

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Fidel Castro's speech on eve of U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion

—PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 75/NO. 15 APRIL 18, 2011

CIA squads on ground spot targets in Libya

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington has placed special units of CIA operatives on the ground in Libya as the imperialist powers keep up their airstrikes, unleashed in mid-March, against the regime of Moammar Gadhafi.

The conflict is “heading for a long stalemate from which Britain, France, and the US will find it hard to extract themselves,” noted the *Financial Times*.

With NATO taking over command of the air assaults from the U.S. Africa Command, Washington announced it was halting its combat missions as of April 2, but continued to bombard the country for the next two days after NATO requested help due to “poor weather conditions.” During NATO’s first four days running the operation, warplanes flew 547 sorties and 218 strike sorties, continuing what U.S. forces had spearheaded over the previous two weeks.

While maintaining air surveillance and aerial refueling operations, U.S. combat aircraft, including AC-130s and A-10 ground-attack planes, will also be on “standby”—available for airstrikes upon NATO’s request, or if U.S. officials decide NATO is unable to effectively conduct these assaults without them.

Although President Barack Obama claims no U.S. ground troops will be deployed in Libya, the president several weeks ago signed “a secret finding” authorizing CIA operatives to pinpoint bombing targets and provide support to opposition forces in the civil war.

Dozens of British special forces and MI6 intelligence officers are car-

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Actions across U.S. stand up to union busting, back Black rights

Wisconsin: 1,000s rally for 7th week

BY ZENA JASPER

MADISON, Wisconsin—As they have for seven weeks now, thousands of workers rallied here at the state capitol April 4 to protest antiunion legislation against this state’s public workers. They also marked the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, gunned down while in Memphis, Tennessee, to support a sanitation strike there in 1968.

Two Memphis sanitation workers joined the protest here, and in Memphis, 1,000 unionists and supporters marched, including veterans of the 1968 strike.

OUR SOLIDARITY SURPRISES THEM

Editorial —p. 9

The action was one of hundreds across the country, involving tens of thousands, in response to a call by the AFL-CIO for April 4 “We Are One” rallies.

Jim Gundersen, a Teamster and snow plow driver in Monona, Wisconsin, told the *Militant* why he was marching. “I’ve been making concessions for 15 years,” he said. “The only reason I stuck around was for the benefits. We have to fight for those who will be in our shoes 30 years from now. This is a nationwide campaign.”

Gov. Scott Walker March 11 signed into law legislation that outlaws collective bargaining for public employees except on wages. A circuit court judge has issued a temporary restraining order halting the law’s implementation for two months.

Articles on other actions across the United States continue on page 6.



Mark Riechers

Prounion demonstration outside state capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, April 4.

Striking Machinists rally in Ohio

BY JOHN HAWKINS

SANDUSKY, Ohio—Some 100 striking workers at industrial chain manufacturer U.S. Tsubaki rallied here April 4 along with supporters of their fight for a decent contract. Held amid driving rain and high winds, the action was part of the AFL-CIO “We Are One” rallies to show solidarity

with public workers in Wisconsin and to commemorate the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King.

Members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 2159 went on strike here January 31. This is the third rally of its kind since. Negotiations with the company broke down

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‘Mubarak is gone, but not the regime’



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Tens of thousands of workers and youth demonstrate in Cairo’s Tahrir Square April 1, demanding political rights and prosecution of hated government figures (see page 3).

Readership of ‘Militant’ grows amid fights by working people

BY DOUG NELSON

The *Militant*’s readership continues to grow as the working-class paper is sold at labor actions and political events across the United States and elsewhere. More than 700 workers,

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The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning
by Jack Barnes ~~\$3~~ \$2 with subscription

Contact distributors on page 8—subscription rates on page 2

Pathfinder Press

Communists in Australia condemn Libya airstrikes

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—“The airstrikes on Libya are being carried out in the interests of the same capitalist ruling families that are out to bust our unions and impose austerity measures to boost their profits,” Robert Aiken told a March 27 rally here against the U.S.-led bombing assault. About 40 people joined the emergency picket outside Sydney Town Hall.

Aiken was one of two Communist League candidates in the March 26 New South Wales state elections. He stood in the Legislative Assembly district of Parramatta, along with Linda Harris in the district of Fairfield.

Supporters of the Communist League candidates distributed a campaign statement titled “Imperialist Hands Off Libya! Stop the Aerial Assault!” The statement condemned the insistent campaigning for a “no-fly zone” by Australian foreign minister Kevin Rudd, supported by the Labor federal

government, the Liberal-led opposition, and the Greens.

The Bankstown-Canterbury *Torch* carried a profile of Harris in its March 23 edition. “Economic wars and depression are devastating the lives of workers and farmers worldwide,” the paper quoted Harris saying. “The capitalist rulers have no solution to their crisis but more unemployment, homelessness, and attacks on workers’ rights and conditions. Working people need to take political power as they did in Cuba and re-organise society in our interests.”

Aiken made a fact-finding trip to Brisbane and Ipswich in February to learn about the ongoing impact on workers and farmers of the disastrous flooding across much of central and southern Queensland. The Communist League candidates call for canceling the debts of farmers and providing credit to those hit by the floods and a cyclone. They oppose foreclosure on any farm.

Introducing their campaign newspa-



Militant/Ron Poulsen

Communist League candidate Robert Aiken, right, campaigning in Auburn, western Sydney. ‘Imperialist airstrikes are being carried out by same capitalists who bust our unions,’ he says.

per, the *Militant*, the candidates campaigned at factory gates. At Beak & Johnston, a meatpacking plant, campaign supporters followed up on discussions with workers—especially with immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East—about the mass revolts against capitalist tyrants across North Africa and the imperialist intervention in Libya.

Campaigning at a March 12 rally and

demonstration marking the 100th anniversary of International Women’s Day, Harris won a hearing among women unionists on the *Militant*’s coverage of worker-farmer solidarity with the public-sector unions under attack in Wisconsin. The action was centered on building support for the campaign to win equal pay for women workers. Union contingents helped swell the march to more than 1,500.

U.S. gov’t uses ‘terrorist’ scare to chip away at Miranda rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

For nearly a year, the U.S. Justice Department has been systematically denying “Miranda rights” to those it labels “terrorists.”

Under the 1966 Supreme Court Miranda decision, cops are required to inform those in their custody of their right to remain silent and to have an attorney present during interrogation. Statements made to the police before informing the accused of these rights are inadmissible in court.

An Oct. 21, 2010, FBI memorandum, which first appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* March 24, asserts that the “magnitude and complexity” of terrorist threats justifies “a significantly more extensive public interrogation without Miranda warnings.”

The document instructs FBI agents

to “ask any and all questions” that they deem related to “safety of the public or the arresting agents” without advising detained individuals of their Miranda rights. After they finish with their initial interrogation, agents may then inform suspects of their rights but should then “seek a waiver of those rights before any further interrogation occurs,” the document states.

In May 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder offered to work with Congress to codify into law a lengthier questioning period of “terror” suspects before having to issue the Miranda warning. While no legislation was passed, FBI director Robert Mueller testified before Congress in July of that year that the Justice Department had been carrying it out anyway.

