

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Bolsheviks' course to sustain
worker-peasant alliance

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Youth in France protest new subminimum wage

Thousands of workers join sizable demonstrations

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — Hundreds of thousands of students and trade unionists have taken to the streets across the country in recent weeks to protest a plan to create a separate, subminimum wage for young people.

The French ruling class argues that the lower wage is the only way to decrease unemployment, which is officially at 12.2 percent. If the wage for youth was lower, they argue, the capitalists would be able to hire more workers.

Under the new law, which went into effect March 22, workers under 25 years old can be paid 80 percent of the minimum wage of about \$1,000 a month. These workers will spend 20 percent of their time in what amounts to unpaid training classes.

The first demonstration on March 3 was called by student groups. One week later they were joined by forces organized by several trade union federations, particularly Workers Force (FO) and the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT).

The main union federation in France, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), had already called for a National Mobilization for Jobs on March 12. This action turned into a massive protest against the subminimum wage. The police estimate that more than 100,000 people — mainly unionists — participated in the seven regional demonstrations.

Then the two national student unions plus FO and the CFDT called for national demonstrations against the subminimum wage for March 17. Since this was a weekday action, calls for work stoppages in support of the protest were issued. Following the successful March 12 action, the CGT announced support for the March 17 events. This was the first trade union action uniting every French union confederation in more than 30 years.

About 230,000 students and workers took to the streets throughout France that day to condemn the government's minimum wage plan. More than 30,000 participated in a demonstration in Paris. Protests spread to every corner of the country, from villages to large cities.

In Lyon, high school students went from



Working people in France reject lower wage for youth in massive numbers

school to school that morning, emptying the classrooms and pouring into the streets. Some 5,000 youth marched around the downtown area until the union-sponsored rally began that afternoon. The students passed out mock "youth wage diplomas" to passersby to get their point across.

One thousand youth blocked traffic in downtown Rennes, while 1,200 students took over the toll booths on the highway to Vierzon and then blocked the trains from Paris to Brive. Another 6,000 high school students blocked another highway. Spontaneous demonstrations took place in dozens of other towns across the country.

Some 10,000 students and union mem-

bers marched through the streets of Bordeaux. In Bayonne, 4,000 youth blocked the city's main roads all afternoon. Highway blockings also took place in Toulon and other cities.

"This is my third demonstration," Sophie, a high school student in Marseilles told *Libération*. "This time the whole class went out. It's real cool. When the unions show up

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Another ruler of Bantustan is toppled in S. Africa

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Oupa Gqozo, the military ruler of Ciskei, one of the 10 so-called homelands conjured up by the white-minority regime in Pretoria, fell from power March 22. Gqozo abandoned ship in response to a rebellion by members of his army and police force. He was the second Bantustan ruler to go in less than two weeks, following the popular uprising that toppled Bophuthatswana's Lucas Mangope March 10.

Meanwhile, as proapartheid forces in Natal province unleashed a new wave of violence, a government commission chaired by judge Richard Goldstone released a report implicating top leaders of the South African police and military in arming, training, and financing terrorist squads of the Inkatha Freedom Party of

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Washington renews threats on N. Korea

BY PAT SMITH

Claiming Pyongyang did not comply with a February 25 agreement on inspection of seven nuclear sites, Washington canceled a round of talks scheduled for March 21 with representatives from North Korea. At the February negotiations, U.S. officials promised to suspend military exercises with Seoul and continue talks with the North. In exchange, the North Korean government agreed to open its nuclear sites to inspection and exchange envoys with the South.

Washington announced it will resume joint military exercises with South Korea and that Seoul will deploy the 38 Patriot missile batteries they had been reluctant to accept. The annual Team Spirit exercises —

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Jobs summit reveals strength of U.S. capitalists over rivals

BY JAMES HARRIS

DETROIT — Government officials from the seven major capitalist countries, referred to as the G-7, held a summit meeting here March 14-15 to discuss the persistent crisis of world unemployment, which presents a growing threat to social stability. One of their goals was to use the publicity surrounding the conference to stem the growing disillusionment with capitalist economic policies and project an image of concern for the worsening plight of working people while continuing their drive to raise labor productivity.

The meeting also revealed that Washington has pushed its rivals in Germany and Japan back in the conflict over access to the world's markets. The United States now exports a higher percentage of its domestic output than Japan. The U.S. rulers have gone much further than the employers

in Europe or Japan in "downsizing" and driving down the living standards of workers.

As a result, substantial numbers of new, younger workers are now being hired in the mines, mills, and factories around the United States.

For example, Ford Motor Co. officials say they expect to hire 10,000-12,000 workers between now and 1996. The auto employer recently announced that it will put on a third production shift at its Louisville, Kentucky, truck plant, adding 900 new workers, and is considering similar moves at factories in Michigan. General Motors and Chrysler are announcing similar hiring waves.

In implementing their productivity drive, the U.S. employers are generally not building new plants. Instead, they are relying on

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♦ SOCIALIST EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE ♦ CHICAGO

Cuba's Revolution Confronts a Crossroads in the Fight for Socialism

Report back from a recent visit

by **MARY-ALICE WATERS**

CHICAGO
Friday, April 1
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World Capitalist Politics in the '90s

'Downsizing,' 'Cultural War,'
and Global Instability

by **JACK BARNES**

CHICAGO
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4:30 P.M.
Palmer House,
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This program is part of a weekend socialist educational conference that will include classes on the labor movement, the fight for women's rights, and South Africa. For more information see ad on page 12 or call (312) 829-6815.

Cuban Nat'l Assembly debates economic measures — pages 5, 6



El Salvador elections

Leaders of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in El Salvador pointed to massive fraud in that country's March 20 elections. Armando Calderón Sol, presidential candidate of the ruling Nationalist Republican Alliance, reportedly won the election. With 70 percent of the votes counted, he had 49 percent. FMLN candidate Rubén Zamora was a distant second. A runoff between the two will most likely be held, since no candidate won more than 50 percent of the vote.

FMLN leaders said that 300,000 Salvadorans had been denied the right to cast ballots and that more than 12 percent of those who got voter cards were turned back at the polls because their names were not on the master list. Augusto Ramírez Ocampo, head of the UN mission in El Salvador, estimated that 74,000 people had been refused voting cards, primarily due to lack of birth certificates. In addition, residents of three towns near the Honduran border had to make the long trip to the provincial capital to vote after Salvadoran election officials ruled that conditions for voting did not exist in the towns.

Argentina workers protest

Some 200 workers of the Florida sugar mill stormed the administrative building of the state legislature in San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina, to protest losing their jobs after the mill went bankrupt. The workers smashed windows and furniture during the protest. The demonstration ended when Gov. Ramón Ortega promised the government would help the sugar mill go back into business.

San Miguel de Tucumán is a city of about half a million people. In mid-December several thousand workers seized and burned the provincial government building in the northern province of Santiago del Estero to demand that public employees, who had received only partial wages since September, be paid.

Mexican investment in U.S. up

In the four months since the North America Free Trade Agreement was signed, Mexican investment in U.S. companies has in-

creased. Since November, Mexican companies have signed multimillion-dollar contracts to buy all or part of a major American bus manufacturer, one of the largest bakeries in the United States, and 39 Westin hotels. Under the bakery deal, for example, Bimbo, Mexico's largest baking company, will buy 50 percent of Mrs. Bairds Bakeries Inc. of Fort Worth, Texas. Together, the two companies will form a joint venture in the United States called QFS Foods that will distribute a range of Bimbo products.

Some Massachusetts schools are turned private

The Massachusetts state government turned over management of 15 schools to private groups March 18. The organizations

include teachers' collectives, private community organizations, colleges, and non-profit foundations, as well as the Whittle Corporation.

The new schools will be allowed to bypass many state regulations and will be given greater latitude in hiring and firing personnel. According to the *New York Times*, they will all emphasize "basics and teaching about morality and ethics." One of the schools geared toward homeless youth and wards of the state, will be run by a retired admiral and will focus on technical training.

Whitewater scandal widens

Hillary Clinton, wife of U.S. president Bill Clinton, made \$100,000 in 1978 in the commodities market with the help of Arkansas state broker James Blair. At the time, Bill Clinton was attorney general of Arkansas. Blair was the lawyer for Tyson Foods Inc. of Springdale, Arkansas. In addition to a massive poultry operation, Tyson in 1992 bought Arctic Alaska Fisheries, a large fish-trawling business based in Seattle. The deal was handled by the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, which at the time included Hillary Clinton among its partners.

As attorney general and then governor of Arkansas, Clinton made several significant decisions that helped Tyson become one of the world's biggest poultry companies. These included loosening federal regulations on environmental pollution and pushing for lax laws regarding inspection of chickens for contamination. Tyson Foods also benefited

from \$9 million in government loans and the placement of company executives on important state boards. In exchange, Donald Tyson, chairman of the company, has been a major fundraiser for Clinton.

Cholera in Somalia

More than 1,700 cases of cholera, resulting in at least 100 deaths, have been reported in Somalia since the first outbreak in February. Doctors have begged the U.S. military for tents and camp beds to provide more space to treat victims of the disease. Many are now cared for outdoors. Washington, as well as Paris, Brussels, Bonn, and Rome, are completing their final pullout of troops from Mogadishu this month.

An article in the *Financial Times* stated that the epidemic "points to the failure of the UN Operation in Somalia to deliver humanitarian assistance. Most of the UN's resources have been consumed" in the military effort.

The UN spent more than \$80 million — including \$9 million for a sewage system — to build a fortified compound for 1,000 UN civilian and military staff. Outside the compound, however, human and animal waste was allowed to stand in stagnant pools providing a perfect breeding ground for cholera.

Protests in Hungary

More than 20,000 people demonstrated in Budapest March 14 against a government decision to dismiss 129 workers at the state-run radio station. Protests continued the following day. The demonstrators said the government was trying to control the airwaves. The protest was organized by a group called Democratic Charter.

6,000 protest Kurdish rally ban

Six thousand people — many members of the banned Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) — protested in the southern German town of Augsburg March 19-20 after officials barred them from holding a rally. Police had earlier prevented Kurdish protesters from holding a demonstration in Frankfurt. In Berlin, about 800 Kurds demonstrated March 19 against Turkish policies. The PKK has been fighting for an independent Kurdish homeland in southeastern Turkey. The German government banned the PKK in November.

Farmers in Russia face shortages

Farmers in Russia face severe shortages of fuel, fertilizer, and machinery as the spring planting season begins. According to the *Trud* newspaper, farmers have 60,000 fewer tractors than just a year ago. Only 70 percent of these are operable due to a shortage of parts. Farmers also have only one-third as much fertilizer as last spring. The newspaper reported that because of these problems, 15 million acres will not be planted this year.

— SARA LOBMAN



One thousand people in New York City protested proposed cuts in financing for AIDS treatment March 22. Demonstrators marched around City Hall chanting "Money for AIDS, not for cops." Police arrested 47 of the protesters.

THE MILITANT

The truth about the Cuban revolution

The 'Wall Street Journal' describes thousands of workers parliaments in Cuba as 'highly orchestrated, tightly controlled debates.' But that's not what 'Militant' reporters found. Read the truth in next week's issue.



Workers at Heroes of Moncada cigar factory

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Editor: GEORGE FYSON

Managing Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Business Manager: NAOMI CRAINE

Editorial Staff: Naomi Craine, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Sara Lobman, Greg Rosenberg, Pat Smith, Brian Williams.

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Internet email: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

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Paris backs down in row with U.S. gov't over imports of fish

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — The French government backed down from an escalating trade conflict with Washington March 7, allowing U.S. fish imports to enter the country. U.S. trade representative Mickey Kantor had threatened March 4 to impose sanctions against \$100 million worth of imports from France, particularly wine and cheese. The proposed action was in retaliation for protectionist measures applied by the French government to fish imports from a number of countries, including the United States. Paris adopted these measures following violent confrontations between police and striking fishermen in France.

French authorities seized 27.3 tons of fish from the United States, supposedly for public health reasons. According to French inspectors, the fish had been chemically treated to retain greater quantities of water. Since fish are sold by weight, this amounted to selling water for the price of fish.

Government officials said U.S. fish merchants lost \$800,000 a week in exports to France due to the restrictions. The tightening of sanitary controls in France, they said, amounted to a hidden quota system designed to appease the French fishing industry.

The confrontation comes in the midst of an international crisis in the fishing industry. A United Nations report notes that of 17 major fishing zones in the world, four are "commercially depleted" and nine others are in serious decline. Yet, in spite of declining fish catches, prices have dropped as offshore fish farms from Norway to South America have flooded the market.

Declining fish prices

Fish prices in France fell 11.7 percent in 1993 and are continuing their sharp decline so far this year. Thousands of angry French fishermen have taken part in a strike and protest movement.

Strikes started in early February and quickly spread from port to port. While the

center of the strike was in the Brittany region, the entire Atlantic coast was involved. In the last days of the two week strike, four fishing ports on the Mediterranean coast were blocked by striking fishermen as well. There are about 25,000 commercial fishermen in France.

On February 3, hundreds of fishermen, frustrated by the government's refusal to take their demands seriously, attacked the wholesale fish market at Rungis outside Paris. Tons of fish were destroyed and police reinforcements were overwhelmed by the fishermen. The authorities later claimed that 26 policemen were injured in the confrontation. Although the government did not acknowledge that any fishermen had been injured, the evening television news programs all showed scenes of police clubbing fishermen unconscious. Later that day, similar actions took place at Boulogne-sur-mer and Calais on the English Channel.

The next day, 5,000 fishermen, their families, and supporters marched on the city of Rennes, in Brittany, where French prime minister Edouard Balladur was scheduled to sign a regional development plan. As Balladur began to address the assembled dignitaries, riot police launched tear gas grenades at the demonstrators. The fishermen responded by firing distress flares and hurling other objects. According to official reports, 77 people were injured in the confrontation that followed—48 policemen, 4 firemen, 22 fishermen, and 3 bystanders.

That evening, Balladur proposed a series of measures. Taxes on ships of more than 12 meters (one meter equals 3.3 feet) were halved for a period of five months. A minimum wage for sailors is to be established by June 1. The government also took various steps to limit imports, including rigorous "sanitary checks" on imported fish.

Many fishermen, particularly ship owners, have blamed fish imports for their economic difficulties. Actions at wholesale fish markets have targeted imports. In some



Cops rough up fisherman at February 4 protest in Rennes, France. For many fishermen, prices for their catch have dropped below maintenance costs.

cases, trucks bringing fish into the country were stopped and their cargoes destroyed.

Balladur's plan drew criticism from some sections of the ruling class. An article in the February 5 issue of the Paris-based English-language daily *International Herald Tribune* said, "This was the third time that Mr. Balladur . . . has scrambled defensively to calm angry protest movements. When Air France employees blocked Paris airports in October to protest a jobs-cut plan, the government scrapped the plan and fired the state-run airline's chairman. The government also backed off a plan to fund private, mainly Catholic, schools from its treasury, offering extra funds to public schools after a huge protest march in Paris."

Government aids fleet owners

Balladur's plan, however, was not designed to help the working fishermen but to help the fishing fleet owners. While the prime minister reduced taxes on the large commercial vessels, he refused to do the same for the 5,227 small coastal vessels of less than 12 meters. It is these smaller ships that are in danger of completely disappearing in the current crisis.

The largest commercial vessels are the 187 trawlers of more than 25 meters. These are owned by a few fleets controlled by big capitalists. Their sailors are paid a fixed

monthly wage. Crew sizes may be as high as 25 to 30 sailors. The bosses now find their taxes cut by 50 percent.

The 1,725 intermediate ships of between 12 and 25 meters share their catch with the crew. Generally, the owner works on board and crew sizes are small — often including family members. A fixed sum is set aside for the ship's maintenance. The rest of the profits are divided up. Working sailors get one part, cabin boys and apprentices get a half part, and the ship owner and the mechanic get two parts.

With the recent drop in fish prices, particularly since early January, the catch for intermediate size ships is being sold for less than the price of maintenance. In this case, the crew, instead of being paid at the end of two weeks at sea, actually owed the ship owner for the ship's maintenance.

The thousands of small coastal vessels generally function with one or two sailors, including the owner. They have been the hardest hit by the crisis and have been cut out of the tax reduction accorded the bigger vessels. Many, if not most, of them will probably lose their ships.

The fishermen's strike was organized by local Survival Committees, which are generally dominated by ship owners. Leaders of the Survival Committees met with Ballardur after the announcement of his plan. They called for a return to work, but the local committees insisted on a secret ballot vote of all fishermen. More than 70 percent of all fishermen on the Atlantic coast called for continuing the strike. But with the leaders of the Survival Committees continuing to push for a return to work, the strike began to fold in one port after another.

The French government has made no secret of its intention to restructure the fishing industry, as it has been trying to restructure such industrial giants as Air France. Paris wants to make the French fishing industry more competitive in a world mired in deep economic crisis. The French rulers see no place for small "family size" fishing vessels in that world.

