

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Does end of Soviet trade with Cuba mean U.S. won cold war?

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Latin America and Caribbean solidarity conference opens in Cuba

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

HAVANA, Cuba — More than 1,100 delegates from political parties, trade unions, peasant organizations, student federations, as well as women's rights, antiracist, cultural, and environmental groups gathered here January 25 for the opening of the Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Conference for Solidarity, Sovereignty, Self-Determination, and the Life of Our Peoples.

Cuban president Fidel Castro; Pedro Ross Leal, general secretary of the Federation of Cuban Workers (CTC); Vilma Espín of the Federation of Cuban Women; Juan Contino Aslán, head of the Union of Young Communists (UJC); and other central leaders of the Cuban Communist Party attended the inaugural session.

Participants began discussing the effects of the social and economic crisis on working people and other social layers in the continent. According to the organizers, delegates will also debate "the role of the popular forces in Latin America and the Caribbean" in elaborating solutions to the crisis.

On-the-scene report

"None of the political and economic doctrines that emanate from the centers of capitalism offer solutions to the financial dependency and other problems facing the peoples" of the continent, stated José Ramon Balaguer, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba, during the inauguration. Jorge Ortega, representing the Unitary Federation of Workers of Colombia, and Jorge Moreno Ordonez from Ecuador, speaking for the event's organizing committee, also welcomed the delegates.

Opposition to trade embargo

During the initial discussion period, most speakers expressed their solidarity with the Cuban revolution and described efforts in their countries to broaden opposition to Washington's trade embargo against Cuba.

The first of these conferences took place in Quito, Ecuador, in November 1988. Similar meetings were subsequently organized in Bogota, Colombia, in 1989 and São Paulo, Brazil, in 1991.

Most of the political parties with representatives at the conference here have participated in meetings of the São Paulo Forum, which includes the overwhelming majority of organizations that function in the workers movement in Latin America and the Caribbean. The last meeting of the forum took place in Havana in July.

Participants at this conference come from virtually every country in Latin America and the Caribbean. Two dozen delegates are also here from the United States. They include representatives of the Caribbean Action Movement, Committees of Correspondence, Socialist Workers Party, and U.S. Hands Off Cuba Coalition. A similar number came from Canada, including representatives of the Friendship with Cuba from Montreal, Ontario Public Interests Research Group, and the *Prairie Dog* magazine from Saskatchewan. A few observers from Germany and other countries in Europe are present as well.

A noticeable number of the delegates are young people, representing student and other youth groups.

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Mandela urges ANC to fight for election victory

BY GREG ROSENBERG

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — "In the great effort to create a new society and a new nation we dare not fail," said Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress, in a January 21 speech to the ANC's National Conference on Reconstruction and Strategy. "History and the world will judge us very harshly if we do not do what is just and correct. We will not have a second chance."

Some 800 delegates from across South Africa, including the central ANC leadership, attended the three-day meeting in Johannesburg. It will be the last national conference before the April elections in this country. Diplomats and the press were invited to the opening and closing sessions of the meeting, which were addressed by Mandela.

The ANC president cautioned supporters against a complacent attitude toward the upcoming elections.

"I have warned on countless occasions," said Mandela at the close of the conference, "and I think I should do so here again because I'm not sure that my warning has been heard by all of you. Opinion polls seem to indicate very clearly that if an election were held today the ANC would muster about 70.3 percent of the total votes in the country."

"That is very encouraging and we

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Militant/Greg Rosenberg

News conference at Reconstruction and Development Program meeting. Right to left: ANC National Executive Committee members Walter Sisulu, Pallo Jordan, and Gertrude Shope.

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South Africa — The *Militant* is featuring firsthand reports on the African National Congress election campaign. *Militant* staff writer Greg Rosenberg, along with Brian Pugh from Salt Lake City and Brock Satter from Minneapolis, are on the scene.

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Coca-Cola strikers in South Africa

Mexico — *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* reporters Sandra Pucci and Juan Villagómez traveled from Los Angeles to Mexico to find out what workers and farmers there are discussing and doing after the government's violent crackdown against guerrilla forces in Chiapas.

Iowa unionist demands new parole hearing

BY NELL WHEELER

DES MOINES, Iowa — Officials at the Iowa Medical and Classification Center (IMCC) in Oakdale, Iowa, have rejected a parole board request to admit Mark Curtis for psychiatric evaluation. Curtis, a political and union activist, is serving a 25-year sentence on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. He received a letter notifying him of the classification center's decision on January 4.

In the letter, which was dated December 13, officials at IMCC declined to have Curtis transferred to their facility, stating there were "no psychiatric issues" in his case. They point to the fact that Curtis already "has had review by psychiatrist - O.P. [out-patient] services at Iowa State Penitentiary" last October, which found no reason for the transfer.

Curtis was arrested on March 4, 1988, shortly after Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops raided the packinghouse where he worked, arresting 17 of his coworkers from Mexico and El Salvador and threatening them with deportation. Just a few hours before he himself was arrested, Curtis spoke at a meeting protesting the raid and urged fellow unionists to join in the fight to defend the victimized workers.

After a grossly unfair trial, Curtis was convicted in September 1988. In the five-and-a-half years since, an international campaign to win his release has won support from thousands around the world. More than

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Japan's political crisis

The Japanese government was plunged into crisis after the upper house of Parliament voted down January 21 a reform package introduced by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa. Hosokawa, who had earlier hinted that he would resign or call elections if the four bills were rejected, said he would try to revive the plan.

The 130-118 defeat fed fears among Japan's rulers that the eight-party coalition government will not be able to jump-start the recession-battered economy. Stock prices have taken a beating in recent months because of lack of confidence in the government's economic policy. This crisis occurs just weeks before a February 11 trade summit between the U.S. and Japanese governments. Washington is trying to pressure Tokyo to reduce its trade deficit with the United States.

Thirty-eight years of single-party rule by the Liberal Democrats ended in elections last July after the government lost a vote of confidence in Parliament a month earlier.

The proposed laws would have rewritten campaign-financing rules, redrawn boundaries of all electoral districts, and replaced the multiseat districts with a combination of single-seat ones and seats chosen through a national proportional representation vote.

Low labor costs in China

The American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing reported that labor costs for U.S. businesses in China are among the lowest in Asia. A recent 17 percent average rise in labor costs lags behind the country's 24 percent inflation rate. Secretaries and drivers at U.S. companies earn less than \$345 a month. Wages at eight joint ventures surveyed were even lower. Accountants and engineers there, for example, earned no more than \$260 per month. More than 80 percent of the employees in the 54 companies surveyed work 40-45 hours a week, and the majority do not receive overtime pay.

Crisis in Russia deepens

Just days after Russian president Boris Yeltsin promised U.S. president Bill Clinton that Moscow will not retreat from its auster-



Days after a serious earthquake shook southern California, thousands of working people without shelter, food, or water were turned away from Federal Emergency Management Agency centers in Los Angeles January 20.

ity measures, two officials known for their support of such policies resigned. First Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar quit January 16 and Finance Minister Boris Fyodorov turned in his resignation four days later. The Yeltsin government has so far refused to accept Fyodorov's resignation.

Amid growing inflation, a lack of foreign investment, and increased hardship for Russia's working people, officials are debating how best to impose a market economy. Gaidar and Fyodorov favor rapid privatization of state-owned enterprises, removing price controls, cutting subsidies to unprofitable businesses, and holding down the money supply to limit inflation. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and others have called for a slower transition to a market economy.

In the wake of the resignations, the ruble plunged to a record low of more than 1,600 to the dollar January 19. In the first three weeks in January alone, the Central Bank in Russia

spent close to \$1 billion of its \$4.5 billion in hard-currency reserves to keep the ruble from collapsing even faster. Moscow announced plans to double the amount of money printed, a move certain to increase inflation. U.S. treasury secretary Lloyd Bentsen warned the Russian government that the receipt of international aid depends on Moscow's ability to curb inflation.

Clinton presses Moscow to cut aluminum exports

U.S. president Bill Clinton is pressing Russian leader Boris Yeltsin to limit Moscow's export of aluminum. Washington charges that Russian companies flood the world market with the mineral at unfairly low prices. Aluminum is Russia's biggest export behind oil and an important source of hard currency. The Clinton administration is pushing a "voluntary export restraint agreement." Industry chiefs are hoping the

government of Russia will cut exports by two-thirds, from 1.6 million metric tons to 500,000 tons, in exchange for help in restructuring and modernizing the industry in the former Soviet republics.

Strike in Zaire

Hundreds of thousands of workers in Kinshasa, Zaire, stayed off their jobs January 19 to protest President Mobutu Sese Seko's decision to dissolve Parliament and appoint a new prime minister. The general strike was called by Etienne Tshisekedi, who heads a rival government appointed by a transitional council last year. Tshisekedi's government is recognized by Brussels, Paris, and Washington but not by Mobutu. On January 14 the president announced he was dismissing his government and that of Tshisekedi and called a meeting to discuss merging the two.

Somalis march for peace

Thousands of people marched January 21 across the so-called Green Line, which divides Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu, in support of an agreement signed to end the fighting there. Leaders of rival organizations in that country signed the accord January 16. The Somali National Alliance, headed by Gen. Mohamed Farrah Aidid, supported the pact and continues to demand the withdrawal of all United Nations forces. The group also called for the rejection of UN-organized local councils.

Colombian president orders curfew after gunmen kill 35

Colombian president Cesar Gaviria ordered a nighttime curfew in the town of Apartado and said he would increase the

military's presence after about 20 hooded gunmen fired automatic weapons at a street party, killing at least 35 people. The January 23 event was organized by the Hope, Peace and Liberty Party (EPL) after an election rally. The EPL represents guerrillas who laid down their arms after reaching an agreement with the government three years ago. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the assault. Colombia's acting defense minister Ramon Gil accused the country's largest guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), of attacking the celebration. According to EPL leader Anibal Palacio more than 360 EPL members were killed last year by the Communist Party-led FARC. Gaviria sent a special 3,000-person army brigade to the region earlier this month.

Hospital conducts illegal tests

The Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston has been accused of performing drug tests on pregnant women without their consent. The hospital is also accused of collecting confidential information from them to turn over to the police without their knowledge when the women came to the hospital for prenatal care. County officials in charge of the program said that since 1989 about "forty-some" women have been arrested, virtually all Black. Some were handcuffed and put in leg shackles or handcuffed to hospital beds during their arrests. An article prepared by the hospital staff and published in a medical journal said the program was intended to "add some teeth to our counseling efforts."

The Center for Reproductive Law and Policy in Manhattan filed charges of human experimentation against the university hospital with the National Institutes of Health. Federal rules require individuals to give informed consent before being made part of an experiment and that they have the right to refuse to participate and still be given medical treatment.

Talks on Bosnia collapse

The European Parliament voted 160-90 to urge the dismissal of David Owen as the mediator of the European Union (formerly called the European Community) at talks to end the fighting in Bosnia. The body does not have the power to dismiss him. The latest round of negotiations collapsed January 19 when the Bosnian government again rejected a proposal, accepted by Serb and Croat forces, on boundaries dividing the country into three ethnically-based states.

Meanwhile, Gen. Jean Cot, the French commander of the 26,000 UN troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, criticized the lack of air strikes to back up his troops and compared the UN forces to a "goat tethered to a fence." UN secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali responded by calling for Cot's replacement. Paris has the largest single contingent stationed in the region, 6,780 troops. Eighteen French soldiers have been killed there and 260 injured, the overwhelming majority in Bosnia.

— PAT SMITH

THE MILITANT

Firsthand coverage of the Cuban revolution

At the end of January a 'Militant' reporting team arrived in Cuba. Upcoming issues of the paper will provide on-the-scene reports on how the Cuban people are responding to the severe economic crisis in that country. Don't miss a single issue!



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Clinton scrambles to find a war secretary

BY NAOMI CRAINE

"It's a Tough Time to Take The Helm at the Pentagon," declared a headline in the December 18 *New York Times*, commenting on the tasks before U.S. defense secretary nominee Bobby Ray Inman. It's also a tough time to get someone to take the job. The Clinton administration was left scrambling for a war chief a month after that headline appeared when Inman withdrew his nomination for the post just before his Senate confirmation hearings.

At least two other candidates to head up the Pentagon, Senator Sam Nunn and former senator Warren Rudman, turned down offers following Inman's declination. Finally William Perry agreed to take the job. Perry, who currently holds the number two position of deputy defense secretary, openly expressed his reluctance to be promoted.

President Bill Clinton's desperate search for a defense secretary "is not a good way to start a second year in office," commented Jurek Martin in London's *Financial Times* January 20.

"The shakeout in Mr. Clinton's national security team has been unparalleled for any recent President's first year," noted a *Wall Street Journal* editorial January 18, calling it a "problem for the country... that an important job at Defense remains unfilled at an important time."

Clinton nominated Inman after Defense Secretary Les Aspin announced his resignation in mid-December. Aspin said he was quitting for "personal reasons" and was not being pushed out by the White House. But media reports now routinely refer to Aspin as having been forced out. Aspin took the heat for a number of foreign policy snags during his year in office, including the death of 18 U.S. Army Rangers in Somalia last October.

Inman accuses media of 'McCarthyism'

In a one-hour televised statement explaining his decision not to be Aspin's replacement after all, Inman accused the media of "new McCarthyism." He compared a handful of negative opinion columns and articles to "when Senator Joseph McCarthy would make outrageous charges, largely against public servants," in the anticommunist witch-hunts of the 1950s. He especially complained about William Safire, a speech writer for the Nixon administration and now a columnist for the *New York Times*, who argued against Inman's nomination.

Actually, for the most part Inman was fawned over by Congress, the military brass, and the big-business media. Senator Joseph Biden, for instance, called him "the most quality guy in the federal government."

"Some top Pentagon officials are already waxing eloquent about [Inman's] organizational skills and articulate speaking style," said an article in the December 31 *New York Times*. Other coverage praised him as a candid "man of principle" who was "popular with the Washington establishment."

A retired four-star admiral, Inman's specialty has been leading government spy operations. He headed the National Security Agency in the late 1970s and was deputy director of the CIA in the early 1980s. Since then he has had a profitable career in private business, serving on the boards of several corporations. He was expected to breeze through Senate confirmation hearings with overwhelming support.

In his January 18 press conference, Inman said he wanted to clear up "the perception that's been created in the media of 'a manipulator of the press.'" He went on to say that from 1977 to 1982 he had the assignment of reviewing articles on military matters for the *New York Times* and other newspapers to make sure they avoided "needless damage to intelligence sources and methods."

"I responded on a great many evenings to editors working stories," Inman said. Some stories went through and "there were others where the editors made the decisions to alter the terms of the story to protect intelligence sources and method," he said, adding, "I never used that process to manipulate any news story."

The *New York Times's* editors denied any such formal arrangement. But Bill Kovach, who headed the paper's bureau in



Inman announces he won't accept top military post

Washington, D.C., at that time, said, "We did approach Bobby Inman regularly... if there were stories the publication of which could jeopardize the lives of people or the security of the country, it was part of the process to check them out as thoroughly as we could."

Bob Woodward, an assistant managing editor for the *Washington Post*, said he sometimes objected when Inman succeeded in convincing his superiors to delete material from Woodward's stories. He and Kovach both described delaying articles under pressure from Inman or former CIA director William Casey.

Despite strong support from many quarters, Inman probably would have faced questions about some of his business dealings in the Senate hearings. Inman was chief executive of Tracor, a military contractor that went bankrupt in the late 1980s. He received nearly \$1 million in compensation while the company became insolvent.

The nominee also had ties to International Signal and Control, which for years illegally sold arms and technology—including seismic detectors for nuclear weapons tests—to the South African apartheid regime.

International Signal president James Guerin apparently spied on Pretoria's nuclear weapons program at the same time and was one of Inman's "sources" when he worked in the National Security Agency and CIA. When Inman left the CIA in 1982, he

became one of three members of an outside board charged with overseeing the international dealings of Guerin's company.

Inman denied any knowledge of International Signal's criminal activities. After Guerin pleaded guilty to fraud and his dealings with South Africa and in money laundering came to light, Inman wrote to the sentencing judge testifying to the businessman's "patriotism toward our country."

After Clinton chose him for the top military post, Inman rushed to pay up \$6,000 in back Social Security taxes for his housekeeper. This has become a standard procedure for White House nominees since Zoë Baird lost the attorney general post after it was disclosed that she failed to pay taxes for her baby sitter. According to a White House memorandum, more than 28 other officials rushed to pay back taxes after being nominated for positions in the administration.

Inman argued that he didn't really owe the money, though, because the worker was an "independent contractor" and therefore responsible for the taxes herself. He suggested the law should be changed so that employers like him would not have to pay taxes for part-time domestic workers.

To bolster his argument that the media was out to smear him, Inman noted that some reporters questioned him about his assignment as deputy director of the CIA to debrief fascist leader Lyndon LaRouche and his wife after they had traveled abroad.