Los Angeles workers reject bosses’ ‘blood money’ trade-off

Three communist workers at an aerospace parts plant in the Los Angeles area received bonuses totaling \$100.14, which they immediately turned over to the Capital Fund. The fund helps finance long-range plans to build the communist movement.

“According to the company’s formula, two accidents this month reduced the bonus, but ‘productivity’ made up for the deficit. How about that trade-off!” writes Arlene Rubinstein, who sent in her check and those of Ellie García and James Harris.

One-off payments of this kind from employers—safety and production bonuses, contract-signing incentives, and the like—are recognized as blood money by class-conscious workers. They are bribes to convince workers to accept dangers on the job, speedup, and wage cuts instead of standing up and fighting for our interests.

Workers who want to contribute blood-money bonuses can do so by writing or calling distributors of the *Militant* listed on page 8.

—CINDY JAQUITH



Capitalist disaster ravages Japan’s toilers

The deadly earthquake and tsunami that recently struck Japan illustrate once again how capitalism works—by serving the needs of the propertied rulers at the expense of working people. Don’t miss the news and analysis the ‘Militant’ provides on this issue.



Tsunami destruction in Tagajo, Japan.

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

The Militant

Vol. 75/No. 15

Closing news date: April 6, 2011

Editor: Steve Clark

Circulation director: Paul Mailhot

Editorial volunteers: Rôger Calero, Naomi Craine, Seth Galinsky, John Hawkins, Cindy Jaquith, Doug Nelson, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams, Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January, one week in July, and one week in September.

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

Fax: (212) 244-4947

E-mail: themilitant@mac.com

Website: www.themilitant.com

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

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

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

Latin America, Caribbean: For one year send \$85, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above

address.

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

‘A thirst in Egypt to read and discuss what’s next’

BY PAUL DAVIES

CAIRO—Organized on short notice, the Tahrir Book Fair opened here March 31 at the American University in Cairo (AUC). The event was scheduled after the Cairo International Book Fair was canceled in January due to the massive street mobilizations and clashes that convulsed this city.

The AUC-sponsored event attracted a couple thousand people on each of the fair’s five days. The annual Cairo book fair has been the largest in the region, attracting up to 2 million visitors.

“We organized the Tahrir fair as soon as possible, to celebrate what has gone on in Cairo over the past two months and to try to make up for cancellation of the Cairo book fair,” said Dax Roque, manager of the AUC bookstores. Opened by Minister of Culture Emad Abou-Ghazy, the fair attracted many of Egypt’s largest publishers, as well as students from city campuses and working people. Many had been active in the fight to get rid of dictator Hosni Mubarak.

An international team of socialist workers took part in the fair, introducing people to the *Militant* newspaper and Pathfinder books and pamphlets. A number of book fair participants came back to the Pathfinder stand several times.

Many young women were drawn to the literature at the booth. Heidi Hasham Hanafy, a graduate student at Cairo University, subscribed to the *Militant* and bought *Problems of Women’s Liberation* by Evelyn Reed and other titles on women’s rights. “You also have made me curious about what the Cuban Revolution has accomplished,” she said. Hanafy described the ongoing sit-in at Cairo University aimed at removing its president, Hossam Kamel, a supporter of Mubarak’s discredited National Democratic Party.

Yostina Boules, a young pharmacy student, recalled joining thousands in Tahrir Square shouting, “The people

want the system down!”—a chant heard earlier in Tunisia. Pointing to titles by Malcolm X, Boules said, “We need revolutionary books. We’re trying to do what Malcolm X did—take full rights as citizens.”

“Before, we were afraid to speak up,” said a young man from Eritrea who picked up a *Militant* subscription and a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. “Now that has changed, and young people need to understand what happened in previous revolutions.” A substantial number of Malaysians studying in Egypt bought books at the stand as well.

The event’s organizers closed the book fair early the second day, as thousands of workers and youth converged on Tahrir Square to oppose a draft law restricting strikes and to demand prosecution of Mubarak and the ouster of his backers who remain in office. When the fair closed, the socialists took their books and papers out to the demonstration and kept on talking and selling.

At a later meeting of booksellers at the fair, some said they were upset the fair closed during the Friday action. “Pathfinder went into the square and sold the *Communist Manifesto* there,” remarked Karam Youssef from Cairo’s Al Kotob



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Two members of international team of socialist workers discuss politics with participants in April 1 demonstration in Tahrir Square, downtown Cairo. Protest took place on second day of Tahrir Book Fair. Team sold *Militant* and books on revolutionary working-class politics.

Khan Bookshop. “It was great. They were selling all the hot titles.”

During the protest the socialists were surrounded by workers and others eager to talk. Sixty copies of the *Militant* were sold, along with a subscription. Thirteen demonstrators bought *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, and 12 picked up the Arabic edition of *Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun*, also by Jack Barnes. A number of titles by Marx and Lenin in Arabic were sold.

During the five days of the book fair, 24 *Militant* subscriptions were sold and

242 books. Local booksellers bought another 150 books to display at their shops.

During the mass mobilizations earlier this year, Egyptian authorities shut down universities, said Trevor Naylor, one of the fair’s organizers and associate director of the AUC Press and bookstores. “After Mubarak was overthrown, Tahrir Square became a center for theater, poetry readings, and cultural activity,” he said, “so it is fitting that we also have a book fair. There is a thirst to read about these events and discuss what happens from here.”

Cairo: Workers, youth rally for political rights

BY PAUL MAILHOT

CAIRO, April 1—Tens of thousands of workers and youth today descended on Tahrir Square, birthplace of what Egyptians call the January 25 Revolution.

Demonstrators raised demands to defend political rights and bring to trial ousted president Hosni Mubarak and key figures of his regime, many of whom still hold office. Workers, students, and others participating in the protest spoke out against the state of emergency laws, called for release of political prisoners, and demanded a halt to military prosecutions of civilians, which have continued since the officer corps pushed the hated dictator aside in February.

The action also opposed a draft law making it a crime, punishable by jail and stiff fines, to carry out strikes or protests that interrupt business or affect the economy (see last week’s issue).

In addition to the protest here in Cairo, which some newspapers estimated at 50,000, there were actions involving thousands in Alexandria, Suez, and other cities.

“This is a demonstration to save the revolution,” Mabrou Sahry told the *Militant*. Sahry is a member of the April 6 Youth Movement, one of the groups organizing today’s action. April 6 is the date in 2008 when the Egyptian regime brutally suppressed a strike and protest of thousands of textile workers in the industrial city of Mahalla.

“We want the right to free speech and demonstration,” Sahry said. “We want the return of national property stolen by the Mubarak family.”

The Supreme Military Council, which holds the reins of power here, says it is ruling on an interim basis until elections are held. The officers caution those pressing to defend and extend workers rights today that

their actions can be used to help a “counterrevolution” that will benefit Mubarak.

“Many in the military and others who continue to hold high government positions are fighting to stop the revolution,” Sahry said. “The people are aware of this, which is why we are mobilizing today. The revolution is ongoing, because we have not yet succeeded in changing the situation.”

