

THE MILITANT

SPECIAL FEATURE

**Cuban leader reports on
1961 victory at Bay of Pigs**

— PAGES 8-10

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VOL. 65/NO. 18, MAY 7, 2001

Thousands march to defend right to abortion

High school and college students swell rally at U.S. capitol

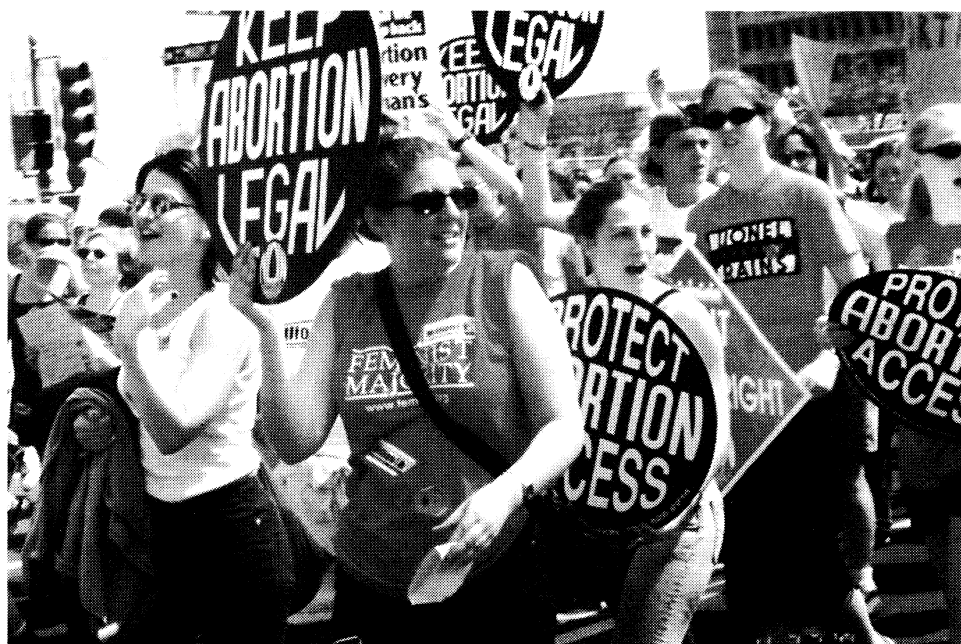
BY AMY ROBERTS
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON—Chanting “Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate” and “Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide,” some 7,000 supporters of a woman’s right to choose abortion marched past the U.S. Congress and the Supreme Court here on April 22.

The marchers were spirited and enthusiastic, expressing the determination of a new generation of young women stepping forward to answer the government’s attacks on abortion rights. High school and college students joined a generation of veterans from earlier mobilizations for women’s rights. For many participants this was the first such national demonstration they had ever attended.

As the marchers set out up Constitution Avenue past the Supreme Court on their way to the National Mall, a small group of right-wing antiabortion advocates stood with large posters condemning a woman’s right to choose abortion. This fired up the demonstrators, who responded to the rightists with loud chants such as, “Pro-life, your name’s a lie, you don’t care if women die.”

Called an Emergency Action for Women’s Lives, the protest was organized by the National Organization for Women (NOW). Some 150 organizations endorsed it, with activists coming from 160 campuses, according to Patricia Ireland, president of NOW.



Defenders of a woman’s right to choose abortion march April 22 in Washington

Among those riding a bus from William Paterson College in Wayne, New Jersey, was Lisa Mycyk, 20, who participated in the October World March for Women and is a volunteer with Planned Parenthood. “We are the majority opinion,” she stated, “and women refuse to have their rights taken away.”

More than 100 young people organized vans from Boston University in Massachusetts to the action. Participants also came from as far away as Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin, as well as from Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Connecticut,

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Florida rallies protest police brutality

BY ERIC SIMPSON

STUART, Florida—St. Paul’s AME church here was jammed with 250 people the evening of April 22 for an NAACP-called mass meeting to begin organizing against cop brutality. Stuart is a small town on the Atlantic Coast of central Florida. The meeting was called in response to the brutal killing of Stacey Scales, a 32-year-old Black

man. He was shot seven times April 14 by police officer George McLain, who is white, after being stopped for allegedly driving with his lights out.

“This was a case of harassment gone bad,” Gwendalyn Jenkins told the *Militant*. Jenkins is a 45-year resident of the neighborhood known as East Stuart where Scales was killed. She was one of many residents

who used the occasion to give voice to longstanding complaints about harassment of the Black community by Stuart’s police department.

Charlie Matthews of the NAACP reported that he had just come from Pensacola, Florida, where the NAACP is also part of protests against police brutality. On Febru-

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‘In Cuba the people are involved in making the decisions’

BY BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO—“One of the things that surprised us is how advanced the struggles in the United States are,” Yanelis Martínez told a meeting of the Cuban Youth Lectures Committee at the conclusion of a four-week visit to the United States.

“We met many people who have confidence that the day will come when people in the United States will have had enough of exploitation,” said the Cuban youth leader. “What happened in Cincinnati confirmed that for us—just hearing about Timothy Thomas who died at the hands of police is one thing. But it doesn’t compare to being at a meeting of 600 to protest this and hearing Timothy’s mother speak. Or to hear the community challenge [the city government] as to why more schools are not being built, as compared to prisons.”

“It has reaffirmed my belief in our revolution, and that our revolution is not just for us Cubans, but for people all over the world.”

Commenting on the numbers of youth who attended the meetings on college campuses during the tour—many of whom knew little about Cuba before—Javier Dueñas said, “We were able to raise doubts about the false image presented by the U.S. media about the revolution. We hope these encounters will inspire youth to learn more, to read about Cuba, and to come to Havana this summer to participate in the conference

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Bush presses ‘free trade,’ anti-China military drive

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Washington took two major steps this past week to strengthen the economic clout of U.S. imperialism and its military encirclement of China. At the conclusion of a summit in Quebec April 22, U.S. president George Bush along with heads of other governments in the Americas except for Cuba announced plans to form a Western hemisphere-wide trading bloc by 2005. Two days later, the U.S. administration said it had decided to sell advanced weapons to Taiwan, a move opposed by the Chinese government, which seeks to unify the breakaway province with the mainland.

While holding off for the time being on the sale of destroyers equipped with the Aegis radar system to Taiwan, the Bush administration agreed to provide the reactionary government with an extensive array of military weaponry. These include four Kidd-class destroyers, antisubmarine aircraft, mine-sweeping helicopters, and up to eight modern diesel submarines.

The destroyers, described by the Military Analysis Network as “the most powerful multipurpose destroyers in the [U.S.] fleet,” can be delivered in three years as opposed

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NEW YORK CITY ♦ SUNDAY, MAY 20

In Defense of Leninism: Expanding Opportunities for Communists Today

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

Campaigning to Use New Pathfinder Pamphlet

Mary-Alice Waters

Socialist Workers Party National Committee

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Representative of Steering Committee of Pathfinder Reprint Project

**Doubling the Membership of the
Young Socialists: A Movement Campaign**

Member of the YS National Executive Committee

**Report from Socialist Workers Party
National Committee Meeting**

Jack Barnes

National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party

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

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at Amsterdam Ave. (on the Columbia University campus)

‘Militant’ subscription drive off to good start — page 5

Monopolies drop suit against low cost AIDS drugs in S. Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—It was a case of total capitulation. In the face of protests and worldwide attention on their refusal to drop drug prices for millions of people on the African continent infected with HIV/AIDS, the pharmaceutical monopolies dropped their case in the Pretoria High Court on April 19.

Protesters erupted in celebration inside and outside the courtroom as drug company lawyers not only surrendered, but agreed to pay court costs of the defendant—the South African government.

The Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association and 39 companies, among them drug giants Merck, Bristol-Myers Squibb, GlaxoSmithKline, and others, withdrew their case against the Medicines and Related Substances Control Amendment Act. It was, in the words of one protester, "a complete climb down."

The act, signed into law by former South African president Nelson Mandela in 1997, was targeted for attack by the drug monopolies and various governments—particularly Washington and European Union (EU) states—while still in draft form.

The legislation will allow Pretoria to produce or import generic versions of all manner of medications at lower prices than currently charged by the patent holders, and establish a pricing committee to force companies to justify what they charge for drugs. The act had not gone into effect pending the outcome of the court challenge.

The derailing of the court case should boost the efforts of semicolonial governments to press the fight for more affordable medications. Brazil in particular now faces pressure from the World Trade Organization for its policy on production of generic AIDS medications.

The trial opened for two days in March, and was postponed for six weeks when the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), an AIDS activist organization, was allowed to support the government as a "friend of the court." The TAC planned to submit evidence

on how the drug monopolies were preventing millions of people from obtaining life-saving drugs for HIV/AIDS. When the court reconvened on April 18, the judge granted a recess until the withdrawal was announced a day later.

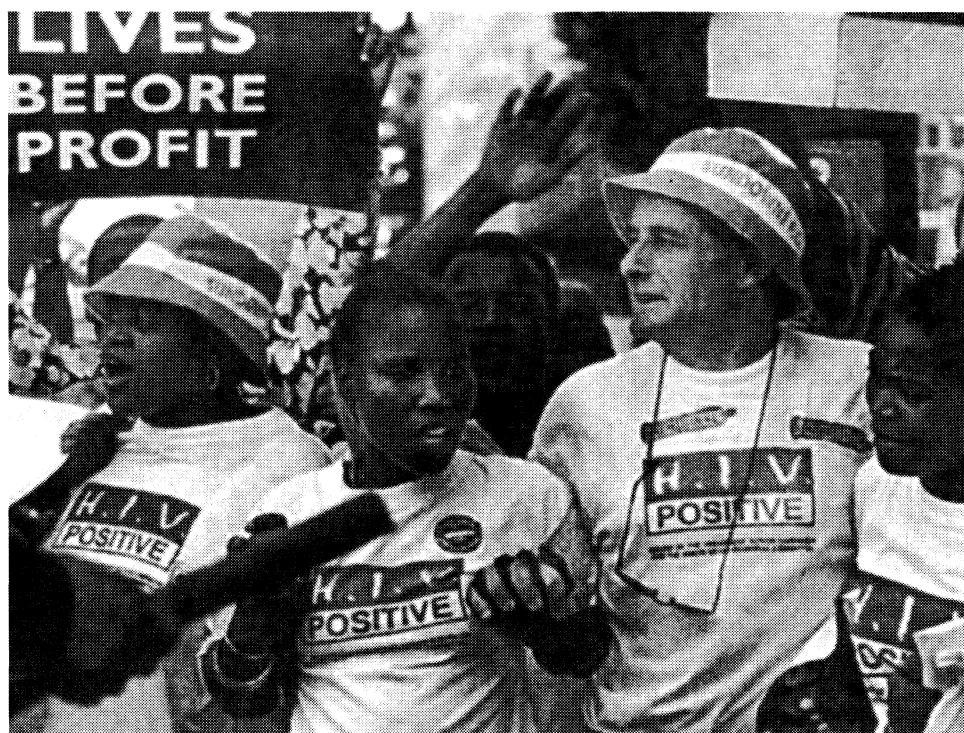
High prices 'must be condemned'

In an April 15 television interview with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Mandela said, "I think the pharmaceuticals are exploiting the situation that exists in countries like South Africa—in the developing world—because they charge exorbitant prices which are beyond the capacity of the ordinary HIV/AIDS person. That is completely wrong and must be condemned."

To increase pressure on the government here, pharmaceutical multinationals closed factories and canceled investments in South Africa in the years leading up to the trial. They waged a campaign claiming that Pretoria intended to violate treaties dealing with drug patents, and lined up political support from imperialist governments.

However, all of this backfired from the moment the trial opened on March 5, as thousands of protesters from the African National Congress (ANC), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), churches, and AIDS activist groups marched in several South African cities and abroad. They explained that millions of lives had been lost and are still threatened by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, particularly in Africa, where more than 25 million people are infected.

The protesters made sure everyone understood that the court challenge was about the greed of the drug companies, and their ability to ensure they could maintain monopoly pricing in the face of this disaster. Workers and farmers throughout the world, along with many people in the middle classes, could immediately identify with this struggle based on their own experience with the cold-blooded profits-before-health system. Even Washington and the EU began backing away from overt support to the drug companies.



Protests like the above march to U.S. embassy in South Africa, helped force drug companies to drop their suit that aimed to halt production of affordable AIDS drugs.

"This is a victory not just for South Africa, but for Africa and the whole developing world. I would like to say thank you to the whole world for supporting us," said health minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang. "While the South African government's drug policy was driven mainly by domestic factors, we never lost sight of the international dimension and we hope our experience has contributed in some way to the larger debate on access to affordable health care for developing countries and for the poor in wealthier nations. We do not delude ourselves that the end of the court case is the end of our struggle for access to affordable medicines. In reality, we are only at the start of a long and arduous journey."

In a joint statement, COSATU and the TAC hailed the withdrawal as "a historic victory of good over evil." The organizations said they would call for rapid steps to make anti-retroviral drugs, which prolong the life of people with AIDS, available here. They called on the government to increase the health budget to make this possible. The

government has suggested that it will not move anytime soon to provide these medications in public hospitals. It says it cannot afford them, and that their safety has yet to be confirmed.

In a joint statement with the drug companies, the South African government said it would respect international agreements on "intellectual property"—a position from which it has never deviated. The drug companies, for their part, were backpedaling as fast as possible. In recent months, they had already announced, with great fanfare, that they would cut the price of some HIV/AIDS medications for African governments—at prices, however, still beyond the reach of workers and farmers.

"We're a very major corporation. We're not insensitive to public opinion. That is a factor in our decision-making," J. P. Garnier, chief executive of GlaxoSmithKline, told the *New York Times*. "We don't want the public to misunderstand the issues. We have never been opposed to wider access. We have discounted our drugs. We've done everything we could."

U.S. gov't ends 'banana war' dispute with European Union

BY HILDA CUZCO

Washington and the European Union announced a settlement in the nine-year "banana war" trade dispute that gives more access to U.S. companies such as Chiquita Brands International to markets in Europe.

The European Union said it will institute a transition period of modified quotas and tariffs to end in 2006, while the U.S. trade officers said Washington will lift a range of punitive tariffs imposed on some European products by July 1.

Since 1993, when the European Union market was created, new rules were imposed against fruit imports from Latin America—where U.S. companies have plantations—in order to protect investments by European capitalists in their former colonies in Africa

and the Caribbean.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Chiquita Brands and Dole Foods, the leading U.S. banana enterprises, raked in profits from European sales because bananas could be sold at twice the price of those in the United States. Chiquita alone had 40 percent of the banana market. With the 1993 regulations, Chiquita's market share and profits plummeted. The company filed suit against the European Union and demanded Washington impose trade sanctions in retaliation.

Dole contends the new deal favors Chiquita because the new European import licences will be based on import levels from 1994 to 1996 when Chiquita had a bigger share.

THE MILITANT

'Don't ask for our rights, take them'

The recent demonstration of thousands in Washington to defend the right to choose abortion bolstered the resistance of all working people against the employers' assault on our wages, working conditions, and dignity. The 'Militant' explains why the fight for women's rights is essential to forging unity in struggle.



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Israeli forces mount brutal incursions into Gaza Strip

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

During April the Israeli government has escalated its military repression against Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, carrying out repeated incursions into the area. Supplementing a range of military vehicles and weapons with bulldozers, Tel Aviv's troops have demolished houses, police headquarters and other official buildings of the Palestinian Authority (PA), and uprooted crops on hundreds of acres of farmland.

As of April 20, at least 394 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli police, military, and settler attacks since unrest accelerated in the last three months of last year. The Israeli death toll stands at 71.

Tel Aviv seized on a series of mortar attacks on Israeli targets launched from the Gaza Strip as justification for the brutal raids into the 30-mile-long coastal area inhabited by 1.2 million people, which is ostensibly under control of the Palestinian Authority and off-limits to Israeli military forces.

"We think the use of mortars is disproportionate," said Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres in justifying the raids. "They are not supposed to have mortars according to the Oslo agreement" negotiated between the Palestine Liberation Organization, headed by Yasir Arafat, and the Israeli regime in 1993. Palestinian security forces are officially limited to 7,000 light personal weapons, 120 machine guns, and 45 wheeled armored vehicles.

The April 19 *Washington Post* noted that "Palestinian mortars have yet to take a life and rarely cause damage to buildings." The Hamas organization has claimed responsibility for many of the attacks. "The means are primitive, but mortars are a symbol, a gesture," said Hamas spokesperson Ismail Abu Shanab.

Describing an April 14 Israeli incursion,

the Palestinian Center for Human Rights reported that Tel Aviv's forces "demolished 16 Palestinian-owned houses and their contents, making more than 170 Palestinian civilians homeless.... This escalation came four days after a similar attack on the western area of Kahn Yunis refugee camp. On April 10, Israeli forces demolished 30 houses.... Dozens were wounded with live bullets and artillery shell shrapnel."

April 17 move to reoccupy

An April 17 offensive on a number of targets, including the main office of the Palestine Authority police forces in Gaza City, and two headquarters of the Force 17 security forces associated with Arafat was described by CNN as "Israel's hardest punch at the Palestinians in seven months of violence."

The air, land, and sea assaults "led to the closure of the Egyptian border at the southern end of Gaza and left the area in disarray with homes destroyed, one dead, and 30 wounded," reported the Reuters wire service. A border post was destroyed near Beit Hanun, and the rain of fire was so heavy that the family of a 20-year-old policeman killed at the post was unable to retrieve his body for several hours. "We felt helpless. We could see his broken body but there was nothing we could do," said the man's cousin, Hussam al-Masri. Eventually, stretcher bearers from the Red Crescent medical organization dashed to recover the corpse.

"We lived a night of fire, war, and horror," said one 30-year-old resident of the northern town of Beit Hanoun. In Gaza City, "the shelling continued for more than three hours and it was all after midnight," said Saud Abu Ramadan, a journalist.

