Salvador's Ilopango Air Base as their headquarters.

Two days after Panama's announcement of its refusal to extradite Posada to Cuba, the government of El Salvador announced that it will ask that Posada be sent there to face charges of using a false passport in an alleged plot to kill Castro. The charges stem from information provided by the Cuban government.

The Cuban daily *Granma* reported that former Panamanian president Aristide Royo and a number of other prominent figures in the country sent a letter to the government demanding the extradition of the terrorists to Cuba.

The Cuban government requested the extradition at the time of the five terrorists' arrests, and has continued to insist on the Cuban people's right to bring them to justice. Showing the indignation of millions of people in Cuba at the impunity with which the admitted terrorist has been active in Latin America, massive mobilizations in the country demanded Posada's extradition. The fight for the prosecution of Posada and the extent and character of his crimes against the Cuban people have also been the subject of roundtable discussions on Cuban television.

## U.S. Navy decides not to court-martial sub captain for sinking Japanese boat

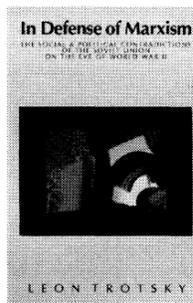
BY MAGGIE TROWE

Acting on the recommendation of a three-admiral Naval Court of Inquiry, Admiral Thomas Fargo decided not to court-martial the captain of the U.S. submarine that shattered a Japanese training boat, resulting in the deaths of nine people. Instead, Fargo—the commander of the U.S. Pacific fleet—issued a reprimand that will go in the file of Cmdr. Scott Waddle, the submarine's chief officer. Waddle will be formally relieved of his command of the *USS Greeneville*, but will be able to retire with an honorable discharge and full pension.

The *Greeneville* hit the *Ehime Maru* February 9 as the crew was demonstrating an emergency surfacing maneuver to 16 civilian guests, including one who was operating the ship's controls. Such visits are a common practice in all the military services. The Japanese ship, a training vessel for high school students learning commercial fishing, sank within 10 minutes of the collision.

Fargo found Waddle guilty of "dereliction in the performance of his duties" and of "negligent hazarding of a vessel." He attributed the collision to an inadequate periscope and sonar search for surface vessel traffic by the crew before the vessel surfaced, and to the crew's failure to commu-

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# Workers strike Hollander in Pennsylvania

Continued from front page article on page 15). Another 100 union members have been honoring a picket line set up by their California fellow unionists at Hollander's factory in Tignall, Georgia. Although the union is negotiating separate contracts at each plant, the central issues are the same: low wages, no pension, and poor working conditions.

Workers at the Frackville plant have been following the struggle by workers in California and Georgia closely and many see these two contract battles as one fight. "We're hoping that this plant going out will be the breaking point" in the struggle, explained sewing machine operator Dale Stumpf.

UNITE members from the Hollander plants in California and Georgia attended a rally at the plant entrance the week before. Also participating were UNITE members from City Shirt, a large garment factory in the same industrial park.

David Greenleaf, an organizer for UNITE, told the *Militant* that the company had offered the Frackville workers a 25-cent raise in the first year of a contract and 20 cents for the following two years. The company has offered two options on the insurance plan, but won't explain the terms. Both appear to require workers to pay more. The company refuses to negotiate a pension plan.

"I've been there seven years and make \$6.75 an hour," explained Stumpf. "I made more 30 years ago. Going on strike was the best thing we could do. This company gave us no choice."

Workers report their wages have been declining and conditions on the job are get-

ting worse. Geraldine Dyszel, the chief shop steward, explained that workers who bag the pillows are paid by piece rate. Without changing the rate the company forced the workers to go from bagging pillows at one station to two, sometimes 20 feet apart, significantly lowering their wages. "We have a grievance in for paid travel time," she said.

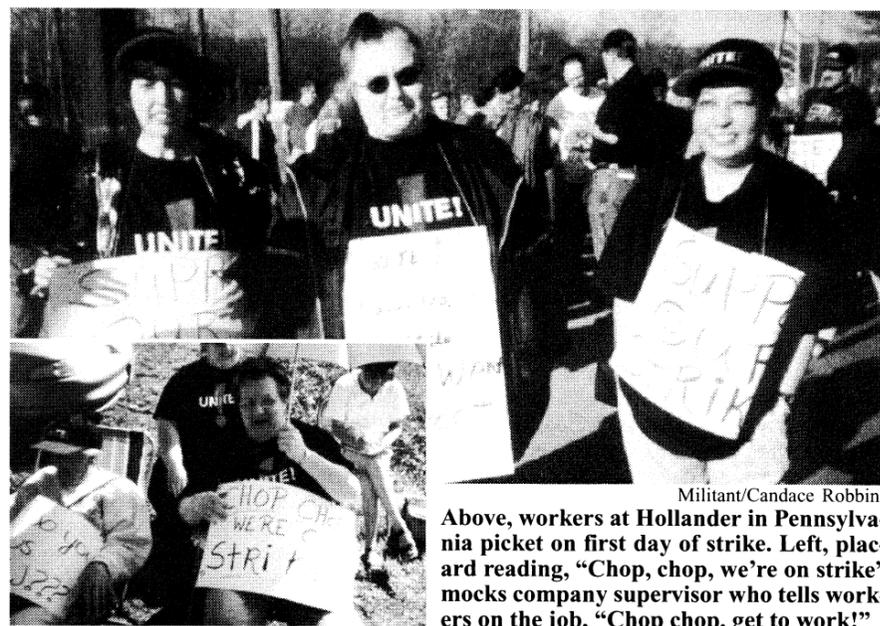
The wages of sewing machine operators on piece rate were cut by several dollars an hour this January when the company rearranged production and modified machinery.

Dolores Peleschak, Kassie Harding, and Gina McGinnis work in the "Feather Room," known as the worst department in the plant. "The air vents aren't connected. The place is filled with dust. They give us masks but it's so hot your glasses steam up and you can't see," Peleschak explained. "Sometimes the pillow casing breaks, the machine blows feathers all over you and you can't breathe," Harding described.

McGinnis has developed an allergy to formaldehyde, a chemical used to treat the feathers. After an allergic reaction she was given a point for missing time at work. She reported that, under the company's attendance policy, workers receive a point for any absence. After accumulating four points within a year the worker is suspended. With seven points they are fired.

"These are slave wages here," Peleschak explained. "And the company says that on these wages we should be able to save for retirement."

Workers reported that vans of temporary workers were brought through the picket



Militant/Candace Robbins

Above, workers at Hollander in Pennsylvania picket on first day of strike. Left, placard reading, "Chop, chop, we're on strike" mocks company supervisor who tells workers on the job, "Chop chop, get to work!"

line the first morning of the strike. While the company has had temporary workers in the plant before, a number have been hired in the recent period to replace the permanent employees during the strike.

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

BOCA RATON, Florida—Nearly 200 people rallied April 25 at the Hollander Home Fashions headquarters here in solidarity with workers on strike at the

company's plant in Vernon, California. The Florida Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) organized the action. The majority of those attending were retirees who came on UNITE-organized buses.

A couple of dozen factory workers from the Tartan Textile and National Linen industrial laundries, in Pompano Beach and Fort Lauderdale respectively, and other area factories also took part. These included a sizable delegation, mostly of Haitian workers, from Bag Specialists, a leather bag manufacturing facility in Miami. A smaller group attended from the cutting plant Fishman Tobin. These four factories are organized by UNITE.

Arcine Raspberry, Florida director of UNITE, introduced two strikers from Los Angeles, who were the featured speakers at the rally. "I thank this community for your support," said Maria Aceves, who has worked for 15 years at the plant. "You know the importance of retirement benefits and you are standing with us against the injustices at Hollander. It is outrageous that production employees with more than 20 years service will retire with nothing. Every three years, when the contract came up in the past, we pled with the company for our demands that were never met. This time we said enough is enough and went on strike."