France: youth protest subminimum wage

Continued from front page

later on, there will be even more of us." The students carried a banner saying, "Slaves in the year 2000? No!"

Christelle, 17, took part in both the student march and the union rally in Bordeaux, "out of solidarity with the unions," she said.

In Lyon, a 21-year-old physics student also participating in the action said, "Just like the high school students, I don't want to be working like a dog if I can't even make a living."

Ann-Lise, a college student came to the march dressed as a squeezed lemon and marched in a union contingent. Near her, a history student who carried a portrait of Che Guevara said he felt "insulted by the youth wage, which is an assault on us," reported *Liberation*. Marching behind a banner with a committee of unemployed workers, Jacques, 42, who was laid off 15 months ago from an industrial bakery, said, "I hope to see the youth rebellion converge with a revolt of the unemployed."

Protests continued the next day around the country: 6,000 in Lyon, 5,000 in Toulouse, 2,000 in Vichy, 1,000 in Grenoble. In Nantes, 500 people went to the police station to demand that 14 individuals arrested the day before be freed; they proceeded to the train station and blocked trains for an hour.

Plans for the demonstrations were also widely discussed on the factory floor. Three different leaflets calling for the action were distributed at the Citroen assembly plant at Aulnay-sous Bois, north of Paris. At the Renault parts plant at Choisy-le-roi, two meetings of workers on the morning shift decided to call a one-hour work stoppage and demonstration inside the factory. About 150 workers took part

in the demonstration on the morning shift, about one-third of those present. Some workers then left work for a couple of hours to attend the demonstration in Paris. The CGT in the plant organized union activists to take part in the marshaling squad for the march.

At the GEC Alsthom plant in St. Ouen, which has been involved in a five-month struggle against plans to fire large numbers of employees, a work stoppage was called to allow workers to go to the Paris march. About 30 workers participated.

Many workers, including older ones, feel just as threatened by the attacks on the minimum wage as young people. "How will older, unemployed workers get a job when they have to compete with younger workers being paid 80 percent of the minimum wage?" asked one Renault worker taking part in the demonstration in his factory. "I feel like a price has been placed on my head," his companion added. "Every older worker is now a living target for the boss, who will be trying to replace us with sub-minimum wage workers."

The protests over the minimum wage are the fourth time in recent months that workers and others have clashed with the government. In October, striking Air France workers occupied the runways at Orly and Charles de Gaulle airports near Paris, forcing the government to retreat from a plan to fire 4,000 workers as part of "restructuring" the company.

In January, the teachers union initiated a demonstration of several hundred thousand people that forced the government to abandon a plan to reinforce the private parochial school system.

And in February, a two-week strike by

commercial fishermen led to violent clashes between strikers and the riot police.

The bosses are getting particularly nervous about the situation and some are starting to criticize the government of French prime minister Édouard Balladur for making too many concessions. A recent headline in the financial daily *La Tribune Desfossés* for example was "Youth express depth of social malaise." The paper also quoted from a recent bulletin distributed by the Union of Metal and Mining Industries. "Every time one retreats . . . that one buys social peace, one risks planting the seeds of future conflict," the bulletin said.



Union activists buy 'Militant'

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Nearly 100 members of industrial unions have purchased subscriptions to the *Militant* at the end of the second week of the 10-week international circulation campaign.

At least 23 members of the **United Auto Workers** purchased subscriptions to the *Militant* since the drive began. Rail workers in the **United Transportation Union** and other rail unions bought 20 subscriptions from coworkers who help distribute the paper.

Distributors of the socialist publications in **Britain**, fourth on the overall chart this week, participated in a "Unity Against Racism" demonstration sponsored by the Trades Union Council. Demonstrators snapped up 5 subscriptions to the *Militant*, along with 62 single copies of the paper, and 3 copies of *New International*.

As readers will note on the accompanying scoreboard, however, many supporters of the circulation campaign who are members of unions and are already selling subscriptions have not sent the *Militant* their adopted targets. We urge them to do so by next week.

Interest in communist literature is considerable among students as well.

Maceo Dixon of **Boston** joined a nine-hour sales team at Brown University and reported lively political discussions with students there. Altogether, youth got their hands on 6 *Militant* and 1 *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions and 3 copies of the *New International*. Supporters of the *Militant* in Boston, encouraged by the positive response, plan to return to that campus.

At the **Morgantown, West Virginia**, Pathfinder bookstore, students and working people from around the area can check out weekly classes on the Cuban revolution on Friday evenings. Two



Militant/Joan Paltrineri
 Selling *Militant* to member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union on strike against Healthtex in Danville, Virginia.

people who began attending the educational activities have purchased copies of *New International* no. 4, which contains the article "Land Reforms and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba."

Workers, students, and others who seek to introduce the Marxist magazine *New International* to prospective readers are currently discussing raising the goals they adopted at the beginning of the effort. The new targets will take into account the publication of issue no. 9, which will feature "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution." The new goals will appear in next week's scoreboard.

Distributors in **Philadelphia** had a memorable weekend March 18-19. Not only were they able to participate in political discussion at a regional student conference in solidarity with the freedom struggle in

South Africa at Temple University, but they also introduced dozens of young people to the socialist press. Students and other activists bought 10 *Militant* subscriptions, 35 single copies, and 7 copies of *New International* no. 5, containing the article "The Coming Revolution in South Africa."

After two weeks, the overall international effort is slightly behind schedule. Based on reports coming in from around the world, however, we are confident that supporters can close the gap in the next few weeks. Distributors who are already ahead of schedule should immediately consider raising their goals. And please send in notes detailing your experiences and anecdotes from sales of the socialist press to the *Militant* editorial office in New York City. Photographs of sales activities are also needed.

WHERE WE STAND end of week two

18% SOLD 533 **20% SHOULD BE 600**

	MILITANT		%	Perspectiva Mundial		NEW INTERNATIONAL	
	SOLD	GOAL		SOLD	GOAL	SOLD	GOAL
NEW ZEALAND							
Auckland	39	70	56%	2	6	4	12
Christchurch	16	40	40%	1	2	2	8
N.Z. Total	55	110	50%	3	8	6	20
ICELAND	4	12	33%	0	1	0	6
SWEDEN	13	40	33%	5	18	3	20
BRITAIN							
London	18	60	30%	0	5	5	25
Manchester	14	50	28%	0	2	0	18
Sheffield	5	35	14%	0	2	0	10
Britain Total	37	145	26%	0	9	5	53
CANADA							
Toronto	17	80	21%	2	15	0	40
Vancouver	14	75	19%	3	10	0	25
Montreal	9	70	13%	0	15	0	40
Canada Total	40	225	18%	5	40	0	105
UNITED STATES							
Albuquerque, NM	1	3	33%	0	1	0	1
Greensboro, NC	15	50	30%	0	5	2	12
Detroit	26	90	29%	1	10	8	28
Atlanta	21	80	26%	8	13	5	20
Miami	30	120	25%	4	50	21	60
Los Angeles	49	200	25%	15	95	12	90
Birmingham, AL	16	75	21%	1	5	0	17
Brooklyn	23	130	18%	4	35	11	45
Salt Lake City, UT	16	90	18%	0	15	0	30
San Francisco	23	135	17%	8	32	11	55
Washington, D.C.	12	75	16%	4	25	3	17
Chicago	20	130	15%	5	30	0	30
Des Moines, IA	12	80	15%	12	35	3	30
Cleveland	12	85	14%	0	10	0	17
Houston	9	65	14%	1	12	0	15
Seattle	10	75	13%	3	12	2	20
St. Louis	9	70	13%	1	8	0	20
Twin Cities, MN	14	110	13%	2	17	5	25
Pittsburgh	12	100	12%	1	10	1	20
New York	15	135	11%	4	35	20	85
Denver	1	10	10%	0	2	0	3
Newark, NJ	12	130	9%	2	35	0	45
Philadelphia	10	115	9%	2	30	11	35
Cincinnati, OH	1	15	7%	0	2	0	3
New Haven, CT	1	15	7%	0	3	0	5
Boston	7	120	6%	3	30	3	45
Morgantown, WV	3	50	6%	0	2	4	12
Albany, NY	0	5	0%	0	1	0	1
Edinboro, PA	0	10	0%	0	0	0	3
Portland, OR	0	6	0%	0	0	0	2
U.S. Total	380	2,374	16%	81	560	122	791
AUSTRALIA	3	25	12%	1	8	1	15
GREECE	1	10	10%	0	1	0	5
BELGIUM	0	2	0%	0	2	0	1
FRANCE	0	10	0%	0	2	0	12
GERMANY	0	10	0%	0	4	0	10
PUERTO RICO	0	2	0%	4	8	3	8
TOTAL	533	2,965	18%	96	652	134	1,021
SHOULD BE	600	3,000	20%	130	650	200	1,000

IN THE UNIONS

UNITED STATES							
ACTWU	1	—	—	4	—	2	—
IAM	9	—	—	1	—	1	—
ILGWU	1	—	—	3	—	0	—
OCAW	4	—	—	0	—	1	—
UAW	23	—	—	5	—	5	—
UFCW	6	—	—	8	—	1	—
UMWA	1	—	—	0	—	0	—
USWA	9	—	—	0	—	0	—
UTU	20	—	—	1	—	0	—
U.S. Total	74	—	—	22	—	10	—
AUSTRALIA							
AFMEU	0	4	—	0	—	3	—
FPU	0	2	—	0	—	2	—
NUW	0	2	—	0	—	1	—
Australia Total	0	8	—	0	—	6	—
BRITAIN							
AEEU	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
NUM	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
RMT	9	—	—	0	—	0	—
TGWU	3	—	—	0	—	0	—
Britain Total	12	—	—	0	—	0	—
CANADA							
ACTWU	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
CAW	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
IAM	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
USWA	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
Canada Total	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
NEW ZEALAND							
EU	4	9	44%	1	—	0	2
MWU	1	4	25%	0	—	0	1
UFBGWU	4	6	67%	0	—	0	1
N.Z. Total	9	19	47%	1	—	0	4
SWEDEN							
Food workers	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
Metal workers	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
Transport workers	0	—	—	0	—	0	—
Sweden Total	0	—	—	0	—	0	—

ACTWU — Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AFMEU — Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union; CAW — Canadian Auto Workers; EU — Engineers Union; FPU — Food Preservers' Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; ILGWU — International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; NUM — National Union of Mineworkers; NUW — National Union of Workers; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union

Iowa warden tightens restrictions

BY MARK CURTIS

FORT MADISON, Iowa — A lockdown of Iowa's maximum-security penitentiary began in mid-February after officials charged

BEHIND PRISON WALLS

three inmates with injuring prison staff. State officials and the media have seized on the incident to call for more guards, more prisons, and heavier punishment of those behind bars.

Iowa State Penitentiary warden Thomas Hundley ordered everyone locked in their cells on February 15 after one inmate working in the kitchen allegedly beat four prison employees. The administration also claimed that a Cellhouse 219 guard was beaten by two inmates while he was ordering people to go to their cells. A week later officials completely dropped the accusations against one of the men.

On the morning of the incident, other printshop workers and I were on the job here at the John Bennett Unit (JBU), a fenced-in medium-security prison right outside the penitentiary walls. We were ordered into the dormitory and counted. The guards reopened our yard in the afternoon, but the phones remained off until that evening.

For the next few days JBU kitch-

en workers prepared thousands of sandwiches for the men in maximum security, who could not work in the kitchen or other prison facilities because of the lockdown.

State officials from the top down immediately used the incident to propagandize for more cops and jails. Iowa governor Terry Branstad threatened prisoners at a press conference the following week. "I'll make it very clear to those criminals who think they are going to get away with something," he warned. "They better be careful, because we're strong and we're tough and we're effective and we're not going to put up with it."

Branstad called for reestablishing the death penalty. State executions were abolished in Iowa in the early 1960s, but the governor has repeatedly pushed for a return to the barbaric measure. He also used this as an opportunity to promote his plan to construct a new 750-bed prison.

Not to be outdone by her boss and Republican Party opponent in the upcoming election for governor, Iowa attorney general Bonnie Campbell, a Democrat, raised her own proposals. Campbell favors building a second maximum-security prison to spread around those she calls "bad people and violent people." She endorses a proposal made by Don McKee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, to immediately hire 75 more guards. The guards would work at the Men's Reformatory in An-

amosa was also recently locked down after prison authorities claimed a big fight broke out among inmates there. McKee is a former prison guard.

Back at Fort Madison, the lockdown has eased up a little. About 90 of the 550 men have been allowed to leave their cells to eat. Some will go back to working in the kitchen, cleaning up the prison yard, and carrying out janitorial work. The rest of the residents remain locked in their cells 24 hours a day.

The inmate falsely accused of beating a guard was sent out here to John Bennett. However, there will probably be more men in lockup when the dust settles. The bottom units of Cellhouse 219 are being turned into a lockup unit for men in "close management" status.

More than half the penitentiary was already in some type of lockup — administrative segregation, disciplinary detention, close management, or protective custody. The Iowa State Penitentiary, the oldest state prison west of the Mississippi River, has become more restrictive since a riot in 1981. Under a "unitization" scheme, cellhouses were divided by new walls and all inmates are limited to just two hours a day of yard time.

Last year Warden Crispus Nix, who had directed the prison since 1981, retired. With Nix gone, many inmates were hoping for a return to an open yard and relaxation of the severe restrictions, but it didn't happen.

Cuban Nat'l Assembly debates measures to deal with formidable economic crisis

(First of three articles)

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND AARON RUBY

HAVANA, Cuba — "By its nature, capitalism harbors hypocrisy, war, competition," stated Cuban president Fidel Castro in a speech to the National Assembly, the country's parliament, during its last session in December.

"Capitalistic ideas are in style, however," Castro continued. "It even seems as though socialists, revolutionaries, and communists are retreating. At times it seems that we fear speaking of socialism, that we are afraid of saying the words Marxist and Leninism; yet at times, one feels the desire to scream: Viva Socialism! Viva Communism! Viva Marxism-Leninism!" Castro said to prolonged applause.

The Cuban president was speaking about economic measures the government has adopted since last summer, and new ones being considered, in an attempt to revive agricultural and industrial production, which have been devastated over the last four years by the sudden loss of aid and trade at preferential prices with the former Soviet Union.

In July, Havana made it legal for ordinary Cuban citizens to possess U.S. dollars and other convertible currency and opened a network of stores where imported goods could be purchased using dollars. In September, the government legalized self-employment in some 140 occupations. That same month the Council of State initiated the process of reorganizing the vast majority of the country's state farms, comprising 75 percent of Cuba's agricultural land, into smaller cooperative units.

Undesirable but necessary retreat

Castro has described some of the steps taken in response to the severe economic crisis as an undesirable but necessary retreat from policies of the revolution.

"Circumstances have forced us," Castro told deputies at the National Assembly, "to adapt to the conditions of the world in which we live. We are assaulted by capitalism from every quarter. . . .

"I believe that we must make some concessions, and we are making them," Castro said. "We have had to take some backwards steps, but we are taking them. . . . In life, war, and revolution there are times when one has to take steps backwards and times when one can go forward."

Deputies of this National Assembly were elected in February 1993. It was the first time since the 1959 revolution, which overthrew the tyranny of Fulgencio Batista, that Cubans went to the polls to cast ballots in direct elections for the provincial and national assemblies. Until the electoral law was changed in 1992, members of the municipal assemblies elected the representatives to the provincial assemblies. The provincial assemblies then elected the National Assembly deputies.

In what became a de facto referendum demonstrating broad popular support for the government, a new parliament was elected with a substantial change in composition. Eighty-three percent of the delegates to the National Assembly are serving for the first time, many of them young. A larger number of Cubans who are Black and *mestizo* (of mixed African and European background) were elected as well as many women. A considerable number of deputies have served on internationalist missions.

Discussion at the December session of the National Assembly, much of which was broadcast on Cuban radio and television, reflected the fact that the delegates, like other Cubans today, are struggling to cope with the extreme economic difficulties.

Much to the dismay of officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other advisors eager to see greater openings for capitalist investment and exploitation in Cuba, however, the National Assembly did not adopt a much-anticipated "package" of sweeping economic measures.

"Cuba Backs Off from Proposed Reforms Despite Warnings of Economic 'Chaos,'" read the headline of a February 8 article in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Instead, the deputies agreed to proposals by the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) to initiate meetings at every single

workplace across the island so that workers can discuss the country's economic crisis and express their opinions on measures being considered by the country's parliament. Called *parlamentos obreros* (workers assemblies), 80,000 of these meetings, which began in January, are bringing the working class into the sharpening debate over how great a retreat is necessary.

National Assembly debate

"Cuba's cautious flirtation with economic reform has cooled, despite dire warnings from international experts that the island needs fast action," wrote José de Córdoba in the February 8 *Journal* article.

