

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Auto, rail workers discuss labor and world politics

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Washington, big banks unite behind Mexico deal

### Capitalists hope to head off financial crisis

BY PAT SMITH

Leaders of both the Democratic and Republican parties in Congress and the big-business press lined up to applaud President Bill Clinton's January 31 repackaged \$50 billion bailout plan to stave off a default by the Mexican government on payments to wealthy bondholders.

Republican Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich told chief of staff Leon Panetta that Clinton's assertion of executive authority in putting together the plan would bring "a huge sigh of relief" from Congress.

Growing concern in financial markets over Congress's hesitation in approving an earlier \$40 billion package resulted in an additional 10 percent drop in the peso against the dollar a day earlier, leaving the peso 45 percent below its pre-December 20 level. The U.S. dollar itself reached a three-week low against the German mark. Stocks not only in Mexico but elsewhere in Latin America, Asia, and other "emerging markets" dropped sharply and rapidly.

The editors of the *Washington Post* warned of "bankruptcies and layoffs" if the legislation failed. "There is a high risk of real economic depression in Mexico," the editorial said.

But it is not the prospect of unemployment and misery in Mexico, the United States, or anywhere else that big business and its bought-and-paid-for press and politicians were worried about.

The *Wall Street Journal* put its finger on their real concerns in a small box headlined "What's at stake" at the top of its daily "Money & Investing" section the



March of 30,000 in Mexico City January 12 called for halt to government attacks on peasants in Chiapas and protested effort by capitalists in the United States and Mexico to make working people sacrifice to stem fall of the peso.

AP photo/Dario Lopez-Mills

day after Clinton announced the bailout: \$15.9 billion in U.S. bank loans to Mexico and \$41 billion in loans to other Latin American countries; revenues of \$17.1 billion in assets held by Wall Street mutual funds in Latin America; and unknown billions of dollars in interest payments on bonds issued by the Mexican and other Latin American and Third World governments.

Under the headline "U.S. Securities

Firms and Mutual Funds Have Big Bucks Riding on Mexico Rescue," the *Wall Street Journal* reported February 1 that investors were "dazzled by the 43% average returns on international-stock funds in 1993," and pointed out that the "emerging markets boom featured huge investment returns at times topping 80% annually."

Despite two weeks of shadow-boxing in Congress, the big majority of bourgeois

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## Returning from Cuba brigade, youth pledge to tell truth about revolution

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"The Cubans told me to remind the people in the U.S., 'We don't claim to be perfect, but we have the right to be a sovereign nation and we won't give up the gains of the revolution,'" said Erin Forbes, a 21-year-old student who was part of a brigade of 70 young people who visited Cuba in January.

Participants in the International Youth Brigade were on editorial assignment to report on political developments in revolutionary Cuba for newspapers and radio stations throughout the United States and other countries. They spent a week on a banana farm talking to Cuban youth and workers in the fields getting an eyewitness account of daily life.

The brigade included young workers and students from Canada, Sweden, Mexico, Britain, Spain, Iceland, and Germany, along with 49 participants from the United States. Many now plan to speak about their experiences at public meetings in their respective countries. The *Militant* conducted telephone interviews with several of the brigadistas.

Many questions answered

"I had questions about democratic rights, racism, homophobia, and the U.S.



Cuban volunteers and brigade participants at Ciego de Avila banana farm

Militant/Rebecca Gettleman

blockade," said Forbes, who attends Temple University in Philadelphia. Forbes, a member of the Young Socialists, participated in the November 12 march in Washington, D.C., against the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

Forbes talked to Cubans who fought in Angola against the racist army of South Africa and plans to write about his experience in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, a Black-owned local newspaper.

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## Canada student actions spur Feb. 12 union rally against gov't cutbacks

BY KATY LE ROUGETEL

MONTREAL — Buoyed by the achievement of the successful January 25 cross-country student protests, a coalition of Quebec's three labor federations, student groups, women's rights organizations, and others are redoubling their efforts to build a February 12 demonstration in this city for jobs and against Ottawa's planned education and other social-service cutbacks.

The January 25 actions were the largest cross-country student protests ever held in Canada. According to the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) communications coordinator, Simone Saint-Pierre, 75,000 students — from Victoria, British Columbia, on the Pacific through to St. John's, Newfoundland, on the Atlantic — marched and rallied that day to protest the proposed federal cutbacks in funding for post-secondary education. Tens of thousands more boycotted classes. Hundreds of high school students also participated.

Here in Montreal, 10,000 young people and supporters wound through downtown in a line stretching for half a mile. Students on more than 80 campuses in dozens of cities across the country organized marches, forums, demonstrations, and sit-ins. In Newfoundland, one of Canada's poorest and least populated provinces, up to 10,000 rallied in several cities, according to the CFS.

The Canadian Labor Congress, provincial labor federations, as well as women's rights and anti-poverty groups endorsed the protest.

The proposed federal government cutbacks include not only \$2.6 billion in post-secondary education spending, but also billions of dollars that may be slashed from social programs such as unemployment insurance and welfare in Ottawa's February budget. The government even floated the idea last week of raising retirement age to 67 from 65.

Sour grapes in big business press

A concerted campaign to undermine the political impact of the January 25 day of action is being carried out by the capitalist media as part of the buildup to the federal budget due in February. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* carried no article on the protests, only a photo with a caption saying that "a full-fledged national strike against federal proposals...never materialized...most students stayed in class."

On the morning of the protest itself, the *Globe and Mail* editorialized that "the national Student Day of Strike and Action is likely to sink with scarcely a ripple: a mark of the lack of support for the student unions in their hysterical campaign" against government cutbacks. "Today's protesters might ask themselves this: Why should the average worker have to pay for his boss's kids to go to university?"

Eight thousand Toronto protesters answered this crude divide-and-conquer tactic by marching to city hall to show solidarity with unemployed workers, then to the Stock Exchange to highlight where the wealth to fund education could be found. The demonstration also passed by Revenue Canada to express solidarity with native peoples who had occupied its offices in a tax protest earlier this year.

Montreal protesters were greeted at

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## Washington admits planning military strikes against N. Korea

U.S. secretary of defense William Perry said January 24 that U.S. officials considered air attacks against nuclear facilities in North Korea last year. Perry admitted that one plan was to "take out" a five-megawatt reactor suspected of producing plutonium. Washington was also prepared to carry out "robust sanctions" to squeeze North Korea economically and politically.

Perry stated that preparations were made to deploy more than 10,000 additional U.S. troops to bolster the 37,000 soldiers stationed in South Korea.

## Japanese bank takes huge loss

Sumitomo, the third largest bank in the world, announced January 27 it was writing off almost \$8 billion worth of bad loans. While the bank will sell some of its stock holdings to compensate, Sumitomo's parent company will likely end off the year \$2.8 billion in the red. Japan's 21 major banks reported about \$133 billion of bad loans in September of 1994. One of them, the Nippon Trust Bank, virtually collapsed and expects a loss of \$1.6 billion this year.

## French bank gets bailout

Crédit Lyonnais, the world's largest bank outside of Japan, last year received \$4.4 billion in fresh capital, loan guarantees, and other aid from the government to stay afloat. Banking executives say it will need at least that amount again this year. The bank suffered huge losses from investments in real estate and in the steel, airline, and other industries that stagnated during the recession. Auditors estimate the bank's losses could be more than \$9 billion. Altus Finance, which handles the bank's investments, ran up massive losses in 1993 and the first half of 1994.

## Strikes threaten Italian airline

Unions at Alitalia, Italy's state-run airline, threatened further strike action against the government's plans for privatization. A restructuring plan calls for reducing the 29,000-member workforce by 20 percent over the next three years. The pilots, who organized a four-hour strike in mid-January, are also preparing work stoppages in February to protest being re-



A border dispute between the governments of Ecuador and Peru escalated into a military clash January 27 when the president of Ecuador declared a state of emergency and the Peruvian government responded by massing thousands of soldiers in the region. Disputed area is believed to be rich in gold, uranium, and oil deposits.

placed by Australian crews on some routes from Rome to the United States and Canada. Air traffic controllers are planning strike actions in early February to help get a new national contract.

## Kazakhstan, Moscow sign pact

The government of Kazakhstan signed a military agreement with Moscow January 20 that establishes "joint forces" and puts four military bases in Kazakhstan under Moscow's control. Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of the republic, has turned to the regime of Russian president Boris Yeltsin and several imperialist countries for help in shoring up his government. The country is gripped by a severe economic recession. Kazakhstan has an estimated 3 billion tons of oil reserves, which Moscow seeks to cash in on by building a transport pipeline.

## Walkouts spread in Jamaica

Jamaica's largest aluminum refinery, Alumina Partners, was shut down by strik-

ing workers January 20. The walkout spread to two more refineries in the country's bauxite industry January 23. The strikers were protesting Alcan Jamaica Co.'s low wage offer. The strike has halted 75 percent of Jamaica's refining capacity, which is more than 1 million tons per year. Jamaica is the world's third largest bauxite ore producer. Ore production in 1994 was 12.95 million tons, almost 5 percent more than in 1993.

## Argentina faces banking crisis

A creeping financial crisis in Argentina has brought as many as 30 banks to the brink of bankruptcy. Three of these financial institutions have been suspended from trading for 30 days and are struggling to stay afloat.

The financial crisis in Mexico may force the collapse of weaker banks as confidence falls and depositors shift their accounts to larger institutions. Luis Secco, a financial analyst, told the *Financial Times* he observed a modest fall in deposits, which will lead to a "relatively orderly process" of bank mergers. However, if large amounts of capital leave the country, Argentina's banking process will be "far more traumatic," he said.

## Recession lingers in Venezuela

According to a report from the *Los Angeles Times*, Venezuela's economy is entering its third year of recession with an annual inflation rate of 71 percent. At least 4 out of 10 Venezuelans live in poverty, and public services barely function.

Amidst the poverty, Venezuela has vast wealth — the largest known oil reserves in the western hemisphere, some 64 billion barrels. An estimated \$175 billion of

imperialist investments that poured in during the past two decades has done little to ease the burdens of working people.

## Family income drops in Canada

Average family incomes in Canada dropped 2.2 percent in 1993, for the fourth year in a row. It was the largest and deepest decline in the last four decades, according to a recent report by Statistics Canada. The number of working people in Canada living below Statscan's low income poverty line rose by almost 9 percent to 4,894,000 from 4,508,000 in 1992.

Statscan also revealed that while employment grew by 143,000 in 1993, the increase came in the lower wage service industries and higher paying jobs declined.

## Clinton curtails rights

U.S. president Bill Clinton ordered a freeze on the assets of 12 organizations and 18 people allegedly linked to terrorist activities in the Middle East January 24. The action was taken several days after a suicide bombing outside Tel Aviv killed 19 Israeli soldiers.

Administration officials say this is the first step toward legislation to establish federal jurisdiction over so-called terrorist cases, which would include expedited deportation of immigrants and blocking of fundraising for proscribed groups. Since the 1970s, the U.S. government has restricted fund-raising for groups suspected of aiding the Irish Republican Army.

## Affirmative action challenged

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments for a case challenging federally mandated affirmative action programs January 17. Randy Pech, owner of Adarand Construction Co., sued the U.S. Department of Transportation in 1990 after his company lost a bid to an Hispanic-owned firm to build highway guardrails.

Pech argues that the government violated the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. Meanwhile, a rally of several thousand demonstrated at the steps of the Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., January 16, to protest the Court's decision to hear the case.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

## THE MILITANT

## Oppose social spending cuts

*The 'Militant' covers the resistance of workers and youth to the capitalists' attempts to lower our standard of living in order to boost their profits. We're on the scene at demonstrations across Canada opposing education cuts and at union picket lines in Flint, Michigan, demanding more hiring. Don't miss a single issue!*



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# Tel Aviv steps up attacks on Palestinians

BY NAOMI CRAINE

More than a week after 23 people were killed in a bombing in Israel, Tel Aviv continued to keep the borders of the West Bank and Gaza Strip closed. The punitive response to the suicide bombing carried out by two members of the group Islamic Holy War prevents tens of thousands of Palestinian workers from reaching their jobs in Israel. Negotiations between the Israeli government and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on the future of the occupied territories were put on hold.

The January 22 bombing intensified the crisis of the Israeli government headed by Labor Party prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. One poll indicated a snap election would result in a 2-1 victory for the opposition Likud Party.

President Ezer Weizman immediately called for a halt in the implementation of accords reached with the PLO 16 months ago to "rethink which way we're going." Rabin rejected Weizman's proposal. Officials of the governments of Israel, Egypt, and Jordan as well as the PLO are scheduled to meet in Cairo February 2 to discuss resuming the talks.