Aceves explained the tremendous boost the Vernon strikers got when UNITE members honored their pickets at Tignall, Georgia. Aceves is among the half dozen workers from Los Angeles who have set up that picket line, and has just come to Florida from there. "We hope the workers at Hollander in Pennsylvania will join us and walk out also," said Martina Vasquez, the second striker from California, in an interview.

"The solidarity here," she said, "and all the support we've gotten in California, from the union, from the AFL-CIO, financial donations and moral support from the community, and even from some politicians make us strong to hold out as long as it takes. Very few people have crossed our picket lines."

"This is payback time from the support we got around the country last summer," said Randal Preddie, a truck driver at the Tartan Textile industrial laundry. Preddie was one of the shop floor leaders of a strike by UNITE against that company last year. Through that action workers won a modest pay raise and "more dignity and respect on the job," as this unionist put it. Preddie and other Tartan Textile workers traveled to other company plants last year, organizing solidarity walkouts in New York and elsewhere. These were part of the success of the walk-out at Pompano Beach.

Other workers present expressed similar sentiments. Unions represented at the rally included the United Federation of Teachers and the Service Employees International Union.

Speakers at the rally included Carlos Carrillo of the AFL-CIO; Antonio Perdomo, UNITE local president at Fishman Tobin; Dan Liftman, assistant to state congressman Alcee Hastings; Rabbi Sam Silver; Bruce Jay of the South Florida Interfaith Committee for Workers Rights; and representatives of two area chapters of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Argiris Malapanis is a meat packer in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

## Kerrey justifies massacre by Navy unit

Continued from Page 6

politicians rose to Kerrey's defense. Senator John McCain, a Republican from Arizona, said his "heart goes out to Bob Kerrey at this moment. All of us involved in wars do things we're proud of and things we're not so proud of." Democratic Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts said Kerrey's "anguish and pain" should not "diminish for one moment the full measure of what he has given to his country and of what he represents."

William Safire, in a column titled, "Syndrome Returns," said that "no hard evidence is offered to support this grave allegation [of] deliberate murder." The SEALs team "has long been burdened by guilt at the mistaken

wartime killings, but they are not murderers. This story is another manifestation," Safire wrote, "of the self-flagellation that led to the Vietnam Syndrome—that revulsion at the use of military power that afflicted our national psyche for decades after our defeat"—an unfortunate outcome in all fronts, according to the conservative columnist.

More to the point was the comment by journalist Mickey Kaus, quoted in an article on the usnews.com web site. "There is already entirely too much respectful attention being paid to the moral and psychological agony of Bob Kerrey and to the 'healing' process," he states. "The question is what happened to the people who haven't had the

luxury of agonizing for 32 years because they've been dead. Kerrey's agony is a distraction."

In an interview on CNN's "Wolf Blitzer Reports," Kerrey justified the action of his commando unit as countless other such military operations were justified by the U.S. military brass during the course of the Vietnam War. "It was a free-fire zone," stated Kerrey. "There were enemy operating in the area. And even though there were civilian casualties, I have every reason to believe they were at the very least sympathetic to the Viet Cong and at the very worst participating in lethal force against the Americans."

In areas declared to be "free fire zones" by the U.S. military forces, combat pilots and Navy warships could attack any targets at will, including people and villages.

Washington had declared certain areas of the country to be "strategic hamlets," where villagers were ordered to relocate. "Those who didn't move to the strategic hamlets were labeled as Vietcong or as enemy sympathizers," wrote Vistica in the *Times Magazine* article.

David Marion, a U.S. Army captain responsible for operations in this section of the Mekong Delta region, told Vistica that the forced relocations of the Vietnamese peasants was a difficult task. "They had been there for generations. They weren't going to leave, and basically they didn't care who was in charge," he said.

"In 1972, Kevin P. Buckley, then a *Newsweek* correspondent, investigated a similar search-and-destroy operation by the 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta and concluded that American troops killed at least 5,000 civilians," reported an April 27 *Washington Post* article.

"This point was reinforced today by another former Navy SEAL, Lt. Bill Belding, a friend of Kerrey's," the *Post* article stated. "Belding, in an interview, described an almost impossible situation in which combatants often killed civilians by mistake and rarely wrote up these casualties as anything other than enemy dead."

Operations such as that carried out by Kerrey's commando unit continued through the course of the Vietnam War. Several came to public attention much sooner. Nine months after the massacre in Thanh Phong, news broke in the media about a slaughter carried out by U.S. forces in March 1968 in the village of My Lai, where hundreds of civilians were massacred (see article on page 13).

In February 1970, Vistica writes, "a five-man Marine patrol entered the hamlet of Son Thang, about 20 miles south of Danang, and killed 16 women and children."

## South African president Mbeki alleges 'plot' by ANC leaders

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—The government of South African president Thabo Mbeki has alleged that there is a plot against him from within the governing African National Congress.

In an April 24 television interview Safety and Security Minister Steve Tshwete said three prominent ANC members—Cyril Ramaphosa, Tokyo Sexwale, and Mathews Phosa—were being investigated by the police, accused of "dispensing misinformation about the president" with a view to ousting him. Tshwete offered no evidence. In another interview broadcast the same evening, Mbeki, who is also president of the ANC, lent weight to the conspiracy claim.

The allegations came three days before Freedom Day, a holiday celebrating the country's first democratic, nonracial elections in 1994. They followed an extraordinary public declaration earlier in April by Jacob Zuma, the South African and ANC deputy president, who said that he had no ambitions for the presidency of the ANC.

Ramaphosa is a member of the ANC National Executive Committee and its former secretary general. Both Sexwale and Phosa have served as provincial premiers for the ANC and previously were members of the National Executive Committee. All three, who today are wealthy businessmen, denied any involvement in plotting.

Tshwete also said there was a "whispering campaign" attributing to Mbeki responsibility for the 1993 assassination of South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani, and that this might trigger violent action towards the president. Two rightists, Clive

Derby-Lewis and Janusz Walus, are serving prison terms for the murder.

These developments come ahead of nine provincial ANC conferences taking place this year. These meetings will lead up to a national conference of the organization in 2002 where, among other things, leadership elections will take place.

Much of the big-business press here saw the developments as an effort by Mbeki to assure there will be no challenge to his position at next year's ANC conference. Some newspapers have cited the existence of a pamphlet, apparently produced by ANC members, arguing for "one president, one term."

An ANC statement backing Tshwete said the organization was "poised to accelerate the pace of...transformation" of the country. As a result, "it has also attracted the attention of those forces resistant to such change.... Among the arsenal of weaponry long employed by those opposed to democratic change is the projection and encouragement of leadership struggles within the ANC to sow confusion and division."

The Congress of South African Trade Unions said in a statement that it "would welcome the investigation of the police into genuine threats to our leadership, but rejects their involvement in normal internal political events." The union federation, which is allied to the ANC, also said, "It is highly irresponsible to announce the names of people subject to investigations, long before any final conclusions have been reached. This violates the due process of law and can harm the security of the individuals involved. Furthermore, it aggravates the spread of rumors and fear."

# Pilots at Bay of Pigs 'fought for socialism'

Continued from Page 8

enemy planes, one of which exploded in a ball of fire.

What's more, in March the revolutionary command had ordered the few Cuban fighter planes to be dispersed to avoid being wiped out by precisely such an attack.

Knowing the invasion was imminent, Fidel Castro instructed the pilots and mechanics to sleep on the runway under the wings of their aircraft.

At 4:45 a.m. on April 17, Castro called Carreras to the phone. "Carreras, there's a landing taking place at Playa Girón. Take off right away and get there before dawn. Sink the ships transporting the troops and don't let them get away," he instructed. Before daybreak, much of the Revolutionary Air Force was in the air, headed to the Bay of Pigs.