Meanwhile, Clinton has asked Aspin to stay on as defense secretary until fourth-choice nominee Perry is confirmed.

Socialist condemns U.S. policy toward Korea

BY PAT SMITH

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes condemned U.S. policy toward North Korea in a New Year's message to Kim Il Sung, president of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

"The greatest threat to peace and social progress in today's world remains the U.S. rulers' intensifying trade pressures against both imperialist rivals and third world nations," Barnes said, "and their determination to use Washington's mili-

tary might to protect their profits."

The SWP leader sent another message to Kim Jong Il, secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea.

"As we begin 1994," Barnes noted, "under the cover of so-called international agencies that in fact defend the interests of imperialism, the U.S. ruling class—the only power on earth ever to use nuclear weapons, against the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—now promotes the lie that the DPRK is a nuclear threat to Asia and the world."

"This is the latest rationalization not only for Washington's denial of Korea's national self-determination, but for the U.S. rulers' increasingly aggressive economic, trading, and military pressures against nations and peoples around the world."

On January 4 the U.S. government took a step back from its aggressive campaign of nuclear blackmail and threats of economic sanctions or military strikes against the DPRK. Washington announced it would accept Pyongyang's offer of inspection of seven atomic sites.

"For more than four decades," Barnes said in his message to Kim Il Sung, "the Korean people have set an unflinching example by standing up to Washington's threats and pressing the effort to reunify Korea." The SWP, he concluded, pledges "to continue to tell the truth about the aggressive aims of the U.S. government and to join other workers, farmers, and youth to fight Washington's attempt to isolate your country."

Pittsburgh activists celebrate 21 years of safe, legal abortions

BY MICHAEL PENNOCK

PITTSBURGH — "We are here today," said Jan Nefke of the Alliance for Progressive Action, "to honor the clinics, doctors, and escorts who are dedicated to keeping abortion safe and legal." She was addressing 100 people January 22 who came to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, which made abortion legal.

Most of the speakers referred to the right-wing attacks against abortion providers. Kay Everett of Planned Parenthood said the right to abortion is "meaningless if it is out of reach due to the murder of doctors, burning of clinics, and other acts of terrorism."

Dr. Robert Kisner, an abortion provider, vowed, "No amount of harassment, blockading, or picketing can turn me around." His remarks were greeted by the loudest applause of the event.

One of the key groups organizing the rally was Pittsburgh Pro-Choice Escorts. Nancy Tilton spoke for the group and urged those present to talk to the yellow-shirted escorts in the audience and volunteer to become escorts themselves.

Earlier that day the volunteers helped patients at a downtown clinic get past a poorly attended antiabortion protest organized by Project Multitude. One of the escorts pointed out, "It was more like 'Project Mini-tude.' There were only 46 of them there."

Bill Hailman of Cry Out/Act Up noted that the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Law was recently deemed legal and, barring further appeals, is scheduled to go into effect in a few weeks. This law will require doctors to inform patients of alternatives to abortion and give detailed talks on fetal development. It also mandates a 24-hour waiting period be-

tween the talks and the medical procedure.

Hailman demanded that newly elected Pittsburgh mayor Tom Murphy, who voted in favor of the Abortion Control Law while in the state legislature, order the city police to protect access to clinic entrances.



Militant/Denise McInerney

"*Roe v. Wade* — 21 years safe and legal, but the fight is not over yet," high school students Sara Michaels and Marilee Manning (above) told a rally of 100 in Birmingham, Alabama, January 22. They had begun the day by defending area clinics from assault by opponents of women's right to choose abortion. Twenty-five rally participants signed up to help with clinic defense in Birmingham. David Gunn Jr. invited activists there to a March 13 commemoration of his father's murder by a right-winger outside his clinic in Pensacola, Florida.

Mandela urges fight for election victory

Continued from front page
should take advantage of that in our work," he said. "But you must understand that unless we are able to transform that 70 percent support on to the ballot box on the day of voting we can lose the election to a party with a much smaller following. It is not just the opinion polls, the size of the people who are attending meetings, the people who say they will vote for you. It is your capacity to bring those people to the voting stations."

Unless the ANC begins to mount a nationwide political campaign to visit every house in the country "twice and even thrice," Mandela said, "everything will have been in vain."

Such a campaign is a mammoth task. South Africa is poised to break away from decades of white-minority rule. An estimated 20 million Blacks of voting age have never cast a ballot. According to a handbook issued by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), 45 percent of African adults cannot read or write.

In addition, the political opponents of the ANC-led democratic movement — the ruling National Party, the ultraright, and the Inkatha Freedom Party of Mangosuthu Buthelezi — are waging a campaign of violence and slander to prevent an electoral victory.

ANC fields candidates

At a January 21 press conference in Soweto, ANC Department of Information and Publicity director Pallo Jordan unveiled the organization's nominations of 200 candidates for the national Parliament. The organization will release two additional lists in the near future — those of the regional slate for the National Assembly, and ANC candidates for the nine provincial assemblies that are to be formed.

First on the list, which ranks nominees in the order of votes they received, is Nelson Mandela. Rounding out the top ten are ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa, national chairperson Thabo Mbeki, South African Communist Party (SACP) leader Joe Slovo, Pallo Jordan, former COSATU general secretary Jay Naidoo, National Executive Committee (NEC) member Ahmed Kathrada, Ronnie Kasrils, Sydney Mufamadi, and Albertina Sisulu.

NEC member and former ANC Youth League president Peter Mokaba is nominee number 27, and ANC Women's League president Winnie Mandela is 31st on the list.

One-third of the nominees are women. Members of the Patriotic Front, COSATU, and representatives of homeland governments are also on the list.

The election was originally scheduled for April 27 but was moved to April 28-29 by the Transitional Executive Council (TEC). To encourage voting, April 29 has been declared a national holiday. The TEC, which is assuming growing governmental powers, was initiated as a result of the advances of the democratic movement.

South African president F.W. de Klerk is also campaigning. He told a crowd in rural western Transvaal on January 21 that the National Party "and no one else" had destroyed apartheid. South African television



Militant/Brock Satter

From left: Jay Naidoo, Nelson Mandela, and Pallo Jordan at ANC conference January 21. "The task of building one South African nation will remain elusive unless the inequalities and disparities created by apartheid are swiftly overcome," said an ANC statement.

reported that at some campaign stops, National Party supporters handed out 10 rand notes (U.S.\$3.00) to those who attended. "It is the ANC which burns down houses... intimidates people... and does not allow free choice," de Klerk said.

In a January 23 speech, Mandela responded to a National Party complaint that their meetings in Black townships have been disrupted.

"We have an interest," Mandela told the delegates, "to ensure free and fair elections. Everyone should be able to approach people" across the country.

"I appeal to you," he told the ANC leaders, "to allow all to campaign in black townships. Of course there is reciprocity here," Mandela said, pointing out that the ANC should be allowed to campaign and rally freely in Pretoria and other white-minority strongholds.

There has been no letup in the political violence plaguing South Africa, as forces within the government, the Inkatha Freedom Party and the ultraright organize bloody attacks on working people and ANC supporters in particular.

At least 22 people were killed here in Natal province January 22-23. In the Ndwedwe district, just north of Durban, five died when 500 men attacked a residential area, setting houses afire and torching a store. In nearby Ngonyameni, 25 men armed with AK-47 rifles, shotguns, and pangas murdered five.

Of the more than 4,000 lives lost in political violence last year, 2,009 were recorded in Natal, where Inkatha leader Buthelezi maintains his strongest support and armed gangs roam parts of the region. Since Janu-

ary 1, more than 100 people have been killed in Natal.

On January 18, two members of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in Sharpeville were shot and killed. According to the *Sowetan* newspaper, the murders might have been a result of factional fighting within the ANCYL.

The Goldstone Commission, which is investigating the sources of political violence, called for "drastic military action" in the wake of a January 9 firefight in Katlehong, near Johannesburg, where photographer Abdul Shariff was killed. The commission said that the TEC "should consider the feasibility... of taking drastic military-type steps to remove from certain areas of South Africa all illegal weapons in the possession of any person."

In the wake of the Katlehong incident, where members of the local Self-Defense Unit (SDU) fired on the hostel from where the initial shooting originated, a discussion within the ANC-led alliance and throughout the country has erupted over the role of the units. The SDUs were formed, initially with the support of the ANC, as a line of defense against the South African security forces.

Self-Defense Units

"For as long as the situation is as it has been on the East Rand," Joe Slovo told the January 16 *Sunday Nation*, "I think it is an argument of folly to, just because there have been distortions in the SDUs, remove from the people their only form of defense."

At the recent congress of the ANC Youth League, Mandela said that some of the Self-Defense Units "have gone completely out of order... youth must make sure that the criminal gangs are eliminated from the SDUs," he said.

"The greatest and most obvious threat facing us... is violence," said Mandela on January 21. "We must confront this problem on all fronts, including those instances where we, ourselves, might be more the perpetrators rather than the victims of this violence."

Two days later Mandela said, "We must act in a way that unites the whole country. That means forgetting the past. No organization can succeed which seeks retribution against its former enemies."

On January 24, some 3,600 men began training for the National Peacekeeping Force, which is charged with restoring peace in the Black townships and preventing violence leading up to the elections. It is expected to have 10,000 troops initially, with ranks drawn from the South Africa Defence Force; South African Police; Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's armed wing; and military forces of the Venda, Transkei, and Ciskei homelands. The Pan-Africanist Congress has not yet said whether its military wing will join.

"The men will be totally integrated: they will sleep, eat and work together," said acting commander Col. Fred Burger.

Ultrarightist groups are stepping up their armed actions and threats of counterrevolution. In an interview with Associated Press, Gen. Constand Viljoen, head of the Afrikaner Peoples Front (APF), said he and his followers have "enough muscle" to carve out a "white state."

The APF named Conservative Party leader Ferdi Hartzenberg the president of the hoped-for Afrikaner Volkstaat — or homeland — on January 19.

In the past month, two ultraright radio stations — Radio Koppies and Radio Vryheid — have joined Radio Pretoria on the air.

Radio Pretoria agitates for a separate white enclave in the new South Africa. Radio Pretoria personality Anieta Armand told the January 22 *Saturday Star* that she is "sick and tired of being made to feel guilty all the time. We are made to feel bad about living in houses while the blacks live in shacks," she said. She claimed that 3,000 people a day have come to the station to deliver food and support.

In the week beginning January 17, ultrarightists carried out six bombings in the Orange Free State, including blowing up two ANC offices in the region.

Reconstruction and development

Delegates to the ANC's leadership conference debated the sixth draft of the democratic movement's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The document, subject to amendments made by meeting participants, presents a broad series of demands ranging from a massive public works programme to create jobs to construction of hundreds of thousands of homes to provide decent living quarters. The meeting issued resolutions calling for big changes in the way government is structured to provide for "democratisation of the state."

"The task of building one South African nation, made up of people united in their diversity, will remain elusive unless the inequalities and disparities created by apartheid are swiftly overcome," said a statement by the ANC's National Executive Committee following the conference.

"The Reconstruction and Development Programme is going to be used for mobilizing all sections of our population — black and white. It is a document to address the basic needs of our people," said Mandela in his closing speech.

Mandela urged delegates to "recognize the fact that the sixth draft in front of us still requires a substantial amount of additional work to be anywhere near what we want it to be."

"In the face of what lies ahead of us," he continued, "the need for [the ANC] is even greater. We must, therefore, make certain that whatever else we do, we must have the strength to continue to build such an organization."

Big business hesitates

Some demands in the RDP drew fire from spokespeople for capitalist enterprises.

Mining companies protested ANC plans to establish "the return of mineral rights to the democratic government," and "government intervention in output and pricing decisions," claiming that these moves go "against all laws of economics."

In London January 23, South African Reserve Bank governor Chris Stals said that proposals in the RDP on how a future ANC government will treat business were creating uncertainty. As a result, total net capital outflow increased from 5.3 billion rand (US\$1.5 billion) in the first half of 1993 to about double that figure in the second half.

An article in the January 23 *Sunday Times* of Johannesburg warned that employers could face a new round of labor militancy after the elections. In 1993, there was a 14.3 percent drop in workdays lost due to strikes.

Following the ANC conference, the organization's Department of Information and Publicity announced a campaign tour by Mandela to rural northern Transvaal. Mandela will meet and address farm workers, miners, and others. On February 2, the ANC president, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, and scores of other former prisoners of the apartheid regime will lead a march from Victor Verster prison in the Western Cape. The theme of the march and rally is "Never Again."

SWP leader sends greetings to Youth League Congress

Reprinted below are greetings to the African National Congress Youth League from Jack Barnes, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. Greg Rosenberg, a member of the party's National Committee, represented the SWP leadership at the January 14-17 Youth League Congress. Rosenberg was part of a delegation of young socialists from the United States that also included Brian Pugh of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Brock Satter of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dear Comrades,

On behalf of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, I extend communist greetings to you on the occasion of your Congress.

In a capitalist world increasingly marked by the devastating consequences of depression conditions, trade conflicts,

landlessness, and war, working people and youth on every continent are being educated and inspired by the courage, discipline, and determination of the revolutionary movement in South Africa. The youth will be very important in the efforts of the ANC to emerge from the April elections as an even more effective force and a stronger voice fighting for the political and social aspirations of the oppressed and exploited in South Africa.

We in the Socialist Workers Party will do our utmost to work with other supporters of the fight for a democratic South Africa to aid you in these efforts. We wish every success to this ANC Youth League congress, as you prepare to take the steps toward your goal of a democratic, nonracial, nonsexist South Africa.

Fraternally,
Jack Barnes
National Secretary

Striking Coca-Cola workers in S. Africa forge unity in fight

BY BROCK SATTER
AND BRIAN PUGH

DEVLAND, South Africa — Some 3,700 workers across South Africa are waging a strike against Amalgamated Beverages Industries (ABI), a franchise of U.S. soft drink giant Coca-Cola. The strike involves 2,500 Food and Allied Workers Union (FAWU) members and 1,200 non-union employees.

Workers struck December 31 after their 12-month contract expired.

These workers are forging unity in the midst of a grueling economic crisis and massive social upheaval. The unemployment rate among South Africans who are Black is about 50 percent.

"We come here to fight for our rights," stated Michael Thwaler, a line quality inspector at the ABI Westland plant in Devland. "There are people here from the African National Congress, Pan Africanist Congress, Azanian People's Organization, and Inkatha. We are for one thing now. At the moment, there is not one crack here. We are fighting for our rights."

Shop steward Martin Mika explained that the union is fighting to win a 15 percent wage increase. Management is only offering 10 percent. The previous contract included a 14.5 percent raise.

The union has also called for a national boycott of Coca-Cola and other ABI prod-

ucts. Stores selling these items are being picketed by the strikers.

The strikers face allegations that they confiscated and destroyed ABI products from the Riverside Garage, a store in Atteridgeville, near Johannesburg. This has made it more difficult to broaden support for the strike, said George Nene, national chair of the FAWU shop steward committee.

Workers are outraged at the apartheid conditions in the factory. A crewman in the Westland plant said that Black workers are subject to the worst jobs, wages, and working conditions. Whites and so-called Coloured workers get better jobs and higher pay.

"There are no Blacks in management, and some of the whites still call Black workers Kafirs," said one worker. "Apartheid still exists here, there are no reforms," said another.

"We're working like slaves," a driver said. Drivers work 15-hour days with no overtime pay. If they are robbed they must pay the company.

Caiphus Mtlalose, a driver, was stabbed on the job. He received no health benefits and was placed under company discipline. If he is robbed again, he may lose his job. "Enough is enough!" Mtlalose said.

In the Westland plant there are 800 workers, although only the 400 who are Black are on strike.



Militant/Brian Pugh

Workers on strike against Coca-Cola franchise in Devland, South Africa. Strikers are demanding 15 percent raise and protesting abusive working conditions.

Striker Idah Mazibuko said that seven women are employed in the plant. They take home 1,300 rand a month (U.S.\$390), while the average male worker takes home 1,800 rand (U.S.\$540).

Intimidation of workers

The company has hired a strike-breaking outfit called Strikeforce and is trying to make the most of the divisions perpetuated by apartheid.

Ishmael Mtamane, chairperson of the ABI Westland union, reported that management initially brought in scabs who were Black.

After two days at the plant, however, these workers joined the other strikers. The bosses also brought in white Afrikaner students from Rand University. Now Coloureds have replaced these students who have returned to school.

During the course of the walkout, the local magistrate ordered an injunction that calls for workers to remain 55 yards from the premises. This makes picket lines almost impossible, Mika explained. During the first weeks of the strike, police were present at the plant gate. On January 7, at the Midland ABI plant outside Johannesburg, workers were holding a meeting at their union hall inside the plant. Management opened the gates to the police, who attacked the meeting and injured 15 workers, three critically.