Weighing in against continued negotiations, *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal wrote January 24 that "terrorists are not separate from the process but very much a part of it." He advised Rabin to "Listen hard to President Weizman" or face the prospect of "a Likud prime ministership."

## Noconfidence motion

Rabin survived a no-confidence motion in Parliament January 24. But the six delegates of the Shas party, which used to be part of the ruling coalition and had indicated it might rejoin Rabin's government, voted against him. The next day a near-brawl erupted in Parliament when opposition members tried to pass a bill to annex a chunk of the West Bank.

"If I were an insurance company, I would not write a policy for this government," declared Israeli political commentator Yoel Marcus.

Reaching for new clubs to further beat back demands for Palestinian national

self-determination, Israeli government officials are talking more than ever of "separation" from the nearly 2 million Arabs who live in the West Bank and Gaza. A January government communiqué said Rabin had empowered the treasury and police ministers to set up teams to examine "ways and means to achieve a separation." The police announced that as a first step guard dogs would be used to patrol along the West Bank border. Some cabinet members have suggested erecting a physical fence along the frontier.

The West Bank and Gaza have been occupied by Israeli forces since Tel Aviv's 1967 war against the neighboring Arab countries. Many Palestinians travel from these areas into Israel every day to work. The Israeli government has periodically cordoned off the occupied territories for days or weeks at a time on the pretext of "stopping terrorism." But this quickly becomes a problem for many Israeli employers, who depend on Palestinian workers to fill the hardest and lowest-paid jobs.

Using racist anti-Arab stereotypes, Rabin has suggested replacing Palestinian labor with more immigrant workers from elsewhere in the world. "I would prefer more Thais and other foreign workers to knife-wielders inside Israel," he said February 1.

Big-business spokespeople outside Israel have also touted the idea of "separation." An article in the February 6 issue of *Time* magazine, for instance, concluded that Israel and the Palestinians "are ready for a divorce."

The same article noted, however, that "Rabin's separation concept is decidedly



Israeli soldier prevents Palestinian woman from entering Israel. Tel Aviv periodically closes border.

one-sided." Tel Aviv "wants to maintain Israeli settlers and — to protect them — Israeli soldiers in the West Bank and even in the Gaza Strip."

On January 25 a new government committee chaired by Rabin approved the construction and sale of more than 4,000 new homes in Israeli settlements in the West Bank near Jerusalem. PLO leader Yasir Arafat lodged a complaint, stating, "We had agreed that they would not expand settlements or increase their number." Despite promises to the contrary, the Rabin government has greatly stepped up the pace of settlements around Jerusalem since coming to power in 1992.

Tel Aviv is far from carrying through on many other aspects of the September 1993 accord, the stated aim of which is some form of Palestinian self-rule in Gaza

and a portion of the West Bank. Planned elections in the area are more than six months overdue, and many of the Israeli troops that were supposed to have been withdrawn have not yet budged.

## Scores of arrests

Following the January 22 bombing, in which 20 Israeli soldiers were killed, Rabin ordered a delay in the planned release of some of the thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israel. The army and police were given the OK to raid mosques and arrest scores of Palestinian religious and political leaders in the following days. Israeli forces shut down the offices of the Society of Islamic Scholars in the West Bank towns of Hebron, Nablus, and Al Bireh and declared the organization illegal. Tel Aviv has detained some 1,500 Palestinians and officially permitted rougher interrogations since October 1994.

Nevertheless, "some specialists," as the *New York Times* described them, complained that the limited withdrawal of troops so far has made it harder for Israeli cops to infiltrate Palestinian organizations in the occupied territories.

The Israeli government is now demanding that the PLO-led Palestinian Authority, which has partial jurisdiction in Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho, take stronger measures against alleged "Islamic militants," including extraditions to Israel.

Calling the January 22 bombing "a criminal event" aimed at derailing negotiations, Nabil Shaath, the PLO's chief negotiator with Tel Aviv, pledged to comply. "Anyone with incriminating evidence of his responsibility or involvement will be held accountable," he said. "This time it will not be a show for two or three days." Palestinian Authority police rapidly rounded up at least 20 alleged members of the Islamic Holy War.

Days earlier, the second death of a prisoner under interrogation by Palestinian police occurred. Both men had been accused of collaboration with Tel Aviv.

In Washington, U.S. State Department spokesperson Christine Shelly mildly rebuked Rabin's decision to expand the settlements around Jerusalem, saying it "complicates the negotiating process." At the same time, the Clinton administration announced with much fanfare the freezing of any U.S. assets belonging to 30 Arab and Israeli organizations accused of "terrorism." For more than a year the FBI says it has been keeping close surveillance in the United States on alleged supporters of one of these organizations, Hamas.

In other developments, the PLO signed an accord with the Jordanian government January 26 on economic relations and the future status of East Jerusalem. Under this agreement, the Jordanian dinar would become the legal tender in self-ruled Palestinian territories and the Palestinian government would join the Jordanian central bank.

On January 30, under a different agreement, Tel Aviv began the return of 130 square miles of territory to Jordan, most of it small strips of uninhabited desert. Although a peace treaty between the two countries was signed three months ago, the Israeli government has not yet assigned an ambassador to Amman.

## Canada student actions spur February protest

### Continued from front page

their rally point by Ogilvy Flour Mill strikers chanting, "Workers, students, solidarity!" Several speakers at the rally urged participation in the upcoming February 12 march. Stickers were handed out reading, "I'm marching on February 12."

On hearing about the planned union-sponsored demonstration from a *Militant* correspondent, Joseph, a Dawson College student participating in the January 25 action, said, "If it's just students [who protest] I don't know if we'll have an effect, so the more solidarity the better."

### Discussion on how to fight back

The discussion among students on how to answer the rulers' attacks is now in full swing.

Michael Burns, executive director of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), told the *Militant* that his organization did not back the January 25 action because "protests are passé. They tend to be knee-jerk reactions that don't garner public support." OUSA, he said, favors broader access to student loans that would be repaid after graduation according to a scale based on income.

Eric Bissonnette and Marie-Claude Ricard, two of the coordinators of the Montreal student coalition that built the protests, spoke on a panel with Guy Tremblay of the Young Socialists at a *Militant* Labor Forum here three days after the successful action.

Ricard explained the significance of the decision by Quebec students to respond to the call for a cross-Canada protest, even though many Quebec junior colleges began classes just two days before the march.

Such united action, including students in Quebec and most other provinces, took place in face of efforts by the capitalist rulers to divide working people and students in predominantly French-speaking Quebec from their counterparts in the rest of the country. This divisive campaign



January 25 student protest of 10,000 in Montreal against Ottawa's education cuts.

was pressed by the rulers as the Quebec government moves towards holding its "sovereignty referendum" later this year.

Ricard and Bissonnette explained that "Coalition X" (in reference to the "X" of refusal to accept government cuts displayed on all their publicity) was formed to counter the two main Quebec student federations that had refused to support the January 25 protest and wanted to build protests against the educational "reform" in Quebec alone. Coalition X mobilized to respond to the Canadian Federation of Students' appeal, Ricard said, because the federal government in Ottawa is carrying out the attack and it can only be defeated by uniting students from coast-to-coast.

The Quebec Federation of University Students and Quebec Federation of College Students are concentrating on building February 7 indoor rallies in Montreal

and Quebec City.

Despite these divisions, the Montreal action on January 25 was the largest in the country, with broad participation from both English- and French-speaking campuses. Organizers made sure that speeches by student representatives were given in both languages and the crowd chanted slogans bilingually.

The February 12 demonstration endorsed by unions, the Quebec student coalition against government cutbacks, and others gathers at noon at Parc Lafontaine in Montreal and will begin the march route at 1 p.m. For more information phone: (514) 598-2032 or (514) 387-3666.

Jim Upton, member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 869, contributed to this article.

## A note to distributors

Beginning with issue no. 8, which will be shipped February 16, there will be a new deadline for changing bundle orders for the *Militant*. Distributors will need to notify the *Militant* business office by noon EST the Tuesday before the paper is shipped of any changes in their bundle size.

This new deadline, a day earlier than before, will allow the *Militant* to be invoiced earlier, giving the staff more flexibility in doing final editorial work on the paper. As political developments warrant, of course, distributors can still order extra papers to be shipped with their bundle after the Tuesday deadline.



# Stepped-up sales needed to make goals in full and on time

BY NAOMI CRAINE

There are four weeks left in the international campaign to sell the new issue of the Marxist magazine *New International* and renewal subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. At this point sales of *New International* no. 10 are about on target, with 913 issues sold.

But as readers of the accompanying scoreboard can see, reaching the goal of selling 1,500 copies by February 28 will require a faster pace of sales than the last few weeks. While we got out ahead in early January, we have slipped a little each week since then.

Renewals to the *Militant* took a jump this week, mostly from readers sending their subscriptions directly to the paper's business office in New York. Some of these readers had received calls from supporters of the socialist press in their areas reminding them their subscriptions were about to lapse; others didn't need the prompt. With more consistent local follow-up, many more subscribers will decide they need to keep receiving the working-class news and analysis they get in the *Militant* every week. Some who have already renewed may be interested in getting a copy of *New International* no. 10 as well. The work distributors in each area do to contact every reader can and will maximize these sales.

## Perspectiva Mundial

Special attention is needed to sales of the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*. Only five renewals have been sold so far. This can be turned around if supporters of the socialist press make an effort to reach out to the hundreds of workers and young people who subscribed to *Perspectiva Mundial* during our last sales campaign. These readers have had several months to see how the socialist magazine gives them unequalled coverage of world politics, from revolutionary developments in South Africa and socialist Cuba to the class struggle in the United States.

When *New International* supporters in Des Moines, Iowa, got close to their target of selling 30 copies of the magazine, they decided to raise the goal to 40, re-



Militant/Linda Joyce

Student in Boston examines *New International* no. 10

ports Joanne Murphy. Some of their sales have been to union members, including a member of United Rubber Workers Local 310 on strike at Bridgestone/Firestone and a member of the United Auto Workers who first bought the *Militant* a few months ago at the gate of the John Deere plant where he works. Other sales in the area have been to abortion rights activists, a farmer, and professors at Drake and Iowa State universities.

From some of the notes faxed in by supporters, it's clear there are many workers in the industrial unions who are interested to read "Defending Cuba, defending Cuba's socialist revolution," "Imperialism's march toward fascism and war," and the other articles in *New International* no. 10.

Stefanie Trice, a young rail worker in Morgantown, West Virginia, sold the issue to an engineer she worked with. She said he was especially interested in the article "What the 1987 stock market crash foretold."

Anecdotes by supporters of the socialist press in a number of cities indicate that the chart may not reflect the total number sold to members of these unions. One thing to keep in mind is that the *Militant* can only print the sales figures reported to us. The chart is

based on reports received by noon E.S.T. each Tuesday from distributors in different cities and unions.

## Helps take up political issues

Lisa Stolarski sent a note to the *Militant* describing how she and Sheila Ostrow were able to use *New International* no. 10 when they spoke to the environmental group Clean Water Action in Pittsburgh January 19. The topic of the discussion was "the rightward slant of U.S. ruling-class politics, and why it's increasing now," she said. The articles in the magazine helped them prepare their talk. While they didn't sell a copy of *New International* no. 10 on the spot, Stolarski said, four members of the group came to an abortion rights activity that weekend and one volunteered to help with construction work at the local Pathfinder bookstore.

This is one example of how the campaign to distribute *New International*, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial* can help workers, young people, fighters for social justice, and others to get a better understanding of the most important questions in world politics today and how to confront them. With a stepped-up effort over the next four weeks, it's possible to meet and go over the sales goals for all three publications.

# Cuba solidarity activists will meet in New York to plan April actions

BY LAURA GARZA

Activists in solidarity with Cuba from dozens of groups will gather in New York February 11-12 to discuss and decide plans for coordinated activities at a meeting of the National Network on Cuba.

Leslie Cagan, co-chair of the network, said there will be discussion at the meeting about a week of coordinated protest and educational activities in defense of the Cuban revolution to be held in April. The proposal was first raised by the network in late November at the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba held in Havana. That gathering of some 3,000 people from around the

world endorsed the call for April activities.

The specific week of these coordinated spring actions in the United States will be discussed at the February network meeting, Cagan said. Local groups are expected to present initial ideas for actions to take place then. They will also discuss the next Friendship caravan to Cuba scheduled to take place in June.

The network helped build support last year for the November 12 march in Washington, D.C., demanding an end to the U.S. embargo of Cuba. The march drew 3,000 people and was the broadest effort organized in years for a na-

tional street demonstration to protest Washington's aggressive policy towards Cuba. Activists at the network meeting will evaluate the November 12 demonstration and other work of the coalition and its affiliates in local areas.