The "experts" are IMF director Jacques de Groote and Spain's former finance minister Carlos Solchaga, who was assigned by Spanish prime minister Felipe González to advise the Cuban government on economics. The experts' advice, of course, was no different than what they offer to capitalist regimes around the world: immediately end subsidies to state enterprises that operate at a loss, begin massive layoffs, slash social services, eliminate price controls on basic necessities, and privatize industries. The capitalist experts also recommended making the Cuban peso convertible and developing tax policies in line with bourgeois norms of distribution.

"But at the National Assembly meeting, Mr. Castro, who dominated the proceedings, vehemently attacked capitalism," said the *Journal* article.

"I believe in socialism and despise capitalism," Castro said in his speech to the National Assembly. "What I feel is repugnance toward capitalists, not prejudice. I have no prejudice, but repugnance. We have to deal with and talk with capitalists. I have one more thing to add paraphrasing an old saying: The better I know capitalism, the more I love socialism."

A debate took place at the meeting between Castro and government ministers who were proposing that the Assembly adopt some package of new policies, such as establishing income taxes; charging for sporting and cultural events, school uniforms, and cosmetic surgery; cutting subsidies to some products; and issuing new currency as a means of expropriating the large sums of pesos being hoarded by profiteers.

"A tax [system] is an instrument or economic category that is universally implemented," argued Osvaldo Martínez, director of the World Economy Research Center in Cuba, in an interview on Radio Havana in September. "It is something like mathematics, by itself it is neither capitalist, nor socialist," he said.

"We responsibly tell you that we are proposing a tax system for the country," said finance minister José Luis Rodríguez during the discussion at the National Assembly. "We have already talked about the need to create an awareness among the people, an awareness that we have lost."

Discussion on taxes

"No, no, no," responded Castro. "We never had that awareness. The other tax system was a bourgeois tax system."

Castro explained that Cuba's non-capitalist economic development and social priorities have been financed by the equivalent of a different kind of tax system — the ration book.

"We have been lucky to have the sacred ration book, the blessed ration book," he said. "Perhaps one day someone will explain how it has been possible for the revolution to do all it has done. All that was done has not been based on foreign cooperation alone," Castro said, referring to aid from the former Soviet Union.

"Simply put, the people in this country have been the ones who financed the building of schools, roads, and so forth. When we did not have the money to build a hospital, that hospital would be built. Why? Because we had the ration book. Without that ration book, our budget would have required complete balance to keep the prices down. We built thousands of schools, hundreds and hundreds of hospitals, many things, and the liter of milk never went up a single cent," Castro stated.

"I can assure you that through taxes and taxes alone," Castro told the deputies, "this



Militant/Martin Koppel
Workers at "Heroes of Moncada" cigar factory in Havana. Cuba's National Assembly, at the urging of President Fidel Castro, deferred decisions on a series of new economic steps so that workers can debate measures at thousands of meetings and bring their weight to bear in deciding how great a retreat is necessary.

country will never be able to maintain the social achievements of the revolution."

Later in the discussion deputy Agustín Delgado stressed that he trusted the economists. "You do but I do not," Castro replied. "Economists frighten me. There is only one thing I know a little about and that is politics. That has been my job, and the most important job I have had. I believe that things must be viewed through politics. The ideas presented by the specialists must be analyzed from a political viewpoint. . . .

"A technocratic approach cannot be used to solve these problems," Castro said. "We must not forget that in this country, workers express their honor, patriotism, their sense of dignity and duty. We encourage workers to express themselves. . . . If we did something without the workers' support it would be a political blunder."

"At this meeting I have not heard a single word from anyone appealing to the patriotism and honor of the worker."

At the conclusion of the debate, deputies decided, at the suggestion of Castro, to defer decisions on any new policies. Instead, they endorsed a proposal by the leadership of the CTC to initiate the thousands of meetings called workers parliaments.

"We hail the wisdom of the National Assembly in postponing decision making and categorically denying that the intent is to formulate a so-called 'package of measures,'" said a January 17 editorial in *Trabajadores*, newspaper of the CTC.

"The truth is that the idea of a 'package of measures' smacks of Third World capitalism, of neoliberal policies under which the workers wake up one day to the news that prices have skyrocketed, enterprises are being privatized and half the employees are to be laid off, wages are falling, and social benefits have been abruptly eliminated," the

editorial continued.

"Reality forces us to make an economic adjustment, but we will do it in the socialist way, the Cuban way, with democratic formulas that are truly unimaginable for other societies."

Economic conditions today

The collapse of aid and trade at preferential prices with the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries — Cuba's main trading partners — triggered increasingly acute shortages of fuel, food, and other basic necessities beginning in 1989.

Since then, Cuba's import capacity has been reduced by 75 percent. Trading at world market prices with hard currency in most cases, Cuba was able to import only 5 million tons of oil last year, down from 13 million tons four years ago.

According to most Cubans we talked to, the worst period yet was last summer. Conditions seem to have stabilized somewhat since then. Electricity blackouts in Havana have dropped from 10 hours or more per day in July to about five hours every other day.

Many workers have to wait for hours to catch a bus or hitch a ride and the streets of the capital are still filled with bicycles. Long lines at bus stops are a feature of everyday life. But some light local traffic has reappeared. In the last two months, as world oil prices have dropped and a little more fuel has become available, the government has managed to distribute a monthly ration of five gallons of gas per vehicle, which it had been unable to do for most of last year. In addition, Cubans with access to hard currency are able to buy gas for dollars, thus keeping their vehicles running.

The most serious crisis, however, has been the accelerating disintegration of the

Continued on Page 6

APPEAL TO OUR READERS

Help the 'Militant' provide you with firsthand coverage of world politics!

From Cuba to South Africa, Ireland, and Mexico, *Militant* reporters traveled throughout the world in January and February to give our readers the best, most accurate news and analysis of major international events.

A team of *Militant* reporters, including Martín Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Francisco Picado, Michel Prairie, Aaron Ruby, Mike Taber, and Mary-Alice Waters spent more than four weeks in Cuba. These reporters contributed to the series of articles beginning this week.

The cost of these trips exceeds \$20,000. The *Militant* depends on the generous contributions of workers, students, and others who value the coverage they can find nowhere else to make such reporting possible.



Members of agricultural cooperative in Cienfuegos, Cuba

As we go to press readers have sent in \$4,300.

Please send your contribution to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, and earmark it Travel Fund.

Cuban Nat'l Assembly debates measures

Continued from page 5

rationing system, the state system for equitably distributing the basic necessities that are in scarce supply. From the early days of the revolution, the ration system guaranteed that no one went without food and other necessities. And for that reason it has been popular in Cuba. But under the impact of the current economic crisis it has been unable to continue to assure adequate quantities.

Most people we interviewed in Havana told us that the ration book provides little more than two weeks worth of rice and beans every month, one roll per person per day, milk for children under seven and some of the elderly, and a few eggs a month. The majority of people have to buy the majority of their food and clothing on what is called the black market — a term covering trade that shades from illegal sales of stolen food, to farmers selling excess produce they have raised, to kids selling fish they have caught.

Many necessities, previously available on the ration book, such as soap, cooking oil, toothpaste, or shampoo, are now only available on the black market or at government stores, called *shoppings*, which sell exclusively in dollars.

Burgeoning black market

Most people now have to buy even salt and sugar on the black market. "Here we are, on an island that is one of the world's major sugar producers, surrounded by a salt water sea and we don't have a grain of salt or sugar in the house," numerous Cubans joked with us, with the kind of black humor that is part of everyday life here.

The acute scarcity of salt is partly due to a severe storm in the eastern provinces last November, which wiped out one of the salt-producing enterprises. It will take at least another year before salt production can be restored even to previous inadequate levels. The lack of sugar, the country's major product, is due to a low harvest of 4.2 million tons last year (2 million tons below projections) and an effort to export the maximum amount possible to obtain much needed hard currency.

Most of the products available on the black market are stolen from factories, farms, and warehouses by people often organized by administrators or other management personnel.

According to *Trabajadores*, 30 percent of all agricultural produce in the province of Havana is stolen and ends up on the black market. Of the serious crimes reported in Havana province last year, 67 percent involved theft and illegal slaughter of cattle.

The degree and extent of theft of raw materials as well as finished products and in some cases machinery from state enterprises is enormous.

On February 1, during a workers assembly meeting at the José Díaz Colina cigar factory in Havana, workers confronted the manager over tobacco that disappeared with no explanation, equivalent to 750,000 cigars out of a total of 4.3 million produced last year.

At a similar meeting a few days earlier at a seafood processing plant in Havana, workers learned that 370 tons of fish, enough to supply all the child-care centers in the capital for a year, had been stolen from that one facility. "All that fish ends up on the black market at outrageous prices," said CTC secretary general Pedro Ross at the meeting, "in a country where people sometimes go without a meal."

Black market prices of consumer goods in Cuba have risen 30-fold in the last three years, according to *An In-Depth Study*, a book soon to be released in Havana. Journalist Mirta Rodríguez Calderón wrote a review of the book in the magazine *Bohemia* in November.

Jorge Rodríguez Hernández, the book's author, told *Bohemia* he found dozens of cases of collusion by business managers, accountants, and government officials in the "diversion" of state resources. "All this shows," Rodríguez Hernández said, "the organized character and the degree of complicity of people who, far from using their position of authority to set a positive example, become lawbreakers."

One term of derision used widely in Cuba today is *macetas*, which means flower pots — those who just sit in the sun and soak up

the rain and grow. Many Cubans use the term to describe the much-hated traders and middlemen who are growing wealthy off the black marketeering.

Several delegates at the December session of the National Assembly expressed in their remarks the deep resentment of many Cuban working people for these profiteers. Deputy Genoveva Morales said she disapproved of the fact that certain people are growing rich in an inappropriate manner. She asked where they get the fuel, meat, rice and beans, and beer, which are not available to most workers.

"I am not bothered by the uneasiness," Castro responded. "This means people have a socialist awareness. . . . That is bad news for the supporters of capitalism. If the people do not understand this, how in hell are they going to resign themselves to living under

currency was aimed at increasing the flow of dollars into the state treasury as opposed to fueling the black market. "Under normal conditions, we would have never decriminalized [use of hard currency]," Castro told the National Assembly in December.

For those with access to dollars, the measure has taken the edge off some of the extreme shortages, while simultaneously fostering the rapid widening of social inequalities. Relatives of Cubans living abroad, mostly in the United States, are the principal source of dollars for many families. Workers in tourism also receive a portion of their tips in dollars.

Armed robberies and similar crimes — rare in Cuba before — have also increased dramatically. Anyone who looks like they might have dollars becomes a tempting target as does any item that can be sold for dollars on the black market, from food to bicycles and

have to go to the bathroom," said Castro causing laughter.

The decree also authorized people who own vehicles to operate them as taxis for pesos only. But many drivers offer tourists rides for dollars at prices cheaper than the dollar taxis operated by state agencies.

Home restaurants

Home restaurants — popularly called *paladares* (palates or taste buds) borrowing a term from a well-known Brazilian soap opera — were also permitted initially. By some estimates they number in the hundreds in the capital alone. A meal of chicken or pork and a drink, hard to find for most Cubans, costs \$3 to \$6 there.

"Anyone can set up a table in his home," said Castro at the National Assembly in December. "Who checks the sacred place we call home to see if one or two tables have been set up? It is difficult to do. We cannot attempt to control that. . . . I really do not think that one or two tables will affect socialism. However, a man with 25 tables and 100 chairs is something else."

The law passed in September legalized the sale of "light foods (drinks, sandwiches, candies, et cetera)" Based on the "et cetera" scores of people, using goods bought at dollars-only stores or stolen from state supplies, began turning their homes into restaurants.

This "et cetera" in the food clause of the law on self-employment became a topic of much debate at the National Assembly.

"I must tell the truth: I missed this et cetera just as all the other comrades did," Castro told the National Assembly. "The comrade who spoke of the et cetera is completely right. Something plus et cetera means everything." In the end, the deputies struck the et cetera from the law, making paladares that serve full meals illegal. However, light foods are still allowed. The government ordered most paladares closed in January. But many still function.

The government is pressing self-employment as one of the solutions to the problem that most factories are considerably overstaffed, since production has declined precipitously but personnel has remained more or less at previous levels. Government officials anticipate that as many as 300,000 people will be licensed to work on their own by the end of the year.

This activity is only minimally regulated as yet. People licensed by their municipal council pay only a monthly fee of about 45 pesos. But self-employed individuals in some occupations, like plumbers or bricklayers, can make up to 1,000 pesos a day, José Alejandro Martínez, a journalist for *Juventud Rebelde*, told us. Prices that licensed people can charge for these services are not controlled, nor is their income taxed.

The self-employment law prohibits hiring of labor, but permits family members to work together on a cooperative basis — leading many long-lost "cousins" to set up shop, winked at by all.

The potentially most far-reaching measure yet adopted has been the reorganization of the state farms into cooperatives, called Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPC). It is the most extensive shift in the organization of agricultural production since the second agrarian reform of 1963.

'Tightly controlled' debates?

Expressing dismay over the outcome of the December National Assembly meeting and the unwillingness of the deputies to embrace economic and social relations Cuban working people overthrew some 35 years ago, the *Wall Street Journal* whined, "Some analysts wonder whether Mr. Castro's deep fear and hatred of capitalism will end up strangling the reforms."

"Meanwhile," the newspaper proclaimed, "the proposed reform measures are being discussed in what some analysts say are thousands of highly orchestrated, tightly controlled debates in workplaces across Cuba."

The workers assemblies in which reporters for the *Militant* participated in January and February, however, were far from tightly controlled and highly orchestrated.

Next week: Workers debate way forward for Cuban revolution. A third article will cover the reorganization of state farms into cooperatives and will report on the voluntary work brigades and contingents in agriculture.



Shoe repair stand in Havana. Since law legalizing self-employment in some 140 occupations went into effect in September, 141,000 people have received licenses to work on their own.

capitalism? Capitalism is constant, incessant robbery, permanent, incessant inequality."

Staples such as rice, beans, and cooking oil have long been distributed through the ration system at prices below cost. For example, milk, which is now guaranteed only for children under seven and some elderly people, sells at 25 cents a liter. But a dairy farmer receives 36 cents for a liter of milk, whose value becomes 56 cents after processing. Subsidized rice sells for 43 cents a kilogram [1 kg = 2.2 lbs].

Wages for Cubans, however, reflect the high social wage represented by free medical care and education, low rents, and affordable food prices. Wages range from 100 pesos per month for some unskilled factory and agricultural jobs to 400 for engineers and doctors. (The official exchange rate of the Cuban currency has remained one peso for one dollar. But the dollar is exchanged for as much as 100 pesos on the black market now.)

In the past, these economic policies, designed to advance proletarian — not bourgeois — norms of distribution and social values, guaranteed affordable prices for all workers and a living income for working farmers. But in today's conditions of extreme scarcity, theft and black marketeering have accelerated dramatically.

An estimated 65 percent of industrial capacity has been idled by shortages of electricity, fuel, raw materials, and spare parts. But layoffs have been kept to a minimum so far. Workers who do lose their jobs generally receive unemployment benefits amounting to 60 percent of their wages for three months and help in relocating. If they haven't found employment in that period, and refuse to accept jobs that are available in agriculture or elsewhere, they eventually lose their benefits.

During the National Assembly meeting it was reported that only 31 percent of state enterprises are deemed "profitable" today. Government subsidies to state-owned companies have jumped by 73 percent since 1989, said the finance minister. This has created large budget deficits, which the government is financing by simply printing more pesos, a policy that feeds inflation.

Self-employment, use of dollars

Decriminalizing the possession of hard

gasoline. Prostitution has also expanded both around the hotels and in other areas.

Havana's Radio Rebelde reported recently that 141,000 people had received licenses to be self-employed by January 31. The decree legalizing self-employment in nearly 140 types of jobs was issued by the Council of State in September and ratified by the National Assembly at the end of the year.

Occupations specified in the law include hairdressing, plumbing, and machine repairs; manufacture of soap, ink, rope, and similar products; teaching of typing, music, art, and language; domestic work; and sale of wine, used books, flowers, and various arts and crafts.

The decree does not include resale of goods for a profit. But since the law went into effect, street markets have cropped up across the country. Many peasants can be seen offering cheese, onions, garlic, and avocados on the side of rural roads. So many peddlers and artisans now jam Havana's San Rafael boulevard that people have started to call it a *candonga*, after the jostling street markets that Cuban soldiers came to know in Angola.

Sale of stolen goods flourishes under cover of self-employment permits, of course. For every legal peddler, said Radio Rebelde reporter Diosdado Maso, "there are five who, without permits, sell bread and cheese or ham, hot pizza, and candy, which is not homemade."

"We can't permit irregularities," said Carlos Lage, secretary of the executive committee of the Council of Ministers, in a recent interview. Lage announced that a special group of inspectors would be created to police the activity.

But Castro cautioned that self-employment cannot be controlled through increased police methods. "Do not think the magic word 'inspectors' solves everything," he told the National Assembly. "We keep hearing 'control' and 'more control,' but the number of people who must be controlled is enormous."