Workers at the action explained that both national and local government councils appointed by the old regime are still in place. The same has been true of editors of the main newspapers, who were put in place by Mubarak’s government, backed it, and reported falsely on the January and February mobilizations. Shortly before the April 1 demonstration, Egyptian Prime Minister Essam Sharaf announced some changes, replacing the board chairmen at the main news

services and appointing 14 new editors at state-run publications.

Mubarak cronies still control vast state enterprises, and many workers unions are run by appointees of the former dictator.

Workers at the rally told the *Militant* stories of family members or friends being held by the military on false charges. Among the demonstrators was the father of Sharif Hosanmedi, who was killed by a sniper outside a police station while demanding the release of political prisoners.

“I have asked the government for accountability for my son’s death,” he said. “I have sent them legal documents. I have eyewitnesses to what happened. But they will give me no answers. No one is being made to pay for this crime.”

Bringing to justice those responsible for such murders was a major

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—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism. Fri., April 15, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 4025 S Western Ave. Tel.: (323) 295-2600.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

50 Years after the Cuban Victory at the Bay of Pigs: Challenges Facing Revolutionary Cuba Today. Fri., April 15, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

CANADA

Montreal

As the Economic Crisis Deepens So Does Ottawa’s War Drive. Oppose Imperialist Intervention from Libya to Afghanistan. Speaker: Michel Prairie. Fri., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St-Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Capitalist Disaster Devastates Japan. Fri., April 15, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Among demonstrators at April 1 protest in Tahrir Square was father, second from left, of Sharif Hosanmedi, who was killed outside police station while calling for release of political prisoners. Son’s photo is held by another protester.

‘Militant’ subscriptions

Continued from front page

farmers, and young people have subscribed to the paper since early February, when a fight against the U.S. rulers’ antiunion offensive opened in Wisconsin.

The subscription base has risen each week for the last two months, reflecting a hunger for solidarity among working people looking for ways to effectively fight back. This bodes well for the *Militant*’s international subscription campaign, which opens April 23.

Twenty-four subscriptions were sold this week by a team of socialist workers in Cairo, Egypt (see article on page 3).

In addition, supporters of the *Militant* sold 72 subscriptions and more than 530 copies of the paper as they participated in a couple dozen union protests and other actions in cities across the country on and around April 4, the anniversary of Martin Luther King’s assassination.

“I couldn’t sit at home and be silent any longer,” said Shawn Keenan, a young restaurant worker who bought a subscription at a labor solidarity action of 400 in Seattle.

Thirty-one participants at a rally of some 100 people in Kankakee, Illinois, left with a copy of the *Militant*. Scott MacDonald, a retired Teamsters’ member, subscribed and picked up a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. “I was visiting Metropolis, Illinois, recently and talked to workers on strike at Honeywell. I could see they had a lot of support in the town,” he said.

‘Militant’ contributions arrive as paper responds to struggles

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The eight-week drive to raise \$110,000 to help finance publication of the *Militant* has begun, with contributions coming in from readers eager to help pay for the paper’s current reporting trip to Cairo, Egypt. A total of \$800 has been raised so far—\$675 from three contributors and another \$125 from “passing the hat” at a Militant Labor Forum in San Francisco.

“What a wonderful opportunity this book fair is,” writes a *Militant* reader in Pompano Beach, Florida, in a note sent along with her \$50 contribution.

Firsthand accounts on the Tahrir Square Book Fair and articles about the ongoing political struggles by working people in Egypt will appear in the paper in coming weeks, as well as coverage of labor resistance and solidarity with public workers fighting against union-busting by state governments in Wisconsin, Ohio, and other areas.

The Militant Fund runs from April 2 through May 30. The funds raised

“I am here to support workers in Wisconsin who are fighting for collective bargaining rights,” said Darrell Lane, a processor technician at Kraft Foods who bought the paper at a demonstration in Atlanta. “If they lose, it passes down. We have to stop the attacks to safeguard the future for workers’ unions and workers’ rights.”

Lane is vice president of Local 42 of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM). He and two of his co-workers, who also bought the *Militant*, were particularly interested in the paper’s coverage of the fight by BCTGM workers locked out by Roquette America in Keokuk, Iowa, and the solidarity their struggle has received.

Four books are being offered at special discounts with *Militant* subscriptions that can help readers better understand the fight by workers here and around the world to advance our class interests amid today’s deep world capitalist crisis and expanding imperialist wars (see ad on front page). These include three books by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party—*Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*; *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*; and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*—as well as *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* by SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters.

At the April 4 actions, 23 books were sold as part of the special offer.

through this campaign are essential to enable the *Militant* to meet operating expenses, including printing and mailing the paper, and responding with reporting teams to cover important political events.

Local areas this week are setting quotas and mapping plans to appeal to new and longtime supporters of the paper for funds. A scoreboard listing area goals will be printed in a coming issue.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Selling *Militant* at March 26 rally in Los Angeles in solidarity with Wisconsin public workers’ fight and protesting anti-working-class measures by California state and local governments.

Benefits for our class vs. ‘fringes’ for a few

Below is an excerpt from The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The book is among four being offered at special discount with subscriptions to the Militant this spring. The selection is taken from a report by Barnes on “Leading the Party into Industry,” adopted by the SWP National Committee in February 1978. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

When we talk about the social and political responsibilities of labor we explain the need to combat the ruling-class policy of imposing on the individual family the responsibility for social services that should be taken care of by society—the care of the young, the elderly, the sick and disabled.

But that’s not the only way capitalism works. The employers also try to impose upon the individual workers responsibilities that should be met by society. And more and more they try to establish that their responsibilities will be met only according to the profitability of each worker’s own boss. I leave aside the most grotesque single examples such as the public-employee unions’ officials sinking massive amounts of pension funds into city bonds in New York City.

But more and more so-called general fringe benefits—pensions, health-care plans, supplemental unemployment benefits—all become contingent on the continuing profits of the boss you work for. We see this growing in industries like coal, steel, and auto.

These benefits are not won for the class as a whole, or even a section of the class. . . . These fringes are good in good times—for workers who have them—because they’re a substantial addition to everything else industrial workers can count on.

But when the squeeze comes, this all begins to fall apart. Your pension funds are threatened. Your health-care plans are dismantled. The supplemental unemployment benefits run out. And the squeeze is on.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 18, 1986

CHILLICOTHE, Mo.—Some 2,000 farmers jammed into the lot of the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) office here Monday, April 6, spilling onto the street and across it. The FmHA building has been the site of a tractor sit-in since March 17. The farmers are protesting FmHA lending policies and the farm crisis itself, which is deepening across Missouri and the Midwest.

Despite planting time being only a few weeks away, only 10 percent of the millions FmHA has for operating loans in Missouri has been disbursed. All lenders have tightened their loan requirements, and as a result, farmers across the Midwest are being kept from their fields.

Also attending the rally was a delegation of Hormel workers from Austin Minnesota; Ottumwa, Iowa; and Fremont, Nebraska.