At the opening session participants in the meeting will hear a presentation by a representative of the Cuban mission to the United Nations. Afterwards time is allotted for general political discussion of U.S.-Cuba relations and related questions.

According to Cagan, some 60 groups are part of the network. These include the Cuba Information Project; Global Exchange;

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Auckland	30	24	80%	10	3	1	1
Wellington	3	1	33%	5	3	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Sweden</b>							
	15	12	80%	7	3	3	2
<b>Canada</b>							
Toronto	55	38	69%	—	8	—	0
Montreal	45	28	62%	—	3	—	0
Vancouver	35	21	60%	—	1	—	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Australia</b>							
	16	10	63%	9	5	2	0
<b>Britain</b>							
Manchester	40	25	63%	—	0	—	0
London	55	34	62%	—	0	—	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>United States</b>							
Atlanta	30	24	80%	9	4	2	1
Miami	35	28	80%	13	4	6	0
Philadelphia	50	37	74%	10	3	3	0
Boston	45	33	73%	12	7	4	0
Seattle	40	29	73%	9	5	2	0
Houston	25	18	72%	8	4	2	0
Morgantown, WV	25	17	68%	4	1	0	0
Cleveland*	30	20	67%	10	7	3	0
Twin Cities, MN	50	33	66%	14	4	2	0
Peoria, IL	20	13	65%	6	4	0	0
Pittsburgh	40	26	65%	11	4	2	0
Los Angeles	100	64	64%	20	9	10	0
San Francisco	90	57	63%	16	8	5	0
Des Moines, IA*	40	25	63%	9	3	4	0
Salt Lake City	45	27	60%	13	9	3	0
New York	100	58	58%	13	3	4	0
Chicago	50	27	54%	15	9	3	0
Newark, NJ	100	49	49%	12	5	3	0
Washington, DC	45	21	47%	10	7	3	0
Brooklyn	100	43	43%	12	2	4	0
Detroit	40	17	43%	11	4	2	0
Birmingham, AL	40	14	35%	8	2	2	0
Greensboro, NC	35	12	34%	7	5	2	0
Other	—	6	—	—	5	—	0
<b>Total U.S.</b>	<b>1175</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Puerto Rico</b>							
	2	1	50%	0	0	2	1
<b>France</b>							
	20	6	30%	—	—	—	—
<b>Iceland</b>							
	4	1	25%	5	0	0	0
<b>Other</b>							
	0	—	—	—	3	—	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1510</b>	<b>913</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>In the Unions</b>							
UMWA	10	7	70%	—	0	—	0
OCAW	30	12	40%	—	1	—	0
ACTWU/ILGWU	20	7	35%	11	1	—	0
USWA	20	6	30%	—	0	—	0
IAM	40	10	25%	—	0	—	0
UTU	55	12	22%	24	4	—	0
UFCW	5	1	20%	—	0	—	0
UAW	60	11	18%	—	0	—	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

ACTWU—Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; IAM—International Association of Machinists; ILGWU—International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; OCAW—Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union.

Friends of Cuba of Denver; Wisconsin Committee for Peace and Justice; the U.S. Peace Council; Casa de las Americas of New York; the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a group of Cuban-Americans who support the Cuban revolution; the Alliance of Work-

ers of the Cuban Community (ATC) in Miami; D.C. Hands off Cuba Coalition; Socialist Workers Party; Pediatricians and Parents for Peace based in Los Angeles; IFCO/Pastors for Peace; Queers for Cuba; and local solidarity committees from many cities.



# Youth tell of experiences while in Cuba

Continued from front page

"I asked people if they thought they had a say in the decisions made in society, and almost everyone said yes. There are elections for representatives to the provinces every 2 years and the national elections occur every 5 years," he said.

Forbes was also impressed with the big although unfinished strides the revolution has taken in combating racism in Cuba. "I asked about discrimination and almost everybody responded 'We are all Cubans.'" He said he spoke to one Cuban who functioned in the black market and thought there was still substantial discrimination, but this did not represent the majority of the people he talked to, Black or white.

"The Cubans told us the blockade exists because they are the one country that cannot be exploited by the U.S. government," he emphasized. Although the blockade has worsened an already difficult economic situation, Forbes was "impressed that money was directed at maintaining adequate social services such as schools and health care facilities."

## 'I wanted to see for myself'

"I've been interested in Cuba for a few years, and I wanted to see for myself because the media is so slanted against it," said Kim Sherman, a 25-year-old brigade member who quit her office job in Seattle, Washington, to join the trip. "I wanted to find out what kind of support exists among the people for the revolution," she said.

"I'll be writing for *Works in Progress*, a newspaper in Olympia, Washington organized by the Rainbow Coalition," she said. "I want to write something in other newspapers, including the campus newspaper at the University of Washington, the *Daily*."

Sherman spoke with people who participated in the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), a "grassroots organization that seemed to have very broad participation."

"I talked to two people in the black market who didn't support the revolution saying they wanted 'freedom.' Both were very vague about what they meant by 'freedom,' although one guy said he wanted 'freedom of expression' as we walked past the police. He said he wanted to open a business. He was selling cigars on the black market that he said had been 'stolen from a cigar factory by a friend,' Sherman explained.

"Cuba was the most integrated place I've ever been. I didn't even think about it there. Only when I got back to Seattle did the shock of segregation hit me. We did hear from some people that there is racial prejudice. Blacks are asked by police to leave the tourist area. Blacks are asked for ID. But it really is different from here. Racism doesn't seem to be institutionalized."

"Sexism is a lot worse," said Sherman. "Women are pretty well integrated in the workforce, but not well represented in the upper levels of government yet. I think women have equal rights in Cuba, but attitudes are lagging behind."

Sherman described a discussion with one leader of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) "who had an extremely backward attitude and didn't think it was a problem if men would not help women with the housework, or the question of relegating housework to women. 'The women leaders in the UJC didn't hesitate to argue with him and take him on,' she added. "Although there is definitely an element of sexism in Cuba, the integration of women into positions of responsibility is a lot higher than in the U.S."

Sherman, a participant in the Cuba Friendship Coalition in Seattle, said a couple of professors at Central Community College and the University of Washington were planning to have her speak to their classes.

One of the youngest *brigadistas*, Eva Rodell, 15, is set to go on a whirlwind of activities. She spoke at a Militant Labor Forum in Stockholm, Sweden, on January 29, which 45 people attended. At Folletuna High School, which she attends, she spoke about her experiences to 30 classmates on January 30, and the next day students continued the discussion for an hour. Rodell said other teachers are trying to get her to speak before their classes.

The international brigade attracted activists who were involved around a variety



Militant/Damon Tinnon

Youth brigade participant (left) talks with youth at vocational center in Havana

of political issues. Amy Beard, for example, participated in a fight by Cree Indians protesting the building of a hydroelectric dam in Canada. Beard, 27, works for Pizza Hut and attends Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.

"I want to be a farmer one day, and I'm interested in organic farming, so I wanted to go to Cuba to get an understanding of

organic farming there," she told the *Militant*. Beard plans to write about her experiences for the university newspaper, the *Appalachian*. Two professors want her to speak before their classes as well.

Beard learned that Cuban farmers have been forced into using less advanced methods due to fuel shortages as a result of the embargo and the cutoff of trade at

preferential prices with the former Soviet Union. "I asked one of the farm leaders if they would go back to using petrochemicals like petroleum-based fertilizers and pesticides if the embargo was lifted and was a little disheartened when he said 'yes,'" she said.

"But he explained that they need to produce more to feed the entire population of Cuba. The farmer was a chemist who agreed with me and said it was his job to find a way to not rely so much on petrochemicals not only for environmental and health considerations, but also to stop dependency on a finite energy source." Beard said she and the farm leader thought this approach would make Cuba less vulnerable to the capitalist market.

Beard said her friends told her before she left she would only be allowed by Cuban authorities to see the best places. "We all had time to see and go anywhere we wanted. I took cabs, road bikes and jogged in the dark all over the place and felt really safe. I would never do that here, even in this small town of 30,000," she laughed.

"Before I went to Cuba, I had heard so many bad things about communism and socialism, that the U.S. was the best country in the world. I'm definitely not nationalist," she said.

"Socialism is the direction I'm headed." Beard said her experience in Cuba and "talking to people in the brigade have definitely won me over."

## Protest against passport seizures mounts

BY LAURA GARZA

Young workers and students who participated in an international youth brigade to Cuba have begun to gather protest letters, give presentations, and organize events to demand the U.S. government return the confiscated passports of three youths who traveled to Cuba with the group in January.

U.S. Customs agents in Chicago seized the passports as Dannen Vance, Sukul Baul, and Aislinn Pulley reentered the country. Vance, 27, of Des Moines, Iowa, and Baul, 21, of Bloomington, Illinois, were held and interrogated together at O'Hare airport on January 21. Pulley, 15, was stopped and questioned when she arrived the next day. Baul, Vance, and Pulley were on editorial assignments for the *Daily Vidette*, the *Valley Courier*, and *Family Matters*, respectively.

The International Youth Brigade to Cuba they joined included 70 young people from seven countries, including 49 from the United States. The participants were reporting for a wide range of campus and community newspapers, radio stations, and other media outlets. They visited factories, health-care facilities, and schools, and also spent time with young workers at a banana farm to learn about the realities of life in Cuba today. Many of those who joined the brigade were active in opposing U.S. government policy toward Cuba.

"We have over 30 letters signed," Vance said after explaining he and others had begun visiting student groups, workers, and community activists in the Des Moines area in an effort to gather messages protesting the passport seizures.

Leaders and members of Amnesty International at Drake University signed protest letters, among others. Vance reported he gave a presentation to Fuerza Latina, another student group at the school. "I told them about the contingent we visited of youth doing volunteer agricultural work. People were interested," he said. He then explained the U.S. Customs agents claimed the trip to Cuba was a violation of current travel regulations.

Organizers of the brigade issued an appeal on January 25 for letters to be sent immediately to the State and Treasury departments demanding the passports be returned and any government harassment of the youths be ended. Ken Riley, a brigade organizer, said, "The trip was within the current regulations, and any attempt to intimidate those who participated in the brigade to Cuba is a serious threat to democratic rights, including First Amendment rights and freedom of the press."

At the same time, Riley added, the travel restrictions to Cuba, which the Clin-

ton administration tightened recently, "are unconstitutional and must be repealed." Youth brigade members are now campaigning against Washington's travel ban and trade embargo on Cuba as they speak and write on their experiences from the trip, Riley said.

"This is an important effort in defense of the Cuban revolution," he noted. "The U.S. government tries to intimidate and prevent people like those who went on the youth brigade from finding out for themselves and telling the truth about Cuba. It's part and parcel of their unending cold war against Cuba aimed at defeating the Cuban people's determination to defend their revolution and their socialist government and to provide an example to millions of working people around the world."

Vance noted he had credentials from two newspapers in the Des Moines area, the *Communicator* and the *Valley Courier*. The latter ran an article explaining to its readers that Vance, a local factory worker, would be writing on Cuba for their readers.

In Chicago, Pulley gave brief presentations on her trip before her performances with other high school and college students who are part of the Edges Ensemble of Insight Arts. "There were about 30 people at each of the two shows where I did the announcement," she said, "and I explained that taking our passports was a violation of our constitutional rights. I asked for their support to create a strong defense and get our passports back." Audience members asked her questions about the legality of traveling to Cuba, what she found out about whether racism exists there, and about the U.S. embargo against the Caribbean country. A few people donated money to help with legal fees that will be needed in fighting the government's attacks.

Upon hearing of the passport seizures, Doug Thompson called an emergency meeting of the Peoria Area Peace Network. Thompson is a longtime activist in Peoria, Illinois, and is currently one of thousands of workers on strike against Caterpillar. The meeting heard a report by Angel Lariscy about the visit to Cuba by the brigade and the actions taken by customs officials. Lariscy was one of a number of activists who helped organize fundraising and other efforts to allow Baul to participate in the brigade. Network activists immediately wrote letters to the Treasury and State departments and discussed plans to let others know of the need to protest the government's actions and gather more letters.

"Some people in the meeting wondered if the government was trying to curtail the

rights of certain journalists, ones they don't agree with," said Lariscy. The U.S. government has attempted to eliminate most avenues of travel to Cuba, using regulations that make it illegal for U.S. residents to spend money on the island. Prior to actions taken to tighten the regulations in August, a growing number of U.S. residents were making the trip. Tens of thousands of Cuban-Americans traveled to see family, and a range of academic visits and conferences also occurred.