On his first sortie, Carreras sank an enemy transport ship, the *Houston*. Later that morning, his Sea Fury fighter was machine-gunned by two B-26s. Carreras deftly eluded the attack and shot down one bomber. He then attacked a second transport ship, the *Rio Escondido*, sinking it.

As he raced away from the exploding ship, smoke poured out of his engine and his plane began to shake. Normally, a pilot in that situation should have bailed out rather than risk his life, but Carreras decided to try to save the plane. He headed to the base as his plane lost altitude, barely making it onto the runway.

As the mechanics rushed over and inspected the plane they asked, astounded, "Captain, how did you manage to get back?" The enemy machine guns had damaged a cylinder in his engine.

Over the next two and a half days, the 10 Cuban pilots played a decisive role in the battle, flying a total of 70 combat missions. By sinking the transport ships and landing craft they helped cut off the mercenaries' supply lines and escape route. Then they hounded the counterrevolutionaries' land forces, which finally surrendered at Playa Girón.

The enemy forces lost nine planes and 14 pilots, including four U.S. citizens, members of the Alabama Air National Guard. The Cubans lost two pilots.

## Ground personnel played key role

In addition to the pilots, who flew repeated missions without relief, an outstanding role was played by the ground personnel. In an interview published in the April 18, 2001, issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*, Raúl Curbelo gives an account of their performance.

Curbelo, a Rebel Army captain, was designated head of the Revolutionary Air Force on the morning of April 17, 1961, as the mercenary invasion began.

"It's true we had few pilots," Curbelo said. "But they acted in combat like veritable tigers in the air. We scarcely had any spare parts. But we had ground personnel—mechanics, weapons technicians, suppliers—who, although they were few and had little experience, rose to the occasion."

The mechanics "carried out so many initiatives—such as their revolutionary and patriotic fervor—that, if on April 17 we barely had six planes ready, by the 18th the figure rose to nine and the following days we had 12 aircraft ready for combat, despite having lost two planes and their men in battle," he noted.

"The planes would land and the ground personnel would swarm around them. The 500-pound bombs, which are traditionally loaded mechanically, were installed on the planes by hand, through sheer physical effort. The fueling, loading the missiles, checks, everything needed to get back into the air to fight was completed in 15 to 20 minutes. Those operations would normally take an hour. The pilots would go into combat practically without resting."

Curbelo recalled "young René Suárez, an auto mechanic with barely three years of schooling, who together with many other compañeros performed real miracles through their initiatives. They even adapted truck brake systems to the planes."

The old aircraft that could barely make it off the ground were dubbed the "*Patria o muerte*" (homeland or death) planes. The ground personnel would ready them to the best of their ability and then send off the pilots to shouts of "*Patria o muerte!*"

The blows dealt by the Cuban air force had a stunning effect on the mercenary pilots, who lost their will to fight. They could

not believe or understand how pilots flying rickety planes could be shooting them out of the sky.

In a speech on April 23, 1961, just days after the victory at Playa Girón, Castro pointed out, "Imperialism examines geog-

## U.S. rulers seek new antimissile weapon

Continued from front page

nuclear warheads currently in the U.S. arsenal.

A system designed to locate, target, and destroy a missile soon after launch, while it is still moving relatively slowly and emitting hot flames, has a greater chance of success than systems recently tested. These target a missile in space, when it is cold and traveling at a high velocity, something Pentagon contractors have so far not been able to do with intercept rockets. Deploying a boost-phase system means having ships and submarines with antimissile weapons stationed off the coast of countries Washington deems a "threat" as well as constant surveillance by airborne and space-based sensing devices.

One program being developed by Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and TRW is the Airborne Laser Program. The companies say they will outfit a 747 airplane with an oxygen-iodine laser by 2003.

Secretary of State Colin Powell told the House International Relations Committee the following day that the U.S. government will no longer participate in the U.S.-Russian Standing Consultative Commission, which meets to discuss potential violations of the ABM Treaty. Instead, Powell said, he will meet with his Russian counterpart in three weeks to emphasize "our total commitment to missile defense programs."

Washington is casting its antimissile program to appeal to the British, French, and German governments. "European allies have responded warmly to Mr. Bush's willingness," wrote the *Financial Times*, "to consult them before proceeding. The word 'national' has been dropped from 'missile defense' as a sign that the new defenses would include allies." In his May 1 speech Bush repeated six times that the missile shield will protect "friends and allies."

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lucas Fischer told the Danish parliament April 29 that Washington will "deploy defenses as soon as possible. Therefore, we believe that the ABM Treaty will have to be replaced, eliminated, or changed in a fundamental

way." The Danish government rules over Greenland, where the Pentagon maintains a radar station that would be a key part of the antimissile system.

Bush's speech came one day after German chancellor Gerhard Schröder announced an initiative by the German ruling class to create a more centralized European Union government, a move that "reflects Berlin's efforts to carve a greater German leadership role in Europe," an article in the *International Herald Tribune* noted April 30. By stating its willingness to use the antimissile shield in Europe to reinforce its massive military forces on the continent, Washington is assuring for itself a commanding role in the affairs of its imperialist allies and competitors in Europe.

## Bush repeats Clinton's arguments

Repeating an argument made by William Clinton before him, Bush said development of the weapons is justified because "more nations have nuclear weapons and still more have nuclear aspirations. Many have chemical and biological weapons" and some "have developed ballistic missile technology." The U.S. president, whose government has the world's largest nuclear arsenal, said the "list of these countries include some of the world's least-responsible states.... for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life." Both Clinton and Bush have named north Korea, Iraq, and Libya as among those "rogue states," meaning governments that are not to Washington's liking.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### NEW YORK

#### Garment District

**The Fight to End the U.S. Navy's Occupation of Vieques.** Speaker: Rose Ana Berbeo, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave, 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

#### Upper Manhattan

**U.S. Navy Out of Vieques.** Speaker: Hilda

The Cuban combatants, Curbelo said, "fought tirelessly, like lions, for their country and for socialism. They broke the enemy's spirit and contributed, to a large degree, in inflicting on imperialism its first military defeat in the Americas."

The antimissile system, however, would give Washington a nuclear first-strike capability, a point reiterated by former secretary of state Henry Kissinger at a high-level government conference in Europe earlier this year. It would enable Washington to use its nuclear forces to threaten countries where capitalism has been overturned, such as China and Russia, as well as others that get crossways with U.S. imperialism.

The *Washington Post* reported April 30 that the administration's change in the U.S. government's "nuclear posture" includes "slashing the number of strategic warheads, taking most B-52s and B-2 bombers out of the nuclear force, and shifting some targets from Russia to China."

The paper quotes Bruce Blair of the Center for Defense Information as saying that Bush's proposals will mean "a 50 percent reduction in Russian targets and a 100 percent increase in China targets" for nuclear weapons.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Terry Sutherland announced the same day that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had "directed the suspension of all Defense Department programs, contacts, and activities with the People's Republic of China until further notice." A clarification later on April 30 said any contacts were to be approved on a case-by-case basis. The Pentagon issued a statement that "U.S. troops shall not wear berets made in China" and directed the Army to recall and dispose of nearly 500,000 of the berets already received.

Cuzco, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 540 W. 165 St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**Stop the U.S. Bombing of Vieques.** Fri., May 11, 7:30 p.m. 5237 N. 5th Street. Donation: \$5. Tel: (215) 324-7020.

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**Critical shortage of pink slips?**—At last report, Cisco, the internet software biggie, will be slicing its payroll because of a

8,500 workers."

**How sweet**—"Our decisions will be based on doing the right thing for our business, and all employees will be treated fairly and with compassion."—Cisco's "Chief Financial Officer."