On January 13, 4,000 strikers and their supporters from the African National Congress (ANC), the ANC Youth League, the South African National Civics Organization, and other groups, marched from Alexandra township to the headquarters of ABI in Sandton, a suburb of Johannesburg. Nene said that the march highlighted the demands of the strike.

One of the seven women at the plant remarked that last year her union participated in the general strikes following the Bisho massacre and the assassination of ANC leader Chris Hani. She said she understood the power of workers when they are united.

Many workers were interested to know that farm workers in Atlanta were protesting against Coca-Cola. Mazibuko agreed that her union would be in a stronger negotiating position if the fought together with Coca-Cola workers in the United States. FAWU is seeking a meeting with other South African workers in Coca-Cola-owned companies.

Four striking workers signed up to endorse the Mark Curtis defense case. One explained, "They do this thing all over the world."

An ANC member stated, "Once we take power from this [National Party-led] government, we can stand up for workers."

Youth forum advances ANC campaign

BY BRIAN PUGH

SOWETO, South Africa — The African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) sponsored the Soweto Youth Forum here January 22 at the Ipelegeng Community Center. Some 50 Sowetan youth, mostly from the ANC Youth League, were addressed by Rapu Molekane, former secretary-general of the youth league; Brian Masongo, treasurer of the league's Soweto zone; and Greg Rosenberg, a representative of young socialists in the United States.

The youth forum meetings are organized along similar lines as the People's Forums, which the ANC is holding across South Africa leading up to the April elections. Leaders from the ANC Youth League addressed questions pertaining to the action program an ANC government will carry out to reverse the legacy of apartheid.

Molekane, who has been named as an ANC candidate in the parliamentary elections, stressed that the major task of the youth league is to put campaigning for the ANC at the center of its work. "We must visit each and every house in Soweto. We need to make sure the communities we live in understand the policies and program of the ANC," he said.

The governing National Party has already begun its election campaign. One youth questioned whether they should be allowed to campaign in the Black townships. Molekane responded, "Our ideas and our programs are far superior to any others. We must

explain to our people what the National Party stands for. Practicing political tolerance to National Party campaigners" is necessary to ensure free and fair elections.

One young person asked Molekane how the interests of youth would be taken into account by the new democratic government led by the ANC. Molekane explained that a Youth Ministry would be created to "continue the struggle of youth interests in Parliament." The ANCYL will be just one of the groups in this body, he said. "It will remain an independent, political youth organization that will continue to promote the twin tasks of achieving national liberation and channeling the interests and aspirations of young people," Molekane said.

Attendance at the meeting, held during the two biggest soccer matches of the year in Soweto, was smaller than anticipated. Only a quarter of the youth league branches in the Soweto area were represented. Molekane reported that a "number of the branches are collapsing." He stressed that the young leaders should "continue to meet and discuss political issues" so that the youth league will be able to lead young people towards the elections.

One participant asked how supporters of the ANC should relate to minority communities of whites, Indians, and so-called Coloureds. Molekane explained, "We have to do more to get these communities in our organization" through the political perspective of nonracialism.

One person asked about the future of young cadres who have been part of the ANC's armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). "Their only future is to join the National Peacekeeping Force," Molekane responded. This national army is being created under the Transitional Executive Council.

Molekane welcomed Rosenberg to the forum. He explained that the ANC Youth League has good and friendly relations with the young socialist movement in the United States.

"In the United States," said Rosenberg, "millions of people have rooted for you. Young people will play a crucial role in the ANC's fight to bring about a democratic, nonracial, nonsexist South Africa," he stated. "The apartheid regime itself was consolidated with the active aid and abetting of the U.S. government."

"Bill Clinton is a war president," continued Rosenberg. "The first thing he did in office was order a bombing assault on Iraq. The new administration expanded the inva-

sion of Somalia and has stepped up its saber-rattling against North Korea."

"Today, there is a growing social and economic crisis of capitalism, from the United States to the republics of the former Soviet Union," Rosenberg said.

The young socialist reported on recent struggles by 18,000 coal miners in the United States fighting to defend their union from attacks by the bosses. He also spoke about the thousands of young people defending abortion clinics against attacks by rightists.

"The disintegration of the Stalinist apparatuses that lorded over workers and farmers in the Soviet Union, East Germany, and elsewhere is an enormous step forward for all those in the world today seeking to advance the line of march of the working class," Rosenberg explained.

The young socialist pointed to the importance of activities to defend the Cuban revolution. He noted the crucial role played by Cuban troops in defeating the South African army in Angola in 1988. This act of self-sacrifice opened the door for unbanning of the ANC and release of political prisoners.

Meeting participants bought several Pathfinder titles and took information on the defense of political activist Mark Curtis.



Rapu Molekane

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ALABAMA

Birmingham

Lessons of the Miners' Strike. Speaker: Mike Blair, member, United Mine Workers of America Local 2161, Coulterville, Illinois. Sat., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Secret U.S. Nuclear Experiments. Speaker: Harry Ring, Socialist Workers Party, contributor to the *Militant*. Sat., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. 2546-C W. Pico Blvd. (Two blocks from Vermont). Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

San Francisco

Mexico: End Repression in Chiapas! Speaker: Susan Zarate, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 5, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$3. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

FLORIDA

Miami

Malcolm X, A Documentary. Sat., Feb. 5, 6:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Lessons of the Miner's Strike. Speaker: Mike Blair, member of United Mine Workers of America Local 2161, Coulterville, Illinois. Sun., Feb. 6, 4 p.m. 172 Trinity Ave. SW. Donation: \$3. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Who Killed Jim Crow?: The Gains of the Civil Rights Movement, and the Lessons for Today. Sat., Feb. 5, 7:30. 7414 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Gov. Cuomo and Mayor Giuliani's Bipartisan Attack on the Rights of Working People. Speaker: Mary Nell Bockman, mayoral candidate for the Socialist Workers Party in recent New York City elections. Sat., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. 214 Avenue A. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 388-9346.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Malcolm X: The Man and His Ideas. Sat., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (910) 272-5996.

The Palestinian Fight for Self-Determination. Speakers: Fawzi Arafat, Committee for a Democratic Palestine; representative, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (910) 272-5996.

Class Series: Why Washington's 'Cold War' Against Cuba Doesn't End. Sundays, Feb. 6 and 13, 4 p.m. Recommended reading: *The Second Declaration of Havana*, a speech by Fidel Castro. For more information call, (910) 272-5996.

South Africa: The revolution advances. Speakers include students from South Africa and Marty Boyers, member of United Auto Workers Local 1597 and the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St., Donation: \$3. Tel: (910) 272-5996.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Roots of Racism and How to Fight It. Sat., Feb.

5, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

BRITAIN

London

Discussion on Peru's Shining Path. Sat., Feb. 5, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £2. Tel: 71-401-2409.

Eyewitness report of recent trip to Ireland by Militant reporters. Sat., Feb. 12, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £2. Tel: 71-928-7993.

Manchester

The Fight Against Anti-Semitism Today. Speakers: Representatives, Manchester University Jewish Society; Communist League. Sat., Feb. 5, 6 p.m. 1st Floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 061-839 1766.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Politics in the U. S. Today. An Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Dean Hazlewood, Communist League. Sat., Feb. 5, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

Iowa unionist asks parole board for new hearing

Continued from front page

350 individuals and organizations sent letters in 1993 to the Iowa Board of Parole demanding that Curtis be released.

On October 7, however, the parole board denied Curtis a hearing. Instead, it requested "a complete psychiatric evaluation at IMCC, as soon as possible. We need supportive information that you are able and willing to fulfill the obligations of a law-abiding citizen," the board wrote.

On October 12, Curtis was interviewed by an IMCC psychiatrist who found no psychiatric reason to send Curtis to the Oakdale institution.

In spite of this, the prison classification committee assigned to make recommendations on his status recommended Curtis be transferred to Oakdale.

On January 12, Curtis's attorney, William Kutmus, wrote to the Iowa State Board of Parole noting the evaluation from the Oakdale staff removes any psychiatric obstacles to Curtis's release. "Therefore,"

the letter states, "we respectfully request you grant Mr. Curtis a parole hearing at this time." Parole board officials have told Kutmus that they are studying his letter.

"This is an important turning point, an opportunity for supporters of Mark Curtis to put pressure on the parole board," said John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. "We must seize this opportunity and approach supporters of justice for Mark Curtis, as well as people newly coming into politics today, to write letters to the Iowa State Board of Parole urging them to grant a hearing and release Curtis."

"The decision by the IMCC not to admit Curtis exposes the political problem the Iowa prison system faces in keeping him behind bars," Studer said. "Curtis has met all the conditions for parole, and he has not been broken down by the prison system. He has an excellent work and personal conduct record in prison, job offers, a home with his wife to go to, and wide-

spread community support. He has served out the time required under Iowa law for the sexual abuse frame-up charge.

"The fact is," Studer said, "no prison authority relishes having him in their institution because of his activism and example, but at the same time they are determined to resist the pressure to let him go."

"For instance, IMCC is notorious for its inhumane practices against inmates under the name of 'treatment,'" continued Studer. "They have performed lobotomies, electroshock 'therapy' and forced inmates to take drugs that induce vomiting when they were judged by officials to have behaved 'inappropriately.' This last practice was stopped only when a class action lawsuit filed by William Kutmus made it public and forced its end. A high-profile inmate such as Mark Curtis would draw unwanted attention to the center's questionable practices, so now they've kicked the ball back to the parole board."

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is

asking that letters urging the parole board to set a date for a hearing and release Curtis be sent to the Iowa State Board of Parole, Capitol Annex, 523 East 12th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319. Copies should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, IA 50311, or fax it to (515) 243-9869.

Nell Wheeler is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431 in Des Moines.

CALENDAR

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Fundraising Dinner for Pastors for Peace/U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan. Potluck dinner with musical entertainment. Sat., Feb. 12, from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Little Five Points Community Center, 1083 Austin Ave., (Corner of Euclid and Austin Ave.). Music by Elise Whitt, the Pand Band, Ritual Band East, and others. For further information, call Robin Singer at (404) 377-1079.

IOWA

Des Moines

Speak Out Against the U.S. Embargo of Cuba. Speakers: Representative, Pastors for Peace; Jon Torgerson, Philosophy and Religion Department, Drake University, traveled to Cuba in October on the Freedom to Travel Challenge trip; Ruth Nebbia, Des Moines-Cuba Friendship Hosting Committee. Thurs., Feb. 3, 7 p.m. Olmsted - PDR 123 - Drake Campus, near 29th Street and University. Sponsored by the Des Moines-Cuba Friendship Hosting Committee. For information, call (515) 274-6449, or Jim Nelson, Wesley Center (515) 274-3133.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Come dance and support the 3rd U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan. Fri., Feb. 4, 9 p.m. Local 1199, 310 W. 43rd St. Tickets: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. For more information, call (212) 926-5757.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Cuban Celebration. Fundraising dance. Fri., Feb. 4, from 8 p.m. to midnight. First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, 2125 Chestnut St. Sponsored by Cuba Support Coalition. Donation \$10. Tel: (215) 729-8514, (215) 386-9322, or (215) 232-4853.

Regional Student Antiapartheid Conference. February 11-12. Temple University, Main Campus. For more information: (215) 324-5520 or (215) 224-4627.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Third U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan Benefit. Sat., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. Andean Ensemble, Tepuy. Dancing at 8:30 p.m. Salvadoran

group, Izalco. Casa del Pueblo, 1459 Columbia Road, N.W. Donation: \$5. Tel: (202) 452-5966.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Celebrate the Publication of the New Book From Pathfinder Press: Nelson Mandela Speaks: Forging a Democratic, Nonracial South Africa. Special guest speaker: Ndumiso Ntshinga, African National Congress, Chief Representative in Australia; Bob Hawke, Patron, Australians for Democracy in South Africa; Marcelino Fajardo, Consul-General of Cuba; Kevin Tory, Trade Union Committee for Aboriginal Rights; Meredith Burgmann, Labor MLC,

NSW Parliament; Paul Matters, Secretary, South Coast Labor Council; Mamie Kennedy, Pathfinder Books. Thurs., Feb. 17, 7 p.m. Reception: 6 p.m. Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy Union, 361 Kent St. Sponsored by Pathfinder Books. For more information, call 02-281 3297.

CANADA

Montreal

Fundraising dance to benefit the Friendship Caravan to Cuba. Sat., Feb. 5, from 7:30 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Salle Du Lion D'Or, 1676, rue Ontario est (coin Papineau) Donation: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. For more information, call (514) 526-5792.

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U.S. gov't embargo of Cuba: a detailed study of its effects

Impact on living standards "extremely negative," says report to UN

Printed below is a report on the economic impact of the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba. It was submitted by Fernando Remírez, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, and circulated to UN delegations as part of the General Assembly debate on the embargo in November 1993.

Following that debate, the UN General Assembly adopted by an 88-4 vote a resolution submitted by the Cuban delegation entitled "Necessity of Ending the Economic, Commercial, and Financial Embargo Imposed by the United States of America Against Cuba." The motion, strongly opposed by Washington, condemned laws that restrict international trade and navigation as well as attempts by governments to impose such laws extraterritorially on other countries. Sub-headings are by the *Militant*.

Cuban experts have calculated the cost of the embargo since it was unilaterally imposed by the United States and have arrived at a preliminary figure of US\$40.8 billion, \$31.5 billion of which represents direct costs and \$9.3 billion, costs which might be called indirect. This calculation is constantly being refined and is one that requires continual updating.

The purpose of this study is to describe the impact of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, particularly the loss of preferential prices for sugar exports; the decrease in production and services; the restricted availability of material and financial resources; the increased cost of trade; the substantial increase in transport costs; the immobilization of substantial resources; and the deactivation of installations and equipment for lack of spare parts.

The impact on Cuba's economic and social development, and especially on the population's standard of living, has been extremely negative.

Specific repercussions

The embargo has forced Cuba to seek trading partners elsewhere and, consequently, to seek new markets for export products and to incur greater promotional and sales expenses. It has also meant that Cuba has had to seek imports from new markets where the parameters and specifications are different and prices are higher than the traditional prices



Volunteer work brigade in 1963 in Cuba. Revolutionary government mobilized workers and peasants to carry out land reform and advance other measures against capitalist exploitation and U.S. domination of Cuba in early 1960s. The trade embargo is part of the relentless campaign Washington has waged against the socialist revolution ever since.

for goods manufactured by United States technologies.

The average distance from supplier markets has increased fivefold to around 11,000 kms [6,820 miles]. This increase, together with United States action regarding foreign vessels transporting goods to or from Cuba, has substantially increased transport, freight and insurance charges, which amounted to US\$6,207,700,000 by 1992.

The embargo has also led to disproportionate growth in outflows of goods, and in the levels of stocks and reserves, which are estimated at US\$3,317,100,000.

The immobilization of these resources during the more than three decades that the embargo has been in effect has

cost the Cuban economy US\$4,163,100,000 just for interest on stocks in excess of the level required for the economy to function normally.

In addition, the cost of investments in infrastructure needed in order to adapt to the new market conditions imposed by the embargo (warehouses, port facilities, merchant vessels, cold-storage facilities, repair shops) as sources of supply became more remote was an estimated US\$1,778,000,000 for nickel and petroleum, the chemical and electrical industries, light industry, and the transport and domestic trade sectors alone.

'Critical financial situation'

From the outset, the embargo plunged the country into a critical external financial situation. On the one hand, its lack of access to the United States market deprived it of what had been its main source of foreign currency earnings, which could not easily be replaced or found elsewhere. On the other hand, the bans imposed by the United States sharply increased the level of expenditures in the economy, but that did not increase the supply of goods and services in Cuba because the embargo had pushed up prices.

In imposing the embargo, the United States cut off Cuba's access to any source of financing from United States financial institutions, either within or outside its territory, by prohibiting United States nationals from effecting transfers, investments and other transactions with Cuba and prohibiting Cuba from using the United States dollar in its economic, commercial and financial transactions.

The United States has also exerted influence over international financial organizations and with specific countries in order to prevent any type of financing from being extended to Cuba through either conventional or non-conventional channels, which has deprived Cuba of financing amounting to US\$84.4 million during the embargo years.

This in turn has meant that Cuba has been compelled to use other currencies in its international trade and that the financing it has received has been granted on extremely hard terms and has been highly susceptible to foreign exchange fluctuations.

In the current circumstances, Cuba does not receive soft loans from any institution or country. Since it no longer has the option of receiving them from the socialist bloc, the country must virtually live from day to day on the resources it produces and occasionally from certain commercial loans, which are generally short term and whose interest and fees are higher than those charged on financial

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Effects of Cuban Democracy Act

In October 1993 Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina submitted a report to United Nations secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali outlining some of the effects on the Cuban economy of the Cuban Democracy Act (sometimes called the Torricelli Act) in the one year since it was adopted and signed into law.

The report is summarized in the November 1993 issue of *CubaBusiness*, a monthly newsletter published jointly in London and Washington, D.C.