Last August Washington used the "rafters crisis," when 30,000 Cubans took to sea attempting to reach U.S. shores, as a pretext to take a number of aggressive steps against Cuba. The U.S. Treasury Department tightened even further the restrictions on travel to and from the island.

The new regulations ended most family visits and cut off the ability to send money to relatives on the island. The Treasury Department enacted a requirement that academics must apply for a license to visit Cuba. The regulations also narrowed the definition of who is considered a journalist.

"I believe these journalists are being treated this way because they were freely exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and travel to a politically unpopular country," wrote Milton Greek of Eureka, Illinois, in a protest letter sent to the Treasury Department. "I am very concerned that such actions set disturbing precedents which threaten freedoms we all hold dear. I sincerely hope that you will look into this matter, have their passports returned, and instruct customs officials to respect the rights of journalists, wherever they go," the letter said.

"Now is the time to get the protest letters in," stated Riley. "An immediate response is very important in cases like this. We have to let the government know that any threat to free speech and freedom of the press will be met with a fight." Riley urged people to send protests to:

•Warren Christopher, Secretary of State. Tel 202-647-5298, Fax 202-647-6434.

•John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Room 7802, Washington, DC. Tel 202-647-2126, Fax 202-647-9519.

•Richard Newcomb, Director, Office of Foreign Assets Control, U.S. Department of Treasury, Annex 2233, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20220. Tel 202-622-2510 Fax 202-622-1657.

Riley requested that copies of the protests be sent to the International Youth Brigade to Cuba at P.O. Box 1801, New York, NY 10009. Tel 212-677-4356, Fax 212-388-1659.



# Caterpillar contract talks spurring strikers' resolve

BY PETER THIERJUNG  
AND JOHN STAGGS

EAST PEORIA, Illinois — The opening of contract talks January 31 between Caterpillar Inc. and the United Auto Workers (UAW) has stirred discussion here among UAW members about their struggle to defend their rights and union.

The UAW has been on strike since June 20, 1994, against unfair labor practices by the company and has been without a contract since September 1991. It is the longest strike in Caterpillar's history.

With company and union representatives blacking out news about the content of the talks, many strikers are cautious. "I'm hopeful, but don't know if Caterpillar is ready for a sincere effort," said Jim McNeely, a striker on the picket line at the Mapleton, Illinois, foundry.

Some UAW members have noted that the company appears to have dropped its condition that negotiations take place within the framework of a union-busting "final offer" imposed by management in 1992 after an unsuccessful five-and-a-half-month strike.

## Pickets hang tough

"I'll stay out as long as it takes," said striker Mike Chatterton, who worked at the Mossville, Illinois, engine plant prior to the strike. He expressed the stubborn determination shared by the majority of UAW Local 974's membership to honor the picket lines. "There's life without Caterpillar and I'm not going back without the union." Local 974 is based in East Peoria.

"I think we did the right thing to strike," said Gary Collins, a welder at the East Peoria complex. "We had to do something. It may not have been the way I would have done it, but we had no choice other than to knuckle under to the company."

If Caterpillar tries to sell another version of the final offer, "we won't go back until hell freezes over," Collins said.

"People were prepared ahead of time for this strike."

Mike Masching, an executive board member of Local 2096 in Pontiac, Illinois, said he felt confident that the union would win this round with the company. But he noted Caterpillar "did not spare a dime or leave a stone unturned," to turn workers in the surrounding communities against the strikers.

## Company targets solidarity

Since 1948, UAW members in the national Caterpillar chain have struck 10 times, including a 205-day strike in 1982, fending off some concessions accepted by other unions around the country. As a result many Caterpillar workers enjoy wages and benefits that are higher than those of most other workers in central Illinois.

The company has used this to portray UAW members as greedy and self-serving. Some people in surrounding towns repeat this company propaganda and "call us selfish," said Don Post, a Pontiac striker. "They can't understand why we are on strike."

But in spite of the massive company campaign to undercut support for the union struggle, many working people in the area continue to back the strikers.

Doug Thompson, a Mossville striker, explained how the union had been stronger years ago and how many UAW members felt that they did not need the help of other workers to fight Caterpillar. "The union did not ask for or show solidarity," he said. "Only now, when our enemy is attacking and we need to circle the wagons, do we see how we need solidarity."

The Caterpillar strike should be more of a cause of the entire labor movement, Fred Gaspardo from Pontiac explained. "If Cat breaks the UAW here, then John Deere will be next, then GM, Ford, and Chrysler. Cat will then turn to its nonunion suppliers and say 'we cut our costs, you should cut

yours.' So all wages will be driven down. It would cause a real disaster."

Caterpillar has especially aimed to get production moving at the Mossville engine plant. Hundreds of young workers, new hires and temporaries, have crossed picket lines to grab the higher paying jobs. Every morning UAW pickets line up at the gates to jeer the strike-breakers. Thompson said he did not feel

animosity toward these workers because of the confusion caused by the company's media campaign and because they had not been educated to see the importance of solidarity.

George Cornwell, a committeeman at the Mossville plant, said that winning these young workers to the union was the big battle ahead. He said it was likely that many young new hires would probably remain Caterpillar employees after the strike ends. "The company is using these young people against us," he said.

Cornwell said he was particularly concerned about divisions between young and old workers because almost 80 percent of those on strike will be eligible to retire in the next five years. Thousands of young people will be hired to replace them.

"Sometimes I'm called a scab lover," Cornwell said. "But we have to win these young people to our side."



Militant/Russell Hall  
Caterpillar strikers rally in Chicago August 5, 1994. The United Auto Workers union has struck the company 10 times since 1948.

Strikers have been discussing what proposals the company may make in negotiations to undermine the union. One UAW member said the company might propose a 10-year contract to get union members anxious to retire to approve long-term concessions. "I want some peace before I retire," another striker said.

Some workers said Caterpillar's reinstatement of Denny Rohrbach, who was fired two years ago for union activity, may be a small sign that the company is serious about seeking a settlement. Not everyone agreed.

Rohrbach is the first illegally terminated worker to be reinstated. He was fired for distributing union literature to coworkers at the York, Pennsylvania, plant.

John Staggs is a member of UAW Local 1695 in Lansdale, Pennsylvania.

## Auto workers discuss politics in the trade unions

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN

CLEVELAND — Members of the Socialist Workers Party active in the United Auto Workers (UAW) met here recently to discuss the deepening crisis of world capitalism — from the fall of the Mexican peso to Russia's brutal war against Chechnya — and its impact on the U.S. labor movement. Special attention focused on assessing the current stage of the strike by UAW members against Caterpillar Inc., now in its eighth month.

The socialist workers concluded that there is broad political space to bring a communist explanation of what is happening in the world to fellow UAW members through distribution of the *Militant* newspaper and sales of the magazine *New Internationalist* no. 10. The Marxist journal features articles on the 1987 stock market crash, Cuba's socialist revolution, and imperialism's march toward fascism and war.

The meeting adopted a goal of selling 60 copies of the magazine to fellow unionists. One socialist who works at the Pemco aerospace plant in Birmingham, Alabama, described selling the issue to a coworker, who then sold a copy to another person on the job.

Participants in the meeting also reported opportunities to promote solidarity with the Cuban revolution. At Fawn Engineering in Des Moines, Iowa, more than 100 raffle tickets were sold to help send a UAW member at the plant on the January International Youth Brigade to Cuba.

## Stakes in the Caterpillar strike

A report assessing the Caterpillar strike was presented by Peter Thierjung, who has written extensively on the strike for the *Militant*.

The strike remains the most important labor battle in the United States, said Thierjung. While some 20 percent-30 percent of UAW members went back to work in the early period of the walkout, the re-

maining thousands of strikers are standing firm, determined to defend their rights and their union.

However, Thierjung continued, the strike has not become a cause of the labor movement as a whole. It is different in that sense from the walkouts of Hormel meatpackers in Austin, Minnesota, in 1985-86, or of International Association of Machinists members at Eastern Airlines in 1989-91. In those two strikes the ranks were able to push past reluctant officials to place their own stamp on the struggle. They reached out broadly across the country to fellow unionists and young people to win substantial solidarity.

The Caterpillar strike today is also not the same as it was during the last few weeks of the 1991-92 walkout against the manufacturing giant, when thousands of Caterpillar workers, joined by coal miners and other unionists, poured onto the picket lines in Peoria and Decatur, Illinois, and other strike centers.

The extent of rank-and-file mobilization at the time was such that spontaneous strike meetings popped up all over central Illinois as Caterpillar workers sought to discuss among themselves and with other union fighters how to advance their struggle. Shortly thereafter, top UAW officials decided to abruptly call off the strike.

Some speaking tours for Caterpillar strikers have taken place around the country since the current strike began last June, but practically no UAW officials have been willing to bring strikers before their memberships.

One result of this, workers reported at the meeting here, is that there is little discussion among workers in the auto plants about the Caterpillar strike and its importance. Many unionists have only learned about the stakes in this battle through reading the *Militant* or by traveling to Illinois to join the picket lines.

Continuing to get out the truth about the strike by circulating the *Militant* broadly

in the plants was a key task decided upon at the meeting. Participants also decided to organize a team to visit the strike areas of central Illinois in order to sell the *Militant* and *New Internationalist* no. 10 to strikers and learn more about the current stage of their fight.

## Reviewing union work experiences

In the context of discussing the Caterpillar strike, socialists at the meeting also reviewed their experiences in seeking to advance labor solidarity through participation on local union committees.

Many UAW locals have standing women's rights, civil rights, or strike solidarity committees, Thierjung noted in his report. The character of these committees has changed, however, from the period of the 1970s and early 1980s, when thousands of rank-and-file workers joined these bodies in an effort to promote political action by the unions on social questions like the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment and opposition to nuclear power. Socialists were active in these committees as an arena where the ranks could fight to transform the unions and break from the class-collaborationist approach of the UAW officialdom.

There are no opportunities for rank-and-file workers to advance class-struggle politics through membership in the standing union committees that exist today, Thierjung stated. The UAW officials consciously use these committees to divert unionists from the kind of activity that can deepen class consciousness and mobilize the ranks.

This goes hand-in-hand with the increasing examples of union officials proclaiming themselves "socialists" or radicals in an attempt to improve their standing with the membership. The officials know that labor resistance to the employer and government assault on workers' rights and living standards is going to mount and they are seeking ways to contain it.

Participants in the meeting related a number of examples where their efforts to get union support for solidarity actions with the Caterpillar strike were met with an offer from officials to be placed on a union committee. Membership in the committee, however, did not result in educating union members about the real stakes in the strike or mobilizing workers to support it. Instead, participation in such committees mainly served to prettify the local officialdom, giving it a "militant" image that is false.

Vanguard fighters in the unions should avoid the trap of trying to "get something going" through participation in such committees, Thierjung explained. Rather than trying to substitute for what does not yet exist, militant workers should center their efforts on reaching out to coworkers through sales of the *Militant*, which reports extensively on developments in the strike and other issues of importance to working people, and such activities as visits to UAW picket lines at Caterpillar.

The socialists also decided at the meeting to donate the bonuses many of them receive from the major auto corporations to help finance the publication of revolutionary books and pamphlets by Pathfinder Press. From Christmas bonuses alone \$3,600 was raised.

Mary Nell Bockman is a member of the UAW in New York.

## Help get the 'Militant' to prisoners

The Militant prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



# YS helps build 70,000-strong protests in Canada

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS or to join write: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2396, New York, NY 10009, or call (212) 475-6482

BY PATRICIA O'BEIRNE

MONTREAL, Quebec — Young Socialists across Canada helped build and participated in the January 25 national day of protest against cuts in university funding. The action, with up to 70,000 taking part, was the largest cross-Canada student protest in decades.

In Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver more than 100 people purchased copies of the *Militant* and hundreds more picked up copies of the YS statement against the cuts, titled "Capitalists, not students, are the privileged elite." Martin, a student at St. Hyacinthe Community College near Montreal who read the statement commented, "it's bad man." When asked if he

disagreed with it, he said, "No, to the contrary. I agree with everything in it!" He later came to a discussion on the fight against the cuts and wants to join the YS.

Ahmad Haghighat, a student at York University in Toronto and member of the Young Socialists said, "The YS was on the York strike committee and we fought to broaden out the protest as much as possible. Some disagreed, saying that this is a students' issue, but we convinced others that we should approach the labor council and the teachers' union."

"In Vancouver, some 6,000 people demonstrated, including 1,000 high school students," reported Sarah Goodacre, a member of the YS there. Two Young Socialists from Seattle and San Francisco also participated in the protest. After the protest, the Montreal Young Socialists held an open house where four youth spoke about the different struggles the YS is involved in.

Kelly Lynn explained why she decided to become a member of the YS after going to a pro-choice demonstration in Boston.