**The right to take?**—Businessman David Chang is the seventh person to plead guilty of making illegal campaign donations to Sen. Robert Torricelli. Looking for assists in international business deals, Chang said he also gave the senator such personal trinkets as an \$8,000 Rolex watch, a 52" TV, etc. It's worth

remembering this lawmaker with the outstretched paw scripted the Cuba "democracy" bill signed by ex-prez Clinton. It penalizes other countries for exercising the legal, democratic right to trade with Cuba.

**Promotes pride in your work**—The United Kingdom's Association of Teachers and Lecturers estimated that parents and teachers raise as much as \$150 million to buy school books for primary school children. Doing this is essential to getting the necessary books, one member of the teachers union said. She added, "You get quite used to begging in a polite way."

**USA: Books? Who's got time**—"First-grade teachers across the country spend very little time actually teaching academic skills, instead focusing on classroom management, according to a national study."—New item.

**Adam and Eve**—"Marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman."—The Archbishop of Canterbury on why the Church of England won't sanction same-sex marriages.

**The rich do have problems too**—A French family living in a \$3.75 million town house in

London's posh Kensington district also had to cough up \$165,000 for a garage to stash their Ferrari in. Sniffed the agent who sold them the garage, "If you want to park your Ferrari, what do you do? You can't just leave it in the street."

**It's 'American' alright**—Flight attendant Martina Alexander filed a complaint against American Airlines. She told the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission she had learned that her company health plan covered the impotence drug Viagra, but not Pap smear tests, infertility treatment, or birth control.



Harry Ring

plunge in profit, a humongous inventory, plus what *USA Today* reported as "costs related to laying off

## Vietnam War protests helped expose My Lai massacre

Printed below are excerpts from *OUT NOW! A Participant's Account of the Movement in the United States Against the Vietnam War* by Fred Halstead. The selection quoted comes from the chapter entitled, "The March Against Death and November 15, 1969." It describes the impact of the major U.S. news media finally breaking the story of the massacre of Vietnamese civilians by U.S. forces in the village of My Lai in March 1968. Copyright © 1978, reprinted by permission.

BY FRED HALSTEAD

On November 9, the GI Press Service of the Student Mobilization Committee ran a full page ad in the Sunday edition of the *New York Times*. It was signed by 1,365 active duty GIs, many of them stationed in Vietnam. The ad, which carried the name, rank, and station of each signer, appealed for Americans to attend the demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco November 15. It also stated: "We are opposed to American involvement in the war in Vietnam. We resent the needless wasting of lives to save face for the politicians in Washington. We speak, believing our views are shared by many of our fellow servicemen. Join us!"

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

Nothing like this had ever happened before in American history, and, according to Washington correspondent William McGaffin, "the Pentagon obviously does not like it one bit."

"Pentagon officials," wrote McGaffin, "were frankly surprised that this many GIs would permit their names to be used in a protest ad."<sup>1</sup> This only showed the Pentagon's blindness to the real mood among rank-and-file GIs. Although the Pentagon tried, it failed to find signers who would declare their names had been used falsely. (The GI Press Service had each authorization in writing before it published the ad.)

Lawyers from the Judge Advocate sections of the army, navy, air force, and marine corps were assigned to find something illegal in what the GIs had done. The best they could come up with was that signing might be construed as "conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces," which was a quote from the catchall Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The GI Civil Liberties Defense Committee threatened to sue against persecution of the GI signers. The Pentagon dropped the matter rather than precipitate another cause célèbre.

This incident was only one item in the veritable crescendo of antiwar activities, publicity, and interest that was generated between October 15 and November 15, in spite of the counterefforts of the Nixon administration. One of the most dramatic of these was the breaking into the major American news media of the story of the My Lai massacre.

My Lai was a hamlet in the village of Son My (sometimes written "Songmy" and occasionally referred to by Americans as "Pinkville") in South Vietnam. On the morning of March 16, 1968—that is, a year and



Right, Militant/Brian Shannon  
Above, U.S. soldiers torch Vietnamese village. Right, New York demonstration of 200,000 against the war on April 27, 1968.

half before the story surfaced—My Lai was occupied by a unit of U.S. infantry from the Americal Division. The villagers offered no resistance and none of them bore arms. They were ordered out of their houses, which were dynamited if made of stone and burned if made of wood. All this was standard operating procedure on American "search and destroy" missions in Vietnam. What followed was more unusual. The villagers—799 men, women, and children—were assembled in groups and some of the Americans fired directly at them with automatic rifles until not one seemed left alive. That was the My Lai massacre.

As it turned out, 132 of the Vietnamese survived, lying under the bodies of their relatives and neighbors, until their murderers left. Some of them reported the story to local Vietnamese officials who were, however, under U.S.-Saigon control. But the atrocity was no secret. In addition to those who ordered it, and committed it, there were other Americans who had evidence of the crime. Nevertheless it was covered up as far as the American press was concerned.

One reason for this was that the indiscriminate killing of noncombatants was not uncommon in Vietnam, especially by American air strikes. My Lai was just an especially brutal example of the kind of counterrevolutionary war against a whole population that the U.S. military machine was engaged in.

An American GI, Ronald Lee Ridenhour, heard about the My Lai massacre and for his remaining eight months in Vietnam devoted his free time to gathering and sifting accounts of the affair.

He returned to the U.S. with a substantial dossier and wrote a summary of his findings. In early 1969 he sent this to the White House, the secretary of defense, and a number of "dove" senators. He received one visit from an army investigator.

In June 1969, tired of waiting for official action, he gave his report to a literary agent who offered it to major newspapers, magazines, and at least one of the three major TV networks. None were interested. Ridenhour gave up.

In September 1969, the army, as unobtrusively as possible, announced through the command at Fort Benning, Georgia, that an army officer had been charged with murder in the death of an unspecified number of civilians in Vietnam in 1968. The Associated Press carried this on its wire Septem-



ber 6, but few papers picked it up and none assigned an investigative reporter to follow up. It was not until shortly after the October 15 Moratorium that a reporter began to pursue the affair. He was Seymour M. Hersh, a

free-lancer, operating on a \$1,000 grant from the Foundation for Investigative Journalism, funded by Philip M. Stern, a resident of Washington and a supporter of the Moratorium and the New Mobe. Incidentally, Stern was one of many Washingtonians who offered housing to antiwar staffers from out of town, and Brad Lyttle was staying at Stern's home at the time.

Hersh resurrected Ridenhour's memorandum and found three GIs who had witnessed the My Lai massacre. He arranged for one of them, Paul Meadlo, to appear on television.

Militant reporter Robert Langston later commented:

The capitalist media had been wholly indifferent to Ridenhour's report, and to the September AP dispatch. Two months earlier, they could and would have given the same treatment to Hersh's story.... But in the second week of November that was virtually impossible. The antiwar movement's activity had made the Songmy story the hottest piece of merchandise in the journalistic market.<sup>2</sup>

The day the first installment of Seymour Hersh's My Lai series broke into the major dailies was November 13, 1969. The macabre story would be in the news for years and haunt the war-makers as no other publicity in the history of the war had done.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Post*, November 11, 1969.  
<sup>2</sup> *Militant*, December 12, 1969.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



**May 14, 1976**  
WASHINGTON—Prompted by the NAACP's support for Black rights in the navy, the FBI began a spying operation on the civil rights group in 1941 that the government admits continued for twenty-five years.

These details—the first proof that the NAACP had been a target of government harassment—were made public by the Senate Intelligence Committee in its final domestic report April 28.

The report outlined a concerted government campaign to disrupt the Black movement in this country. No group was "moderate" enough to escape the FBI's devious operations over the years; it infiltrated and tried to disrupt groups ranging from the National Urban League and every Black student union in the country to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party.

"A great number of organizations that you might not today characterize as black nationalist but which were in fact primarily black," the report quotes an FBI official, were included in the bureau's Black Nationalist-Hate Groups Cointelpro operation begun in 1967.