Robaina noted the effects of the act's provision barring ships from entering U.S. ports for 180 days after docking in Cuba. "The situation has worsened to an extreme degree during 1993," the report said. "Shipowners are refusing to operate because of the strong pressure they are under, thus creating serious difficulties in the importation of basic foodstuffs for the Cuban population." Among the examples cited:

- cancellation of a shipment of 25,000 tons of wheat by an exporter unable to arrange a Latin American shipper, as well as the blocking of other wheat deliveries by European suppliers;

- cancellation of a contract with Cuba by a major Asian firm that combined any stops in Cuba with docking at U.S. Pacific ports.

Robaina's report cited a list of major companies that have been pressured to end trade or investment ties with Cuba in line with new provisions in the Cuban Democracy Act: the Argentine subsidiaries of the U.S. Cargill and Continental grain trusts; a Mexican subsidiary of

Sheraton Hotels; the Monterrey Group of Mexico; the subsidiary in Canada of the U.S. Eli Lilly drug company; and the Tate & Lyle sugar company of the United Kingdom.

Britain's Cable & Wireless "faced refusal of a license to operate in Europe and Asia using the United States as an intermediate territory," *CubaBusiness* reported. And Washington has made "attempts to dissuade oil companies, such as Total of France, from prospecting for oil in Cuban waters, including claims that areas offered have legally registered pre-1959 [U.S.] owners" who were expropriated by the revolutionary Cuban government.

Finally, Robaina cites pressure by Washington on various other governments. Members of the European Community have been warned of reprisals for offering trading credits to Cuba. African nations, according to *CubaBusiness*, have been threatened with loss of "World Bank and IMF credits for drought relief programmes." Governments in Latin America have been pressured to block purchases of Cuban pharmaceutical, biotechnology, and other medical products.

And governments of former republics of the USSR are being helped by Washington "to find alternative sources of sugar."

The U.S. government, according to Robaina's report, is also systematically pressuring governments of oil-producing nations not to sell badly needed energy supplies to Cuba.

— Steve Clark

Does end of Soviet trade with Cuba show U.S. imperialism won cold war?

BY STEVE CLARK AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

In a letter to the editor published elsewhere on this page, reader Ludo De Witte takes issue with several aspects of recent *Militant* coverage of the ongoing socialist revolution in Cuba. He asks: Doesn't the impact on Cuba's economy of the collapse of trade with the former USSR show that the *Militant* needs "to adjust earlier assessments" that the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe since 1989 marked an historic defeat for imperialism?

The same question can be put another way: Should communists have advocated keeping the Stalinist regimes in power until or unless they could be replaced with revolutionary governments? Would that have strengthened the Cuban revolution and bought some time for revolutionary developments elsewhere in the world?

The answer is unequivocally no.

Trade and military aid

Communists in the United States and elsewhere welcomed the aid — both military assistance and trade — that the Cuban revolution began receiving from the Soviet Union in 1960 in face of mounting economic assaults and threats of military aggression against Cuba by U.S. imperialism.

"The material aid which [Cuba] received may well prove decisive in its defense against the American-supported counterrevolution," the Socialist Workers Party explained in its December 1960 resolution on the Cuban revolution. The resolution was drafted by the late Joseph Hansen, a longtime SWP leader who was editor of the *Militant* at the time.

Hansen explained the importance of Cuba's aid from and trade with the Soviet Union more fully in the introduction to his 1978 book *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, which is being reissued by Pathfinder Press in the coming months. "The Cubans were completely correct in seeking that aid," Hansen wrote. "It was due them in accordance with the program of world revolution supported by the Soviet government when it was headed by Lenin and Trotsky."

"Stalin's heirs felt obliged to respond to the Cuban plea" for military and economic assistance during the opening years of the revolution, Hansen said. But "instead of providing aid free of charge, as was their duty, they demanded that a price be paid — principally on the political level. In short, to get the required aid the Cubans had to let the red glow of the Cuban revolution shine on [Soviet premiers] Khrushchev and Brezhnev."

In January 1959 Cuban workers and peasants — under the leadership of the July 26 Movement led by Fidel Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and others — carried out a victorious revolution against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The new revolutionary government mobilized the urban and rural toilers to carry out a land reform, to organize a literacy campaign to draw more and more working people into political and social life, and to advance other measures against capitalist exploitation and U.S. imperialist domination in Cuba.

As Washington stepped up its hostile actions against the



Cuban cane cutter in 1960s. Policies of Moscow-dominated trade bloc perpetuated many aspects of the underdevelopment Cuba inherited from decades of imperialist exploitation — including dependence on exports of sugar and imports of many vital food products and industrial goods.

workers' and farmers' government in Cuba, the revolutionary leadership organized working people in late 1960 to expropriate the domestic and U.S.-owned capital that formed the economic and social foundation of the old exploitative social system. On that basis, the government began the planned development of Cuba's economy on the basis of new property relations. The socialist revolution had been opened in the Americas.

During the early years of the revolution, the U.S. rulers systematically organized to launch a military assault against Cuba to crush the revolution. In April 1961 the Kennedy administration organized an invasion by counterrevolutionaries

that was rapidly crushed by the militia and Cuban armed forces. The U.S. war drive reached a peak during the months leading up to the October 1962 "missile" crisis.

What stayed the hand of Washington was its growing conviction during that historic confrontation that the workers and peasants of Cuba, organized by the revolutionary leadership around Castro and Guevara, would fight to the death to defend their social conquests and their national sovereignty. With preparations already under way for the coming war against the Vietnamese people, the U.S. rulers had to face the political costs they would pay for a protracted war with enormous U.S. casualties and the destabilizing political consequences at home, in Latin America, and around the world.

At a January 1992 conference in Havana of political and academic figures from Cuba, Russia, and the United States, Fidel Castro explained the Cuban leadership's approach to defense of the revolution during those early years. "It did not seem right to me," he said, "that our people . . . should place their hopes for defense in support from abroad. Our populace should be totally prepared — as it is today, and today more than ever — to develop that confidence in themselves and their ability to struggle and resist without any foreign support."

It was this revolutionary political consciousness and military preparedness on the part of the Cuban toilers that held off the defeat of the revolution in the early 1960s, and that has continued to do so until today. In that framework, arms and other military assistance from the Soviet Union gave the Cuban government an important advantage in the facedown with the Kennedy administration, bipartisan Congress, and the Pentagon in the early 1960s.

October 1962 crisis

At the same time, Fidel Castro has explained that the Cuban government paid a big price for the political course of the Soviet government

that accompanied the military aid. In an October 1992 interview with NBC television interviewer Maria Shriver, Castro said that if Cuban revolutionaries had known in 1962 what they know now about the political orientation of the Soviet leadership, they would not have accepted the deployment of Soviet nuclear-tipped missiles on Cuban soil.

Castro explained that the Cuban government had strongly opposed Moscow's insistence that the military agreement between Cuba and the Soviet Union be kept secret. Cuban leaders had argued that the pact, including any missile deployment, should be made public and that they should explain to the world's toilers and democratic-minded people that the U.S. government was preparing to invade Cuba.

The Cuban government only agreed to accept the missiles when it became clear to them that the Soviet officials would never agree to a public pact. They did so, Castro said, in the mistaken belief that this was in the best interests of defending the world struggle for socialism.

But in accepting deployment under these conditions, Castro said, the Cuban revolution lost some of the moral and political high ground it had achieved among workers and farmers in the Americas and elsewhere in the world. Cuba had an absolute, sovereign right to enter into a military agreement with any government it chose, he said. But the secrecy undercut the clarity of its political goals in the eyes of hundreds of millions.

The military agreement between Cuba and the Soviet Union, Castro said at the 1992 conference, "could have been published and no one could have challenged the legality and morality of this agreement. Of course, it was not essential to bring the missiles here to defend Cuba," he said.

The Cuban government, he explained, always said publicly "that Cuba considered that it had a sovereign right to have whatever kind of weapons it thought appropriate."

But, Castro said, "the secrecy about the military agreement and the deception . . . did us a lot of harm."

In the wake of the revolutionary victories in Nicaragua and Grenada, Cuba came under renewed and intensified U.S. military pressure at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s. "The socialist revolution that dawned in the Americas with the Cuban victory in 1959 is now being extended in Nicaragua. A revolutionary-minded government has come to power on the island of Grenada," the Socialist

Question from a reader

I have a few questions about your (by the way, excellent) coverage on Cuba.

Why do you speak regularly about Washington's "cold war" against the island? I've learned from earlier articles that "cold war" policies were specifically aimed at the isolation of the Eastern European workers' states with the complicity of the Stalinist regimes who governed these states. In the December 20 issue of the *Militant*, Malapanis states that US policy towards Cuba is the same as that during the "cold war" against the Soviet Union, but he gives another definition of that policy. "Clinton . . . hopes the government in Cuba is similar to the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe . . . which Washington helped bring down through decades of unremitting and debilitating military and economic pressures," he says. I think that the US rulers correctly see the fundamental difference between a Stalinist regime and the Cuban government, and act accordingly. (They want to completely destroy the Cuban government, not 'reform' it).

Shouldn't we speak about a "blockade" instead of an "embargo"? The Cubans themselves stress the important political differences (see, for example Alarcon's speech to the United Nations of November 1991, printed at that time in the *Militant*): a blockade is an act of war, and has an extraterritorial character. The fact that the blockade is crippled doesn't change this.

In the December 27 issue of the *Militant*, Martin Koppel says that the main causes of the crisis in Cuba "are to be found in Cuba." This assertion seems to be one-sided to me. Koppel says that Cuba's crisis has to do with an internal factor, that is: Cuba's acceptance of the "international socialist division of labor" which maintained its dependency on the Soviet Union. But some aspects of Cuba's integration in COMECON were positive (for example, some barter agreements, the absence of unequal exchange relations which govern economic trade between imperialist and neocolonial countries). Essential pillars of the workers' states evaporated together with the Stalinist regimes: the breakdown of planning, the first inroads into socialized property, and the abolition of state monopoly on foreign trade. This resulted, from the standpoint of Cuba, in the de facto disappearance of the workers' states from the COMECON, and together with that, in the disappearance of those positive aspects of the international economic relations between Cuba and those states. Shouldn't this be taken into account when you speak about Cuba's crisis? And consequently, shouldn't the *Militant* have to adjust earlier assessments of what happened in Eastern Europe (see, for example articles about "the historic defeat of imperialism" there).

Ludo De Witte
Kessel-Lo, Belgium

Workers Party's National Committee explained in a May 1980 statement entitled "The Coming Showdown in the Caribbean."

"Washington's stubborn refusal to allow the peoples of the Caribbean and Central America to run their own governments, control their own resources, and chart their own destinies carries a grave threat of war" in the entire region, the SWP statement said.

Confronted with this mounting threat of U.S. aggression, the Cuban government learned once again that the privileged bureaucracy in Moscow was anything but a steadfast internationalist ally.

In a spring 1993 interview with the Mexican daily *El Sol de México*, Cuba's minister of the armed forces, Raúl Castro, explained that he made an official visit to Moscow in the early 1980s "to communicate to the Soviet leadership our own government's opinion on the urgent need to take extraordinary political and diplomatic actions in order to check renewed U.S. intentions to attack Cuba militarily."

"The Soviet leader's reply was categorical," Raúl Castro said. "In the event of U.S. aggression toward Cuba, 'We cannot fight in Cuba because you are 11,000 kilometers away from us. Do you think we're going to go all that way to stick our necks out for you?' Those were his very words. . . ."

"Although for many years we had been working on the assumption that the USSR would not go to war over Cuba and we would have to rely solely on our own forces," Raúl Castro said, "it was at that moment of greatest danger that the Soviet leadership clearly and officially informed us . . . that in the event of military aggression by the Pentagon, Cuba would find herself dramatically alone."

The central leadership of the revolution "suffered silently the bitter burden," he said. "We learned from the experience and drew greater strength to prepare ourselves for taking on our historic mission alone."

"Since the USSR has disappeared and its most confidential files are no longer confidential," he told the interviewer, "there's no longer any reason to keep it a secret."

As it had done time and again since the 1959 victory, however, the Cuban leadership responded to imperialist threats by mobilizing the workers and farmers. In May 1980 some 5 million people, half the island's population, joined a March of the Fighting People in Havana to declare their readiness to defend the revolution. And in January 1981 the government launched the Territorial Troop Militia, which over the next few years put some 1.5 million workers, farmers, students, and housewives under arms and trained them in military skills.

Washington's economic embargo

In February 1962 Washington also imposed an economic, commercial, and financial embargo aimed at crippling Cuba's economy. Flowing from U.S. imperialism's superexploitative economic domination of Cuba since the beginning of this century, the United States had been the main market for sugar and other Cuban exports, especially raw materials, as well as the island's main source of needed energy, food, and industrial imports.

The new Cuban government was able to partially offset the potentially devastating impact of the U.S. embargo by arranging trade relations with the Soviet Union and pressing for the most favorable terms it could negotiate from the regime in Moscow. As with the military aid, however, the trade came with a political price tag from the Stalinist regime in the USSR.

All sorts of ultraleft and centrist political forces in the working-class movement condemned the Cuban government and leadership for accepting the Soviet aid on these conditions. The *Militant* and leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States were among the few voices that answered these sectarian sideline critics. Rather than risk "a swift crushing of their revolution," Hansen wrote in response to one such critic in 1977, "the Cubans chose to take the material aid even if the price amounted to a holdup."

In 1972, Cuba was admitted to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon), the Moscow-dominated trading and investment bloc of the Soviet Union and Eastern European workers' states. By the end of the 1970s Cuba was one of three non-European countries in the Comecon that had inherited backward, underdeveloped economies from decades of imperialist domination imposed on precapitalist social relations; the other two were Mongolia and Vietnam.

Within the Comecon, the Cuban government pressed for an internationalist policy whereby the industrialized members in Europe would aid Cuba, Mongolia, and Vietnam in overcoming the imperialist legacy of exploitative trade relations and distorted economic development. Cuba advocated that similar policies be applied toward Grenada,



After triumph of the 1979 revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua, Fidel Castro spoke of the "three giants rising up on the very threshold of imperialism." Defeat of Grenada and Nicaraguan revolutions dealt a serious blow to Cuban revolution. Above, from left, are Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, Maurice Bishop of Grenada, and Castro at 1980 May Day rally in Havana.

Nicaragua, Angola, and other governments established through victorious popular revolutions or hard-fought freedom struggles.

Through its economic relations with the Soviet Union and other Comecon members, Cuba obtained important help in mechanizing sugar production, thereby releasing agricultural workers from much backbreaking manual labor and freeing hundreds of thousands for other farm, industrial, and social tasks. Light industry was diversified, and some heavy industry — especially related to agricultural machinery, construction, and some consumer durable goods such as refrigerators — was begun.

But Moscow used Comecon to impose an "international socialist division of labor" that was first and foremost to its own advantage and perpetuated significant aspects of the legacy of imperialist domination of the trading bloc's economically weakest members. The role assigned Cuba within this so-called division of labor was above all the export of sugar, citrus fruit, and nickel and the import of grains and most other agricultural commodities, processed food products, and industrial goods. Cuba's initial steps toward self-sufficiency in food production were put aside, in line with Comecon policies dictated by Moscow.

Cuba's integration into the Comecon in the early and mid-1970s coincided with the adoption of a political course at home modeled on the policies of the Eastern European and Soviet regimes, a course that led to the growing political demobilization and demoralization of working people. This nearly 15-year-long course created an enormous obstacle to redeeming the time and space Cuba gained through trade with the USSR and the Comecon, and by revolutionary victories from Vietnam, to Africa, to Central America and the Caribbean in the 1970s.

Agriculture and industry needed to be organized in Cuba in ways to progressively decrease rather than reinforce dependence on the Comecon countries. Steps needed to be taken to accelerate agricultural diversification, move toward food self-sufficiency, and lessen the reliance of Cuba's industrial development and energy policy on Moscow. Instead, however, trade relations were organized as if the status quo of economic relations determined by the bureaucratic castes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe would be eternal.

Rectification process

It was this prior course, and its disastrous economic, social, and political consequences, that the communist leadership in Cuba began to reverse in 1986 in launching what was called the rectification process. In face of growing political disorientation among working people as a result of these policies, the Cuban leadership began to reach back toward the course that had been argued for by Ernesto Che Guevara during the early 1960s and that had begun to be implemented in limited ways in those years.

"What are we rectifying?" Fidel Castro asked in

his October 1987 speech on the 20th anniversary of Guevara's death. "We're rectifying all those things — and there are many — that strayed from the revolutionary spirit, from revolutionary work, revolutionary virtue, revolutionary effort, revolutionary responsibility; all those things that strayed from the spirit of solidarity among people. We're rectifying all the shoddiness and mediocrity that is precisely the negation of Che's ideas, his revolutionary thought, his style, his spirit, and his example."