"This historic event changed my perspective about wanting to change society. I realized that if the Young Socialists were fighting against right-wing politicians like Newt Gingrich and Patrick Buchanan, it was an organization worthy of my support, or at least of my attention."

A debate on Cuba also took place. Charles, a student who helped organize the march at his college, said, "I'm sympathetic to Cuba but I think we have to be more concerned with what's going on here." Another participant in the discussion responded, "we can't say that Quebecois shouldn't be concerned about Cuba. It's as if we said that the right to abortion concerns only women. Workers in Cuba and Canada face a common enemy—the world capitalist system that is the source of racism, sexism, national oppression and attacks on the rights of working people and youth. We can only defeat the enemy through a common struggle."

Vicky Mercier, a recent participant in the International Youth Brigade to Cuba, pointed to the example of the revolution.

"If Cuba can provide free education right through the university as well as free social services, despite a severe economic crisis, then the government of Canada certainly can."

At a Militant Labor Forum several days later, Marie-Claude Ricard and Eric Bissonnette, two leaders of the coalition that organized the Montreal demonstration, as well as YS member Guy Tremblay spoke about how to continue the struggle against the cutbacks.

Some of the questions asked included whether or not working people and students should pay the deficit, how to unite youth from across Canada against the attempts by Canadian and Quebecois nationalist forces to deepen divisions along national lines, and the next steps in the fight-back. All three speakers called for building the February 12 union-organized march against cuts in social services among students and youth.

Carlos Cornejo and Ahmad Highat contributed to this article.

## Pennsylvania court orders frame-up victim to face new trial after 1992 acquittal

BY STEVE HALPERN

PHILADELPHIA — Wilfredo Santiago was convicted of the murder of policeman Thomas Trench in 1986, and served six years in prison.

In 1992 Common Pleas Court Judge William Mazzola ruled that all charges be dropped against Santiago. "This court finds it incredible to believe that certain items were not turned over [to the defense] given the volume of evidence involved," Mazzola stated at the time.

In December, a three-judge panel of the Pennsylvania State Superior Court reversed the 1992 ruling and said Santiago should stand trial again. "We can find no evidence...that the prosecution acted in bad faith," said the court ruling.

"In the first days after Trench was killed Philadelphia police swept through the Spring Garden neighborhood (which is

largely Puerto Rican) to take dozens of people in for questioning — breaking down doors, pulling old men from games of dominoes, apprehending young guys in the middle of basketball games," reported the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in October 1992. A federal judge later ruled that the city had violated the civil rights of 1,444 people and ordered the city to pay them \$500,000.

The District Attorney's office claimed that Santiago confessed while in prison. (He was being held on assault charges that were eventually dropped.) At the time the charges were made, several of Santiago's fellow inmates exposed an effort within the prison to recruit anyone willing to testify against Santiago. These inmates testified that anyone who made statements against Santiago would be rewarded with lesser sentences, and even cash reimburse-



Wilfredo Santiago at a celebration welcoming his 1992 acquittal and release from six-year jail stint. A state court has now ordered him to face trial on the same charge.

ments. Santiago's lawyer, Bruce Franzel, was denied access to the so-called evidence linking Santiago to the murder.

The evidence against Santiago in no way linked him to the murder. One witness testified to seeing Santiago on a bicycle in the vicinity of the murder with a bulge under his clothing, which could have been a gun. Santiago had in his possession a plane ticket to Puerto Rico, which the prosecutor's office said was suspicious. The other piece of evidence was that Santiago allegedly failed a lie detector test. This could not be used as evidence in a court of law.

Four witnesses who claimed to have seen Santiago in the vicinity of the murder testified that the police altered their testimony. These witnesses said they saw Santiago between 8:00 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. on the night of May 27, 1986. The police claim that all four witnesses testified to seeing Santiago at 1:30AM, on May 28th, making it closer to the time of Trench's death.

In the Puerto Rican community there was widespread sentiment that Santiago

was being railroaded. Demonstrations and meetings took place in his defense. At the time of the trial newspaper articles appeared daily pointing to loopholes in the case against Santiago.

However, Santiago was found guilty of the murder. The Superior Court says that prosecutors were under no obligation to turn over disputed evidence because it did not clearly establish Santiago's innocence.

Altagracia Oppenheimer, a longtime friend of Santiago's and director of Justice and Hope for the Inmate said, "The law has to know he has a strong community behind him."

"The community will be involved and fight for him again," said Wilfredo Rojas in response to the latest ruling. Rojas is president of the National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, one of the dozen civic groups that fought for Santiago's freedom. "This is seen as an affront to the Latino community. It reinstates the community's suspicion of the legal system."

Steve Halpern is a member of United Auto Workers Local 813.

## AAM holds national farm meeting

BY JEANNE FITZMAURICE

JACKSON, Mississippi — Some 100 farmers attended the 16th convention of the American Agricultural Movement (AAM) held here January 12-15.

"Farm families continue to move to the city to survive while rural areas continue to deteriorate," former AAM vice president Darrell Miller told participants. The Kansas grain farmer said, "Farmers and ranchers have been paid less than the cost of production for years and the shortfall has been made up through subsidies and accumulated debt. We have not had the money to buy trucks, tractors, combines, and farm machinery."

The centerpiece of the gathering was what AAM president Bob Thornton called "the struggle to write a more farmer-friendly farm bill."

In recent years omnibus legislation has been adopted every half-decade carrying a range of provisions directly or indirectly related to agriculture.

The convention heard government officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Farmers Home Administration, Consolidated Farm Service Agency (CFSA), and others. Grant Buntrock, administrator of CFSA, said the government is preparing to review programs aiding small farmers. "Agriculture will become more trade-oriented," he said.

Much attention at the conference was given to a marketing plan introduced by the National Farmers Organization (NFO). Steve Halloran, president of the NFO, presented the proposal as collective bargaining for farmers. The plan is based on holding back part of the harvest and selling when market prices are more favorable.

"We need to connect with the people

who eat our food...the working men and women of America," Tom Asbridge, AAM executive director, said. Asbridge raised that the small numbers of remaining family farmers don't have the money or votes to influence Congress. "We need new members, the few young farmers left need to be part of our movement," he said. Most of those at the convention were more than 45 years old.

The AAM opposed the NAFTA and GATT trade agreements. Thornton said very few farm organizations joined them in their opposition. "If you've been following the World Trade Organization [WTO] it's scary," he said. "123 countries controlling our trade." The WTO is the successor organization to GATT emerging out of last year's world trade treaty. Some delegates pointed to the higher price support payments to farmers in Japan and Europe as a factor in lower world market prices. The AAM farm bill proposal calls for a national referendum on the GATT pact and WTO.

Convention participants included grain, cotton, rice, and peanut farmers and cattle ranchers hailing from Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Many have been active in AAM since the 1979 farmers tractorcade to Washington, D.C., protesting low farm commodity prices.

Jeanne FitzMaurice is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1131, in Birmingham, Alabama. Ruth Nebbia, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 431 in Des Moines, Iowa, also contributed to this article.

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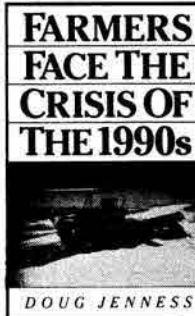
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DOUG JENNESS



# How publication by Cuba of Guevara's Bolivian diary foiled U.S. gov't plans

BY MIKE TABER

*The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, recently published by Pathfinder, tells the story of the struggle waged in 1966-67 to create a Latin America-wide revolutionary movement capable of contending for power. That battle, led by one of the 20th century's outstanding working-class and communist leaders, was an important chapter in the struggle of workers and farmers internationally against capitalist rule.

There is another closely related story: the struggle around the Bolivian diary itself and the efforts that were required to make it available to fighters everywhere.

In "A Necessary Introduction" to the diary, Fidel Castro wrote that some did not want to see this book published. This included the Bolivian dictatorship, led by Generals René Barrientos and Alfredo Ovando, who Che described "with words that cannot be erased from history." The U.S. imperialists also did not want the full story to see the light of day, Castro said. They "fear the power of [Che's] example and everything that helps spread it." Finally, Castro cited the "pseudo-revolutionaries, opportunists, and charlatans of every stripe," who "call themselves Marxists, Communists, and other such titles." Among these were leaders of the Communist Party of Bolivia.

But "from the revolutionary point of view," Castro wrote, "there is no alternative but to publish Che's Bolivian diary." Cuba did so in July 1968.

## A captured document

Guevara's diary fell into the hands of the Bolivian military when he was captured Oct. 8, 1967. That night, as the cold-blooded decision was being made in Washington and La Paz to execute Guevara, the pages of the diary were being photographed by Félix Rodríguez, an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency accompanying the Bolivian army. Rodríguez participated in and helped organize Che's murder the following day.

The diary itself was sent to the army high command, where it was kept under lock and key.

Excerpts were read aloud the following month at the trial of two journalists arrested in connection with the guerrilla campaign, Régis Debray from France and Ciro Bustos from Argentina. A few passages were selected, torn out of context, to implicate opponents of the regime and to denigrate Guevara and Cuba. Barrientos announced to the press, for example, that he had discovered evidence in the diary of "an evident falling out between Mr. Guevara and Premier Fidel Castro."

Fitting into this pattern of distortion were "reports" of utterly unbelievable comments allegedly made by a demoralized Guevara to his captors before his death: "Don't kill us. I'm Che. I'm worth more to you alive than dead." "The peas-



Fidel Castro in a televised appearance on July 3, 1968, answering charges that Cuban edition of the Bolivian diary of Che Guevara was a fabrication. He displays a photograph of Bolivian generals shown celebrating the murder of Che Guevara.

ants betrayed us." "It's all over." "I am defeated."

Confident that the documents were safe in their hands, Che's murderers sought to undermine Guevara's legacy, cover up their own role, and discredit the Cuban revolution.

Bolivia's dictators had another interest in the diary: personal enrichment. Having no moral or legal rights to Guevara's literary works, they nevertheless entered into negotiations with publishing firms in the United States and other countries. At one point, figures of up to \$400,000 were raised.

Bidders included the magazine *Paris-Match*, *Magnum Photos*, *Doubleday & Co.*, *McGraw-Hill*, *Stein & Day*, and others. In their competition for the spoils, Generals Barrientos and Ovando each pursued their own separate deals.

Some of these publishers soon backed out, fearing legal challenges from Guevara's estate. The Bolivian dictatorship finally signed a deal with the U.S. firm *Stein & Day*.

## Crisis in the regime

In the context of deepening class battles in the mines, the cities, and the countryside, the worldwide impact of Guevara's assassination shook the regime to its foundations. Fissures soon developed within the top echelons, with Barrientos and Ovando plotting to oust each other.

The crisis was reflected in the interior ministry, headed by Antonio Arguedas. A longtime crony of Barrientos, Arguedas was among those having access to the diary. The interior ministry at the time was filled with CIA "advisers," and Arguedas

himself was on the CIA's payroll. However, he had become resentful of the CIA's heavy-handed ways and informed the Cuban government that he was sending photostats of the diary to Cuba.

Acting with great secrecy, steps were taken by supporters of the Cuban revolution to arrange the delivery. In an operation code-named "Aunt Victoria," the photostats were smuggled into Chile, hidden inside a record jacket of Bolivian folk music. From there they were taken aboard a flight to Mexico, and then to Cuba. The diary arrived in Havana around March 15, 1968. Soon after the diary was published, Arguedas was traced as the source of the leak and was forced to flee Bolivia.

A new operation now began in Cuba: to verify the document's authenticity, transcribe it from Guevara's difficult to decipher handwriting, and prepare it for publication in Cuba and throughout the world. Assisting in the effort was Guevara's widow, Aleida March, and three Cuban survivors of the guerrilla movement, who had reached Cuba about the same time as the diary.

On July 1, 1968, less than three months later, a surprise announcement was made: the Bolivian diary was being published in Cuba, where hundreds of thousands of copies were distributed free of charge. Within days it appeared in English in *Ramparts* magazine under permission from the Cuban government acting on behalf of March. This edition was reprinted later that month by Bantam Books.

Barrientos responded quickly to the unexpected news. The Cuban publication was "a fictitious diary, falsified and conveniently presented... I am sure that the

whole thing is part of a scheme by the Castro hierarchy to exalt Mr. Che Guevara," he said. Gen. Juan Torres, army chief of staff, stated that the diary "is nothing but an attempt at sensationalism by Fidel Castro."

Attacks on the Cuban edition came from other directions, too. The Czechoslovak news agency wrote, "The authenticity of some materials is doubtful, to say the least, and gives rise to questions as to which is the 'true' Guevara."

