

# THE MILITANT

**SPECIAL FEATURE**

**Cuban trade unionists  
prepare for national congress**

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Youth from Cuba speak on fight to broaden culture

BY RÓGER CALERO  
AND MAGGIE TROWE

HARTFORD, Connecticut—"The Cuban people are carrying out many projects not only to address the economic and material needs of the population, but also to advance our cultural level and develop higher human values," said 22-year-old Cuban youth leader Yanelis Martínez Herrera to a meeting of 70 people at the University of Hartford here. "Our revolution is developing a human being who is much more capable of seeing the problems of the person next to them. Forty years of revolution have demonstrated that the most important thing is not the material, but the human wealth that the Cuban people have," the young leader concluded.

After meetings on campuses in the Chicago area, Martínez and Javier Dueñas Oquendo began the New England leg of their tour here April 1. Martínez is a fifth-year law student at the University of Havana and a member of the National Secretariat of the Federation of University Students. Dueñas, 28, is a professor of journalism at the University of Havana and a member of the National Bureau of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) in Cuba.

After visiting the Mark Twain House museum and the New England Air Museum in Hartford, Martínez and Dueñas had dinner with several Puerto Rican activists,

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## Vancouver bus workers strike against cutbacks

BY JOE YOUNG

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Thousands of bus drivers and mechanics struck Coast Mountain Bus Company April 1, paralyzing bus service in the greater Vancouver area.

The 3,300 strikers are members of Canadian Auto Workers. A month earlier, workers rejected the proposed contract and voted 98.6 percent in favor of a walkout. Coast Mountain Bus Company is a subsidiary of TransLink.

Strikers are opposing company moves to cut service, contract out some routes, and use part-time employees during peak periods. Despite a protest by workers at a March 31 TransLink board meeting, company officials voted to cut 160,000 hours of transit service worth Can\$5 million (US\$1 = Can\$1.58). Against a union demand for an 18 percent wage increase over three years, the company is offering only an 8 percent wage hike. TransLink is also seeking to deepen the two-tier wage structure by extending from one to three years the time it takes for new hires to receive full pay.

At a support rally for the bus drivers on March 31, Avtar Sandhu told the *Militant*,

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## Defend China's sovereignty, end Washington's threats!

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

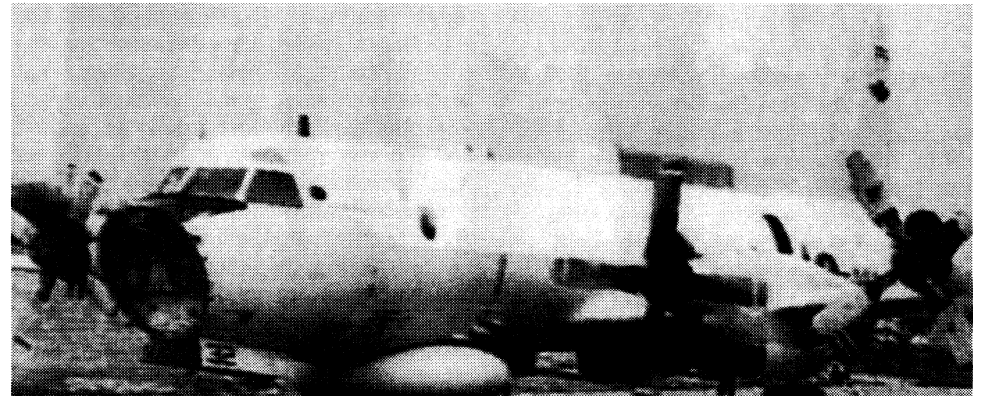
By threatening China and demanding it immediately return U.S. military personnel and a spy plane that landed in the country without authorization after colliding with a Chinese fighter jet, Washington "has displayed an arrogant air, used lame arguments, confounded right and wrong, and made groundless accusations," said Chinese foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan April 4.

The U.S. government has issued repeated threats of diplomatic and economic reprisals against China if it does not comply with its dictates and "is keeping three warships in the area to maintain pressure on Beijing," the *International Herald Tribune* reported April 4.

The April 1 collision of the U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II spy plane with the Chinese aircraft has heightened tensions between Washington and Beijing. The Chinese government says it has repeatedly protested what are routine surveillance missions by U.S. warplanes. U.S. Navy officials say the spy planes make several flights a month over the South China Sea, often to monitor Chinese naval activities.

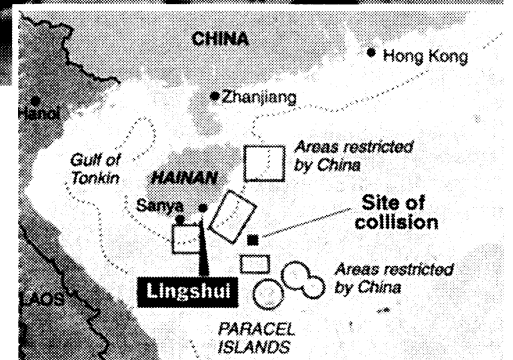
Other moves by Washington to militarily threaten the Chinese workers state include the arming of Taiwan, where U.S. president George Bush is expected to make a decision soon on whether to sell destroyers equipped with an antimissile system to Taiwan. Not only do the Chinese people consider this a violation of their sovereignty because Taiwan is part of their country, but the destroyers could be used as part of a U.S.-designed "theater missile defense" aimed at China (see article page 11).

Washington has stepped up its spy patrols off the Chinese coast in recent years, run-



ning reconnaissance operations which monitor radar signals, electronic communications, and the activities of Chinese shore-based units and ships. The U.S. government, however, "does not tolerate such close surveillance of United States territory," the *Times* noted.

"The United States must stop these types of flights in the airspace of China's coastal areas," said Chinese president Jiang Zemin. "Only this will avoid a repeat of this type of incident."



At an April 3 news conference in Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao gave a detailed account of the collision. The U.S. reconnaissance plane took off from the U.S. Kadena air base in Okinawa, Japan, April 1 and was picked up by Chinese radar near the country's airspace, he said. One of two Chinese F-8 fighter jets that flew up to intercept the plane was hit after the U.S. plane suddenly veered toward the jets and headed toward China. One of the pro-

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## U.S. government trial of Cubans in Miami targets rights of working people

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI—Attacks on the rights of working people are at the center of the U.S. government's prosecution of five people arrested in September 1998 by the FBI. They are on trial for attempting to "infiltrate" the U.S. Southern Command, passing U.S. "military secrets" to Havana, and "infiltrating" and "disrupting" rightist Cuban-American groups in Miami that are trying to overthrow Cuba's revolutionary government.

Federal prosecutors have filed unprecedented charges against one defendant, Gerardo Hernández, of conspiracy to commit murder for allegedly providing Cuban authorities with flight plans for Brothers to the Rescue flights, which were violating Cuban airspace after taking off from the United States. The Cuban air force shot down two of three Brothers to the Rescue planes deep inside Cuban airspace in 1996. The charges against Hernández, described by prosecutors as the "lead defendant," carry a sentence of up to life imprisonment.

The prosecution case, now entering its fifth month, also indicates how Washington can concoct documentation to frame up opponents of its policies. The accusations of the FBI are based on two pieces of "evidence": information allegedly contained in supposedly encoded messages the FBI copied from hard drives of computers in the residences of the defendants; and testimony

by one of those indicted in 1998 who later pleaded guilty to some of the charges and is now serving a four-year sentence. Five of the 10 people arrested two-and-a-half years ago subsequently pleaded guilty.

FBI agents have testified they broke into the homes of the defendants many times over a three-year period prior to the arrests. The government's actions, the severity of the charges against Hernández, and a frame-up underway against the five in the big-busi-

ness media here, are all meant to send a chill down the spine not only of those who defend Cuba or attempt to expose the activities of counterrevolutionary groups in Miami, but of any working person seeking to oppose U.S. government policy or assaults by the employers.

Defense lawyers have been able to present extensive information on how Florida-based Cuban-American groups have carried out

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## Strikers at Hollander Home Fashions win more solidarity

BY ELIZABETH LARISCY

VERNON, California—Three hundred striking workers and their supporters rallied at Hollander Home Fashions here March 27 as part of their struggle for a contract. "We are fighting for our children and our grandchildren. I see that other unionists have won. We can win this fight too," union member Maria Silas told the rally.

In addition to keeping up picket lines and blocking buses carrying replacement workers into the plants, strikers have built support for their struggle by addressing public meetings, speaking at a high school, and

joining pickets of members of the International Association of Machinists at United Airlines. They also addressed a large meeting of the United Teachers of Los Angeles and spoke at an event supporting mushroom workers. Teams of strikers are visiting J.C. Penney stores in the area, asking customers not to buy Hollander products.

Hollander's two plants are located here in Vernon, a small incorporated city with a large number of industrial plants right in the middle of Los Angeles. The workers, who are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Em-

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**Farmers demand end to mandatory pork tax — page 4**

# Parents vote to reject plan to privatize five N.Y. schools

BY BILL ESTRADA

NEW YORK—Chanting, "Education is a right! Fight! Fight! Fight!" and "Just Say No! Edison has to go!" 200 mostly working people rallied outside Public School 161 in Harlem March 24. Many carried signs reading, "Education is not for sale!" and "Our children are not for sale!"

The rally was one of many protests organized over the past weeks as part of a successful effort to defeat a proposal by the New York City government to turn five public schools over to Edison Schools Inc., a private, for-profit company. Backed by Schools Chancellor Harold Levy and Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, Edison received \$500,000 from the Board of Education to promote the privatization scheme. The Board also provided Edison with parents' addresses and phone numbers during this effort. Edison was to be paid \$250 million if the plan passed.

A majority of students at the five schools are Latino and African American. The teachers union and some local Democratic Party politicians also came out in opposition to the plan. The *New York Times* backed the plan in a March 22 editorial entitled "Give Edison a Try."

The schools are among those called the "worst performing" by city officials who have vowed to turn them over to private businesses to manage. City authorities, though, ran into a small snag: there is an element of democracy involved in the changeover. State law requires 50 percent of parents with children in the school to vote in favor of any proposal to turn a public school over to a private company. Edison's plan was to make these facilities into charter schools that would be run by them.

Nearly 5,000 parents were eligible to vote in person, by telephone, mail, or via the Internet over a two-week period that ended on March 30. Edison not only failed to obtain 50 percent of the votes, but only 2,286 parents cast a ballot, putting the turnout at 47 percent. The highest turnout was at Public School 161, a middle school in Harlem, where 69 percent of parents voted. Parents, teachers, and community groups there extensively organized to defeat the plan. In the end some 80 percent who voted

cast ballots against Edison.

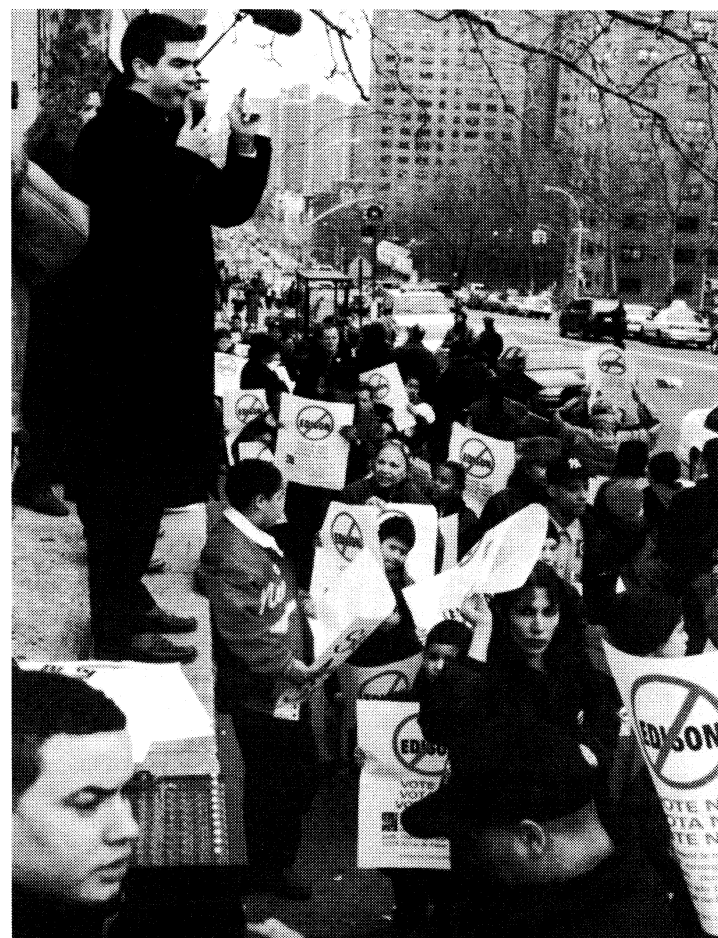
Prior to the vote Chancellor Levy threatened that if the plan failed he would close two of the five schools and reopen them with new teaching staffs. After Edison lost the vote, Giuliani told the press: "Obviously, what the parents have indicated by not showing up to vote is a lack of interest." He pressed for Levy to "take control of this and do a contract with Edison and turn the schools over to them."

In response to the label of "worst performing schools" in the city, Pam Price-Haynes, a teacher for 18 years at P.S. 161, said the Board of Education "does not provide us with the tools, the support, and the staff that we need. They blame the teachers and parents. We need the resources that we now don't have so that we can also provide children with more art classes, sports, and other recreational activities. Give us what we need and we'll do the job."

Odessa Watford in the Bronx told the *Times* that she voted against Edison because "I don't feel anybody should come in and make money off our children." Others were attracted by Edison's promises of smaller class sizes, computers for students, and other improvements. "I voted yes because I liked the way Edison plans to make smaller classrooms," Olga Ramirez said. "Right now, my daughter has 36 students in her classroom."

Edison Schools Inc. is the largest private school company in the country, operating 143 schools in 45 cities. This is the first attempt by a for-profit company to take over a school in New York City, which has the largest school system in the nation with 1.1 million students. In face of its defeat here, Edison's financial problems have worsened.

Since its founding in 1992 the company has lost \$200 million, according to an article in the *Times*. San Francisco's Unified School District is trying to revoke Edison's contract to run a charter school there because of financial discrepancies and Edison's failure to have an independent community board oversee the school. According to the *Times*, "The district's report also faulted Edison for high teacher



Militant/Bill Estrada

March 24 rally in New York against privatization of school

turnover after each of its first two years managing the school. In the spring of 1999, after Edison's first year operating the school, 21 of 26 teachers left in a dispute over Edison's longer working hours."

## SWP opens new headquarters in Miami

BY CINDY JAQUITH

MIAMI—The Socialist Workers Party has opened a new headquarters, located in North Miami, a working-class community of Afro-Americans, Haitian and other Caribbean workers, Latinos, and whites.

Celebrating the March 17 grand opening of the SWP office and Pathfinder Bookstore were speakers from various struggles in the area. Tony Jeanthenor, from the Haitian rights group Veye-Yo, recalled two decades of working with the Socialist Workers Party. "The SWP workers were at every action we had for Haitian rights," he said. He also recalled joining with the so-

cialists on the picket line in the Eastern Airlines and UPS strikes.

Cindy Jaquith, who recently traveled to Cuba to cover the Havana Book Fair for the *Militant*, told the audience that the socialists first established an office in Miami in the 1970s. At that time counterrevolutionary Cuban terrorist groups openly used violence to intimidate supporters of the Cuban revolution as well as other fighters for social justice in the city. In 1979 right-wing Cubans made a bomb threat against the socialists' headquarters and bookstore.

For years after that, the headquarters was located in Little Haiti. "We were welcomed by the Haitian community," she said, "which was important given the campaign to silence any working-class voice in the city."

Jaquith explained that the move to North Miami is in response to the interest working people there have expressed in communist literature, ranging from subscriptions to the *Militant* to books and pamphlets by Pathfinder Press. For the last three months socialists have regularly put up a table in front of a major supermarket near their new headquarters. Almost without exception, a book or pamphlet is sold every time the table goes up.

Karl Butts, a farmer from Plant City, Florida, gave greetings to the celebration from the Tampa SWP Organizing Committee. Butts explained that he was won to the

communist movement "through the work the SWP is doing with farmers and bringing us into contact with workers." Butts participated along with other working farmers in a trip to Cuba last year to learn about farming in that country. He said the most fundamental thing he learned was that "in Cuba, farmers are guaranteed the right to farm."

Greetings were sent to the meeting from Irving Forrester of the National Boricua Human Rights Network in Orlando, Florida. "Throughout the years," Forrester's message said, "the peoples in struggle have counted on the Party and the bookstores for solidarity, truth in information, and support."

Hector Castillo, a Cuban-American active in the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, also spoke. He had attended the New York launching of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs—Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* the week before. "I urge all of you to get a copy of this book," Castillo told the audience. "It's especially important for the American people to read this, to learn how they were misinformed."

Chairing the meeting was Eric Simpson, a Miami meat packer who designed the cover of *Playa Girón*. A fund appeal to purchase computer manuals for Simpson's ongoing volunteer design work for Pathfinder, and to help cover the cost of Jaquith's trip to Cuba, netted \$120.

## THE MILITANT

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# Students in Michigan defend affirmative action

BY ELLEN BERMAN

DETROIT—In the latest in a series of setbacks to affirmative action, U.S. District Judge Bernard Friedman ruled unconstitutional the use of race as a factor in admissions to the University of Michigan Law School.

Friedman's March 27 ruling in *Barbara Grutter v. the University of Michigan Law School* is in contradiction to an earlier decision by U.S. District Judge Patrick Duggan in a nearly identical suit filed against the University of Michigan's College of Literature, Science and the Arts. Duggan ruled that an undergraduate admissions policy similar to the one used by the law school is legal. These contradictory interpretations of the law increase the likelihood that these cases will go before the U.S. Supreme Court.

University officials immediately announced their intention to file an appeal. "We believe Judge Friedman's decision is wrong and flies in the face of over 20 years of U.S. Supreme Court law," said Liz Barry, the university's deputy counsel. "The ruling is contrary to every selective university in the country." University of Michigan lawyers also filed a motion to put on hold an injunction issued by Judge Friedman that bars the law school from using race as a factor in its admissions process. The injunction comes in the midst of the school's admission season, forcing the school to stop extending acceptances to prospective students for the coming semester.

Reaction from the student body was swift. Sophomore Agnes Aleobua addressed a rally of about 100 students after Friedman issued his ruling. "Students on this campus are outraged by this decision and we will not accept it," she said. "Diversity is a good thing for everyone. Everyone on this campus benefits from it."

Reverend Jesse Jackson was the featured speaker at a March 29 campus rally attended

by hundreds of students. Jackson encouraged students to fight the ruling and called on them to join a national march in Washington, planned for October, and a national conference on affirmative action to be held on the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus in April or May.

White students filed two lawsuits in 1997,

sented the white students. The university defended its affirmative action policies by arguing that diversity is necessary for students to get a good education. On December 13, the U.S. District Court ruled without a trial to uphold the university's inclusion of race among criteria for undergraduate admissions.



Students protest March 14 at University of California in Los Angeles demanding board of regents reverse its policy banning affirmative action on admissions. Hundreds of students rallied in Michigan March 29 against court decision banning affirmative action policy for admissions in University of Michigan Law School.

one against the law school and the other against the undergraduate College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Both lawsuits claim that minority students with lower qualifications were accepted at the school instead of the white applicants. The Center for Individual Rights, which successfully argued against affirmative action at the University of Texas law school in 1996, repre-

sented the white students. The university defended its affirmative action policies by arguing that diversity is necessary for students to get a good education. On December 13, the U.S. District Court ruled without a trial to uphold the university's inclusion of race among criteria for undergraduate admissions.

tion program is pending before the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The trial in the suit against the law school attracted national attention. For the first time students supporting affirmative action were allowed to present their case in the courtroom. This group of "defendant-intervenor" included current University of Michigan law students and prospective applicants, as well as students from schools in Texas and California, who described the difficulties they face in states where affirmative action programs have been declared unconstitutional.