"We also need people to control the controllers of the controllers," Castro added. "We then end up having 450,000 people doing this. . . . The day would then come when we have to control people at their most sublime moments, at the moment when they

How Bolsheviks charted course to sustain worker-peasant alliance

From War Communism to the New Economic Policy in the early 1920s

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Faced with severe shortages of fuel, food, and other basic necessities, the Cuban government has been implementing a series of new economic measures to revive declining agricultural and industrial production (see accompanying article).

Leaders of the Communist Party of Cuba describe these measures as a retreat from many of the policies of the revolution.

There was another time in history when revolutionaries holding state power were faced with a similar, albeit not identical, situation. In the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks also had to carry out a retreat — the New Economic Policy (NEP) — following the devastation of the young Soviet republic from three years of civil war, foreign imperialist intervention, and setbacks of revolutionary struggles in Europe.

In this issue of *International Socialist Review* we reprint major excerpts from speeches and articles by Russian revolutionary leader V. I. Lenin on the NEP, launched by the Bolsheviks in 1921.

The Bolshevik Party was a working-class party both in composition and in program. Bolshevik workers helped lead the insurrection that overthrew the tsar in February 1917 and brought to power a government led by the bourgeois Cadet Party (Constitutional Democrats). That regime represented the interests of the capitalists, landowners, and foreign imperialists. It was overthrown by an armed insurrection of workers and soldiers organized in soviets (workers and peasants councils) in October 1917, which brought the Bolsheviks to power.

The workers and peasants government that came to power ended Russia's participation in World War I.

It declared on the first day of the revolution that the holdings of the big landowners would be distributed to the peasants. Around 80 percent of the country's population was engaged in agriculture at the time. The industrial working class numbered only 4 million.

Under the monarchy, 100 million peasants had been scraping out a meager living on about 380 million acres of land with average allotments of 19 acres per family. But rich landowners, numbering 30,000 with average allotments of 5,400 acres each, owned as much land as 50 million poor peasants. So, land distribution was immensely popular among the peasants.

To encourage increased agricultural production, the Soviet government provided aid in the form of implements, fertilizer, and other necessities.

This stance cemented an alliance between working people in the cities and countryside without which the revolution could not survive.

The Bolshevik-led government extended freedom of choice to all nationalities. They could either remain in the Soviet Union or peacefully secede if they so desired. In most cases they joined the Soviet federation. The revolutionary regime took actions to radically advance the status of women.

In the first days of the revolution, the government also issued decrees defending workers' rights. These included abolishing child labor, guaranteeing the eight-hour day and health and unemployment insurance, forbidding lockouts by employers, and granting elected workers councils increased control over industry.

The communists sought to aid workers' struggles in other countries and extend the revolution. This was seen as a precondition to defending and advancing the Russian revolution.

Civil war and 'war communism'

In response to these and other Soviet government policies, a civil war erupted, pitting capitalists and former tsarist forces against workers and peasants. Invading armies from more than a dozen imperialist countries backed the capitalist counterrevolution.

In response, the workers and peasants government utilized its power to deepen the revolutionary struggle, resulting in the expropriation of the capitalist class and nationalization of industry and wholesale trade by the end of 1918. This laid the basis for the establishment of a planned economy and state monopoly of foreign trade.

Although the peasants during the civil war joined with



Red Army soldiers on one of armored trains that engaged in bombardment of counterrevolutionaries and foreign invaders during civil war in Russia 1918-21. After victory in civil war the Soviet government had to implement a retreat — the New Economic Policy — due to devastation of the country from fighting and setbacks in revolutionary struggles in Europe.

the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary workers against the landlords and the tsar, they were not, in their majority, won to the socialist perspective of the Bolsheviks. Thus, the military alliance had to be accompanied by an economic alliance. Under civil-war conditions, this took the form of compulsory requisitions of the peasants' grain surpluses to feed the urban working class. In addition, the revolutionary government relied on growing militarization of labor in the factories and in transportation.

By the end of 1920, the foreign invaders and counterrevolutionary armies had been defeated. Under the new post civil war conditions, the alliance of workers and peasants could not be maintained by the same methods. The policies of "war communism," followed by the Soviet government from mid-1918 through early 1921 as necessary measures of defense and survival, were no longer sustainable.

Sporadic resistance to these policies turned to open revolt. In late 1920 and early 1921 there were strikes in some factories, peasant revolts in parts of the countryside, and — in March 1921 — a mutiny by troops, largely peasant and petty bourgeois in composition, at the Kronstadt garrison near Petrograd (St. Petersburg).

Tax in kind

The conditions of the peasantry had become too miserable, and the common military cause was no longer there to buffer growing resentment against the requisitioning of food. So, in early 1921, the Bolsheviks replaced their previous policy with a tax in kind on the peasants' grain surplus — that is, only a certain portion of the surplus, established by law, was taken by the state for distribution in the cities. The peasants could keep the rest for the use of their family or to sell on the market.

Along with this policy toward the peasantry, Lenin and the Bolsheviks also proposed measures to help revive industrial production. This included leasing nationalized factories, mines, forests, and oil fields to foreign capitalists and to some remaining entrepreneurs in Russia itself. This was combined with an ambitious proposal to bring electrification to the entire country — urban and rural areas alike.

These measures marked the beginning in Russia of the NEP. The Bolsheviks placed this important shift in their tactics before delegates at the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921 for a discussion and vote.

Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and other Bolshevik leaders explained that this policy was a necessary but temporary retreat. Above all, the NEP assumed the existence in the Soviet Union of a communist leadership of the working class that worked to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance, increase the production and circulation of food and other agricultural goods, and revive industrial production as rapidly as possible, in order to lay a more solid foundation on which to organize the next steps in advancing toward socialist relations of production and interchange.

A major factor that led the Bolsheviks to adopt the NEP was the conjuncture in world politics that existed in the opening of the 1920s. On an international level, Lenin and the Bolsheviks acknowledged and analyzed the fact that the prewar revolutionary upsurge had peaked. They came to grips with the political consequences of the defeats of working class uprisings in Germany, Hungary, Italy, and elsewhere in Europe. The failure to extend the example set by the Bolsheviks and the recoil from revolutionary struggle in those countries reinforced by bloody repression meant that the possibility for an extension of the world revolution had been pushed back temporarily. However, solidarity with the Soviet republic and opposition to war against it remained high among workers in Europe and other parts of the world.

Combating negative consequences of NEP

The Bolsheviks were very much aware of the dangers of increased class differentiation and polarization inevitably bred by the NEP. These policies widened social inequalities and helped generate new exploiting layers, especially rich peasants and price-gouging traders and middlemen, whom the workers and poor peasants came to call "Nepmen," with contempt. State industrial enterprises, pressed to cut costs, laid off workers and pushed up jobless levels in the cities. Making the profit column of the ledger book look good became the overriding consideration for many factory managers — whether or not these figures reflected less wasteful organization of labor and utilization of resources, and regardless of broader social needs and priorities. Efforts to advance workers control and management in the factories faced greater obstacles.

To combat such consequences of the NEP, the Bolsheviks worked to rebuild the strength of the Communist Party

Continued on ISR 2

Continued from ISR 1

among the reviving industrial working class and to fight for political leadership of the peasantry.

Once the economic recovery was under way and the worker-peasant alliance placed on firmer ground, new tasks were posed. Once again, Lenin led the political battle. During the last year of his active political life, Lenin launched a fight aimed among other things at combating the initial consequences of the NEP and reversing the Soviet republic's unavoidable temporary retreat. This was one of Lenin's final contributions to Marxism and working-class politics.

The degeneration of the workers state after Lenin's death in 1924 was the result of a bloody political counterrevolution carried out against the working class, its vanguard, and its allies, in the interests of a materially privileged social layer numbering in the millions. By the beginning of the 1930s, Joseph Stalin emerged as the leading representative of that social caste. Under the banner of "socialism in one country," the new regime beat a headlong retreat from the internationalist course carried out during Lenin's time of subordinating the national interests of the Soviet state to the advance of the world struggle for national liberation and socialism.

The battle following Lenin's death over the social consequences of the policies collectively called the NEP were fought out in this political context. It was a struggle over conflicting class interests and orientations. The representatives of the bureaucratic caste triumphed and reversed the communist course initiated by Lenin in the Soviet government, Communist Party, and Communist International. Contrary to the decades-long distortions by bourgeois, social-democratic, anarcho-syndicalist, ultraleft, and Stalinist opponents of communism, the policies of Stalin and his heirs were not the outcome of the continuity of Lenin's political course but the bloody defeat of that course.

Certainly, Cuba in the 1990s is very different than the young Soviet republic of the early 1920s. The relationship of class forces is far more favorable for the working class in comparison with the Soviet Union of those days, because the proletariat in Cuba today is infinitely more powerful and a much higher percentage of the population than it was in Russia back then. About 80 percent of the Cuban population lives in the cities now, a demographic fact that is the reverse of the Soviet Union of the 1920s.

But as Lenin pointed out at the time, as long as the Soviet republic was surrounded by the capitalist world and the revolution in Germany and other advanced capitalist countries had not come to its aid, the Bolsheviks had to pay a tribute to the imperialist bourgeoisie. They had to do it in order to survive and gain time until the extension of the world revolution could shift the balance of class forces once again in favor of the working class.

Maintaining the workers and farmers government in power and buying time until revolutionary developments in other parts of the world can come to its aid, is also what is posed for the Cuban revolution today, as the communist leadership there leads a similar retreat.



The following are excerpts from a report Lenin gave to the Third Congress of the Communist International, July 5, 1921. The entire document, titled "Report on



U.S. troops parade in street of a town in Russia during civil war. Armies from more than a dozen countries invaded young Soviet republic, but Red Army with aid of workers and peasants defeated counterrevolution.

the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party," can be found in Vol. 32 of Lenin's *Collected Works*. Sub-headings are by the *Militant*.

BY V.I. LENIN

When the Civil War came to an end, however, we faced a different problem. If the country had not been so laid waste after seven years of incessant war, it would, perhaps, have been possible to find an easier transition to the new form of alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. But bad as conditions in the country were, they were still further aggravated by the crop failure, the fodder shortage, etc. In consequence, the sufferings of the peasants became unbearable. We had to show the broad masses of the peasants immediately that we were prepared to change our policy, without in any way deviating from our revolutionary path, so that they could say, "The Bolsheviks want to improve our intolerable condition immediately, and at all costs."

And so, our economic policy was changed; the tax in kind superseded the requisitions. This was not invented at one stroke. You will find a number of proposals in the Bolshevik press over a period of months, but no plan that really promised success. But this is not important. The important thing is that we changed our economic policy, yielding to exclusively practical considerations, and impelled by necessity. A bad harvest, fodder shortage and lack of fuel—all, of course, have a decisive influence on the economy as a whole, including the peasant economy. If the peasantry goes on strike, we get no firewood; and if we get no firewood, the factories will have to idle. Thus, in the spring of 1921, the economic crisis resulting from the terrible crop failure and the fodder shortage assumed gigantic proportions. All that was the aftermath of the three years of civil war. We had to show the peasantry that we could and would quickly change our policy in order immediately to alleviate their distress. We have always said—and it was also said at the Second Congress—that revolution demands sacrifices...

Naturally, every revolution entails enormous sacrifice on the part of the class making it. Revolution differs from ordinary struggle in that ten and even a hundred times more peo-

ple take part in it. Hence every revolution entails sacrifices not only for individuals, but for a whole class. The dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has entailed for the ruling class—the proletariat—sacrifices, want and privation unprecedented in history, and the case will, in all probability, be the same in every other country.

The question arises: How are we to distribute this burden of privation? We are the state power. We are able to distribute the burden of privation to a certain extent, and to impose it upon several classes, thereby relatively alleviating the condition of certain strata of the population. But what is to be our principle? Is it to be that of fairness, or of majority? No. We must act in a practical manner. We must distribute the burdens in such a way as to preserve the power of the proletariat. This is our only principle. In the beginning of the revolution the work-

ing class was compelled to suffer incredible want. Let me state that from year to year our food policy has been achieving increasing success. And the situation as a whole has undoubtedly improved. But the peasantry in Russia has certainly gained more from the revolution than the working class. There is no doubt about that at all...

I have already said that in the spring of 1921 the most appalling want caused by the fodder shortage and the crop failure prevailed among the peasantry, which constitutes the majority of our population. We cannot possibly exist unless we have good relations with the peasant masses. Hence, our task was to render them immediate assistance. The condition of the working class is extremely hard. It is suffering horribly. Those who have more political under-

State capitalism in a society where power belongs to capital is different than in a proletarian state . . .

standing, however, realize that in the interest of the dictatorship of the working class we must make tremendous efforts to help the peasants at any price. The vanguard of the working class has realized this, but in that vanguard there are still people who cannot understand it, and who are too weary to understand it. They regarded it as a mistake and began to use the word "opportunism."

They said, "The Bolsheviks are helping the peasants. The peasants, who are exploiting us, are getting everything they please, while the workers are starving." But is that opportunism? We are helping the peasants because without an alliance with them the political power of the proletariat is impossible, its preservation is inconceivable. It was this consideration of expediency and not that of fair distribution that was decisive for us. We are assisting the peasants because it is absolutely necessary to do so in order that we may retain political power. The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and its political power.

The only means we found for this was the adoption of the tax in kind, which was the inevitable consequence of the struggle. This year, we shall introduce this tax for the first time. This principle has not yet been tried in practice. From the military alliance we must pass to an economic alliance, and, theoretically, the only basis for the latter is the introduction of the tax in kind. It provides the only theoretical possibility for laying a really solid economic foundation for socialist society.

The socialized factory gives the peasant its manufactures and in return the peasant gives his grain. This is the only possible form of existence of socialist society, the only form of socialist development in a country in which the small peasants constitute the majority, or at all events a very considerable minority. The peasants will give one part of their produce in the form of tax and another either in exchange for the manufactures of socialist factories, or through the exchange of commodities.

Freedom to trade

This brings us to the most difficult problem. It goes without saying that the tax in kind means freedom to trade. After having paid the tax in kind, the peasant will have the right freely to exchange the remainder of his grain. This freedom of exchange implies freedom for capitalism. We say this openly and emphasize it. We do not conceal it in the least. Things would go very hard with us if we attempted to conceal it.

Freedom to trade means freedom for capitalism, but it also means a new form of capitalism. It means that, to a certain extent, we are re-creating capitalism. We are doing this quite openly. It is state capitalism. But state capitalism in a society where power belongs to capital, and state capitalism in a proletarian state, are two different concepts.

In a capitalist state, state capitalism means that it is recognized by the state and controlled by it for the benefit of the

For Further Reading on the NEP

By V. I. Lenin

Most of Lenin's writings on the NEP can be found in volumes 32 and 33 of the Russian revolutionary's *Collected Works* (LCW).

Major reports and articles in chronological order include:

- 1) Report on Tax in Kind to Tenth Congress of Soviet Communist Party (March 15, 1921; LCW vol. 32, pp. 214-238).
- 2) Report on Tax in Kind to Meeting of Moscow Communist Party Leaders (April 9, 1921; LCW, vol. 32, pp. 286-298).
- 3) Speech on Concessions Policy to Communist Trade Union Leaders (April 11, 1921; LCW vol. 32, pp. 300-315).
- 4) The Tax in Kind (Pamphlet; April 21, 1921; LCW, vol. 32, pp. 329-365).
- 5) Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party (Presented to the Third Congress of the Communist International, July 5, 1921; LCW, vol. 32, pp. 478-496).
- 6) The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments (Oct. 17, 1921; LCW, vol. 33, pp. 60-79).
- 7) The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism (Nov. 5, 1921; LCW, vol. 33, pp. 109-116).
- 8) The Home and Foreign Policy of the Republic (Report to the Ninth All-Russia Congress of the Soviets, Dec. 23, 1921; LCW vol. 33 pp. 143-177).
- 9) Political Report to the Eleventh Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (March 27, 1922; LCW, vol.

33, pp. 263-326).

- 10) Better Fewer, but Better (March 2, 1923; LCW, vol. 33, pp. 487-502).

By Leon Trotsky

- 1) Report on the New Soviet Economic Policy and the Perspectives of the World Revolution (Presented to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, Nov. 14, 1922; in *First Five Years of the Communist International* vol. 2, Pathfinder Press, pp. 220-263).
- 2) Theses on the Economic Situation of Soviet Russia from the Standpoint of the Socialist Revolution (Dec. 1, 1922; in *First Five Years of the Communist International* vol. 2, pp. 264-274).

By Farrell Dobbs

Precarious New Equilibrium (Chapter from *Revolutionary Continuity*, Vol. II, Pathfinder Press, pp. 155-167).

By Mary-Alice Waters

From War Communism to the New Economic Policy (From article "Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government"; in *New International* no. 3, pp. 71-80).