The Israeli military divided Gaza into



Participants in protest of 1,000 people stand on rubble of house destroyed by Israeli shells in Beit Hanun, the Gaza Strip, one of a number of demonstrations condemning Tel Aviv's occupation of the area in a military offensive beginning April 17.

three areas, prohibiting movement among them. Hundreds of people were forced to travel along beaches in donkey carts to points where they could pick up taxis and buses. One Israeli bulldozer dug a trench in the coastal road and piled it with rocks to bar traffic. "That's too much, that's too much," said one elderly woman, forced to take a detour along the sand.

The commander of the offensive, Brig. Gen. Yair Naveh, said that "he aimed to push back the line from which mortars are fired into Israel," according to the *New York Times*. The so-called "security belt" seized by the Israeli forces comprised two strips of territory, each more than a mile deep.

As troops flattened farmhouses, demolished police barracks, and felled acres of orchards to make way for an infantry battalion and other reinforcements, Naveh spoke of digging in for "days, weeks, even months." Thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank took to the streets to express their opposition.

The preparations for a reoccupation of the PA-controlled territory—described as "indefinite" by one army spokesperson—prompted sharp criticism from the U.S. government. Secretary of State Colin Powell described the Israeli action as "excessive and disproportionate." State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said that the Israeli forces should pull back immediately from the Gaza territory. That same evening, tanks and other military vehicles began moving back into Israel. The withdrawal was completed before dawn on April 18.

Tel Aviv plans 'pinpoint' operations

The next day the government of Ariel Sharon approved a proposal from Defense Minister Ben-Eliezer to conduct what he claimed would be "'smart and quiet pinpoint' operations inside Palestinian controlled...territories," according to the *Ha'aretz* newspaper. Further incursions were reported on April 21 and 22.

Justifying Israel's brutal and continuing crackdown, Sharon said several days earlier that "the end of the conflict will come only when the Arab world recognizes the innate right of the Jewish people to establish an independent Jewish state in the Middle East. And that recognition has not yet come."

Four Israeli jets fired six rockets at a radar site belonging to the government of Syria in the central mountains of Lebanon on April 16, destroying the installation and leaving three Syrian soldiers dead and a number wounded. Tel Aviv said it had acted in retaliation for attacks on the Israeli-Lebanon border by the Lebanese group Hezbollah. Two days earlier an Israeli soldier had been killed by an anti-tank missile.

This was the first Israeli attack on Syrian positions in Lebanon since 1996. Damascus maintains some 35,000 troops in Lebanon.

San Francisco workers discuss housing crisis

BY SARAH KATZ

SAN FRANCISCO—In 1980 a two-bedroom apartment in San Francisco rented for \$475 a month. Today, the same apartment rents for \$2,740 and the vacancy rate is 1 percent.

Although this crisis affects both working-class and middle-class layers, it hits working people, the elderly, and students the hardest.

Christina Medalie, a 46-year-old single mother, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "I did everything I was supposed to do. I worked. I paid the rent. I paid the bills. When it comes to that point and I still end up in a shelter there is something very wrong." Medalie was kicked out of her apartment so her landlord could move in. She spent months looking for a new place that would accept her federal Section 8 voucher.

Section 8 vouchers expire in four to six months. Last June only 37 percent of voucher recipients in neighboring Oakland could find housing before they expired. This is compared to 73 percent in June 1998. In San Francisco, two out of three vouchers expire before they can be used. Section 8 housing serves about 3 million households nationwide.

Most workers are finding it hard to find affordable housing close to where they work.

Tammy Lopez was living in Union City, a 45-minute drive from San Francisco, until her rent was raised from \$1,433 a month to \$2,300. She can't afford to move any further from the city because her husband has built up seniority at a trucking company there and would take a pay cut to start a new job. For now, like most working people, they are living with six relatives in a three-bedroom apartment in San Francisco.

At a March 9 Militant Labor Forum, Kendra Wilson, 26, spoke about the unjust treatment she's facing from her landlord. The roof of her apartment building had blown off during a wind storm last October. The landlord hadn't fixed the roof before it started to rain a few days later. Water caved the ceiling in, causing damage to Wilson's

apartment and those of two other tenants.

Wilson and the other tenants finally called a local television news station, which covered the story. The landlord then changed the locks and warned them to not step foot on his property. "The apartments have been fixed up and rented for \$950 per month. I was paying \$625," said Wilson, who now lives with her mother.

Wilson and the other tenants from her building have called a housing protest for April 26 at noon in Oakland. "I think it's important to speak out and educate. What was done to us was unfair. If we don't say anything about it, it means it will happen to

more people. I hope more people learn what's happening so they can act on it, to stop it," said Wilson in an interview after the forum.

One forum participant who just moved to the area explained how he stopped by a gas station, and ended up talking to the mechanic about housing. The mechanic pointed to the back corner of the room where his bedding was rolled up, and said that's where he sleeps.

Sarah Katz is a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

'Transformation of Learning' available in Icelandic

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Socialist workers and Young Socialists members in Iceland have begun distributing the Icelandic edition of the Pathfinder pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning: The Fraud of Education Reform under Capitalism*. The pamphlet rolled off the presses at Pathfinder's New York printshop in mid-April.

The new pamphlet is the result of work by a dozen volunteers in Iceland who translated the work, and of the Pathfinder volunteers who formatted the text, photos, and made the entire booklet ready for printing by Pathfinder's printshop.

In the pamphlet, which first appeared in English, French, and Spanish in July last year, Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes takes up a number of central political questions facing working people today.

They include the fraud of education reform under capitalism today, attacks on Social Security, the deadly consequences for workers of speedup on the job, federal assaults on welfare, and police repression and government measures that have dramatically expanded the number of working people behind prison bars on death row. Barnes describes the resistance to these government

and employer attacks by workers and farmers in the United States.

He explains that by rejecting the wealthy rulers' attempt to get working people to accept their framework of "looking out for number one" on each of these questions, more workers in struggle begin to see them as matters of social solidarity. Barnes says the working-class movement can "fight for the transformation of learning into a *universal and lifetime* activity. [As] part of preparing workers and farmers...to recognize that we are capable of taking power and organizing society."

In an interview from Iceland, Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdóttir, who edited the translation, said, "We began the work in the first week of a 12-week strike by teachers in Iceland." The teachers took action to defend the public education system and in support of their demand for a wage increase.

As the volunteers alternated between their translation work and building solidarity with the strike, they drew on material in the pamphlet to arm themselves politically in the discussions that arose, explained Gunnlaugsdóttir. The translators worked in groups of two, said Gunnlaugsdóttir, noting there was much discussion on the translations.

Arnar Sigurdsson, one of a number of Young Socialists members who worked on the translation, told the *Militant* that the ideas in the pamphlet "helped us to explain why the government was cutting the budget to the state schools, and why it was such a long strike. In response to remarks like, 'it seems like they don't care that students aren't going to school,' we explained, 'It's true—they don't care, despite all their fine speeches about the importance of education.'"

The YS worked with other young people to organize a sit-in of around 70 people at the Ministry of Finance in support of the teachers' demands.

Sigurdsson and Gunnlaugsdóttir said that the strike, which ended with the teachers being granted a significant wage increase, encouraged the volunteers to speed up their work. "We wanted to get it out while the discussion was still fresh," said Sigurdsson. "Now we will integrate sales of it into the circulation drive. We are trying to get it into high school libraries, along with other Pathfinder titles."

A Swedish-language edition of the pamphlet is in the last stages of preparation, says Mike Taber, a member of Pathfinder's editorial staff.

YS sales, Cuba activities attract new members

BY BERNARD ISLEY

PITTSBURGH—Recent activities by Young Socialists in the Pittsburgh area include sales teams on college campuses and meetings with students from several area universities. While discussing U.S. and world politics we introduced them to the *Militant*, explaining its importance as a source of news and analysis, as opposed to the distorted big-business, mainstream media. We are holding weekly classes on the Cuban Revolution, with the latest on *The Second Declaration of Havana*. With extensive leaflet posting and conversations during sales we expect more young people will attend the classes in coming weeks.

Representatives of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party here traveled to Cincinnati last weekend to learn about the struggle against police killings and to attend the funeral of Timothy Thomas, the young Black man shot down by the Cincinnati police. Many at the funeral and other actions protested against the Cincinnati police department and called for jailing the cop who killed Thomas. Many people were glad to find out about the *Militant* newspaper and its coverage of their rebellion from a working-class perspective.

While there we witnessed an unprovoked attack by the Cincinnati police on protesters. People there were angry about this latest assault and said such attacks were "normal" abuses of power by the city cops. We are planning a *Militant* Labor Forum April 20 to report back from our trip and discuss police brutality. Young Socialists members in Pittsburgh are helping build the forum in order to get as many youth to attend as possible. Participants will discuss the abuse of power by the police in every city, as well as the true role of the cops.

Members of the Young Socialists are also

working to build a delegation to attend the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange this July 22-30. Quite a few young people have expressed interest in participating. The Pittsburgh YS will now focus on meeting more youth to inform them about the Cuban Revolution and the history of the working-class struggles.



BY LAWRENCE MIKESH

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Through the recent one-week visit here by Cuban youth leaders Yanelis Martínez and Javier Dueñas, who spoke at area college campuses to hundreds of students, the Twin Cities Young Socialists was able to meet and work with a number of youth and students in several cities. As the Twin Cities chapter worked hand-in-hand with youth to organize the tour locally, the chapter is on a strong footing to recruit to the YS.

One youth, Sam Wegner, first attended a *Militant* Labor Forum about the new Pathfinder book *Fertile Ground: Che Guevara and Bolivia* just before the tour started. He was soon helping to staff Pathfinder literature tables and selling the *Militant* newspaper along with YS members. Wegner said one important accomplishment of the tour is that "it dispelled a lot of the myths around Cuba."

Nate Paulsen, a student at the University of Minnesota who was a central organizer of the youth tour here, said hearing Martínez and Dueñas was "a great opportunity for students to get a better perspective of the Cuban Revolution today. It's an even better opportunity for U.S. students to think about how the political and economic struggles of working people in the United States relate to the Cuban Revolution." Paulsen said the youth exchange "offers us a chance to see for ourselves the country of Cuba; a chance for students to open their minds more to the

revolution."

To take further advantage of the success of the Cuban youth tour, the growing number of those involved in building the youth exchange, and the interest in learning more about a revolutionary youth organization in the United States, we have scheduled a class series beginning April 15 to discuss three of the latest Pathfinder books on the Cuban Revolution: *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.



BY ROMINA GREEN

NEW YORK—The New York citywide YS chapter and members of the YS in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia participated in building several successful meetings for Javier Dueñas and Yanelis Martínez to speak at various campuses in southern New England. The meetings drew in many students and workers from the area who wanted to learn more about the Cuban Revolution.

Following an event to hear the two Cuban youth leaders at the University of Hartford (U of H), several students organized a follow-up meeting to discuss building a delegation for the Second Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange taking place in Havana July 22-30. The meeting included four students who are members of the Progressive Students Alliance (PSA) at U of H, one from Hofstra College, a young worker from the area, and a member of the Young Socialists. The PSA is supporting the fight by campus cafeteria workers on the campus. The workers, who work for a subcontractor, are denied free tuition for their children to attend the university, unlike the rest of the campus employees.

Rachel Fischer, a student from U of H and a member of the PSA, said her reason for building the Exchange is that she is "interested in an alternative form of government other than capitalism." In the meeting they discussed how to broaden the delegation to the Youth Exchange and ideas on raising funds for the trip. These include going to campus organizations and departments to sending donation buckets around the dorm rooms. They also discussed obtaining journalist credentials for their trip from campus and local newspapers as well as from radio and television stations in order to report on the Exchange upon their return.

In New York City Young Socialists members have begun working with several students and young workers to start organizing a delegation to the youth exchange. These youth are also interested in the Young Socialists and want to start studying the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Phidias Ahipeaud, a 22-year-old student from Medgar Evers College, is working on building the tour at his campus. When asked why he thought it important to intertwine studying communist literature and organizing the tour, he said, "Because it is not a tourist trip. It will help me understand the situation of the people living [in Cuba]."

Two young people came to a *Militant* Labor Forum held at the Pathfinder bookstore in the Garment District on the Chinese revolution and Washington's military threats against China today. In addition to wanting to learn more about the Young Socialists, they expressed interest in building the youth exchange.

Bill Schmitt and Jason Alessio, members of the Young Socialists, contributed to this article.

Killing by store guard sparks protests in Detroit

BY ILONA GERSH

DETROIT—Eighty protesters circled the parking lot of the Rite Aid Pharmacy in Northeast Detroit April 16, demanding that justice be served in the death of Alwanda Person-Jackson, 36.

Person-Jackson was killed April 6 after being attacked by the store's security guard, a cashier-manager, and another manager. She is the third person in the Detroit area to die at the hands of store security guards in the last 10 months. A fourth was brutally beaten on her head, but survived. "This is becoming an epidemic," said the Rev. Horace Sheffield III. "It has gotten totally out of hand."

Person-Jackson walked out of the store

carrying a basket of Swisher Sweets cigars and a Conair hair product she allegedly had not paid for. The alarm went off. A female security guard followed her out the door and tried to stop her from getting into her van. Seconds later, a cashier-manager came out to assist the guard, followed by the store manager.

According to a lawsuit brought by her family against Rite Aid, the three "hog-tied" her with an electric cord and one of them sat on her, suffocating her for more than five minutes before she went limp. They dragged her back into the store. Person-Jackson was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

None of the security guards responsible for the earlier deaths have been prosecuted.

Frederick Finley died last June 22 outside Lord and Taylor at Fairlane Town Center at the hands of security guards who accused his 11-year-old daughter of stealing a \$4 bracelet. One guard charged with involuntary manslaughter has not yet been brought to trial.

Travis Shelton died at the hands of security guards February 8 at a northwest Detroit Kroger supermarket after being stopped for allegedly stealing some meat. The Oakland County prosecutor did not press charges.

Gail Hardy was brutally beaten on her head and knocked unconscious February 21 by a security guard at another Rite Aid drug store. She allegedly used a pair of nail clippers and then put them back on the shelf. The guard was suspended and charged for the assault, but the case still awaits prosecution.

Several members of the Shelton family participated in the rally protesting the death of Person-Jackson. Algin Shelton, Sr., Travis Shelton's father, said he was at the protest to demand that the guard and managers be charged and prosecuted for murder. "I live

in Alabama," he said, "and I came up here because this has got to end. There can be no more deaths."

"I just want justice to be served," said Louvenia Banks, Person-Jackson's mother, who was at the protest. "I just met Travis Shelton's father. I'm glad so many people came here, because I feel like I'm not alone."

Family members, friends, and supporters carried signs that said "Human, not hogs," "No justice, no peace," and "Justice will prevail." They chanted "Rite Aid is not right!"

Rev. Horace Sheffield III announced that the Michigan chapter of the National Action Network (NAN) is sponsoring a public hearing on the issue. He encouraged people who have witnessed or experienced racist brutality to testify. "We have to find out the extent of these incidents," he said. The public hearing will be at the New Galilee Missionary Baptist Church, 11241 Gunston, on Thursday, April 26 at 6:00 p.m.

Ilona Gersh is a member of United Auto Workers Local 157.

Korean students protest Japan's new history textbooks



More than 3,000 elementary school students and parents marched in Seoul, south Korea, April 10 to protest a new set of history textbooks approved by the Japanese government. The marchers charged that the publications whitewash Tokyo's subjugation of Korea and other nations of Asia in the first half of the 20th century by describing it as a crusade for national independence of the affected countries. The governments of China and north Korea have also protested the attempt to gloss over Tokyo's brutalities.

Mass pickets shut some Toronto schools

BY ANNETTE KOURI

TORONTO, Ontario—Some 13,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 4400 are on strike here to demand higher wages and job security. The employees of the Toronto District School Board include school janitors, teachers of English as a Second Language, school secretaries, teachers of students with special needs, and school supervisory personnel.

The strike began March 31 after the Board claimed it did not have funds to meet the workers' demands. The school support workers explain that they have not received a pay raise in over eight years. They are demanding an 8 percent raise, comparable to what teachers received in Toronto last year.

The Ontario Conservative Government, headed by Premier Mike Harris, has cut millions of dollars from the provincial education budget over the last six years. Janine Bielskis, a day-care worker in an elementary school, explained to the *Militant* her

anger with the Board's position: "Instead of the board fighting for more funding, they're fighting their own workers."

Support workers have organized daily mass pickets at about a dozen high schools each day, effectively shutting them down. All schools have been affected, as many parents kept their children out of school. Many high school students have also stayed away in support for the strike. One explained to the *Militant* that she intended to go to school the first Monday of the strike, but "I didn't go in. I just hung out with the janitors and everybody outside the school."

Negotiations resumed Easter weekend, when Local 4400 dropped some of its demands for increased job security, and the provincial government indicated that they were not going to exercise their powers under the law and order strikers back to work.

Annette Kouri is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers at Quality Meats in Toronto.

Good response to 'Militant' by workers in Cincinnati

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

CINCINNATI—In the first week of the international campaign to win new subscribers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, socialist workers and Young Socialists have introduced the periodicals to workers, farmers, and young people who took to the streets here to protest the cop killing of Timothy Thomas, and to participants in the April 22 Emergency Action for Women's Lives in Washington. In a number of areas partisans of the *Militant* have gone back to plant gates at packinghouses, garment shops, textile mills, and coal mines and have been able to strengthen political relationships with a layer of workers, some of whom have purchased subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Some who subscribed also took advantage of the special price of \$1 offered by Pathfinder for *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* or *Pathfinder was Born with the October Revolution*. Both pamphlets complement the two publications, and using these valuable tools is an essential part of the circulation campaign.

So far we have sold 105 *Militant* subscriptions, 73 subscriptions to *PM* and 139 Pathfinder pamphlets, putting us slightly behind the pace in the circulation campaign. With a big push over the next week we can get on schedule.

Socialists from Cleveland, Detroit, and Newark traveled here over the weekend to continue to take part in discussions and protests against discrimination and police brutality in the city. We sold three *Militant* subscriptions; 51 copies of the paper; seven copies of the *Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*; the *Communist Manifesto*; *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X; and *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas*.