The students felt that the university's own defense solely on the basis of diversity would not address the importance of affirmative action as a remedy to past and present discrimination.

The students' testimony, however, appeared to have little effect on the judge. In his opinion, Friedman recognized the "tragic" history of racial discrimination in the United States, as well as its lingering societal effects, but suggested it is not the place of the school to remedy this. Friedman admitted that there might be a dramatic drop in minority enrollment on campus without the current admissions policy. He expressed the "hope" that this would not occur. "The effects of general, societal discrimination cannot constitutionally be remedied by race-conscious decision-making," wrote the judge.

Erika Dowdell, a junior, said in response: "There is no excuse for ignoring racism and segregation." Most students interviewed by the press said they were in favor of affirmative action. Matt Nolan, president of the Michigan Student Assembly, the student government, said the group will continue to support affirmative action.

Miranda Massie, attorney for the student intervenors, told the *Detroit Free Press*, "It's an opinion for resegregation that will intensify existing unfairness and inequality for Black people and other minorities seeking access to higher education."

The university argued that maintaining racial diversity is a "compelling" state interest. Judge Friedman disagreed, declaring that the school's 1992 admission policy violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The December ruling by Judge Duggan, however, said Michigan's practice of giving an edge to African American, Hispanic, and Native American applicants—as it does to children of alumni, scholarship athletes, and others—is constitutional.

Last fall's entering class at the University of Michigan Law school, one of the nation's most competitive, was about 85 percent white and Asian and 15 percent Black and Hispanic.

Ellen Berman is a member of United Auto Workers Local 157.

## Changes to bankruptcy law targets workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a major move that will strengthen the ability of banks and credit card companies to collect debts from working people, Congress has passed a measure aimed at tightening the nation's bankruptcy laws. President George Bush says he will sign the bill.

According to the *Washington Post*, the new regulations are "the most significant change in the nation's bankruptcy laws in two decades." They will make it much more difficult for individuals to write off unpayable debts.

The legislation, shepherded through Congress in a bipartisan effort, was approved in the Senate by an 83-15 vote March 15. Two weeks earlier a similar bill passed in the House of Representatives. The vote was 306 to 108 with a solid majority of Republican supporting it along with about 40 percent of the Democrats.

The new law would make it harder for many individuals to erase debts under Chapter 7 of the federal bankruptcy code. About 70 percent of people who file for bankruptcy do so under this chapter. Under its provisions, individuals do not have to prove insolvency to wipe out their debts if they agree to give up most assets, excluding houses and other essential items. A number of debts, including credit card and medical bills are eliminated under this chapter.

Under the draft legislation, people with incomes over each state's median will be compelled to file under Chapter 13, requiring them to repay a portion of their debts over five years.

Median household income stands at around \$39,000 nationally. Individuals who file bankruptcy will be forced to pay debts under a court-supervised plan, even if it puts the payment of old credit card bills in competition with child support, alimony, or other court-supervised payments.

A similar bill was passed by Congress under the previous administration, but then-president William Clinton vetoed it in his final weeks in office.

"More Americans file for bankruptcy than graduate from college each year," claimed Thomas Donohue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, one of the business groups backing the tighter restrictions along with credit-card companies and automobile-finance companies.

Statistics show, however, that most of those filing are working people. According to a 1999 study by federal judges, the median income of those filing for personal bankruptcy was \$21,500. Between 1980 and 2000 the number of those seeking bankruptcy protection has risen from 287,500 a year to more than 1.2 million.

Chapter 7 dates from the federal bankruptcy law of 1898. It was aimed at helping impoverished workers—with little property and no prospects of repayment—get a fresh start. In 1938 Congress added the forerunner of today's Chapter 13.

In a March 14 column in the *Washington Post* entitled "Bad Timing on the Bankruptcy Bill," Robert Samuelson warned that

passing this legislation now "could per- versely worsen the economic downturn." He pointed to statistics showing that consumer borrowing in the United States expanded from 1995 to 2000, as the population increased personal debts by about 50 percent to roughly \$7.5 trillion.

According to Mark Zandi of Economy.com, in 1995 a sixth of households with incomes less than \$50,000 devoted more than 40 percent of their income to debt payments.

By 1998 almost a quarter did, and the numbers are continuing to rise. Last year debt payments accounted for 14 percent of disposable income, a near record and up from 12 percent in 1994.

## Forum marks 1981 hunger strikes in Ireland

BY BILL KALMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—A meeting to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the 1981 hunger strikes by Irish political prisoners drew 40 people here March 24. The hunger strike gained international recognition for the Irish freedom struggle, and focused attention on the demands of the prisoners and the conditions they faced.

The meeting, sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum, featured presentations by Sinn Fein activists Terence Kirby and Bobby Laverty. Sinn Fein is the political party in Ireland leading the struggle to end the British division of the country and occupation of the north.

Kirby joined the republican movement, which seeks a unified Ireland free from British rule, when he was 14 years old. He was interned without trial in the 1970s and convicted of participating in an armed Irish Republican Army (IRA) attack. Kirby was sent to Long Kesh prison, where he joined with other Irish republicans demanding recognition as political prisoners.

Ten H-Block prisoners, beginning with Bobby Sands, died during the hunger strike. Sands was elected to the British parliament on the 41st day of the strike. Some 100,000 people attended his funeral. In 1983 Kirby escaped from Long Kesh along with 37 other Irish political prisoners and eventually settled in California. A decade later he

was arrested along with three other former prisoners by the U.S. government and threatened with extradition. Their case, known as the H-Block Four, focused attention on the history of human rights abuses in Ireland by the British government, with the complicit support of Washington.

This meeting was the first time that Kirby has spoken publicly about his experiences since his escape.

"I'm not a politician, I'm a soldier," Kirby told the audience. "Why did we do the hunger strike? Why did we go on the blanket? It was for the principle." The Irish freedom fighter told the audience that the Good Friday peace accords, signed by Sinn Fein and several pro-British Unionist parties, represented the will of the people. "In any struggle, if you don't have the support of the people, you have nothing. But [the struggle] will never be over until the British leave Ireland, either voluntarily or by force."

Until recently Laverty was a Sinn Fein city council member in North Belfast. He explained how Sinn Fein representatives conduct themselves in office, treating Protestants the same as Catholics, Laverty said. "But the struggle in Ireland is not a religious struggle between Catholics and Protestants, but a political struggle between the Irish working people and the British Crown. I'm opposed to killing someone for their religion. Every imperial government creates

divisions among people."

Noted Puerto Rican poet Piri Thomas read two poems by Bobby Sands and pointed out the similarities between the Puerto Rican struggle against U.S. imperialism and the fight for a united Ireland against British imperialism. He said Puerto Rican political prisoners in New York went on a 10-day hunger strike in solidarity with Bobby Sands at the time.

Barbara Bowman of the Socialist Workers Party described being at both the San Francisco and Seattle St. Patrick's Day parades this year, and the receptivity of many in the crowd to contingents carrying large photographs of the 10 dead hunger strikers, along with banners demanding "British Troops Out Of Ireland!"

"After 30 years of a brutal military occupation, Britain has been unable to break the Irish struggle. This has weakened Loyalist forces, and opened more political space for the republicans," Bowman said. Fighters around the world today have the example of the Cuban Revolution, "which was able to defeat U.S. imperialism."

Fourteen copies of Pathfinder's new book, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, were purchased by forum participants.

Bill Kalman is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120.

# Farmers demand end to mandatory pork tax

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON—"I'm mad as hell," declared Iowa hog farmer Wayne Demmer, who opened a March 26 news conference here to protest the Department of Agriculture's decision to reverse the results of a nationwide vote to end a mandatory pork checkoff program. "Our message is 'honor our vote, honor democracy,'" Demmer said.

Hog farmers voted down the pork tax by a clear margin of 53 percent last September in a referendum in which more than 30,000 hog farmers participated. The check-off requires all farmers to pay an assessment on each hog they sell. Working farmers voted more heavily against the assessment because they say it benefits only big farmers and meatpacking companies.

In an open letter to President George Bush presented at the news conference, farmers said the pork checkoff "has not helped independent hog farmers stay in business, hog prices to farmers have steadily fallen since the pork tax was started in 1986, and it uses hog farmers' money against them to pay for research and media to promote factory farms and agribusiness corporations."

Several farm and rural groups in the Midwest formed the Campaign for Family Farms in 1998 to fight to end the pork tax. In a national petition drive the following year, more than 19,000 hog farmers signed a petition calling for a national vote.

"We donated our time and paid for our gas to drive around to talk to our farm neighbors and get their signatures," explained Linda Noble, a farmer from Kenyon, Minnesota. "We followed all the steps, all the rules, we got the vote, we voted, and we won. Now the tax should be deleted."

Despite the results showing a clear majority to end the checkoff, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) struck a deal with the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC), run primarily by wealthy farmers, to throw out the vote and keep the pork tax in place.

## Livelihood of working farmers

The NPPC "spent \$4 million to woo the big producers," said Greg Carr, a farmer from Hennepin, Illinois, "and they still lost." Carr, who had to give up raising hogs in September, also produces corn, beans, and feeder cattle.

A member of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Carr said this was his first protest. "It was a question of our future, our livelihood, and the future of our children," he told the *Militant*.

"We voted and that's all there is," declared Iowa hog farmer Larry Ginter. "We're not going to stand by and let them get away with stealing our votes." Ginter

blasted politicians from the Democratic and Republican parties for not standing with the farmers and pointed to the importance of "taking our message to the cities."

"Other farmers are also watching what's happening here," said Demmer, who is also with the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, which helped organize the referendum. Dairy farmers have been battling to end their mandatory assessments for milk promotions, as have beef producers. Mark Smith, campaign director of Farm Aid, pledged his organization's support to this effort and to the struggle against the growing concentration of corporate farms.

"We'll go as far as it takes," said Missouri hog farmer Rhonda Perry. "For years the NPPC has been using our money to represent the interests of corporate factory farms and meatpacking companies," she told the media. Perry, with the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, also outlined the ongoing legal steps and pointed out that a federal district judge in Michigan still must rule on the termination of the pork check-off program.

Before the USDA cut a deal, the Campaign for Family Farms had been a code-

fendant along with the USDA against the NPPC's challenge to the termination of the pork checkoff. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, who refused to meet with the Campaign for Family Farmers, claimed she made the deal because she thought the court case would lose. "But this does not end the lawsuit," Perry said. "She had no authority to cut a deal. Her only authority is to terminate the pork checkoff. This was a legally binding vote."

Also at the news conference were two farmers from France and Spain, who were visiting farm groups in the United States to forge links in their common struggles.

## Farmers protest NPPC, government

Earlier that day the farmers protested at the offices of Al Tank, head of the National Pork Producers Council. They also rallied the day before outside Veneman's home in Alexandria, Virginia, chanting, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, the pork tax has got to go," and "Food Stamps for children, not corporations." They were joined by more than 100 other representatives of neighborhood and community groups in town for an annual conference of National People's Action.

"Hog farmers voted down a tax that forces family farmers out of business and keeps corporate farms going," Roger Allison, a hog farmer from Howard County Missouri, told the crowd. "Our votes should count."

"We're going to fight as long as it takes and do as many demonstrations as it takes to get our story out about this injustice," Noble told the *Militant*. "They're taking away our democratic rights. Once they do this to the hog farmers, who will be next?"

Noble also described the conditions of the migrant workers employed by the large corporate farms near her farm: "They put people in servitude, pay them just enough to survive, force them to live in trailer parks with 7-10 families in a trailer, and give them no health benefits. It's nothing short of slavery." She displayed a picture of one of these factory farms, and also described the pollution and the increased illnesses in the surrounding community.

The farmers visited members of Congress during their visit here.

Janice Lynn is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

# Bus workers in Vancouver walk out

Continued from front page

"If we let TransLink do this, the same thing is going to happen to us that has happened to the bus drivers in Calgary. Everyone will become part-time in the next ten years." Some 2,000 transit workers in Calgary have been on strike since February 22.

"The key issues for the drivers are privatization and part-time work," said Raj Gill, a driver for two years. "If people think they are paying a lot of money for fares now, wait until they privatize. The bus service shouldn't be seen as a cash cow but as an essential service. The jobs won't be as well paid and the public is going to suffer and pay higher fares."

Workers last struck the bus lines in 1984 and were ordered back to work after three months. Negotiations broke down this time when TransLink applied to the Labour Relations Board for a ruling forcing the drivers and mechanics to vote on the company's last offer.

Last year bus drivers organized several protests and work stoppages against TransLink's decision to cut a bus route and contract it out to Bonny's Taxi Company. Bus driver Shail Passad commented, "Contracting out is an attack on our right to have a union."

One driver, Gord Fletcher, said that he had just started his job, and now "there are threats of layoff because of lack of funds to operate the system. The lack of funding comes from



Bus drivers, who walked out April 1, picket Surrey Transit Centre in Vancouver.

them spending money they didn't have. In orientation they told us it would be a long and fulfilling career, and now there is no money to back up their promise. Riders are supportive. Everyone says this company has mismanaged the bus system."

On the same day as the transit workers' walkout, office workers and security guards who belong to the Office and Professional Employees International Union went on strike. The security guards work for the Sky Train rapid transit system.

Other union members who operate the Sky Train have announced they will respect the picket lines. Sky Train bosses said they would ask for a rapid court injunction to end the picketing.

Some 45,000 hospital workers were also to start strike action April 1, but this was delayed when the Labour Relations Board backed an appeal by the employers that the

unions had incorrectly issued their strike notice. Strike action is expected to begin this week, although most union members are designated as "essential" and barred by law from striking. Officials of the Hospital Employees Union say the employers are offering only half the pay increase sought by hospital workers. Another issue is pay equity, following a recent arbitration ruling that members of the union were owed more than \$100 million in pay equity funds. The employers want to deduct this from any pay increases. The B.C. Nurses Union is also in negotiations and is demanding a 60 percent wage increase.

School support staff will start rotating strikes at Vancouver-area schools this coming week in their fight against the cutting of 24 full-time heating and ventilation jobs.

Joe Young is a meat packer.

## Fletcher's workers face contract vote

BY STEVE PENNER

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Fletcher's Fine Foods has issued an ultimatum to union members locked out by the company almost eight months ago to accept a contract proposed by a government mediator or the bosses will close the plant.

The mediator's proposals will be presented to union members one hour before an April 9 membership meeting where a vote will be taken. Workers who aren't ready to vote at that time can cast their ballots up until 2:00 p.m. the following day.

This comes after union members effectively turned down the company's latest contract offer, after only 50 workers signed unconditional buyout applications. The company sought to get 150 workers earning the top rates to leave in order to hire new employees at a significantly lower wage.

Many workers told the *Militant* that they weren't prepared to accept a buyout proposal without knowing what the new contract and wage structure would be.

Others considered the latest buyout proposal to fall far short of their expectations. Some said they're not interested in a buyout because they are fighting against Fletcher's drive to substantially cut the wages and working conditions the union

was able to achieve over many years.

Workers who spoke to the *Militant* explained that they felt like they were being asked to vote with a gun at their heads. Ian McLean, one of the picket captains, pointed out that such threats have been standard procedure for Fletcher's over the years.

Two years ago the company told union members to reopen their contract and accept a 40 percent wage cut or they would close the plant. The proposed cut was similar to that imposed on meat packers at Maple Leaf Foods, Quality Meats, and Fletcher's plant in Red Deer, Alberta, after strikes and lockouts over several months. Workers here rejected the company's demand by a large majority.

Nancy Darlington, a worker on the wiener line, objected to only receiving the contract one hour before voting. "They've had months to discuss this. Why can't we have at least one week? People need time to think about something this important."

McLean agreed that a week was needed to properly consider the proposals. "I'd like to have time to talk among the members to discuss what we're voting on. I'd also like time to discuss such an important decision with my family."

Steve Penner is a meat packer.

## Communist League election campaign

Continued from Page 16

farmers affected by the mass slaughter and restrictions on movement of animals. Farmers should be guaranteed they will not lose their land and an income sufficient to cover costs of production and a decent standard of living."

Central to the Communist League's program is the need to build support for the struggles of working people worldwide, from the Palestinian people fighting Israeli state aggression to the nationalist struggle to end British rule in Ireland. Davies called for the complete withdrawal of all British and NATO troops from Yugoslavia.

In his talk here Davies said the Labour government over the last four years has led the assault on the social wage, won in struggle by working people, especially following the Second World War. The government of Prime Minister Anthony Blair has "cut single parent allowances, imposed tuition fees on students, introduced welfare-to-work reforms that have forced many unemployed workers into low-paying jobs, and

cut back on universal pension rights at a time when 2 million pensioners are living below the poverty level."

In a world of growing insecurity for working people, where the slowdown in the U.S. economy is giving ruling classes the world over the jitters, the Communist League's campaign is presenting demands aimed at uniting working people and protecting workers and farmers from the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis. These include a sliding scale of wages and hours and for cancellation of the Third World debt.

"Our campaign is the most realistic of all the political parties. We explain that the only way working people can win is by making a revolution and overthrowing the capitalist class," Davies said. He pointed to the example of the Cuban revolution, where "working people set out to change the intolerable conditions in which they lived and in the process transformed themselves into people who were capable of overthrowing the capitalists in Cuba and facing down the mightiest imperialist power on earth."

# Sales teams reach miners, textile workers with 'Militant'

Campaigners for the *Militant* and *PM* are warming up for the opening week of an April 14–June 10 international circulation drive by participating in sales teams to the coalfields in Wyoming, Colorado, Alabama, and to textile plants in the southeast. Other sales activities include visits to the picket lines of striking meat packers in Rochelle, Illinois, and joining the Cesar Chavez Day parade of thousands in San Francisco.

BY SUSAN LAMONT  
AND NAOMI CRAINE

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Socialist workers from here and Charlotte, North Carolina, teamed up March 25–26 for a visit to Alabama's coalfields and textile mills in the area. We sold the *Militant* at five mines organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). We also went door-to-door in three coal communities in Jasper, Sumiton, and Brookwood. Coal miners bought 23 copies of the *Militant* at the mine portals and we sold another 23 copies to workers at their homes. A number of miners said they were glad to see the *Militant* again.

Several workers bought two issues of the paper with coverage of the UMWA's fight to defend recent small improvements in black lung regulations, which the coal bosses and the Bush administration have moved to reverse.

After visiting the coalfields, the team went to Columbus, Georgia, and Phenix City, Alabama, to sell at the large Pillowtex facilities there. Although the Columbus mill had only one department working, three workers who are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) there bought the paper. They were especially interested in finding out more about the strike by their fellow union members at Hollander Home Fashions in Los Angeles.

Another eight workers bought the paper at the Phenix City mill, where much of Pillowtex's Columbus-area production has

been shifted.

We also visited two small independent bookstores in Columbus. The owner of one of these told us he would be placing an order for several of Pathfinder's Malcolm X titles and would check out other books and pamphlets advertised in the Pathfinder catalog.