April 17, 1961

April 12—Rarely has a major world power planned naked aggression against a small country as openly and brazenly as Washington is preparing the projected invasion of Cuba.

As these lines are written, a well-armed mercenary force of pilots, naval units, paratroopers, guerrilla fighters and saboteurs—financed and trained by the government of the United States—stands poised for attack on Cuba. The counterrevolutionary troops are massed in two staging areas. One is in Louisiana, the other in Central America.

Only one thing is postponing the “D-Day” signal that was slated for last weekend—the fear that they can’t get away with it.

After a hard look at Cuba’s impressive defense preparations, the Kennedy administration and its Cuban hirelings apparently became fearful.



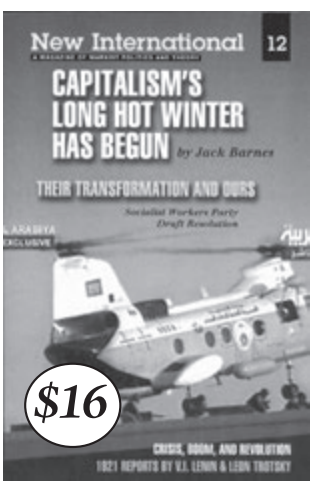
April 18, 1936

With the capture of Dessye and the announcement by the Italian forces in Africa of plans of a three-day march at the end of which it is expected to take the capital city of Addis Ababa, the main immediate objective of the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia seems to be definitely assured.

The occupation of the capital which now appears inevitable will undoubtedly be a severe moral blow to the defenders, and little more will be left to the courageous Ethiopians save the continuance of sporadic guerrilla warfare to prevent the Italians from completing the subjugation of this last of the “independent” lands of Africa.

Meanwhile, the Italian representatives, haughtily exuberant with victory, have laid down the victor’s peace terms in accordance with the old Roman war-cry: “Woe to the vanquished!”

New International
MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY



www.Pathfinderpress.com

Antigovernment protests challenge Syrian regime

BY SETH GALINSKY

Protests in Syria demanding freedom of speech and assembly and measures to alleviate the impact of the capitalist economic crisis on working people have been met by state violence and promises of limited concessions.

Syrian president Bashar al-Assad told parliament March 29 that the protests are part of a foreign “conspiracy” creating “chaos and destruction.”

In an interview earlier this year with the *Wall Street Journal*, 45-year-old Assad said that uprisings that began in Tunisia and spread across the region had little to do with Syria. “We are not Tunisians and we are not Egyptians,” Assad said. We are “very closely linked to the beliefs of the people,” he added, pointing to opposition to Israeli occupation of Syria’s Golan Heights.

Less than two months later, demonstrations swept the country. They were attacked by the regime’s security forces, who killed dozens. In an attempt to quiet protests, Assad announced March 29 he was replacing his entire cabinet. He later said he was ordering a study of eventually ending the state of emergency.

Like other regimes in the region, the Syrian government is based on a narrow layer of capitalist families, in this case mostly from the Alawite Muslim minority, a branch of Shiite Islam. Three-quarters of the population are Sunni, only 11 percent Alawite, and 12 percent are Christians. Some 9 percent are Kurds. While some Assad family members are billionaires, a third of the population survives on \$2 a day or less.

A British-trained eye doctor, Assad became president in July 2000 after the death of his father Hafez al-Assad, who had ruled the country with an iron fist since 1963. Emergency laws imposed at the time by the ruling Baath party are still in place today.

Bashar al-Assad began a short-lived relaxing of restrictions on rights known as the “Damascus Spring.” While he has released 700 political prisoners, at least 4,000 remain in prison, even before the recent arrests. Assad also kept in place his father’s tight control of the Alawite-dominated officer corps.

Assad’s bourgeois Baath party once flaunted the demagogic motto “Unity,

liberty, and socialism” in the fight against imperialism and proclaims itself a “fortress of resistance” of the Palestinian people.

During the 1975–76 civil war in Lebanon, however, Syrian troops entered the country to prevent a revolutionary upsurge that threatened the regime there. These troops blocked Palestinian fighters from defending the Tel al-Zaatar Palestinian refugee camp, which was under siege by the Lebanese army and rightist militias. Hundreds of camp residents were slaughtered.

In 1985, less than three years after Phalangists backed by Tel Aviv massacred Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut, the Syrian-backed Amal militia attacked the same camps. Assad wanted to bring the Palestine Liberation Organization under his control, using it as a bargaining chip in his dealings with Washington.

In 1991 the regime of Assad senior joined Washington’s “coalition of the willing” in the war against Iraq. Since then, despite heated conflicts with the U.S. government over Syria’s role in Lebanon and relations with Iran, Damascus has sought to keep relations with the imperialist powers on an even keel. After Sept. 11, 2001, the regime handed over to U.S. forces people accused of al-Qaeda ties and closed down offices of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and other Palestinian and Islamist groups.

The latest protests in Syria began in mid-March, after 15 teenagers in the southern agricultural town of Dara’a were arrested for writing graffiti saying, “The people want the regime to fall.” The youths were later released, but protests spread.

According to al-Jazeera, actions took place across the country April 1, includ-



AP photo/Muzaffar Salman

Protesters in Syria calling for democratic rights and end to the Bashar al-Assad regime clash with government supporters, at right, after Friday prayers in Damascus, March 25.

ing in Dara’a, the mixed Sunni-Alawite city of Latakia, and in Damascus, the capital. The *New York Times* reports that at least five people were killed in Douma, a working-class neighborhood north of Damascus.

For the first time, protests took place in Qamishli and Amuda in the mostly Kurdish northeast. Some 300,000 Kurds have been denied citizenship since a census in 1962. The use of the Kurdish language is restricted, and most Kurds are not allowed to own land. Radif Mustafa, a Kurdish rights activist, told Agence France-Presse that people chanted, “We don’t only want citizenship but freedom as well.”

The Syrian Communist Party (Unified), long part of Assad’s National Progressive Front, took its distance from the protests, while calling for “reforms.” Anything “that inflames

feelings and situations should be avoided,” the Stalinist party said. “National unity must be ensured.”

In December President Barack Obama appointed the first U.S. ambassador to Syria since February 2005. At a March 27 press conference, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton contrasted Assad favorably to Libya’s Moammar Gadhafi. “There’s a difference between calling out aircraft and indiscriminately strafing and bombing your own cities,” she said, “and police actions that frankly have exceeded the use of force that any of us would want to see.”

Nor is the Israeli government cheering for the anti-Assad protests. While Tel Aviv and Damascus have often clashed, Israeli “officials note that Syria has been careful for decades to avoid direct violence” along the border with Israel, reported Associated Press.

CIA, special forces on ground in Libya war

Continued from front page

rying out similar operations inside Libya. “British operatives have been directing airstrikes from British jets and gathering intelligence about the whereabouts of Libyan government tank columns, artillery pieces and missile installations,” reported the *New York Times*.

The White House has said arming

the opposition is under consideration and the president has not “ruled it in or out.” Defense Secretary Robert Gates in testimony before the House Armed Services committee said that besides arms the rebel forces will need training with “advisers on the ground.” He said that “somebody else should do that” besides the U.S. government. The secret finding signed by Obama authorizes the CIA to provide arms to rebel forces, according to U.S. officials cited in the *Washington Post*.