Castro answered these attacks in a televised speech July 3, 1968. "The publication of the diary has upset a few apple-carts. In the first place, the imperialists and the Bolivian militarists were most interested in keeping the contents of the document a secret. In the second place, its publication ruined a number of shady and grossly mercenary business deals in connection with the document."

These dealers, Castro said, "counted their chickens before they hatched as they dreamed of fat profits, but their dreams never materialized. Now they are desperately trying to see what they can still do and what they can salvage from their investments in these shady deals."

The Cuban leader announced that as proof of the Cuban edition's authenticity, photostatic copies would be made available to journalists around the world. Eventually the Bolivian generals were forced to acknowledge the diary's veracity. The Cuban revolution had won a battle.

## Rival editions

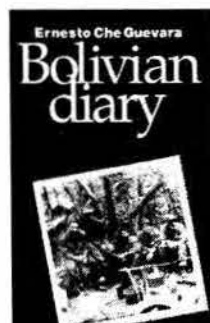
The controversy over the diary did not end, however.

In an unsuccessful attempt to block the *Ramparts* edition, *Stein & Day* announced that it alone had "exclusive literary rights" to publish the diary—granted by Bolivia's dictatorship. Accordingly, *Ramparts* was threatened with legal action for copyright infringement. Publisher Sol Stein made clear that he had political reasons, not just financial ones, for this move. It was "a great coup for Castro in that he has compelled innocent publishers to help his propaganda."

Several weeks later *Stein & Day* published its own edition featuring a lengthy introduction by Daniel James. A right-wing social democrat and former editor of the *New Leader*, James had high praises for Barrientos and sharply attacked Guevara and the Cuban revolution.

But it was too late; the true account of the battle led by Guevara could no longer be hidden. The plans of Washington and the Bolivian regime to use the diary as part of their campaign against Cuba had fallen in shambles. Instead, Fidel Castro wrote, Che Guevara's Bolivian diary with its "priceless information" would reach "the receptive ear of the poor and exploited for whom he gave his life."

Today, 26 years later, it is once again available in a new edition from Pathfinder.



## The Bolivian Diary of Che Guevara

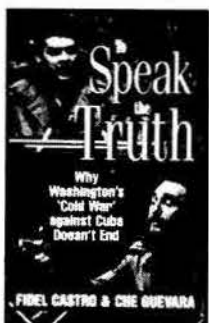
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## Greek high school students walk out

BY LINOS PANTELAKIS

ATHENS — Thousands of high school students here and in neighboring towns occupied schools in early December to demand increased government funding of education. By mid-month, students had occupied 149 schools.

Two thousand youth chanting, "Give money for education not for the army and police," protested December 15 in Athens. Students also organized two smaller demonstrations that month. "The state of our school is unacceptable," one student said. "We have water running in our classrooms. Electric wires are hanging in our gym." Another said of the government's education budget, "6.8 percent is a farce. You can't maintain free education with crumbs. We are asking for 15 percent."

Protesters also demanded the suppression of post-secondary private institutions, which have proliferated in Greece at the expense of public education. In addition to dilapidated buildings, students face the

forced teaching of catechism and restrictions on clothing in many schools.

This is the third time in five years that the Greek government has butted heads with students. Sit-in strikes closed schools in 1990 and 1992.

The state prosecutor in Athens launched an investigation of the students, parents, and teachers involved in the December mobilizations. He used the pretext of preventing damage to school property and threatened immediate arrests. Grigoris Kalomiris, the vice-chairman of the Union of Public Secondary School Teachers, condemned the threats. A delegation of student representatives met with George Papandreu, the minister of education and religion, after the December 15 demonstration. The great majority of the sit-ins were disbanded by the Christmas holidays. Sixteen continued into mid-January.

Linos Pantelakis is a high school student in Athens.



# Food shortages easing, say Cubans at speaking events in New York City, Miami

BY SUSAN ANMUTH  
AND PAT SMITH

NEW YORK — "During my visit [to the United States] last year I explained the biggest problem facing Cuba is food," said Pavel Díaz, a young Cuban speaking to a crowd of more than 150 at New York University here January 28. "Fortunately, because of discussions and decisions last year we started the agricultural markets. Unlike the farmers markets in 1985, all institutions that produce participate — cooperatives, state farms, and private farmers. The markets have made more food available and brought optimism that the shortages will diminish," he added.

Alina Perez joined Díaz at the meeting to discuss the current situation in Cuba. Both are researchers from the Center for Youth Studies in Havana. Díaz is also a member of the Union of Young Communists. The two traveled New York to attend meetings at the United Nations in preparation for a UN summit on poverty and development to be held in Copenhagen later this year.

Díaz toured the United States last spring, speaking to some 4,000 students, workers, and activists in more than 40 cities.

At the NYU meeting, sponsored by an ad hoc committee of students and others, he explained that before the recent opening of the agricultural markets food shortages allowed prices to soar on the black market, the only place many products were available. He noted most workers were forced to turn to the black market when the food they received with ration stamps could not meet their basic needs.

The current economic crisis in Cuba began when trade at preferential prices with the former Eastern European countries

and the Soviet Union collapsed.

Díaz said the most important challenge youth and workers face today is to increase production in order to make it possible once again for the rationing system to provide basic staples to all Cubans at affordable prices. "The black market had almost eliminated other markets. At one time a pound of pork cost 600 or more pesos. Today it can be purchased at the new agricultural markets for 40 pesos." Many workers receive salaries in the range of 150 pesos a month. Rice has gone from 40 pesos a pound to 5 or 6 pesos, he said. "People work with the confidence that they can buy food now."

Animated discussion followed the presentations for more than two hours.

"What will you do when the [U.S. government] embargo is lifted, what are your hopes?" a young woman asked.

"I'm not optimistic the embargo will end," Díaz replied. "It's true the two governments are involved in immigration talks, and the U.S. government granted me a visa to come here, but I am not optimistic about the embargo and many Cubans agree with me. If a U.S. government official asked me that question, I would say 'Hey, let's try it and see what happens.'" As long as the Cuban government and people continue to defend socialism, he said, Washington won't give up its policy of aggression.

"We have thought-out plans on how to advance when the embargo is lifted," he continued. "But we don't need to wait for the embargo to be lifted before we can carry out the aspirations of our people. We have not achieved true equality between men and women for example. We have not conquered racial equality. These have been won in an elemental way, but we can

advance on these questions today. We don't have to wait for the embargo to be lifted."

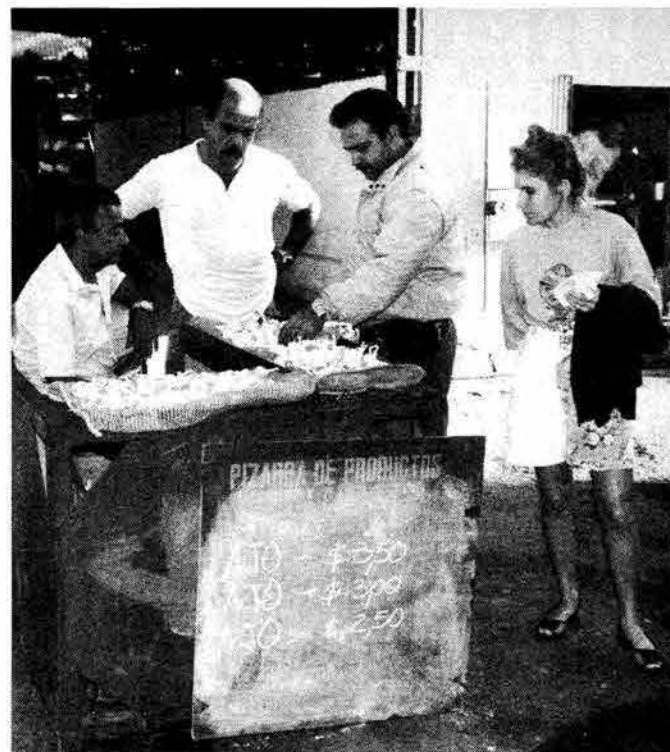
"I am a Latin American with Indian blood and I'm proud to have that," a dental student told the visiting Cubans. "Dental schools and medical schools in the U.S. are elitist. Professors don't care about the health of the population. Can you tell us about the Cuban health-care system and how I can study in Cuba?"

"We're pleased to have 33,000 students from around the world in Cuba. Even in hard economic times we see that these youth graduate. We hope to see you studying in Cuba," Díaz told him. "I met some workers at General Motors [Tarrytown plant] yesterday who work long hours with no health-care coverage. In Cuba health care is a right not a privilege."

"But we have medical shortages because some countries fear reprisals from Washington if they trade with us," Díaz explained. "So our pharmaceutical companies are developing substitutes. Health care and education have been hurt in the special period."

The special period is the term used to describe the measures taken by Havana since 1990 to alleviate the crisis. These include stringent rationing of oil, necessitating periodic blackouts, and limited transportation and imports of raw materials.

"But we have not closed one school, or one polyclinic, family health center, or



Militant/Laura Garza  
Garlic on sale at agricultural market in Havana in December. The opening of these markets has eased difficulties Cuban population faced in getting food on the table.

hospital. Cuba has the fifth lowest infant mortality rate in the world, lower than the United States. These conquests are rights we will fight for."

Responding to a question about Cuba's internationalism, Díaz pointed to his participation as a volunteer in Angola in the mid-1980s. Tens of thousands of young Cubans fought there alongside the Angolan army and succeeded in smashing South Africa's invading forces — opening the road to ending the racist apartheid system once and for all.

Participants also asked the two Cubans about problems brought on by greater reliance on tourism to earn foreign currency, debates in the workers parliaments held in factories throughout Cuba and in the National Assembly, the current debate over taxation, and the impact of the special period on the military.

"I am not opposed to people visiting Cuba," one questioner said, "but opening the country to the tourist industry is like

Continued on Page 12

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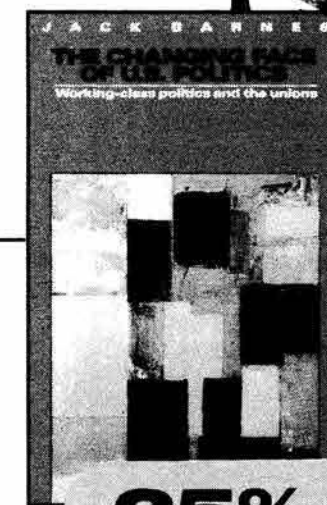
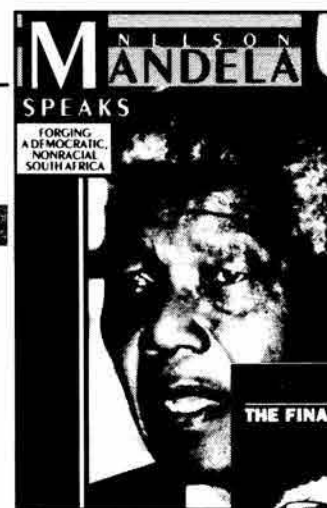
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# Engels on 'welfare reform' 1830s-style

BY STEVE CLARK

At the end of January U.S. president Bill Clinton hosted a meeting in Washington, D.C., to chart a bipartisan course to implement his 1992 campaign pledge to "end welfare as we know it." The Democratic and Republican politicians differed among themselves over specifics, but "participants said they agreed that welfare recipients should be required to work and that there should be a time limit on payment of cash assistance," according to the *New York Times*.

The message from White House officials, members of Congress, and governors was the same: The poor themselves are to blame for poverty — not the existing social system and form of government that breeds rising joblessness, drives down real wages, denies federally funded child care, and slashes funds for education, unemployment insurance, and other basic social rights. The source of the problem, exhort the politicians, professors, and media pundits, are the "welfare cheats," "unwed mothers," and "deadbeat dads." What's more, we're told, this "underclass" of the lazy, dumb, and dangerous is reproducing at an alarming rate.

Even if some spokespersons for the monied classes try to tone down the most coarse and callous rhetoric, the cruel and stingy clamor for "welfare reform" spans bourgeois liberals and conservatives alike.

Such assaults on the rights and living standards of the worst-off layers of the working class are nothing new in the history of capitalism. Nor are the hypocritical and "public-spirited" rationalizations the



A poor-house in mid-19th century England. Engels called these "the most repulsive residence which the refined ingenuity...can invent."

rulers use in hopes of convincing "decent and industrious" working people they share an interest in such attacks.

Below we are reprinting an excerpt from *The Condition of the Working Class in England* written in 1844-45 by Frederick Engels, who together with Karl Marx was a founding leader of the modern communist workers movement. Engels describes the political propaganda used by leaders of the two predominant capitalist parties of the time — the Liberals and Conservatives — to justify implementation of the New Poor Law of 1834.