By Jack Barnes and Steve Clark

New Economic Policy (From article "Che Guevara and Marxist Continuity"; in *New International* no. 8, pp. 133-141).

bourgeoisie, and to the detriment of the proletariat. In the proletarian state, the same thing is done for the benefit of the working class, for the purpose of withstanding the as yet strong bourgeoisie, and of fighting it. It goes without saying that we must grant concessions to the foreign bourgeoisie, to foreign capital. Without the slightest denationalization, we shall lease mines, forests and oilfields to foreign capitalists, and receive in exchange manufactured goods, machinery, etc., and thus restore our own industry.

Of course, we did not all agree on the question of state capitalism at once. But we are very pleased to note in this connection that our peasantry has been developing, that it has fully realized the historical significance of the struggle we are waging at the present time. Ordinary peasants from the most remote districts have come to us and said: "What! We have expelled our capitalists, the capitalists who speak Russian, and now foreign capitalists are coming!" Does not this show that our peasants have developed?

There is no need to explain to a worker who is versed in economics why this is necessary. We have been so ruined



Leon Trotsky (left) with V.I. Lenin in May 1920

by seven years of war that it will take many years to restore our industry. We must pay for our backwardness and weakness, and for the lessons we are now learning and must learn. Those who want to learn must pay for the tuition. We must explain this to one and all, and if we prove it in practice, the vast masses of the peasants and workers will agree with us, because in this way their condition will be immediately improved, and because it will ensure the possibility of restoring our industry.

What compels us to do this? We are not alone in the world. We exist in a system of capitalist states. . . . On one side, there are the colonial countries, but they cannot help us yet. On the other side, there are the capitalist countries, but they are our enemies. The result is a certain equilibrium, a very poor one, it is true. Nevertheless, we must reckon with the fact. We must not shut our eyes to it if we want to exist. Either we score an immediate victory over the whole bourgeoisie, or we pay the tribute.

We admit quite openly, and do not conceal the fact, that concessions in the system of state capitalism mean paying tribute to capitalism. But we gain time, and gaining time means gaining everything, particularly in the period of equilibrium, when our foreign comrades are preparing thoroughly for their revolution. The more thorough their preparations, the more certain will the victory be. Meanwhile, however, we shall have to pay the tribute. . . .

The following are excerpts from a report Lenin gave to the Second All-Russia Congress of Political Education Departments of the Communist Party, Oct. 17, 1921. Titled "The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments," it can be found in Vol. 33 of Lenin's *Collected Works*. Sub-headings are by the *Militant*.

BY V.I. LENIN

Comrades, I intend to devote this report, or rather talk, to the New Economic Policy, and to the tasks of the Political Education Departments arising out of this policy, as I understand them. . . .

In the initial period, when we had only just completed the first stage in the work of building up the Soviet government and had only just emerged from the imperialist war, what we said about our tasks in the field of economic development was much more cautious and circumspect than our actions in the latter half of 1918 and throughout 1919 and 1920. . . .

At the beginning of 1918 we expected a period in which peaceful construction would be possible. When the Brest

peace was signed it seemed that danger had subsided for a time and that it would be possible to start peaceful construction. But we were mistaken, because in 1918 a real military danger overtook us in the shape of the Czechoslovak mutiny and the outbreak of civil war, which dragged on until 1920.

Partly owing to the war problems that overwhelmed us and partly owing to the desperate position in which the Republic found itself when the imperialist war ended — owing to these circumstances, and a number of others, we made the mistake of deciding to go over directly to communist production and distribution. We thought that under the surplus-food appropriation system the peasants would provide us with the required quantity of grain, which we could distribute among the factories and thus achieve communist production and distribution. . . .

A strategic retreat

At that time, when in the heat of the Civil War we had to take the necessary steps in economic organization, it seemed to have been forgotten. In substance, our New Economic Policy signifies that, having sustained severe defeat on this point, we have started a strategical retreat. We said in effect: "Before we are completely routed, let us retreat and reorganize everything, but on a firmer basis." If Communists deliberately examine the question of the New Economic Policy there cannot be the slightest doubt in their minds that we have sustained a very severe defeat on the economic front.

In the circumstances it is inevitable, of course, for some people to become very despondent, almost panic-stricken, and because of the retreat, these people will begin to give way to panic. That is inevitable. When the Red Army retreated, was its flight from the enemy not the prelude to its victory? Every retreat on every front, however, caused some people to give way to panic for a time. But on each occasion — on the Kolchak front, on the Denikin front, on the Yudenich front, on the Polish front and on the Wrangel front — once we had been badly battered (and sometimes more than once) we proved the truth of the proverb: "A man who has been beaten is worth two who haven't." After being beaten we began to advance slowly, systematically and cautiously.

Of course, tasks on the economic front are much more difficult than tasks on the war front, although there is a general similarity between the two elementary outlines of strategy. In attempting to go over straight to communism we, in the spring of 1921, sustained a more serious defeat on the economic front than any defeat inflicted upon us by Kolchak, Denikin or Pilsudski. This defeat was much more serious, significant and dangerous. It was expressed in the isolation of the higher administrators of our economic policy from the lower and their failure to produce that development of the productive forces which the Program of our Party regards as vital and urgent.

The surplus-food appropriation system in the rural districts — this direct communist approach to the problem of urban development — hindered the growth of the productive forces and proved to be the main cause of the profound economic and political crisis that we experienced in the spring of 1921. That was why we had to take a step which from the point of view of our line, of our policy, cannot be called anything else than a very severe defeat and retreat.

Moreover, it cannot be said that this retreat is — like retreats of the Red Army — a completely orderly retreat to previously prepared positions. True, the positions for our present retreat were prepared beforehand. That can be proved by comparing the decisions adopted by our Party in the spring of 1921 with the one adopted in April 1918, which I have mentioned. The positions were prepared beforehand; but the retreat to these positions took place (and is still taking place in many parts of the country) in disorder, and even in extreme disorder. . . .

Purport of the New Economic Policy

The New Economic Policy means substituting a tax for the requisitioning of food; it means reverting to capitalism to a considerable extent — to what extent we do not know. Concessions to foreign capitalists (true, only very few have been accepted, especially when compared with the number we have offered) and leasing enterprises to private capitalists definitely mean restoring capitalism, and this is part and parcel of the New Economic Policy; for the abolition of the surplus-food appropriation system means allowing the peasants to trade freely in their surplus agricultural produce, in whatever is left over after the tax is collected — and the tax takes only a small share of that produce. The peasants constitute a huge section of our population and of our entire economy, and that is why

capitalism must grow out of this soil of free trading.

That is the very ABC of economics as taught by the rudiments of that science, and in Russia taught, furthermore, by the profiteer, the creature who needs no economic or political science to teach us economics with. From the point of view of strategy the root question is: who will take advantage of the new situation first? The whole question is — whom will the peasantry follow? The proletariat, which wants to build socialist society? Or the capitalist, who says "Let us turn back; it is safer that way; we don't know anything about this socialism they have invented"?

The issue in the present war is — who will win, who will first take advantage of the situation: the capitalist, whom we are allowing to come in by the door, and even by several doors (and by many doors we are not aware of, and which open without us, and in spite of us), or proletarian state power? What has the latter to rely on economically? On the one hand, the improved position of the people. In this connection we must remember the peasants. It is absolutely incontrovertible and obvious to all that in spite of the awful disaster of the famine — and leaving that

The question is, who will lead peasantry? The capitalists or the proletarian state power? . . .

disaster out of the reckoning for the moment — the improvement that has taken place in the position of the people has been due to the change in our economic policy.

On the other hand, if capitalism gains by it, industrial production will grow, and the proletariat will grow too. The capitalists will gain from our policy and will create an industrial proletariat, which in our country, owing to the war and to the desperate poverty and ruin, has become declassed, i.e., dislodged from its class groove, and has ceased to exist as a proletariat. The proletariat is the class which is engaged in the production of material values in large-scale capitalist industry. Since large-scale capitalist industry has been destroyed, since the factories are at a standstill, the proletariat has disappeared. It has sometimes figured in statistics, but it has not been held together economically.

The restoration of capitalism would mean the restoration of a proletarian class engaged in the production of socially useful material values in big factories employing machinery, and not in profiteering, not in making cigarette-lighters for sale, and in other "work" which is not very useful, but which is inevitable when our industry is in a state of ruin.

The whole question is who will take the lead. We must face this issue squarely — who will come out on top? Either the capitalists succeed in organizing first — in which case they will drive out the Communists and that will be the end of it. Or the proletarian state power, with the support of the peasantry, will prove capable of keeping a proper rein on those gentlemen, the capitalists, so as to direct capitalism along state channels and to create a capitalism that will be subordinate to the state and serve the state. . . .

Is this the last fight?

The dictatorship of the proletariat is fierce war. The proletariat has been victorious in one country, but it is still weak internationally. It must unite all the workers and peasants around itself in the knowledge that the war is not over. Although in our anthem we sing: "The last fight let us face," unfortunately it is not quite true; it is not our last fight. Either

Continued on ISR 4

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Continued from ISR 3

you succeed in uniting the workers and peasants in this fight, or you fail to achieve victory.

Never before in history has there been a struggle like the one we are now witnesses of; but there have been wars between peasants and landowners more than once in history, ever since the earliest times of slavery. Such wars have occurred more than once; but there has never been a war waged by a government against the bourgeoisie of its own country and against the united bourgeoisie of all countries.

The issue of the struggle depends upon whether we succeed in organizing the small peasants on the basis of the development of their productive forces with proletarian state assistance for this development, or whether the capitalists gain control over them. The same issue has arisen in scores of revolutions in the past; but the world has never witnessed a struggle like the one we are waging now. The people have had no way of acquiring experience in wars of this kind. We ourselves must create this experience and we can rely only on the class-consciousness of the workers and peasants. That is the keynote and the enormous difficulty of this task.

We must not count on going straight to communism

We must not count on going straight to communism. We must build on the basis of peasants' personal incentive. We are told that the personal incentive of the peasants means restoring private property. But we have never interfered with personally owned articles of consumption and implements of production as far as the peasants are concerned. We have abolished private ownership of land. Peasants farmed land that they did not own — rented land, for instance. That system exists in very many countries. There is nothing impossible about it from the standpoint of economics. The difficulty lies in creating personal incentive. We must also give every specialist an incentive to develop our industry.

Have we been able to do that? No, we have not! We thought that production and distribution would go on at communist bidding in a country with a declassed proletariat. We must change that now, or we shall be unable to make the proletariat understand this process of transition. No such problems have ever arisen in history before. We tried to solve this problem straight out, by a frontal attack, as it were, but we suffered defeat. Such mistakes occur in every war, and they are not even regarded as mistakes. Since the frontal attack failed, we shall make a flanking movement and also use the method of siege and undermining. . . .



The following are excerpts from an article Lenin wrote, titled "Better Fewer, but Better." It was published in *Pravda* on March 4, 1923. It can be found in Vol. 33 of Lenin's *Collected Works*. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY V. I. LENIN

The general feature of our present life is the following: we have destroyed capitalist industry and have done our best to raze to the ground the medieval institutions and landed proprietorship, and thus created a small and very small peasantry, which is following the lead of the proletariat because it believes in the results of its revolutionary work.



Workers march during revolutionary uprising in Berlin in 1918, which was crushed by 1920. Setbacks of working-class struggles in Germany, Hungary, Italy, and elsewhere at the time forced Bolsheviks to organize retreat.

It is not easy for us, however, to keep going until the socialist revolution is victorious in more developed countries merely with the aid of this confidence, because economic necessity, especially under NEP, keeps the productivity of labor of the small and very small peasants at an extremely low level. Moreover, the international situation, too, threw Russia back and, by and large, reduced the labor productivity of the people to a level considerably below pre-war.

The West-European capitalist powers, partly deliberately and partly unconsciously, did everything they could to throw us back, to utilize the elements of the Civil War

Capitalist powers failed to overthrow revolution, but they did prevent it from at once taking steps forward . . .

in Russia in order to spread as much ruin in the country as possible. It was precisely this way out of the imperialist war that seemed to have many advantages. They argued somewhat as follows: "If we fail to overthrow the revolutionary system in Russia, we shall, at all events, hinder its progress towards socialism." And from their point of view they could argue in no other way.

In the end, their problem was half-solved. They failed to overthrow the new system created by the revolution, but they did prevent it from at once taking the step forward that would have justified the forecasts of the socialists, that would have enabled the latter to develop the productive forces with enormous speed, to develop all the potentialities which, taken together, would have produced socialism; socialists would thus have proved to all and sundry that socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development of extraordinarily brilliant prospects.

The system of international relationships which has now taken shape is one in which a European state, Germany, is enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, owing to their victory, a number of states, the oldest states in the West, are in a position to make some insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes — concessions which, insignificant though they are, nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of "class truce."

East completely jolted out of rut

At the same time, as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries of the East, India, China, etc., have been completely jolted out of the rut. Their development has definitely shifted to general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that must lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism.

Thus, at the present time we are confronted with the question — shall we be able to hold on with our small and very small peasant production, and in our present state of ruin, until the West-European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism? But they are consummating it not as we formerly expected. They are not consummating it through the gradual "maturing" of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war

combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.

What tactics does this situation prescribe for our country? Obviously the following. We must display extreme caution so as to preserve our workers' government and to retain our small and very small peasantry under its leadership and authority. We have the advantage that the whole world is now passing to a movement that must give rise to a world socialist revolution. But we are laboring under the disadvantage that the imperialists have succeeded in splitting the world into two camps; and this split is made more complicated by the fact that it is extremely difficult for Germany, which is really a land of advanced, cultured, capitalist development, to rise to her feet. All the capitalist powers of what is called the West are pecking at her and preventing her from rising.

On the other hand, the entire East, with its hundreds of millions of exploited working people, reduced to the last degree of human suffering, has been forced into a position where its physical and material strength cannot possibly be compared with the physical, material and military strength of any of the much smaller West-European states.

Impending conflict with imperialist powers

Can we save ourselves from the impending conflict with these imperialist countries? May we hope that the internal antagonisms and conflicts between the thriving imperialist countries of the West and the thriving imperialist countries of the East will give us a second respite as they did the first time, when the campaign of the West-European counter-revolution in support of the Russian counter-revolution broke down owing to the antagonisms in the camp of the counter-revolutionaries of the West and the East, in the camp of the Eastern and Western exploiters, in the camp of Japan and the U.S.A.?

I think the reply to this question should be that the issue depends upon too many factors, and that the outcome of the struggle as a whole can be forecast only because in the long run capitalism itself is educating and training the vast majority of the population of the globe for the struggle.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle will be determined by the fact that Russia, India, China, etc., account for the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe. And during the past few years it is this majority that has been drawn into the struggle for emancipation with extraordinary rapidity, so that in this respect there cannot be the slightest doubt what the final outcome of the world struggle will be. In this sense, the complete victory of socialism is fully and absolutely assured.

But what interests us is not the inevitability of this complete victory of socialism, but the tactics which we, the Russian Communist Party, we, the Russian Soviet Government, should pursue to prevent the West-European counter-revolutionary states from crushing us. To ensure our existence until the next military conflict between the counter-revolutionary imperialist West and the revolutionary and nationalist East, between the most civilized countries of the world and the Oriental backward countries which, however, comprise the majority, this majority must become civilized. We, too, lack enough civilization to enable us to pass straight on to socialism, although we do have the political requisites for it. We should adopt the following tactics, or pursue the following policy, to save ourselves.

We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations.

Reduce state apparatus

We must reduce our state apparatus to the utmost degree of economy. We must banish from it all traces of extravagance, of which so much has been left over from tsarist Russia, from its bureaucratic capitalist state machine.

Will not this be a reign of peasant limitations?

No. If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry, we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat, to complete the Volkhov Power Projects, etc.

In this, and in this alone, lies our hope. Only when we have done this shall we, speaking figuratively, be able to change horses, to change from the peasant, muzhik horse of poverty, from the horse of an economy designed for a ruined peasant country, to the horse which the proletariat is seeking and must seek — the horse of large-scale machine industry, of electrification, of the Volkhov Power Station, etc. . . .

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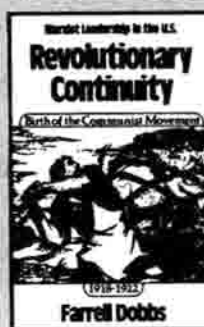
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Cuban youth addresses students in Utah

BY NELSON GONZALEZ
AND EILEEN KOSCHAK

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — During a one-and-a-half-day stop here as part of a nationwide speaking tour, Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz Hernández was able to speak to nearly 200 people.

In whirlwind fashion, the youth tour was organized by an ad-hoc Cuba Youth Committee formed right after a successful send-off rally for the Third U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment caravan on February 26. The evening after the rally a group made up of high school and college students, a professor, and a number of community activists quickly put together an itinerary, a budget, and began to organize the Cuban youth's visit.

Building on the previous successes of a benefit musical done for the Friendshipment caravan, Playskool, a local all-ages club, hosted a political/cultural event for Díaz.

After State of the Nation, a local band, played a few songs, band leader and political activist Rob Hayworth introduced Díaz to the more than 40 high school youth present.