Under NATO’s command are 25 warships stationed off the coast of Libya, including two aircraft carriers—Paris’s *Charles de Gaulle* and Rome’s *Garibaldi*. On these ships and bases in Europe are more than 220 aircraft available for operations in Libyan airspace around-the-clock, under the direction of NATO commander Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard from Canada.

In testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee March 31, Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg said the transition to NATO gives the U.S. government “the best of both worlds.” Washington is able to play “a less front-line role in terms of the operational military activities,” he said, but “can conduct effective

military activities,” since U.S. troops remain under the command of U.S. Adm. James Stavridis, NATO’s top commander.

Stalemate in civil war

At a congressional hearing Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen presented a bleak assessment of the rebels’ capabilities and the limited impact of the imperialist bombing. He said only about 1,000 rebels have military training and that Gadhafi’s tanks and armored vehicles outnumber the opposition’s by 10 to 1. The daily airstrikes, according to Mullen, have reduced the Libyan government’s forces by 25 percent or less.

Targeting Gadhafi’s troops is becoming “a real challenge,” Mullen said, because in recent days they “have started to look like, dress like, drive in vehicles like, the opposition.” A NATO airstrike April 1 killed at least 10 rebel fighters on the outskirts of Brega, in eastern Libya.

Meanwhile, food prices in Libya are rising sharply. According to the United Nations World Food Program, in the last few weeks the price of flour has more than doubled, rice increased by 88 percent, and bread by more than 110 percent.

NEW INTERNATIONAL A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

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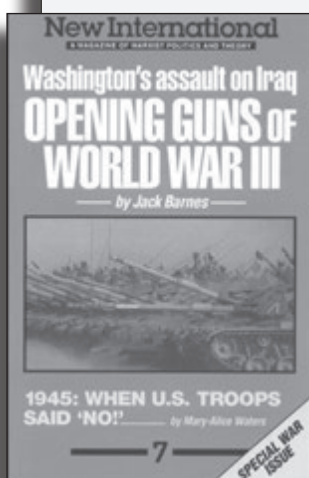
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Miners back Wisconsin unions

Pennsylvania: ‘Today it’s public workers, tomorrow it’s coal miners’

WAYNESBURG, Pennsylvania—Chanting “We are union!” coal miners and their supporters marched to the Greene County Fairgrounds April 1 to rally in support of public workers fighting government efforts to curb union rights. In spite of snow and rain, the rally, called by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), drew more than 3,000 miners from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and beyond.

“Today it’s the public employees. Tomorrow it’s the steelworkers. Tomorrow it’s the coal miners,” UMWA president Cecil Roberts said, referring to the struggles in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and elsewhere against legislation aimed at curbing the bargaining rights of public workers. Among those addressing the rally was Wisconsin AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale.

Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, also addressed the rally. He came with a contingent of farm workers from northern Ohio. Velasquez announced that in September, tomato workers and others from that region would be holding a one-day strike in solidarity with the public workers.

The UMWA is in the midst of negotiating a new contract with the Bituminous Coal Operators’ Association, which includes coal companies employing some 10,000 union miners in the eastern coalfields. The five-year accord expires December 31.

—Paul Pederson

Birmingham, Alabama: ‘A wrong to one is a wrong to all’

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—The “We Are One” rally here drew 500 people, including a large number of UMWA members.

A leaflet distributed at the action said, “Alabama Senate Bill 310 abolishes the tenure law, the fair dismissal act, and 70 years of job protection for 125,000 school employees.” Urging participation in an action April 13 against the bill, Vi Parramore, president of the Jefferson County American Federation of Teachers, told the rally, “We are asking our union brothers to join us in Montgomery,” the state capital.

UMWA District 20 president Daryl Dewberry said at the rally, “A wrong to one is a wrong to all. We will be next if we don’t stand up now.” Many miners took the day off work in order to participate in the rally.

—Jacob Perasso and Rachele Fruit



Militant/Paul Pederson

WAYNESBURG, Pennsylvania—Coal miners march April 1 to support embattled Wisconsin public workers. They were joined by farm workers from northern Ohio.



Militant/Betsey Stone

SAN FRANCISCO—Hundreds of hotel workers demanded decent contracts as part of rally April 4.

Rallies answer union-busting across U.S.

San Francisco: ‘Wisconsin workers set example!’

SAN FRANCISCO—The April 4 labor march here began with a spirited picket of hundreds of hotel workers, members of UNITE HERE Local 2, in front of the Palace Hotel where workers are fighting for a decent contract.

The hotel workers have been buoyed by the recent signing of a contract with Hilton, successfully pushing back company demands for deep concessions. Carlos Narváez, a worker at the Palace, said, “Wisconsin workers have set a great example for us!”

The Local 2 picket later joined a march through downtown San Francisco that swelled to more than 5,000, including contingents from Service Employees International Union, American Federation of Teachers, Teamsters, Sailors Union of the Pacific, and others.

Some of the larger contingents were from the construction trades, where unemployment remains high. “We’re here because of what happened in Wisconsin; we can’t let this spread,” said Shaun Reyes, a member of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 38.

“The corporations and the contractors, they don’t care about us, we’re expendable,” said 23-year-old Brandon Barnum. “That’s why we have to have broth-

erhood—and the sisters too. We’ll have to at some point shut down some jobs over that. It will come to that.”

The San Francisco march was one of more than two dozen labor actions that took place throughout northern California April 4, including a rally in Oakland of several thousand. International Longshore and Warehouse Union members took off work in solidarity with the demonstrations.

—Betsey Stone

Columbus, Ohio: Hundreds protest bill attacking public workers

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Four hundred people rallied here April 5 to protest Senate Bill 5, recently signed into law by Gov. John Kasich, and sweeping budget cuts.

The bill severely restricts collective bargaining rights for state and municipal workers, outlaws public workers’ right to strike, and eliminates their right to negotiate health and pension coverage. Where there is an unresolved dispute between union members and the government body employing them, the government can simply impose its

Continued on page 9



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

HOUSTON—City workers called action April 4. “We’re here in solidarity not just with workers in Wisconsin, but for union rights across the country,” said flight attendant Christine Diaz.

Striking Ohio Machinists demonstrate

Continued from front page

after the union called for a 1 percent pay increase and management proposed 0.5 percent, or about eight cents. Workers average \$16 an hour.

To add insult to injury, the company demanded increased worker contributions to medical insurance costs, an end to calculating overtime on a daily basis

after eight hours, and a lengthening of the time on the job required to take a vacation.

“They want our deductible to go up to \$500 and our prescription payments to go up as well,” striking worker Ed Baker told the *Militant*. “Their proposal on overtime will amount to a wage cut for many people. A lot of us feel they’re trying to go to a 12-hour day, like a lot of other companies.”

Management hired replacement workers in early February, Baker explained. No union member has crossed the picket line and production is down in the plant. So are safety conditions. Just hours before the rally, an ambulance took an injured worker away.