On March 28, the team visited the Hollander Home Fashions plant in Tignall, Georgia. Four UNITE members there bought the *Militant*. The next day we wound up the sales activities at Pillowtex's huge complex in Kannapolis, North Carolina, selling at two locations where UNITE members were going to pick up their paychecks. Despite heavy rain, workers bought nine copies of the *Militant*.

## Team gets good response from coal miners

BY TONY LANE

KEMMERER, Wyoming—A five-day *Militant* sales team that traveled to northwestern Colorado and southern Wyoming ended up selling almost 70 *Militants* to coal miners at five mines. The team included a meat packer and two coal miners.

One of the big responses to our sales efforts was around recent attacks on working people by big business and the government. Miners discussed with us the actions by the Bush administration to back up the airline companies as workers fight for contracts. As one miner explained, "They are taking away our power to bargain." There was also discussion on the recent attacks by the coal bosses and the government on black lung benefits.

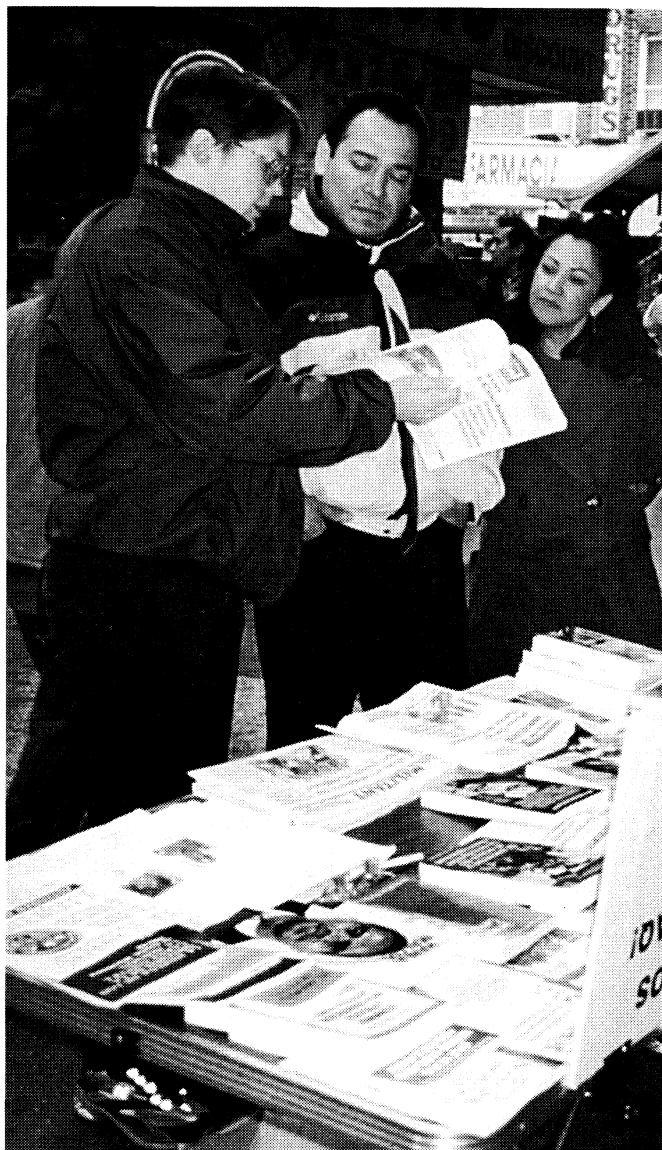
The high point of the team was a sale at Pittsburg & Midway's (P&M) Kemmerer mine, which was the scene of a successful strike by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) last year. We sold 35 copies of the *Militant* there between two shift changes to miners and workers at the adjacent factories: a power plant and a coke plant.

The team also received a strong response at non-union mines. At the Colowyo mine owned by Kennecott, where workers are on 12-hour shifts, we sold 11 *Militants* and workers talked about how the bosses fire and harass workers who speak out. The employers, one miner said, "treat us like dumb miners," explaining that the company will raise their hourly wage by 15 cents and then raise what they have to pay on benefits by 30 cents an hour.

At the Twentymile mine, another nonunion mine and one of the largest underground operations in the country, 12 miners picked up the *Militant*.

We also sold several copies of the *Militant* at two other UMWA mines; Deserado, where workers struck in 1998, and Seneca, a Peabody mine. Peabody settled their contract there after the conclusion of the P&M strikes at Kemmerer and the McKinley mine near Gallup, New Mexico. Workers explained that the company had a number of cuts on the table, including the 12-hour workday, but these were withdrawn after the union's success at P&M.

The team was able to talk with a small number of women miners at both union and nonunion mines. At one of the nonunion places, a woman miner explained that the company tries to keep women in less skilled operator jobs. A couple of women miners at union mines said they and other women miners around the country had been part of



Militant/Patrick O'Neill

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* show revolutionary literature to workers in Queens, New York.

activities organized by the Coal Employment Project (CEP), which fought for women to get mining jobs and against discrimination in the mines.

## 'Militant' is welcomed by meat packers

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

ROCHELLE, Illinois—Meat packers on strike at Rochelle Foods here have bought 11 copies of the *Militant* and three of *Perspectiva Mundial* since their walkout began. After introducing ourselves and our support for their strike, we described how the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are written by and for working people. Some of the strikers talked about their experiences working in California in garment shops, on construction jobs, as farm workers, and in Mexico "where strikes are much tougher." Two workers at the front gate bought the *Militant* and one bought *PM*.

At the back gate, the strikers looked over the *Militant* and *PM* as they remarked how callous and profit-hungry the Hormel bosses who own Rochelle are.

We talked about how the line speed and forced overtime contributes to job injuries. One worker mentioned how his job pays better than others he's held but the company doesn't "pay nearly enough for what we do." We sold one *Militant* and one *PM* at the back gate.

## Campaigning at Cesar Chavez Day Parade

BY ELYSE HATHAWAY

SAN FRANCISCO—Supporters of Pathfinder, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial* campaigned at the Cesar Chavez parade March 31. This was the first year Cesar Chavez Day was a state holiday. The crowd of thousands was young and very spirited. Delegations of students from MEChA chapters in the Bay Area and others several hours away participated. Many labor unions also had contingents, including the Ironworkers union, transit workers, hotel and restaurant workers, and flight attendants.

We sold five copies of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, four in English and one in Spanish. Overall we sold more than \$200 in literature, along with 21 copies of the *Militant*, two *Militant* subscriptions, and one *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription.

In March, supporters of the socialist press in the Bay Area sold 93 Pathfinder titles totaling \$1,200. So far we have sold 44 copies of *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*, and placed another 22 copies of the book in commercial outlets.

# 'Return our lands' say Palestinian protesters

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Carrying numerous Palestinian flags, singing the Palestinian anthem, and chanting "return our lands," more than 10,000 people marched in the northern Israeli town of Sakhnin March 30 to commemorate Land Day and to protest Tel Aviv's repressive policies.

Rallies were organized in other localities with a large Palestinian population, including Kafr Kanna, Rahat, Tamra, and Kafr Arara, and in Arab villages of the Negev desert. Elsewhere in the Middle East, 50,000 mobilized in Beirut, and thousands turned out in other Lebanese cities.

The day commemorates the 1976 fatal shooting by Israeli security forces of six Palestinians, who were citizens of Israel, during protests against government land expropriations.

These were the largest mobilizations of Palestinians inside Israel since October when 13 people were killed by Israeli security forces. High school students and other young people turned out in large numbers in Sakhnin, helping to put a militant stamp on the action. The protest was also marked by the diversity of the forces participating, including Palestinian members of the Israeli Knesset, or parliament; other elected officials and public figures; and members of Israeli peace organizations, including the Peace Now movement.

Recalling the October events and the massacre of 25 years ago, Muhammad Ganayiam told reporters in Sakhnin, "I was 14 in 1976, and I saw everything. But then the years passed, and we began to think of it as a onetime event. Until October. Now we despair that after all these years, we're back in the same place." In the Israeli Palestinian community, noted the *New York Times*, "life is divided into before and after October." Some Palestinians in Israel, often called Israeli Arabs, hold Israeli citizenship but faced second-class status in the country.

The bloodless outcome of the protest was in itself a victory, as organizers and



Protesters marched in Sakhnin, Israel, March 30 against Tel Aviv's repressive policies.

participants prevented the police from intervening, and kept them well away from the high school where the protest occurred. In other demonstrations inside Israel, the security forces were also forced to keep their distance.

In the West Bank city of Nablus, however, Israeli troops answered stone-throwing youth with deadly fire, killing five. Another Palestinian was killed by an Israeli bullet to the head in Ramallah in a protest of 1,000.

Just prior to the Land Day protests, the *Financial Times* noted an upturn in the number of protest actions by Palestinians. The *Times* quoted Marwan Barghouti, a leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), who told the Israeli *Ha'aretz* newspaper, "We should encourage the participation of other people, and concentrate on nonviolent means so that all will participate in the activities."

The *Financial Times* article commented, "Mr. Barghouti's statement coincided with a number of peaceful protests, including one by women and one by artists at Israeli checkpoints outside the Palestinian town of Ramallah." In the Ramallah protests two weeks earlier, Palestinians had demanded that the Israeli government dismantle barricades around the town, lift their tank-enforced siege, and reopen the road to Bir Zeit university. Palestinian spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi was injured when Israeli forces lobbed stun grenades into the crowd at a women's protest there.

The big-business newspaper commented further that the timing of Barghouti's announcement "appeared to indicate a *post facto* recognition that groups that have felt themselves marginalized during the years of Palestinian Authority rule had decided to make their own stand against the Israeli occupation."

# Cuban youth leaders well received in Chicago

BY BETSEY STONE

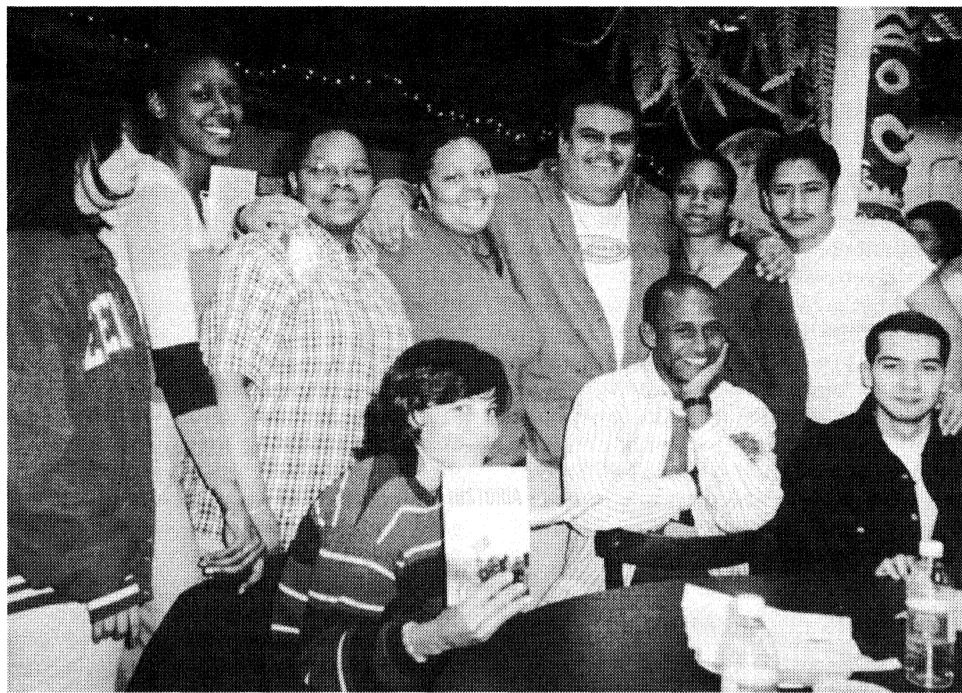
CHICAGO—Cuban youth leaders Yanelis Martínez and Javier Dueñas spoke to more than 550 students, professors, and others at campus meetings and events in the Chicago area during the last week of March.

At each meeting Dueñas and Martínez described the political awakening of an important layer of youth in Cuba today. "The youth are stepping forward," Dueñas told students at the University of Illinois at Chicago. "During the last few years we have seen an increase in political discussion, mobilizations, and strengthening of our revolutionary ideas."

Dueñas is a professor of journalism at the University of Havana and on the National Bureau of the Union of Young Communists (UJC). He explained that although the Cuban economy has improved in recent years, severe economic problems continue due to the abrupt cutoff of trade and aid from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe a decade ago and the continuation of the U.S. government's economic embargo and other attacks.

The strengthening of the revolution in such economic conditions would never have been possible without the transformation of Cuba over the previous decades, Dueñas emphasized.

"In 1959 we began to transform our country from a neocolony of the United States—with huge social problems, widespread poverty, and high rates of illiteracy—into a nation which is now leading on many fronts. In Cuba there is one doctor for every 172 people and we have the highest level of education professionals per capita in the world."



Yanelis Martínez and Javier Dueñas (seated left to right) with students at potluck supper March 29 after speaking at Benedictine University in Chicago.

Speaking to students at Columbia College in Chicago, Yanelis Martínez, a law student at the University of Havana and on the National Secretariat of the Federation of University Students, explained that demonstrations organized last year by young people in Cuba to demand Washington return Elián Gonzalez to the country, and ongoing protests against U.S. political and economic attacks, are part of a long history

of Cuban resistance to colonial and neocolonial domination.

"This struggle began with the indigenous peoples fighting the Spanish colonists and it continues in Latin America today," Martínez said. "We are the only country not subject to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We are the only country that is free from the wealthy few who exploit the rest of Latin America

and working people right here in the United States."

One of the initiatives that is drawing people into study is called the "University for All." Courses in literature, art, language, history, music, computers, and other subjects are taught on television, and are available for the five cents it takes to buy the course book. "Fundamental to this is the belief that knowledge should not be for an exclusive group," Dueñas said. "If you are 50 years old and never had a chance to go to the university, here's your chance. If you are a young worker who didn't get to complete high school, it's there for you."

## Decreasing number of youth in prison

Another program, described by Martínez to students at Benedictine University, is aimed at decreasing the number of young people in prisons. "We are giving young people convicted of small crimes the possibility of going to places that are not jails, where they can learn skills and work for a paycheck. The goal is to make it possible for them to come back into society, and where possible, to win them to revolutionary ideas," she said.

At each meeting, Dueñas and Martínez have urged the young people present to continue the dialogue started with their visit by participating in the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange planned for Havana July 22 to 30. Dozens of students and other young people signed up for more information on the exchange.

The two Cuban youth leaders have also encouraged youth to consider going to the World Festival of Youth and Students, scheduled for Algeria this coming August.

Ne'Keisha Green was one of those who signed up for the July youth exchange after the meeting at Benedictine University. She commented, "What they are doing in Cuba, we should be doing here. I liked what they said about increasing the educational level of the whole population, even the prisoners." Her friend, Samantha Baker, added, "They support each other. There is brotherhood!"

Over the course of the week, Dueñas and Martínez spoke at five college campuses. The largest meetings were 100 at Loyola University, sponsored by the Honors Society of the Communications Department, and 120 at Northeastern University, sponsored by the Latino student group Chimexla.

The Cuban youth met with Mary Johnson, a fighter against the death penalty and police brutality whose son has experienced inhumane treatment while incarcerated at the Tams super maximum security prison. They were taken on a walking tour of sites related to the struggle of Puerto Ricans in Chicago by Luis Galarza, a longtime Puerto Rican rights activist. They also met with farmers during the Family Farm Defenders' conference in Wisconsin.

The week's events were capped off by a "Noche Cubana," sponsored by Casa Guatemala at the Dulce Vida Cafe. A hundred people who crowded into the cafe heard talks by the Cuban youth, listened to music, and enjoyed delicious food prepared by Casa Guatemala activists.

## Meetings set on Bay of Pigs anniversary

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

NEW YORK—Two events April 14 in Miami and New York City will commemorate the 1961 victory of the Cuban people over a U.S.-backed mercenary invasion of the country aimed at toppling the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

These public meetings will be an opportunity to win more support for the Cuban revolution and against the ongoing U.S. policy of aggression toward Cuba today, said Luis Miranda, director of Casa de las Américas in New York.

"With each passing year, as more and more facts on what happened at Playa Girón

come out, the significance of Cuba's victory grows," said Miranda. Casa de las Américas, founded soon after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, is the longest-standing organization of Cuban Americans involved in activities to explain and defend the revolution in the United States.

In the 1950s Miranda and a number of other Cubans living in the United States supported the July 26 Movement, which successfully led workers and peasants to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in January 1959. After the triumph of the revolution they organized to counter Washington's lies and to win solidarity for the new revolutionary government. As the U.S.-trained invasion force hit the beaches at Cuba's Bay of Pigs on April 17, 1961, Miranda, other Casa activists, and other opponents of U.S. aggression against Cuba took to the streets to protest Washington's involvement and to demand an end to the assault.

Miranda said the Cuban rout of the invaders within 72 hours "was not just an honor and victory for all Latin Americans who defend the right to national sovereignty, but an honor and victory for socialism on the continent."

In Miami, Cuba solidarity activists are planning a conference entitled "The Bay of Pigs: 40 Years Later."

Among those participating in the panel will be Rafael Cancel Miranda, a Puerto Rican independence fighter who was imprisoned for 25 years for his pro-independence activities; Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and coeditor of the recently released Pathfinder book *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*; Andrés Gómez, national coordinator of the Antonio Maceo Brigade; and Luis Tornés, editor of the *Miami Post*.

In a phone interview, Gómez pointed to the Cuban victory at Playa Girón in April 1961 as the event that "politically consolidated the Cuban Revolution, and made it possible for the Cuban people to unite in a common effort to build a new society and to fight US aggression."

"Perhaps as significant," Gómez said, "is the fact that 40 years later, the U.S. government has the same policy to subvert and destroy the Cuban Revolution by any means available. At the same time, you will find the same determination of the Cuban people—through new generations—to build a new society and to fight against U.S. aggression."

### Anniversary of the Victory at Playa Girón

#### MIAMI

#### Conference: The Bay of Pigs — 40 Years Later

Sat., April 14, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Speakers:

**Rafael Cancel Miranda**, Puerto Rican independence fighter and former political prisoner of the U.S. government

**Andrés Gómez**, national coordinator of the Antonio Maceo Brigade

**Mary-Alice Waters**, president of Pathfinder Press, editor of the recently released *Playa Girón: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*

**Luis Tornés**, editor of *Miami Post*

Holiday Inn, Coral Gables

2051 SW Le Jeune Road.

Donation: \$10.

For more information: (305) 951-9356.

Sponsored by: Greater Miami Free Speech Coalition • Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba • Antonio Maceo Brigade • ATC • Boricua Human Rights Network in Orlando.

#### NEW YORK

#### Casa de las Américas

#### Celebrate 40th Anniversary of the Victory at Playa Girón

Sat., April 14, 8 p.m.

33 West 14th Street

Donation: \$10

Sponsored by: Pastors for Peace • Vieques Support Campaign • Comité Pedro Albizu Campos • Frente Unido de la Revolución Dominicana • Working Group on Puerto Rico/ Socialist Front • Fuerza de la Revolución • Pro Libertad • Workers World Party • Freedom Socialist Party • Socialist Workers Party • International Action Center • Young Socialists

## In Canada, Cubans describe 'University for All'

BY CARLOS CORNEJO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—Yamila Lafourie, a leader of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC), spoke to a meeting of close to 60 people here on March 24. In her talk she stressed the importance placed by Cuba's revolutionary government on advancing the political and cultural level of working people in the country.