The committee report also summarized operations against numerous other groups, including the Socialist Workers Party, the Business Executive Move for Peace, National Organization for Women, and the Communist Party. FBI headquarters alone has 500,000 domestic intelligence files, the document reported.



**May 14, 1951**  
On May Day, the colonial revolution, dominant feature of the present world situation, came to Paris, when thousands of Algerian workers successfully chased away 500 policemen who tried to break up their demonstration and to tear their national banner out of their hands.

Last year the participation of some 25,000 Algerian workers, members of the militant nationalist MTLD (Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Democratiques, present name for the outlawed Algerian People's Party) was the dominant note of an otherwise lukewarm May 1 parade. The police, enraged by the wonderful, militant demonstration by the Algerian workers, the most disinherited and downtrodden layer of the French working class, had planned long in advance to prevent the Algerians from repeating the same feat this year. The heightened repression of the Algerian national movement is symbolized by the fact that the new governor-general of Algeria is Leonard, the former chief of Paris police.

No month passes without a frame-up trial of MTLD leaders in Algeria or without brutal arrest and torture of MTLD militants. In France, whither several hundred thousand Algerian workers have been lured by promises of work and better living conditions, the biggest centers of concentration of North African population (Paris, Marseilles and the industrial area of the North and Northeast) are constantly scenes of police violence and organized raids against these pariahs.

## Who is the real enemy?

The recent revelations about former Democratic senator Robert Kerrey's role in a Navy SEALs massacre of civilians in a village in Vietnam highlight the character of imperialist war against working people the world over. Brutality. There is no innocence on this question among the superwealthy rulers of the United States, their servants in the Democratic or Republican Party, or the military brass.

The U.S. military killed hundreds of thousands of civilians in Vietnam, among the millions of Vietnamese killed in the war—because, to the U.S. rulers, they were the enemy. Washington sought to militarily crush a popular revolutionary struggle by the Vietnamese people, north and south, who were determined to free their nation from imperialist domination. They were finally victorious on April 30, 1975, when liberation fighters gained complete control of the southern part of their country—a victory for working people worldwide.

To working people in the United States, the enemy is not our fellow workers and farmers in Vietnam—the enemy of humanity is in Washington.

Kerrey was an officer in the Navy's special forces division. He admits they operated under "unwritten rules" that gave them a green light to "kill if you thought that would be better.... We were instructed to take no prisoners." These assassination squads, like other of the military special forces units, are glorified by bourgeois politicians and the media. But the actions of "Kerrey's Raiders" more accurately sum up how they are used to terrorize those whom Washington views as its enemies.

Many backing Kerrey blame what happened on the "fog" of war. But this is precisely why war conventions have been adopted and formally agreed to by Washington. They prohibit murder of civilians, mistreatment of prisoners, and other "unfortunate" consequences of modern warfare.

The brutality of Washington's war on Vietnam was not a case of "excesses" but inherent in the class character of U.S. imperialism's government and its armed forces, in particular the officer corps.

The *Militant* has been featuring a series on the victory by the Cuban people against the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion in April 1961 and the examples of what revolutionary Cuba's internationalist support to freedom

struggles around the world has accomplished. Not one Cuban leader has stated what Sen. John McCain, an air force pilot during the Vietnam War, said: "All of us involved in wars do things we're proud of and things we're not so proud of."

Cuban internationalist volunteers, a total of 300,000, did not commit any massacres during their decade-long defense of Angola in the 1970s and '80s. The few isolated instances of abuse of the local population were harshly punished. This is because the Cuban armed forces have a different class character than the imperialist army and serve to advance, rather than roll back, the march of humanity.

The publicity and debate around the Kerrey revelations have as much to do with today and tomorrow as the past. From the invasion of Panama in 1989, to the 1990-91 U.S.-led slaughter of Iraqi people, to the bombing of Yugoslavia aimed at working people, the U.S. rulers are increasingly driven to use military power to pursue their interests. Far from winning the Cold War, Washington is pressed to push and probe, expand its military power, to confront and eventually seek to violently uproot the historic conquests of working people who overturned capitalism in Russia, China, and other workers states. The antimissile system being pursued by Washington, a system that would give it a nuclear first-strike capacity, is a centerpiece of this drive.

The U.S. rulers' brutality toward workers and farmers around the globe is an extension of their brutality toward working people at home, especially oppressed nationalities. This is true of police executions of workers on the street, the wider use of the death penalty, and the deaths of workers on the job as a result of the bosses' profit-driven speedup.

The Vietnam exposures demonstrate what the U.S. ruling class has in store for workers, farmers, and youth who resist the devastating consequences of the world crisis of capitalism and Washington's drive to reassert its place as the final empire. Out of the resistance of working people—evident in the strikes, rallies, and demonstrations covered in just this issue of the *Militant*—it is possible to begin to build a revolutionary leadership capable of leading workers and farmers to take power out of the hands of the warmakers in Washington.

## Bipartisan assault on rights

The Supreme Court ruling backing the "right" of police to arrest and jail people for "crimes" such as not wearing a seat belt is part of the government's drive to widen use of the state's repressive police forces against working people, expand spying and intrusion into the affairs of organizations, and impose harsher sanctions—including the death penalty—for a wide range of offenses.

A reminder of this fact came on May 1 in New Jersey. Bilal Dash Colbert, who had stopped his car at a convenience store so his two girls could get a snack on the way to school, was shot dead by police officer William Mildon. The cop said Colbert failed to obey his order to stop. Colbert's daughter Shaquita, sitting in the back seat, told reporters that Mildon "put his gun through the window and shot his brains out." Four years ago Mildon killed another driver who tried to flee after being stopped.

The actions of these cops are not a bolt out of the blue. They are in harmony with the bipartisan offensive on the federal and state level over the last decade. The erosion of democratic rights and constitutional protections against unreasonable search and seizure stands as a deadly threat to working people. A mighty campaign by the labor movement, civil rights organizations, and other defenders of democratic rights is needed to combat the policies of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Under the banner of "the fight against drugs," U.S. president Clinton's 1994 Crime Bill assaulted Fourth Amendment protection against illegal search and seizure in private homes. The courts have virtually eliminated such rights in automobiles. Under the bipartisan 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act the INS has become the largest federal police force in the country. Deportations have hit a record high, and some 1,000 working people are estimated to have died trying to cross from Mexico into the United States since 1996.

From the point of view of the bosses and their government, the offensive against the wages, conditions on the job, and social wage of working people must go hand in hand with a restriction of democratic rights and an increase of repressive measures by the state. This—along with the organization of rightist violence—is their ultimate answer to the resistance of workers and farmers who enter into struggle to defend themselves against the effects of the capitalist assault.

Joining struggles against police brutality, opposing new court rulings and laws that restrict democratic rights and expand police powers, and building actions that advance the fight to win equal rights for immigrants are ways all working people and youth can take a stand against the bipartisan assault.

## 'Chop, chop: we're on strike!'

Working people and unionists in the United States have an opportunity to back an important strike by members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) at Hollander Home Fashions. The workers are fighting for better working conditions, higher wages, and a pension plan. So far, union members have shut down two of the firm's plants in California and Pennsylvania, and workers in Georgia are honoring a picket line set up by strikers from Vernon, California.

The company is trying to keep production going at all three plants by hiring workers through temporary agencies. The union has reached out to those crossing the picket line to explain the issues in the strike and why their lot is with the labor movement, not the bosses' strike-breaking moves. Strikers in Los Angeles, at two plants in Vernon, have spread their message at union meetings, held strike support rallies, and traveled to talk with workers at other Hollander plants across the country.