Since then the workers movement in England and many other countries has waged hard-fought battles that have made substantial inroads against the kinds of degrading and despotic conditions portrayed in the paragraphs that follow. But Engels's description sounds more than a little familiar today when you replace terms like "workhouses" with recent proposals for the cutoff of public assistance benefits after two years and compulsory "workfare" schemes at the minimum wage or below.

Subheadings are by the *Militant*.



BY FREDERICK ENGELS

Meanwhile the most open declaration of war of the bourgeoisie upon the proletariat is Malthus' Law of Population and the New Poor Law framed in accordance with it. We have already alluded several times to the theory of Malthus. We may sum up its final result in these few words, that the earth is perennially overpopulated, whence poverty, misery, distress, and immorality must prevail; that it is the lot, the eternal destiny of mankind, to exist in too great numbers, and therefore in diverse classes, of which some are rich, educated, and moral, and others more or less poor, distressed, ignorant, and immoral.

Hence it follows in practice, and Malthus himself drew this conclusion, that charities and poor-rates are, properly speaking, nonsense, since they serve only to maintain, and stimulate the increase of, the surplus population whose competition crushes down wages for the employed; that the employment of the poor by the Poor Law Guardians is equally unreasonable, since only a fixed quantity of the products of labour can be consumed, and for every unemployed labourer thus furnished employment, another hitherto employed must be driven into enforced idleness, whence private undertakings suffer at cost of Poor Law industry; that, in other words, the whole problem is not how to support the surplus population, but how to restrain it as far as possible....

If, then, the problem is not to make the "surplus population" useful, to transform it into available population, but merely to let it starve to death in the least objectionable way and to prevent its having too many children, this, of course, is simple enough, provided the surplus population perceives its own superfluousness and takes kindly to starvation.

There is, however, in spite of the violent exertions of the humane bourgeoisie, no immediate prospect of its succeeding in bringing about such a disposition among the workers. The workers have taken it into their heads that they, with their busy hands, are the necessary, and the rich capi-

talists, who do nothing, the surplus population.

Since, however, the rich hold all the power, the proletarians must submit, if they will not good-temperedly perceive it for themselves, to have the law actually declare them superfluous. This has been done by the New Poor Law. The Old Poor Law which rested upon the Act of 1601 (the 43rd of Elizabeth), naively started from the notion that it is the duty of the parish to provide for the maintenance of the poor. Whoever had no work received relief, and the poor man regarded the parish as pledged to protect him from starvation. He demanded his weekly relief as his right, not as a favour, and this became, at last, too much for the bourgeoisie.

In 1833, when the bourgeoisie had just come into power through the Reform Bill, and pauperism in the country districts had just reached its full development, the bourgeoisie began the reform of the Poor Law according to its own point of view. A commission was appointed, which investigated the administration of the Poor Laws, and revealed a multitude of abuses.

It was discovered that the whole working class in the country was pauperised and more or less dependent upon the rates, from which they received relief when wages were low; it was found that this system by which the unemployed were maintained, the ill-paid and the parents of large families relieved, fathers of illegitimate children required to pay alimony, and poverty, in general, recognised as needing protection, it was found that this system was ruining the nation, was "a check to industry, a reward for improvident marriages, a stimulant to population, and a blind to its effects on wages; a national institution for discountenancing the industrious and honest, and for protecting the idle, the improvident and the vicious; the destroyer of the bonds of family life; a system for preventing the accumulation of capital, for destroying that which exists, and for reducing the rate-payer to pauperism; and a premium for illegitimate children" in the provision of aliment. (Words of the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners [1833].)

Poor laws, old and new

This description of the action of the Old Poor Law is certainly correct; relief fosters laziness and increase of "surplus population". Under present social conditions it is perfectly clear that the poor man is compelled to be an egotist, and when he can choose, living equally well in either case, he prefers doing nothing to working. But what follows therefrom? That our present social conditions are good for nothing, and not as the Malthusian Commissioners conclude, that poverty is a crime, and, as such, to be visited with heinous penalties which may serve as a warning to others.

But these wise Malthusians were so thoroughly convinced of the infallibility of their theory that they did not for one moment hesitate to cast the poor into the Procrustean bed of their economic notions and treat them with the most revolting cruelty. Convinced with Malthus and the rest of the adherents of free competition that it is best to let each one take care of himself, they would have preferred to abolish the Poor Laws altogether. Since, however, they had neither the courage nor the au-

thority to do this, they proposed a Poor Law constructed as far as possible in harmony with the doctrine of Malthus, which is yet more barbarous than that of *laissez-faire*, because it interferes actively in cases in which the latter is passive.

We have seen how Malthus characterises poverty, or rather the want of employment, as a crime under the title "superfluity", and recommends for it punishment by starvation. The commissioners were not quite so barbarous; death outright by starvation was something too terrible even for a Poor Law Commissioner. "Good," said they, "we grant you poor a right to exist, but only to exist; the right to multiply you have not, nor the right to exist as befits human beings. You are a pest, and if we cannot get rid of you as we do of other pests, you shall feel, at least, that you are a pest, and you shall at least be held in check, kept from bringing into the world other 'surplus', either directly or through inducing in others laziness and want of employment. Live you shall, but live as an awful warning to all those who might have inducements to become 'superfluous'."

Compulsory workhouses

They accordingly brought in the New Poor Law, which was passed by Parliament in 1834, and continues in force down to the present day. All relief in money and provisions was abolished; the only relief allowed was admission to the workhouses immediately built. The regulations for these workhouses, or, as the people call them, Poor Law Bastilles, is such as to frighten away every one who has the slightest prospect of life without this form of public charity.

To make sure that relief be applied for only in the most extreme cases and after every other effort had failed, the workhouse has been made the most repulsive residence which the refined ingenuity of a Malthusian can invent. The food is worse than that of the most ill-paid working-man while employed, and the work harder, or they might prefer the workhouse to their wretched existence outside.... Tobacco is forbidden, also the receipt of gifts from relatives or friends outside the house; the paupers wear a workhouse uniform, and are handed over, helpless and without redress, to the caprice of the inspectors....

To prevent the "superfluous" from multiplying, and "demoralised" parents from influencing their children, families are broken up; the husband is placed in one wing, the wife in another, the children in a third, and they are permitted to see one another only at stated times after long intervals, and then only when they have, in the opinion of the officials, behaved well.

And in order to shut off the external world from contamination by pauperism within these bastilles, the inmates are permitted to receive visits only with the consent of the officials, and in the reception-rooms; to communicate in general with the world outside only by leave and under supervision....

Workers will reconquer rights

I hope that after this picture of the New Poor Law and its results, no word which I have said of the English bourgeoisie will be thought too stern. In this public measure, in which it acts *in corpore* as the ruling power, it formulates its real intentions, reveals the animus of those smaller transactions with the proletariat, of which the blame apparently attaches to individuals. And that this measure did not originate with any one section of the bourgeoisie, but enjoys the approval of the whole class, is proved by the Parliamentary debates of 1844.

The Liberal party had enacted the New Poor Law; the Conservative party, with its Prime Minister [Robert] Peel at the head, defends it, and only alters some pettifogging trifles in the Poor Law Amendment Bill of 1844. A Liberal majority carried the bill, a Conservative majority approved it, and the "Noble Lords" gave their consent each time.

Thus is the expulsion of the proletariat from State and society outspoken, thus is it publicly proclaimed that proletarians are not human beings, and do not deserve to be treated as such. Let us leave it to the proletarians of the British Empire to reconquer their human rights.

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# Rail industry booms, work conditions fall

BY DAN FEIN  
AND MIKE GALATI

ALLIANCE, Nebraska — The railroad freight industry is booming today with major carriers scrambling to find equipment, hire workers, and improve or add to their trackage.

Nowhere is this more evident than in this area of western Nebraska stretching into southern South Dakota and northeastern Wyoming. This is the heart of western coal production. The area around the Thunder River and Powder River basins in northeastern Wyoming is one of the richest coal-producing regions in the world. In 1992 this area alone mined more than 159 million tons of low-sulfur coal for customers throughout the United States and as far away as Japan and South Africa.

Virtually all this coal is shipped by rail. The Burlington Northern (BN) is the leading coal hauler here, but it finds itself facing increasingly stiff competition from other carriers.

Rail workers here face massive overtime demands by the bosses, which have been accompanied by the most significant hiring by the railroads in this area in more than a decade.

All of this occurs as the national contract between the major rail freight carriers and the rail unions expires this year.

Rail unionists explain they are being forced to work for days and sometimes weeks on end without a day off. The shortage of train crews means many work an 8- to 12-hour shift and are called to return for another shift 8-10 hours later. This pattern can last for weeks. Many noted that it can lead to severe fatigue, which increases the risks of accident or injury.

"During the summer they had us working on our rest [every other eight hours] for weeks," a longtime BN conductor explained. "They won't let you lay off unless you tell them you're sick, and then they still try to pressure you not to take time

off. They make it almost impossible to have any kind of family life."

The Burlington Northern is offering bonuses to engineers who agree to come work for them in this part of the country.

The companies are also pushing to get new hires working as conductors and engineers as quickly as possible. BN says that all new hires will be required to attend train school in Kansas City for six weeks at minimum wage. They will then have to pass a rules test to become a qualified conductor before they ever work a day on a train. Conductors often work alone and are responsible for all the train's movements.

Will Ford, a member of the United Transportation Union (UTU) from Sheridan, Wyoming, shared the view of many of the workers when he said, "All they [the railroads] care about is moving coal. How can you promote new people to conductors in only 60 days without someone getting hurt? It's a disaster waiting to happen."

Many of the rail workers interviewed said that the bosses' rush to move coal was causing more accidents and injuries on the job. They pointed to a collision last June when a Burlington Northern coal train slammed into the rear of another coal train near Thedford, Nebraska, on a stormy night.

The engineer and conductor, both experienced railroaders, were killed. Many workers believe a signal failed that night because of a violent electrical storm, but they also blame BN for its practice of "fleeting" trains, that is, running them one right after another in the same direction with little distance between them.

The company has denied any responsibility, and instead suggested that the train crew fell asleep. The government is continuing its official investigation, but the carrier has filed suit against the estates of the two dead workers seeking to recover the cost of the equipment that was dam-



Militant/Dan Fein

Coal being loaded in Powder River Basin, Wyoming. Bosses are stepping up hiring, but profit drive means rail workers also face more accidents, injuries and overtime.

aged or destroyed in the accident.

Some of the biggest concessions in the last national rail contract were taken by the workers who maintain and repair the track and are members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE). This includes what the contract calls "on-site reporting," which means workers are no longer paid for the travel time to and from a job site. This can amount to hours of unpaid travel every day for some work gangs.

Others are required to work hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles from their homes. Mike Shannon, a track inspector and BMWE member, said the railroad pays these workers as little as \$22 per day for housing and \$14 per day for meals when they are away from home on a work gang. "What this means is that a lot of these guys live in tents or out of the back seats of their cars in the summer when they're on these crews," he added.

"It's not uncommon for people to work 40 hours of overtime a week in the summer. I just finished working 87 days without a day off; they're real short of track inspectors," he said.

Carl Starks, a BMWE member from Sheridan, noted that the railroads are increasingly contracting out maintenance of way work. He told the *Militant* he expects this to be one of the major issues in the upcoming contract negotiations.

Many rail workers here anticipate the companies will demand more concessions in approaching negotiations, and many are discussing how to fight to build the unity necessary between all of the rail unions to stand up to the bosses' attacks. "What we get out of the next contract will depend on how well the crafts [unions] stick together," said Starks.

A railroad signal maintainer from Gillette, Wyoming, discussing the prospects for the upcoming contract in light of the recent strike on the Soo Line railroad last fall, put it this way, "Now is not the time for us to be fighting amongst ourselves, now is the time for us to be coming together."

Dan Fein is a member of UTU Local 1416 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Mike Galati is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in Des Moines, Iowa.

## Rail workers discuss labor and world politics

BY SAM MANUEL

SAN FRANCISCO — Increased opportunities to advance communist ideas among rail workers was the central theme discussed at a recent meeting of socialist workers, including young socialists, who are active in the United Transportation Union (UTU).

In the main report to the meeting Joe Swanson, an assistant conductor for Amtrak here, explained that advancing the broadest interests of the working class internationally has been at the heart of "our approach to political work in the trade unions since the founding of the communist movement."

Swanson referred to an 1866 resolution on the trade unions, drafted by Karl Marx and approved by the International Working Men's Association. The resolution, entitled *Trade Unions: their past, present, and future*, explained that the trade unions "must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interests of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction." This is the opposite of the course presented to workers by every other grouping, from the labor officials to "trade union radicals" who restrict trade union politics to the narrow framework of the workplace and the union, Swanson explained.