Lafourie is a member of the UJC's National Committee. She and Alfredo Bárzaga, a leader of the University Students Federation (FEU) of Cuba, began a speaking tour of Canada on March 21.

They have been invited to make presentations on the theme of "Youth and the Cuban Revolution Today" to a number of groups and colleges in Quebec, Manitoba, and Ontario. Earlier, they had spoken in Ontario at York University, and two Universities of Toronto campuses.

"At this moment, we consider what we are doing in Cuba is rebuilding the socialism that stalled for ten years, while we fought to survive the effects of the loss of 80 percent of our trade with the socialist

camp," Lafourie said. Cuba's economic output fell dramatically as a result of the drop in trade and aid that followed the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

The UJC leader described the campaign in Cuba today to expand educational programs and political discussion. The effort includes televised classes and roundtable discussions. "This new educational program, led by the UJC and supported by the Cuban government, is known by the name University for All," she said. While developing this program, she explained, "we realized that many people did not have access to a television set. So we decided to distribute 27,000 TV sets and 19,000 video machines, mainly to schools and other public places where there are large concentrations of people."

### Anti-imperialist mobilizations

Lafourie also described the anti-imperialist mobilizations in Cuba against the U.S. embargo and other attacks mounted by Washington since the revolution triumphed more than 40 years ago. She also pointed to the importance of proletarian international-

ism for Cuban youth, citing the Cuban medical contingents in Latin America and Africa as examples.

One participant in the meeting asked Lafourie about the Cuban victory at Playa Girón against the U.S.-backed invasion in 1961. "We were capable of defeating the mercenary invasion in less than 72 hours because we mobilized an armed people who were organized in the militias," she said.

Lafourie ended the meeting by inviting those present to participate in a Canada-Cuba youth gathering to be organized by the UJC in Havana next November. She reported that Cuba is planning to send 300 delegates to the 15th World Festival of Youth and Students that will take place in Algeria next August.

Lafourie will join Bárzaga in Montreal on March 30 to continue the tour there. The two will return to Ontario for visits to Toronto, Kitchener, Peterborough, and London.

*Carlos Cornejo is a garment worker and member of the Cuban youth tour organizing committee in Vancouver.*

# Youth leaders say confidence growing in Cuban Revolution

Continued from front page

where they discussed the movement to demand the U.S. Navy end the bombing and occupation of the island of Vieques. The "Todo Connecticut con Vieques" (All of Connecticut with Vieques) Committee is organizing a rally in Hartford April 19 in commemoration of more than 50 people who have died as a result of the U.S. occupation. Later, the two Cuban leaders were interviewed for the Spanish-English National Public Radio program "Tertulia" by WFCR radio journalist Luis Meléndez in Amherst, Massachusetts.

The following day, Martínez and Dueñas had lunch with student activists from the Progressive Student Alliance, a University of Hartford student group that was organizing a teach-in to support the demand of cafeteria workers to receive tuition benefits for themselves and their families, which the university administrators deny them on the basis that they are "subcontracted" workers.

The University of Hartford meeting was sponsored by the Department of Politics and Government, the African American Studies Program, the Progressive Students Alliance, and the Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba. Harald Sandstrom, professor of Politics and Government and director of African American Studies, chaired the event. Tim Craine, a leader of the Greater Hartford Coalition on Cuba, invited those present to participate in an April 16 commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the defeat of the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs by Cuban revolutionary forces, which the coalition is sponsoring.

"The beginning of the discussion at tonight's meeting has to be 1959, which is the year the revolution took political power in Cuba," said Dueñas in his opening remarks. In 1961, the Year of Education, a mass literacy campaign involving more than 100,000 young people teaching workers and peasants of all ages to read and write "wiped out illiteracy in the country," he said.

Cuban youth have made other important contributions to the revolution, Dueñas said, such as being the backbone of many internationalist missions throughout the world, from the defense of Angola from invasion by apartheid South Africa's military to the more than 3,000 Cuban doctors currently in some of the poorest areas in Latin America, Africa, and Central America providing medical services.

Over the past 12 years, facing the effects of the collapse of trade and aid with the fall of the regimes in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe and the intensified U.S. embargo, the Cubans have gone through what they call the "Special Period."

"We have gone through a difficult struggle to rebuild our economy and to in-

still in all of the citizens the optimism, confidence, and the strength of the revolution with encouraging results," stated Dueñas. "But a revolutionary is never satisfied with what has been accomplished, and that is why we are working on programs to increase social justice and raise the cultural level of every Cuban citizen," he explained.

## 'A government to benefit the majority'

"We know information about Cuba is lacking here in the United States and that what you receive is far from the truth," said Martínez, in her opening presentation. "Our revolution is one that from the beginning tried to build a socialist government that would benefit the majority of the people," she said.

She described the radical transformations that have taken place in the countryside, the impact of the deep-going land reform, and the success of the Cuban Revolution in making health care and education available to all rather than profit-making private enterprises. The Cuban Revolution, Martínez said, not only carried out the literacy campaign, but has also made university education available to all who want it.

"It is our country and our people who are really forging the revolution today," said Martínez. "This was demonstrated in how we overcame the economic difficulties over the last 12 years. We organized workers' parliaments in which the people were able to discuss the measures that were being taken. Decisions were not made by a dictatorship in the government," she said. She contrasted the revolutionary leadership with the governments of other countries that impose austerity measures on the population. "Not one university was closed during that time," Martínez noted, "and the stipends students receive were maintained."

"Our revolution is not a perfect one," she said, "and many problems in our society have gotten worse" during the Special Period. She gave the example of how programs aimed at solving the housing shortage were curtailed by the economic crisis. An example of initiatives and mass participation of young people to solve these problems, Martínez said, is that today, "university students are participating in brigades that visit places where the economic situation is most difficult. The students become friends of the families and help the children with school work. The revolution is, little by little, coming up with solutions to social problems."

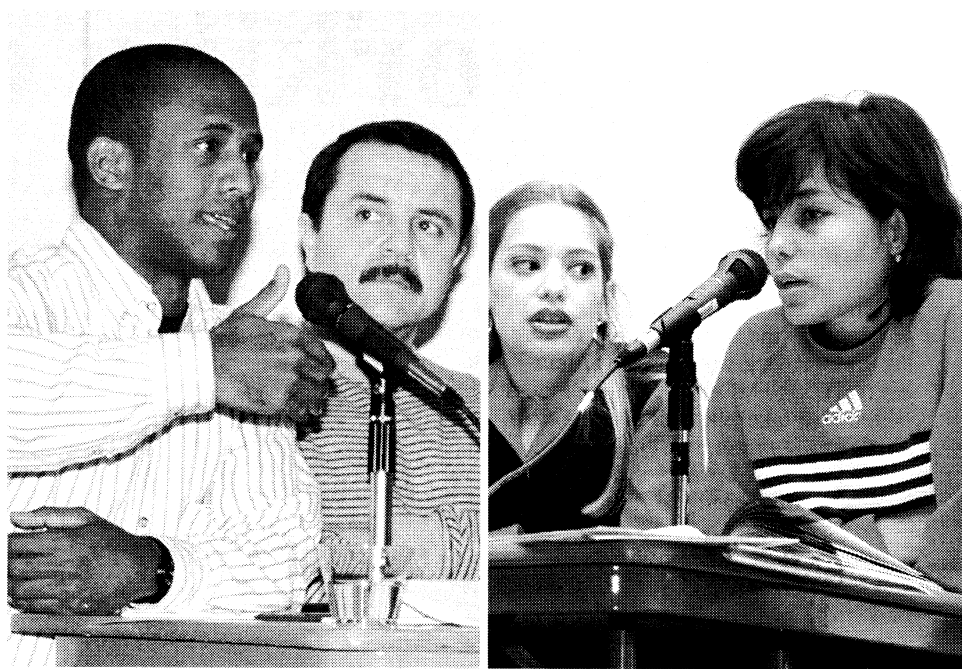
During the discussion period, Martínez and Dueñas answered questions about the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Dueñas said Washington's plans were well-calculated. "The only thing that explains how we overcame the invasion and the difficulties of the terrain was the understanding of the people that the revolution was theirs and the fact that they knew they were defending it," he explained. "We saw incredible acts of heroism that people still talk about today."

The two youth are explaining at their speaking engagements the "University for All" (see articles on opposite page). Martínez mentioned how the program originally was aired in the mornings, but by popular demand they were expanded to nights and weekends.

## Bringing youth out of prisons

She also detailed the efforts led by the Union of Young Communist to release some youth currently in prison for petty crimes and reintegrate them back into society through participation in the youth-led social work projects. The youth receive six months training in social work and teaching skills and then they join the work of the UJC in the neighborhoods. After they graduate, they have the option to enter the university without any other requirement than a desire to study, Martínez explained.

During the discussion period a person in the audience suggested that Cuba's economic problems were a result of its communist economic system and government. He gave the example of how the city of Havana used to have its lights on 24 hours a day, seven days a week before the revolu-



Photos: Militant/Angel Lariscy  
Cuban youth leaders Javier Dueñas, left, and Yanelis Martínez, right, speak on "Youth and Cuba Today" at University of Hartford in Connecticut, April 2.

tion. "Now," he said, "they have rotating blackouts like the ones in California," which caused some laughter in the audience. He also asked why Cuba has not been able to abolish poverty even after the redistribution of wealth that took place after the revolution, and why Cuba couldn't just carry out necessary trade with countries other than the United States.

Dueñas responded that before the revolution the figures on per capita income and cattle ownership in Cuba were impressive. "You might think Cuba was the Switzerland of the Caribbean based on those figures," he continued, adding that Cuba ranked just below Argentina in many economic indicators. "But the income and cattle were in a very few hands. Milk and meat were not accessible to the population," he said. Dueñas pointed to the collective accomplishments of the Cuban people despite the lack of access to credit and foreign investments and difficulty trading with countries that feel the economic pressures that the U.S. government imposes on those who want to trade with Cuba.

"We eliminated misery," Dueñas said, "but have not yet eliminated poverty. It is true we are a poor country, but we are not a

miserable people," he stated. "If capitalism is willing to combat poverty by killing the poor, as [Latin American writer] Eduardo Galeano said," Dueñas emphasized, then "we are doing exactly the opposite."

The two youth also answered questions on freedom of religion in Cuba, the fight against racism, and the fight to preserve the environment. "Black or white, woman or man, believer or nonbeliever, homosexual or heterosexual, everyone has the same rights in Cuba," said Dueñas in response to a comment a participant made on the gains of the revolution on the fight against racism.

At the end of the program, Martínez extended an invitation to all youth present to participate in the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, which will be held in Cuba July 22-30. The conference "is open to people of diverse ways of thinking who want to learn about Cuba and exchange ideas," Martínez said.

After the meeting, Dueñas and Martínez had dinner with a group of youth to discuss the possibilities of building a contingent of students from Connecticut to the Exchange. Coming out of the discussion, the students organized a meeting April 11 for Hartford-area youth to start building the delegation.

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



Participants at First Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange in Havana in 1996.

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

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

## The Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange will include:

- Discussion in workshops
- Visits to the universities and meetings with students
- Meetings in the communities
- Visits to the Latin American School of Medicine
- Sports and cultural events
- Participation in July 26 activities to commemorate the 47th anniversary of the attack by Cuban revolutionaries on the Moncada army barracks, which launched the Cuban revolutionary struggle.

Conference cost is \$250, which will cover registration, meals, lodging, and transportation within Cuba during the exchange. Cubana Airlines will offer a special fare for exchange participants. **Sponsored by:** Pioneer Organization "José Martí," Federation of High School Students, Federation of University Students, Union of Young Communists, "Hermanos Saíz" Association, Technical Youth Brigades, Youth Study Center.

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

Or contact the Young Socialists, P.O. Box 33, Times Square Post Office, New York, NY 10010. Tel.: (212) 695-1809. E-mail: [youngsocialists@attglobal.net](mailto:youngsocialists@attglobal.net)

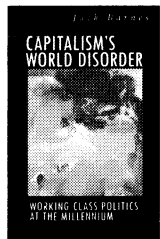
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Jack Barnes

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# 'The working class must confront

Thousands of workers discuss resolution in preparation for convention of Central Organization of Cuban Workers

The following is a translation of the first portion of a resolution, known as the Theses, being submitted for discussion and adoption at the 18th national congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), Cuba's trade union federation, which will take place in Havana April 28-30. Over the past several months, hundreds of thousands of workers throughout the island have discussed the Theses in factory assemblies and other workplace meetings in preparation for the congress.

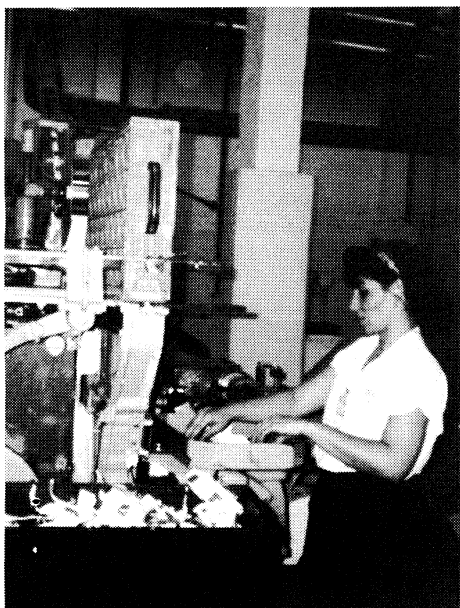
The previous CTC national congress took place in 1996. The *Militant* published a translation of the Theses for that meeting in four installments from the March 18 to the April 8 issues of 1996.

Reprinted below are the first 24 theses; a further excerpt will be published in next week's issue. The translation as well as the footnotes and text in brackets are by the *Militant*.

## Introduction

The process leading to the 18th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers takes place in the midst of the gigantic battle that Fidel [Castro] has called for. Its main axis is the conviction that our political culture, ideology, and general, rounded culture are the most powerful shield for our socialist society.

Together with youth and students, key actors in this offensive of revolutionary ideas—which was launched originally through the fight to win the freedom of the child Elián González—Cuban workers,



Militant/Maggie Trowe

Workers at BrasCuba cigarette factory, whose exports bring in hard currency that Cuba needs to help finance social priorities. "The gradual recovery of our economy serves as the framework for the revolution's advance in politics, education, and culture."



Militant/Brock Satter

**Factory meeting in Holguín, Cuba, June 1996. The upcoming national congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers will draw on the active role that workers have played in discussing and making proposals to address economic and political challenges facing Cuba today. Hundreds of thousands of workers discussed the CTC congress Theses in workplace meetings across the island.**

teachers, doctors, industrial workers, scientists, artists and other intellectual creators, athletes, retirees, and all of our union members, along with peasants, combatants of the Revolutionary Armed Forces [FAR] and Interior Ministry, and our entire patriotic and revolutionary people, are taking part in this process of strengthening our moral and political positions. We know imperialism will be unable to defeat us by force or seduce us through the siren song of neoliberal ideology. Nor will it be able to erode the values that have forged the revolution over more than 40 years of constant battles for our freedom and independence.

The development of a general, rounded culture, aimed at involving every Cuban and reinforcing even more our national identity, is a strategic goal. It encompasses efforts such as the speakouts, the roundtables, the University for All, the study of history, the promotion of reading, the development of a culture of debate, and calm and reasoned analysis of the serious problems confronting humanity today.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *tribunas abiertas*, or speakouts, are political rallies that are being organized weekly in Cuba to educate about and mobilize opposition to the U.S. government's policies of aggression against the Cuban Revolution. The *mesas redondas*, or roundtables, are panel discussions, held five or sometimes six times a week and televised nationally, that discuss a range of political questions, often as-

pects of the U.S.-led drive against the Cuban Revolution. Both initiatives were originally launched as part of the revolutionary leadership's mobilization of Cuban working people and youth to defend Cuba's sovereignty and demand that Washington return Elián González, a Cuban child who had been picked up by U.S. authorities off the Florida coast in November 1999; the U.S. government

These are tasks that all of us as workers are called on to carry out and that our union movement takes on as our own. The entire process of the 18th Congress has been marked by the determination of the Cuban people to strengthen and improve our socialism; to resist and defeat the criminal economic U.S. blockade as well as all laws, amendments, and maneuvers against our country; to achieve efficiency in all areas of production and services nationwide; and to consolidate our social and political system.

This is the main thrust of the work that we in the CTC, its unions, and all members have been carrying out since the very first steps leading to this congress. The very process of discussion of these Theses is an integral part of the battle of ideas led by Fidel.

These Theses for the 18th Congress of the CTC are aimed at presenting the essence of the most important lines of action that the Cuban union movement must follow in the coming period.

The general secretary of the CTC, on behalf of the national secretariat, will present to the plenary of the 18th Congress a report on the organization's work since the previous meeting in 1996, which will be extensively analyzed and debated by the delegates.

Thus, the Theses do not include such a balance sheet of this work, although at times it makes a necessary reference to it.

The congress will adopt various resolutions on union work that will explain the tasks in detail.

The present Theses will therefore focus only on the key questions and leave the details to the resolutions, which will be drafted based on analyzing workers' experiences and their contributions to the discussion of these Theses and to the congress discussions.

In other words, the Theses are not the culmination of a discussion but rather are designed to initiate and encourage it. They are aimed at stimulating a discussion, enriched by the experiences of the working masses, and preparing the deliberations of the 18th Congress and the drafting of its resolutions.

## Theses for the 18th Congress

"Revolution means a sense of the historic moment; it means changing everything that must be changed; it means complete equality and freedom; it means being treated and treating others as human beings; it means emancipating ourselves through our own efforts; it means challenging the powerful dominant forces within and beyond the social and national arena; it means defending at any cost the values we believe in. Revolution means modesty, selflessness, altruism, solidarity, and heroism; it means fighting with audacity, intelligence, and realism; it means never lying or violating moral principles; it means the profound conviction that there is no force on earth capable of crushing the power of ideas and the truth.

"Revolution is unity, independence, and fighting for our dreams of justice for Cuba and for the world—the basis of our patriotism, socialism, and internationalism."

—Fidel Castro

## The current situation

1. This 18th Congress, the first congress of the revolution and of our union organization taking place in the new century, is geared toward two great historical tasks. One is to keep strengthening the active role of workers in building our invincible trenches of stones and of ideas in defense of the revolution, in face of the criminal imperialists who seek to take away our independence. The other is to advance the efforts to achieve the full recovery of the country and the development of a socialist economy that is efficient and competitive, as defined by the Fifth Congress of our [Communist] Party.<sup>2</sup>

To achieve this goal, we must further improve the functioning of the unions.

2. The present situation is shaped by the fact that the gradual recovery of our economy serves as the framework for the revolution's determined advance toward an unstoppable offensive in the field of ideas, particularly in

finally returned him to Cuba in June 2000.

The University for All is part of a campaign to widen the availability of education both among student youth and working people of all ages. It consists of nationally televised courses on various subjects such as English, geography, and art appreciation. It is part of a multifaceted effort—which also includes promoting computer literacy, including among preschool and primary school students; a campaign to train greater numbers of grade school teachers; and other initiatives aimed at broadening access to culture and deepening political education, which Cuban president Fidel Castro has referred to as the fight for a "general, rounded culture."

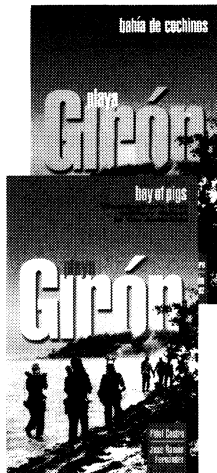
<sup>2</sup> The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, held in October 1997, adopted an Economic Resolution that emphasized boosting labor efficiency in order to reduce state subsidies to enterprises and produce more of the essential goods needed by the Cuban people.