We received a very positive response to the *Militant*, especially the article on the protests in Cincinnati and the coverage on the Cuban Revolution. "You came at the right time," said Annette Brown, who lives in the Avondale section of the city, where a rebellion against police brutality took place in 1967. "There's going to be another uprising if they don't stop killing these Black youth," she remarked, expressing the opinion of several people we sold the *Militant* to.

Our sales team also went to Bond Hill, another predominantly Black working-class section of the city. This is an area where a number of workers at the huge General Electric plant live.

Before we started visiting people, we decided to make a shift in our sales approach, leading with the *Transformation of Learning* pamphlet and linking that with the *Militant*. We spent a couple of hours there, selling 10 papers, two *Militant* subscriptions, and seven copies of the pamphlet.

One Black worker, a member of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees who lives in the area, invited two of us into his home and almost immediately indicated he would buy a subscription and the pamphlet.

"What are you trying to accomplish?" he asked us. We pointed to the Cuban Revolution as an example for workers and farmers in the United States. While expressing some skepticism on communism, the Cuban Revolution, and whether a revolutionary leadership can be forged that can lead the U.S. working class to challenge the capitalist rulers for power, he said he appreciated us stopping by.

Participants in the circulation drive are planning another trip to Cincinnati next week.

Big sales at April 22 demonstration

Young Socialists members, socialist workers, and other supporters of the *Militant* participated in the April 22 national march for women's rights in Washington, where they sold more than 200 copies of the *Militant*, 16 *Militant* subscriptions, and four *PM* subs.

YS member Olympia Newton said a sales team she joined sold three *Militant* subscriptions. "We started by encouraging people to buy subscriptions, explaining why they would need to read it on a regular basis," said Newton. "We pointed to articles on the Cuban Revolution and how this is the only way to secure rights for women. One young woman from New Jersey responded, 'Oh, come on, do you really think that's possible?' When we said yes, she said,

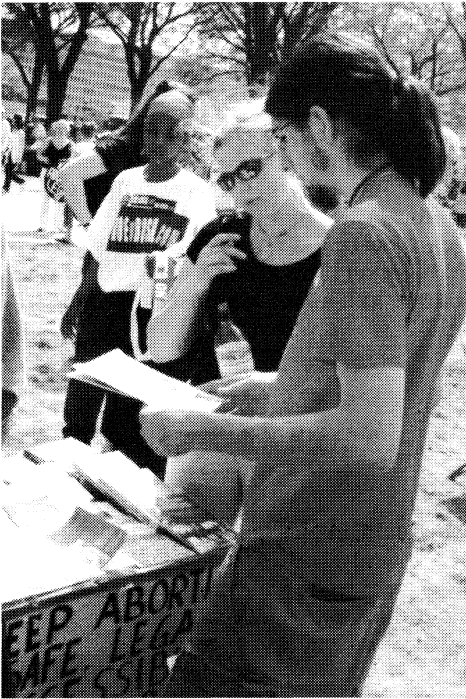
"Those are some things I've been thinking about myself." Then she asked, 'Are you guys Marxists?' When we said yes, she said, 'Okay, so what do I do?' and purchased a *Militant* subscription."

Stu Singer, a meat packer in Washington, D.C., who also participated in the march, wrote, "At least two of our co-workers came to the NOW demonstration here. One of them bought a *Militant* subscription, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* pamphlet, and a book of speeches by Malcolm X."

Also this past weekend socialist meat packers in Omaha went to Fremont, Nebraska, where they picked out a spot half a mile down the road from the Hormel plant to sell the *Militant* and *PM*. They had a sign that read, "Illinois Meat Packers Win Strike. Read the *Militant*," referring to the recent victory of workers at the Hormel-owned Rochelle Foods in Rochelle, Illinois. They sold

seven copies of the *Militant*, four of *PM*, a *PM* subscription along with the Spanish edition of *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

"The previous week we had gone to Schuyler where we spent time at the home of several meat packers who work at the Excel plant there," they wrote. "The article in the March 26 issue of the *Militant* reporting on the workers at the Excel plant in



Pathfinder table at April 22 march in Washington to defend women's right to choose abortion.

Militant/Brian Williams



Militant/Jack Parker

Sale of *Militant* to Navajo miner at McKinley mine in Window Rock, Arizona. Sales team sold 85 copies of the paper to miners at coal portals during recent trip to Arizona and New Mexico.

Fort Morgan, Colorado, telling the story about their strike against intolerable working conditions has proven to be invaluable in our discussions, which are really about how to transform the unions. Before we left we sold a copy each of *PM*, *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs*, and *Making History*."

As a reminder, reports of pamphlet sales and subscriptions should arrive at the *Militant* by Tuesdays at noon in order to be counted on the sales chart.

Militant/PM subscription drive to win new readers April 14-June 10 (week 1)

Country	Militant			PM		Pamphlet	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
United Kingdom	35	5	14%	10	2	90	1
United States							
Grand Junction	25	9	36%	5		35	3
Seattle	25	8	32%	8	1	55	7
Chicago	35	9	26%	25	3	75	12
Houston	35	8	23%	15		75	4
Washington	27	6	22%	13	5	60	13
Omaha	15	3	20%	18	2	20	1
Charlotte	12	2	17%	4		25	2
Detroit	20	3	15%	5	1	40	6
Upper Manhattan	70	10	14%	50	9	125	13
Tucson	8	1	13%	5		6	
Brooklyn	75	9	12%	40	5	150	17
Atlanta	30	3	10%	15	5	50	1
Cleveland	20	2	10%	6		30	9
Des Moines	30	3	10%	20	4	45	6
Miami	22	2	9%	20	3	75	3
Los Angeles	50	4	8%	25	8	80	7
Newark	40	3	8%	25	5	100	2
NY Garment Dist.	70	5	7%	55	9	150	4
Philadelphia	30	2	7%	10	1	60	8
San Francisco	50	3	6%	25	2	100	3
Allentown	18	1	6%	5	2	20	2
Birmingham	25	1	4%	3		55	
Boston	25		0%	8		30	2
Fresno	9		0%	9	1	20	
Pittsburgh	40		0%	5	1	65	
Tampa	8		0%	6		15	
Twin Cities	35		0%	25		50	4
U.S. total	849	97	11%	450	67	1611	125
Sweden	12	1	8%	5	2	20	
New Zealand							
Auckland	10	1	10%	1		20	2
Christchurch	8		0%	1		10	
N.Z. total	18	1	6%	2		30	2
Canada							
Vancouver	15	1	7%	2	1	35	3
Montreal	12		0%	5	1	40	2
Toronto	20		0%	3		40	3
Canada total	47	1	2%	10	2	115	8
Australia	12		0%	2		25	
Iceland	6		0%	1		35	3
Int'l totals	979	105	11%	480	73	1926	139
Goal/Should be	1000	130	13%	500	65	1900	247
IN THE UNIONS							
United States							
UFCW	65	3	5%	80	5	170	8
UMWA	25		0%	1		25	
UNITE	35		0%	30	8	70	
Total	125	6	5%	111	13	265	8
Australia							
MUA	2		0%		1	3	4
Meat workers							
Total	2	0	0%				
New Zealand							
NDU	2		0%			2	0
MMU	1		0%			2	0
Total	3	0	0%			4	0

Florida events protest cop killings

Continued from front page

ary 26 Andrena Kitt was killed by Pensacola undercover agents. She was 21 years old and unarmed. This week her mother helped lead a protest in Pensacola of 250 people who marched past the spot where Kitt was killed on their way to the police station. Marchers protested the killing of 14 people over the past 10 years by the police.

The meeting here was initiated by the Florida NAACP to launch an investigation of the killing with an eye towards possible legal action around civil rights violations. Matthews, Florida Area Director of the NAACP, said, "This is not a family issue. It is a community concern. It's time for the citizenry to take a stand." He announced that nine full-time NAACP investigators will be coming to town on a fact-finding mission to question every aspect of the events surrounding the killing.

The news media has widely publicized a police account of the shooting designed to exonerate the officer and make the victim look like a criminal. According to these stories the police officer was dragged down the street for several blocks as he reached into the driver's side window of the car to turn off the ignition switch while Scales was driving away. The car crashed at the end of the street and McLain was thrown to the ground. According to the story, he quickly recovered, grabbed his gun, and shot Scales seven times.

Many residents at the meeting pointed to the racism that permeates the police force, which has no Black officers. Pressed on this the police chief said he had one new officer in training at the police academy who is Black. He said there

were 42 police officers now, all of whom are white.

"Profiling is going on," one graduate of the local high school complained. "It's not just the police department. It starts in the school system as well. They pass us on. They want us to play basketball, but they don't care if we know how to read. They are sending our kids to prison for nothing."

"Your officers are like a time bomb ticking," Jenkins told the police chief. "As a parent I am fearful that my children will run into one of your trigger-happy cops."

She described an incident where McLain had demanded to speak to her son while he was standing outside the house. When he refused to talk to the cop, McLain threatened him. "That's OK, you don't have to talk to me now, but I'll see you later," she quoted the cop as saying. "This is what our children are dealing with," she said.

Assistant State Attorney Robert Belanger told the press, "At this point it doesn't look like there was any criminal conduct on the part of the officer." A lawyer for McLain named David Golden justified the killing, saying, "You have to pull the trigger and continue to pull the trigger until the threat is over." Scales was unarmed at the time he was killed. The preliminary police autopsy showed that two of the seven bullets that hit Scales were "instantly fatal."

Rebecca Arenson and Andy Towbin contributed to this article.

U.S. government uses McVeigh execution to win support for federal death penalty laws

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Continuing the pro-death penalty policies of the Clinton presidency, the U.S. Justice Department under the Bush administration is organizing the execution of Timothy McVeigh as a highly publicized spectacle.

McVeigh, a rightist convicted of the 1995 Oklahoma City federal building bombing that resulted in 168 deaths and hundreds of injuries, is to be the first person to be executed under federal jurisdiction since 1963. The government is using the character of McVeigh's attack, called a "cowardly crime against our nation" and an act of "savagery" by Attorney General John Ashcroft, to bolster the federal death penalty laws, which were reinstituted in 1988 and expanded under the Clinton administration.

Ashcroft, a champion of the use of capital punishment, announced April 12 that due to the "special circumstances" of the case, he has approved a closed-circuit televised showing of the state-sponsored killing of McVeigh. Relatives of those killed in the bombing and those Ashcroft calls "the survivors" will view the execution. The viewing will take place in a Oklahoma federal prison by at least 250 people. In Terre Haute, Indiana, where the execution will occur, the government is permitting 10 persons, chosen by lottery among the survivors and victims' relatives, to view the killing.

The Clinton administration was responsible for two major federal laws expanding capital punishment—the 1994 Federal Death Penalty Act, which added 60 federal offenses to the list of capital crimes, and the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which put further restrictions on federal court appeal rights of prisoners in state penitentiaries.

There have been 13 people given federal death sentences since 1988. One has been since overturned. McVeigh waived all appeals of his conviction and urged his execution by lethal injection be publicly broadcast.

The government decision to carry out McVeigh's execution in this way comes at the same time that many working people are raising questions and doubts about the death penalty, and when support for the death penalty is at the lowest point in 19 years, according to public opinion polls.

On March 27 Ashcroft announced that the government may seek the death penalty against Robert Hanssen, a veteran agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation accused of spying for the Russian government over a period of years.

Death row disproportionately Black

There are more than 3,500 people on death row today. Since the death penalty was restored in 1976, more than 700 people have been executed. Approximately 35 percent of them were Black. Blacks make up 12 percent of the U.S. population. A 1998 University of Iowa study showed that in Philadelphia a defendant's odds of receiving the death penalty are nearly four times greater if the defendant is African American. Forty percent of those on death row are Black.

Over the past few years, appeals of sentences based on new DNA evidence and investigations by journalists and students have led to at least 82 people on death row being exonerated. In 2000 the convictions of eight death row inmates were overturned, bringing to 92 the total since the death penalty was reinstated.

Two recent examples are Michael Ray Graham Jr., 37, and Albert Ronnie Burrell, 45, who were set free last December after their conviction for the murder of an elderly couple in 1986 in Louisiana was overturned. Their conviction was based on no physical evidence, but largely on the testimony of a jailhouse snitch known to local cops as "Lyn' Wayne" Brantley, who testified as part of a plea bargain. Burrell, who is retarded, came within 17 days of being executed in 1996.

A Columbia University study published in June 2000 found that two-thirds of appealed death sentences have been overturned, in many cases on the basis of errors by incompetent defense attorneys or the withholding of evidence by police and prosecutors.

Workers locked behind bars have difficulty obtaining any legal counsel. In California, where an average of 33 new inmates are sent to death row each year, half of the

249 death row inmates awaiting their first appeal have no attorney.

Execution of mentally retarded people

Growing sentiment against the execution of mentally retarded people has resulted in a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider its 1989 ruling that such executions do not violate the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The high court is currently hearing the case of Johnny Paul Penry, who has been on death row in Texas for 21 years. Penry, 44, has the intellectual capacity of a first-grader. Thirty-five retarded persons have been put to death since 1976, amounting to 5 percent of all those who received capital punishment.

Facts such as these have engendered a growing sentiment and movement against the death penalty, pressuring Democratic and Republican politicians to try to clean up its tarnished image. While 38 states have capital punishment—in most cases by lethal injection, but in a minority by electrocution—there are now bills for a moratorium on executions in 19 states. More than two dozen municipalities, including Philadelphia, Atlanta, Baltimore, and San Francisco, have adopted moratorium resolutions. Seven municipalities in North Carolina alone have passed such measures. In Illinois, Gov. George Ryan, who supports the death penalty, declared a moratorium in January 2000. The state's Supreme Court has now issued new rules governing the way death penalty cases are handled, a step toward reinstitution of executions in the state.

The 540 people executed by the government from 1991 through 2000 is rivaled only by the 1,667 put to death in the 1930s, a decade of mounting working-class resistance.

Washington State employees rally



Militant/Cecelia Moriarity

State employees rally at capitol in Olympia, Washington, April 21. Four days earlier the Washington Federation of State Employees, representing 19,000 workers and 800 nurses in the Service Employees International Union, District 1199, began rolling walkouts to back up their demands for wage raises and a cap on health-care costs. Hundreds of food service workers, janitors, and gardeners organized picket lines at the University of Washington, Seattle Central Community College, and other campuses the same day.

Thousands march for abortion rights

Continued from front page

Maryland, and Virginia.

Laura Aiken, 22, and Angela Baitucci, 22, were two of the 15 people who made the 14-hour drive from the University of Wisconsin in Madison. "I'm amazed," stated Aiken, as she looked around at the spirited crowd. "It's good to see all these people here." Added Baitucci, "Our rights are being threatened. Women's rights are not just for women, they're human rights that affect everyone in the nation."

Restricted access to abortion

Over the course of the 28 years since the Supreme Court decriminalized abortion in its landmark 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling, the capitalist rulers under both Democratic and Republican party administrations on both the state and federal level have been whittling away at the availability of abortion, particularly for working-class women.

In fact, as of 1998, some 86 percent of U.S. counties and one-third of U.S. cities have no abortion providers. These attacks have included the denial of Medicaid funds for abortion, which was adopted by Congress as the Hyde amendment in 1976 and remains in effect to this day; passage of laws forcing young women to get parental consent for this medical procedure; and the imposition of waiting periods.

Prior to the march, a three-hour rally was held in Upper Senate Park. Speakers included Carol Rosenblatt of the Coalition of Labor Union Women; Frances Kissling, Catholics for a Free Choice; Rev. Barry Lynn, Americans United for Separation of Church and State; Kate Michelman, National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League; Eleanor Smeal, Feminist Majority; and Patricia Ireland, president of NOW.

Rosemary Dempsey, from the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, condemned the executive order put into effect by the Bush administration in February that denies federal funds to international health organizations that perform abortions or offer abortion counseling or referrals. "Since 1984, 20 more countries have legalized abortion," she pointed out. "Though today, 78,000 women die of illegal abortions around the world each year." Bush has also moved to place under review the FDA's approval of the abortion pill Mifepristone (RU 486).

Also speaking was abortion provider Dr. James Pendergraft and his attorney, Larry Callington. Pendergraft, an African American physician in Florida, was indicted and found guilty on February 1 of federal extortion and conspiracy charges for seeking to protect his life and his right to provide abortion services to women.

This frame-up began when Pendergraft sought to open a clinic in Ocala, Florida, in 1997, in the same town where in 1989 the only abortion clinic was burned to the ground in an arson attack for which no one has ever been charged.

In a campaign of harassment, the chairman of the Marion County Board of Commissioners and prominent church officials published public letters in the newspaper making clear to Pendergraft that he was not welcome in the city of Ocala. City and county government officials repeatedly denied Pendergraft's request to hire off-duty



police officers for security against constant threats and harassment. The doctor then filed a civil lawsuit demanding that county authorities provide such protection for himself and the Ocala Women's Center he opened. The federal charges against him claim that his civil suit is an attempt to extort money from Marion County.

The authorities "are out to stop abortions and to stop me," stated Pendergraft at the abortion rights rally. "They have charged and convicted me of extortion for providing abortion services that women need." He received a rousing round of applause and a standing ovation from rally participants.

Several dozen activists from the Gainesville, Florida, area were in attendance at the rally, distributing fact sheets on the case and appealing for support for the defense efforts. Pendergraft will be sentenced on May 24. He could face up to 30 years of prison time and \$750,000 in fines.

This protest action is "wonderful," commented Drew Carswell, 21, who came with a contingent of more than 70 students from New York University, and is a co-founder of the campus group Voices for Choice. This "shows a movement that's being rekindled," he said, and "how much support there is for women's and civil rights."

Alanna Sklover, a 17-year-old high school student from McClean, Virginia, came with three other students to the action. "I'm here today because I believe as a member of the future leadership, I should play a role in shaping my own life and if I won't and if I wait, the world will be what I don't want it to be," she said.

"More and more women are part of organizing drives and see that they need unions to collectively fight for our rights," commented march participant Susan Phillips from United Food and Commercial Workers National Women's Network.

"I'm here because I want to revive a second wave of the women's movement. Women aren't considered or treated as equals," said Melissa Sills, a 23-year-old student at George Washington University in Washington. "We need to fight for the Equal Rights Amendment and have a complete overhaul of the system."