Since the company announced it was hiring permanent replacements, the Ohio unemployment office ruled that the strikers are actually locked out. Thus they are eligible to receive unemployment compensation, a welcome addition to the \$150 strikers receive weekly from the IAM. Unionists throughout the area are raising funds to support the Tsubaki strikers.

Among those joining Local 2159 members at the rally were United Auto Workers members from local auto parts factories, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers members, unionists from other IAM locals, and members of the Laborers union.



Militant/Sara Lobman

SANDUSKY, Ohio—Striking Machinists rally outside U.S. Tsubaki plant April 4. They walked out after company refused to pay even a 1 percent raise in new contract.



Militant/Janet Post

PHILADELPHIA—Students and teachers protest April 4 against plan to cut funding to state colleges by 52 percent.



Militant/Marla Puziss

ATLANTA—Supporters of Troy Davis, a death row inmate framed by cops, attended April 4 rally.

‘We will not hesitate to defend revolution’

Cuban leaders proclaim socialist revolution on eve of U.S. Bay of Pigs invasion

April 19 this year marks the 50th anniversary of the victory of Cuba’s working people over a U.S.-organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs. Below we print an excerpt from an April 16, 1961, speech by Fidel Castro given at a mass funeral rally honoring those killed in U.S. airstrikes the day before. In his address, Castro prepares the Cuban people for the coming imperialist attack, publicly proclaiming for the first time the socialist character of the revolution they were defending.

While Washington had been vehemently denying any intention to launch a military operation, a U.S.-backed invasion by 1,500 mercenaries began the following day, April 17. In fewer than 72 hours it was crushed at Playa Girón (Girón beach) by Cuba’s workers and farmers, who had conquered power two years earlier and begun to reorganize society in the interests of the toiling majority.

Castro’s speech is included in *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas*. Copyright © 2001 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.



BY FIDEL CASTRO

Yesterday at 6:00 a.m., as everyone knows, three groups of bombers penetrated the national territory from abroad and attacked three points of the national territory. At each of these points, men defended themselves heroically. In each of these points, the courageous blood of the defenders was shed. . . .

Yesterday they attacked our land in a cunning and criminal attack. The whole world knew about it. There were Yankee planes, Yankee bombs, and Yankee weapons, as well as mercenaries paid by the Yankee Central Intelligence Agency. They destroyed the nation’s wealth. They ended the lives of young people, many of whom were still in their teens. . . .

Those we’ve come here to bury were not millionaire parasites . . . they were not mercenaries who sold themselves for foreign gold, they were not thieves. They are true sons of our people! [*Prolonged applause*]



Above: Granma; Inset: Bohemia
Above, Fidel Castro delivers speech April 16, 1961, at ceremony honoring those killed by U.S. air assaults and preparing Cuban people for inevitable U.S. invasion, which began near Bay of Pigs the next day. Cuban toilers triumphed over imperialist mercenary force in less than three days, solidifying their political power and setting powerful example for working people worldwide. Inset, airfield in Santiago de Cuba after April 15 bombing.

They were young workers, children from families of ordinary people who never stole anything from anyone, who never exploited anyone, and who had a right to live more than the millionaires. They had more right to live than the parasites and the *gusanos*! [*Applause*] Because they did not live off the labor of others, like the Yankee millionaires. They did not live off foreign gold, like the mercenaries and *gusanos* who have sold out to imperialism. [*Shouts of “Down with them!”*] . . .

What the imperialists cannot forgive is that we are here. What the imperialists cannot forgive is the dignity, the integrity, the courage, the firmness of ideas, the spirit of sacrifice, and the revolutionary spirit of the people of Cuba. [*Applause*]

That is what they cannot forgive, that we are here under their very nose. What they cannot forgive is that we have made a socialist revolution right under the very nose of the United States! [*Applause and shouts*] That we defend this socialist

revolution with these guns! [*Applause*] That we defend this socialist revolution with the same courage shown yesterday when our antiaircraft artillery riddled the aggressor’s planes with bullets! [*Applause and shouts of “Venceremos!” and other revolutionary slogans.*] . . .

Compañero workers and peasants of the homeland: yesterday’s attack was the



prelude to the mercenaries’ aggression. Yesterday’s attack, which cost seven heroic lives, aimed to destroy our planes on the ground. But the mercenaries failed; they did not destroy our planes, and the bulk of the enemy planes were damaged or shot down. [*Applause*]

Here, in front of the graves of our fallen comrades; beside the remains of the heroic youth, children of workers and children of ordinary working men and women, we reaffirm our determination. Just as they faced the bullets, just as they gave their lives, we state that no matter when the mercenaries come, no matter who we face, that we are all proud of our revolution, proud to defend this revolution of the working people, for the working people, and by the working people. And we will not hesitate to defend it to the last drop of blood. [*Applause*] . . .

Compañeros, all units need to head toward the site of their respective battalions, in view of the mobilization order to maintain the country in a state of alert in face of the imminent mercenary aggression that can be deduced by all the events of the last weeks and yesterday’s cowardly attack.

Let us march to the Militia Houses.

Let us form up the battalions and prepare to go confront the enemies, with the national anthem on our lips, with the words of the patriotic anthem, with the cry of “To battle,” with the conviction that “to die for the homeland is to live” and “to live in chains is to live plunged in ignominy and shame.”

Cuban official, U.S. journalist testify in trial of Luis Posada

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After 11 weeks of testimony from 23 witnesses, federal prosecutors rested their case against Luis Posada Carriles, a CIA-trained Cuban counterrevolutionary assassin and saboteur.

The U.S. government has charged Posada with 11 counts of perjury and naturalization fraud for lying to an immigration judge about how he entered the United States in 2005 and his role in a series of bombings in Havana in 1997. The trial is taking place in El Paso, Texas, where the defense is now presenting its arguments.

Among the lead witnesses called to testify was Cuban lieutenant colonel Roberto Hernández Caballero. He presented details about these blasts, which killed Italian tourist Fabio Di Celmo and wounded at least a dozen others.

Hernández, who works for the state security division of Cuba’s Interior Ministry, headed a task force that investigated the bombings in Havana and the beach resort of Varadero between April and October 1997. Cuban medical examiner Ileana Vizcaino Dime also testified.

Posada, who U.S. government prosecutors admit was on the CIA payroll from the early 1960s to 1976, bragged about his involvement in these bombings in an interview with journalist Ann Louise Bardach that appeared in the July 12, 1998, issue of the *New York Times*.

At the trial the prosecution played

portions of Bardach’s taped interview with Posada where he discusses his role in preparing the bombings. Under questioning from Posada’s attorney on whether his client “explicitly admitted” to the bombings, Bardach shot back, “Yes he did, in a hundred ways he admits to the bombing campaign. He was proud this was a success, minus the death.”

Posada has a long record as an organizer of violent attacks and sabotage operations directed against the Cuban Revolution. Ample evidence implicates him as the mastermind behind the October 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados that killed all 73 people aboard, including the Cuban Olympic fencing team, many of whom were teenagers. At the time Posada was working as chief of operations for the Venezuelan secret police under the government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez. A Venezuelan military court dismissed charges against him for the crime, but the decision was later overturned. In 1985 he was allowed to escape from prison.