Voluntary work brigades and contingents were relaunched in the latter 1980s to meet pressing social needs such as housing and day care. Steps were taken to begin decreasing the gap between the highest and lowest-paid workers by raising the living standards of the worst-off layers in the countryside and cities. Policies were initiated to counter the spread of those who profited off shortages of housing and food. Food self-sufficiency was again put forward as an urgent priority. Action was taken to mobilize against abuses, waste, and outright corruption by growing middle class

layers in state enterprises and the apparatus of the party and state. New projects were launched to develop and diversify industrial production.

The political dynamic of these measures associated with rectification was to strengthen the organization and mobilization of expanding layers of the working class as a conscious communist vanguard and draw them into more and more aspects of the administration of economic institutions and the state.

Collapse of trade with USSR, CMEA

It was in this context that the collapse of Cuba's trade with the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, from which it obtained some 85 percent of its imports, triggered the severe economic shortages and dislocations at the opening of the 1990s. The Cuban government was hit by this jolt to established trading patterns while it was still just at the beginning of the battle to rectify its prior course. The ensuing shortages and economic dislocation undercut the momentum of rectification by bringing to a screeching halt many of the initiatives at its heart, such as the volunteer construction minibrigades and contingents.

It was in this sense that Martin Koppel wrote in the December 27 issue of the *Militant* that the main causes of the current economic crisis in Cuba "are to be found in Cuba." Reader De Witte is certainly correct that this phrase standing alone is "one-sided." But the reasons De Witte cites for this judgment are wrong, as are the political conclusions he draws from it.

"Some aspects of Cuba's integration in Comecon were positive (for example, some barter arrangements, the absence of unequal exchange relations which govern economic trade between imperialist and neocolonial countries)," De Witte writes.

We have already explained that Cuba's socialist government was correct to join Comecon and press for the most ad-

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FROM PATHFINDER

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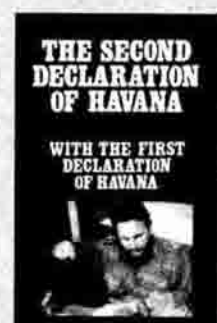
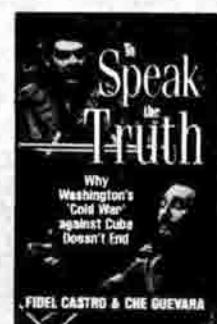
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Cold War

Continued from ISR 3

vantageous trade relations it could get for Cuba, Vietnam, Mongolia, and other countries. De Witte overstates the point, however, in claiming that relations between these countries and the industrialized members of Comecon were marked by "the absence of unequal exchange relations."

The Cuban leadership has never ceased to be grateful for the trade it developed with the Soviet Union and Eastern European states in face of Washington's inhumane economic embargo. But Cuban leaders in recent years have also shed light on decisive aspects of these relations that were far from beneficial to Cuba's economic development and sovereignty.

"The preferential price we received for our sugar supply [from the USSR] simply represented a fair exchange," explained Raúl Castro in the *El Sol de México* interview. "If the USSR had produced from beets the same amount of sugar as we sent them, with their own methods, it would have cost them many more rubles." And, "as you know," he told the interviewer, "the quality of Soviet products, machinery etc." that Cuba received in exchange for its sugar "is not very competitive."

Fidel Castro was more blunt in a March 1990 speech to the congress of the Federation of Cuban Women in Havana. "There's one thing I want to say here, and say it clearly once and for all: there is some junk that only we buy and nevertheless we make it function, because we already specialize in that after so many years: taking rubbish and trying to make something useful out of it."

"I'll give you an example: we were the only ones in the world who bought Bulgarian forklifts," Castro said. "They're so worthless and have so many problems that no one but us bought them in this trade we established. . . ." He also pointed to the Hungarian buses that "get six kilometers [3.7 miles] to the gallon" and "fill the city with exhaust fumes, poisoning everybody."

Speaking just as Comecon was in its final death agony, Castro said, "I'm glad I'm now able to speak so freely; let's forget about scruples. . . . We will have to review our economic relations with those countries, because they still need our products, or else they must go somewhere else to buy them. So their advantages are relative . . . because we're exporters of foodstuffs and raw materials and we often received in exchange this kind of junk. . . ."

"It's very difficult to talk about all these things," Castro said, "unless there are special circumstances to free us from all commitments and enable us to speak clearly. Now we will see, now they will compete, they want to be like the Western countries. Who will buy their junk? At least our nickel is our nickel, our sugar is our sugar, and our citrus fruit is our citrus fruit, our food is food!"

Permanence of Stalinist bureaucracy?

De Witte makes two fundamental and interrelated errors. First, he equates the workers' states in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe with the Stalinist regimes that ended up dominating them as a result of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the USSR at the end of the 1920s. Second, he writes as if these regimes of a privileged social caste, with interests alien from the working class, could somehow have been permanent, at least until workers in those countries were able to replace them with revolutionary governments at some point in the future.



Volunteers returned from fighting against South African invasion of Angola in late 1980s. The Cuban revolution's internationalism has inspired generations of fighters around the world.

The aid and support the Cuban revolution received for more than three decades from the Soviet Union was a tribute to the living legacy of the Bolshevik-led October 1917 revolution, which brought the workers and peasants to power in the old tsarist empire of landlords and capitalists. Despite the Stalinist counterrevolution, the workers' states and the toilers' conquests in overturning capitalist property relations have proven to be stronger than the parasitic castes in the USSR and Eastern Europe and their police apparatuses. This is shown by the big obstacles facing imperialism and each of the new regimes today in attempting to reimpose capitalist social relations in these countries.

But the Stalinist bureaucracies had been eroding every one of these conquests for decades. These privileged castes have been the main transmission belts of imperialist pressures and bourgeois values into these countries, and into the workers movement worldwide. (Those who may have doubted this in the past need only look at what these social forces, and frequently the very same individuals, are doing today.) These police regimes used terror and lies to push working people out of politics and wall them off from the struggles of workers and peasants in other parts of the world.

Despite their brutal repression, however, these regimes were brittle, and it was inevitable that they would eventually come crashing down. The one-two punch of world capitalism's accelerating decline since the mid-1970s and their own internal corruption and decay led to a cascading collapse of one Stalinist apparatus after the next beginning in 1989.

The collapse of these regimes and apparatuses was not only inevitable; above all, it removed the biggest obstacle to forging the kind of communist leadership of the working class and other toilers that is necessary for any new advances in the world struggle for national liberation and socialism. It weakened those counterrevolutionary political forces that presented a counterfeit of communism as the real thing, miseducating and ultimately destroying the political effectiveness of revolutionary-minded workers and youth the world over. It removed the barrier to workers in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe fighting their way back into political life and finding ways to identify and forge bonds with revolutionaries in other countries.

The prospects for revolutionaries and communists around the world have been strengthened by the weaken-

ing of Stalinism — including the prospects for the communists in Cuba whose more than three-decade-long example of intransigence and internationalism has encouraged and inspired generations of fighters in the United States and other countries. It is imperialism that has suffered blows from the collapse of these regimes, with whom the capitalist rulers had found a multitude of ways to collaborate in the vain effort to preserve the international status quo.

Meeting the challenges ahead

Of course, the rapid collapse of Cuba's long-standing trading patterns has precipitated serious economic difficulties and social tensions there. But Cuba has survived other hard times in the 1960s and 1970s, when revolutionary struggles were making strides forward in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The real political blow sustained by the Cuban revolution is one rarely pointed to — the defeats of revolutionary workers' and farmers' governments in Grenada and Nicaragua in the 1980s and their impact in pushing back revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America and the Caribbean.

When the Grenada and Nicaraguan revolutions triumphed and were in their ascendancy in the early 1980s, Fidel Castro spoke of the "three giants rising up . . . on the very threshold of imperialism."

After two decades of standing up to Washington's threats and pressures, Cuban revolutionaries said, "We are no longer alone!"

Then came the Stalinist-organized counterrevolutionary coup in Grenada in October 1983 that resulted in the murder of Maurice Bishop and other revolutionaries, the destruction of the workers' and farmers' government, and Washington's successful invasion and occupation of the island. And in the latter half of the 1980s the political degeneration of the Sandinista National Liberation Front leadership in Nicaragua eroded the revolutionary government and ultimately led to its demise as well.

From the standpoint of revolutionaries organizing the toilers to conquer state power and use it to advance their class interests, Cuba was once again alone — in the Americas and in the world. The rise of these revolutions at the opening of the 1980s gave a powerful impetus to the advance of the Cuban revolution and the rectification process, which, it could be said, really began with the organization of the volunteer Territorial Troop Militia in 1981. The defeats in Grenada and Nicaragua slowed that momentum.

Today, aside from the advancing national, democratic revolution in South Africa, no new revolutionary victories are in sight. But the capacity of Cuban communists to stand firm until further advances in the world class struggle come to pass is crucially important. Because the fate of the Cuban revolution — like the fate in the 1920s of the Bolshevik-led Soviet republic, with much greater economic resources to draw on — cannot and will not be settled in Cuba alone.

In face of the current economic difficulties and political setbacks, the revolutionary leadership of the Cuban government and communist party is organizing to lead a necessary retreat in Cuba. The Bolsheviks too launched a retreat in 1921 — the New Economic Policy — in the wake of the devastation from several years of civil war and imperialist intervention and of setbacks to revolutionary struggles in Europe in 1919 and 1920.

For Further Reading

New International no. 8

CHE GUEVARA, CUBA, AND THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

Articles by Ernesto Che Guevara, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Carlos Tablada, Mary-Alice Waters, Steve Clark, Jack Barnes. Exchanges from both the early 1960s and today on the relevance and historic importance of the political and economic perspectives defended by Ernesto Che Guevara. 204 pp. \$10.00

New International no. 7

OPENING GUNS OF WORLD WAR III WASHINGTON'S ASSAULT ON IRAQ

Jack Barnes. The U.S. government's murderous blockade, bombardment, and invasion of Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, more wars, and growing instability of international capitalism. 333 pp. \$12.00

SPEECHES AT CONGRESSES OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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As in the Soviet republic 70 years ago, the measures required by such a retreat in Cuba today are strengthening the hand of bureaucratic layers and emerging groups of exploiters and other anti-working-class elements. How well Cuba's communist leadership prepares the working-class vanguard to defend and advance their class interests at home and abroad under these conditions will be key to the outcome. This, in turn, will be decisively affected by advances or retreats in the class struggle elsewhere in the Americas and around the world.

Over the past 35 years, the Cuban working class and its leadership in what is now the Communist Party of Cuba have faced many adversities and sharp trials, and each time, with whatever errors along the way, they have emerged stronger and with a new generation of battle-tested cadres and leaders. While a fight for the heart and soul of the Cuban revolution will unfold under such conditions, as it did in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, we have every reason to believe that these communists in Cuba will once again wage a determined struggle and that they can win.

U.S. embargo

Two brief final points.

Reader Ludo De Witte asks why the *Militant* generally uses the term *embargo* instead of *blockade* to refer to Washington's trade sanctions against Cuba. While our aim is not to engage in an argument over semantics, we use this term because we think that in English it is clearer and more accurate. During the height of the "missile" crisis in October 1962, the U.S. navy did indeed impose a blockade against Cuba, stopping ships on the high seas around the island to interdict cargo Washington considered unacceptable. The U.S. government may do so again at some point.

Today, however, the U.S. rulers use the absolute size and weight of the U.S. capitalist economy in the world to maintain a tight embargo on economic, commercial, and financial relations with Cuba by U.S. companies, their subsidiaries abroad, and businesses in other countries that value the big profits from their U.S. trade. The effects of the U.S. embargo, strengthened in several aspects last year by the so-called Cuban Democracy Act, is detailed in the accompanying study submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in November 1993 by the Cuban delegation to the UN.

To refer to an embargo, not a blockade of the 1962-type, does nothing to diminish its severity and inhumanity or the suffering it inflicts on the Cuban people.

Finally, De Witte takes issue with the statement in the December 20 issue of the *Militant* that "Clinton . . . hopes the government in Cuba is similar to the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe . . . which Washington helped bring down through decades of unremitting and debilitating military and economic pressures." De Witte writes, "I think the US rulers correctly see the fundamental difference between a Stalinist regime and the Cuban government, and act accordingly (by wanting to destroy completely the Cuban government and not wanting to reform it)."

De Witte forgets that the capitalist rulers are first and foremost pragmatic. They have no scientific understanding of the world; they use their economic and military might to advance their profits and class interests as they see them. Together with the stick of the embargo and military threats and pressures, they keep a big fat carrot extended to those whom Cuban communists themselves call "the faint-hearted" in the government and party apparatus who are eager to reverse the revolution's course in return for an accommodation with U.S. imperialism.

With this caveat, we agree with De Witte that the U.S. capitalist class remains determined to crush the Cuban socialist revolution and the communist leadership that has successfully led this struggle from the early 1950s to today. And the U.S. rulers are not about to back down from this goal at a time when they sense that Cuba faces a deep economic and social crisis, and lacks revolutionary allies in power in the Americas, as it had from 1979 through the latter 1980s.

But in waging this latest fight they call the "special period," communists in Cuba have made one addition to the basic slogans of the revolution:

Patria o muerte! Free homeland or death!
Venceremos! We shall win!

Socialismo o muerte! Socialism or death!

Given what the Cuban revolution has meant to revolutionary-minded workers and youth around the world for more than a quarter century, we can pledge no less in standing shoulder to shoulder with our sisters and brothers



MILITANT/TERRY COGGAN

Rectification process, launched in 1986, began to reverse political demobilization and demoralization among working people that was a result of following the economic model of Soviet Union. Volunteer work brigades, like the one pictured above, played an important role.

in Cuba in defense of the revolution there — and in our determination to organize workers and farmers to advance the revolution wherever we ourselves happen to live and labor.

U.S. embargo of Cuba: a detailed study

Continued from ISR 1

or soft loans extended by institutions and Governments.

This financial problem has meant that Cuba has had to apply to institutions that grant loans on harder terms, forcing it to lay out an additional US\$230 million.

Moreover, the depreciation of the dollar (net fluctuations) from the 1970s until 1992 has reduced Cuba's export earnings and increased the cost of imports, resulting in a loss of US\$1.03 billion.

Furthermore, according to estimates from the Banco Nacional de Cuba, the Cuban external debt, calculated at US\$7 billion, would be US\$1,913,000,000 lower, had it been able to pay its debts in United States dollars.

The United States move to freeze all Cuban assets in United States banks has also severely affected the country's finances. The amount corresponding to telecommunications alone is US\$112 million.

This entire financial situation has had severe repercussions on economic development as a whole and, in particular, on the population's standard of living.

The embargo has seriously impeded the provision of medical services to the population and the obtaining of medicines, chemical reagents, medical equipment, non-medical equipment, technology and other essential resources.

In order to satisfy its needs in this area, Cuba has had to turn to distant markets, mainly in Europe and Asia, which has cost it an average of US\$5 million annually in air and ocean freight alone.

If we consider 32 finished goods of United States origin and the quantities of these goods Cuba was able to obtain in 1991 and 1992, we find that the considerable excess amount paid on freight from Europe could in itself have purchased 10,453 ampoules of methotrexate (5 mg), a drug used in the treatment of acute leukemia, to give just one example.

The use of intermediaries has also been a major factor contributing to the higher prices of the medical supplies and equipment that Cuba imports, for example chemical reagents, which are essential for the performance of clinical analyses.

In these times, without the market once provided by the former Soviet Union and the socialist bloc, it is even more difficult to acquire such medical supplies as a result of the United States bans on exports to Cuba, which apply not only to sales from the United States but also from third countries if any of the components is of United States origin.

These products include:

- Cannulae for extracorporeal circulation;
- Artificial vascular grafts;
- Peritoneal dialysis catheters (which affects the program of treatment for chronic kidney failure);
- Angiography catheters (which affects diagnostic procedures for the circulatory system and other such procedures);
- Cardiac stimulation catheters (which affects the treatment of patients with cardiovascular diseases in critical condition);
- Urostomy equipment (which affects patients whose urine must be drained);
- Draining for hydrocephaly patients (which affects neurosurgery services);
- Silicone implants for retina surgery (which affects ophthalmology services);
- Skin expansion sheets (which affects burn units);
- Surgical sutures made of special materials for specific uses (which basically affects cardiovascular surgery, oph-

Continued on ISR 6

Solidarity conference opens in Cuba

Continued from front page

Following the inaugural session, the conference broke up into three subgroups, where delegates began discussing political, economic, and cultural questions.

