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 strikes upon NATO’s request, or if U.S. officials decide NATO is unable to effectively conduct these assaults without them.

A White House official 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.

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

Three communist workers at an aerospace parts plant in the Los Angeles area received fines 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 Garcia 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

Harness destruction in Japan. 

Capitalist disaster ravages Japan’s toilers

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

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Signed 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 Das 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 of the booksellers 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 Ha-sham 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 ongo- ing sit-in at Cairo University aimed at removing its president, Hossam Kannal, a supporter of Mubarak’s discredited National Democratic Party.

Yostina Budes, 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, Budes 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 thou- sands of workers and youth converged on Tahrir Square to oppose a draft law restricting strikes and to demand pro- secution of Mubarak and the oster of his backers who remain in office. When the fair closed, local socialists carried their books and papers out to the demonstration and kept on talking and selling.

At a later meeting of bookstores at the fair, some said they were upset the fair closed during the Friday action. “Path- finder went into the square and sold the Communist Manifesto there,” remarked Karam Youssif from Cairo’s Al Kotob Khan Bookshop. “It was great. They were selling all the hot titles.”

During the protest the socialists were surrounded by workers and others ea- ger to talk. Sixty copies of the Militant were sold, along with a subscription. Thirteen demonstrators bought Mal- colm 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 were sold. During the five days of the book fair, 24 Militant subscriptions were sold and 242 books. Local book sellers bought another 150 books to display at their shops.

During the mass mobilizations ear- lier this year, Egyptian authorities shut down universities, said Trevor Naylor, one of the fair’s organizers and as- sociate director of the AUC Press and bookstores. “After Mubarak was over- thrown, 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.

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.

CAIRO: Workers, youth rally for political rights

BY PAUL MAILHOT
CAIRO, April 1—Tens of thou- sands of workers and youth today de- scended 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 pros- ecuti on of civilians, which has been true of editors of the main regime are still in place. The same “counterrevolution” that will benefit Mubarak cronies still control vast 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 docu- ments. 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 respon- sible for such murders was a major goal. Continued on page 9

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.
Continued from front page

farmers and young people have sub-
scribed to the paper since early Feb-
uary in a fight against the U.S. rulers’ anticolonial 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 cam-
paign, which runs through 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
events. Sales picked up two-thirds way
on and around April 4, the anniversary of
Martin Luther King’s assassination.

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

The Militant participants at a rally of
some 100 people in Kankakee, Illinois,
left with a copy of the Militant. Scott
MacDonald, a retired Teamsters mem-
ber, 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, re-
cently, and talked to workers on strike at
Honeywell. I could see they had a lot of
support in the town,” he said.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The eight-week drive to raise $110,000
over help finance publication of the 
Militant has begun, with contributions com-
ing in from workers in 16 states at help for the paper’s current reporting trip to
Cairo, Egypt. A total of $800 has been
raised so far—$675 from three contribu-
tors, $16 from a Militant subscription at a
labor solidarity action, and another $125 from “passing the hat” at a Militant Labor Forum in San
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“Militant” contributions arrive
as paper responds to struggles

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

April 12—Rarely has a major world
power planned a military attack on a
small country as openly and brazenly
as Washington is preparing the project-
ed 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 Louisi-
ana, the other in Central America.

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 impres-
sive defense preparations, the Kennedy
administration and its Cuban hirelings
apparently became fearful.

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 ex-
plain the need to combat the ruling-class policy of imposing on the individual
toys 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 supple-
mental unemployment benefits run out. And the squeeze is on.

April 17, 1961

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sive defense preparations, the Kennedy
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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 inva-
sion 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 coura-
geous Ethiopians save the continuation of
sporadic guerrilla warfare to prevent
the Italians from completing the subju-
gation of this last of the “independent”
lands of Africa.

Meanwhile, the Italian representa-
tives, haughtily exuberant with victory,
have laid down the victor’s peace terms
like coal, steel, and auto.

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gation of this last of the “independent”
lands of Africa.

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

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
over 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 plans to phase out benefits 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 deleg-
ation of Hormel workers from Austin
Minnesota; Ottumwa, Iowa; and Fre-
mont, Nebraska.

April 18, 2011

The Militant subscription at a labor solidarity action in Los Angeles in solidarity with Wisconsin public workers’
fight and protesting anti-working-class measures by California state and local governments.
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 country’s economic crisis on working people have been met by state violence and imprisonments of suspected protesters.

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 under his father are still in place across the country April 1, including “reforms.” Anything “that inflames passions” is under consideration and the president has not “ruled it in or out.” Defense Secretary Robert Gates 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 200 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 actions.” 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.

CIA, special forces on ground in Libya war

WASHINGTON’S ASSAULT ON IRAQ

The murderous assault on Iraq in 1990–91 heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, growing instability of international capitalism, and more.