For Melissa Murphy, 18, and Rachel Fischer, 18, both students at the University of Hartford, this was their first national demonstration.

After hearing two Cuban youth leaders speak on their campus last month, they got involved in helping to build the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange, taking place in Havana July 22-30. "I believe in women's rights," stated Fischer. "There are many issues I like to fight for." She said that a women's rights action is being planned for Hartford on May 27.

New York NOW activists invited those present to participate in an April 25 rally to protest antiabortion violence in front of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in midtown Manhattan, where the National Right to Life Committee is honoring antiabortion rightist Father Frank Pavone.

‘In Cuba, people are involved in decisions’

Continued from front page of Cuban and U.S. youth.”

The tour of Martínez, a law student at the University of Havana and member of the national secretariat of the Federation of University Students, and Dueñas, a teacher of journalism at the University of Havana and a leader of the Union of Young Communists, ended with an enthusiastic send-off event April 18. Tour organizers reported to the meeting that the two Cuban youth had spoken on 28 different university and college campuses in seven states to more than 2,100 students, faculty, and others. A broad array of professors, academic departments, and student groups helped make the tour a success.

The final campus meeting during the visit was at Northern Illinois University (NIU) in DeKalb, Illinois. Some 100 students packed the Latino Center for the event, which was sponsored by the Center for Latino and Latin America Studies, History Club, Organization of Latin American Students, Latino Law Students Association, and the National Lawyers Guild.

Questions raised at NIU, and at a meeting earlier that day at Rock Valley College in Rockford, Illinois, included those often asked in meetings across the country: What will happen to the revolution when Fidel Castro dies? Is there democracy in Cuba? What do Cuban youth think about the future of the revolution?

In their responses, Dueñas and Martínez emphasized the role of the masses of Cuban people, including youth, in making the revolution and confronting the economic crisis that followed the cutoff of economic trade and aid from the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

“The secret to why the revolution has lasted is that the people are involved in the decisions; they are informed,” Martínez told the students at Rock Valley. “They know that it is up to the people themselves to have the solutions. Undoubtedly the people feel strongly about the need to continue the revolution,” she said. “This last decade has proven that. With the crisis and privations we have

suffered, the revolution is still there.” At the meeting at NIU, Dueñas said the mobilizations of young people are strengthening the revolution today. Those born since the revolution triumphed in 1959 are a majority of the population, he pointed out. “In the demonstrations in Cuba today, it’s the youth who raise the outcries against capitalism and imperialism,” he said.

Read and study Marxism

One participant in the meeting asked about the future of the United States. Dueñas encouraged those who want to discuss that question to first read some books by Marxists, including Marxists in the United States. “Then let’s talk about it,” he said with a smile. Martínez added, “To talk about the future of the United States you have to talk about the whole world.” After the meeting a number of students asked the speakers what books they suggested reading. Many crowded around the display of Pathfinder literature and purchased books and pamphlets on the crisis of world capitalism, on socialism and the Cuban Revolution, as well as subscriptions to the *Militant*.

On the last day of the visit Martínez and Dueñas met with Basu and Pamela Basu, two farmers from Pembroke Township, Illinois, who are part of the struggle of Black farmers to form a cooperative to help them stay on the land and who have joined with others there to prevent a prison from being built next to their farmlands.

Since 1980, 17 new prisons have been built in Illinois. The Basus explained they are opposed to the prison, not only because it will ruin farms in the area, but also because they see the prisons as institutions that are part of oppression of Black people. The Basus were especially interested to hear from the two Cuban youth leaders about the campaign being spearheaded by Cuban youth organizations to release young people in Cuban prisons who have been convicted of a range of lesser crimes and to get them involved in school to become qualified as teachers or in other professions.

Dueñas and Martínez were also interviewed on WVON, a radio station with a large Black audience in the



Above, Javier Dueñas, second from left, and Yanelis Martínez, second from right, address meeting at Northern Illinois University April 17.

Chicago area. “We have impressions of our discussions on university and college campuses, but it has been the discussions with factory workers, farmers, and people in the Latino and Black neighborhoods that have been the most intense,” Dueñas said on program. “This gave us a broader image of society here. We have seen how people are exploited and excluded and that this is leading to resistance.”

Talk show interview

Listeners on the WVON talk show, like many at the campus meetings, asked about racism in Cuba. “In Cuba before 1959 we had a similar situation as in the United States before the 1960s,” Dueñas said. “Then we made a revolution and eliminated segregation and racist measures. There is still some racism in the minds of the people, and more consciousness-raising needs to be done. Forty years is a short time in history to get rid of this legacy.”

A caller to the program who visited Cuba several years ago reported he noticed that jobs dealing with customers at the Cohiba Hotel in Havana were held by whites, while cleaning and security jobs were done by Blacks.

Martínez explained that discrimination by

foreign companies investing in Cuba is one of the many problems brought by the development of tourism in the period of economic crisis. There have been growing inequalities within the working class because those with jobs in tourism receive tips in dollars. During the worst years of the crisis, she said, many professionals left their jobs and took jobs in tourism to make more money.

“We knew measures we took, like the development of tourism, would bring problems,” she said. “But we are taking on these problems.” She said that steps have been taken at the Cohiba Hotel to end the discriminatory practices of management. “The main thing has been to prepare people, to educate from a political, a social point of view. It is precisely the people who have helped combat these negative effects,” she said.

“What bothers you most about the United States?” asked Cliff Kelley, the moderator of the call-in show. “Here you have to pay for everything,” Dueñas replied. “In Cuba there is a wide variety of services that are free, such as health care, education, and social security. It’s a different concept than in the United States. For us, these are all a right. We have a right to take vacations with all our pay and to have access to culture and to sports.”

Farmers protest in California

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

SACRAMENTO, California—One hundred California farmers participated in a tractorcade here April 16 that ended in a rally at the state capitol building. The action was called by the California Farm Bureau Federation and State Assemblyman Dennis Cadoza to support pending legislation that would overturn the state sales tax on farm equipment. California is one of four states that presently have such a tax.

Many of the family farmers who participated in the protest are not in the market for new equipment, which can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. They hoped the action would bring public attention to the broader crisis they face, characterized by some as “catastrophic.”

“I’m here today because if something drastic isn’t done soon none of us will be around next year,” Jim Diedrich, 54, a fifth generation farmer from Merced, California, who raises tomatoes, almonds, and beans, told the *Militant*. “I support ending the sales tax on equipment, but there’s a lot more that has to be done even on the tax question. Taxes on land, on fuel, and the cost of diesel fuel are killing us. Diesel fuel used to cost 10 cents a gallon. Now it goes up 10 cents a day! It’s over a dollar a gallon. What the energy companies are charging us is outrageous!”

Farmers are especially hard hit as California’s energy providers try to pass skyrocketing costs onto consumers. Copies of one farmer’s energy bills provided by Cadoza’s office showed an increase from \$18,312 for the month of February last year, to \$85,033 this year, even though he used less gas.

“Everything is going up but the price the farmer gets for his product,” said Alan Sano, 38, who grows processing tomatoes, wheat, almonds, and cotton. “We’re only going to get 40 percent of the water we’re supposed to this year and the supplemental water is twice the cost!”

No family farmer spoke at the rally. The speakers list was dominated by politicians, businessmen, and representatives of farm and

governmental agencies. The few handmade signs seen in the crowd seemed to better address the concerns of those who in some cases had traveled hundreds of miles to bring their message to the state. The signs read “California Farmers: #1 Endangered Species” and “No water; No farmer; No food.”

Pathfinder Fund 2001			
Country/City	goal (\$)	paid	%
Detroit	2,500	570	23%
Chicago	6,500	1,215	19%
Seattle	8,000	1,465	18%
Los Angeles	6,000	895	15%
Upper Manhattan	3,300	500	15%
Des Moines	1,400	175	13%
Boston	3,750	420	11%
Houston	3,500	285	8%
Tampa	600	50	8%
Newark	3,000	180	6%
Pittsburgh	5,000	235	5%
San Francisco	8,000	425	5%
Atlanta	3,200	140	4%
Brooklyn	4,000	180	5%
Philadelphia	3,000	100	3%
NY Garment Dist.	4,000	69	2%
Birmingham	2,500	10	0%
Cleveland	1,250	5	0%
Allentown	900	0	0%
Charlotte	2,700	0	0%
Fresno	225	0	0%
Grand Junction	2,000	0	0%
Miami	2,000	0	0%
Omaha	250	0	0%
Twin Cities	4,000	0	0%
Washington	2,200	0	0%
other	0	96	
U.S. total	83,775	7,015	8%
Canada	5,000	195	4%
Australia	0	0	0%
France	0	0	0
Iceland	0	25	0
Sweden	0	50	0
New Zealand	800	0	0
International totals	\$89,575	\$7,285	8%

Nearly \$90,000 pledged to Pathfinder Fund

BY BOB ADAMS

Supporters of Pathfinder Press around the world have pledged close to \$90,000 to the fund-raising campaign under way. The overall pledges—\$10,000 more than initially projected—register the impact of both the increased sales of Pathfinder books in recent months and the interest being generated by Pathfinder’s newest titles. They indicate the growing appreciation of Pathfinder’s nearly 400 books and pamphlets, which give a class explanation of world politics and how working people can organize a revolutionary movement to transform it.

The Pathfinder Fund, which runs through June 10, is needed to help finance the publication of new books and keep in print the entire revolutionary arsenal.

Supporters of Pathfinder in a number of cities have begun to hold public political meetings, approach co-workers and other unionists, and send out mailings to raise money for the fund campaign.

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, local Pathfinder backers held an event with Joel Britton, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, Félix Maldonado, a worker at Quality Pork Processors and a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 9, and Rose Engstrom, a ramp worker and Machinists union member at Northwest Airlines, on a panel to discuss the lessons of the Cuban revolution for working people in the United States.

Supporters of the Pathfinder Fund are urged to send the *Militant* reports of their fund-raising activities, plans for events, and the results they are getting.

May Day Marches for Workers' Rights
Tues. May 1

NEW YORK
Amnesty for all Immigrants
—Present and Future
12:00 Noon—Rally and concert at Union Square at 17th St. and Broadway. **3:30 p.m.**—March to garment district. **4:30 p.m.**—Meet at 36 St. & 8th Ave. March to IMF building. **4:00-7:00 p.m.**—Rally at IMF building. 44th St. and 2nd Ave.

Sponsored by Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty. For more information: (212) 473-3936 or 633-7108.

Newark, New Jersey
March for Immigrant Rights
3:30 p.m.—Rally at Federal Building. 970 Broad St.

For more information: (973) 643-1924 or 622-6448.

New Haven, Connecticut
15th annual May Day Celebration on New Haven Green. 12-5 p.m.

For more information: (203) 776-2170 or 562-2798

Cuban leader reports on 1961 Ba

José Ramón Fernández, commander of revolutionary column, describes battl

The *Militant* has been publishing articles and reprinting feature documents as part of celebrating the 40th anniversary of revolutionary Cuba's April 19, 1961, victory over the U.S.-organized invasion at the Bay of Pigs. In less than 72 hours, Cuba's volunteer militias, Rebel Army combatants, revolutionary police, and air force, led by their commander-in-chief Fidel Castro, crushed the invasion force of 1,500 Cuban-American counterrevolutionaries, who had been armed, trained, financed, and deployed by Washington. The main group of mercenaries surrendered at Playa Girón, the name by which the battle is known in Cuba.

In this issue we are publishing the majority of a Sept. 18, 1961, report by Capt. José Ramón Fernández to the central command of the revolutionary armed forces, in response to a request that he prepare a detailed report on the operations carried out by the revolutionary forces against the mercenary invasion at Playa Girón. Fernández, who led the principal column of Cuban forces at the Bay of Pigs, offers an almost hour-by-hour account of the three-day battle.

At the time of the invasion, Fernández was head of the Cadet School at the army base in Managua, Havana province, and of the Militia Leadership School in Matanzas, where selected workers and student youth with proven leadership capacities were trained as officers in the revolutionary militias.

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

The following translation, as well as the annotation and subtitles, are by the *Militant*.



BY JOSÉ RAMÓN FERNÁNDEZ

1. On April 17 of the present year, as I was sleeping at the Cadet School at

from Commander Castro, who informed me that the enemy had been pinpointed, and told me to go with the battalion to Jovellanos, where I should again contact him and then establish the command post at Jagüey Grande.

I quickly took a jeep and rode ahead of the battalion, arriving in Jovellanos at about 0600 hours. I again contacted Commander Castro, who brought me up to date on the latest reports he had received about the enemy.

Command post at Australia sugar mill

Continuing the trip, I arrived at the Australia sugar mill [near Jagüey Grande] at about 0800 hours and immediately established the command post with the small number of officers who accompanied me, not yet having troops available. It was evident that, although shots had not yet been heard, we were in a zone of operations. The residents expressed alarm, talk was rampant, and the peasant militias and even women were asking us for weapons.

In light of their reports that enemy planes had attacked civilians, we ordered men and vehicles to be dispersed and camouflaged.

3. We gave instructions to organize a seven-man patrol, headed by the manager of the sugar mill, to go through the area around two nearby cooperatives where, it was said, [enemy] paratroopers had landed. They re-

5. At 0830 hours, I traveled through the area, giving the order to block off a nearby airstrip with vehicles and other obstacles.

During the trip I met Capt. Cordero, who told me he was the head of the 339th Battalion [of the militias], which had been posted at the Australia mill. They had resisted the enemy with the few available men and weapons, consisting of M-52 rifles and submachine guns, but had been repulsed and forced to retreat by the mercenaries and planes. I had thought that the members of his battalion had all been killed or captured, and that none of our forces were then putting up resistance to the enemy.

At that moment Capt. Benítez arrived and informed us that he was bringing a battalion from Bolondrón. We immediately ordered him to go to the front, dislodge a small group that—according to the news we had received—had seized the mouth of El Tesoro Lagoon, then take Pálpite and Sopllillar, and fortify his positions at those locations.

He advanced and went past the mouth of the lagoon. The fighting became generalized, but they could not definitively push the enemy out of Pálpite.

6. Later the 227th Battalion from Matanzas, commanded by Capt. Pérez Díaz, arrived. I ordered it to advance and reinforce the battalion from Bolondrón.

7. At about 0930 hours, the Militia Leadership School arrived from Matanzas. We assembled them and I spoke, explaining the situation. I ordered them to take Pálpite and consolidate their strength there. Meanwhile, the Second Company [of the Militia Leadership School], commanded by Lt. Conyedo, would advance toward Sopllillar, dislodge the enemy from its position there, and block off the airstrip, defending it against any possible landing by paratroopers. Around one hour later, we were informed that the mission had been completed.

We then ordered the forces stationed at Pálpite to march toward Playa Larga until we made contact with the enemy. At that moment we saw the first body of the enemy, a paratrooper who had died while landing, and who seemed to be a foreigner named Koch, according to his ID tags.

8. At about 1000 hours, Lt. Elio López, designated by the general staff as information officer, arrived. We assigned him, as his initial mission, to try to find out whether the enemy was situated at the rear

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PATRIA O MUERTE ¡VENCEREMOS!

Left: Bohemia

Left: Revolutionary National Militias at front of giant funeral procession in Havana on April 16, 1961, to honor those killed the day before in bombings by eight planes of the CIA-organized Brigade 2506. At the rally Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro explained, "This is the socialist and democratic revolution of the working people." Above: April 18, 1961, issue of *Revolución* calling for defense of the revolution. Headline reads: "Everyone to their posts in combat and work!"



Granma

Combatants at Playa Girón included worker and peasant militias, revolutionary police, and Rebel Army forces. Fernández describes fearlessness and determination of Cuban working people in defending their revolution in face of U.S.-organized invasion.

Managua, I was awoken at approximately 0240 hours by a call from Commander Fidel Castro. He informed me that a landing had just taken place at the Zapata Swamp [near the Bay of Pigs] and ordered me to go there at the head of the Militia Leadership School based in Matanzas.

Together with three or four officers and enlisted men, I left for Matanzas, arriving at the school at about 0500 hours. Capt. Vilá, the secretary at the school, had already prepared more than 20 trucks he had requisitioned. Those at the school had been organized several days earlier into six companies.

2. In Matanzas I received another call

turned a short while later, reporting that they had been attacked by planes, sustaining four casualties, including an old woman who had been traveling through the area.

While we did not yet have troops to begin operations, we remained in communication with Commander Castro, who informed us that our planes were successfully attacking the enemy and that they had sunk a ship.

4. Shortly after arriving at the Australia mill, two B-26 bombers, with the insignia of our air force painted on them, passed nearby and did not attack us. Later, Commander Castro informed me these were enemy planes.

Victory of Pigs victory

e that defeated U.S.-directed invasion

Militia Leadership School who were marching along the highway toward the Australia sugar mill. They informed us that they had received orders to withdraw, which we canceled immediately.

I ordered the battalion from Bolondrón to take the highway from Pálpito to the area near the Australia mill in order to secure the mission and protect the sewer system and communications.

I ordered the battalion from Matanzas to stay in Sopllillar, reinforcing the Second Company of the Militia Leadership School.

The battalion from the Militia Leadership School was ordered to reorganize in Pálpito. The field artillery and heavy mortars were deployed to the north, south, east, and west of Pálpito. The anti-aircraft guns

the enemy as he could in order to adjust the artillery's line of fire.

When they had just begun to adjust their line of fire, the enemy began to fire its batteries. Some rockets landed nearby and one of them left us four casualties among the four-barreled machine-guns.

We intensified our artillery fire against the enemy positions, and soon the enemy stopped shooting. Lt. Milián reported to us that after some corrections our fire was becoming effective, so we ordered all artillery units to fire at maximum speed for 10 minutes.

13. We immediately coordinated the details of the attack:

Four T-34 tanks would advance in front. Beside them would march the infantry—

First, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Companies of the Militia Leadership School, led by Lts. González, Méndez, Rivero, and Palacios.

Column 1 and the bazookas would follow behind them. The attack began just after midnight. I advanced with our units about 1,500 meters and, after giving final instructions, returned to the command post.

After about an hour of marching, the shooting intensified. The enemy unleashed a violent barrage against our troops, keeping it up for an hour.