Díaz gave a presentation on the history and current state of the Cuban revolution. He noted that 60 percent of the people in Cuba are under the age of 30. "It's these young people who are leading the rest of our people toward the solutions of our problems and the programs we are putting together," Díaz said.

"But we have made mistakes," Díaz added. "At one point we marginalized and made fun of a group called 'rockers' because they wore long hair and liked rock music. But then we went out and



Pável Díaz (right) addresses participants at March 18-19 Philadelphia student conference in solidarity with the South African freedom struggle.

organized them and found that they wanted to use their energy and creativity to defend the revolution just like us." The young people listening to Díaz burst into applause.

After a question and answer period, Díaz was given a guitar and played a few Cuban songs and continued informal discussion.

The next day he spoke at Weber University in Ogden, Utah, to more than 70 students. Marta Acosta, a professor who is Cuban-American and who helped organize the tour, chaired the event.

During the question and answer period one student commented, "I was born after the Cuban revolution and the only Cuba I

know is the Cuba of the cold war, seemingly hostile. I would like to know what was Cuba like before the revolution so I can compare it to the Cuba of today." Díaz replied by giving a graphic picture of widespread repression of revolutionary-minded youth and working people in Cuba under the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Racism, prostitution, and disease was rampant then, he said. "Most of us are also like you born after the revolution," Díaz said. "But we know from our parents what Cuba was like before and that all that we have is because of socialism. We will defend these conquests and not return to the past."

The next stop was a presentation at the University of Utah in a meeting sponsored by the student task force of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the anti-apartheid coalition. Sarah Jolley, a leader of NOW on campus, introduced Díaz.

"A large book could be filled with the predictions that have been made about when Cuba would fall since the revolution," the Cuban youth said. "Cuba has not only survived, but in 1993, the hardest period for us, we were fifth best in the world with regard to our infant mortality rates."

During the discussion period someone asked what will happen to the revolution once Cuban president Fidel Castro died. "Many people make the mistake of identifying the revolution with Fidel and they think that when Fidel dies the revolution will die with him," said Díaz. "This is a mistake. This greatly underestimates the accomplishments of the people of Cuba."

That evening more than 30 people turned out to meet Díaz at the Centro Civico, a Mexican-American community center. Lee Martinez, the state's director of Hispanic affairs, welcomed the Cuban youth to Utah on behalf of the governor's office. State representative Pete Suazo also welcomed Díaz and commended the tour committee for the work done in keeping the lines of communication open between U.S. citizens and the Cuban people.

Other greeters included Tami Peterson a leader of the Utah Young Socialists and Archie Archuleta, a local activist.

Díaz used the occasion to explain the importance of the Friendshipment caravan. "The people of Cuba are following the progress of the caravan," he said. "They are inspired by it. Not because of the material aid but because of the gesture of political solidarity it represents."

Of special note at the meeting was the participation of four Cuban-Americans, one who came here during the Mariel incident and the other as a small child right after the revolution. Both supported the revolution and want to be active in the Friendshipment. Two other Cubans described themselves as members of the Cuban American National Foundation. They disagreed with Díaz but had a calm exchange of views with him.

Díaz's short visit was covered widely by the news media. This included several articles in *The Daily Utah Chronicle*, the University of Utah student newspaper; an announcement of the tour itinerary in the *Private Eye*, a widely distributed tabloid; and an article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* featuring an interview with Díaz.

Solidarity caravan returns from Cuba

BY SCOTT BREEN

HAVANA, Cuba — Tens of thousands of Cubans turned out in many cities throughout this Caribbean island to welcome and thank the 250 participants of the Third U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment caravan. Before returning to the United States, caravan members visited the provinces of Havana, Holguín, Matanzas, Pinar del Río, and Santiago de Cuba.

Nearly 5,000 Cubans joined the caravan participants in a rally to greet the arrival of the cargo ship carrying 140 tons of humanitarian aid from the Mexican port of Tampico. The solidarity convoy had transported the aid there from Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

"It is well-known that Cuba helped Angola defend its freedom," Sergio Corrieri, president of the Institute for the Friendship of the Peoples (ICAP), told the rally. "During those years, we, too, had caravans that took food and medicines on risky missions. Now, in a different time, you have given new meaning to the word caravan," he told solidarity activists from North America. Lucius Walker, executive director of Pastors for Peace, which sponsored the caravan, also addressed the rally.

The next day, ICAP held the Third Forum on Ending the U.S. Blockade Against Cuba. Its purpose was to discuss the history of the U.S. economic embargo and its impact on Cuban people. Speakers included Corrieri, Francisco Duran of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), journalist Nicenor Leon Cotayo, and Toriello García, president of the Anti-imperialist Tribunal (TANA).

Corrieri announced ICAP's plan to organize a World Conference in Solidarity with Cuba, November 21-25 in Havana. "We want it to be massively attended and broad," he said.

Caravan members spoke about their experiences in Cuba during the discussion. One woman who visited Pinar del Río said she was "impressed with the creative solutions the Cubans have come up with to cope with the shortages and other problems brought on by the trade embargo. It is a mistake," she said, "to portray Cubans as victims. They display courage and creativity."

Chris Pforr from Seattle said the trip had "strengthened my desire when I get home to continue to work against the blockade."

The forum issued a declaration calling on the Clinton administration to "cease and

desist from enforcing the Torricelli bill [Cuban Democracy Act] and the embargo now."

Afterwards, Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, spoke. "You have witnessed the dramatic and difficult reality here," he told participants. "This same reality has been examined in open assemblies of the workers. Millions of Cubans are discussing what to do when their factory, through no fault of theirs, is not profitable. They are discussing what measures of austerity must be accepted to overcome these difficulties. In no other country have the opinions of the workers been asked," he said.

"In the so-called democracies the governments make decisions in consultation with the billionaires," Alarcón continued. "Despite everything, the immense majority here continues to show their patriotic determination to resist, resist, resist."

"Independence can only be achieved in a society based on solidarity, where all cooperate so all can benefit. This is our socialism. We will never agree to a society based on profit, greed, and selfish individualism," Alarcón concluded. "Socialism or death!"

Scott Breen is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Seattle and a participant in the Friendshipment caravan.

BY SHERRIE LOVE
AND JOHN STEELE

LAREDO, Texas — Participants in the Third U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment returned here March 20 after delivering more than \$3 million worth of humanitarian aid to Cuba. The next morning caravan participants carried across the border into Mexico a communications satellite dish, computers, typewriters, and medical equipment that U.S. government officials had prevented them from taking to Cuba March 9.

U.S. customs officials allowed most of the aid through. Around noon, however, local police and officers of the U.S. border patrol stopped a van carrying a replacement engine, an eye examination machine, and other materials destined for the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana.

About 75 members of the caravan surrounded the van and shouted, "Let the truck go," as cops positioned a squad car in front of the vehicle.

After a half-an-hour standoff, the cops forcibly removed from the truck Pastors for Peace leader Lucius Walker and Camilo

García, a Cuban Canadian from Vancouver, British Columbia. After cutting their seatbelts with a knife, police dragged the two men from the van, and roughed up García. The cops arrested Walker and García and impounded the van.

At the same time, several caravan members returning from Mexico, after taking boxes of aid across the border, were briefly detained and interrogated. Immigration officials photocopied their passports.

"I saw two members of the caravan who had been detained and went up to ask what was happening," said caravan member Ruth Reitan from Moorhead, Minnesota. "Then they detained me and took my passport, which had a Cuban entry visa stamp in it. I was also wearing a Cuba solidarity T-shirt. They asked me what I was doing. After about 15 minutes they gave me back my passport and said I could go."

Walker and García were released five hours later after posting a combined bond of \$4,750. Police charged both with obstructing traffic. In addition, Walker was charged with assaulting a police officer and García with resisting arrest. Pastors for Peace has urged actions to demand that the charges be dropped.

According to a March 23 press release by Pastors for Peace, U.S. officials later demanded that Mexican customs return the satellite dish.

Sherrie Love from Los Angeles and John Steele from Toronto participated in the Friendshipment caravan.



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Jobs summit

Continued from front page

increased use of technology in already modernized factories, stretching existing plant capacities to the limit to absorb new production workers.

Meanwhile, layoffs, in some industries such as airlines and telecommunications continue, particularly of administrative personnel. Employers announced a record of some 143,000 job eliminations in January and February.

U.S. president Bill Clinton opened the G-7 meeting with a speech that repeated many of the themes of his presidency. "Today, we are beginning a serious conversation about the economic well-being of ordinary people in each of these countries," he said.

"We've got to prove to our people that change can work for them, and that increasing productivity is still the key to jobs and growth," continued Clinton. "If we forget that, if we allow our fears to blind us to the fact that we must always be on the side of productivity, we're going to be in real trouble."

'The biggest security problem'

Dominique Moisi, deputy director of the French Institute for International Relations, stated, "Seen from Europe, unemployment is the biggest security problem facing the Western world today, and the G-7 is simply acknowledging that. Because if we don't find answers to that problem, our entire system will collapse on itself."

Unemployment rates in most of Europe exceed 10 percent. Germany's official rate is more than 10 percent. Joblessness in France is 12 percent and stands at 22 percent in Spain, which is not a G-7 member.

In the United States unemployment hovers around 6.5 percent. Its economy is in the midst of an upturn in the business cycle during an international depression. World unemployment has continued to rise steadily over the last 20 years, remaining high even after recessions have ended. The U.S. employers' chief competitors view Washington's success in "downsizing" and its relatively lower unemployment with envy. "Among the Group of Seven — Germany, France, Britain, Japan, Canada, Italy and the United States — the jobs problem manifests itself differently," said a March 14 *New York Times* article. "Broadly speaking, Europe and Canada have managed to keep wages and benefits rising for their workers, but at the price of relatively high unemployment for many others, who are sustained with generous unemployment insurance. The United States, which has been out of recession the longest, has managed to create many more jobs than Europe but only by getting workers to take more low-paying jobs, thereby widening the gap between the highest-paid and lowest-paid workers," said the *Times*.

The lower U.S. unemployment rate masks other factors in comparison with Europe and Canada. An unemployed worker in the United States faces the threat of poverty more directly. Jobless benefits last only six months for those who qualify, and replace on the average only about one-third of a worker's previous earnings. In many countries in Europe, unemployment benefits last longer and are a greater percentage of workers' former wages. These conditions force U.S. workers to accept lower paying jobs.

Clinton also used his platform at the conference to press for economic policies in the other G-7 countries that could benefit U.S. capitalists.

"The United States should continue to bring its deficit down," he said in his speech to the group. "Japan should increase domestic demand through more government spending and tax cuts so that its consumers will import more from the rest of the world. And Europe should continue to work for lower interest rates." The Clinton administration proposed that the G-7 establish new working groups to exchange ideas on unemployment, training and education. Government officials from Britain and Germany rejected this proposal. Gunter Rexrodt, Germany's economics minister, called the idea "superfluous." Rexrodt also rebuffed Washington's demands for further "economic stimulus" measures, such as lowering interest rates, cutting government subsidies to industry, and increasing investments in Germany. Bonn's economy is now in recession, aggravated by the burden of reunification with eastern Germany.

James Harris is a member of United Auto Workers Local 155 in Detroit.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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San Francisco

Mandela en Cuba. Showing of Empresa Cubana video production of Nelson Mandela's July 1991 visit to Cuba. In English, featuring excerpts from Mandela's and Fidel Castro's July 26 speeches to a rally in Matanzas. Discussion to follow video. Sat., April 2, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$4. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

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Jew-Hatred, the Fight Against Racism, and the Farrakhan Controversy. A panel discussion. Sat., Apr. 2, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

The Fight for Women's Rights: A Working Class Perspective. Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party and longtime women's rights activist. Sat., April 2, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. (corner Mass Ave.) Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

Clinton renews threats against N. Korea

Continued from front page

practice invasions of North Korea — are usually held in March before planting season so they don't interfere with farming in South Korea. No date has been announced for them but South Korean president Kim Young Sam directed Seoul's 650,000 troops to remain on alert in preparation for the joint maneuvers. Two U.S. Navy aircraft carriers are prepared to carry out unilateral military exercises in the Sea of Japan to show that Washington has the means to enforce economic sanctions.

The Clinton administration pushed the United Nations Security Council March 21 to question the North Korean government not only about the seven sites related to their nuclear program, but also about two unrelated sites. The Chinese government — which is a member of the UN Security Council abstained on the vote by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that called on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to "immediately allow... all requested inspection activities."

Two days earlier Zhang Tingyan, China's ambassador to South Korea, had argued against sanctions in an interview with the Yonhap news agency. "It's an international rule now to solve all issues through dialogue," he said. "Why should the North Korean nuclear problem be an exception? China cannot agree to sanctions or any other stringent measures."

Madeline Albright, chief U.S. delegate to the United Nations, met with representatives from the four other permanent members of the Security Council shortly after the vote to discuss a draft resolution threatening sanctions against North Korea. The March 22 *New York Times* reported Albright was "optimistic" that Beijing would not block

AUSTRALIA

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Socialist Educational Weekend. Classes: Sat., April 2, 2 p.m., *The Origins of Women's Oppression: The Marxist view*; 4 p.m., *Challenges Facing the Cuban Revolution: An eyewitness report from Havana*. Sun., April 3, 12:00 noon, *Racism: Where It Comes From and How to Fight It*; 2:30 p.m., *Capitalism and War: Can the War-makers be Disarmed?*; 4:30 p.m., *Workshop: Defending Mark Curtis, framed-up unionist and socialist*. All events at the old Children's Court, 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Tel: (02) 281 3297. **The Unfolding Revolution in South Africa.** Sat., Apr. 9, 6 p.m. Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, corner of Norton and Collins Streets. Donation \$3. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

BRITAIN

Manchester

After the Hebron Massacre... The Fight for Arab Liberation. Speakers: Sammy Masad, chair, Friends of Palestine Manchester University; Chris Morris, Communist League, member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union. Sat., Apr. 2, 6 p.m. 1st floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 061-839 1766.

the move against Pyongyang.

U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher confirmed that Washington planned to ask the Security Council to threaten to impose sanctions on the DPRK. Politicians from both the Democratic and Republican parties have backed the measure. Pyongyang has said it considers sanctions an act of war.

A Pentagon spokesman said 800 soldiers would be sent to beef up the 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. "We are going to go step-by-step to ratchet up the pressure," a senior U.S. official was quoted as saying in the *Times*. One early step being considered is banning financial transfers between the DPRK and banks in Japan. This cash infusion came to about \$1 billion last year, according to Tokyo. Twenty percent of North Korea's exports and almost 10 percent of their imports are with Japan.

Washington's threats are being made despite the fact that an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections came up with no proof that Pyongyang had reprocessed any plutonium. North Korean officials allowed inspectors to carry out tests at six of the sites, including taking samples and replacing cameras and film in the permanent monitoring systems. Inspectors were not permitted to sample radioactivity levels at part of the seventh site, which Pyongyang said is a radio chemical laboratory.

North Korean delegates walked out of talks March 19 on the exchange of envoys with the South after Seoul's representative threatened possible UN sanctions. "It does not matter what sanctions are applied against us," the *Financial Times* quoted North Korean representative Pak Yong Su as saying. "We are ready to respond with an eye for an eye and a war for a war."

"All the facts clearly prove that the United

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1:30 p.m. • *A Working-class Perspective on the Fight for Women's Liberation by Naomi Craine, Socialist Youth Organizing Committee and Militant staff writer.*

4:30 p.m. • *World Capitalist Politics in the '90s: 'Downsizing,' 'Cultural War,' and Global Instability by Jack Barnes, National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party.*

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States has neither the intention to continue talks nor the will to solve the nuclear issue, but only schemes to isolate and stifle the DPRK," a statement from the DPRK foreign minister said. "We have accepted inspection of the seven declared sites enough for the continuity of safeguards within the time agreed upon with the IAEA."

While supporting limited sanctions, the *New York Times* editors expressed reservations about taking measures that may lead to military conflict. U.S. president Bill Clinton "should be in no hurry to heed the advice of Congressional hawks," *Times* editors wrote. "If he pushes too soon for overly tight sanctions, he may end up confronting his Asian allies instead of North Korea. And if he does not carefully calibrate his military moves, he may stumble into war."

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Expert opinion — After Tricky Dick Nixon's Moscow meeting with rightist politico Vladimir Zhirinov-



Harry Ring

sky, an aide to the ex-prez said of Zhirinovsky, "He's smart, articulate and unburdened by an excessive concern for the truth."

Unexplained? Read the Militant — "Many of the world's most affluent nations have found that the

pursuit of prosperity has been accompanied by an unexpected and to some extent unexplained side effect: A growing legion of able-bodied men and women in Europe and the United States have either dropped out of, or been driven from, the work force and appear to have poor prospects of rejoining it." — News item.

Better make that refrigerator payment — Westinghouse paid Robert Watson \$14 million to liquidate its credit division, which lost a bundle in bad loans to real estate sharks and others. Watson, who did the job in 18 months, will also be credited with 25 years service. That means that in 1998 he'll be eligible to collect a yearly pension of at least

\$450,000.