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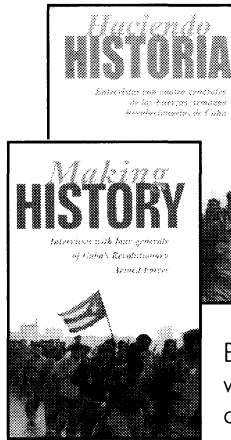


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# t a war of ideas'

## al Organization of Cuban Workers

areas such as moral values, law, politics, information, education, and culture.

3. This turn, which had already been announced in the late 1990s, gained an extraordinary momentum in 2000 through the fight to save the boy Elián González Brotons, who had been held hostage by the Miami mafia and its accomplices of the Yankee far right.

4. During these years the imperialists used their entire arsenal to try to bring us to our knees: the destabilizing effects of the cynical and murderous Cuban Adjustment Act, which has been maintained despite the immigration accords; passage of new legislation tightening further the cruel and illegal blockade, such as the Torricelli and Helms-Burton laws;<sup>3</sup> tolerance of and support for the terrorists of the Cuban American National Foundation; psychological and propaganda war through the radio and other means; as well as the crude manipulation that takes place year after year—with an array of supporting actors and accomplices—in the United Nations Human Rights Commission.



Girl in Holguín studies computer education program for grade school students called "Learning about our environment." Promotion of computer literacy and expansion of computer clubs nationwide is part of widening availability of education to student youth and to working people of all ages.

5. These measures have caused us serious harm. Nonetheless, they have failed to achieve their objectives. Our people, through their tenacious resistance and their hard and conscious sacrifice, have proven once again to be an unshakable bastion of dignity, morale, and patriotism.

6. The conditions of the Special Period continue today.<sup>4</sup> While the country has unquestionably begun a sustained process of recovery that includes almost all branches of production and services, we can not close our eyes to the reality that the economic crisis has not been completely overcome and that the effects of the intensified Yankee blockade continue. It has also been demonstrated that, despite this situation, where

ever systematic work has been done by applying the correct policies of the revolution, we advance more rapidly and start leaving behind the most difficult moments of the Special Period.

7. Through a tenacious and well-led effort, our revolution has been able to preserve its independence as well as the revolutionary values of fairness, equal opportunity, free public health care, and education for all. It has been able to maintain, as much as possible, the availability of decent and useful jobs, a universal system of social security, the protection of the most vulnerable citizens and social layers, broad access to sports and culture, and the full exercise of people's dignity and inalienable democratic rights through real participation in all basic decisions.

8. We can not ignore, however, the fact that some social welfare policies, such as housing, transportation, food quality, and others that have a major impact on the everyday life of the population, have been affected negatively by the economic crisis and the intensified U.S. economic war



Rally in Manzanillo, Cuba, in July 2000 to protest U.S. embargo and Cuban Adjustment Act. "The imperialists have used their entire arsenal to try to bring us to our knees," CTC document states. "These measures have caused us serious harm. Nonetheless, they have failed to achieve their objectives. Our people, through their tenacious resistance and their hard and conscious sacrifice, have proven once again to be an unshakable bastion of dignity, morale, and patriotism."

economy and have generated contradictions and inequalities that we did not have before the Special Period, and that are alien to the values we defend and have fostered over the years.

10. In these circumstances, we must firmly and persistently continue the revolution's strategy—the cornerstone of the political and ideological work of the unions—of steadily strengthening the value of labor and wages as an essential aspect of the well-being and quality of life of workers and our people.

11. This remains a key issue to resolve, both because of its economic as well as moral importance. The improved management process<sup>5</sup> and other measures being implemented should bring us closer to the goal of income in pesos being the main source of wages and material incentives, based on each person's contribution to society.

12. Greater efficiency and increased production and services—in a way that reduces costs, increases the benefits to the country, and expands our exports—will be a decisive aspect in providing a gradual solution to the legitimate expectations of working people.

13. In recent years the value of the peso has increased many times over in relation to hard currencies, but remains low in relation to the unmet demand for goods and services, especially in markets where prices are set by supply and demand. Even with huge material limitations, our socialist state

continues to subsidize a range of products and services offered at affordable prices.

14. More than 1,060,000 workers—60 percent of those in production—earn wages that are based on production results, and more than 775,000 workers—70 percent—in the state budgetary sector have received wage increases of 15 to 50 percent. Some 1,200,000 workers are receiving incentives in hard currency or the equivalent, also tied to production results. Nonetheless, we are aware of the existence of inequalities caused by disproportionate incomes that do not correspond to the work performed and its results; we cannot eliminate these inequalities completely, but we can increasingly diminish them by working on measures that raise income for those who live from their wages and that prevent those receiving other sources of income from enjoying privileges that contradict the principles of social justice of our society.

15. In light of these realities, a particular focus of our attention, as part of the policies of our revolutionary government, is the situation faced by families with very low incomes, including retired people, elderly people living alone, and single mothers.

16. There are workers, who, in these circumstances, drift toward corruption and crime, toward a deformed and irresponsible attitude of how to resolve their needs and satisfy their aspirations at any cost, and to

**Continued on Page 14**

<sup>5</sup> The Improved Management System, or *perfeccionamiento empresarial*, is a set of reforms being implemented in an increasing number of Cuban enterprises through which a number of important management policies that have been determined by national legislation, or have been subject to strict regulation by the responsible government ministry—such as wage scales, the number of workers employed, the hours worked, and enterprise responsibility for training—are determined, to

a greater degree, enterprise by enterprise. These policies are subject to discussion and agreement between management and the union at the workplace. Eliminating government subsidies to inefficient enterprises is one of the goals.

For a discussion of the Improved Management System, see article "Cuban workers discuss reforms in factory management" by Jonathan Silberman and Mary-Alice Waters, in the June 5, 2000, issue of the *Militant*.

against Cuba.

9. As part of our strategy of survival and development in the new international context, the revolution has had to carry out certain necessary economic reforms to have available resources that are vital to the population and to the functioning of the economy as well as to maintain our socialist course. This process has been conducted in an orderly and controlled way, with good results. But we are aware that along this road there have been measures that—while unavoidable and even necessary to carry out—carry the germs of the market

## Books for Cuba Fund gets generous donations

BY HILDA CUZCO

A generous response to the *Militant's* appeal for contributions to the Books for Cuba Fund is making possible an unprecedented number of donations of books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press to organizations and institutions in Cuba.

The most recent is the donation of 25 copies of the Spanish edition of Pathfinder's new title *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* to the Union of Young Communists (UJC) and 40 copies to the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. The donations were made by the *Militant* reporting team that recently visited Cuba to cover the March 22–25 Havana conference, "Girón: 40 Years After."

With help from the fund, Pathfinder is able to respond to requests from libraries, schools, and political groups in Cuba for a range of its books. Its titles can also be sold at the annual Havana International Book Fair in pesos, at prices Cubans can afford.

At a February 7 ceremony during the

Havana book fair, 300 copies of *Haciendo historia*, Pathfinder's new Spanish edition of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*, were donated to the combatants association. The group has distributed the books to its municipal groups to aid their work in bringing the real history of the revolution to Cuban youth.

In receiving the books on behalf of the association's leadership, Brig. Gen. Gustavo Chui Beltrán said, "We are grateful for the contributions of workers in the United States who give part of their wages to make this donation possible."

Events to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Cuban people's victory at Playa Girón and Cuba's successful 1961 literacy campaign took place in New York March 11 and in Seattle March 18. Both meetings also launched *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs* in English and Spanish.

A participant at the Seattle meeting sent in a contribution of \$10,000 to the Books for Cuba Fund a few days later. "You will appre-

ciate the following story," she wrote. Her second cousin was one of the 1,500 Cuban mercenaries who participated in the Bay of Pigs invasion, she said. He was imprisoned for nine months and later released together with the big majority of those captured.

The contributor recalled a visit to her relatives in Miami when she was a teenager. "They explained their support for [the terrorist organization] Omega 7 and how convinced they were that one day Cuba would return to them, the rightful owners. History has proved to be on our side," she wrote.

The Seattle meeting encouraged her to do what she could to help expand the distribution of "the true account of the defeated U.S. military invasion of Cuba."

Since the beginning of the year working people and other readers have sent in \$14,426 to the fund. More contributions, large or small, are welcomed. Checks earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund" can be made payable to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

<sup>3</sup> Under the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, anyone from Cuba landing on U.S. shores is granted permanent residency within a year by the U.S. government. Under U.S.-Cuban immigration accords signed in 1994 and 1995, Washington agreed to grant entry visas to 20,000 Cubans a year, and to return Cubans attempting to enter the United States without papers.

The 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, known as the Torricelli Act, prohibits trade between third-country U.S. subsidiaries and Cuba. The 1996 Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, known as the Helms-Burton Act, includes a number of embargo-tightening measures, such as exposing foreign investment in Cuba to the risk of legal challenges in U.S. courts by Cuban-American and other U.S. capitalists whose properties were nationalized by Cuba's working people.

<sup>4</sup> The Special Period refers to the economic crisis, triggered at the opening of the 1990s by the cutoff of trade in preferential prices with the former Soviet bloc countries, during which Cuba has had to face more directly the ravages of the world capitalist market.

# Hollander workers hold rally in L.A., build solidarity

Continued from front page

ployees (UNITE), walked off the job March 9 demanding higher pay and a pension plan from the company. Hollander, which makes pillows, down comforters, and other home fashions, employs 1,300 workers at plants in Georgia, Illinois, Texas, Pennsylvania, and in Canada.

"When we're united neither the scabs, the police, nor Hollander can stop us," said Cristina Vazquez, an international vice president of UNITE, who opened the March 27 rally. Vazquez said workers at the Hollander plant in Tignall, Georgia, continue to honor a picket line there set up by workers on strike in Vernon. Union members in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Texas were carrying out solidarity actions, such as signing petitions and holding protests inside and outside the plants, she said.

Union officials announced that joining the rally were farm workers and teachers, as well as laundry workers who have recently won union recognition. Antonio Villaraigosa, Democratic Party candidate for mayor, also addressed the crowd. Miguel Contreras, president of the Los Angeles Central Labor Council, and Carlos Urutia, organizer of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1877, also spoke.

## 'We set an example'

"They said it would be impossible for the janitors to win the battle but we triumphed after a month on strike," said Urutia of the SEIU walkout last year. "And we set an example all over the country. After we won, janitors in many other cities won too."

A spirited march of the unionists and their supporters through Vernon from one Hollander plant to the other was met with blowing horns and raised fist salutes from workers and truck drivers passing by. The marchers chanted "*Se ve, se siente, la union esta presente*" (You can see it, you can feel it, the union is here).

Breaking a virtual blackout of news since the strike began, the main Spanish- and English-language television stations and newspapers reported on the strike and march the next day. The daily Spanish-language newspaper *La Opinión* quoted from a statement released by company boss Jeff Hollander

that was run as a quarter-page ad in the Sunday edition of the paper. Hollander said he opposed a pension plan for the workers and thought each worker should have the right to make his or her own decision on how to invest for retirement.

"Many employees across the country that are in 401(k) plans have lost a lot of money recently with the fall in the stock market," he said to justify the company's position. He also claimed that Hollander is offering the largest-ever wage increase for the Los Angeles workers.

But UNITE leader Christina Vazquez told the *Los Angeles Times* that much of the increase is due to a scheduled jump in the California minimum wage. Angelina Andrade, interviewed by *La Opinión* at the march, said she has worked at Hollander 20 years and earns \$7 an hour. She commented on how the company drives the workers to work hard and fast.

## Replacement workers

Hollander is contracting with the temporary work agency Labor Ready, is using the Vernon police, and has hired the security company Huffmaster Crisis Management to bring two busloads of replacement workers across the union's picket lines each day. In response, the strikers block the entrance and appeal in Spanish to those in the bus not to cross. The police then move in and open the driveway allowing the scab bus to pass.

Tina Marquez, a sewing machine operator at the Boyle Avenue plant, told the *Militant* April 2 that around 60 union members have crossed the picket line. The strike is "difficult," she said, "and some are afraid. We need to talk more with those who are thinking of crossing. The majority are still very strong." Strikers report that only four workers have crossed at the Seville Avenue plant.

Among the meetings strikers spoke to was a March 30 Militant Labor Forum at the Pathfinder Bookstore. María Dolores Meléndez, a sewing machine operator, said she had won support from teachers and stu-



Militant/Susan Lamont

UNITE members from Vernon, California, outside of Hollander Home Fashions plant in Tignall, Georgia. Workers at the Tignall plant have honored the strikers' picket line. In Vernon, the company is organizing to bring two busloads of replacement workers into the plants each day.

dents after speaking at Huntington Park High School earlier in the day. "Hollander says we don't have a right to a pension and better wages but we should have those rights because we are the ones who produce," she said.

Marta Bonilla, who celebrated her 62nd birthday on the picket line, asked forum participants to excuse her hoarse voice because she had been chanting all day. "We are fighting a just struggle," she said. "I make \$6.65 an hour stuffing and boxing pillows and face tremendous pressure from the company to get the job done really fast." Bonilla, who had never spoken at public meetings before the strike, has been out winning support at meetings, classes, and on television.

## Georgia workers honor pickets

BY DEAN HAZLEWOOD AND SUSAN LAMONT

TIGNALL, Georgia—Workers at Hollander Home Fashions from Vernon, California, continue to picket the company's Georgia facility in this small rural town. And for the third straight week the vast majority of workers at this plant continue to honor the picket line. The workers are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

The Georgia workers say that their resolve is solid and only about seven of the 87 em-

Ramón Higuera works in shipping and receiving. He described working at Hollander as a "daily humiliation. If our strike was only against Hollander we would have won already. But they bring in the police and the scabs. Hollander pays the agency \$18 an hour for each scab and the agency pays each scab \$8 an hour. They have money and resources." Higuera said they welcome support on the picket line and were "ready to give support to others like the workers at the airport this week."

Carlos Codon, a UNITE organizer and picket captain, told the forum, "Even with the union presence we have not been able to get wages where they should be with a steady increase. Now they are doing everything to break the strike."

employees have crossed the line. Most of the rest show up every day to gather outside a couple of houses opposite the company gates to show support for their counterparts from California. Like the California workers, they have no pension plan and believe that if the strikers at Vernon win that demand it will benefit all Hollander employees. Their contract expires in March 2002.

"My main reason for honoring the Los Angeles strike is that I've been here 26 years and I have no retirement benefits, no 401(k)," said sewing machine operator Oralee Hill. "That's not right. If we win, even if it's too late to help me much, it will help the younger people in the plant. It's for them, their future. Before, every time we would ask for something in our contract the company lawyer would say 'Los Angeles doesn't have that.'"

Hazel Daniel, who has worked at the plant for 13 years and is also a sewing machine operator, added, "This fight is about respect."

The Tignall workers have received support from many parts of the community. Other UNITE-organized workers from Chipman Union, a nearby hosiery plant, have kept a steady presence, as have workers' relatives and former Hollander workers. Several members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters have come by to show their support. The police arrested two of them while they were picketing trucks. Video film showed the police assaulting at least one of those arrested.

Scottie Ferrell, who has worked at Hollander for eight months, said, "This has been the first time there has been anything like this in Wilkes County." He said his wife, who does not work, backs him 100 percent. "She told me, 'Fight for whatever you have to fight for.'"

Another worker said they have also received plenty of material support, including food. The company is trying to run the plant with the handful of line-crossers plus temporary workers.

All of the strikers who have come here from Los Angeles are Latino, while the big majority of the Georgia workers are Black. Many workers commented on this fact, noting proudly that they're all sticking together against the company.

Dean Hazlewood, a textile worker, and Susan LaMont, a garment worker, are both members of UNITE.

## U.S. officer calls N. Korea 'number one enemy'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"I define north Korea [as] the number one enemy state when I look across my area of responsibility," Adm. Dennis Blair, the commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, told the press March 21. Blair spoke after a trip to south Korea, where he met with the ministers of defense, foreign affairs, and unification.

The admiral's assessment dovetails with Washington's history of aggression toward the workers state. Despite a flurry of diplomatic meetings, which included a trip by then-secretary of state Madeleine Albright to Pyongyang in October, the Clinton administration ended talks with the north Korean government three months before leaving office. President George Bush has maintained the freeze on talks with the north. This approach has placed Washington at odds with the course of southern president Kim Dae Jung, who has pressed for closer cross-border ties. In contrast with U.S. policy, a number of European powers have recently opened diplomatic relations with Pyongyang.

Washington maintains some 37,000 heavily armed troops in south Korea, nuclear weapons, and the naval force commanded by Blair. The arsenal at the disposal of south Korea's half-million-strong army includes missiles designed to strike targets throughout the north.

Despite the U.S. government stance, contacts arranged during unification talks last June between Kim Dae Jung and north Korean president Kim Jong-Il have for the most part proceeded.

In the most recent event, Pyongyang was the site of a consultative meeting between

religious councils of the north and south. According to the north Korean news agency, the meeting adopted a joint agreement in favor of closer ties, and condemned attempts by "Japanese reactionaries" to justify and whitewash Tokyo's brutal occupation of Korea in the first half of the last century.

A recent cabinet reshuffle by Kim Dae Jung showed that Seoul is not backing off its pursuit of closer ties. In particular, the appointment of Lim Dong-won to the position of unification minister, reported the south Korean news agency Yonhap, "can be construed as an attempt...to systematically push pending inter-Korean issues.... Lim has been leading inter-Korean relations behind the scenes."

Kim's simultaneous attempt to avoid further antagonizing Washington was underscored by his replacement of foreign minister Lee Joung-binn. In the words of the March 27 *Financial Times*, Lee "provoked a flap with the U.S. after Seoul issued a joint statement with Russia last month that implied that South Korea was critical of the [National Missile Defense] plan." The south Korean government afterwards denied any such implication.

Lee also stated in a March 23 address to the Korea Press Foundation that "during the consultations to prepare for the [March 7] Korea-U.S. summit, the United States asked us to agree to their plan to promote the National Missile Defense System." Seoul remains officially neutral on the "missile shield," which represents a push by Washington to gain a nuclear first-strike capability.

Bush, like Clinton before him, has justi-

fied the antimissile plan by claiming that north Korean missiles pose a threat to the United States. In preparing a review of the U.S. armed forces, for example, Pentagon officials and Congresspeople "say that the nation's ability to fight major wars on two fronts acts as a...deterrent to potentially hostile states like North Korea," according to the *New York Times*.

As part of its efforts to win broader diplomatic ties, investment, and trade, the north Korean government hosted officials from Britain, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand in recent weeks, according to the *Times*. From December to March, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Luxembourg, and Greece established diplomatic relations with north Korea. The European Union plans to send a high-level delegation over the coming months, and a number of major European firms have begun sounding out investment opportunities, particularly in the areas of electricity generation and transmission.

"Many European diplomats have sought to play down their differences with Washington—while pursuing a starkly contrasting policy," towards north Korea, according to the *Times*.

"We want very visibly to show that we support the process of closer engagement between the two Koreas," said British diplomat Antony Stokes in Seoul.

Pyongyang has welcomed these wider ties while not backing down in face of continued U.S. government hostility. Criticizing Bush's demand for "verification and checking" of any future missile deal, the government stated that such a policy "is in essence aimed at completely disarming us."