The Third Company and elements of Column 1, headed by Capt. Ferrer, reached a triangle at the entrance to Playa Larga, where the enemy positions were located. Lt. Díaz, head of the Third Company, fell in combat as he advanced beyond the forward enemy positions, along with a number of courageous *compañeros*. Others fell when they were already in the very

trenches of the enemy.

Heavy enemy fire

Due to the hesitations of some tank operators in advancing, the small number of



Granma

B-26 bombers from mercenary forces strafed a column of Cuban militias, shooting at tanks, buses, and other vehicles. Fernández writes: "Learning of the attack almost immediately, we quickly marched over there, arriving as the planes were still machine-gunning the column. We rallied the troops' enthusiasm and when the burned vehicles were moved aside, continued to advance on the enemy."

effective subordinate officers, and the heavy and powerful enemy fire, our fire was ineffective against the weapons of the enemy, who had tanks, mortars, bazookas, recoilless cannon, and so on. Our infantry suffered many casualties and began to fall behind along the side of the highway. Only one tank, heads of units, and a total of 50-60 men—many of whom fell as they advanced—reached the site of the attack; only one bazooka from the entire company arrived.

The tank operator at the front of the march stopped before reaching the triangle where the enemy stood, because the others were not following. He later continued his advance, and, as he fell into an enemy position, one of his tank treads was destroyed by enemy fire. This was the head of the platoon, Lt. López [Cuba], who was able to evacuate his tank despite the risk of being wounded.

Another tank crossed enemy positions, heading in the direction of Girón. It got off the highway and fell into a ditch, where it was destroyed.

Along the highway on the east side, the enemy had deployed troops with light weapons about 800 meters ahead of their front lines, and they allowed our troops to advance without firing on them. When the enemy fired, they did so suddenly and very effectively. Their weapons were placed so as to be able to sweep the highway. The cannon and mortars were also targeting the highway. So were the troops positioned along the road who had let our troops pass without shooting at them.

After fighting and advancing bravely, our troops, who lacked a terrain where they could entrench themselves or protect themselves from the tanks, had to withdraw from Pálpito.

This withdrawal was an error, since they

no longer maintained their contact with the enemy. So we immediately reorganized some units and prepared a new attack, sending the remaining units to the rear.

14. The Militia Leadership School suffered 18 dead and more than 50 wounded.

Knowing that the enemy planes, emboldened since the previous afternoon, would try to destroy us at dawn, we alerted all batteries starting at 4:00 in the morning. We did not need to wait long. At dawn a B-26 appeared; our response was intense and the plane was unable to penetrate our ring of fire—spinning wildly, it dropped its bombs in the middle of the woods. It withdrew and did not appear again.

15. The 180th and 144th Battalions arrived at daybreak. We instructed the 144th to move as fast as it could through Sopllillar toward Caletón del Rosario, and to reinforce some of its elements there to avoid an attack from Girón; the rest were to advance to Playa Larga on the Girón-Playa Larga highway.

We ordered the 180th Battalion to move with the tanks and attack from the Pálpito-Playa Larga highway toward Playa Larga. Some of the tanks and two companies from the Militia Leadership School were to attack Playa Larga, using the road that leads to Buenaventura; that is, the attack was to be launched from the north, east, and west, with troops converging on the only three roads giving access to this location.

16. At about 0800 hours, the troops began to move against the enemy positions. As soon as they approached, a group of civilians came out holding white flags. In face of our presence, the enemy had abandoned that position; the battalion that tried to cut off its retreat arrived just minutes too late. The enemy had left Playa Larga, which was

Continued on Page 10



Granma

At the end of the battle, the revolutionary forces entered Girón and arrested the demoralized mercenaries. "Through them we found out that the rest had fled—leaving their weapons and position, after their attempted evacuation by U.S. ships was foiled by the fire from our artillery and planes," writes Fernández, pictured above in center, inspecting captured weapons.

formed a ring around the field artillery and the town of Pálpito.

At about 2000 hours, the tanks began to arrive in Pálpito, where we had established the command post. We were at a position that had been hit by enemy planes, mortars, and cannon.

At that time we were also visited there by Dr. Fidel Castro; soon after, the Rebel Army's Special Combat Column 1 and a bazooka company also arrived.

We ordered the artillery units to fix their line of fire on the enemy positions, with the aim of subsequently launching a barrage in preparation for the attack. The 85 mm. cannon were the first to fire, followed soon after by the 122 mm. guns. But the ammunition for the 85 mm. artillery did not arrive ready for use and the firing was very slow.

The battery of 120 mm. mortars had one piece that was out of service and, because of the rocky terrain, the head of the unit insisted on not firing because the guns would be damaged.

Communications were poor because we had no radio. Only the 122 mm. guns had some radio equipment mounted on vehicles.

Although we had set up telephone lines, they were not of much use because the darkness and the flat terrain with its dense vegetation did not allow for much observation.

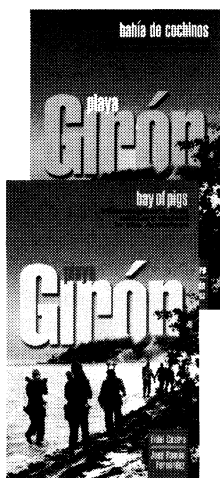
At around 2200 hours, I ordered Lt. Milián to take a vehicle and go as close to

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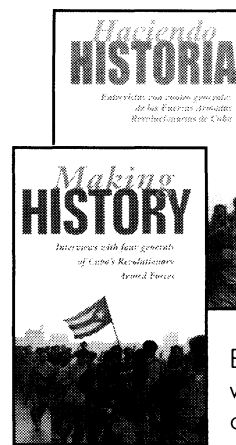


Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs

Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas

In less than 72 hours of combat during April 1961 near the Bay of Pigs, Cuba's revolutionary militias, police, and armed forces defeated an invasion by 1,500 mercenaries armed, trained, supported, and deployed by Washington. In the process, the Cuban people not only transformed their country and themselves, but set an example for workers and farmers across the Americas and the world. With political consciousness, class solidarity, unflinching courage, and a revolutionary leadership displaying an impeccable sense of timing, it is possible to stand up to enormous might and seemingly insurmountable odds—and win. Forty years later the U.S. rulers can still neither accept nor extinguish this example. Foreword by Jack Barnes. In English and Spanish. \$20.

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Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

1961 report on Cuban victory at Bay of Pigs

Continued from Page 9

quickly occupied by our troops. The 180th Battalion was ordered to fortify Playa Larga, and the light combat battery of the 180th Battalion was instructed to begin pursuit.

Cuban forces head to Playa Girón

17. Carrying out Commander Castro's orders and using the 123rd Battalion for this purpose, we organized the attack on Girón. Using elements from the Light Combat Company in front to protect the tanks and trucks, reconnaissance patrols were sent out. They covered 15 kilometers and found no enemy forces.

18. At that point we received information that our air force was going to protect our troops in the afternoon, between 1500 and 1600 hours. We therefore changed plans and had the troops ride on the tanks, ordering those marching behind them to ride in the vehicles (buses), which were driven at full speed. We considered that it would be an audacious blow to march against the enemy with such speed, since we did not already have air cover.

19. About 17 kilometers past Playa Larga, three enemy B-26s surprised our column, which was riding in vehicles. One of the officers marching at the front—who

stroyed vehicles.

We rallied the troops' enthusiasm and when the burned vehicles were moved aside, continued to advance on the enemy. By nightfall, we were about 9 kilometers from Girón. There we ordered the men to organize the defense and to rest until two hours before daybreak. During the night we were joined by the battalion from the Revolutionary National Police.

21. At about 0400 hours of the 19th, we gave the order to begin advancing on Girón, starting from where the troops were situated. Shortly thereafter they came under enemy fire and assumed battle positions.

We knew that at bottom their defenses were aimed at slowing us down. We ordered the tanks and forward elements to ignore their fire, whose only purpose was to slow us down and compel us to assume battle positions.

This was done, and we quickly took three or four enemy positions, capturing machine guns, mortars, trucks, and so on. We were able to do so because the enemy hadn't expected what we did, and didn't even have time to turn around their vehicles toward Girón and drive off.

In this operation, we advanced within 1.5 kilometers of Girón, where there were

one that was added shortly afterward.

We ordered observers to the front lines, at the same time that the artillery was finishing up getting into position, on rocky and difficult terrain. Despite all the resources we were employing, the observers were unable to locate the enemy positions (given the difficulties of the flat terrain and thick vegetation).

24. After reaching a point 4.2 kilometers from the enemy, we ordered the 120 mm. mortars to begin firing. The artillery units, a little further back, were set up about 40 meters from each other. We had to saturate the entire area with artillery fire, so, because of our lack of information, we ordered four batteries to be raised at an angle corresponding to a range of 3.8 kilometers and to begin firing—first three salvos, and then increasing the distance by 100 meters. As a result, 18 shots fired by the first battery would land at the initial position, and immediately afterward the battery behind it would fire 18 shots at the position, and so on. We proceeded to shell every 100 meters, up to 4,800 meters.

After completing that process, all the batteries would shift their direction, firing 300 meters to the right and pulling back the line of fire just as they had moved it forward. When they returned to the shortest distance, 3,800 meters, they would again shift their line by firing 600 meters to the left, moving up the line of fire again up to the maximum distance.

We assumed that all the enemy weapons and positions were within the rectangle that we were tracing and that was being saturated by our artillery fire.

25. The results were effective. After the enemy was destroyed, we captured numerous heavy weapons, mortars, and recoilless cannon, which showed marks of being hit by our artillery. Some mercenary prisoners were interested to know what procedures we had used to adjust our line of fire in order to be able to keep landing shells on them.

26. By 1300 hours, the enemy mortar fire seemed to have died down. We began to prepare a new attack against enemy positions. At about 1440 hours, as our tanks and infantry advanced, we noticed that warships appeared on the horizon. Landing craft were immediately lowered from the ships, and smaller boats were also observed going from land toward the ships. We determined that it was a landing. We reported to the high command and deployed all the artillery against the small enemy vessels.

The range finder for our antiaircraft artillery indicated that the ships were six to seven kilometers away, which put them outside Cuban jurisdictional waters, even though it was an open provocation and intervention. We gave the order to fire using all available weapons against the landing craft, boats, and smaller vessels. This was done, and we were able to appreciate the effectiveness of the two batteries of 85 mm. cannon, the tanks, and the self-propelled cannon, which sank some of the boats.

We were informed that our air force was going to attack Girón at 1500 hours so that we could launch an assault on it.

U.S. warships withdraw

27. At approximately 1540 hours, after changing positions several times and positioning themselves in a threatening manner, the enemy warships, which appeared to be two destroyers, headed out to open sea at full speed. This seemed to be because their radar had detected the presence of our planes, which had arrived then, attacking the landing craft and sinking many of them.

28. We organized our lines of defense to repel a possible attack and went to Playa Larga to report on what had happened. There we were informed that Dr. Fidel Castro's opinion was that they were trying to escape—which turned out to be true—and not trying to land, as we had believed.

29. We then returned to our point of departure, organized a small group of tanks and two companies of infantry, and made our way to Girón, which fell into our hands practically without firing a shot. The enemy had fled, leaving behind tanks, cannon, mortars, etc. It was about 1830 hours and it was beginning to get dark when we entered Girón. We ordered the 123rd Battalion to head down a road that starts at the Girón-Playa Larga highway, about 1 kilometer from Girón going north. We ordered



Cuban antiaircraft gunner at Bay of Pigs



Fidel Castro (center, in back) and others around an enemy B-26 downed by Cuban revolutionary combatants during the Bay of Pigs battle.

thought he knew about our plans, that is, that we were advancing in this way because we would have air cover—concluded that the planes were ours and did not allow the troops to be moved off the road, saying they were our planes. The planes flew over our troops and began to attack. They particularly targeted the tanks marching at the front but did not succeed. They hit three buses, however, which began to burn, and we suffered some casualties.

20. Learning of the attack almost immediately, we quickly marched over there, arriving as the planes were still machine-gunning the column.

The highway was blocked by the de-

strong enemy defensive positions—with tanks, recoilless cannon, heavy machine guns, infantry in position, and so on.

22. At about 7:00 a.m., a B-26 plane attacked our positions, and the alert antiaircraft gunners quickly shot it down. At the same time a B-26 attacked Playa Larga, strafing our positions and wounding one. But the heavy antiaircraft fire made it retreat. The plane was apparently damaged, since this was the last air attack we faced.

23. In this way, we moved the artillery into position about 4 kilometers from Girón. There we had four 122 howitzer batteries, one incomplete 120 mortar battery, one 85 cannon battery, and another

Camco strike shuts down plant

BY JOANNE WALLADOR

MONTREAL—"We've been making concessions for the last 20 years. That's over with now—we're going to fight back," said assembler Gaétan Guay on the picket line in front of the Camco plant here. More than 800 members of the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) locals 501 and 504 are pursuing their three-week-old strike against Camco, a major appliance maker.

About 60 members of five other CEP locals at the same company in Montreal, representing mechanics, office, and warehouse workers have already signed contracts with the company. Some 1,100 production workers belonging to the Canadian Autoworkers (CAW) at the Camco plant in Hamilton, Ontario, are poised to go on strike as of April 22.

The company began phoning workers in the middle of night of March 30 to inform them they were locked out. Over the previous weeks workers on both shifts had slowed production by 50 percent and organized several marches inside the plant. These actions helped to forge unity within

the union, between shifts, and between newer and veteran workers. At a union meeting April 1, workers voted 86.5 percent in favor of transforming the lockout into a strike. About 25 percent of those on strike, including many of the newer workers, are female.

Camco is majority-owned by General Electric. Workers at the Montreal plant produce dryers and dishwashers. Néré Dutil, vice president of Local 501, explained, "this is the first time since 1981 that workers have gone on strike at this plant." Dutil said that one of the main issues in the strike is a new pension plan the company wants to introduce for employees hired after March 2001. The present plan is fully funded by the company, but the new plan would incorporate employee contributions.

The company also wants to remove 30 of the most expensive items presently covered by its medical insurance plan, and is pressing to introduce 12-hour shifts in the press and plastic injection departments. Camco is only offering an average 1.5 percent wage increase over three years, with slightly more for workers classified as skilled.

this operation to form a circle and pressure the enemy from a wider front. It was not possible to do this completely owing to the difficulties of the terrain and, in part, because it was not carried out resolutely by the head of the battalion.

30. After entering Girón, we began to search all the cabins, buildings, and so on, trying to find any enemy elements lying in ambush or in hiding. In the course of this operation we freed the employees of the beach, who had been made prisoners by the enemy.

31. We also proceeded to arrest some 20 mercenaries. Through them we found out that the rest had fled—leaving their weapons and positions, after their attempted evacuation by U.S. ships was foiled by the fire from our artillery and planes—and had taken refuge in the woods.

The search, collection of weapons, and cleanup operation were carried out practically without firing a shot.

32. Shortly after starting this operation, a tank arrived carrying Capt. Pardo. He looked rather lost, and was surprised on finding us in the area rather than the enemy. Through him we learned that Commander Fidel Castro was in San Blas. So we headed there to bring him up to date on developments. We were unable to get there because our vehicle came under intense fire from two machine guns and some lighter arms.

We therefore continued our mopping-up efforts, using the time to reorganize the defense of Girón against a possible attack both by land and by sea.

33. At dawn the following day, we received word that an aircraft carrier was nearby, accompanied by some warships. Jet planes were flying in the vicinity of Girón, and we began the systematic pursuit and capture of the mercenaries who had fled into the woods.

34. In two days we captured about 700 who turned themselves in, exhausted by hunger, thirst, and surrounded with no possible escape.

35. All were treated well by those who captured them. Insulting or offensive expressions or actions against them were prohibited. They were afforded the best care possible in terms of food and medical care. Cuban and foreign journalists were allowed to freely interview them and, in general, they all expressed regret about the action that had been carried out.

Next week the Militant will run the concluding section of Fernández's report, which is a critical balance sheet of weakness of the Cuban forces in the battle.

At the recent conference in Havana "Playa Girón: 40 Years Later," Fernández noted that the commission reviewing documents for declassification had proposed blacking out that section before releasing the report, but that Fidel Castro, as commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, overruled the recommendation and insisted the entire report be declassified.

Unionists in Cuba discuss how to tackle social needs

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN
AND CINDY JAQUITH

LAS TUNAS, Cuba—"We should be moving into our new home by the beginning of May," said Yuniór, one of 169 workers at La Pedrera sugarcane cooperative in the small town of Puerto Padre, in the rural province of Las Tunas.

Yuniór, his wife Liliana, and their young child currently live in a small wooden house. The new home has two bedrooms, a bathroom, and two other rooms, constructed with low-cost cement substitute and brick. It is one of 31 new houses currently under construction by members of the cooperative.

Cooperative president Walter Avila says housing is one of the biggest challenges they face. "There are 56 houses that are in poor shape," he elaborated.

Now, he indicated, as Cuba continues to recover from the harshest conditions of a decade-long economic crisis, they can take some steps to address this pressing problem.

Workers' housing was one of the main topics discussed at a provincial conference in this city of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), the country's national trade union federation. The gathering, held February 11, took up issues to be discussed at the 18th national congress of the CTC, which is taking place April 28-30 in Havana.

The 143 elected delegates spent a couple of hours soberly assessing the economic situation Cuba faces today—particularly in Las Tunas province—and the political role the union movement can play in strengthening Cuba's socialist revolution. Also at-

by the provincial committee to conference delegates. Last year almost 3,300 houses were completed, about 1,400 more than the previous year.

"We've got to build on the success registered in 2000 to offer each family, each worker decent housing" Ramón argued. "This was explained by Fidel in *History Will Absolve Me*, but the realization of this goal was set back by the Special Period."

History Will Absolve Me was the courtroom defense speech that Fidel Castro gave during his trial for the 1953 attack on the Moncada military barracks of the Batista dictatorship. It became the basic program of political and social demands of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, which led Cuban workers and farmers to victory over the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959, opening the road to the socialist revolution.