They'll get a similar payoff? — IBM disclosed that last year it paid its former top dog, John Akers, \$4 million to get rid of him. Separately, it reported it will be icing 30,000 jobs this year.

Can't even spit a little venom — Responding to criticism of his query, "Who is the Tolstoy of the Zulus? The Proust of the Papuans," author Saul Bellow complained: "We can't open our mouths without being denounced as racists, misogynists, supremacists, imperialists or fascists."

Funniest statement of the week — Thomas Mann, A Brookings Institution thinker says the series of

televised debates between House Dems and Republicans should "let the public see that it's not all special interests and getting elected, that matters of high interest and principle" are also part of the Congressional agenda.

Tell the customers it's gas pain — One report has it that EuroDisney employees, fed up with required fixed smiles, call the place, "Mauschwitz."

Can't beat that with a stick — Martin Marietta is willing to pay \$208 million for General Dynamics Corp.'s space business if the feds give it \$225 million. It says this is half the amount it will save the government by cost-cutting, includ-

ing axing jobs.

Plain talk — "People can talk to me about drainage and trees and spotted owls, but the bottom line is: It's not their land." — Frank Normali, owner of a landmark Colorado rural area hotel, now pressing ahead to surround it with condos, office buildings, malls, etc.

And thanks to each of you — Clippings from readers continue to provide the material for nearly 50 percent of the items that appear in this column. Contributions should be sent to Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. 90006. Fax: (213) 280-1268.

Stockholm presents accord to join European Union

BY ANITA ÖSTLING

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The Swedish government announced March 2 that it, together with the rulers in Finland and Austria, had reached agreement on joining the European Union (EU). Negotiations with the Norwegian government are still continuing.

The accords must be ratified by parliaments and referendums in each country. The 12-member EU, formerly known as the European Community, currently includes the governments of Britain, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

Divisions run deep among present EU members on terms for accepting new member states. The governments of Germany and to some extent Britain are prepared to make concessions; those of Spain, Portugal, and France are opposed.

The German rulers welcomed the agreement. Decisive to Bonn is that "Finland, Sweden, and Austria are countries with a special sensitivity to the threat coming from an unstable eastern Europe," said an article in the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet*.

According to news reports, the Swedish delegation nearly walked out of talks in Brussels the day before the agreement was sealed. Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt stated, "The German initiatives were of decisive importance at critical moments in the negotiations." He then telephoned German chancellor Helmut Kohl to thank him for Bonn's support.

Subsidies and quotas

The controversy has centered on subsidies to the agricultural sector, fishing quotas, and a few other specific demands from the four countries.

The agreement defines 85 percent of Finland as a "less favored area," which qualifies it for subsidies from the EU budget. The Norwegian government is demanding the same treatment as Finland.

Agricultural prices in Austria are 20 percent to 40 percent above the EU average. These prices will be lowered and the EU budget will compensate Austrian farmers. The Austrian rulers have also been granted control over truck transit traffic in the Alps until the year 2004.

The rulers of Spain and Portugal have

clashed with the government in Norway over fishing quotas in Norwegian waters. Madrid calls for an annual quota, a demand the Norwegian government has rejected.

Farm subsidies comprise half the EU budget. Agreements with the rulers in Finland, Austria, and Sweden will increase the cost by more than \$1 billion a year over the next four years.

Stockholm also demanded that its payments to the EU be lowered. In the end, subsidies to farmers and less favored areas of Sweden cut the net payment in half, to \$1.25 billion. In addition, the Swedish government was allowed to keep its free trade agreement with the Baltic states, even though these countries are not members of the EU.

If the four new applicants for membership are included, the population of the EU countries will total 372 million with an economic output of \$6.7 trillion a year. By comparison the North American Free Trade Agreement covers 370 million inhabitants with an economic output of \$6.5 trillion.

Dispute over voting rules

Following the agreement, Kohl encouraged the government of Hungary to apply for EU membership. The Polish government has already announced that it will apply. Both countries are largely agricultural and their applications will further aggravate the EU's internal divisions over subsidies.

At the moment the EU foreign ministers are locked in a dispute over voting rules for the group's ruling bodies. The present rules give a de facto veto on farm subsidies to a combined vote by the representatives of Spain, Portugal, and Greece. Bonn and the new member states want to change this; Madrid backed by London, is opposed.

These differences could postpone the date of entry into the EU for the new members.

Referendums on the pact are scheduled for June 19 in Austria and September 18 in Finland. In Sweden the date has not yet been agreed on. All of the parties in the governing coalition favor entry. So does the opposition Social Democratic Party and the officialdom in all of the major union federations. There is debate over the measure in most parties, however, especially the Social Democrats and the Centre Party, which has a large base among farmers.



Militant/Lasse Johansson
Workers in Stockholm march against unemployment and austerity, December 1993. Economic crisis strains European Union as capitalist rulers compete for markets.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT
Published in the Interest of the Working People
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On March 25 the Army brought formal charges against nine antiwar GIs at Ft. Jackson, S.C. All nine have been associated with an antiwar group on base, GIs United Against the War in Vietnam.

The patent frame-up of the nine GIs, on various charges — including "disrespect to a superior commissioned officer," "failure to obey a lawful order," "breach of peace," and "willful disobedience to a superior officer" — came immediately after the largest and most successful meeting that GIs United has held to date.

The frame-up charges represent an attempt by the brass to clamp down on the tremendous increase in antiwar activity at Ft. Jackson. The men of GIs United have been making their antiwar views known all over the base. They have circulated petitions requesting facilities for meetings on post to discuss the war, and a legal suit has been filed to that end. Numerous GIs at Ft. Jackson have been planning to participate in the April 6 antiwar demonstration in Atlanta, Ga.

The antiwar GIs at Ft. Jackson have gained nationwide publicity and support. Last week, noted constitutional attorney Leonard Boudin announced plans to sue the Secretary of the Army and the commanding general at Ft. Jackson to prevent infringement on the GIs' rights, and specifically their right to hold meetings and petition.

On March 19, Pvt. Tommie Woodfin, one of the nine, was acquitted at an earlier summary court-martial on charges of circulating the GIs United petition. The present charges are much more serious,

however, and are an attempt by the brass to victimize many of the leaders of GIs United.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
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April 1, 1944

A portentous crack in the iron-clad war structure of imperialist Japan has been disclosed to the world in dispatches out of London revealing:

1. Food riots in Kagoshima prefecture and probably other parts of the country, followed by repressive government action against the Japanese Farmers' Union.

2. A Japanese government decree disbanding the Workers' Party under whose auspices a mass meeting was held in Tokyo's Ueno Park, with some 40,000 people attending.

The Workers' Party meeting in Ueno Park was savagely attacked by police gendarmes, with 37 casualties suffered by the demonstrators, seven of whom subsequently died of their injuries. Flags used by the demonstrators, the Osaka paper added, were confiscated and burned.

The Japanese press reports make it clear that these manifestations of mass opposition to the war program of the Japanese imperialists are not just spontaneous, sporadic outbreaks, but possess the character of an organized movement which apparently is still in its first stages.

The mention of a Workers' party and a Farmers' Union are the first indications that masses are beginning to confront their capitalist-militarist exploiters and oppressors in organized fashion. Long before the extension of the world war to the Pacific area, the Japanese government dissolved all political parties — including the capitalist Minseito and Seiyukai — and merged them in the totalitarian, monolithic political structure known as the Imperial Rule Assistance Association, which is the Japanese counterpart of Hitler's Nazi Party.



Ny International no. 1
(In Swedish)

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Washington's Assault on Iraq

JACK BARNES

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Capitalism's new grave diggers

The single most important fact emerging from the current upturn in the U.S. economy is that for the first time in more than a decade there is substantial hiring for production jobs in basic manufacturing and transportation.

This occurs during a cyclical economic recovery taking place during a worldwide depression. The past several upturns in the business cycle resulted in paltry job creation. Large scale layoffs are continuing, particularly those of managerial and administrative personnel. But what is new is that the employers in auto, coal mining, railroads, and other industries are now forced to hire tens of thousands of young workers.

This is the result of a large-scale reorganization of industry by the employing class that workers have already paid dearly for in blood and bone. "Downsizing," computerization, and speedup have been the *modus operandi* of capitalists in the United States for at least a decade. By squeezing more out of workers' hides and by cutting already inadequate social services that provide a minimum safety net for working people, the U.S. employers and their government have been far more successful in increasing labor productivity than their competitors in Tokyo, Bonn, and elsewhere in Europe. Today, for example, Washington has exports representing a higher percentage of its gross domestic product than does Tokyo.

The bosses in general are not building new plants or expanding productive capacity. The auto companies, for example, plan to hire tens of thousands of workers to produce more cars and trucks over the next few years by adding new shifts and replacing those who retire. Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler have all announced plans to

add third shifts at assembly plants.

The employers are not overjoyed with the prospect of hiring new labor, especially younger workers who aren't aware of what they can't do and who tend to be more rebellious. But they have no choice. They are looking for warm flesh with strong muscles to produce for their export boom. They are most likely getting, however, more than they bargained for.

History has shown that when there is massive hiring during an upturn, younger forces can have a significant impact on the working-class movement. The explosion of labor battles that built the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1930s and the post-World War II labor upsurge were fueled by waves of young workers who entered the factories and mines.

The worst threat workers face is that of massive unemployment. The greatest division in the working class is between those who have jobs and those who don't. Hiring of the kind unfolding now can help break such divisions down, allowing room for self-confidence among workers to grow.

Capitalism is simply creating more of its own grave diggers. Initial evidence suggests that a series of guerrilla struggles are taking place in many plants around the country, including new skirmishes at GM and ongoing conflicts at Caterpillar. Young workers can be an important and immediate factor in the initiation or outcome of any working class battles. No one knows how long the hiring will last, or can predict its overall impact on the class struggle. But all working-class fighters should welcome this development and use every opportunity to join younger forces flocking to the factories, mines, and mills.

Lower wages don't create jobs

From Paris to Marseilles and from Bordeaux to Lyons, tens of thousands of young people have poured into the streets of France to protest imposition of a law that allows employers to pay a subminimum wage to workers who are 25 years old or under. High school and college students have emptied out classrooms, organized marches and rallies, distributed fliers, and blocked roads. "Slaves in the year 2000? No!" said one banner in Marseilles. "I don't want to be working like a dog if I can't even make a living," said a student.

Significantly, the students have not been protesting alone. Tens of thousands of working people — who understand that the question of the minimum wage is primarily a class question, not a youth question — have joined the demonstrations. Workers organized by all of France's trade union federations have participated.

The French ruling class, reeling from the impact of the worldwide economic depression, is pushing the subminimum wage as a solution to unemployment. Unlike the United States, Britain, and New Zealand, there is no episodic economic upturn in continental Europe. The jobless rate in France is more than 12 percent. For youth it's 25 percent.

The youthful protesters don't buy the bosses' argument that they must choose between jobs and a living wage. And

the fact is that a lower minimum wage won't mean more jobs for working people. The employers don't have a set budget item for labor costs. They hire workers to make the products they can sell on the market, and then pay them as little as they can get away with. A lower wage for young workers, or any other part of the working class, just makes it easier for the capitalists to pay everyone less. It also drives a wedge between workers who are young and those who are older.

The workers and students protesting in France have the right idea: massive protests organized independently of the bosses and their associations to demand that they not be the victims of the capitalist crisis. These protests, unlike the ones pushing protectionist slogans that big business is trying to rally fishermen around, strengthen the hand of working people in France and around the world.

Demanding a shorter workweek with no cut in pay and a sliding scale of wages and hours can further strengthen the hand of workers and students demonstrating in France against a lower minimum wage.

These protest actions provide an example for working people around the globe who want to resist capitalist austerity. Workers and youth in the United States and the world over should stand in full solidarity with their brothers and sisters in France.

End threats against N. Korea

Working people and youth have no interest in backing Washington's war moves against North Korea. The Clinton administration arrogantly justifies its latest threats with claims Pyongyang refuses to comply with an agreement to maintain safeguards against the production of nuclear weapons.

United Nations inspectors have no evidence that the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has reprocessed any plutonium for use in weapons. Pyongyang says it has no nuclear weapons, although it has every right to develop or acquire them in the face of decades-long aggression from Washington. In fact the DPRK has been pushing for an agreement to make the Korean peninsula nuclear-free since 1970.

Washington, the biggest nuclear power on earth, has been the only government in the world to use atomic weapons. It is the U.S. government, not Pyongyang, that poses a threat to the safety of workers and farmers in Asia and around the world. Already Washington's wars and economic policies have cost millions of lives from Japan to Vietnam and from Nicaragua to Iraq.

U.S. president Bill Clinton has ordered the reinstitution of the Team Spirit exercises, which amount to a practice invasion of North Korea. Navy aircraft carriers, patriot

missiles, and more troops will boost the already 37,000-strong U.S. troop presence in South Korea. For more than four decades Clinton and the nine U.S. presidents before him have carried out a campaign of aggression against North Korea.

The U.S. rulers hostility to North Korea has little to do with nuclear weapons. It is aimed at maintaining the division of Korea and thus weakening the ability of workers and farmers — North and South — to fight for their rights. Washington's efforts to convince other governments to impose sanctions against the DPRK bring the peninsula closer to a military conflict. But the U.S. government is miscalculating the explosive character of the national question when it threatens North Korea.

The U.S. guns and troops stationed in South Korea and the war maneuvers in the region are aimed not only at the DPRK, but also at the toilers in South Korea, who have time and again risen up against repressive regimes in Seoul and continue to demand an end to separation from their brothers and sisters in the North.

To aid the Korean people's fight for national sovereignty and reunification, the labor movement should demand Washington stop its threats against the North and withdraw its troops from the peninsula.

Tailhook affair reveals sexual harassment by officer corps worldwide

BY PAT SMITH

On March 9, four women representing each branch of the U.S. military testified before the House Armed Services Committee that they had been sexually harassed and punished for reporting it.

Air Force Sgt. Zenaida Martinez, for example, said her superior at a base in Britain, "explicitly described the benefits of my having a sexual relationship with him" in 1992. The sergeant "made me understand that if I refused, my career would suffer," she said. When Martinez repudiated his demands, she found her tires slashed and wheel bolts loosened. Martinez turned over tape recordings of harassing conversations to air force officials, but after 18 months was told her case was still being reviewed. She found out *she* was the focus of an official investigation, not the men she charged with harassment. Documents accusing her of misconduct or poor performance had been put in her personnel file without her knowledge.

The March 9 hearing came in the aftermath of the Tailhook scandal — revelations of sexual abuse at a Navy aviators convention in September 1991.

Dozens of women — mainly officers — attending the gathering reported being attacked by a crowd of men who formed a gauntlet in the hallway of a Las Vegas hotel during the convention of the Tailhook Association. In spite of two investigations, one by the inspector general and Naval Investigative Service and the other one by the Pentagon, no one was ever held accountable for the sexual harassment and abuse that took place at the convention. About 50 men were eventually fined or otherwise disciplined for indecent exposure, conduct unbecoming an officer, or making false statements.

Although Navy Secretary John Dalton recommended the removal of Admiral Frank Kelso, chief of naval operations, for failing to show proper leadership at the convention, Les Aspin, defense secretary at the time, rejected the proposal and Kelso remained in his post.

Navy judge, Capt. William Vest, concluded Kelso used "unlawful command influence" to "manipulate the initial investigative process" and the subsequent discipline process "in a manner designed to shield his personal involvement in Tailhook '91." Again, the secretary of defense — this time William Perry — came to Kelso's defense, calling him "a man of highest integrity and honor." Following Perry's comments, Kelso retired.

Standard operating procedure

The military brass's cavalier attitude toward rape and other abuses, reflected in their handling of the Tailhook scandal, should come as no surprise to working people. The fact is that from post-World War II Japan to Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, the U.S. military has acted to ensure that the sexual services of large numbers of women are made available — at "bargain rates" — to U.S. servicemen.

Women, known as "comfort girls," were forced to accompany Japanese military units during World War II and submit to what amounted to repeated mass rapes. Many of these women were later organized as prostitutes for the occupying U.S. troops after the war. Shantytowns of brothels and massage parlors surrounded U.S. bases in Vietnam and the Philippines. The number of prostitutes in Vietnam at the time U.S. troops were forced to leave was estimated at more than 300,000. The U.S. military controlled the health and security features at the facilities.

Opposition from the Saudi government during Washington's war against the people of Iraq made it impossible to set up similar services for troops in the Middle East. So military officials arranged for large numbers of servicemen to be flown home via Thailand and the Philippines, to make available the prostitution facilities in those countries.

The U.S. military brass reflects the worst aspects of capitalism. The officer corp attracts those interested in investing their lives in upholding the decaying system of sexism, racism, unemployment, and war.

Many who describe themselves as feminists argue that the only way to end sexual harassment in the military is to fight for more female officers and the "right" of women to hold combat positions. As long as women are kept from these jobs, they claim, they will suffer a second-class status that invites harassment.