# S. African gov't retreats on land expropriation

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—After ordering the first land expropriation since the end of apartheid rule, the South African government quickly reversed itself in face of protests by right-wing farmer organizations.

On March 13, the African National Congress government ordered farmer William Pretorius to vacate his 1,200 hectare cattle and corn farm in Lydenburg, Mpumalanga province. The land officially became government property at midnight on March 20. That morning, as he had announced for at least a week in advance, Pretorius filed a court challenge to the ruling. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the land minister, Thoko Didiza, reversed the expropriation, and the land reverted to Pretorius.

In the early 1960s the Dinkwanyane community was forcibly removed from this area. The 600 or so families were among more than 3.5 million blacks driven off their land under white-minority rule between 1960 and 1982. The Dinkwanyane applied to win their land back under restitution legislation enacted after democratic, nonracial elections

in 1994. Of some 65,000 restitution claims lodged, about 11,000 have been settled.

The ANC government has repeatedly stressed that it does not intend to carry out widespread or uncompensated expropriation. Instead, it is offering to buy land on the basis of market prices determined by independent valuers, minus soft loans made earlier to the farmers. Pretorius, who bought the land some years after it was stolen from the Dinkwanyane, rejected the land ministry's offer of 848,000 rands (about \$108,000), holding out for his price of R2.1 million.

Chief land claims commissioner Wallace Mgoqi said the reversal of the expropriation was intended to create a better climate for talks on a purchase price for the farm. "It has nothing to do with us fearing to lose the court case," he said. "This is a confirmation of the government's commitment to promoting negotiated settlements as far as possible." But he did not explain why the government had acted as it did in the first place.

About 200 right-wing farmers rallied

March 16 in Lydenburg against the government's announcement of expropriation. "This means war," declared one. The Transvaal Agricultural Union, which represents many white capitalist farmers in north-eastern regions of the country, issued a statement saying, "A second Zimbabwe must be avoided at all costs. South Africa cannot afford becoming a guinea pig. We have too much to lose. After the [state's] blatant disregard for basic property rights, no landowner can sleep soundly." The larger national capitalist farmers' union, Agri SA, took a more conciliatory stance.

Reuters quoted Phineas Molatsi, a Dinkwanyane spokesperson, as saying "Pretorius is much better off than we were. The government is paying him money and giving him lots of time to go. We were forcibly removed. Our houses were bulldozed and set on fire. There was no compensation for us.... We don't have a fight with him. We just want our land back."

Racist assaults by white farmers and vigilante "commandos" remain widespread in South Africa. A white farmer was charged

with murder on March 8 after a 27-year-old black man was shot and had his head smashed in with a pickaxe. The assault took place on March 6 when the man and a friend were collecting firewood on a farm 30 miles west of Pretoria. They were confronted by two farmers who said they were trespassing. The man killed was buried on the spot.

A day earlier, in Potchefstroom, about 100 miles west of Johannesburg, another white farmer threw tablets of phostoxin, a highly toxic fumigant, into the houses of 47 farm workers, allegedly because they refused to report for work that morning. About 70 people, including the workers' children, were evacuated. A number of them began vomiting, became drowsy, and developed muscular pains. The farmer was charged—and released on R5,000 bail (\$625).

## Protest of cop brutality

Johannesburg cops arrested and assaulted teacher Sylvia Manda, 33, on March 9. To justify the arrest, police captain Bongani Dube said Manda failed to produce identity documents or "elaborate about her citizenship." Dube said "her complexion, facial appearance, accent, and her style of dressing" made cops suspect she was an "illegal immigrant."

Every year thousands of black workers and peasants are routinely harassed and/or arrested as cops sniff around for proof of South African citizenship. Even when they produce such proof, they are often beaten up and thrown in jail on any available pretext by the police, an institution largely unchanged since apartheid rule. Such stories are legion, particularly in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

As Manda was being arrested some of her students yelled at the police to let her go, but to no avail. After a cop beat her with a blunt object, Manda, bleeding profusely, was thrown into a cell for four hours before she was taken to a clinic. She intends to lay charges against the cops.

When contacted by the press, national police commissioner Jackie Selebi, an ANC appointee, said he could not comment as he did not know about the case. He added that he did not know of any anti-immigrant prejudice among the cops.

## Mineworkers threaten strike

Officials of the National Union of Mineworkers say they will call for a strike at mines run by Placer Dome if a government arbitration body says it cannot arbitrate in the dispute.

The company suspended 13 union shop stewards in March and barred them from the mines. Workers are fighting the company's efforts to declare overtime compulsory instead of voluntary, and unilateral interpretation by the bosses of health and safety agreements, among other issues. Placer Dome claimed the shop stewards were "intimidating" workers and "interfering" with mine security. About 2,000 miners marched at the Westonaria mine in mid-March to demand the union representatives be reinstated and in support of their other demands.

# Beijing opposes U.S. weapons sales to Taiwan

BY RÓGER CALERO

In meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and President George Bush held on March 21 and 22, Chinese vice premier Qian Qichen reiterated his government's opposition to Washington's plans to sell four destroyers equipped with the Aegis radar system to Taiwan.

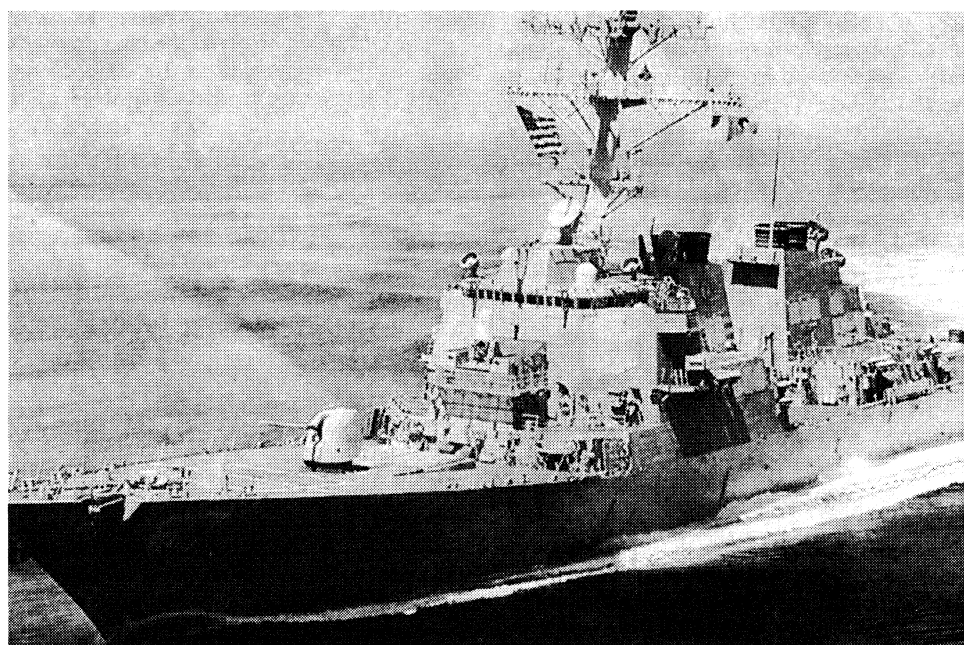
Qian, the highest ranking Chinese authority to visit Washington in two years, said that going through with this sale would be a "grave violation" of a 1982 agreement with China signed by then-President Ronald Reagan.

The Chinese official warned that the sale of these weapons would be detrimental to U.S.-China relations and would raise military tensions in the area. Bush administration officials have said the decision on whether to proceed with the sale will be made in April.

The arms-deal decision will have a major impact on Washington's relations with the Chinese workers state. According to a CNN news article, "Bush... campaigned on a pledge to treat China as a 'strategic competitor' rather than a 'strategic partner,'" the policy it claimed Clinton was pursuing. The arms deal under consideration was initiated under the Clinton administration.

Qian also expressed concern with the fact that Taiwan's acquisition of the Aegis-capable vessels could allow Taiwan to link into a future U.S. missile defense system that would be directed at the Chinese workers state.

U.S. officials have refused to rule out the sale, saying that it would be consistent with Washington's 1979 commitment to Taiwan to provide it with the necessary weapons for defense against the mainland. For their part, Chinese officials have criticized the U.S.



U.S. Arleigh-Burke class destroyer equipped with Aegis radar system that Washington is pressing to sell to Taiwan. Sale of missile system would heighten tensions in region.

government for not sticking to its 1982 pledge that future sales to Taiwan would not increase the quantity and quality of its weapons.

"We don't consult with China on our arms sales to Taiwan," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. "We sell to Taiwan what we think is appropriate and necessary to meet their legitimate defensive needs."

The Chinese government has also rejected a suggestion made by U.S. officials that the sale could be put off if China moves its missiles away from the region just across from the Taiwan Strait where they are presently deployed.

"The more weapons you sell, the more we will prepare ourselves in terms of our national defense. This is logical," stated Chinese president Jiang Zemin in an interview published in the March 24 *Washington Post*. In the same interview Jiang referred to the question of reunification. It is an "internationally recognized fact that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China," he said.

The Bush administration has been stepping up its rhetoric around the Chinese government's violations of human rights, as they seek to press the ruling Chinese bureaucracy for further economic concessions in exchange for supporting its bid to join the World Trade Organization.

# Lockout by Co-Steel bosses ends in Canada

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Union solidarity played a key role in forcing Co-Steel Lasco bosses to end their lockout of 460 steelworkers who refused to accept deep concessions demanded by the company. The workers, members of Local 6571 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), were locked out December 18.

At a March 11 union meeting 79 percent of the 366 workers present voted to accept a new three-year contract. "Neither side got all that it wanted, but the new contract will be advantageous for those of our members who are close to retirement," union local president Denis Kavanagh told the paper *This Week*.

The pact contains concessions on the company's rights to contract out work and working hours. The bosses will eliminate about 100 jobs through attrition over the life of the contract. Workers gained improvements in the pension plan, and those who retire before August will receive a \$30,000 incentive payment.

Three hundred workers will be recalled by April 1 and the rest by December 2. Acceptance of the contract was contingent on

workers not called back to work now being eligible for federal employment insurance.

Several weeks ago Co-Steel Lasco, which transforms metal scrap from the auto industry into structural steel, began hiring 200 replacement workers. When the union declared its intention to prevent the replacement workers from crossing its picket lines, the bosses went to court to get an injunction limiting the number of pickets. The court hearing was adjourned until March 12 to see if negotiations between the union and company were possible, and the company committed itself not to try to bring replacement workers across the picket lines during that period.

Local 6571's efforts to win solidarity from other workers bore fruit in the United States when members of USWA Local 2632 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, learned that Johnstown Corp. had received a major order to machine 67 blank rolls made by Hitachi of Japan from Co-Steel Lasco. The unionists decided to refuse the work. The company tried to pressure the local to accept the job because 150 members are on layoff and others are working reduced hours.

The *Post Gazette* reported that the local's president, Curtis Corle, said, "There comes

a time in a man's life when you have to say 'no' and mean it. When it comes to a company trying to make a scab out of me, doing fellow steelworkers' work, that's a sacred cow. I'll always say 'no.'"

The solidarity of Local 2632 members "may just have been the reason" the talks resumed, said Ontario USWA subdistrict director Jim Stewart. "It was nothing short of heroic," said Denis Kavanagh. Both comments appeared in the *Post-Gazette*.

Co-Steel Lasco bosses also felt the pressure from auto workers at the nearby General Motors assembly plant. Three days before the contract vote, Canadian Auto Workers Local 222 raised \$15,000 at a plant gate collection for the USWA Local 6571 membership. The day before the vote a large contingent of Co-Steel Lasco workers and their families marched in the International Women's Day parade in Toronto. They carried signs declaring: "No scabs," "I am a victim of Co-Steel injustice," and "Injustice to one is injustice to all."

*John Steele is a meat packer and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.*

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in New International no. 10

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by Jack Barnes

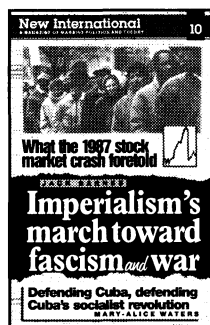
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# U.S. government targets rights in spy trial

**Continued from front page**  
armed attacks against Cuba over the last decade, and against opponents of Washington's economic war on Cuba in Miami. They have also succeeded in revealing how the U.S. government has provided a base of operations for these organizations and refused to take any effective steps to halt their activities. This is despite being provided information by the Cuban government on these plots.

For example, a series of bombings of tourist spots in Cuba in 1997 was "organized, planned, and financed from the United States," declared Roberto Hernández Caballero in the trial. Hernández, currently a lieutenant colonel for the State Security Department of the Interior Ministry of Cuba, testified as a defense witness at the trial March 29 and 30.

The prosecution sought to prevent Hernández's testimony, arguing that he was not personally present when the bombs went off in Cuba. U.S. District Court Judge Joan Lenard, presiding over the trial of the five Cubans accused of espionage, overruled the U.S. government attorneys.

This evidence further boosted the defense case that the five men face frame-up charges that should be dropped. Testimony by a series of witnesses brought to the stand by defense attorneys over the last month has also shed further light on Washington's unceasing cold war against Cuba.

Retired U.S. Air Force colonel George Buchner testified March 21 that evidence from the records of the U.S. government's National Security Agency shows that the Brothers to the Rescue pilots were well within Cuba's airspace when they were shot down (see last week's *Militant*). This contradicted earlier claims by Washington, and by a 1996 United Nations Security Council report, that the planes were brought down over international waters. Buchner's testimony and similar evidence presented in a federal courtroom here, however, has re-

ceived little media coverage beyond Miami.

The revelations by U.S. military officers and other witnesses called on by the defense have further divided backers of Washington's policy towards Cuba in southern Florida. Some Cuban-American groups here have denounced recent developments in the trial and urged other rightists to boycott it. Ramón Saúl Sánchez, for example, president of the Democracy Movement, told *El Nuevo Herald* March 28 that opponents of the Cuban Revolution should not appear on the witness stand because the defense "is trying to blame the exiles for a series of aggressions and to present the regime of Fidel Castro as the victim."

The Democracy Movement organized several anti-Cuba flotillas from Miami a few years ago, at least one of which entered Cuban waters and ended up having one of its boats forcibly turned around by Cuba's gunboats. The organization also has an "air command," consisting of several small planes that accompany the flotillas.

Sánchez and others complain the defense has turned the tables, putting them on trial, instead of the defendants. These rightists were not too pleased with how Basulto's cross-examination by defense attorneys turned out.

The Brothers to the Rescue leader had tried to portray himself in earlier testimony as a "nonviolent resister" to "Castro's tyranny" and a follower of Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi.

After the defense grilled him on the stand for five days, however, Basulto testified March 16 that he would do nothing to stop illegal arms shipments to Cuba because "he broadly supports exile groups bent on overthrowing Fidel Castro violently," according to the March 17 *Miami Herald*.

## Attempt to whitewash frame-up

At the same time, statements by U.S. government officials, the prosecution claims, and news coverage of the trial along with editorial comments have pushed the ruling-class effort to cover up the attempted frame-up of the five men.

An editorial in the January 8 *Miami Herald* is one such example. Titled "Cuban Justice?" the editorial claimed the defendants are getting a fair trial here, something that could supposedly never happen in the courts in Cuba.

"What kind of justice could accused spies in Cuba expect?" the *Herald* editors began. "Certainly nothing like the process affording a vigorous defense and civil-rights protection to the five men accused of spying for Cuba on trial in Miami's federal court."

The editorial described with derision the fact that four of the five defendants have private criminal defense lawyers appointed by the court and "paid by public dollars." The fifth is represented by a public defender.

The editorial portrayed the trial proceedings as advantageous to the defendants. "Jury selection took nearly two weeks in a

painstaking effort to get impartial jurors, and no Cuban American now sits in judgment," it stated. The *Herald* editors made no mention of statements by several potential jurors, however—a number of Cuban-Americans and other Latinos, in particular—who asked to be disqualified for fear of recriminations if they voted "not guilty" at the end.

"Our justice system presumes even accused spies innocent until proven otherwise," the editorial said, and praised the coverage of the trial by the "media—beholden to neither court nor government."

Such presumption of innocence, however, has not been the *Miami Herald's* stock in trade around this trial. Miami's main daily has all but convicted the five men as "Castro's spies" in numerous headlines, news articles, and opinion columns. One of the first feature articles on the case the paper ran, for example, was titled "Spies Among Us: Castro Agents Keep Eye on Exiles." The article, published in the April 11, 1999, *Herald* not only outlined the government's plan, but implied that "Cuban spies" are plentiful in Miami, especially among Cubans who defend the Cuban Revolution.

## Violation of Cuba's sovereignty

In a related case, Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Alan Postman ordered the Cuban government March 23 to pay \$20 million to Ana Margarita Martínez, the former wife

**Continued on Page 14**

## Hear Cuban Youth Leaders

Yanelis Martínez

### They will speak on "Youth and Cuba Today" at these campuses:

#### Minnesota

##### St. Olaf College, Northfield

Mon., April 9, 3:00 p.m. Holland Hall 50. Sponsored by *Presente student club, Political Awareness Committee*. Contact: Angie Moreno, president of Presente, (507) 646-2987. Email: [moreno@stolaf.edu](mailto:moreno@stolaf.edu)

##### St. Thomas University

Mon., April 9, 7:00 p.m. Roach Hall Auditorium. Sponsored by *Graduate School of Education Critical Pedagogy Project, and Peace and Justice Center*. Contact: Prof. Seewha Cho, Graduate School of Education.

##### Macalester College, St. Paul

Tues., April 10, 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Olin Rice 150. Sponsored by *Council Multicultural Affairs Office*. Contact: Jesse Buendia

##### Hamline University, St. Paul

Tues., April 10, 8:00 p.m. 1536 Hewitt Ave., Gliddens Learning Center. Sponsored by *Political Science Dept., Alma Latina, Multicultural Affairs*. Call (612) 869-3194. E-mail: [wdiaz01@gw.hamline.edu](mailto:wdiaz01@gw.hamline.edu).

##### St. Cloud State University

Wed., April 11, 2:00 p.m. Brown Hall Auditorium. Sponsored by *Student Coalition Against Racism, Organization for Prevention of AIDS in Africa*. Call Holly Santiago, (320) 333-3274, or e-mail: [miss\\_lil\\_e@yahoo.com](mailto:miss_lil_e@yahoo.com)

##### University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

Wed., April 11, 7:00 p.m. Room 175 Wiley Hall, West Bank. Sponsored by *Global Studies Program, Spanish-Portuguese Department, Minnesota Cuba Committee, La Raza Stu-*

## Javier Dueñas

dent Cultural Center. Call (612) 624-1512, or e-mail: [Paul0324@tc.umn.edu](mailto:Paul0324@tc.umn.edu)

##### Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Thurs., April 12, 12 noon to 2:00 p.m., 1515 Hennepin Ave. Sponsored by *Department of Anthropology, Global Issues*.