When the strike expanded this week to Pennsylvania, workers reportedly set up picket lines in a festive mood. They were glad for the chance to stand up to the company, which strengthens the overall struggle and opens the way for more unions to back UNITE in this fight. Signs answering the indignities heaped on workers by the bosses,

such as that by one worker, "Chop, Chop, We're on Strike,"—responding to a boss who would tell workers on the job, "Chop, chop, get to work!"—show the confidence of the strikers.

Hollander, a maker of pillows, down comforters, and other home fashions, employs 1,300 people in four states and in Canada. "Hollander says we don't have a right to a pension and better wages, but we should have those rights because we are the ones who produce," one striker told a meeting in Los Angeles.

Sewers and garment industry workers are among the worst paid in the United States. Most of them work at factories where there is no union representation, and where bosses provide little, if any, benefits or retirement plans. Union members like those at the Hollander plants in Los Angeles comprise a small percentage of the 140,000 workers in the garment industry in California. But skirmishes and strikes by garment workers, laundry workers, and others in UNITE are pointing the way to turn the situation around by extending union organization and relying on the power and capacities of the union membership and the labor movement as a whole. Answering the union's call to support the strikes at Hollander Home Fashion can be another step in this struggle.

## 'U.S. Navy out of Vieques!'

Continued from front page

closed at 3:30 p.m. to allow students and employees to attend the rally. Although there were no organized union contingents, the T-shirts of the water utility workers union were visible.

Protests the next morning in Vieques began with a student strike at the German Rikeihoff high school. "We all met last night," Carla Benjamin, 16, told a reporter from the *San Juan Star*, "and we decided to lock the gates. Nobody will get in. We need to stand up for ourselves." The strike was supported by teachers such as Victor Emerice, who said that it is time for the students to fight for what they believe in.

At least 150 people tried to enter the restricted zone around the firing range. Some tore down a cyclone fence that marks the entrance to the federal land. Puerto Rican police did not try to stop them, saying the fence was outside their jurisdiction.

By the next day 128 protesters had been arrested and many were still on the range, including Vieques mayor Serrano and PIP president Berrios. Fisherman Carlos Zenón told the press that when Vieques Commissioner Juan Fernández asked U.S. officials to stop the bombing, he was told the Navy would only agree to do so if he discloses the location of the protesters. "The Navy intends to seek the maximum penalty against the trespassers," Lt. Jeff Gordon said after the first arrests.

Following the first day of protests on the island, Martina Rodríguez and friends from the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan were up late talking politics. "We've never felt anything like this before," she told the *New York Times*. "This is the Vietnam of my generation. We want to stop the mayhem. We want to make a difference."

Farrique Pesquera, who supports independence for Puerto Rico, added that people in the country "have been brainwashed to think that they can't survive without America, that all our air comes from the north. Struggles like this one will change that."

Vieques resident Tito Padro, a waiter, said the "bombing overshadows all our other problems," such as poor roads, an inadequate sewage system, and an unemployment rate of nearly 50 percent.

BY DON MACKLE

NEW YORK—Hundreds of people rallied at the Federal Building in lower Manhattan April 28 to protest the renewed bombing of Vieques by the United States Navy. "I think it's time for the Navy to get out," said José Hance, 25, of the Bronx, one of a large number of young people participating in the lively picket line. "The Navy is having a bad effect on the health of the people and violating their social and human rights. They have been there for almost 60 years. How long are they going to go on violating our people?" he said.

At a rally held after the picket a number of Democratic Party elected officials who are Puerto Rican announced they would be going to Vieques a few days later to participate in the protests at the bombing sites in Vieques. In addition, there were speakers from the Vieques Support Campaign, ProLibertad, Casa de las Américas, and the Palestinian Right to Return Coalition.

"There are many similarities in our struggles," said Abbas Hamideh of the Right to Return Coalition. "Both our peoples are victims of relocation, both are victims of colonialism, and both are victims of U.S.-made weapons."

BY BARBARA BOWMAN AND DEBORAH LIATOS

SAN FRANCISCO—"Vieques Sí! Marina No!" shouted more than 60 demonstrators on a lively picket line held at the Federal Building in Oakland, California, April 30. The protest had been called by the Bay Area-based solidarity group, Comité '98 por un Puerto Rico Libre, to protest the resumption of bombing practice by the U.S. Navy on Vieques. Other endorsers included the Vieques Solidarity Coalition, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, the Socialist Workers Party, and Juntos, a San Francisco Bay Area coalition opposed to military expansion.

Deborah Berman Santana, an assistant professor at Mills College, was in phone contact with demonstrators in front of Fort Garcia, Vieques. The chants of the Oakland protest were picked up over the phone and then broadcast over a speaker to the demonstrators on Vieques.

Deborah Liatos of the Socialist Workers Party said, "The people of Vieques are not just fighting against the U.S. military bombing their land. They are also fighting against the U.S. military's use of their island to prepare war on workers and farmers around the world." Kendra Wilson, a housing rights activist who is fighting eviction from her apartment by an area landlord, spoke in solidarity with the people of Vieques, as did Meagan Jones, a student at Mills College. "This is not just a struggle for the little island of Vieques, but for all the people the U.S. government mistreats," Jones said.

At a meeting of 75 people April 27, Nilda Medina, a resident of Vieques and a member of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, said, "We will continue to protest until the Navy leaves Vieques."

# Northwest Airlines workers prepare to vote on contract

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA—Workers at Northwest Airlines are reviewing a proposed contract reached April 9 between union officials and the company, which covers inspectors, mechanics, cleaners, custodians, and other workers at the airline. In preparation for a ratification vote, the union has distributed the 193-page contract to its 9,500 members, who are discussing it on the job, at informational meetings, and on web sites. Mail-in ballots will be counted May 8.

Members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) at Northwest voted by a 96 percent margin to strike the carrier on March 12. Three days before that deadline, U.S. president George Bush issued a no-strike order and set up a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) under terms of the antiunion Railway Labor Act.

The PEB gave the government a direct hand in the contract negotiations at Northwest. Although its recommendations are nonbinding, if the company or the union rejects the federal mediators' proposals, the company can lock out the workers, or Congress can impose a settlement. The convoking of a PEB also postpones the workers' right to strike by an additional 60 days.

The response of many workers at Northwest to the intervention from the White House was to continue their contract fight. They have been working under a contract that expired four-and-a-half years ago and haven't had a contractual raise for nine years.

Since the announcement of the tentative agreement, the government has kept the pressure on the union. If the tentative agreement is rejected by AMFA members on May 8, the union will not be able to go on strike on May 11, the original deadline set by the PEB. A PEB recommendation to Bush was due on April 11, but the board requested a delay to May 14, citing the potential contract settlement. U.S. Congressman James Oberstar of Minnesota, the ranking Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, also stated that Congress stands ready to intervene and prevent a strike if the tentative agreement fails.

Highlights of the contract include an average wage increase of 24 percent for

mechanics and 13 percent for cleaners and custodians and another 10 percent wage increase over the four-year contract. Pension benefits are also increased from \$40 to \$85 for mechanics and \$27 to \$51 for cleaners. That rate, multiplied by a worker's years of service, is the pension a retired worker would receive each month.

The proposed agreement includes a "retro bonus" equal to 3.5 percent of workers' wages from October 1996 to May 1, 2001. This adds up to approximately \$10,000 for mechanics and \$6,000 for cleaners employed during those years.

Northwest's initial proposal was for back pay to be limited to 29 months instead of 56. AMFA had demanded that the initial wage raises be applied retroactively to the October 1996 date of the last contract. The 3.5 percent lump sum is similar to what other unions at Northwest received in contracts signed in 1998. A one-time pay adjustment of \$3,750 for mechanics and \$1,875 for cleaners will also be paid.