In referring to the Special Period, Ramón was employing the term commonly used here for the exceptionally difficult economic and social conditions Cuba faced following the collapse at the beginning of the 1990s of the regimes and parties that had existed in the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. The abrupt ending of aid from these countries and trade at preferential rates—accounting for some 75 percent of Cuba's imports—forced Cuba, virtually overnight, to face more directly the exploitative terms of trade imposed by the imperialist-dominated world market.

By the mid-1990s, the resulting disruption of the economy led to a 35 percent decline in Cuba's gross domestic product. An



Alfredo Rico/Militant

Members of the Blas Soler farm cooperative in Holguín province process sugarcane. At the CTC conference in Las Tunas it was reported that two-thirds of Basic Units of Cooperative Production under the ministry of agriculture made a surplus last year.

tending the conference were about 100 observers, including government ministers and national union leaders, as well as managers of local workplaces. CTC general secretary Pedro Ross attended and actively took part in the discussion, which was marked by a tone of confidence among the delegates.

Similar meetings were held in each of Cuba's 14 provinces. They were the culmination of months of discussion in every workplace and union, which led to the election of delegates to the national congress.

A resolution known as the Theses, prepared by the CTC leadership for discussion by union members and presentation to the national congress, was taken up at all these provincial conferences. [The complete text of the resolution was serialized in the *Militant* in the April 16, 23, and 30 issues.]

Housing a top priority

Provincial CTC secretary Omar Ramón told the conference that he considered housing the number one priority faced by the unions in the province.

Some 13,000 workers' houses were built in Las Tunas in the period 1996-2000, largely through voluntary work involving 470,000 people, according to the Main Report, which was distributed in written form

acute shortage of oil and other vital materials made sheer economic survival the number one issue that faced Cuban working people and their government for several years. Most projects to meet pressing social needs such as housing construction had to be shelved.

Although Special Period conditions continue, the last few years have witnessed a significant economic improvement. According to the Main Report, the year 2000 registered a decline in unemployment to 3.6 percent of Las Tunas province's economically active population of 200,000. Some 7,585 jobs were created, a 36 percent increase over the previous year. Of the new jobs, 6 out of 10 were in sugar and agriculture, mostly in the sugar industry. Labor productivity improved by almost 23 percent over the previous year.

This is part of the national trend, with unemployment on the island declining to 5.5 percent last year. Joblessness nationwide was reported to be 8 percent at the height of the crisis in 1996, not counting those on extended layoffs or short hours due to plant closings for lack of raw materials or electrical parts.

Industrial and agricultural production continued to rise over the past year, according to figures reported at the conference. Nonetheless, sugar production, which domi-



Photos: Trabajadores

Workers' housing was one of the main topics discussed at provincial conference of the CTC in Las Tunas, Cuba. Some 13,000 workers' houses were built in Las Tunas largely through voluntary work involving 470,000 people. Right, construction of single family-housing.

nates the province's economy, continues to lag considerably—nationwide, it has not risen much above half the 8 million tons produced in 1989. Sugar is a vital source of hard currency needed to finance Cuba's social priorities.

"The purpose of citing these improved figures is not to brag," Ramón told the conference, but rather to show what's now necessary and possible to meet the country's needs.

Doricel Dopico Sánchez, secretary of the construction workers union, shared Ramón's view as to the importance of the housing question. House-building is being revived, she said, by relaunching voluntary work as a way to resolve this social need. "This is not a construction movement but a political movement, one that today places house construction as a priority," she explained. Dopico said this effort began a few years ago, led by the Communist Party.

The government pays half the costs of the building materials for an individual worker's house, and the family concerned gets loans to finance the other half. While some skilled workers are provided to help direct the labor, most of the construction work is done by family members, friends, and neighbors who volunteer after working hours or on weekends. Frequently, family members become more active in mass organizations as the result of this experience, said Dopico.

Next, she added, they aim to turn their attention to building rural schools and teachers' houses to go with them.

Workers' role in economic upturn

Delegates at the CTC conference focused considerably on assessing the economic turnaround, its scope, how it has been achieved, and how to build on it.

In a capitalist country, bosses frequently make appeals to workers to do "our part" to boost the efficiency of a particular plant and improve the economy as a whole by accepting speedup, the erosion of job safety, and belt-tightening measures. Such appeals—often echoed by the trade union officialdom—are designed to boost profits and convince workers that our interests and those of our bosses are the same.

The situation in Cuba is the opposite. Through their socialist revolution, Cuban workers and farmers removed the profit-seeking capitalist class from power and established their own class rule—"the revolutionary power of the workers, by the workers, and for the workers," as the Theses adopted by the previous CTC congress in 1996 put it. The Cuban government defends the interests not of an exploiting minority class but of workers and farmers.

As a result, working people in Cuba have a powerful interest in raising labor productivity and efficiency, and reducing waste, because they have the power to determine how the product of their labor is utilized. The ability to meet the basic needs of the majority, made possible by the revolution, depends on such actions and initiatives by workers.

As Julio Martínez, provincial secretary of the sugar workers union in Las Tunas, said in a post-conference interview, "The unions have a dual role in Cuba, reflecting the fact that workers here are simultaneously employees and—unlike in capitalist countries—also owners. As such, the unions must both represent their members, defending



their rights before the administration, and at the same time act in favor of the values, responsibilities, and norms that workers must observe to improve the functioning of the enterprise or workplace."

When workers in Cuba discuss how to boost productivity nationwide or increase the efficiency of their particular plant, they do so—often through union-organized workplace meetings known as efficiency assemblies—in a way that brings their collective weight to bear in resolving problems in the interests of all working people.

The CTC conference discussion, as registered in the Main Report, gave considerable importance to the place of efficiency assemblies in continuing the economic recovery and making social advances. The report specified ways of improving them, such as regular monthly meetings held at a time that maximizes turnout—including for women who have small children—and ensuring they're well-prepared with reports written clearly and understandably, not blurring the issues.

As they celebrated the economic improvements registered over the last year, a number of conference delegates stressed that sustaining and improving on them depended on advancing the leading political role of the working class.

Jorge Licea, of the agricultural workers union, reported on the improved economic performance in the province of the agricultural cooperatives known as UBPCs, Basic Units of Cooperative Production. "Sixty-five of the 97 UBPCs that come under the ministry of agriculture made a surplus last year"—a distinct improvement, he reported. There are an additional 94 sugarcane-producing UBPCs in Las Tunas that come under the sugar ministry.

Licea spoke of the importance of ensuring material incentives to workers as a way to help achieve these results, in particular by linking workers' incomes to production results through special bonuses, and resolving their housing needs.

"Most important," he said, "is political awareness. If workers understand the social role of a cooperative—for example, a dairy UBPC's contribution to much-needed milk production—then they make efforts to reach these goals."

Licea also stressed that production targets must be fully discussed by the workers involved to ensure they're realizable.

Héctor Rodríguez of the union of maritime, merchant navy, dock, and fish workers reported that fish production had improved in both quantity and quality, with lower costs and less wastage. He said im-

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Unionists in Cuba discuss social needs

Continued from Page 11

provements in the fishing industry were in line with the overall 39 percent increase in production in Las Tunas province. He said the role of union cadres, whether they hold or don't hold official posts, is critical.

"Our role is to participate with voice and to listen," Rodríguez said. "What we're doing is improving the situation. It's not perfect. Continuous improvement can only be achieved by listening closely to what other workers say."

Rodríguez specified that two issues consistently come up on the job. "One is protective work clothes, and broader questions of working conditions and health and safety at work. The other is the need for production results-based bonus payments in hard currency," referring to dollars. The average hard currency bonus received by fish process workers in Las Tunas is \$43 monthly, he said. Given the economic crisis of the Special Period, many basic necessities such as laundry detergent, cooking oil, and clothing are largely unavailable except with hard currency.

Health and safety

- At the urging of Pedro Ross that delegates speak concretely about problems faced in addressing workers' needs, José Antonio Pérez, union secretary at the Antonio Guiteras sugar mill and a member of Cuba's Union of Young Communists, complained that protective work clothes are often in insufficient supply, despite being stipulated in collective agreements between the union and management. This problem is not due to objective reasons, he said—they are simply not sent in the necessary quantities.

In response, Ross insisted that this situation was unacceptable. "The union cannot accept any explanation for this," he said. "The measures and materials necessary for workers' safety constitute part of the production costs." If collective agreements are not honored or agreements are made that are not sufficiently precise, cynicism will result, Ross said.

Ross asked Pérez how many accidents there have been, insisting that union cadres know the figures and can show that they're actively working to improve things.

Health and safety on the job is one of the concerns of the CTC that has most suffered under the Special Period. The Main Report to the Las Tunas conference noted that while improvements have been made—there was an average yearly reduction of 936 injuries since 1996—there continue to be major health and safety problems, especially in sugarcane, other agriculture, food, light industry, and construction.

The report says there were 38 on-the-job fatalities in Las Tunas province over the 1996-2000 period—down from 49 during the previous five years, in the depths of the Special Period and on average, 42 days were lost through each serious accident.

'Battle of ideas'

In his opening address to the Las Tunas conference, Omar Ramón noted that the

coming national CTC congress was above all part of a "great battle of ideas." The Theses point to the efforts of imperialism "to erode our principles and values, and weaken in particular our youth," and of the negative consequences of some of the measures the Cuban government has had to take—such as decriminalizing use of the dollar—which have increased economic inequalities. This challenge imposes "new demands on our conscious activity in defense of socialist values," the Theses state. Ramón highlighted two such negative consequences: petty crime and corruption.

Problem of petty crime

Militant reporters also had the opportunity to attend workers' assemblies at the Calixto García hospital in Havana and the Prodal fish and meat processing plant in nearby Regla, where the issue of increased petty crime was a point of discussion.

At the Calixto García assembly, Roberto, a pensioner, was the first to take the floor. "We are revolutionaries," he said. "This means there is no material necessity that can justify the erosion of revolutionary ethics that theft of hospital property entails." Roberto is one of 150,000 retired workers in Cuba today who remain active members of the CTC through retirees' organizations, continuing to carry out voluntary work in their former workplace and other activities.

Roberto noted there had been an improvement in the situation over the past year. There had been more than 100 reported crimes in the hospital in 1999, particularly cases of theft, and the figure was down to 28 in 2000. One way workers have addressed the question is through "lightning meetings" called immediately after a crime

is discovered, which has helped focus attention on this problem and check petty crime.

Strengthening of workers guard

He said another question he thought should be addressed was the strengthening of the "workers guard," the voluntary organization of workers into the 24-hour defense of their workplace. Roberto argued that some people who signed up for the workers guard didn't take it seriously enough. "It's voluntary guard duty, but when you sign up you have an obligation to do it effectively," he said. Roberto proposed that each department head organize classes on Cuba's defense against imperialist aggression and the exemplary role of the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

The question of crime also came up at the efficiency assembly at the Prodal fish processing plant, where about 300 production workers and other personnel drew a balance sheet of last year's performance.

CTC general secretary Ross joined workers in the assembly at Prodal and spoke on the question of crime in the workplace. He called for trying the accused worker in the plant rather than calling in the police and going to court. Where this approach has been applied, CTC officials said, a worker who is found guilty is sanctioned through a transfer to another department, being moved to a lower-paying job, or another measure.

"Prisons are not part of the socialist system of ideas. Nor is social marginalization. Nor is unemployment. This question is part of the battle of ideas too," Ross said, to enthusiastic applause from the delegates.

Ross's approach, CTC officials said, is being applied at a number of plants but not yet at Prodal.

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Cuba and the Coming American Revolution. Speaker: Martin Koppel, editor of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Sun., April 29, 4:30 p.m. 372A 53rd Street. Tel: (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

The Fight Against Police Brutality and Racism in Cincinnati. Speaker: Maurice Williams, staff writer for the *Militant*. Fri., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 695-358.

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The Fight Against Police Brutality and Rac-

ism in Cincinnati. Speaker: Maurice Williams, *Militant* staff writer. Sat., April 28, 7:30 p.m. U.S. Navy Out of Vieques. Speaker: Hilda Cuzco, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., May 4, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 540 W. 165 St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

Dockworkers end strike in Santos, Brazil

BY RÓGER CALERO

Dockworkers at the port of Santos, Brazil, went back to work April 10 after a 15-day strike that paralyzed the busiest port in Latin America. The 11,000 dockworkers were protesting antiunion measures that the government and the port bosses are implementing as part of their drive to sell off Brazilian port facilities to private capitalist enterprises.

The return of the dockworkers to their jobs was described as "tense" by the Brazilian newspaper *Diário do Grande ABC*. It followed the agreement of the government to fund a voluntary retirement program for the workers, who were also able to win the creation of a training center for those affected by the retirement plan.

For the first time, though, union members will be called up by the Organ of Labor Management (OGMO), a bosses' institution. The assignments of crews had been the right of the union for 65 years. The OGMO had earlier won assignment rights at other ports in the country.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Celebrate 40th Anniversary of Cuban Victory at Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs. Event will feature "After the Battle," documentary on the role of the Cuban internationalist volunteers in the defeat of the South African apartheid regime at Cuito Cuanavale, Angola. Speaker from the Young Socialists. Sat., April 28, 6:00 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland Ave. Donation: \$5. Tel: (773) 342-1780

NEW JERSEY

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Roots of Women's Oppression and the Fight for Women's Liberation Today. Speaker: Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 27, 7:30

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—CALENDAR—

NEW YORK

Stop the U.S. Navy's bombing of Vieques, Puerto Rico. Sat., April 28, 12:00 p.m. 26 Federal Plaza, Downtown Manhattan, New York City. Take N or R train to City Hall, or 4, 5, or 6 train to Brooklyn Bridge. Sponsored by Vieques Support Campaign. Tel: (212) 677-0619 or (718) 601-4751.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Demonstration for Peace in Vieques: Say No! to the resumption of bombing by the U.S. Navy. Fri., April 27, 5:00 p.m. White House sidewalk, Pennsylvania Ave. Sponsored by Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. Tel: (787) 741-0716, and the International Action Center.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Cuba's victory at the Bay of Pigs and the Literacy Campaign. Evening includes presentation on the Bay of Pigs and Cuba today; video, including documentary footage from the literacy campaign; details on the annual work/study brigade to Cuba; light refreshments with Cuban music. Thurs., May 10, 7:30 p.m. Aldersgate, Durham St. Methodist Center, 309 Durham St. Organized by the Cuba Friendship Society.

Folks don't get it, time is money—British Airways said it will not await new, safer tires for the re-launching of its seven Concorde jets.



Harry Ring

The new tires are being made by Michelin in the wake of the runway crash of a French Concorde in which 113 passengers died. BA says waiting for the safer tires would be an unnecessary delay.

Capitalism: a flourishing system—In Japan, the ranks of the

homeless continue to swell and now include white-collar workers who had traditionally been promised lifetime jobs. Officials say there are 23,210 homeless, with 5,700 of them in Tokyo, double the numbers given five years ago. People who aid the homeless say the real number in Tokyo is 16,000 and the national figure is close to 100,000.

Taking Amtrak while non-white?—The Drug Enforcement Agency disclosed it has a computer link with the Amtrak rail station in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ticket agents alert the feds to suspicious purchasers of one-way tickets. If narcotics or cash is seized, Amtrak cops get 10 percent of the take.

Late departure?—A baggage handler at Dallas-Ft. Worth was

locked into the cargo area of a Champion Air jet bound for Mexico. The charter line said the worker wasn't hurt but the cargo door was slightly damaged. A spokesperson shrewdly observed: "He was obviously trying to get out."

Big joke—Watsonville, California, is a top producer of strawberries and the big growers get the cream. Mainly Latino field hands and working farmers get little. But now they're being offered a high school site. Interviewed by the *Los Angeles Times*, was Dan Hernandez, whose farm is near the proposed site.

Hernandez pointed to the endless flights of crop dusters spewing chemicals over the nearby strawberry fields. And he noted the

stench from the neighboring cattle feedlot and solid waste dump. Officials have already named the projected school: "New Millennium."

Hello Mr. Gerrymander—The Justice Dept. said it's checking a slated merger of the Jefferson and Louisville County governments in Kentucky. They want to find out if the merger will reduce Black representation. The 2000 census figures indicated that six mainly Black districts will be sliced down to three.

'99 Cents': price or hourly wage?—In New Jersey, 11 Latino workers got a \$100,000 settlement from a 99-cent chain. They accused the stores of treating employees "like animals." Locked into the stores at night, they were compelled

to work long hours for miserably low wages, and without overtime pay.

How much is that an hour?—In Canada, Jacques Bougie quit as top dog at Alcan, a major aluminum producer, perhaps because of this low pay. Last year, he received a mere \$975,000 in wages and benefits. But, fortunately, since his departure he's been given a \$4 million bonus.

To close on a less than cheerful note—In England, more than 900 of the cattle and sheep buried since the foot-and-mouth outbreak may be dug up and reinterred. Government advisers said the animals were buried in the wrong place, contaminating a freshwater spring less than 50 feet away.

1949 revolution radically transformed China

Printed below are excerpts from "The SWP Position on China," a resolution adopted by the 1963 national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. The full text of the resolution can be found in the Education for Socialists booklet *The Chinese Revolution and Its Development*. The resolution refers to the 1949 Chinese Revolution in which the workers and peasants succeeded in overthrowing the ruling capitalist party, the Kuomintang, which was led by Chiang Kai-shek. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

The Third Chinese Revolution is now thirteen years old. During that time, and especially since our conclusions were codified in the resolution adopted by the SWP national convention in September 1955 and ratified by the 1957 SWP national convention, all our

broken. The balance of forces between the capitalist and the anticapitalist camp has been altered to the advantage of the latter.

New China has become the central powerhouse of the colonial revolution, especially throughout Asia. It is popularizing socialist ideas and methods among the underdeveloped nations and providing them with an example to follow in overcoming their backwardness and modernizing themselves. In the Korean War China proved a major deterrent to the further penetration of U.S. imperialism into the Far East. The People's Republic of China is emerging as a military and diplomatic power of the first rank, while it is only at the threshold of its assertion in international affairs.