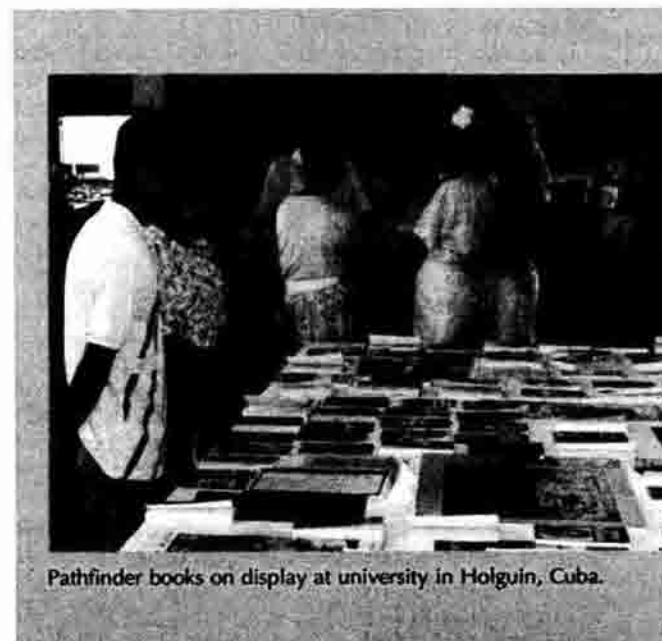
Roberto Regalado Alvarez of the Communist Party of Cuba, David Abdulah of the Oil Workers Union in Trinidad and Tobago, and Javier Diez Canseco of the Unified Mariateguista Party of Peru initiated discussion at the session on politics.

Regalado said that in spite of great challenges facing the workers movement today around the world, the masses of working people can move forward to true independence and sovereignty only if revolutionaries lead a fight for socialism. Abdulah called "for greater unity among the forces on the left to save humanity from barbarism imposed upon them by the imperialist powers."

Clara Israelia from Madres, a group that has organized a campaign to bring worldwide attention to the plight of thousands of disappeared political prisoners in Argentina, spoke about the revolt by state employees in Santiago del Estero in the north of the country in December. "Thousands of public workers and their sons and daughters took to the streets to defend their wages, their livelihood," she said. "There's more to come." After 5,000 angry demonstrators burned several government buildings to protest the refusal by local authorities to pay state workers for four months, federal authorities sent in hundreds of troops to quell the uprising. The government in Buenos Aires, however, was forced to begin handing out some of the back pay.

A few delegates made references to the recent armed rebellion in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas and called for putting pressure on the government of Mexico to end the repression it unleashed against peasants and others there.

The four-day conference will conclude January 28.



Pathfinder books on display at university in Holguin, Cuba.

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Make checks payable to the *Militant*, earmarked for the Books for Cuba Fund, and send to: 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Impact of U.S. gov't embargo on Cuba

Continued from ISR 5

thymology, neonatal care, organ transplants);

- Graph paper for echocardiography (which affects cardiology services and, in particular, the early-detection program for congenital defects in fetuses and perinatology and pediatric services);

- X-ray plates;

- Other supplies such as surgical gauze, cotton, surgical cotton batting, gauze bandages, nebulizers, laboratory reagents, surgical gloves and urine collection bags.

The acquisition of spare parts for medical equipment has also been affected because, *inter alia*, most of the high-integration electronic devices and circuits for high-technology equipment, including computerized tomography, nuclear magnetic resonance and Gamma chambers, are patented in the United States.

Similarly, nonmedical equipment, such as electrogenic units, cold chambers, air conditioning equipment and vehicles, is also subject to restrictions under the embargo.

The embargo has made it especially difficult to obtain drugs. The purchase of third-generation antibiotics (cyclosporin), essential for treating acute infections; cytostatics used to treat cancer patients; radioisotopes used in diagnosis and therapy; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories and others, to name a few, has become more difficult.

As regards the medicines used in endocrinology, insulin, in particular, can be purchased only from a European supplier, since the world's leading producer is a United States company, the Eli Lilly Company.

This has pushed up the cost of insulin considerably, and Cuba, which has 16.5 diabetics for every 1,000 inhabitants, many of them insulin-dependent, must spend US\$3 million annually in order to obtain this product. Corticosteroids, calcium, vitamin D-2 and antidiuretic hormones have also been affected by the embargo.

When a comparative analysis was made of the prices of 24 products as per contract in 1992-1993 and the prices quoted by the firm Talgrex International Export of Florida, it was concluded that in that category alone and without taking into account the difference in freight charges, Cuba would save US\$986,386.96.

At the time of the neurological epidemic, because Cuba had to go to a European supplier to acquire the necessary medicines, for three products alone Cuba had to spend US\$111.48 per unit (mg) of each product.

Moreover, in order to transport a shipment of vitamins and excipients for the manufacture of pills, Cuba was forced to spend approximately US\$237,448.68 for air freight from Europe.

The situation is further aggravated because the manufacturers in the countries from which all these items are obtained have been forced to stop supplying certain items to Cuba, and we therefore have to search constantly for new markets. Some examples are:

- In May 1991 the Swedish firm Alfa-Laval canceled its contract with Cuba for the sale of medical equipment on the basis of the United States Export Administration Regulations which prohibit the export or re-export of parts or components to Cuba and impose a requirement of written approval from the United States office of export licenses if the value of the manufactured part in that country is greater than 10 percent of the total value of the equipment.

- The Netherlands firm Enraf Nonius, which for more than 10 years supplied physiotherapy equipment, parts and components to Cuba, representing 80 percent of the installed equipment in Cuba, suddenly announced in 1991 that it would be unable to continue supplying its products because of difficulties in obtaining a license for exports to Cuba. This equipment is used mainly for the rehabilitation of disabled patients.

- The firm Amsco Canada Inc. notified Cuba in April 1992 that it was unable to supply spare parts for operating tables because they were of United States origin and it could not obtain an export license.

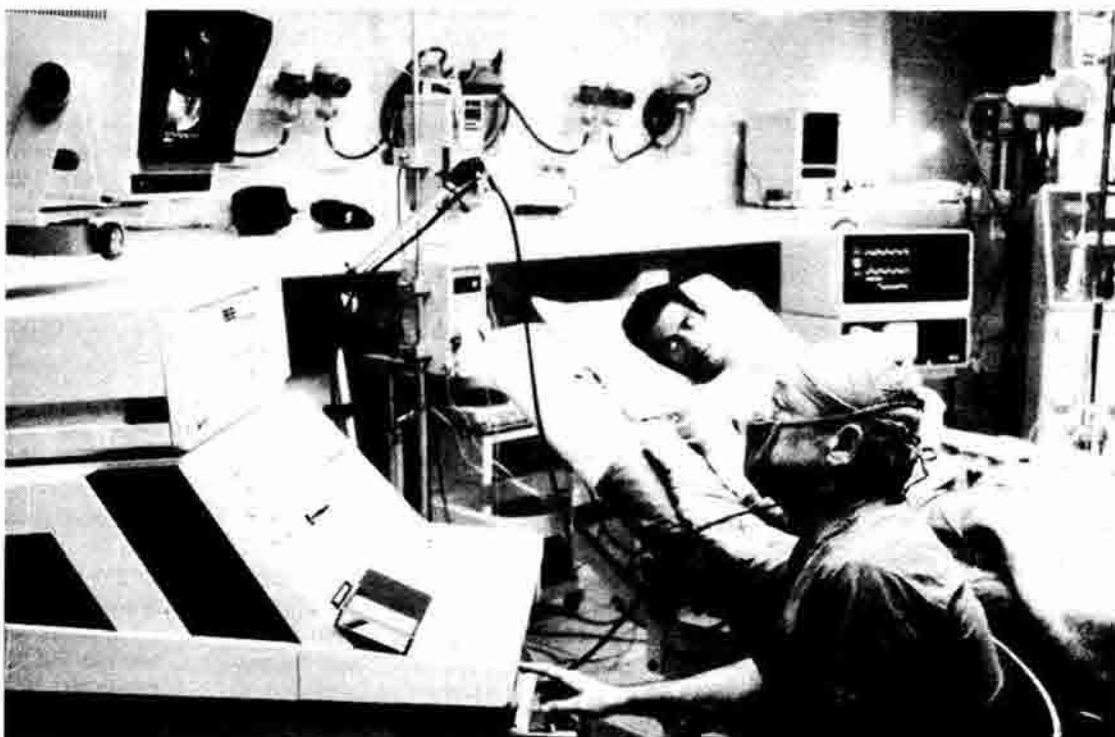
- The firm Janssen Pharmaceutical of Belgium, a subsidiary of the United States firm Johnson & Johnson, has experienced difficulties with its export licenses, and its shipments of medicines have therefore been reduced.

- The Swiss firm Fluka A.G. Chemical reported in October 1992 that it had great difficulties with its exports to Cuba because it had not been able to obtain export licenses.

Furthermore, in the vital area of food supply, for milk, chicken and grain alone Cuba in 1992 spent US\$40 million more than any other country would have spent on the same volume of imports because of the prices Cuba was forced to pay.

Similarly, as regards food production, the embargo has forced Cuba to go to other markets to acquire important supplies and materials, which has led to higher prices. These supplies include seeds, fertilizers, herbicides, livestock and semen, with costs estimated at US\$66.5 million.

In the particular case of imports of chemical products used in agricultural operations in connection with the sugar harvest and food production, the price increases have been calculated at US\$9.2 million, because the products have been imported from distant places and in many cases at higher prices than those prevailing in our region. These products include diammonium phosphate, triple superphosphate, potassium chloride, potassium sulfate, anhydrous ammonia, urea and refined sulfur.



Heart transplant patient in Havana hospital in 1985. U.S. embargo makes it difficult and expensive for Cuba to import necessary medical supplies and equipment.

As to other economic areas of vital importance for Cuba, the loss of the United States sugar market and of the preferential prices Cuba had enjoyed in that market since the 1930s has led to a decline of over US\$5 billion in the income received by Cuba from sugar exports.

In addition there are the losses associated with the measures which the United States Government is applying to block Cuban sugar exports to third countries, which are required, under penalty of losing their quotas, to assure the President of the United States that their exports to the United States do not contain Cuban sugar.

'Sugar industry is seriously affected'

The sugar industry has also been seriously affected because of the need to replace and renovate existing equipment and acquire raw materials, supplies, materials and fuel at an additional cost estimated at between 22 and 30 percent, which has resulted in an outlay of approximately US\$1.6 billion.

Costs to the sugar-cane industry are estimated at US\$2.7 billion because of the need to acquire new agricultural, construction and irrigation equipment, laminates, sugar-harvest supplies and other supplies at higher prices.

The exclusion of Cuban exports of tobacco, rum and other traditional products from the United States market has led to income losses which, for tobacco alone, amount to US\$252.5 million, considering only the portion not reallocated to other markets and also taking into account the fact that for some of these products, the United States market was the natural outlet.

In the case of nickel, another traditional export product, it is estimated that expenditure of US\$400 million was incurred simply because of having to move the market to Europe, along with production losses caused by the lack of supplies and spare parts.

In addition, losses calculated over the past two years (1991-1992) in respect of nickel exports which could potentially have been placed in the United States market amount to US\$3.2 million, taking into account the differences in freight and insurance costs for some exports of nickel sulfate and cobalt, and insurance on sales of suiter/nickel oxide.

The losses arising from the prohibitions imposed by the United States on third countries in respect of the export to its territory of products containing Cuban nickel, in even the most infinitesimal proportion, have not been taken into account.

These requirements have been applied by the United States to member countries of the European Community, such as France and Italy, and to Japan and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, at a resulting cost to Cuba, since the United States is the main importer of steel and

the main firms trading in nickel internationally have extensive business with the United States.

As to the electrical industry, a cost of US\$120 million is estimated simply for replacement of equipment and the lack of spare parts for electric power plants and electricity transmission and distribution networks.

In addition, over the past two years there have been substantial losses in the operation of electricity generating units, mainly because of the lack of fuel, which is all the more significant in that over 90 percent of the electricity used by Cuba is generated on the basis of fuel use.

It should be noted that since 1991 when Cuba lost its source of petroleum from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States has continued to put pressure on potential suppliers to Cuba in order to block imports, resulting in a deterioration of the situation.

Moreover, as regards imports of petroleum products, in freight alone, costs of US\$81.2 million have been calculated over and above what would have been incurred if there had been no prohibitions under the embargo.

In the chemical industry, there have been costs of US\$112 million for fertilizers, rayon and industrial gases alone.

Higher freight costs

In the sphere of transport, the losses inflicted on our economy, which have limited the possibilities of improving the standard of living of the population, amount to US\$4,842.5 million up to Dec. 31, 1992.

The prohibitions imposed by the United States on the transport of cargo from or to Cuba have made it necessary to charter vessels, paying between 15 and 20 percent above the freight market, entailing an additional outlay of US\$375.2 million up to Dec. 31, 1992.

The increased costs of maritime transportation because of the increased distance (dry cargo) and excess freight costs amount to US\$3,980 million.

In rail transport, the almost total replacement of rolling stock, including locomotives and motor and passenger cars, required an outlay of US\$1.8 million.

Meanwhile, the replacement of automotive transport, which is basically of United States origin, required an outlay of US\$140.4 million.

The limitations imposed on Cuba by the United States in respect of access to aviation technology have led to an additional cost of US\$82 million, since Cuba is forced to use a technology with fuel consumption parameters that are higher than the equivalent technology of other airlines.

The Cuban population has been adversely affected by the lack of spare parts for the repair and maintenance of domestic equipment of United States origin and the prohibition on the purchase of any such equipment or even of non-United States equipment which contains United States parts, materials or technology.

It is estimated that the cost of goods in this category owned by the population exceeds US\$374 million, without taking into account secondary economic costs and the implications for the style and standard of living of the population.

Conservative estimates place at between US\$1.6 and US\$1.7 billion the losses caused by the anticipated shortages of equipment resulting from the embargo, without taking into account the cost to the economy in the area of production and services represented by equipment servicing.

The embargo has systematically closed Cuba's access to advanced technology and to any form of scientific and technical exchange, whether to secure higher levels of efficiency and greater volumes of production, or in any sphere of national life.

This is the most significant strategic implication of the embargo against Cuba, since it not only deprives Cuba of opportunities to compete in markets on an equal basis, but also forces it to produce under less efficient conditions, with technologies which involve a greater investment of resources or are less productive, and this sometimes results in a heavy burden since there are no alternatives.

The measures imposed by the United States entail not only lack of access to technologies of United States origin but also prohibitions imposed on the exports of products in which the transfer of United States technology is involved, even when such products originate in a third country.

Lack of access to advanced technologies has represented for Cuba a loss of national income equivalent to US\$2,318 million for each 1 percent of unassimilated level of production efficiency.

Complex but heartfelt — AT&T plans to market software that creates "agents" — special packets of codes which sift through com-

puter information. The agents can also perform "relatively complex tasks," said one news account. For instance: "A busy executive could have a system programmed so that



Harry Ring

Have to make do — Given the current L.A. shortages, we were concerned about what the emergency director would do if his ostrich leather boots got muddy and had to be replaced. We checked with Neiman-Marcus in Beverly Hills and, sure enough, they didn't have any. They did have lizard leather though. \$495.

But they never stop trying — "You can't get blood from a turnip." — Ben Livingood [?], a Pennsylvania state prison official, explains

why they don't intend to emulate moves by county officials to bill inmates of the county jail in Pittsburgh for food, lodging, and medical care.

Does she give refunds? — "I used to feel that if you weren't exhausting yourself, then the exercise didn't have benefit. But you don't need to go for the burn. It's better to do what you enjoy at a moderate level for a longer time." — Jane Fonda, whose "go-for-the-burn" books and videos made a very healthy bundle.

Gold leaf? — "In the name of cost-cutting, Delta Airlines recently got rid of the lettuce underneath its salads, saving \$1 million a

year." — News item.

Front-line fighter — Stressed-out Los Angeles residents will be cheered to know that within hours after the quake, James Lee Witt, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, was en route in full battle gear — blue jeans and ostrich leather boots.

In the cargo section? — For every 30 corpses shipped by USAir, funeral directors get a free domestic round-trip ticket.

Must watch late-night TV — "We are the 82nd Airborne; we are the Marines..." The people who

hit the beaches always suffer the most casualties but we accept that's our role in the culture war." — Lon Mabon, head of the Oregon Citizens Alliance, opponents of gay rights, explaining he had to dump the director of the Washington state section for being squeamish about confrontational tactics.

Travel tip — "The ultimate way to travel the world — aboard a luxurious, private... jet that has been reconfigured for 82 guests with all first-class seating, lounge and stand-up bar." — A 28-day trip, \$41,995.

Ownership plan is blow to United Airlines workers

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS AND JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) who work at United Airlines, will vote on a massive concession contract framed as an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP). The IAM represents mechanics, ramp workers who handle baggage, cabin service workers who clean the planes, and others.

The United Airlines ESOP has been touted by the major media as a way of preventing a "catastrophic showdown" between the unions and the company. They report it as part of the Clinton administration's plan of greater employee ownership in U.S. industry, by which they mean their goal of breaking and weakening unions.

The proposal requires IAM members re-

officials are ideologically opposed to the ESOP, the union must "wait for another day to fight the war with United." Several members spoke against this perspective, explaining the importance of organizing a fight today.

Some workers have expressed the opinion that although the deal involves massive concessions, jobs will be safe for a few more years.