Workers are debating and discussing the contract. "I will definitely be voting yes," stated Terry Samuda, a mechanic at the Northwest maintenance base in Atlanta. "It's a good first contract, and we'll work on the rest next time." Referring to the ground lost by Northwest workers since 1993, the start



Militant/Robin Mace

Workers at Northwest Airlines hold picket at White House in March protesting move by President Bush to block their right to strike for 60 days.

of a three-year period when the unions accepted deep cuts in wages to help "save" Northwest from bankruptcy, Michael Krieg, a mechanic in Minneapolis, told the *Star Tribune* "It's really a restoration of things, not a victory."

Contract language on outsourcing is seen as a problem by many workers. Some cleaners have raised objections to the 11 percent gap in the wage increases for mechanics and cleaners, which codifies divisions in the union. Another example cleaners cite is

while the tentative agreement provides for higher "skill premiums" for mechanics, cleaners did not win hazard pay for jobs that require working with highly dangerous chemicals such as Dinol, a rust inhibitor, and de-icing fluids.

O.V. Delle-Femine, national director of AMFA, responded to objections by cleaners by stating, "There's some heartburn. It's too bad. They work hard. We couldn't do it without them." AMFA officials are promoting ratification of the tentative agreement.

## Sewing plant strikers rally in Los Angeles

BY AL DUNCAN

VERNON, California—Several hundred workers on strike against Hollander Home Fashions along with union supporters rallied and marched between the company's two plants here April 19, the 43rd day of the walkout.

"It's good when we get together and when other people come out to support us," said Hugo Gaona, 25, who has worked as a machine operator at Hollander for four years. At the time of the strike Gaona was paid \$6.75 an hour. The workers are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Hollander Home Fashions is a producer of sheets, comforters, and pillows.

"I'm one of the youngest here and I will never cross the line to go back in," Gaona said. "We are fighting so that new people coming to work here will have what we have when they start out."

Another striker, Benny Chanler, 30, who has worked for four years in the Hollander shipping department, said, "It was good so many people came out to support us and let us know that they are on our side in what we are fighting for."

Asked about how strong the strike is, Chanler said, "The company has got some of the union people to cross the line and has bused in some folks. But the people who make the comforters and the pillows are still out and they can't do anything without them. They used to ship out at least 15 truckloads of products a day; now they get out no more than two or three. We are still strong and having an impact on the company."

Cristina Vazquez, a UNITE international vice president, told the strikers, "The pressure is increasing on the company. The contract of the 175 workers at Hollander's plant in Frackville, Pennsylvania, expires April 30 and will soon be on strike if the company doesn't give in to their demand for a new contract that includes a pension." The demand for a pension plan is one of the central issues in this contract fight by the 450 workers here.

Joining the rally were representatives from the Amalgamated Transit Union,

whose bus mechanics were recently on strike against the city; members of the Operating Engineers union; a speaker from the Service Employees International Union; a representative of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and a representative of the International Association of Machinists.

Later that evening four strikers and a union organizer from UNITE attended a meeting entitled, "The 40th Anniversary of Cuba's Victory at the Bay of Pigs: the Living Legacy." A featured speaker was Sergio Martinez, first secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. The 160 people present gave a warm response to the strikers.

"We have been on strike for more than 40 days," Ramón Higuera told the audience. "We haven't been able to negotiate a contract. Hollander owns two factories in Los Angeles, and factories in Georgia, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Florida. They use the money we make for them to fight us. We want a pension plan and we want an end to humiliation on the job. This is a fight about respect. We want to be treated like people, not animals. We are confident we can win," he said. "Today we'd like your help. Tomorrow you may need help and we can help you. United we can win."

Wendy Lyons, a garment worker, contributed to this article.

## Mississippi vote upholds Confederate flag

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—A statewide referendum was held in Mississippi April 17 to determine whether the current state flag, which prominently features the Confederate battle flag in its design, would be replaced by a new design.

Of the 756,442 votes cast, two-thirds voted to keep the current flag, which dates from 1894.

Several counties in the predominantly Black Delta region voted heavily for the new flag, which would have replaced the Con-

federate "stars and bars" with a field of 20 stars. The vote in Natchez, where steelworkers at Titan Tire have been on strike for more than two years, also went in favor of the new flag.

In response to the outcome of the referendum, NAACP president Kweisi Mfume said, "The NAACP will not give up its fight to remove from public property any and all symbols that celebrate the twisted philosophy of bigotry and hatred in this country." He said the NAACP board would decide at its July meeting what action to take.

also. I'm a 26-year-old worker-unionist in Iowa.

I'll resubscribe to the *Militant* when I'm in contact with members of the Socialist Workers Party who I can discuss the paper with.  
Drew Chebuhar  
Iowa City, Iowa

### Welfare Reform Act

Be advised there is a growing movement afoot to call public attention to the debilitating plight of the poor and homeless in America, and to help unite and mobilize welfare recipients into a cohesive political force to repeal the 1996 Welfare Reform Act that will push thousands off the rolls with no alternative means of survival.

Two social activists are on a walk across the country to build mass support for a moratorium on the Welfare Reform Act. That has a five-year

limit of access to public assistance of any kind that will terminate in August in which millions are going to have to fend for themselves with no further consideration.

Certainly this political consciousness-raising movement deserves support because it will not only give the poor and welfare recipients the opportunity to network and coalesce. But more importantly it will provide the organizational power to fight back against the forces that threaten their constitutional rights to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness.  
Shakir Muhammad  
Alexandria, Virginia

### Read until it falls apart

Please change my address as indicated so I can continue to receive your paper. I truly love the *Militant* and so do all my friends who read

it. It is passed along until it literally falls apart. Keep up the good work.  
A prisoner  
Morgan, Georgia

### Assist in your task

I would like to help you in your task of informing the American people about the social struggle going on in the world. Since I am Mexican and live in Mexico City, I have access to a lot of information that might be harder for you to get. I am a political science student and am interested in being a correspondent.

I want you to know that you can count on me and that in me you have an ally for anything that is for the rebel youth.

F.N.  
Mexico City, Mexico

### Interested in Marxism

We are a student organization

that is active in some of the major universities in Mexico. The Student Committee in Defense of Public Education (CEDEP) is particularly interested in learning more about Marxist literature, since access to that kind of literature is very restricted. With that in mind we have decided to contact a publishing house that could offer us a way to have access to these publications. We look forward to a favorable reply. Militant greetings.

G.V.  
by e-mail

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.

## LETTERS

### Cincinnati events

Your article on the crisis in Cincinnati is the best onsite report I have read so far. There is a complete news blackout both in the press and on the web. As always you get us the news and you tell it from the best class perspective. Please keep up the excellent work and if there is anything I can do to help here locally where I live to get out the news please let me know.

Tom Siblo  
Kingston, New York

### Renewing contact

I purchased *U.S. Imperialism Has Lost The Cold War* and I agree with much but not all of it. I'm definitely in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and agree with your position on Cuba. So, I'd really like to go on the U.S./Cuba youth exchange and try to get others to go

## Coca farmers and workers resist government austerity plans in Bolivia

BY HILDA CUZCO

In face of a deep economic crisis and government measures that have devastated the livelihoods of working people in Bolivia, unions and peasant organizations have been carrying out a wave of protest actions since early April.

The latest actions were initiated by small coca farmers, who are being ruined by the government's policies in the countryside. They have organized mass marches and blocked highways around the country.

Transport workers held a one-day national strike, which was attacked by riot police. They later organized protests against the death of two people as a result of the cop assault. Retired workers have conducted a hunger strike in La Paz, demanding reductions in their rent.

The Bolivian Workers Confederation (COB) called a nationwide strike starting May 1, as well as a march from the city of Oruro to La Paz, the capital.

COB leader Zósimo Paniagua said the labor movement opposes the sell-off of state companies, demands the reinstatement of laid-off workers, and calls for raising the minimum wage from \$60 to \$150 a month, among other demands such as improved health care.