Class nature of communist China

These mighty accomplishments, their international radiations, and the prospects of progress opened up for the 700 millions of China and the rest of humanity have determined our fundamental attitude toward the Third Chinese Revolution and our definition of the social structure and state which have issued from it. We are firm partisans of that workers and peasants revolution, defenders of its social forms and conquests against all internal and external enemies and supporters of its advances. Our party has demonstrated its solidarity with revolutionary China in the struggles against Chiang Kai-shek, then in the [1950-53] Korean War, and most recently in the India-China border clash.

We have sociologically characterized China as a workers state resulting from and based upon the fundamental social achievements of the revolution—expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, nationalization of the means of production, state control of foreign trade and planning of the economy.

At the same time we have noted that the political system of the People's Republic is not in harmony with its socioeconomic foundations. It has been subjected to grave bureaucratic deformations. These were brought into the revolution by the Stalinist background, training and methods of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP], which organized and directed the civil war, set up the new regime, and has monopolized all political activity from its birth.

The CCP did not follow up the victory of the workers and peasants and its own assumption of power by establishing, developing and strengthening organs of popular control. The bureaucratic tendencies present from the first have been subsequently reinforced by China's poverty and cultural backwardness. The predominance of the peasantry over the workers, the insistent demands of extensive and accelerated capital investment in economic development, the sustained scarcities of consumer goods, including food and other elementary necessities, coupled with the authoritarian, ultra-centralized character of the regime has fostered the growth of inequalities. There are no democratic curbs upon the arbitrariness and appetites of the ruling stratum in the government, party, army and economic enterprises. Although their privileges may appear slight compared with the exorbitant parasitism in the wealthier workers states, they can loom large amidst the extremely low level of subsistence.

The absence of workers and peasants councils, freedom of organization and political expression, the suppression of revo-



City of Wonsan in north Korea after the 1950-53 war. After 41-day bombardment by warships of the United Nations forces headed by Washington, and 861-day siege, city was "mass of cluttered ruins," states official U.S. Navy history. Chinese volunteers helped push back invading forces. SWP resolution explains, "In the Korean War China proved a major deterrent to the further penetration of U.S. imperialism into the Far East."

lutionary Marxist opinion and groups, the total fusion of the party with the state apparatus, the exclusive possession of all the instrumentalities of power by the CP have given a special stamp to the new Chinese regime. It is a workers and peasants state by virtue of its property relations and major social ten-

dencies. But it is a deformed workers state because of the lack of any means of popular control over its policies and administration. In political terms, it is not, as its leaders claim, a "people's democracy," but a bureaucratic autocracy elevated above the worker-peasant masses in whose name it rules.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

official activities and writings related to that colossal event have been directed in accord with the following guidelines.

Significance of the revolution

The Chinese Revolution converted China from a capitalist-colonialist country to a workers state by overthrowing Kuomintang rule, ending imperialist domination, unifying the nation under a central government, wiping out provincialism and warlordism, nationalizing the land, banks and major means of industrial production, monopolizing foreign trade, planning the economy, and reorganizing agrarian relations through a series of steps culminating in the "People's Communes."

This radical transformation of China's social and political organization has brought about remarkable progress in many fields in the face of immense obstacles. The new regime has taken measures to improve food, clothing and shelter, stabilized the currency, cleaned up prostitution and beggary, promoted literacy, education and science, expanded public health and medical services, introduced social benefits for the aged and disabled, broken down the patriarchal family, giving greater freedom and equality to the women and youth, built up and beautified many cities. These changes and many others associated with them testify to the gains made through the revolution which has released enormous popular enthusiasm and energies.

The Chinese Revolution is not only the major turning point in modern Chinese history; it is the greatest blow against capitalism since the Russian Revolution of 1917. It is a continuation and extension of that first socialist victory. The progressive consequences of the overturn have not been confined within China's boundaries. The successes of the Chinese Revolution have affected the whole of world politics, especially in the colonial areas, and will have even more profound impact in the next decades. The isolation of the Soviet Union has been

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



May 7, 1976

CHICAGO—"If anyone needs the Equal Rights Amendment, it's Black women," stated Brenda Eichelberger, head of the Chicago chapter of the National Alliance of Black Feminists.

She was speaking to a predominantly Black and Latina audience at an April 13 Loop Junior College meeting sponsored by AWARA (Aware Women for the ERA).

More Black and women's organizations are recognizing the double jeopardy of being Black and female in this society. Eichelberger announced that the recent convention of the National Association of Black Women Attorneys pledged to support the ERA.

Also the Chicago chapter of the National Council of Negro Women has endorsed the May 16 national ERA march.

Another reason why Black women are turning toward the ERA struggle is that they see in the anti-ERA movement the same forces that are fighting against Black rights.

"It's the same thing they do with busing," she continued. "They say 'Oh we think Black children deserve a decent education. We don't oppose busing because we're racists. It's just that we think busing isn't necessary.' And then, these so-called nonracists viciously attack Black people in Boston."

"Black women have an oppression that is different than Black men and white women," Eichelberger explained, summing up the importance of Black women organizing themselves to participate in the women's and Black rights struggles.



May 7, 1951

A handful of huge corporate farm interests in the South, the Southwest and the West Coast are working might and main to reintroduce peonage in this country. These agricultural monopolists who so ruthlessly exploit several million native and foreign migratory workers now seek to assure themselves of a vast reserve of imported labor in order to further drive down agricultural working and living standards. They are pressing hard for such legislation as the Senate bill 984, sponsored by Sen. Ellender of Louisiana, a bill that would secure large-scale importation of Mexican workers.

These charges were flatly made on the Senate floor by Sen. Chavez of New Mexico, not a radical by any stretch of the imagination, but a hard-boiled supporter of the capitalist system.

Over the past years these corporate farms have exploited the so-called wetbacks, or migrant workers from Mexico, who enter this country illegally by crossing the Rio Grande and who are then completely at the mercy of their employers. The number of these wetbacks is estimated at above a million. Last year alone, 500,000 of them were deported.

"People who are supposed to be outstanding citizens in their community have told me that they have the least trouble with a wetback. Certainly they do not have as much trouble with him as with a contract worker. They can take care of a wetback. If he complains or rebels or gripes, he is reported to the Immigration Bureau. He is at a disadvantage," said Chavez.

Abolish the death penalty!

The grotesque spectacle being prepared by the Bush administration for the execution of Timothy McVeigh, the man convicted of the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, is part of the rulers' effort to divide the working class, to erode democratic rights, and to prepare the ground for more attacks on the toilers here and in other countries. This move goes hand in hand with the recent Supreme Court ruling authorizing the police to arrest and jail people without a warrant for minor infractions such as not wearing a seatbelt, and Bush's active enforcement of a law passed under the Clinton administration that bars federal aid to students with misdemeanor drug convictions.

The administration hopes to strengthen support for capitalist punishment and federal death penalty laws with the propaganda around the orchestrated killing of McVeigh, the first federal execution since 1963. This takes place at a time when opposition to the death penalty is growing and resistance by workers to attacks on unions and the social wage is increasing. The ghoulis march to the death chamber also comes in the wake of protests by African Americans and others in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Stuart, Florida, against street executions by the cops—part and parcel of how the death penalty is used in capitalist society.

Bush is building on the accomplishments of the Clinton administration in dramatically expanding the number of crimes covered by the death penalty. From the Waco massacre at the opening of the administration, to the assault by INS and other cops in Miami, to pressing for the death penalty to be exacted against McVeigh, the Clinton administration set a pace for the use of state violence for Bush to follow.

But the ability of the employing class to justify the death penalty as a weapon of terror has been weakened by the resistance and growing solidarity among working people in the United States. This includes the union organizing drives of laundry and meatpacking workers, the stepping forward in struggle by an expanding immigrant workforce, the demands of Blacks and women for equality and justice, and the tractorcades and rallies by farmers fighting to defend their land and right to farm.

By showcasing trials and executions of "spies," "traitors," and "terrorists," the capitalists and their government hope to grease the skids for more infringements of democratic rights in the interest of national security and for the expansion of the repressive apparatus they will increasingly need against the struggles that the working class and its allies will mount.

Politicians of the big-business parties try to deflect growing rejection of the use of the death penalty by proposing moratoriums or reforms to make the punishment "fair." But there is no fairness or justice in the system in which a tiny class of billionaire families, backed up by massive police and military force, the legislature, and the courts, exploits and plunders the vast majority of humanity, the workers and farmers who produce all the wealth.

The labor movement has every interest in calling for an end to the death penalty and participating in protests against state-sponsored murder. Taking this weapon of terror out of the hands of the rulers strengthens the march of workers and farmers toward taking political power and beginning to reorganize society on the basis of human solidarity in the interests of the vast majority.

Capitalist trade pacts

Working people are bombarded with arguments to make us accept the notion that "we" have a stake in one or another set of U.S. government and employer trade policies. These range from "protecting" the "American worker" with tariffs and other measures that increase the cost of imports to so-called "free trade" policies that will give U.S. companies an advantage on the world market. Workers and farmers are subjected to such arguments from the employers, government and trade union officials, the big-business media, and various organizations that claim to speak in the interests of working people.

Accepting this framework—in any of its guises—for how to confront the effects of the growing world capitalist economic crisis is a deadly trap for all working people. The bosses and their two parties, Democrats and Republicans alike, present the false notion that "we" in the United States have a stake in one or another of their proposals. This disguises the fact that the United States, Canada, and Mexico are class-divided and that *we*—workers and farmers—have nothing in common with *them*—the capitalist exploiters and landlords.

Capitalism has been "globalizing" since its very birth more than two centuries ago. There is no point in trying to make the capitalists organize their economy in a different way, as some "antiglobalization" opponents of "free

trade" policies seek to do. The real question to address is what we as workers and farmers can and must do—and that is to join together across borders and fight for solutions that advance our common needs as a class.

Millions of working people around the world are discovering as they enter into struggle the fact that we are an international class and have common interests. In contrast with proposals that foster competition among ourselves for jobs and other basic rights, the only course that serves working people in the cities and countryside is one of joining together in a united struggle against our common enemy: the employers and their government, above all Washington.

Decades of struggles by working people have demonstrated that the only way to prevent the employer class from deepening its assaults and ultimately imposing fascism and world war on working people to resolve the deep-going crisis of the outmoded capitalist system—their solution twice before in the 20th century—is through revolutionary struggle by working people against the capitalist rulers and their government. The international fight for socialism does not start from a good idea. It begins with the most basic needs of the producing classes to defend ourselves from the assaults, brutalities, wars, and oppression by an outmoded and violent system.

Cincinnati jury indicts protesters

BY OSBORNE HART

CINCINNATI—The Hamilton County grand jury is indicting 63 demonstrators arrested during the state of emergency following the police killing of Timothy Thomas, an unarmed Black teenager, April 7. The killing was

Houston socialists report break-in

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—The offices of the Socialist Workers Party branch in Houston were broken into during the night of April 22. The front door of the Pathfinder Bookstore, which rents space to the party, was pried open and a window was broken, causing extensive damage to the storefront. An air conditioner was apparently the only item stolen.

The bookstore and party office is well-known in the Houston working-class neighborhood where it is located. Socialist workers have been campaigning in the neighborhood over the past year, selling the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books. The bookstore and SWP office were recently featured in a half-page article in the *Houston Chronicle*.

Lea Sherman, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in 2000, said that, "Break-ins, burglaries, and other apparently 'common petty crimes' have been used by rightist forces and police agencies to disrupt our movement. We will make the public aware of any and all such actions to better defend our democratic rights and those of all working people."

The Militant Labor Forum on April 28 will feature a report on the fight by coal miners for health and safety. Supporters have already offered to help with the repairs and to make donations, including an air conditioner, in order to hold the forum as scheduled.

met by days of protests demanding justice and the prosecution of Stephen Roach, the cop who shot Thomas. These actions also highlighted the widespread discrimination against this city's Black population, especially those who are working people.

During the citywide curfew, which was imposed by Mayor Charles Luken following mass protests, 852 people—overwhelmingly Black—were arrested. They are charged with "curfew violations" and "felonies" for "riot-related violence."

Using video from two of the city's major media outlets, the prosecutor's office plans to file more charges. An audio recording of Roach's chase of Thomas has been publicized, but the police video of the Thomas killing has yet to be released.

Many in the Black community here are calling for amnesty for those arrested. The general mood among Black working people and opponents of police violence, is "wait and see" if a possible Hamilton County grand jury rules for a murder indictment against Roach. If there is no justice, in the opinion of most, protests will resume. Roach remains on paid leave.

Meanwhile, no charges have been filed against six city police SWAT members and a state trooper who, unprovoked, opened fire with pellet-filled bean bags on protesters holding signs and funeral programs following the April 14 service for Thomas. These cops have also been given paid leave while a city and FBI "investigation" proceeds.

In addition to mobilizing the city's police force, government officials assigned more than 100 state troopers to Cincinnati during the curfew.

Osborne Hart is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876 in Detroit.

Washington and 'free trade'

Continued from front page

to eight years needed to construct the Aegis-equipped warships. The Kidd-class ships were originally intended for use by the Shah of Iran, before he was overthrown in a popular revolution in that country in 1979.

Washington has in the past rejected Taiwan's requests for advanced diesel-powered submarines because they were classified as offensive weapons. In approving the order, administration officials claim the submarines are now needed to defend the island against China. On ABC's "Good Morning America" television program April 25, Bush reiterated the U.S. rulers' position that they would use military force "to help Taiwan defend herself."

The sale of this weaponry to Taiwan will also lead to much closer ties between the militaries of Washington and Taipei. "While overt cooperation, such as joint military exercises, is still unlikely," states the *Wall Street Journal*, "the U.S. could agree to increased exchanged of a lower profile, perhaps allowing more Taiwan officers to study at U.S. military institutions or sending U.S. teams to Taiwan for assessments."

'Free trade' zone

Washington's moves in relation to Taiwan came after Bush, together with 33 other heads of governments in North and South America and the Caribbean, completed a three-day summit meeting in Quebec where they agreed to Washington's initiative to create what is touted as a "Free Trade Area of the Americas" where member nations reduce or eliminate tariffs by 2005.

Bush hailed the trade agreement, stating with candor that the accord will mean "we can combine in a common market"—with U.S. imperialism at its head—in order to "compete in the long term against the Far East and Europe."

According to the *Financial Times*, "The free trade area would be the world's largest trade grouping, with 800 million people and a third of world economic output."

The slowdown in the U.S. economy and its effects on Canada, countries in the Caribbean, Mexico, and the rest of Latin America hung over the meeting and underscored conflicts between Washington and a number of officials from governments in semicolonial countries, especially in South America.

The *New York Times* noted that many "American-inspired economic reforms" in Latin America over the last decade "have had limited effect. Growth has been a modest 3 percent, unemployment is up and a third of the population of 180 million people earns \$2 a day."

"The leaders said they would 'conduct consultations' if any member state had a disruption of its democratic system," reported the *Associated Press*, and "committed themselves to halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015" without saying how they planned to achieve this.

Canadian prime minister Jean Chretien singled out Haiti for particularly sharp criticism, claiming the recent election there that brought Jean-Bertrand Aristide back to power was flawed. The summit leaders announced plans to send a "fact-finding" mission to Port-au-Prince later this year.

Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, upon returning from the summit meeting, said he had reservations about joining the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. In Quebec he told reporters that his country would sign the declaration but could not accept the scheduled timetable for putting the hemispheric trade pact into operation.

Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso also expressed criticism of the trade pact, and refused to participate in a closing news conference with Bush and seven other leaders. According to the *Financial Times*, "Brazil's president said the free trade area would be 'irrelevant or worse, undesirable' unless the region's rich countries opened their markets to imports from the poorer ones."

The *New York Times* reported that various questions of national sovereignty are posed in the trade accords. "Even Canada," the paper wrote, "objects to provisions that would let international investors challenge any nation's laws on the grounds that they threaten the profitability of those investments." For example, under the North American Free Trade Agreement, United Parcel Service is challenging Canada's subsidies for its postal service.

Despite its talk about free trade, Washington maintains a vast array of protectionist policies which will remain true if the new trading bloc comes into being. In relation to Brazil, for example, the U.S. government has placed tariffs of 45.5 percent on 15 of that country's main exports, including, sugar, orange juice, and shoes. According to *The Fair Trade Fraud* by James Bovard, since 1980, Washington has negotiated more than 170 bilateral accords to restrict imports. These include against the lumber industry in Canada and steel imports from Japan and a number of other countries. The NAFTA accord itself is a 29-chapter book, full of articles of exemptions, tariff and export tax allowances, and other protectionist measures.

In another development, Washington, together with the International Monetary Fund, has been demanding the European Central Bank (ECB) cut its main interest rate from 4.75 percent in order to stimulate economic growth. The U.S. Federal Reserve has cut interest rates by 50 basis points four times this year, while the ECB remains the only bank not to cut interest rates in 2001. Wim Duisenberg, the ECB president, responded, "It seems to me there may be some misconceptions on the American side.... We are confident that we are weathering the storm."

Utility bankruptcy plan makes workers pay

BY BILL KALMAN

SAN FRANCISCO—The Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E), the principal energy utility in northern and central California, filed for bankruptcy protection April 6. The filing, the third largest corporate bankruptcy in U.S. history and the biggest utility bankruptcy, came after bailout talks with California governor Gray Davis's office did not result in a more profitable resolution of the utility's problems.

Because of sharply higher prices it must pay for electricity, PG&E claims its debts have increased by \$300 million a month. Both PG&E and Southern California Edison have been demanding over the last three months that electricity rates in the state be increased so it can return to profitability. Because of public pressure state politicians have been stalling on plans to bail out the utilities, especially after more information has come to light about "ring-fencing."

Ring-fencing legally separates the utility division from its highly profitable parent company. PG&E's bankruptcy filing, for instance, does not affect its parent company, PG&E Corp., or any other PG&E division. According to a report in the *New York Times*, "The utility hopes to have more success in court in trying to win relief from \$9 billion in wholesale energy debt it claims to have incurred since prices began soaring last May."

Governor Davis had been trying to negotiate a deal where the state of California would buy out transmission lines in an effort to keep PG&E solvent. But Robert Glynn Jr., chairman of PG&E Corp., told reporters, "We've heard a lot of the words that have been involved, but we have not seen a lot of actions. The regulatory and political processes have failed us, and now we are turning to the court."