A cabin service committee person said, "It really comes down to choosing whether to shoot yourself in the foot or in the head, and I think I'd rather shoot myself in the foot. Our army's just not strong enough right now to do anything else."

"Most people look at the union leadership and ask what do they do for us," a mechanic commented. "I think we have to look to ourselves and try to push United back as far as we can."

He pointed to the respect American Airlines flight attendants won during their five-day-strike and how, to everyone's surprise, they were able to force American's management to back off.

'Won't stop layoffs'

A ramp worker said she believed that if more people realized that the ESOP really can't save jobs they would vote against it. "We have to let people know there's really no way to assure there won't be layoffs or contracting out, even with the ESOP."

If the economy goes bad, we just end up voting ourselves out of a job, she said.

A lot of mechanics have been wearing hand-lettered badges saying, "Just say No to ESOP" or "STOP ESOP '94."

Some, however, while opposing ESOP, have become disgusted with the strategy of top IAM officials and are considering breaking with the union and going with a group called the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA). AMFA promotes a strategy of building an exclusive association of skilled workers — mechanics — to guarantee those workers high pay and benefits, as opposed to industry-wide unions that fight for the rights and living standard of all workers. A move toward AMFA will only weaken workers' ability to stand up to the company and to scams like ESOP unified and in a stronger position.

United's plan is a way of getting massive concessions from the unions. Virtually no one believes that United's stock is such a good investment that we will someday get even a fraction of what we put into it. The concession-deal does nothing to put us or our union in a stronger position to prevent further wage cuts, job losses, and erosions of our living standards. It serves to further promote the illusion that workers and the company have the same interests and that we have to sacrifice for "our" company.

Unions exist to defend workers and our standard of living. They are not about looking out for the profits of the wealthy airline owners.

Last November IAM members, along with some Airline Pilots Association members, staged various job actions around the same time that the American Airlines flight attendants' strike pushed their management back. While the union officialdom saw these as pro-ESOP actions, most IAM members saw them as protests against company attacks. It was soon after this that United bosses decided to support the ESOP plan, rather than confront resistance from union members to even deeper concession demands.

Over the last few years, owners of the airlines, like most other major corpora-



Militant/Janice Lynn

International Association of Machinists members in May 1993 protest sale of United flight kitchens to nonunion company. Employee ownership scheme will not save jobs.

tions, have forced workers to accept two- and three-level wage scales, the use of temporary and part-time workers, and other concessions that serve to divide us.

A vote against the United's ESOP is a vote against concessions.

As union members we have to remain firm and reach out for the support and solidarity we need to stand up to the bosses. United Mine Workers of America members and the American Airlines flight attendants

have been good examples.

We need to prepare ourselves for the bigger showdowns that are down the road — by solidarizing with other struggles that break out and by strengthening our forces in the face of all the divisions that the wealthy owners impose on us.

Emily Fitzsimmons and Janice Lynn work at United Airlines and are members of IAM Local 1759 at Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C.

UNION TALK

duce our current base wage rate by 9.7 percent, forego a 5 percent wage increase scheduled for May 1, 1994, and give up our paid lunch, thereby lengthening the workday one-half hour. It also includes a no-strike pledge and allows the company to contract out 20 percent of maintenance work.

If voted up, the new wage rate will be in effect for just under six years. We are told that wages might be raised in three to four years by a neutral arbitrator, depending on United's financial performance and wage rates compared to other airlines.

The ESOP proposal also provides for creating a lower-cost, short-haul airline operation known as "U-2", which would have "high frequency, simplified cabin and ramp service, rapid turn-around, and high rates of aircraft utilization."

There are also provisions for severance pay benefits and re-hire potential for the several thousand kitchen workers who lost their jobs when United sold its flight kitchens to a non-union company. The plan contains some increases in pension benefits in 1998.

In exchange for the estimated \$5 billion in wage and productivity concessions, there is a promise of job security for permanent, full-time employees, although many temporary and part-time workers have already received layoff notices. This includes 187 part-time ramp employees at Dulles Airport near Washington, D.C.

The ESOP also gives the IAM and the pilots' organization one seat each on the 12-member board of directors.

As part of the ESOP, former Chrysler executive Gerald Greenwald will replace Stephen Wolf as United's chief executive officer. No friend of labor, Greenwald was part of the offensive carried out against workers by that auto giant in the name of restructuring.

According to the proposal, employees will own 53 percent of the 61.5 million shares of stock. IAM employees will receive 19.68 percent, the pilots will get 24.5 percent and salaried employees will hold 8.82 percent. These amounts would be modified if the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) joins the deal.

This latest ESOP proposal followed public threats by United's top management to sell off additional parts of the airline and contract out thousands of jobs.

At informational meetings to discuss the ESOP with IAM members at Dulles airport, Jerry Nelson of the IAM District 141 negotiating team said that while union of-

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



"Fully half" the U.S. troops in Vietnam are "against the war to some extent," the noted *Chicago Daily News* correspondent Georgie Ann Geyer concluded after covering the war for six months.

"Many of these men say the experience of Vietnam has led them to a deep cynicism and skepticism about many of their country's motives and actions."

These highly significant observations about the attitudes and morale of U.S. soldiers in the war were covered in a five-article series in the *Chicago Daily News* beginning Jan. 13. The CDN press service is nationally syndicated.

It is interesting to note that in Miss Geyer's report most of the quotes were from officers — and even some fairly high-ranking brass at that. This suggests that the enlisted men are a bit judicious in talking to reporters.

Enlisted men have the right to speak their opposition to the war — it is guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. Soldiers are no different from any other American citizens in this respect.

It is one thing for brass at a base to try to silence GIs on that base; quite different when they are trying to keep them from participating in a demonstration which is nationally known — and moreover widely supported by the civilian population.

These points were recently emphasized by an antiwar GI, Sherman Sitrin, who ex-

plained them at a GI workshop in Washington, D.C., Jan. 18. Sitrin has been able to ward off victimization for his antiwar views with the support of the antiwar movement.



February 5, 1944

Seventeen Mexican boys have been framed-up and clapped behind prison bars as part of the recent anti-Mexican attacks on the West Coast which the capitalist press labelled the "Zoot-Suit Riots."

The "Sleepy Lagoon" case, as it has come to be known, follows the lynch pattern familiar to other minority groups in the United States. Police, prosecutor and judge joined to uphold "white supremacy" and railroad innocent youngsters to jail.

In August, 1942, a group of Mexican boys tried to "crash the gate" at a boisterous party near Sleepy Lagoon, Los Angeles. They were dispersed. The following day, a guest, José Díaz was found unconscious in the road. He died shortly after. Police rounded up twenty-two of the boys who had tried to join the festivities. There was no proof that the man had been murdered; his injuries could have been caused by a fall, a hit-run driver, or a fight with some other invited guest. Nothing indicated that the Mexican lads had had anything to do with it.

The sentences for the alleged "crime" which may never have been committed by anyone, were as severe as a prejudiced court could make them. Of twenty-two defendants, three were sent to jail for life; nine for five years to life; five for six months; and only five acquitted.

Support ANC election campaign

With the announcement of its slate of candidates, the African National Congress election campaign begins in earnest. In the weeks leading up to the April vote, ANC supporters in South Africa will be doing everything from knocking on doors to hosting public rallies to win support for the organization's program to build a nonracial, democratic society. Workers, youth, and all fighters for democratic rights around the world owe the ANC their full support in this endeavor.

A strong showing in the election will be important for the ANC to be able to lead the way in carrying through the next stages of the democratic revolution in South Africa. This includes carrying out land reform, a public works program, and other measures aimed at overcoming the brutal legacy of the racist apartheid system. The new government will also take on the challenge of rebuilding a devastated economy.

But an ANC victory is not automatic, as Nelson Mandela explains. "Unless we are able to transform that 70 percent support [in polls] on to the ballot box on the day of voting, we can lose the election," he told a January 21 ANC conference. Mandela called for intensive campaigning to explain the ANC's political program, both in the Black townships and rural areas and in predominantly white districts.

Opponents of democratic change — from the ruling National Party to ultrarightist outfits — are also on the campaign trail, both in word and in armed action against the

ANC. An important aspect of the ANC's campaign is the fight against the political violence whipped up by these forces.

The democratic movement makes headway against these reactionary elements when it seeks to involve the broadest possible layers of the population in the debate on the road forward for South Africa. One way the ANC does this is through the People's Forums, where ANC leaders engage in discussions and answer questions from workers, farmers, and others.

The weeks of political campaigning and an ANC victory in the election itself will open up more space for working people who are fighting to defend their rights and living standards, such as the 3,700 strikers at Coca-Cola's South African franchise.

Workers, young people, and others around the world should support the ANC in its campaign efforts over the next several months. One opportunity is a regional student anti-apartheid conference called for February 11-12 in Philadelphia. Young people at the conference will discuss political events in South Africa today, as well as building support for the ANC's voter education campaign and fundraising to ensure a democratic election.

This is an example of what can be done internationally to help ensure an ANC victory in April, which will be a victory for working people the world over.

Parole for Mark Curtis now!

An important new opportunity has opened up to demand justice for Mark Curtis, a union and political activist incarcerated in Iowa on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. The Iowa Medical and Classification Center (IMCC) has rejected a parole board request to admit Curtis for psychiatric evaluation. Unionists, political activists, and all defenders of democratic rights should respond to their decision that there are "no psychiatric issues" in Curtis's case with a campaign to demand the union activist immediately be granted a parole hearing and be released from prison.

Last October the board utilized a new Iowa law to deny Curtis a hearing. Instead, they requested he be transferred to the IMCC in Oakdale, Iowa, for psychological evaluation.

Prison officials pushed for the transfer, even overruling the decision of a psychiatrist who, after interviewing the political activist, declared him mentally fit.

The fact is, prison authorities are between a rock and a hard place. None of them want to take responsibility for releasing Curtis from prison. Neither, however, are they anxious to have him as a resident of their facilities, since they know that any prison he is in will be placed in an international spotlight.

But democratic-minded people face no such dilemma. Curtis is mentally fit. He has served out the time on the sexual abuse frame-up charge and has an excellent record in prison. He has a home, job offers, and massive community support. He meets all the conditions demanded by the state of Iowa for parole. He should be released.

Since his arrest almost six years ago, the political fight to win parole for Curtis has been an important part of defense efforts to expose the frame-up. New people can be won to support Curtis's fight for freedom and to oppose the frame-up itself as it becomes obvious that his continued incarceration is a violation of basic democratic rights.

Supporters will want to reach out to a new layer of union and political activists, including some of the young abortion rights fighters and those involved in activities to defend the Cuban revolution. A powerful message can be sent to the prison authorities if supporters in each city were to get just one or two letters demanding a hearing and an immediate release for Curtis.

Letters should be sent to the Iowa State Board of Parole, Capitol Annex, 523 East 12th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319. Copies should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, IA 50311.

Ties that bind the ruling class

The way Bobby Ray Inman ended his nomination to head Washington's war machine was rather unusual. In bowing out, the long-time spy and navy officer offered a glimpse of the threads that bind together the government, the media, and the capitalist class in the United States.

Inman gave a frank description of how the capitalist press and government officials routinely consult on what they consider to be "all the news that's fit to print," as the *New York Times* motto goes. Editors who worked for the *Times* and other major dailies readily confirmed this, explaining that information was sometimes deleted or delayed at Inman's request.

That's why the *Militant* often refers to these publications as the "big-business media" — they loyally serve the interests of the capitalist class and the its government. In addition to direct collaboration, columnists and editors move in and out of government and the business world themselves. William Safire, for example, was a speech writer for former president Richard Nixon.

Inman's record in private business is a useful illustration of the ease with which people in his circles slide from the war room to the board room and back. He went from one of the top spy posts in Washington to overseeing the company of a former "source," who happened to be selling weapons to the apartheid government in Pretoria. Then Inman took over a defense contractor and milked \$1 million before it went belly up.

But there's nothing unusual there. In fact Bill Clinton praised Inman's business success in explaining why he

should become war chief for U.S. imperialism.

Inman's failure to pay Social Security taxes on his housekeeper's wages didn't raise any eyebrows in ruling-class circles either. It's the norm in his class to hire maids, nannies, and other "household help." Most employers don't pay taxes for these domestic workers, jeopardizing their ability to collect Social Security benefits if they retire or become disabled.

The former admiral also got indignant when reporters questioned his ties to Lyndon LaRouche. After all, Inman argued, he was just doing his job. But that's what should make working people pause to consider — the CIA assigned its number-two man to "debrief" a fascist figure on his travels.

This web of bourgeois interrelations tends to come to the surface more today for the same reason Clinton has a hard time finding someone willing to head up his war department. The rulers in Washington may still be top dog in the imperialist world, but they are presiding over a system in deep crisis. As competition for profits and markets among the different capitalist powers grows, and more trade and shooting wars become inevitable, taking responsibility for the military machine of the U.S. ruling class becomes a less attractive career option for many politicians.

At the same time, it is easier to see the total rottenness of the capitalist system and those who run it, and the need for workers and farmers to replace it with a government of our own.

Sex harassment: are men the problem?

In a letter on the opposite page, reader Carol Sholin asserts that "while the source of violence against women is class society, the acts of violence are carried out by men." She later raises the question "when workers fight against sexual harassment, aren't they seeking to change male behavior?" This is simply another way of posing the question: Aren't men the problem?

The article on date rape that appeared in the Dec. 20, 1993, issue of the *Militant* began by pointing to an important fact: that the gains won in the fight for women's liberation are a result of the growing numbers of women brought into the workforce — and hired into jobs previously reserved for men — since World War II. The percentage of working women has risen continuously for more than four decades. In 1950, only 34 percent of women 16 years of age or older were in the labor force. Today, that figure is almost 58 percent.

It was this historic shift — not a moral campaign to change the behavior of men or even fights on the job against specific incidents of sexual harassment — that

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

gave tens of millions of women economic independence, broadened their social and political horizons, and changed forever the way that both women and men thought about women's place in society.

Because of these tremendous changes, sexual harassment and violence against women are considered important questions by broad numbers of people.

The fight to defend women's rights will be advanced if we understand who benefits from women's oppression and therefore has a stake in perpetuating this oppression. The answer lies in explaining who the enemy of women's equality is and who women can look to for allies in the fight to further rid ourselves of the shackles placed on us.

Are men the problem? The answer is no. The enemy is not male workers. It is the bosses, the owners of the means of production, who consciously strive to deepen the divisions between workers who are men and women because it weakens the solidarity and unity of the working-class majority whom they exploit for profit.

The bosses also benefit from divisions in the working class based on skin color, country of origin, and anything else they can come up with. The second-class status of women perpetuated by capitalism means that the bosses can pay less for female labor power than for that of male workers. This drags down the wages of all workers. The oppression of women hurts *all* working people, not just women.

Women's oppression weakens entire working class

The fight against sexual harassment on the job does advance the struggle for women's rights. But not, as Sholin says, because it changes male behavior. The fight against harassment is first and foremost a fight against the employers. By keeping our fire on those who benefit from the oppression of women we can win fellow workers to fight for women's rights.

There are, of course, workers who adopt the racism and sexism of the bosses. But the starting point for answering them must be the fact that the oppression of women weakens the entire working class. Fighting against sexist discrimination and harassment on the job along these lines does educate both men and women in the working class and increase our capacity to fight.

The article in the *Militant* was correct to condemn the social engineering approach of Antioch College's sexual code of conduct. This code — which *would* be humorous if it didn't unnecessarily provide ammunition to the Rush Limbaughs of the world — substitutes a utopian search for improved personal relations for a real fight for women's rights.

The behavior of men — and women — will continue to change. But it will be a result of the further integration of women into the workforce and the continued development — and disintegration — of capitalism in the United States and around the world. Because of these factors, the struggles of women and those of the organized labor movement are more closely intertwined than ever before. This creates a historic opportunity for labor to be involved in defending women's rights. A working-class approach to women's oppression is indispensable to unifying the working class and strengthening it politically. It is an important piece of preparing the working class for the socialist reconstruction of society, in which both men's and women's behavior will be changed for the good of all humanity.

— ESTELLE DeBATES

Locked-out Minnesota steelworkers win support

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Four hundred fifty locked-out taconite iron ore miners picketed seven mining facilities in northern Minnesota and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan January 6. They were protesting the sale of taconite to their employer, National Steel Pellet Company, by the owners of other Iron Range mines.

More than 400 United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 2705 members at Hibbing Taconite, who had been given advance notice of the protest, refused to cross the picket line.

Clarence Kuusi, coordinator of the picket lines and president of USWA Local 2660 at National Steel in nearby Keewatin, said the solidarity demonstrated by the Hibbing workers shows that his local's plan to win support in the fight against the lockout from other Steelworker locals is working.

The protesters were locked out by National Steel September 16 when they reported for work after voting to accept the company's final contract offer.