A plan by the United Union Confederation of Working Peasants (CSUTC) to set up roadblocks on highways connecting Bolivian cities with Peruvian and Chilean ports on the Pacific has been postponed for 30 days.

To try to undermine the large-scale protests, the government of President Hugo Banzer announced it would be "flexible" with its austerity demands. Officials said the regime would consider "pardoning" the debts of 20,000 peasants who have no more than \$5,000 in debts to the state bank.

The farmers are demanding the government halt the campaign to destroy the coca crop in the rural regions of Chapare and Yungas as long as it offers no alternatives for peasants to earn a living.

Under a U.S.-backed program labeled the "Dignity Plan," which began in 1998, the Bolivian government has sent troops to storm the tiny coca farms and forcibly uproot the crops of 40,000 peasant families in the Chapare jungle, 200 miles from La Paz.

Coca provides the raw material for cocaine. While coca farmers eke out a living, capitalist drug traders in both the United States and South America rake in millions of dollars in profits.

The U.S. and Bolivian governments brag about the "success" of their program, reporting a reduction in "illegal coca" from 74,000 to 6,600 acres. "Bolivia has done in the past two to three years what no other country

has done in the drug war in Latin America," the U.S. ambassador to Bolivia, Manuel Rocha, declared.

Another 24,000 acres of coca in the Yungas lowlands are planted illegally for traditional indigenous uses such as easing hunger pains and for herbal tea.

The peasants have angrily protested that the government's "solution" is U.S.-financed military attacks that are wiping out their livelihood, without providing assistance to plant alternative crops.

In the rural village of Paraiso, Silverio Mamani, 35, told reporters the government has promoted pineapples as an alternative crop. But he said there is only one technician per 300 families, and that his family has received virtually no help on how to grow the plants. As a result, only half the crop has bloomed and the rest, attacked by a jungle fungus, lies rotting in the fields.

Until the government stops abandoning the farmers to their fate, "we are not going



Thousands of people joined and supported a march by coca farmers that set off for La Paz, the capital of Bolivia.

to stop growing coca," said Evo Morales, leader of the Federation of Coca Growers and a member of Congress. "And we will defend ourselves from this government, which has decided to blindly obey the or-

ders of Washington with no thought given to its own citizens."

Thousands of people joined and supported a march by coca farmers that set off from Chapare and Yungas to La Paz on April 9. Many peasants and others swelled its ranks as it crossed the countryside.

At several points along the way hundreds of police in full riot gear attacked marchers with tear gas. A number of peasants were forced back to their towns, while others were arrested. The remaining marchers arrived in La Paz April 23.

Since then the coca growers have organized roadblocks on the highway connecting Santa Cruz and Cochabamba.

### Protesters demand president resign

The unions and other protesters have been demanding Banzer's resignation. The main opposition party, the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), has tried to channel the opposition off the streets and into electoral politics. The MNR, while joining the call for Banzer to step down, has offered to form a "national salvation government" headed by the current vice president, Jorge Quiroga. Banzer supporters in Congress, however, have taken a hard-line stance, saying they will push for revoking the MNR's legal status as a party.

Banzer was the head of a bloody military dictatorship from 1971, when he led a coup against the government of Juan José Torres, to 1978. In 1997, with other capitalist politicians discredited by the growing economic crisis, Banzer was elected president with only 22 percent of the popular vote, but with the necessary congressional majority.

## Ontario officials order end to school strike

BY ROBERT SIMMS

TORONTO—Ontario's provincial Conservative government passed back-to-work legislation late at night on April 27 ordering 13,000 school support workers to end their strike. The workers were instructed to report to work on April 30.

The members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 4400 walked out March 31. They are employed by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Their ranks include school janitors, teachers of English as a second language, secretaries and hall monitors, classroom teachers' assistants, and special education teachers. Under the same legislation, Windsor school support workers were also ordered back to work.

These workers are the lowest paid in the

education sector, making a yearly wage of Can\$22,000 to \$25,000 (Can\$1=US 64 cents). Their wages have been effectively frozen for the past eight years.

### Negotiators strike deal

The back-to-work law was introduced in the legislature on April 25. In the following two days before it was passed, the TDSB and CUPE negotiators reached a deal incorporating issues on which agreement had been reached, and mandating binding arbitration on issues that have not been resolved. The latter include wages and job security questions.

The Tory government ignored this development. Labor Minister Christopher Stockwell called the agreement too little too late, and forged ahead to pass the law.

Many strikers fear that the government-appointed arbitrator will reopen all issues and fashion a binding contract that wipes out some bargaining gains.

During the strike CUPE members organized two mass rallies. On April 19 some 2,000 strikers demonstrated outside the headquarters of the school board. A demonstration of roughly the same size was held April 25, just hours after the Tory back-to-work law was introduced into the legislature. For several weeks the union organized daily pickets of 500-1,000 strikers and supporters at 12 different high schools on a rotating basis.

On April 23 the TDSB shut down all the schools, citing potential health hazards posed by uncleaned toilets and mounds of garbage that had built up over three weeks. By this stage some 300,000 students were affected.

At a membership meeting April 29, the day before work was to resume, union leaders set out plans for workers to organize information pickets at their schools at 8:00 a.m. the next day. Teachers and parents were invited to join the actions. "Choose the best time for everyone to enter the school together," advised a Local 4400 organizing leaflet.

It is quite possible that many, if not most schools will not be cleaned adequately to allow classes to resume for one or two days.

Krishna Persaud, who teaches at the Bickford Centre, which specializes in adult education and offers literacy courses and studies in English as a second language, told the *Militant* that "the strike was a good experience. We showed the board we could stay together for four weeks. Morale was good. The struggle will go on."

Another striker working as a classroom teaching assistant at Westview Centennial Secondary affirmed that the strike had a positive impact. "The teachers supported us. It hurts in the pocketbook but you have to stand up or the problems get worse."

## Workers in India close down state of Maharashtra

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"All industries are closed. All transports are closed.... Nothing is running," Harish Trivedi told CNN news April 25, about the effectiveness of a one-day strike by millions of unionists across the state of Maharashtra. Trivedi is the president of the Maharashtra Indian National Trade Union Congress.

The one-day stoppage, initiated by unions and a number of political parties "to condemn the economic reform policies" of the government, "received a total response in Maharashtra," according to the *India Daily*. "Normal life in Maharashtra came to a grinding halt today."

According to the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), the federal government has taken steps to "amend labor laws and privatize state-owned industries." The measures include "plans to make it easier for loss-making companies to fire workers, reduce economic subsidies, and allow more

business to employ contract labor." The government is also moving to ease restrictions on imports. Farmers producing for the local market see their livelihoods under threat from the latter policy.

"The new economic policies of the government have affected everyone. The working classes will be reduced to nothing if we don't protect ourselves," said Trivedi.

The strike had a big impact on Bombay, a fast-growing city of 18 million people and the country's financial center. "More than 60 percent of factories in Bombay and surrounding areas have been shut down," one union official told the BBC. "Taxis and buses were not running. Factories and other industry was frozen." The strike and associated protests affected train services, and forced the rescheduling of many flights.

Even the U.S. consul in the city, David Good, acknowledged the widespread support for the action. Using the common word

for strike, he said, "I think the bandh has been pretty effective."

The government stationed police at Bombay's railway stations and bus depots, claiming that they were necessary to deter violence. Many strikers were detained.

The nine political parties joining the strike call covered a wide spectrum, from the right-wing, Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena party to several with links to the labor movement.

"There will be a loss of 4 billion rupees (US\$85.4 million) in Bombay alone," complained P.N. Mogre, secretary-general of the Indian Merchants Chamber, on the day of the strike. Zubin Kabraji of the Confederation of Indian Industry advised workers that "you can't run away from changes in labor laws, and there are better ways to negotiate deals than to shut down a city."

CNN reported strike organizers "have considered a broader strike possibly nationwide, but have no timetable."