Washington has refused repeated requests by the Cuban and Venezuelan governments to extradite Posada to stand trial for the 1976 airline bombing.

After entering the United States in 2005, Posada was held in an immigration detention center in El Paso until May 2007, when a judge dropped the charge that he was in the country illegally. Since then he has been living in Miami.

Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs \$22

Washington’s First Military Defeat in the Americas



by **Fidel Castro, José Ramón Fernández**

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

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution \$10



by **Jack Barnes**

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had a worldwide political impact, including on workers and youth in the imperialist heartland. As the proletarian-based struggle for Black rights was advancing in the U.S., the social transformation fought for and won by Cuban toilers set an example that socialist revolution is not only necessary—it can be made and defended.

The Inevitable Battle by Juan Carlos Rodríguez \$20

The failure of the attack on Playa Girón was not due to poor strategy and tactics on the part of the invading forces, but because the human material available to Washington could not match the courage and determination of a people fighting to defend what they had gained through the continent’s first socialist revolution.

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by **Enrique Carreras, Harry Villegas, José Ramón Fernández, Nestor López Cuba, Mary-Alice Waters**

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Che: 'Politicize and transform attitudes toward work'

Below is an excerpt from Che Guevara Talks to Young People. The Spanish edition is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. On May 9, 1964, Guevara gave a presentation to members of the Union of Young Communists working in the Ministry of Industry. Under Guevara's leadership since early 1961, the ministry sought to give the working class greater leverage in determining economic and social priorities. In advancing this course there were many challenges, some of which Guevara discusses below. Copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

You have been talking about the technological revolution. This is one of the most important things, one of the most concrete tasks and one that is closest to the mentality of youth. But one cannot seek to carry out a technological revolution by oneself, because the technological revolution is happening all over the world, in every country, both socialist and nonsocialist—I am referring to the advanced countries, of course.

There is a technological revolution going on in the United States. There's a powerful technological revolution in France, in Britain, in the Federal Republic of Germany, and these are certainly

not socialist countries. So the technological revolution must have a class content, a socialist content. And for this to happen, there must be a transformation of the youth so that they become a genuine motor force. In other words, all the bad habits of the old, dead society must be eliminated. One cannot think about a technological revolution without at the same time thinking about a communist attitude toward work. This is extremely important. We cannot speak of a socialist technological revolution if there is not a communist attitude toward work.

This is simply the reflection in Cuba of the technological revolution taking place as a result of the most recent scientific inventions and discoveries. These are things that cannot be separated. And a communist attitude toward work consists of changes taking place in an individual's consciousness, changes that naturally take a long time. We cannot expect that changes of this sort will be completed within a short period, during which work will continue to have the character it has now—a compulsory social obligation—before being transformed into a social necessity. In other words, this transformation—the technological revolution—presents the opportunity to get closer to what interests you most in life, your work, your research, your studies of every type. And one's attitude toward this work will be something totally new. Work will be what Sunday is now—not the Sunday when you cut cane, but the Sunday when you don't cut cane. In other words, work will be seen as a necessity, not something compelled by sanctions.

But achieving that requires a long process, a process tied to the creation of habits acquired through voluntary work. Why do we emphasize voluntary work so much? Economically it means practically nothing. Even the volunteers who cut cane—which is the most important task from an economic point of view—don't accomplish much. A volunteer cutter from this ministry cuts only a fourth or a fifth of what a



Granma
Che Guevara addresses seminar on "Youth and the Revolution" at Ministry of Industry, May 9, 1964, in Havana. "Today, we have begun a process of, let us say, politicizing this ministry," Guevara told young communists.

cane cutter who has been doing this his whole life does. It has economic importance today because of the shortage of labor. It is also important today because these individuals are giving a part of their lives to society without expecting anything in return, without expecting any kind of payment, simply fulfilling a duty to society. This is the first step in transforming work into what it will eventually become, as a result of the advance of technology, the advance of production, and the advance of the relations of production: an activity of a higher level, a social necessity.

We will advance if at every step we bring together the ability to transform ourselves, generalizing our attitude toward study of the new technology, with the ability to perform in our workplaces as the vanguard. And if you get into the habit of turning productive labor little by little into something that, over time, becomes a necessity, then you will automatically become the youth's vanguard, and you will never have to wonder what you should be doing. You will simply do what at the time seems to make the most sense. You won't have to go searching for what youth might like.

You will automatically be youth, as well as representatives of the most advanced youth. Those who are young, young in spirit especially, don't ever have to worry about what to do in order to please others. Just do what is necessary, what seems logical at the time. That's how youth will become leaders.

Today we have begun a process of, let us say, politicizing this ministry. The Ministry of Industry is really cold, a very bureaucratic place, a nest of nit-picking bureaucrats and bores, from the minister on down, who are constantly tackling concrete tasks in order to search for new relationships and new attitudes.

Now, the youth organization here was complaining that even though they had organized things, this place was empty on the days when I didn't show up, and they wanted me to raise this. Well, I can raise it, but I can't tell anyone to come here. What's going on? Either there is a lack of communication or a lack of interest, and this hasn't been overcome by the people in charge of doing so. This is a concrete task of the ministry. It is the task of the youth organization, to overcome the indifference within the ministry. Of course, there is always room for self-criticism; and the assessment that not enough has been done to stay in constant communication with people is always appropriate.

That's true, but it's also important that self-criticism be complete: because self-criticism is not self-flagellation but rather an analysis of a person's attitude. Moreover, the enormous amount of work on one's shoulders, one task after another all piled up, makes it more difficult to have a different type of relationship and to pursue a more human relationship, one could say, a relationship less directed through bureaucratic red tape.

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Our solidarity surprises them

“The capitalists are surprised when human solidarity—of which the working class is the bearer for the future of all humanity—comes together in explosive and unexpected resistance to assaults on the living standards, job conditions, and democratic and social rights of working people,” says Jack Barnes in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*.

They’re being surprised again this year—ever since February, when working people began mobilizing in Wisconsin to fight attacks against public employees and their unions. The Wisconsin actions opened the first showdown between the employing class and workers and our unions since the acceleration of the capitalist crisis and antilabor offensive began in 2007.

This issue of the *Militant* reports on actions from coast to coast in solidarity with embattled government workers. These protests, called by the AFL-CIO and held on or around April 4, also marked the anniversary of the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King. At the time King was shot, he was in Memphis building support for striking city sanitation workers, who took “I am a man!” as their slogan in the fight against racism and for union rights.

Some April 4 actions were linked with current or coming union fights. On April 5, for example, some 400 people rallied in Columbus, Ohio, where the governor has just signed a law not only curtailing collective bargaining rights but allowing local governments to impose contract terms in disputes over the few issues unions are still permitted to negotiate.

Other actions involved striking Machinists in Sandusky, Ohio; United Mine Worker—organized miners in the eastern and southern coalfields, whose contract comes up in December; and UNITE HERE—organized hotel workers engaged in a contract fight in San Francisco.