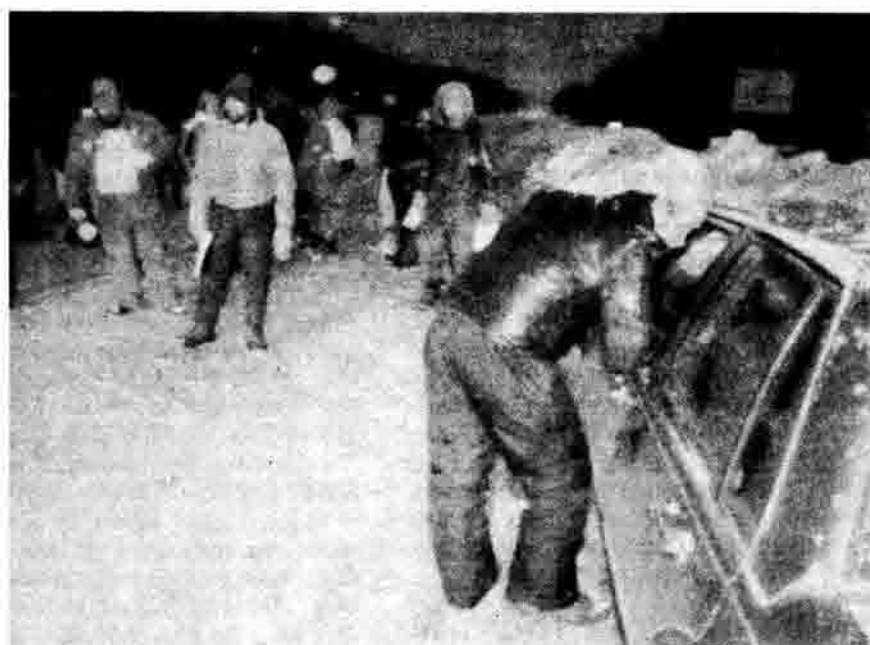
The local had been on strike against National since August 1. Steelworkers at Hibbing Taconite and the Empire and Tilden mines in Michigan's Upper Peninsula struck the same day, but returned to work under contracts signed in early October.

National Steel officials stopped returning miners at the plant gate September 16 and told them the company's contract offer was "no longer on the table" and that they would not be allowed to return to work until a new contract is signed. More than 600 union

worked 60 days as stipulated in the contract. The company has also refused to pay temporary workers overtime rates and shift differentials spelled out under the agreement.

The secretary-treasurer of IUE Local 829, Garnette Devine, said that in the past few years the company employed almost twice as many temporary workers in the plant as it did permanent ones. "We're a small local of 42 people and if we allow the company to do this to these temporary workers, down the road we won't have a union there at all," she stated.

Currently, the company is using management personnel to run some production in the plant. □



Steelworkers demonstrating outside iron ore plant in Hibbing, Minnesota.

members worked at National prior to the strike.

Steelworkers at the nearby Eveleth Mine, faced with company threats to close the facility if they strike, have been working without a contract since August 1. □

Electronics workers strike plant in Iowa

Since mid-December members of the International Union of Electronics Workers (IUE) Local 829 have been locked out by Erickson Displays Co. in Des Moines, Iowa. Union and company representatives were negotiating a new contract when dealings broke off. Employees showed up for work to locked gates.

At issue is the company's demand that the union drop an unfair labor practice charge filed with the National Labor Relations Board. The union has accused the company of refusing to allow temporary workers to become permanent — with benefits and the right to join the union — after they have

Steel company plans to close struck plant

At the end of December National Standard Company announced plans to close its wire plant in Columbiana, Alabama. Citing the effect of a seven-month strike by members of United Steelworkers of America Local 15015, lower production, and loss of customers, the company announced that production will be gradually reduced until the plant closes sometime around June 1994. Company losses from strikes at its Niles, Michigan; Corbin, Kentucky; and Columbiana plants totaled \$4.5 million in 1993.

The 200 members of USWA Local 15015 struck against concession demands equaling \$7.42 per hour. These include loss of one week of

vacation and at least one holiday, an across-the-board wage cut of \$1.50 per hour, elimination of 24 maintenance jobs, and imposition of two 12-hour shifts in place of three 8-hour shifts. Two strikers, Keith Cain and Walter Fleming, were killed on the picket line September 7 when an 18 wheeler swerved off the road and struck them as it left the plant.

The factory, which makes bead and hose wire, is being operated with scabs.

"They treat us like dogs out here, but we're still just as strong as ever," stated Charles Willis while on the picket line. Only one member has crossed the line, and that was in the first six weeks of the strike. Willis said they would settle for "no concessions, reparations and damages for what they've done to us — especially the deaths of our two brothers, and

drop all the charges. Everybody goes back or nobody goes back."

Support for the strikers continues to come in. According to Jimmy Pitts, treasurer of the local, other unions have donated as much as \$1,900. An in-plant collection at U.S. Steel's Fairfield tin mill before Christmas netted \$226. United Auto Workers Local 1155 at Pemco Aeroplex in Birmingham donated more than \$1,200 gathered at plant gate collections, and delivered a truckload of toys and food for Christmas as well. □

The following people contributed to this column: Marea Himelgrin, member of USWA Local 9198 in Roseville, Minnesota; Tim Mailhot, member of USWA Local 1057 in Birmingham, Alabama; and Mike Galati, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 in Marshalltown, Iowa.

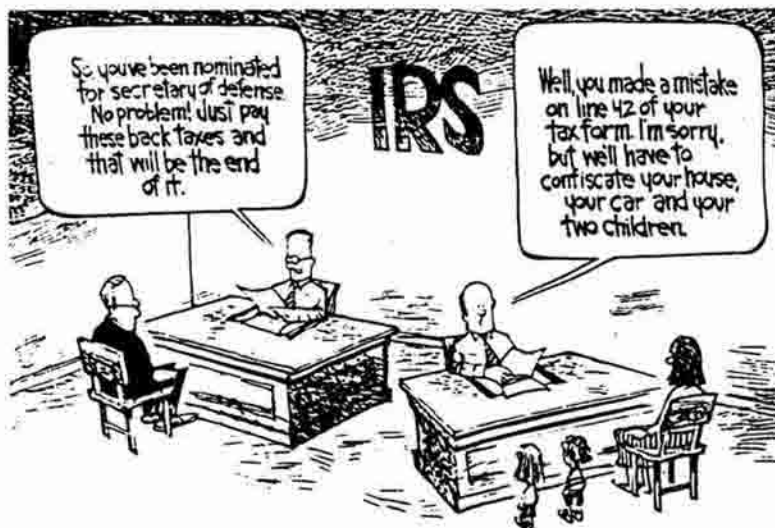
LETTERS

Date Rape

In her column, "What's behind the debate on date rape?", Estelle DeBates criticizes the Antioch College Sexual Offense Policy. The Antioch code was intended to address two separate but related issues. The first is date rape, where the primary defense is virtually always, "She wanted it." The second is the widespread attitude of many straight men that they have a right to demand sex, that women somehow owe them. The Antioch program seeks to establish mutual consent, not submission, as the basis for sexual relations. Whatever the weaknesses of the program — for example, it appears to address only heterosexual relations — it is at least a first attempt to deal with genuine problems of campus women.

DeBates quotes the section on drugs and alcohol without appearing to understand its significance. If a woman was under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of an alleged rape, this is an almost automatic acquittal for the man or men, regardless of circumstances. If she was drunk or stoned, she must be "immoral" and deserved what she got. This has been true even when the woman was forcibly given drugs or alcohol until she was unconscious. Such cases make it critical to establish that there is no situation, including drugs or alcohol intoxication, that makes rape acceptable.

DeBates denounces "social engineering aimed at modifying the behavior of men through the threat of expulsion." While the source of violence against women is class society, the acts of violence are carried out by men. What's wrong with trying to change such behavior? When workers fight against sexual harassment, aren't they



seeking to change male behavior? Preferably, men will learn through experience and persuasion that sexual harassment divides the work force, strengthens the hand of the bosses against the workers, and is neither harmless, fun, nor male privilege. But for those who refuse to learn, stronger measures may be in order. I see no problem with firing men who persist in sexual (or racial) harassment, nor do I see a problem with expelling male students who commit rape. And the Antioch code presents men with a clear-cut way of protecting themselves against false accusations.

DeBates states that "it's not hard to see" why the Antioch code has been the target of "jokes." Women's liberation and women in general have long been the target of vulgar "jokes." The ridicule heaped on the Antioch code is based on hostility towards the idea of women having control over their sexuality, as well as discomfort over people frankly discussing sexual matters. That Rush Limbaugh would find such ideas absurd is no surprise: that the

Militant would concur is. Carol Sholin Oakland, California

Gays in the military

The article by Sara Lobman on Clinton's "Don't ask, Don't tell" policy concerning gays in the military was a welcome change in the *Militant* where articles addressing gay rights and AIDS have been few and far between.

Despite the enormous energy committed by the so-called gay leadership on this issue, very little has been won. As Lobman correctly points out, the shabby window dressing still leaves enough room for all sorts of rumors leading to gays and lesbians being discharged from the service. Not to mention that gays remain held to a standard of conduct (military monasticism) not expected of their heterosexual counterparts. An interesting article might investigate why other capitalist countries such as Canada, Belgium and Israel were able to integrate and accept openly gay soldiers in their armies.

Unfortunately while many gay men and women have been rallying

around this issue, the AIDS crisis continues unabated. In his last article before his death, *New York Times* journalist Jeffrey Schmalz commented on his disappointment in layers of the gay community that latched onto the "military campaign" as a way of putting AIDS behind them. Reacting to the right wing hysteria that equates AIDS with gay people, it seems many felt that being a part of Uncle Sam's New World Police force would put a positive spin on the gay community proving that not all of us are "AIDS carriers." But it remains difficult for gays to earn credit for their contribution to the military when a simple admission of being gay is still tantamount to "homosexual conduct" and can land you in the unemployment line.

Craig McKissic Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

New Alliance Party I

That was a very helpful piece on NAP [New Alliance Party] in the current *Militant*. Thanks for it.

David McReynolds New York, New York

New Alliance Party II

Your January 24 issue had an interesting commentary on the New Alliance Party. While the article started out objectively, and made some valid points, it was unfair for it to criticize the New Alliance Party's "Rainbow Lobby" for choosing that name (your article said the name confused people into thinking that it was associated with the Rainbow Coalition). The Rainbow Lobby responded to this criticism over a year ago and changed its name to Ross-Green Associates.

The article was also one-sided because it ignored all the effort the New Alliance Party has put into improving legal conditions for all alternative political parties.

Among these achievements:

(1) the party persuaded members of Congress to introduce a bill, outlawing restrictive ballot access restrictions on third parties and independent candidates, in federal elections. This bill was introduced by Congressman John Conyers of Michigan in 1985, 1987 and 1989. It was introduced by Congressman Tim Penny of Minnesota in 1993. Although the bill hasn't made any headway, it has been a useful means of organizing support for fairer ballot access laws and publicizing the problem of the existing state laws on that subject.

(2) the New Alliance Party won a ruling in federal court in Manhattan last year that the League of Women Voters Fund cannot keep its tax-exempt status if it continues to use subjective criteria for deciding whom to invite into its debates. This case is on appeal and was just argued in the 2nd circuit last week.

(3) the New Alliance Party has filed winning lawsuits against bad ballot access laws in Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, which are now benefiting all third parties.

Furthermore, New Alliance Party attorneys have represented other third parties in other ballot access cases, which also won. I feel that these points should have been mentioned, in order to give your article a more balanced and more complete account.

Richard Winger San Francisco, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. 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.

British Coal endangers miners' lives

BY JIM SPAUL

SHEFFIELD, England — British Coal, the government-owned coal company, is tampering with safety equipment and threatening miners' health, according to reports in several major newspapers here. The company is attempting to cut costs in an effort to make mines more attractive to private buyers. These revelations come after the coal bosses have successfully carried through a huge program of mine closures and job cuts.

The *Daily Mirror*, *The Independent*, and British Broadcasting Company (BBC) have all reported on the life-threatening practices by the coal bosses. The story was first revealed by *The Miner*, the newspaper of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), in its October issue. What has come to light is that coal dust measuring equipment has been rigged to give false readings.

According to the *Daily Mirror* this was "so that dangerous dust levels in pits would remain undetected — and productivity would go through the roof." This means that miners are more at risk of contracting diseases such as pneumoconiosis or "Black Lung" from which 2,500 U.S. miners have died every year over the past decade.

There are no figures for the number of miners in Britain killed by this disease, according to the *Mirror*. Gary Beard, a deputy at Whitmoor colliery in Selby, Yorkshire, told the *Mirror* he discovered the practice last July when he noticed that filters on air samplers "were... clogged up with what appeared to be super-glue." An NUM official at the pit said he found a piece of cloth inside another machine.

A miner interviewed on the BBC television program *Public Eye* at the end of October admitted sabotaging samplers. *The Independent* reported, "I know that it's happening in at least half a dozen mines," he said. The newspaper stated that the miner was under pressure from management after they told him bonuses would be affected if production ceased. These and other practices have "become more widespread as the pressure to prove viability increased," the *Independent* reported.

On October 13, 1992 the government and

British Coal announced plans to close 31 pits and fire 30,000 miners. A wave of protest actions and one-day strikes coupled with divisions inside the ruling Conservative party forced the bosses to slow down the closures and job cuts. However since October 1992, 28 mines have closed and 23,000 miners have lost their jobs or voluntarily taken layoffs.

Today the coal bosses are continuing to attack the conditions of the remaining 16,500 miners. They are preparing to sell off both the remaining 22 pits and some of those that have been shut. More mine closures are expected in 1994. The *Daily Telegraph* reported December 29 that five more pits and 3,000 jobs were likely to go. "Soaring productivity" at the remaining pits meant fewer mines were needed, it said.

Paul Galloway, a NUM member at Thoresby colliery in Nottinghamshire, commented that the dust sample scandal shows that "a boss is a boss whether the mines are owned by the government or are in private hands. Both types of boss are only interested in making money at the expense of our jobs and our health."

The practice of tampering with dust samples in mines is not confined to Britain. In 1991, 500 U.S. mines were fined \$5 million for tampering with coal dust samples. In fact, the U.S. Labor Department received 4,710 faked samples from 847 coal mines in



Revelations that British Coal has been tampering with safety equipment come as the company tries to cut costs. In the past 15 months the government has closed 28 mines and laid off 23,000 workers. Above, October 1992 protest against pit closures.

just a year and a half.

"Coal miners themselves should have the right to monitor the sampling at every step," United Mineworkers of America president

Richard Trumka said at the time.

Jim Spaul is a member of the NUM at Kellingley colliery in Yorkshire.

Workers at Puerto Rico grain factory respond to lockout with picket lines

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — One hundred forty members of the Congress of Industrial Unions who work for a grain importer here received an early Christmas present when management locked them out of the plant October 26. The company, Molinos de Puerto Rico, is owned by the giant food corporation, Con Agra. It makes flour for bread and animal feed. There are no nego-

tiations going on at this time.

Jorge Reyes, 53, is a forklift operator and has worked for Molinos for 28 years. "The company wants to cut my wages from \$8.25 to \$4.50 per hour," Reyes said January 11 on the picket line.

The union has given the company concessions in the last several contracts. One of these was allowing the bosses to institute a two-tier wage scale.

But this time the company demanded even deeper givebacks. In previous contracts the company paid 100 percent of employees' health insurance. Their current proposal is for workers to pay a third of the cost. "They told us this was [U. S. president Bill Clinton's] health plan," said Francisco Rivera, an electrician with 27 years' seniority.

Luis Rivera Lugo, who has worked at the mill for 31 years, noted that "the company never said that they are losing money. They just say they need to be more competitive."

"These guys are so stingy that they even wanted to stop providing soap for the locker

room," he said.

When the workers balked at the pay cuts and other concessions the company simply ended negotiations and locked them out. They also started hiring new workers.

In the first few days of the lockout the workers successfully kept trucks and scabs from entering the plant. The police threatened to arrest the pickets for blocking access to the factory. Since then, the workers, who said they did not want to break the law, have allowed trucks to freely enter the plant. At this time the union's efforts are focused on getting a favorable ruling from the National Labor Relations Board.

None of the union members have crossed the picket lines. The company is running the plant with people transferred from the administrative offices and newly hired workers.

Ron Richards is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 1503 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Cops raid hostel in France, arrest immigrant workers



Workers outside the hostel in Rosny, near Paris.

Militant/Nat London

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS — On December 6 the immigrant hostel in Rosny, a suburb of Paris, France, was raided by police. Doucouré Mody, an elected representative of the residents at the hostel, told a Militant reporting team that the cops surrounded the hostel at 4:30 a.m., cut all the telephone lines, and used a master key to systematically open the door to each room. They threw residents out of bed,

searched each room, damaging personal belongings in the course of their inspection, and hauled nearly 300 of the workers to police headquarters.

Six of the immigrant workers were immediately expelled from France. Sixty-four had their papers confiscated and now must report to the police each week. Many others were prevented from going to work that day.

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