##### Gustavus Adolphus College St. Peter

Thurs., April 12, 5:00 p.m. Crossroads International Building, Main Floor, Sponsored by *Women's Studies, and Latin American, Latino and Caribbean Area Studies, departments of Communications, Peace Studies, others*. Contact Prof. Gaston Alzate (612) 378-0533, e-mail: [galzate@gac.edu](mailto:galzate@gac.edu)

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Grand Opening of New Pathfinder Bookstore.** Sat., April 14, 7:30 p.m. Reception 6:30 p.m. 4208 Vernor. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**Working Farmers Confront Worldwide Crisis of Capitalism.** Fri., Apr. 6, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

### NEW YORK

#### Brooklyn

**The Fraud of Education Reform Under Capitalism.**

Speaker: Röger Calero, staff writer, the *Militant*. Fri., Apr. 6, 7:30 p.m. 372A 53rd Street. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

## CALENDAR

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Rally to Defend the Charleston 5 Dockworkers.** Speaker: Ken Riley, International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422. Sat., April 21, 5:30 p.m. UAW Local 22 Hall, 4300 Michigan Ave. Tel: (313) 680-5508.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**March for the Right of Return of Palestinian Refugees.** Join the demonstration and rally to support the right of Palestinian refugees to return to homes and lands from which they were expelled. Sat., April 7. Noon. Assemble at Israeli Mission, 42nd and 2nd Ave. For more information, contact The Palestine Right to Return Coalition, P.O. Box 401, Hummestown, Pennsylvania 17036. Fax (717) 832-1173. Email: [PRRC@mail.com](mailto:PRRC@mail.com)

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**March for Women's Lives.** Sun., April 22. Assemble: 11 a.m. Senate Park. March: 12 Noon Step-Off. Rally: 1 p.m. near Capitol. Sponsored by the National Organization for Women. For more information, call (202) 628-8669.

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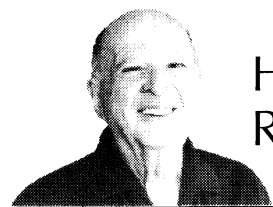
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**'Cultural warriors'?**—Until recently, the "Come-to-Jesus" Union Rescue Mission in Los Angeles provided overnight shelter to



Harry Ring

some 300 men, 200 mothers with children, and about 200 single women. With stiffened rules, beds for men have been cut. Now, pleading lack of funds, it has barred single women. The mission has an annual budget of \$16 mil-

lion and spends about \$300,000—less than 2 percent—on shelter for women.

**Next on hit list?**—With internet entrepreneurs making fortunes overnight and crashing even faster, a new cottage industry is flourishing—therapists offering counseling to the traumatized momentarily wealthy. Explained one therapist: "A lot of the work we do is grief work. They lost money, lifestyle. They work through the stages of grief, shock, disbelief, anger, depression, and acceptance."

**Can you believe it?**—"Garages fail to pass on fuel tax cut to motorists."—The Times, London.

**Contagious disease**—A couple

of columns back we reported a sudden shortage of tetanus vaccine. Even with our crystal ball in the repair shop we ventured to suggest an energy-type "crisis." Apparently we weren't being paranoid. A few days later, a headline declared: "Soaring Prices Curb Availability of Tetanus Vaccine."

**Semantics**—Responding to the market drop, the top dog at the Cisco Corp. announced the company was cutting expenses, including firing up to 5,000 employees. They would be removed, he said, by "voluntary attrition" and "involuntary attrition." One pundit wondered what was "voluntary attrition?" Simple enough. The boss man had intended to say, "volun-

tary, involuntary attrition." If you think that's an oxymoron, you don't grasp the mind of a capitalist slave master.

**Just doing their thing**—"WASHINGTON—Police are investigating allegations that a Black officer was beaten by white officers who mistook him for a carjacking suspect. Robert Byrd was off duty when he saw a robbery at a gas station and called for help on his police radio. Byrd's lawyer said responding officers pulled him out of his car and beat him."—News item.

**What price sexism**—Employers in the United Kingdom can boast that despite an equal pay law enacted 30 years ago, women who

work part time draw 60 percent of the wages of men, and full-time women workers get 80 percent. A report said the UK wage gap is the largest in Europe. Meanwhile it was reported that in the United States, women draw 70 percent for every dollar paid to men.

**A foul system**—"More than 1 billion people have no access to clean water and 3.4 million die every year of diseases that could easily be remedied by better supplies and sanitation, the World Health Organization said. The world's poor pay more than the rich for worse water—up to 20 percent of household income—and face a greater risk of waterborne disease."—News item.

## The need for a class alliance of exploited producers

Printed below are excerpts from *The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States*, by Jack Barnes. The report was adopted by the 1984 national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. The entire report is published in *New International no. 4*. Copyright © 1985 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

As emphasized at the beginning of this report, our governmental perspective is based on the alliance between the working class and working farmers. This class alli-

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

ance of exploited producers against the capitalist exploiters is at the heart of our entire strategy. In this section of the report, I want to focus on a section of the draft political resolution that explains an important aspect of the worker-farmer alliance more clearly than our party has done in the past.

This section of the resolution opens with an explanation of how the U.S. capitalist class is forcing exploited farmers to shoulder the burden of capitalist stagnation and competition. It explains:

Income from farming remains too low to enable family farms to meet the rising costs of land, equipment, seeds, fuel, fertilizer, and loans. The squeeze on these debt slaves is being tightened by the banks; the land speculators and real estate sharks; and the seed, fertilizer, food processing, farm equipment, and energy monopolies. Washington's policies are designed to benefit the capitalist farmers and big food processors and merchants. They do little or nothing to free exploited working farmers from the scourge of foreclosures, land dispossession, and repossession of tools, livestock, and machinery.

Having laid out the crisis confronting family farmers, the resolution continues:

The working class has a direct stake in the resistance of exploited farmers against this ruinous proletarianization. The larger the number of working farmers who succeed in this struggle, the stronger will be the worker-farmer alliance, which is essential to the advance toward a socialist revolution in this country. The more solid this alliance, the easier it will be to feed and clothe the population in a socialist United States. And the firmer will be the foundation on which to increase farm output to meet the needs of working people worldwide.

At first glance, it might seem strange for a workers' party to oppose the proletarianization of farmers. After all, the creation of our class is largely the result of the proletarianization of small farmers—or of freed slaves who aspired to become small farmers—over the past few hundred years. Won't an acceleration of that process today strengthen the ranks of the working class for the coming battles with the capitalists? We say no.

**What future does capitalism hold?**

What future does capitalism offer working farmers? Basically it holds out two roads.

One is to try to become a capitalist farmer. To get bigger and bigger, to amass some capital, to start hiring wage labor, and to become rich. That is the American dream, the great promise. But the problem is that it doesn't happen to many farmers.

(This dream is actually held out to workers too—the prospect of somehow scrimping and saving enough out of their wages to start a small business of their own someday, "to be my own boss." A smaller percentage of workers are prone to believe in this dream, however, since their conditions of life and work don't lead them to think of themselves as small businessmen. They neither possess any productive property nor have anything to sell on the market except their capacity to work.)

The alternative future that capitalism holds out to working farmers is proletarianization. This is not a dream. It is a nightmare that is happening to growing numbers of farmers. Dispossession of the land they work. Dispossession of their tools, machinery, and livestock. Being ruined and thrown down into the reserve army of labor, into the ranks of the jobless and the homeless.

It is not the demoralization and ruin of the producers that can furnish added power to the workers' fight for a better world. Involuntary proletarianization does not make exploited farmers as a class more progressive, more anticapitalist. Working farmers will not be won to the struggle for socialism by having their land and tools wrested from them, their confidence sapped, getting bloodied and battered. That is not the way forward for working farmers—or for the working class.

Of course, deepening social crisis will force many who are today working farmers to travel such a path. But that will be the product of objective conditions created by capitalism—whose effects on working people we seek to combat—not an outcome that we advocate.

Defeats do not advance the revolutionary struggle to establish a workers and farmers government, nor will the ruin of working farmers facilitate agricultural production and the transition to socialism following a successful revolution.

This is not a new position. Engels explained this in 1894 in an article addressed to socialist parties in France and Germany. "The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat," Engels wrote, "the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished."

The idea that the ruin of working farmers in any way strengthens the revolutionary labor movement has nothing to do with Marxism and the working class. It is a prejudice, with its origins not in our class but in the bourgeoisie and well-off middle classes.

The draft political resolution connects our approach to the worker-farmer alliance with the lessons that the workers' movement has learned since the Russian revolution about the tasks of workers and farmers governments in the countryside.

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "The Peasant Question in France and Germany" in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), vol. 3, pp. 472-73.



Militant/Heidi Rose

Farmers in Ontario, Canada, participating in March 14, 2001, National Day of Action. "The idea that the ruin of working farmers in any way strengthens the revolutionary labor movement has nothing to do with Marxism and the working class," writes Barnes.

"The goal of communists," the SWP resolution explains, "is not the transformation of exploited independent commodity producers into proletarians, either before or after the revolutionary conquest of power and expropriation of the bourgeoisie. Our

goal is the voluntary collaboration of all producers in discovering and developing the most labor-efficient and environmentally sound methods of cooperative and collective agricultural production, as part of constructing a socialized economy."

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS  
**THE MILITANT**  
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

April 16, 1976

**BOSTON**—Amid shrieks of "Get the nigger, kill him!" a frenzied mob of racist white high school students came close to beating the life out of a Black man at the doorstep of Boston's city hall April 5.

The attack came moments after 200 white students left the city council chambers where they had staged an antibusing demonstration as part of a sweeping racist school boycott.

Having received the blessing of antibusing city council members, including Louise Day Hicks, president of ROAR, Boston's main antibusing group, the mob left the building.

Upwards of fifty of the whites broke away and chased the Blacks, seizing attorney Theodore Landsmark. Landsmark, executive director of the Boston Contractors Association, was on his way to a city hall meeting.

Outraged leaders of the Black community responded swiftly to the attack. More than 200 Blacks, encompassing a wide range of community leaders and organizations, turned out for a Massachusetts Legislative Black Caucus news conference on the city hall steps the next morning.

State Sen. William Owens blasted city officials. Their leadership and support of the antibusing organizations, he said, was "the cause of racist attacks by white youth on Black adults, youth, and young children."

He indicted Boston Mayor Kevin White for his refusal to provide adequate safety for Blacks. "We must come to the realization that if city and state officials will not protect us, we will ask for federal protection, and short of that we must protect ourselves," he said.

**THE MILITANT**  
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
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April 16, 1951

New Deal, Fair Deal and Welfare State are now words of interest only to the students of history. By means of a few reforms, concessions and benefits the capitalists rulers of America were able to stagger through two terrible decades of depression and war. Today with the very existence of the profit system threatened on a world scale as never before, big business has launched a national offensive to beat down the living standards of the American workers, destroy hard-won reforms and undermine their organizations.

The N.Y. legislature, with Dewey and Wall Street guidance, murdered rent control, raised phone and utility rates. But the bill that sneaked through with the least publicity, one that will hurt thousands now but will scald millions of workers when the boom is over and the bust begins, is the Hughes-Brees unemployment insurance bill.

A checking system will be substituted for the fund whereby every benefit check a worker gets will be charged against his boss's individual account with the state. Each employer will be taxed according to how much unemployment benefits are paid to his workers. The lower the benefits, the lower the employer's tax. Can you see how this is going to work? Every boss will be opposed to every single claim filed by his workers. Workers will now get hearings instead of benefits.

The giant corporations haven't dared to kill unemployment insurance directly. They are slaughtering it piecemeal, making sure of its total ineffectiveness.

# Respect China's sovereignty

Washington's violation of Chinese sovereignty and threats against the Chinese people should be condemned by working people everywhere. The U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II reconnaissance plane that collided with a Chinese jet off the coast of the Chinese island of Hainan and then landed without authorization was a spy plane, carrying out surveillance that the U.S. government does not tolerate off its shores.

U.S. president George Bush showed imperial arrogance when he said, "We have allowed the Chinese government time to do the right thing. But now it is time for our service men and women to return home. It is time for the Chinese government to return our plane." There have been no voices of opposition in the halls of Congress to this belligerent stance by the administration.

Washington's response is the latest in a long series of U.S. aggressions against the Chinese workers state. These include the efforts of the U.S. rulers to send in troops to crush the rising Chinese Revolution in 1945; the assault on Korea in the early 1950s that had the Chinese workers state as one of its central targets; and the U.S. government's current move to sell billion-dollar Aegis destroyers with antimissile capacity to Taiwan.

The U.S. rulers and their government have no respect for the sovereignty of any semicolonial country. In their drive for profit they see only the potential for cheap labor, cheap resources, and markets for their manufactured products and their high-interest loans. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Chinese people is seen as an unfortunate obstacle to getting access to what they need.

The rulers' arrogance and aggression against working people in China and other countries is an extension of their attitude toward workers and farmers in the United States. These include Washington's bipartisan attacks on

airline workers' right to strike, coal miners' black lung benefits, aid to working farmers facing ruin, health and safety on the job, protection of the environment, and women's right to control their bodies.

The purpose of Washington's heavy military presence in Asia, like its growing presence in Latin America, is to back up the U.S. rulers' ability to maintain social relations favorable to extracting huge profits from the exploitation of workers and farmers throughout the region.

The toilers in China, after throwing off Japanese colonial rule, broke out of the capitalist sphere of control in the late 1940s.

The lawful workings of the crisis-wracked capitalist system drives the U.S. rulers on an irreconcilable course to try to dominate Asia and the Pacific, overturn the workers states, and restore private ownership and the superexploitation of workers and farmers.

What stands in their way is working people, both in China and the United States. The fierce determination of working people in China, who defend their sovereignty and the conquests of the Chinese Revolution, are a mighty block to Washington's aims. And U.S. imperialism cannot hope to carry out its war drive without first dealing mighty blows to workers and farmers at home.

The defense of the sovereignty of the Chinese workers state strengthens the capacity of workers in the United States to defend ourselves against the antilabor offensive by the employers and their government. And it advances the working class along a course toward building a powerful revolutionary movement of millions that can take power away from the exploiting classes and prevent them from marching toward another world war.

Stop U.S. violation of Chinese sovereignty!

Stop the U.S. threats against China!

# Defend China's sovereignty

Continued from front page

pellers of the U.S. plane hit the F-8 jet flown by navy pilot Wang Wei, who lost control and ejected before it crashed. Wei is presumed dead.

When the other Chinese jet returned to the Lingshui air base on the Chinese island of Hainan, the damaged U.S. spy plane followed it and also landed.

"The United States should take full responsibility, make an apology to the Chinese government and people, and give us an explanation of its actions," said Zhu. He said the air base in Hainan received no notification of an imminent emergency landing. "This was not a civilian plane but a military plane that entered without permission, violating international and Chinese law."

## 'Sovereign immune status'

U.S. government officials claim the spy plane has "sovereign immune status" similar to an embassy, which prohibits Chinese authorities from entering the aircraft without permission. The U.S. flight, however, entered China's 200-mile exclusive economic zone, violating the United Nations Convention on Maritime Law, which bars military aircraft from flying over the territory of another country without approval.

"If this plane is sovereign American territory, how did it land in China?" said Zhu. He said China has the right to detain and question the U.S. crew as part of its investigation. "This is the right of any sovereign country."

The Bush administration has refused to apologize for the collision and a Pentagon spokesman, Rear Adm. Craig Quigley, has stated that surveillance flights off China's coast will continue. "The United States government doesn't understand the reason for an apology," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer to reporters April 4. "Our airplane was operating in international airspace and [the crew] did nothing wrong."

Washington's aggressive stance has emboldened rightists to call for military action against China. *National Review* columnist John Derbyshire declared, "That plane should be destroyed without any regard whatsoever to Chinese sensitivities, or indeed lives and property.... Let's show these gangsters what a *real* violation of Chinese air space looks like."

Anger over the incident has mounted among Chinese working people and youth who compared the loss of the pilot with the death of three Chinese journalists after U.S. warplanes bombed the country's embassy in Belgrade two years ago. "The boys at our school are quite upset," said Bo Liu, a graduate student in Chengdu. "All of us draw a straight line between Hainan and Belgrade."

"China simply cannot agree that the United States has the legitimate right to spy on us, and no other country could agree to that either," said Yan Xuetong, director of the Institute of International Relations at Qinghua University in Beijing. "How can the United States say that 'we have a right to spy on you, but you don't have a right to enter a plane that landed on your territory without official agreement?'"

On the day of the collision, the government of north Korea condemned the U.S. spy flights in the region. "The U.S. imperialists committed over 180 cases of aerial espionage against North Korea in March," said a dispatch from the Korean Central News Agency. "Involved in them were strategic and tactical reconnaissance planes and commanding planes with various missions deployed in their overseas bases and South Korea."

Much of Washington's military presence in the region is based in Japan where 47,000 U.S. troops are stationed. Opposition has been growing against the U.S. military force in Okinawa where the spy plane that collided in Chinese territory flew from.

# Cuban workers discuss Theses

Continued from Page 9

ward using certain jobs for personal gain at the expense of state resources or by deceiving consumers and customers.

17. It is clear that no need, no matter how pressing, can justify antisocial conduct that glorifies disorder and moral decay and violates the essential moral values of the revolution. A response to such a problem cannot be delayed; the administration must confront it vigorously and systematically, with the decisive aid of the union, the participation of the organs of public safety, prosecutors, courts, and vigilance and action by the whole population.

18. Thieves and corrupt individuals not only take away people's peace of mind and undermine their morale, but steal important economic resources and harm the profitability of enterprises; that is, they are stealing from all the people. It is essential for workers in every workplace to watch for, combat, decisively reject, and prevent such conduct.

19. Among the measures that were necessary to adopt to confront the complex economic situation at the opening of the 1990s was allowing the free circulation of hard currency. This measure was taken because, either it would be done officially—and mechanisms could then be established to redistribute among the population, to the extent possible, the income produced through various channels—or it would left to chance, to be diverted to the black market and illegal methods, without any possibility of redistribution. With the passage of time, there is no doubt that this decision was correct and necessary, and that, combined with the results of other measures, it has contributed to the country's economic recovery.

20. These beneficial effects are accompanied by an inevitable effect on society—social and economic inequalities that have made the political and ideological aspects of Cuban society more complex. These repercussions, which were always anticipated, place new demands on

our conscious activity in defense of socialist values.

21. Everyone can clearly see the complexities involved in the circulation of two currencies, principally in monetary-commercial relations between enterprises, as well why it was necessary to resort to this measure, even as a temporary move. The government and the union movement agree on the importance of ending this temporary situation and restoring the exclusive circulation of our national currency as soon as the necessary conditions exist—conditions that are tied in particular to the increase in production and economic efficiency. We will thus be able to shorten this period to the extent we work harder and better.

22. On the other hand, the changes our country is carrying out are sometimes blocked by the inertia of some administrative cadres and the lack of response and commitment of workers and union leaders who have little or poor training. Some still maintain the attitude of continuing to expect unlimited resources. While such an attitude was always an erroneous and complacent one, under today's conditions in a neoliberal and globalized world, it is an unacceptable illusion that leads only to paralysis.

23. There is also the bad habit of failing to meet commitments and contracts—including those reached with the workers—with the apparent confidence that nothing will happen. There are also expressions of self-sufficiency, arrogance, dishonesty, and double standards, with a large dose of individualism. Such attitudes flourish when weaknesses in political work persist, including when unions play a passive, formalistic, and hollow role.

24. The union movement is an active defender of the principle that under socialism, a leader who is not competent, modest, and austere cannot be a leader; and that socialist officials, revolutionary cadres, are servants of the people. At the same time we recognize and fight together with leaders who have these qualities.

# Washington stages spy trial

Continued from Page 12

of Juan Pablo Roque. The judge ruled that Havana committed acts of "sexual battery, torture, and terrorism by orchestrating Roque's phony marriage with Martinez so he could penetrate the exile community," according to the March 24 *Miami Herald*.