“We need to work as one,” said a government worker from British Columbia at a rally of workers from both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border. “Whether we are in Wisconsin or in Canada, we have the same interests as workers.”

These and other workers need a paper like the *Militant* that, as our masthead says, is “published in the interests of working people”—a paper that tells the truth about our struggles and points a political road forward for the working class. Since February, thousands have bought copies of the *Militant* at labor actions and elsewhere. Hundreds have signed up as weekly readers. For the next two months, *Militant* subscriptions are being sold along with an offer for one of four books, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, quoted at the opening of this editorial.

That book by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, is especially useful for militants who not only need to learn how our unions got as weak as they are today, but who want to draw lessons from hard-fought battles we’ve waged in recent decades—victories, stalemates, and setbacks—as the bosses stepped up their offensive against labor since the mid-1970s.

Just leafing through the book’s photos shows what fighting workers will find. The organizing battle in 1979 that won union recognition for 18,000 shipyard workers, a large percentage of them Black, in Newport News, Virginia. The six-week walkout in 1989 by some 44,000 UMW members in support of miners on strike against Pittston Coal. Fights by packinghouse workers, airlines employees, garment and textile workers, and more.

The book also draws lessons for the working-class movement from struggles by working farmers, mobilizations for women’s rights, fights against racist discrimination and cop brutality—and battles by fellow toilers from revolutionary Cuba, to South Africa, and beyond.

As Barnes writes in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, class-conscious workers aim to advance the transformation of the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle for the interests of working people and the oppressed in the United States and the world over.

Take advantage of our front-page offer to get this invaluable handbook for workers, unionists, and young people attracted to their struggles.

Protest for political rights in Cairo

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demand of the protest. Young people told the *Militant* that more than 600 were killed by government forces during the January and February mobilizations.

Khaled El Masry, another activist in the April 6 Youth Movement, wanted people in the United States to know that the struggle for political freedoms and better living conditions has been a long fight. “What began January 25 is the product of many mobilizations, especially since 2008,” he said. “The first public demonstration I was part of last year in Cairo had fewer than 2,000 people, and we were surrounded by 10,000 police.”

During the youth movement that started in 2008 to support workers strikes in Mahalla, Masry said, “We used the Internet to communicate, make statements, and help us organize. But how we built the movement is through joining with workers at the factories and in the neighborhoods.

“We want to change the regime,” he said. “Mubarak is gone, but we have not yet changed the regime.”

At the protest, a curator at a Cairo museum described the deplorable living conditions for workers. His job, considered a good one, pays the equivalent of \$100 a month. A garment factory worker told us she receives the equivalent of \$60 a month for a six-day workweek.

Especially since some soldiers sympathized with the protests in Tahrir Square earlier this year, there is wide-ranging debate in Egypt about the armed forces. Many workers and young people have illusions in the officer corps, which finally removed Mubarak when mobilizations against the regime did not abate. A number have told the *Militant* the military needs to be given time to usher in democratic reforms.

This view was contested at the April 1 action by Abdul Hamid Kamal, a private school instructor, who argued with several young people being interviewed by the *Militant*. “From the first day the military has taken orders from the Mubarak regime,” he said. “Even after forcing Mubarak out, they still take their orders from the same forces. The military pretends it is for the revolution, but they are in fact very much opposed. They try to undermine it through pretending to support it.”

“Mubarak should be in prison, not in a palace in Sharm el Sheikh,” said Kamal. “Thousands have been killed here by the regime, not just the 600 who died in January and February.”

Open debate on this and other questions was widespread in Tahrir Square April 1. Workers and young people who have been at the forefront of the fight here are using the political space they’ve won to formulate their demands and positions and strengthen their organization.

“I am optimistic we will advance in Egypt,” said Hanan El Wakeel, a hospital medical technician, speaking to the *Militant* earlier in the day. “Before we could not even have this conversation,” she said. “You did not express what you really thought. There was fear. Now we speak more freely.”

Supporters of the *Militant* were well received by most workers and youth in Tahrir Square. Many crowded around to get copies or subscriptions to the paper, to buy books and pamphlets about the class struggle in the United States and the world, and to learn why socialist workers from abroad had come to Egypt to find out about their struggle.

Some Islamist forces, however, told us that socialists and communists had no place in Egypt, and that we should leave the square and go back to the United States. After every such encounter, others nearby demonstratively let us know we were welcome here.

Rallies across U.S.



Militant/Jeanne FitzMaurice

BLAINE, Washington—Banner at U.S.-Canadian border labor rally April 2 calls for participation in May 1 demonstrations for immigrant workers rights.

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contract terms. Union dues will no longer be automatically checked off.

—John Studer

Blaine, Washington: Unionists rally at U.S.-Canadian border

BLAINE, Washington—More than 1,500 people gathered in Peace Arch Park at the U.S.-Canadian border April 2 in a rally sponsored by the Washington State Labor Council, the Oregon State AFL-CIO, and the British Columbia Federation of Labour. A moment of silence was observed at the rally for the seven workers who perished last April in an explosion at the Tesoro Refinery in nearby Anacortes, Washington.

John Ross, who is with the Inland Boatman’s Union and a ferry worker, told the *Militant*, “I’m here because as soon as we agreed to the concessions, legislation was introduced at the state level which would take away our collective bargaining rights.”

Colleen Jones with the British Columbia Government Employees Union explained that there have been deep cuts in the public sector by the provincial government. “We need to work as one. Whether we are in Wisconsin or in Canada we have the same interests as workers,” she said.

—Edwin Fruit

L.A.: ‘Every gain won by labor and discipline of ordinary people’

LOS ANGELES—More than 1,800 people filled the First A.M.E. Church here April 4. “I was one of the 161 who flew to Madison from Los Angeles to show solidarity with the fight,” Laura Brown told the crowd. “It inspired me to see thousands of workers with pride in the unions and their history.” Brown is a member of the Service Employees International Union—United Long Term Care Workers, who face big attacks in the current round of California statewide budget cuts.

“Every gain for the last 100 years has been won by the labor and discipline of ordinary people,” said veteran civil rights fighter Rev. James Lawson, to cheers and applause.

—Arlene Rubinstein

Albany, New York: Students march against deep cuts at state university

ALBANY, New York—Hundreds of students, teachers, and unionists rallied at the capitol building here March 30, as the state assembly prepared to approve a budget that would cut millions of dollars from the State University of New York (SUNY).

“[New York governor Andrew] Cuomo thinks he can do whatever he wants, just like Scott Walker does,” said Daphne Ter, 24, a senior at SUNY Albany. “We’re here to tell him he can’t.”

“I’m enraged that Governor Cuomo is asking us to pay for his budget when none of the top 10 percent pay anything,” said Christopher Gordon, a senior at SUNY New Paltz and an organizer of Students for the Final Cut, a group opposed to cuts in public education.

—Harry D’Agostino

Rallies and demonstrations also took place April 4 in New York; Atlanta; Houston; Philadelphia; Seattle; Miami; Boston; St. Paul, Minnesota; Des Moines, Iowa; Kankakee, Illinois; Newark, New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; and many other cities.