This is false. The working class has no interest in fighting for anyone's "right" to be part of Washington's repressive war machine. To link the fight for women's rights with support for imperialist wars pits the fight to end women's oppression against the struggle of working people around the world.

However, working people should oppose the harassment of women in and outside the armed forces. We should support serious investigations into allegations of abuse and demand punishment of those found guilty.

The confidence of women in the military to expose instances of sexual harassment is a result of advances made in the fight for women's rights. The increasing integration of women into the workforce in the decades since WWII and the subsequent women's movement has meant that more working people and others find sexual harassment unacceptable. Through women's participation alongside men in battles on the shop floor, at clinics in defense of abortion rights, and in the streets, working people can continue to push back attacks on women's rights. This is the road forward to fight against sexual harassment — wherever it occurs.

Ohio strike shuts seven GM plants nationwide

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 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.

Close to 3,000 auto workers in Dayton, Ohio, struck General Motors for three days in mid-March over company plans to lay off up to 500 workers. GM, which is in-

The Modern Operating Agreement (MOA), which would cover workers on the Mercury Villager assembly line, gives the company greater flexibility in assigning jobs by establishing "teams" that are responsible for all the jobs in a certain area.

The MOA was first imposed on the Avon Lake workers in 1990 by agreement of the company and union officialdom. Union members did not get a chance to vote on that contract. Most workers on the Mercury Villager line are young. Many are new to the auto industry and the UAW.

Workers explain that the MOA has meant line speedup, increased injuries, overloaded jobs, and harassment and intimidation of work-

ON THE PICKET LINE

involved in contract negotiations with the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the plants, had said it was going to stop producing some of the parts currently made at the two Delco Chassis division brake part plants.

Following the strike, which quickly forced GM to shut down seven factories in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Ontario, Canada, the company announced it would maintain production of some aluminum parts at the plant, adding about 200 new jobs. Shares of GM fell almost \$2.50 during the strike.

Last October, the UAW and General Motors signed a national three-year agreement that included a wage for new hires of 70 percent of full pay, deductions from cost-of-living increases to pay for health-care benefits, and a 3 percent wage increase. In addition, GM's owners said they would cut 65,000 union jobs by 1995. Since then, local unions around the country have been negotiating agreements on work schedules and other issues. □

Auto workers in Ohio reject contract with Ford

Nineteen hundred members of the UAW at Ford's Avon Lake assembly plant in Ohio rejected a proposed local contract March 14.

ers by management.

John Schmidt, a 27-year-old worker with a little more than a year at the plant, explained that many unionists have been disciplined by the company for stopping the line to fix a problem or complete their job. "In the contract we've been working under, we have authority to stop the line to fix a problem, so you can fight it when the company disciplines you for halting production. But the new contract includes wording that allows the company to use discipline 'as a last resort.' I consider that a concession," he said.

"People want a contract that's clear," said Don Rowe. "The MOA is vague and gray." The MOA breaks down unity in the plant, said Rowe. "With a traditional contract, the whole department is together and if something happens to someone the entire department knows about it. With the MOA we're broken down into teams."

Bill Carroll, a spokesman for Ford Motor Co. has told the local press that the company will not go back to the bargaining table.

Union president John Hatcher reported to the *Morning Journal* that he has requested strike authorization from the UAW international.

Meanwhile, 1,400 workers on



Hundreds of union supporters held a victory demonstration outside the Silver Palace in New York's Chinatown March 13 after 40 members of the Restaurant Workers Union beat back the owner's attempts to force them to give up paid health insurance, part of their tips, and other benefits. The workers had been locked out since August 19.

the Econoline at the Avon Lake plant approved a "traditional" contract with Ford. □

Garment workers win victory against Healthtex

Members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union at three Healthtex garment plants in Danville, Virginia; Warrenton, Georgia; and Centerville, Alabama, won a victory after a three-day strike forced the company to agree to a settlement that provides better insurance coverage, a pay raise, and contract language guaranteeing that 1,000 jobs will be maintained at the three plants. The workers had walked off the job March 14.

All but a handful of the workers joined the walkout, which shut down all three plants. In addition, some workers who were not yet

members of the union took the opportunity to sign up.

Healthtex is the second largest manufacturer of children's wear in the United States. □

4,000 fishery workers protest gov't budget cuts

Four thousands fishery workers took to the streets in St. John's, Newfoundland, February 27 to protest cuts in Canada's unemployment insurance program. The cuts were announced in the federal government's budget February 22 and will affect workers in the East Coast fishing industry especially.

The government will increase the number of weeks of work per year needed to be eligible for unemployment insurance from 10 to 12. Earnings will be reduced from 57 to 55 percent of average

salary.

A special fishery workers compensation program that began in 1992 will also be cut. The program pays a maximum of \$406 to fishermen thrown out of work by the closing of fishing grounds. Average payments under the program will drop to \$280 from \$301.

The protest in St. John's was the only large action in Canada so far to protest the unemployment insurance cuts. □

The following people contributed to this column: Kibwe Diarra and Amy Husk Sanchez, members of UAW Local 2000 in Avon Lake, Ohio; Robert Dees, member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in North Carolina; and Roger Annis, member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 1900 in Montreal.

LETTERS

Immigration

The coverage the *Militant* gives to immigration issues has prompted me to write of a recent case in South Auckland which highlighted the ineptitude of the New Zealand Immigration Service and the cruelty of the immigration laws.

A house was raided at 6:30 a.m. one morning and two Samoan sisters were arrested and taken to police cells where they spent three days locked up whilst their lawyer, family, and friends tried to tell the Immigration Service and the police that they had the wrong two sisters. One of the women in the cells was eight months pregnant, the other was breastfeeding a six-month-old child. When they were finally released the two women were able to have a brief meeting with their sisters at the airport before the latter were deported.

The Immigration Service is being sued by the two sisters who were wrongfully arrested and held in police cells.

Mervyl Morrison
Otahuhu, New Zealand

Nation of Islam I

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan visited Massachusetts March 9 and 10 speaking at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and the Strand Theater in Bos-

ton. Thousands turned out to hear his over three-hour long speeches. In Boston all women, as well as whites, were denied entrance to the meeting that was billed "for black men."

A group of five black ministers here condemned Farrakhan as a "hypocrite" at a March 10 news conference. "We are concerned about a tendency toward intimidation and threats," Rev. Ray Hammond of Bethel AME Church said of the Nation of Islam. "To preach against black-on-black violence and to practice and condone black-on-black violence... is morally inconsistent," said Rev. Eugene Rivers of the Azusa Christian Community.

The five ministers addressed a letter to Farrakhan calling on him to answer questions about five violent incidents linked to his organization. Among these is Farrakhan's connection to the assassination of Malcolm X.

Farrakhan spoke to this point in his March 9 speech saying, "I never had anything to do with Malcolm's death. But I can't lie to you that I was his friend when he died. I was his enemy because I felt him to be the enemy of black people." He acknowledged however that he was among those who, "created an atmosphere that allowed Malcolm to be assassinated."

The March 11 Boston *Globe*

cites a Farrakhan speech given in Chicago last year in which he said, "Was Malcolm your traitor or was he ours? And if we dealt with him like a nation deals with a traitor, what the hell business is it of yours?"

The March 14 *Globe* cites a March 13 interview on the New York TV show "News Forum," with Malcolm's widow, Betty Shabazz. In answer to Gabe Pressman's question as to whether Farrakhan had anything to do with Malcolm's death she replied, "Of course, yes. Nobody kept it a secret. It was a badge of honor." In response, Nation of Islam spokesperson Conrad Muhammad opined that Shabazz used the interview to do, "what the ADL [Anti-Defamation League] and the Jews planned." Conrad asked, "Is Gabe Pressman Jewish?"
Geoff Mirelowitz
Boston, Massachusetts

Nation of Islam II

The recent *Militant* news article, "Nation of Islam's Jew-hatred sets off heated debate," refers to the group in question as "a bourgeois-nationalist organization." This limited definition fails to note the Nation of Islam's fundamentally rightist character.

Khalid Muhammad's Jew-hatred, anti-woman, race-baiting, anti-

Catholic, anti-immigrant, and gay-bashing remarks, — defended in content by Louis Farrakhan — are akin to fascist, Ku Klux Klan and skinhead scapegoating. Attempts to demonize and create pariah categories of "subhumans" serves and reflects the rightist drift of bourgeois politics in a time of crisis for the capitalist system.

The Nation of Islam stands for and subsists on capitalism, or more precisely, the small crumb earmarked for its services rendered.

Farrakhan & Co.'s right-wing, "radical" demagoguery gets a hearing because of the absence of united struggle, the void of working-class leadership, and the vacuum of such leadership for the Black nationality. No amount of liberal hand-wringing, prayer services, and condemnation by officials of civil rights organizations can substitute for a genuine battle against oppression and the new fighting leadership it requires.

The *Militant* article also unfortunately failed to note that in his Kean College speech Muhammad sought to blame German Jews for the Nazi's genocidal campaign against Jews. "You see," he said at Kean, "everybody always talk[s] about Hitler exterminating 6 million Jews. But don't nobody ever ask, 'What did they do to Hitler?' They went in there to Germany, the way

they do everywhere they go, and they supplanted, they usurped, and a German in his own country would almost have to go to a Jew to get money. The Jews had undermined the very fabric of the society."

Muhammad does not "deny" the Holocaust, like some other ultrarightists. He justifies it. This, Farrakhan stated, is one of the many "truths" his former aide told, the stock-in-trade of the Nation of Islam, borrowed from the arsenal of capitalist reaction, built up through centuries of oppression and prejudice.

Frederick Engels once termed anti-Semitism "the socialism of fools." The utility this "socialism" provides the bosses to confuse, disorient, demoralize, divert, and divide the oppressed and exploited, crippling the struggle against capitalist rule, is exemplified by the Nation of Islam's rightist demagoguery, "the nationalism of fools."

Jon Hillson
Minneapolis, Minnesota

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.

U.S. students call events to back ANC

BY DAMON TINNON
AND GREG McCARTAN

PHILADELPHIA — A student-sponsored conference here issued a call for college campuses to hold activities and educational events backing the African National Congress during the April 26-28 elections in South Africa.

Students from 39 colleges, a majority in the Northeast, and other anti-apartheid activists gathered for an intensive discussion at the March 18-19 regional conference titled "Giving Birth to a New South Africa."

Conference participants voted to organize a speaking tour of an ANC leader next fall in order to continue to draw more youth and workers into the struggle for a nonracial and democratic South Africa.

Many of the 150 participants said they gained a better understanding of the place of the first-ever democratic elections in South Africa, and of the aims, strategy, and political perspectives of the ANC coming out of the establishment of a constituent assembly in May.

The conference featured keynote addresses followed by lively discussion periods, special greetings from prominent individuals, a city council resolution declaring "South Africa weekend" in Philadelphia, and workshops on the elections, the roots of violence in South Africa, and the role of youth and labor in aiding the ANC.

"When the day dawns" after the conclusion of voting, "the people of South Africa will, for the first time, be free to determine their own future," said keynote speaker Neo Moikangoa. The ANC leader is the director of the Office of the National Chairperson of the ANC and convener of the Political Secretariat of the ANC presidency. Moikangoa said that "there has never been an election so misunderstood — especially internationally." The poll "will give birth to a new political, economic, and social order in South Africa. Elections are not supposed to do that. Elections are supposed to preserve the existing order."

"We are not involved in that type of election. This election will bury the racist, oppressive, and exploitative order; deprive those who have illegally ruled South Africa since 1948 of their so-called right to rule; put 'peoples power' into the hands of the victorious party; and mandate that party to build a united, nonracial, democratic, and nonsexist South Africa," the ANC leader said.

Moikangoa emphasized that "the most difficult part of our struggle will begin with those elections," noting the challenge facing

the new government will be to write a new constitution that "will make a nonracial society a reality."

He encouraged conference participants to help insure that any investment and trade relations with South Africa "result in the empowerment of the disadvantaged people of South Africa and that U.S. government aid goes without strings attached."

The large majority of conference participants were college students. Students from several high schools also attended.

Meghan Washington, who attends a Philadelphia-area high school, said she heard about the conference on the radio and decided to attend. "I want to help make other students aware that there is something going on, it affects them, and they can relate to it," she said.

Building solidarity with the freedom struggle in South Africa is important, she said, because "it is a struggle and not just a cause. It gives young people a chance to know that we can make a change."

Fika Sibibi is a student from South Africa

attending State College in Pennsylvania. He came to the event to "participate with people from America on a discussion about our struggle. I also want to get ideas about what to organize on my campus in April to support the struggle," he stated.

A high school student from Cleveland who attended with several classmates said the liberation movement in South Africa is special because "it is about people taking our lives into our own hands and making a decision to demand what we want and need in our lives. We are creating a voice that has been lost through politics and government."

Pável Díaz Hernández, a youth leader from Cuba, addressed the meeting and held several informal discussion sessions with conference goers.

As an internationalist volunteer, Díaz served in Angola in the late 1980s at a time when the South African regime had mounted a massive invasion of Angola. Cuban and Angolan troops along with freedom fighters from Namibia defeated the invasion in a crucial battle around the southern city of

Cuito Cuanavale.

The 14-year effort to defeat the expansionist aims of the South African regime was "our contribution to the struggle for a free South Africa and the independence of Namibia. To fight was a duty to humanity," he said.

"Our revolution will emerge stronger despite the current difficulties, and will support struggles around the world like we have before," the Cuban youth leader said to applause.

A South African student responded during the discussion, saying, "We admire you Cuba. You have survived in a sea of capitalism. We are aware of the role you played in southern Africa. Because I knew Cuba was there from the time I was a youth, I don't believe any of the propaganda against Cuba that we've heard in the United States."

Nearly \$2,000 was raised at the conference to donate to the ANC election effort. A walk-a-thon was also held the following day to aid the voter registration and education effort.

Ruler of second apartheid homeland falls

Continued from front page
Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Buthelezi, the chief minister of the KwaZulu Bantustan, is one of the principal opponents of the African National Congress-led fight for a democratic, nonracial, nonsexist republic. While the rulers of KwaZulu continue with their threat to boycott the elections and block political activity inside the homeland, a combination of political protests and actions by South Africa's Transitional Executive Council (TEC) is putting enormous pressure on Buthelezi to capitulate as well.

On March 23, ANC deputy secretary-general Jacob Zuma called on the TEC to take over administration of KwaZulu. The ANC plans to launch a mass action campaign March 25 in Natal, beginning with a march in Durban.

The TEC, which has assumed growing control over governmental powers, replaced Gqozo with its own administrators. The homeland ruler announced his resignation and pleaded with Pretoria to send troops to



Protest at Ciskei consulate following 1992 Bisho massacre on orders of former dictator Gqozo.

Ciskei following a rebellion by hundreds of striking soldiers and police, who took some senior officers hostage. The troops demanded early pension payments. A new government will take over following the April 26-28 elections.

Civil service workers and soldiers in the 10 Bantustans are concerned that they receive their pay.

"I am relieved in a sense," Gqozo said. "I would not like to end up in a situation where the whole place is up in smoke." South African army troops were deployed at the Ciskei border. The *New York Times* reported that rebellious members of the homeland police shouted "Viva ANC," during their protests.

Gqozo is notorious for ordering his police to attack an ANC-led march in September 1992. In what became known as the Bisho massacre, named after the homeland's main city, troops shot 28 ANC supporters dead.

South Africa's Goldstone Commission announced March 18 the partial results of its investigations into the cause of the political violence that has claimed 15,000 lives since 1990. The report directly implicated top officials of the South African government.

Lieut. Gen. Basie Smit, second in command of the South African police, and spy chief Krappies Engelbrecht headed a network that supplied automatic rifles, grenades, mortars, and other weapons to Inkatha in its war against the democratic revolution.

These cops drew on a South African gov-

ernment slush fund for their activities, which included organizing the slaughter of working people traveling on commuter trains in hopes of prolonging white-minority rule.

Police spokespeople denounced the report and de Klerk's handling of the situation, saying the force had been demoralized to an "unbelievable extent."

"The ANC has always said that a third force existed," within the government, said ANC president Nelson Mandela March 21 at a rally of 65,000 people commemorating the 1960 Sharpeville police massacre of 69 Blacks. "Today many families have no fathers, mothers, sisters, and friends because of political violence. De Klerk's National Party has to take responsibility for all of this. ... it was under its government that all of this happened."

A TEC-appointed subcommission announced March 22 that there is evidence linking Natal hit squads directly to Buthelezi's office. "The number of deaths caused by these hit squads is unquantifiable, but would represent a significant proportion of those who have died in political violence in Natal-KwaZulu. ..."

"Apparently the network is preparing for further widespread destabilization," the TEC's report said.

More than 60 people died in the province from March 18-22. Inkatha stepped up its attacks on growing political protests demanding that Buthelezi allow free political activity. Inkatha thugs also carried out random attacks on working people in the province. ANC supporters fought back.

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