Juan Pablo Roque was one of four men indicted in absentia on "spy" charges, in addition to the 10 people arrested by the FBI in 1998. Roque, who reportedly had joined Brothers to the Rescue in Miami, returned to Cuba in 1996 prior to the shootdown of the Brothers to the Rescue planes and declared publicly his support for the Cuban Revolution.

In an earlier hearing, Postman had announced he wanted

to impose \$20 million in punitive damages but stopped short of doing so because that would be prohibited "under federal law because of Cuba's immunity as a sovereign nation." The judge said March 23 he changed his mind after lawyers for Ana Margarita Martínez claimed they found an exemption for this case in the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

Using the same act, another federal court issued a similar ruling violating Cuba's sovereignty in February. The court ordered Havana to pay \$93 million in damages to the families of the four pilots of the Brothers to the Rescue planes shot down in 1996. In both cases, Washington has indicated it will allow those affected to use frozen assets of the Cuban government in the United States to get their awards.

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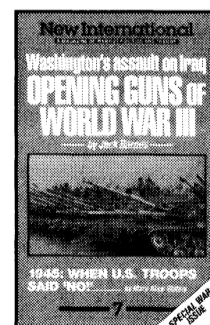
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# Washington expands use of 'secret evidence'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Washington is expanding its use of "secret evidence" to imprison those whom U.S. government officials claim are involved in a "global conspiracy to kill Americans." White House officials have also stepped up their hype about "cyberterrorist" attacks on federal facilities and other sites that make up the country's infrastructure in their anti-terrorism campaign.

On March 22 the *New York Times* reported that Mohamed Suleiman al Nalfi had been secretly jailed in New York City for four months. He left his home in Sudan last November after accepting a job offer in Amsterdam and receiving a plane ticket. Upon landing in Kenya he was arrested by government authorities there and placed under the custody of the FBI. According to the *Times*, al Nalfi was indicted for being an "early associate" of Saudi businessman Osama bin Laden, who the U.S. government claims heads an international "terrorist network."

The big business media portrays al Nalfi as a participant in the 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. But so far he has been not charged with any role in the blasts. Four men are currently on trial in the Federal District Court in Manhattan for their alleged involvement in the explosions, including two who are charged with participating in a "global plot" against U.S. citizens.

One of the four men on trial, Mohamed Rashed Daoud al-'Owhali, was grabbed by FBI and Kenyan cops, interrogated for two weeks and coerced into a confession. Owhali said the U.S. agents told him that if he demanded an attorney he would be left in the hands of the Kenyan authorities where "you will be hanged from your neck like a dog."

U.S. government officials have not explained why they "kept Mr. al Nalfi's arrest secret for so long, but in the past, prosecutors have worked quietly, sometimes for many months, to win cooperation from terrorism suspects," the *Times* reported. Apparently unable to force a confession during "negotiations" with al Nalfi, they filed public charges against him. "I am not guilty," he said at his arraignment March 16.

"He was basically kidnapped by the FBI," said al Nalfi's lawyer, Marion Seltzer. "He has never been to this country, knows nobody in this country, and is basically being housed like an animal." She said al Nalfi is being held under 23-hour-a-day lockdown prison conditions.

## Growing use of 'secret evidence'

In a report last year before the U.S. Congress's National Commission on Terrorism, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) said the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) along with the Justice Department acknowledged using "secret evidence" in some 50 cases between 1992 and 1998. The ACLU report stated the government is currently using secret evidence in 12 cases.

"Virtually every recent secret evidence

case that has come to public attention involves a Muslim or an Arab," said Gregory Nojeim, ACLU legislative counsel who presented the report. He said this "form of classified information often consists of mere rumor and innuendo...[and] is often unverified and unverifiable."

Secret evidence courts were established under the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act signed into law by former president William Clinton. The power to use secret evidence was expanded by the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, also signed by Clinton. Both laws target the rights of immigrants, including those who are legal permanent residents. Provisions in the two laws authorize the government to deport immigrants, deny asylum, and deny bond to immigrants who are tarred as "terrorists."

The government has been forced to release at least three Arab men jailed on secret evidence. In 1999 Nasser Ahmed, an Egyptian man imprisoned for three-and-a-half years, and Palestinian Hany Kiarledeen, in jail for 19 months, were both released after being accused of terrorism. "They're liars, and they know they are liars," said Nasser, referring to U.S. government officials when he walked out of a New York jail on Nov. 29, 1999.

Last December Mazen al-Najjar, a Palestinian jailed by the INS on secret evidence, was released in the wake of public outrage. He spent three-and-a-half years in prison without being charged with a crime.

Meanwhile, Washington's stepped-up antiterrorism propaganda has broadened to include warnings about so-called terrorists who may allegedly attempt to use computer technology to launch a "cyberterrorist attack." At a March 22 forum on Internet security, U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice stated, "Today the cyber economy is the economy. Corrupt those networks and you corrupt this nation."

The day before Rice spoke an article appeared in the *Washington Post* asserting that "an attack from a terrorist group, rogue nation, disgruntled former employee, or hacker could destabilize the nation's economy unless there is closer cooperation among federal agencies and better coordination between private businesses and the multi-

## Workers in Belgrade protest gov't austerity moves



Police in Belgrade prevent hundreds of workers from marching to parliament March 27 to protest budget cutbacks. The Serbian parliament March 30 passed the 2001 budget, which projects freezing the wages of public sector workers. In response, some 730,000 members of the main state-sector union staged a one-hour warning strike and vowed to undertake further actions. Two days earlier, in the southern town of Nis, some 5,000 trade union activists protested their deteriorating standard of living. The new budget projects inflation of 30 percent while real wages only go up 3 percent. Last year inflation was more than 110 percent.

agency National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC), which is headed by the FBI."

Ronald Dick, director of the NIPC, the FBI's "cyber-crime unit" that was set up by the Clinton administration three years ago, introduced a "new NIPC team," that includes representatives from the CIA and the Defense Department. Rear Admiral James Plehal, a naval commander, was named deputy director of the NIPC on March 20, according to the *Washington Post*.

"Information warfare is obviously something the United States, the National Security Council, the Department of Defense, the CIA, the FBI, and our private-sector partners are very concerned with, Dick said.

National Security Council adviser Rich-

ard Clarke, who heads the "counterterrorism efforts" for the Bush administration, has stated that "an attack on American cyberspace is an attack on the United States" that should trigger a military response. Clarke served as "counterterrorism czar" under the Clinton administration.

In January Clinton announced the creation of the National Counterintelligence Executive with a "broad mandate to identify potential security threats and vulnerabilities," the *Times* reported. The *Wall Street Journal* said the duties of the counterintelligence "czar" who heads up the new spy outfit will include "identifying and protecting critical corporate secrets and private-sector assets."

## Thousands protest austerity moves in Turkey

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in cities across Turkey March 30 to protest austerity measures being demanded by the government as part of securing a new loan from the International Monetary Fund. A Reuters dispatch reported, "Shouting 'IMF go home,' they gathered mainly in downtown Ankara and in Istanbul amid a heavy police presence."

Major unions united under the umbrella of the Labor Platform said that the IMF's proposals are unacceptable and warned that

protests and work stoppages will continue. Union officials are demanding that wages be increased to match the 34 percent rise in inflation. According to Reuters, an unnamed senior economic official said the government would "call for sacrifices from all sides...including restraint in upcoming collective wage negotiations."

A political crisis in Turkey's fragile coalition government precipitated a severe financial collapse in February, forcing the government to float the lira, which has since lost a third of its value against the dollar.

## LETTERS

### Affirmative action ruling

A federal court in Detroit ruled March 26 that the University of Michigan could no longer use its affirmative action policy in the admissions process for the law school. This ruling faces two major problems.

One, the ruling strictly violates the U.S. Supreme Court precedent of the 1978 ruling of *Bakke v. The Regents of the University of California*. The other major problem is that this ruling claimed that diversity in education was not a "compelling state interest." The truth is that in the state of Michigan, along with the rest of the United States, minorities have been excluded from higher education due to inadequate resources.

If it is not a compelling state interest to help boost the amount of minority enrollment, along with providing education to people of all socio-economic classes, then the court might as well reinstate segregation and ignore another U.S. Su-

preme Court ruling like *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Ari Paul

Ann Arbor, Michigan

### Inequality for vets

Veterans of World War II and Korea are passing away at the rate of 1,500 persons a day, yet there has been a terrible inequity persisting over 20 years. Military Service Retirees effectively must fund their own disability compensation by forfeiting one dollar of earned retirement pay for each dollar of disability compensation received from the Department of Veteran Affairs.

The excuse for not addressing this issue has been budget constraints and the national debt. This is especially galling in light of president Bush's \$1.6 trillion in tax reductions for the rich.

William Jung

Flagstaff, Arizona

### Foot-and-mouth disease

On a recent trip to Ireland the

effects of foot-and-mouth disease were evident to all travelers who were advised not to travel to Northern Ireland and to stay away from rural areas.

One farmer told us many farmers could be wiped out of their livelihood and lose much of what they had worked for all their lives if the disease spreads to the country. Much of the Irish economy is dependent on agriculture, which also effects dairy, garment, and some of the liquor industry.

All who discussed the situation showed great concern for the farmers in Ireland as well as their counterparts in the United Kingdom.

Dennis Chambers

Chicago, Illinois

### Honoring Chuck Sheehan

An article on the life of Charles "Chuck" Sheehan in the *Los Angeles Times* described him as an "ardent unionist." He was the Southern California president of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers

Organization (PATCO) in 1981 when U.S. president Ronald Reagan fired him and all other controllers in the union for going on strike. Sheehan relentlessly fought the U.S. government for the union's right to exist and was still active at the time of his death.

He opened many doors for those who wanted help workers on strike at Eastern Airlines. He spoke at the Militant Labor Forum several times regarding the PATCO strike.

Virginia Garza

Los Angeles, California

### Appeal to Vicente Fox

Compañeros, please publish the following letter to Mexican president Vicente Fox. *Hasta la victoria siempre* (Until victory, always).

President Vicente Fox: Mexicans that live in other parts of the globe, like other Mexicans, yearn for peace with dignity, liberty, and justice. We hope to obtain very soon what we long for. We urge you to consider that we only want equal

rights for all Mexicans, whether they are mestizos or indigenous. The indigenous people must be given special recognition for their great ability to resist for more than five centuries the cruelest of actions.

We need creation of jobs in our Mexico, the immediate solution to the conflict in Chiapas, the creation of a fund for the assistance of all retirees, and above all the removal of obstacles to the right of the people to choose how to govern themselves in each region.

In economic exile and missing the land of our birth.

José Sandoval López

Ignacio Valdovinos

San Jose, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## Workers protest layoffs by Ericsson

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN  
AND DANIEL AHL

KUMLA, Sweden—Six hundred people assembled in the city square here March 31 to protest the layoff of 1,500 workers out of 3,200 employed at Ericsson's mobile phone factory in this town of 19,000 people. Several days earlier the telecommunication company said it will lay off 2,600 workers from its factories in Kumla and Linköping. Another 1,200 workers in the United Kingdom will lose their jobs when factories in Carlton and Scunthorpe are closed.

"In one way, it's not a surprise," said Mona Hagerlöf, who along with some of her co-workers at Ericsson came early to the rally. "We've been suspecting that something like this could happen. But it feels bitter to hear about it on the seven o'clock news and realize others have known about this beforehand. As workers, we should be the first to be informed, not the last."

Ericsson presented its first "crisis package" in late January, announcing that it would shift its production in Kumla from cell-phones to operating stations. "We worked hard, but never got the chance to do this," another worker told the *Militant*. "No thank you, we want to keep our jobs," she said upon being handed a leaflet from Kunskapslyftet (the Knowledge Lift), an education program for unemployed workers.

The layoffs at Ericsson and its subcontractors are the largest in Sweden since the closing of the country's six biggest shipyards in the late 1970s. Before reporting a 5 billion krona loss for the first three months of the year, Ericsson accounted for roughly 20 percent of the total stock value of the Stockholm Stock Market, which it has dominated for years (1 krona = US 10 cents). Ericsson accounts for some 16 percent of Sweden's exports. Following the report, the company's stock plunged by 22 percent.



Some 600 people rallied in Kumla, Sweden, March 31 to protest layoffs at Ericsson's mobile phone plants. Banner says, "Ericsson lets Örebro province down."

"The whole nation, the whole of Sweden has been proud that Ericsson is a Swedish company," said Göran Johnsson, national president of the Metal Workers Union, at the rally in Kumla. "We want to continue being proud." Johnsson asked the two top Ericsson bosses, CEO Kurt Hellström and Chairman of the Board Lars Ramqvist, "You get paid 15 to 20 million kronas. Now show that you deserve these high salaries."

Metal Workers Union local president Peder Boström presented a range of measures that, he said, "will save at least 1,000 jobs." Among the proposals presented to the company were to withdraw production from

subcontractors, increase "flexibility," early retirement, an education program, and to sack (layoff) the 1,700 workers at Ericsson employed nationally through agencies such as Manpower. Boström ended his speech by pleading to the company bosses, "Don't let Ericsson fall. Don't move the jobs to low-wage countries, let the jobs remain in Sweden."

On the day of the rally, Swedish minister of industry Björn Rosengren supported Johnsson and picked up on the same economic nationalist theme, blaming the layoffs at Ericsson on "an Americanization of Swedish industry, in which profit and up-

turns on the stock market control the whole process."

### 'Not much confidence in Ericsson'

Anna-Karin Karlsson, who has worked with surface soldering for six years at Ericsson, said the rally "was good. We showed that we care about what's happening." She told the *Militant* about a co-worker who moved to Kumla from Norrköping when the company closed its factory there in 1997. "He doesn't have a lot of confidence in Ericsson anymore."

Many workers from the closed factory in Norrköping moved to work at the Ericsson plant in nearby Linköping in 1997. In January, Ericsson announced that 500 people would be laid off at the Linköping factory. But by March rumors were spreading that this would not be enough, and one-third of the workers at the plant called in sick March 22. Four days later Ericsson announced they would lay off 1,100 out of the 1,650 workers in this factory.

"I really hope the union local will call a membership meeting now," said Kjell Nielsen after the rally in Kumla. Nielsen, now an assembler, worked as a driver until the company outsourced the job. "It is important that we discuss our demands before the negotiations begin on who will be laid off," he said. Nielsen said Ericsson has hired an outfit to "measure the competence" of the workers, which many union members fear will be used by the company to handpick which workers they want to keep. "I think the union should demand the company stick strictly to the seniority principle, and not agree to anything else," Nielsen said.

The plunging stock value of Ericsson, along with the layoff announcement, has resulted in a media campaign demanding that Hellström and Ramqvist resign. After its first three-month report for 2001, the liberal daily *Expressen* put two pictures of Hellström, along with the text "Wanted," on the front page of its March 14 issue.

Ericsson has announced that another "package of measures" will be presented on April 20 in connection with the next quarterly report.

*Catharina Tirsén is a member of the Metal Workers Union at Ericsson Radio Access in Stockholm. Daniel Ahl is a member of the Industrial Union in Stockholm.*

## UK Communist League launches campaign

BY PHIL WATERHOUSE

LONDON—Against the background of a deepening crisis facing working farmers, the Communist League launched the campaign of Paul Davies for parliament in the upcoming elections. Davies, a car worker and a member of the Transport and General Workers' Union, is standing in North Southwark and Bermondsey constituency in south London.

Davies said at a March 30 meeting that the campaign is one "of working people involved in struggle, reaching out to others who are taking a stand and championing unity and solidarity in the face of the as-

sault by the bosses and the government."

Davies and his campaign supporters joined picket lines of the London Underground rail workers, members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers, who struck for 24 hours over health and safety issues. "Privatization of the old British Rail national rail network has been a disaster for working people," he said. "Thousands of workers have lost jobs, and many more have been reemployed at lower wages, in worse conditions, and on temporary contracts."

The crisis facing working farmers, he said, has been made worse by government restric-

tions in the wake of an outbreak of the foot-and-mouth disease. "We urge the trade unions to support the struggles of farmers as they fight to prevent the loss of their incomes and their land," Davies said, "including immediate and full compensation for

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## Rail workers shut down London subway

BY PHIL WATERHOUSE

Members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers (RMT) shut down the London Underground for 24 hours March 29 over health and safety issues. The cause of the dispute is the planned privatization of the underground rail network and its breakup into different companies by the Labour government. In an earlier strike, the drivers union, the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) closed the Underground February 4-5.

The RMT was prevented from joining the strike by a court ruling, although members refused to cross ASLEF picket lines. The rail unions fear the impact on jobs and work conditions that privatization would bring about.

On a picket at the Northumberland Park depot in north London, RMT member Glenroy Watson reported that out of the 200 union members working there only four have crossed the picket line.

Safety and the long working hours are also at issue. "A year ago we won a reduction in hours to a 35-hour week, but station

staff are still doing a compulsory 42 hours," he said.

Adam, a young RMT member from west London, said, "The ASLEF drivers have not turned up for work today because we supported them last time by not crossing picket lines. There are already safety problems on the Underground and with privatization it will get worse."

The *London Evening Standard* portrayed the rail unions as dinosaurs "entrenched...in the dark ages." Yet the paper had to admit that only 31 out of a possible 475 trains ran March 29, with no trains at all on most lines. Trying to whip up antiunion sentiments, photos in the paper showed football-size crowds waiting to get onto the buses and people walking to and from work.

"We've shown our strength and solidarity today by striking together," Ian Brandon said. "If they are seeking private money to run the Underground, then whether this comes from shareholders or bondholders, they are not going to invest unless they can skim off a profit. That means a failing infrastructure and more attacks on safety, working conditions, and pay."

BY BASKARAN APPU  
AND ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

RICHMOND, New Zealand—Workers at two Carter Holt Harvey (CHH) workplaces joined together for a march through this town March 17. They included waterfront workers from the Port of Nelson and timber workers from the Eves Valley timber mill.

The 70-strong march was called by the National Distribution Union with support from the Waterfront Workers Union and the Engineering, Printing, and Manufacturing Union. Workers at the Eves Valley mill are currently provided with transport to and from work.

CHH wants to withdraw the free transport from the site to reduce its wage bill. There are about 250 workers at the sawmill and about half use the company-provided transport. Workers had rejected the company proposal of a one-time payment of NZ\$1,200 as compensation for the loss of transport (NZ\$1 = US 40 cents). The Eves Valley workers were joined by Nelson port workers looking to strengthen their fight against a union-busting attack by CHH. A rally following the march was addressed by union delegates and officials from three unions and by the Labour Party member of parliament for the Maori electorate of Te Tai Tonga.

Waterfront workers throughout the South

Island have been continuing to protest against Mainland Stevedoring, an antiunion outfit contracted by CHH last year to load logs at South Island ports. Every ship Mainland has loaded over the past five months has been met by union pickets, with large contingents of police escorting the nonunion labor onto the wharves.

Waterfront workers organized a picket in Nelson March 27 of the ship *Torm Eastern*. Mediation talks between CHH, Mainland, and the Waterfront Workers Union have come to a standstill.

Safety is a key issue in the dispute. Mainland operates without a hatchman to guide the crane operator and watch for the worker called a digger operator in the ship's hold. Instead it relies on radio communication between the crane and the digger, and the crane operator often can't see the digger. The company operates with only two breaks in a 12-hour shift, as opposed to the standard three, and they do not rotate jobs in a shift. Mainland's operations also threaten job security on the wharves. Instead of permanent jobs the company has turned to employing workers on a casual basis.

*Baskaran Appu is a member of the National Distribution Union. Annalucia Vermunt is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.*