Also includes:
1945: When U.S. Troops said “No!” by Mary-Alice Waters
Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War by Samad Shari

Available from distributors listed on page 8

www.pathfinderpress.com

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.

BY Mary-Alice Waters

“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.

The Militant  April 18, 2011  5
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.

“We’re here because of what happened in Wisconsin; construction trades, where unemployment remains high,” said UMWA president Cecil Roberts said, referring to the struggles in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and elsewhere against legislation aimed at curtailing the bargaining rights of public workers. Among those addressing the rally was International union, American Federation of Teachers, Palace Hotel where workers are fighting for a decent contract.

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 contenders 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 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.

“Today it’s the public employees. Tomorrow it’s the steelworkers. Tomorrow it’s the coal miners,” UMWA president Curtis Roberts said, referring to the struggles in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, and elsewhere against legislation aimed at curtailing the bargaining rights of public workers. Among those addressing the rally was Wisconsin AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale. The hotel workers have been buoyed by the recent signing of a contract with Hilton, successfully pushing back company demands for deep concessions.

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.

Columbus, Ohio: Hundreds protest bill attacking public workers

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota—Four hundred people marched April 4 in the first of a series of protests against budget cuts, union-busting, and corporate greed. "We are fighting to protect jobs, our pensions, and our union brothers' health care," said Vitali Kuzmin, a member of Local 1552.

The rally 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.

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San Francisco: ‘We are one’ rally

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‘We are one’ rally

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

Continued from front page

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 workers. A lot of us feel they’re trying to go to a 12-hour day, just 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.

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

SANDBUSKY, 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.

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 Rachelle Fruit

Miners back Wisconsin unions
‘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 (Giron).[4] 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. Printed by permission.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

Yesterday at 6:00 a.m., as everyone knows, three groups of mercenaries 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 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]

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 gangsters! [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 gangsters who have sold out to imperialism. [Shouts of “Down with them!”...]

What the imperialists cannot forgive is that we have here that 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 to us many of them were still in their teens.

The Militant April 18, 2011 7
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.

Che Guevara told young communists, “Today, we have begun a process of, let us say, politicizing this ministry.”

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 youth of today. We cannot seek to carry out a technological revolution by oneself, because the technological revolution is happening all over the world. It is already happening 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 of a change in the technological revolution taking place as a result of the most recent scientific inventions and discoveries. These are things that are happening. And a communist attitude toward work consists of changes taking place in an individual’s consciousness, changes that naturally take a long time. One 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 your life, your work, your research, your studies of every type. And one’s attitude toward this work will be something totally new. Work will no longer 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 something that is something compelled by sanctions. But achieving that requires a long process, a process tied to the creation of a new consciousness. But this requires voluntary work. Why do we emphasize voluntary work so much? Economically it means practically nothing. Even the volunteerism of a small number of people—whether it is the most important task from an economic point of view—doesn’t accomplish much. A volunteer cutter from this ministry cuts only a fourth or a fifth of what a 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 at the time seems to make the most sense. You won’t have to go searching for concrete tasks in order to search for new relationships and new attitudes.

We will automatically be youth, as well as representatives of the most advanced youth. Those who are young, who are in the spirit of the time—whether they 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, rules and forms, and 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 communique 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, makes it difficult to have a different type of relationship and to pursue a more human relationship, one could say, a relationship less direct-ed through bureaucratic red tape.

Che Guevara

Granma

April 18, 2011

Che addresses seminar on “Youth and the Revolution” at Ministry of Industry, May 9, 1964, in Havana.

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The Militant April 18, 2011
“The capitalists are surprised when human solidarity—of which the working class is the bearer for the future of all humanity—comes together to repulse and unseat agents seeking to assault 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 Fight for Union Rights.

They’re being surprised again this year—ever since February, when working people began mobilizing in Wisconsin to fight attacks on 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 anti-labor offensive began in 2007. This view was contested at the April 1 action by the Militant Socialist Workers Party, which wrote: “The capitalists are surprised when militant workers not only need to learn how our unions and fight 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, is the product of unions of miners in South Africa, to South Africa, and beyond. As Barnes writes in The Changing Face of U.S. Politics, “The capitalists are surprised when human solidarity comes together in ex- pression of the universal struggle.”

These and other workers need a paper like 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 freedom and better living conditions has been a long fight. “We need to work as one,” said a government worker from Egyptian state-owned factories. “Whether we are in Wisconsin or in Canada, we have the same interests as workers.”

Protest for political rights in Cairo

Continued from page 3

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 freedom and better living conditions has been a long fight. “We need to work as one,” said a government worker from Egyptian state-owned factories. “Whether we are in Wisconsin or in Canada, we have the same interests as workers.”

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