The bankruptcy proceedings, which could last for years, may also lead to higher rates for working people if the bankruptcy judge puts the PG&E debt of \$9 billion on ratepayers. The filing led to a sharp exchange of statements between PG&E and the governor's office over who was to blame for the bankruptcy. Susan Abbott of Moody's Investors Service in New York observed, "The governor endorsed the rate increase the utilities had been asking for." These increases have ranged between 10 percent and 37 percent, in addition to a 9 percent surcharge already in place. In fact,

only one day before the filing, Davis stated in a televised speech that despite his earlier promises of no more rate hikes, consumers would have to pay more.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* later obtained an eight-page confidential proposal from PG&E to Davis's office sent during the course of the talks. According to the newspaper's report, "The utility demanded unprecedented freedom from regulatory oversight and the ability to pass along huge rate increase to consumers." PG&E also demanded "that it be cleared of any wrongdoing when it transferred millions of dollars to its parent company," according to the *Chronicle*.

Only hours before PG&E filed for bankruptcy protection, some 6,000 senior managers and some other employees were awarded \$50 million in bonuses. Most PG&E union workers were unaffected by this move. "It's not unusual for corporations anticipating bankruptcy to sweeten the pot and encourage management to stay," said Los Angeles bankruptcy lawyer David Huard.

Who gets paid first?

In the bankruptcy hearings, which began in Los Angeles April 9, Judge Dennis Montali will decide how to restructure the utility to make sure that gas suppliers and

bondholders get paid first. The first day of the hearing began with a presentation by phone from an attorney speaking on behalf of the Bank of New York, which represents PG&E bondholders who are owed more than \$2.2 billion. Further down on the list of debts would be property taxes.

PG&E's bankruptcy filing came just four days before \$80 million in tax payments to 49 California counties became due. Smaller counties depend on the revenue from corporate property tax to fund schools and other services.

Meanwhile, the manager of the state's power grid testified at a congressional hearing in Sacramento that rolling blackouts this summer might be more prevalent than previous reports had indicated. Terry Winter forecast 34 days of power outages over the California summer, or one out of every three days. "I'm very concerned there's no end in sight," said State Controller Kathleen Connell.

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



U.S. bosses eliminated 86,000 jobs in March

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

New economic figures released in April point to a further slowing of the U.S. economy. In March the nation's employers eliminated 86,000 jobs, the largest loss for a single month since November 1991.

A Labor Department survey of 356 industries last month "showed that an increasingly broad array is cutting jobs. Not since the last recession have cutbacks been so widespread," stated an April 7 *New York Times* article.

The biggest job losses were in manufacturing, where 81,000 jobs were cut last month, and 451,000 since last June. Just since the beginning of the year 270,000 manufacturing jobs were eliminated. Also hard hit were the large number of temporary workers, 83,000 of whom lost jobs last month and 300,000 since last spring. In addition, largely due to a decline in overtime hours, one-fifth of all families said their income had recently fallen.

"Until last month," states the *Times*, "the suffering in manufacturing and temporary help had been more than offset by employment increases in retailing, wholesale trade, transportation, public utilities, engineering services, consulting and government. In March, however, retailers and wholesalers eliminated jobs. So did government. And the others added fewer jobs than usual."

Cisco Systems, the world's biggest networking equipment company, announced April 16 that because of sagging sales it was laying off 25 percent of its workforce. John Chambers, president of the company, blamed the economic slowdown in the United States for this move, as well as declining demand for their products in Australia and Asia, par-

ticularly Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.

March was only the second month since January 1996 that produced a net job loss. The Labor Department announced that jobless claims rose 9,000 in the first week in April to a five-year high of 392,000, up 46 percent from a year ago. "The unexpected increase suggests the jobless rate, which rose in March to 4.3 percent, from 4.2 percent, may be headed even higher," noted the *Wall Street Journal*.

The number of workers officially listed as unemployed by the government rose to 6.1 million last month. This figure does not include those whose unemployment benefits have expired or are working severely reduced hours. The unemployment rate for Blacks was 8.6 percent in March, double the overall figure.

The Eastman Kodak Company, the world's biggest maker of photography products, said it would be cutting up to 3,500 jobs or 4.5 percent of its workers.

Honeywell International, Inc. said it would cut 6,500 jobs after announcing its earnings dropped 18 percent in the first three months of 2000. In Europe, Philips Electronics, the continent's largest electronics manufacturer, announced plans to cut 6,000 to 7,000 jobs or about 3 percent of its workforce, after announcing a 91 percent drop in first quarter earnings.

Concerned about the slowing U.S. economy, the Federal Reserve April 18 reduced its interest rate on overnight loans between banks to 4.5 percent from 5 percent. It was the fourth half-point cut in rates by the central bank since the beginning of the year.

Meanwhile, consumer confidence fell to

its lowest level in eight years, according to a preliminary survey released by the University of Michigan in mid-April. Consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of the nation's gross domestic product.

The U.S. economy grew in the fourth quarter of 2000 at a 1 percent annual pace, the slowest rate in five-and-a-half years, and profits fell for the first time since 1998, according to Commerce Department figures.

"A slower buildup in inventories, a decline in auto production and weaker consumer spending led to the slowdown," stated *Bloomberg News*. "Business spending on software and equipment fell for the first time in almost 10 years."

The business news service also estimated that growth in the first quarter of 2001 probably slowed to a 0.7 percent rate. This would place growth over the past two quarters at the slowest rate since the 0.1 percent pace in the first half of 1991.

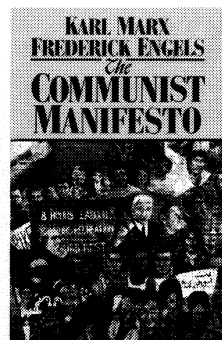
According to the Institute of International Finance, a research group affiliated with the world's largest financial institutions, "the global economy appears to be in the most precarious position it has seen since the 1973-74 oil crisis, as bad news in industrialized countries feeds bad news in the developing world," reports an April 18 *Wall Street Journal* article.

The economic slowdown in the United States will have an even bigger impact on semicolonial countries.

The *Journal* reports that exports from Asian and Pacific countries will grow just 5 percent this year, after jumping 23 percent in 2000. Latin America's sales abroad will increase only 7 percent this year, down from 22 percent growth last year.

The Communist Manifesto

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels



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LETTERS

Racist riot in Tulsa

Recently I reread the article by Róger Calero on the racist riot against the Black community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. On the whole this was an excellent article and I hope the *Militant* can print more articles about the real history of working people.

However, there was one sentence I had a problem with. In describing the atmosphere at the time of the riot Calero wrote, "Over this same period the practice of lynching criminals became more directed against Blacks." In my opinion the word criminal should not be used to describe the victims of lynchings.

Ida Wells investigated 728 lynchings at a time when they were routinely being carried out in this country.

Wells concluded that most victims were killed for alleged crimes like "incendiarism," "race preju-

dice," "quarreling with whites," and "making threats."

Wells gave an example of one of the more horrible lynchings. "So great is the southern prejudice, they...hung poor little 13-year-old Mildrey Brown at Columbia, South Carolina, Oct. 7 on circumstantial evidence that she poisoned a white infant."

"If her guilt had been proven unmistakable, had she been white, Mildrey Brown would never have been hung. The country would have been aroused and South Carolina disgraced forever."

Steve Halpern
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[Editors note: The report by the Oklahoma Commission on the Tulsa Race Riots refers to lynchings of white "criminals" who were convicted or accused of crimes. Over the course of several years in the

early 1900s Blacks became the main target of lynch mobs.]

Suggestions for coverage

I enjoy the recent articles focused on the American spy plane event. Those reports did not appear in the imperialist-control media like CNN. Some suggestions: 1. Increase the contents about the situation of Native Americans. 2. Increase the contents about the indigenous people—how they struggle for equality. Thank you very much. David Szutu
by e-mail

DEA and Amtrak

A recent editorial in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, *Journal Opinion* stated, "If you decide to travel by [Amtrak] train and purchase a ticket on the Southwest Chief...an agent may be watching on a computer" checking all infor-

mation about the passenger.

The agent mentioned is not an Amtrak ticketing agent, but an agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). While media coverage of this arrangement has focused on Albuquerque, a *New York Times* article quotes an Amtrak spokeswoman as saying, "This program exists all across the country." In return for the information provided, Amtrak receives 10 percent of any assets seized from suspected drug runners arrested either on the train or in the Albuquerque station.

Ostensibly, the objective is to interrupt the trafficking of drugs on passenger trains. But alerted to the presence of a Vietnamese passenger, the DEA searched the man's room and belongings, finding \$149,000. In spite of the fact that drugs were not found and the DEA did not charge the passenger with any crime, the DEA has yet to re-

turn \$148,000 of the passenger's money.

In response to editorials saying the practice violates constitutional rights and criticism of racial profiling, the assistant special agent in charge of the Albuquerque office explained that the methods used do not involve any racial profiling. "The bottom line is we do not engage in racial profiling. Crime is universal. We arrest people of all races," he said.

Shirley Peña
Albany, 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.

Strikes by workers spread in France

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—Resistance by workers to layoffs, plant closures, and threats of privatization of public service industries has led to a new wave of strikes and demonstrations in France.

The strikes, led by railroad workers, started just one week after large numbers of workers either abstained from voting in municipal elections across the country or cast their ballot for small centrist groups that have the image of being more combative than the current government of the Plural Left coalition. The principal parties in the coalition are the Socialist Party and the French Communist Party with SP leader Lionel Jospin as premier. The vote for the French Communist Party has plummeted as workers have become increasingly dissatisfied with the policies of the government.

Privately owned bus, metro, and trolley lines in some 30 cities throughout France were closed down March 26, as workers demanded the retirement age be lowered to age 55. The next day workers assemblies voted to renew the action, which the unions had initially projected to last 24 hours. Strikes were lifted progressively over the next week, although bus transport in the city of Rennes was totally halted for 25 days. National negotiations have been opened on lowering the retirement age for mass transit workers in the private sector, and a new one-day strike has been called in 49 cities for April 23.

Three days into the bus and subway drivers' action, railroad workers responded to a call by six national unions for a one-day walkout on March 29. The action called for a wage increase and for hiring more rail workers. The main reason for the action, however, was to call for an end to "Cap client," a management program to reorganize the state-run SNCF rail service into four separate administrations. Workers believe that "Cap client" is the first step towards a breakup and privatization of the SNCF, a state monopoly. Two previous attempts to privatize the SNCF were defeated by major rail strikes in 1986 and 1995.

The next day, large numbers of rail workers remained on strike at the call of several small unions but without the support of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), by far the largest union in rail. The French Communist Party dominates the CGT leadership.

The strikes were renewed on a daily basis by general assemblies of workers held at each train depot. A majority of train drivers remained on strike followed by a small number of other rail workers. Unions that did not call for the strike, including the CGT, said they would nevertheless respect the decision of the workers assemblies.

On April 5, one week after the start of the rail strike, SNCF president Louis Gallois opened negotiations, promising a 1.2 percent wage increase for 2001 and the hiring of 1,000 additional rail workers. He also announced a "pause" in the application of "Cap client." Gallois told the daily *Libération* that there was no risk of "Cap client" leading to privatization since "the public authorities and myself absolutely exclude this hypothesis."

Transportation Minister Jean-Claude Gayssot, a member of the French Communist Party and himself once a rail worker, testified before the Senate that he could "assure the railroad workers that I am resolutely opposed to privatization and any breakup of the SNCF."

Fighting railroad workers were not convinced. The next day general assemblies once again renewed the strike, which continued during the Easter holiday season. It took more than two weeks for the last train depots to vote to return to work. The strikers' intransigence led to a debate on the government's perspectives.

"The political contract that [Transport Minister] Gayssot has with the government to maintain social peace," says Dominique Bussereau, a deputy from the conservative Liberal Democracy Party, "has not been



Some 30,000 union supporters mobilized April 21 in Calais to express solidarity with workers fighting layoffs at Gervais-Danone food distribution company.

honored. He should straighten out the problem or he should go."

For *Le Parisien*, one of the largest daily papers in France, "any government has a legitimate fear of a railroad workers' strike. It would not be very wise to push the rail workers to radicalize their movement on the very eve of important elections. Remember what happened in 1986 and 1995."

'Haunted by 1995 strikes'

The business daily *La Tribune* complained, "The Premier [Jospin], like all political leaders, has been lastingly marked by the syndrome of the 1995 strikes. He seems to have opted for buying social peace any time he can."

In order to avoid the spread of the rail strike to other sectors, the government announced it would not apply the EU directive ordering the partial privatization of Gaz de France, another public service state monopoly, until at least 2002. The future of Gaz de France has been handicapped" ran the front-page headline of the financial daily, *Les Echos*.

Rightist groups have used the strikes to renew calls for limiting—or even forbidding outright—strikes in public services. Jacques Chirac, the French president and leader of the Gaullist party, the Rally for the Republic, publicly supported the call for a guaranteed minimum service in case of strikes while the SP's Jospin opposed limiting the

right to strike. Jospin, in a nationally televised press conference, pointed out that any attempt to impose a minimum service "would shut down the rail system for many weeks."

Under growing pressure from the railroad workers, Jospin also confirmed his opposition to privatization of the railroads. "We have seen," he said, "the example of the consequences of privatization of the railroads in Great Britain and of the electricity system in California."

The SNCF has lost more than 1 billion francs during the strike and has offered an additional 800 million francs in wage increases (1 franc = US 14 cents).

Added to the debate on privatization has been the question of layoffs and plant closures. The slowdown of the U.S. economy has begun to have repercussions in Europe. Significant layoffs and plant closures in France have been announced by the food distribution giant Gervais-Danone, the British-based department store chain Marks and Spencer, two electronics and telecommunications companies, Philips from the Netherlands, and Ericsson, based in Sweden. Pechiney has announced the closure of the only magnesium producing plant in Europe.

Workers at Danone have occupied two plants scheduled for closure and the Pechiney workers occupied their plant with the general director locked in his office for 24 hours. Close to 30,000 demonstrated in Calais April 22 at the call of the French Communist Party to defend the Danone workers.

Finally, more than 10,000 farmers marched in 78 towns throughout France April 21 "to save cattle raising and the rural world." Farmers demanded that nearly \$200 million in aid promised by the government to help cattle raisers be rapidly disbursed. None of the promised aid has yet been given to farmers. According to farmers' leaders, the current aid program covers only 30 percent of farmers' losses.

Derek Jeffers contributed to this article.

Actions will protest resumption of U.S. naval bombings in Vieques

BY HILDA CUZCO

As the U.S. Navy gets ready to resume bombing practices on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques April 27, activists in Puerto Rico and the United States are gearing up for protests to stop the aggression, including reoccupying the portion of the island used in the war maneuvers.

"I can say that Vieques is a one-of-a-kind training facility. It is a vital...facility for our sailors and Marines," Lt. Cmdr. John Kirby of the Navy's Second Fleet told the *Washington Post* following the Navy's announcement of the exercises. "There is simply no other place where we can train our forces in a combined arms training environment."

Washington insists the U.S. Navy can resume the bombings based on an agreement reached in January 2000 between the Puerto Rican governor and the Clinton administration. The pact allows Washington to continue use of the island despite widespread opposition to the bombing and calls for a referendum on the question—whose time and character is set by the U.S. government—for November 6.

Gen. Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the resumption of military maneuvers, which will last six days, will be under protection of the Puerto Rican police to assure "no interference" from local residents. "We hope that the government in Puerto Rico complies with the accords," said Shelton in a news item on the television channel C-SPAN.

The U.S. Navy in Vieques has, in turn, launched an ideological campaign through radio programs to convince Puerto Ricans they should accept the Atlantic Fleet's full-

scale mock invasions that include shellings, bombings, and amphibious landings, because the island is the "perfect location" for it.

According to *El Diario/La Prensa*, the military exercises announced by the Navy will include a fleet of 12 warships assigned to the aircraft carrier *USS Enterprise* and 15,000 troops prior to the battle group being deployed in the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

Two-thirds of Vieques, a small island off Puerto Rico's eastern coast with 9,400 residents, has been used by the U.S. Navy for live-fire military maneuvers for six decades. During bombing practices in April 1999, a civilian guard, David Sanes, was killed by a bomb dropped from a war plane. The death, which sparked a wave of protests, including the occupation of the site by opponents of Washington's use of the island, ended last May after a U.S. government raid expelled the protesters. Vieques residents contend that the live-fire maneuvers have been a threat to their health and environment for the past 60 years.

"We're ready to do our jobs, to protest," said Ismael Guadalupe of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, about the upcoming protests. José Paralitici, head of All Puerto Rico With Vieques, told *El Vocero* that his organization welcomes everyone who wants to join the action to stop the resumption of the bombings in Vieques. The protests include civil disobedience by a range of labor, religious, and community organizations, according to Robert Rabin of the Vieques Peace and Justice Campaign.

In New York, supporters of the struggle to end the U.S. bombings have scheduled a demonstration at 12:00 noon on April 28 at the Federal Plaza, sponsored by Vieques Support Campaign.

The governor of Puerto Rico, Sila María Calderón, introduced a bill that toughens noise regulations on beaches and waters surrounding Vieques in an effort to halt the bombings. Legislators in Puerto Rico announced they plan to approve the bill and will hand it to Calderón for her signature as a law.

The governor of New York, George Pataki, recently visited Vieques to express his opposition to continued U.S. bombing of the island. He was joined by Denis Rivera of the 1199 Health Workers Union and several New York state legislators.

In a statement during the visit, Rabin urged Pataki, a Republican, to "use the influence you may have with President Bush to help him understand that in Vieques, the U.S. Navy, far from defending democracy, violates the most basic rights of our community to live in peace and enjoy the security and happiness guaranteed by the constitutions of the United States and Puerto Rico." Rabin said residents of the island have faced "over a half a century of mistreatment" and will "fight to the end to defend its patrimony and the future generations of Viequesens."

Rabin also asked the New York governor to help get charges dropped against Tito Kayak and Gazir Sued, two people who scaled the Statue of Liberty to highlight opposition in Puerto Rico to the Navy's occupation and bombardment of the island.