The meeting drew lessons from the experiences of socialist rail unionists who participated in a recent strike on the Soo Line against Canadian-Pacific railroad, and solidarity efforts with United Auto Workers members striking against Caterpillar.

Swanson reported on the experience of one Pennsylvania rail union activist and socialist who brought a resolution into his local meeting in support of the Caterpillar strike. The meeting was attended by only two union officers and four local members. The resolution was passed unanimously but the union officials refused to sign it. After some discussion with the

rank and file members who supported the resolution it was decided to post it. But only the socialist rail worker signed it, which drew some red-baiting of the strike support effort.

In another case following the end of the Soo Line strike socialist rail workers who had been part of that struggle distributed a pamphlet entitled, "The Canadian-Pacific Soo Line Rail Strike: An Unfinished Battle." The pamphlet contained a compilation of articles from the *Militant* on the strike. Swanson pointed to these experiences as examples of the pressures vanguard fighters in the unions are under today to "get something going," falling into substituting for what isn't yet happening in the labor movement.

The title of the pamphlet, "An Unfinished Battle," was an attempt to appeal to the most combative workers who didn't like the outcome of the strike, Swanson noted. "More importantly," he added, "by selecting articles solely on the Soo Line and other strikes the pamphlet did not give a true picture of what the *Militant* covers. It appealed to these workers on a narrow trade union basis."

The experience in Pennsylvania showed what can happen when vanguard fighters take their eyes off the ranks or attempt to substitute for them.

### Begin with world politics

In order to explain an effective course to fight against declining wages, working conditions, and safety on the job "we cannot begin with the workplace but with what is happening in the world," Swanson said.

"It is the combination of what our coworkers face on the job and the impact of big world political events outside our unions — the devaluation of the peso in Mexico, the instability of the Canadian currency, the Russian war against Chechnya, the continued U.S. military presence in Haiti, and the response to attacks on abortion clinics — that drives their interest in politics, and communist ideas."

Swanson stressed the importance of distributing the socialist press and publications. The socialist rail unionists working on freight and passenger railroads across the country are centering their efforts on a campaign to sell 55 copies of the latest issue of the magazine of Marxist politics and theory, *New Internationalist*. They will also aim to convince 35 rail workers who currently subscribe to the *Militant* to renew, and to sell 50 single copies of the *Militant* each week through mid-February.

"But talking socialism on the job isn't just about overthrowing capitalism. It's also being union activists, standing up for safer working conditions, and talking about class politics — defense of our social wage, abortion rights, and affirmative action," Swanson said.

### Safety

"The increasing dangers we face on the job are a result of the international drive of the capitalists to squeeze out more profits through wage concessions, work rule changes, reduced benefits, speedup, downsizing, job combinations and ever-deteriorating job conditions," said Dennis Richter, a railroad conductor in Morgantown, West Virginia. Richter was part of a panel of speakers at a Militant Labor Forum held in conjunction with the meeting entitled, "Working can be dangerous to your health." The panel also included Don Brown, a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 1-326, and Andy Mechlin of the Shoreline Environmental Alliance.

Many track maintenance crews no longer have a crew member assigned to warn them of approaching trains or other hazards. As a result "31 track workers have been killed by moving trains since 1988," Richter pointed out.

Last May members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees shut down Conrail for 13 hours before union officials bowed to a government back-to-work order. Strikers carried picket signs reading, "We come to work, not to die."

"Workers must take responsibility for our safety and that of the public," Richter added. Dozens of people are killed each year at railroad crossings due to the failure and often absence of crossing safety devices. The rail bosses tell workers not to worry about anyone hit or killed on the tracks because they were "trespassing."

### Abortion rights

The meeting participants reported significant opposition among rail workers to murderous assaults on doctors and staff at abortion clinics. "The rightist opponents of abortion are turning to these terrorist attacks out of weakness," Swanson said.

Rail unionists Margo Storsteen and Valerie Johnson in Boston were active in building the January 22 abortion rights march in response to the fatal shooting of two abortion clinic workers there. Storsteen reported that one of her coworkers participated in the protest action immediately following the shooting. One of Johnson's coworkers also joined one of the actions supporting abortion rights. Afterwards he purchased copies of *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* and *New Internationalist* no. 10.

With the aid of coworkers and the union socialist rail workers in San Francisco have been able to obtain leave from work on several occasions to go on political fact-finding trips to Cuba. "These trips have generated much interest in and discussion about Cuba on the job," reported Kathryn Crowder.

Socialist rail workers on Amtrak in Washington, D.C., raised \$200 to help fund a youth brigade to Cuba by selling raffle tickets to coworkers.

"This helped us to get into many discussions about Cuba," explained Margrethe Siem, "in addition to involving our coworkers in helping out with the fund-raising effort."

Sam Manuel is a member of UTU Local 454 in Washington, D.C.



# Cubans speak in New York, Miami

Continued from Page 9

prostituting your country — look at Mexico; you lose your dignity.”

“Before 1959 we were one of the world’s biggest tourist spots,” Diaz replied. “Overnight we eliminated tourism. So you see we are not great lovers of tourism.” But to eliminate tourism today, he added, would mean Cuba would not “be able to buy the petroleum we need. Tourism brought in \$1 billion last year and helped cover the millions of dollars we fell short in sugar production. It will be the number one source of hard currency in 1995.

“It brings the problems we are familiar with that we must work to overcome,” he said. “We are trying to find alternative entertainment for youth, for example, and we are trying to develop our pharmaceutical industry to earn hard currency.”

Alina Pérez said that opening up Cuba to foreign investment in tourism and a few other sectors of the economy — like other measures the government has taken — is a “necessary step backwards under the current difficulties. But sometimes we



Militant/Greg Rosenberg

Cuban youth leader Pavel Díaz

have to retreat in order to save the basic conquests of the revolution.”

“This kind of event lets us see both sides,” a young garment worker said. “I had a view of Cuba shaped by the media.” He and three coworkers stayed to talk with the visiting Cubans after the presentation. “It’s good to have fresh information so I can figure out the issues myself.”

A day earlier Pérez spoke at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, at a meeting sponsored by a Black student organization. At the same time Díaz was part of a lively exchange with more than two dozen students at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan. A student from Russia asked a number of questions. Díaz, who studied in the Soviet Union, took the opportunity to practice his Russian. The youths discussed the difference between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

“How is it that Cuba survived?” some students asked. A Polish woman who visited Cuba as part of the Freedom to Travel Challenge told the crowd she was surprised by how critical young people in Cuba are even while they wholeheartedly support the revolution.

The two Cubans also spent a few days in Miami and addressed a crowd of about 75 Cuban-Americans who are active in opposing the Washington’s embargo against the island. They spoke at a celebration of the anniversary of the death of José Martí organized by the Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community (ATC), pointing out the impact of the embargo on the availability of medicines and other essential goods.

They also spoke at another meeting of 35 Cuba solidarity activists. Osiris Bravo, who recently returned from a youth brigade to Cuba with others on editorial assignments from media across the United States, opened the meeting. The platform also included Elizardo Bascoy, a leader of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a Cuban-American organization that supports the revolution.

Rollande Girard from Miami contributed to this article.

## — CALENDAR —

### GREECE

#### Athens

The Chechnya War and Russia’s Deepening Crisis. Sat., Feb. 18, 7 p.m. 2 Kapodistriou St. (Kaningos Square), 6th floor. Sponsored by friends of the *Militant* newspaper.

# —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

The Militant Labor Forum is a weekly free-speech meeting for workers, farmers, youth, and others. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation are invited to attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

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### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

South Africa: The Challenge of Building a Non-Racial, Non-Sexist Democracy. Speakers: Iandi Gtabashe, African National Congress; James Harris, *Militant* newspaper reporting team to South Africa in September, 1994; Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Malcolm X: the Relevance of His Ideas for Young Fighters Today. Sat., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.

Both events at 803 Peachtree St. (between 5th and 6th Streets). Donation: \$3. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

### ILLINOIS

#### Peoria

Revolutionary Cuba Today. Speakers: Naomi Craine, member of Young Socialists just returned from a three-week speaking tour hosted by Cuba’s Union of Young Communists; Sukul Baul and Dannen Vance, participants in recent youth brigade to Cuba. Sat., Feb. 11, 7 p.m. Bradley University, Room 254, Baker Hall (on Main Street). Donation: \$5. Tel: (309) 674-9441.

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

Malcolm X: How His Ideas are Relevant to Today’s Struggles. Speaker: Maceo Dixon, former Socialist Workers Party candidate for

mayor of Boston. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

The “Bell Curve” Controversy: Intelligence, Race, and Other Class-Biased Myths. Speaker: Willie Mae Reid, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Malcolm X: His Revolutionary Perspective and Legacy for Today. Panel discussion. Sat., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.

Both events at 7414 Woodward Avenue (1 block north of Grand). Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

The Frame-up of Roger Warren, Yellowknife Gold Miner. Speakers: Ned Dmytryshyn, member, International Association of Machinists, who reported on the trial of Roger Warren in Yellowknife, Canada, for the *Militant* newspaper. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.

Who Killed Malcolm X? Sat., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m.

Both events at 1405 E. Madison Avenue. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

Celebrate Black History Month. 1) Video: Malcolm X: Make it Plain. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 2) Malcolm X: His Legacy for Working-Class Fighters Today. Speaker: Representative, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 18, 7:30 p.m. 3) The Political Contributions of Maurice Bishop and Thomas Sankara: Lessons from the Grenada and Burkina Faso Revolutions. Sat., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m.

All events at 1802 Belmont Rd., N.W. Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

### WEST VIRGINIA

#### Morgantown

Imperialism’s March Towards Fascism and War. Speaker to be announced. Sat., Feb. 11,

7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6 p.m. Donation requested. Tel: (304) 296-0055. 242 Walnut St. Donation: Tel: (304) 296-0055.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

International Youth Brigade to Cuba - A Participant’s Report. Speaker: Bill Estrada, Young Socialists, United States. Sat., Feb. 11, 6 p.m. Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, corner Norton and Collins Streets, Surry Hills. Donation \$4. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

### BRITAIN

#### London

Revolutionary Cuba Today. Panel discussion with participants in recent youth brigade to Cuba: Julie Crawford, member of Rail, Maritime and Transport Union; Anwar Ravjani, member of National Union of Students; Susan Smythe, member of Young Socialists. Sat., Feb. 11, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 071 928 7993.

### CANADA

#### Toronto

Myths of Race and Intelligence: An Answer to “The Bell Curve.” Speaker: George Rose, member, International Association of Machinists Local 1295. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 827 Bloor St. W. (between Christie and Ossington). Donation: \$4. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

#### Montreal

World Capitalist Crisis Deepens: Ottawa Assaults Rights of Working People. Speaker: Steve Penner, member of the Central Committee of the Communist League. Sat., Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m. 4581 Saint-Denis Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 284-7369.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Christchurch

South Africa: The Next Steps in the Democratic Revolution. Speaker: Eugen Lepou, Communist League. Sat., Feb. 11, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

# Company faulted in 1994 New Jersey blast

CLIVE TURNBULL

NEWARK, New Jersey — The National Transportation Safety Board issued a report recently on the March 1994 pipeline explosion in Edison, New Jersey, that injured more than 100 people, left 1,500 homeless, and killed one nearby resident who died of a heart attack after viewing the damage.

The blast leveled the Durham Woods apartment complex, which had been built alongside the 36-inch pipeline. Gouges along 40 feet of the pipe were found to have weakened it.

These had been caused at an unknown time when digging was done near the pipe; and industrial debris, including leaking drums, were dumped on top of it.

The report’s findings show that the company owning the pipeline, Texas Eastern Transmission Corp., failed to operate and maintain it safely.

There had been no internal inspection of the 34-year-old pipeline since 1986. Aerial surveys of the line, buried up to 15 feet deep, did not include identifying any excavation on its route. No markers indicated where it ran.

The steel used to construct the pipeline in 1961 is brittle at temperatures below 172°F. The average temperature in the pipeline is 29°F. After the line exploded Texas Eastern took more than two hours to turn off the flow of burning gas.

There were no automatic or remote controlled shut-off valves. Once workers got

to the manual valves it required 700 turns to close them.

This explosion is one of a number of incidents recently that have occurred as companies put profits before safety.

The same day the Edison report was published, a federal judge ruled that the cause of a 1985 Exxon pipeline break, in which 567,000 gallons of heating oil poured into the Arthur Kill sea channel in New Jersey, was a mystery!

The spill went undetected for eight hours as an alarm system that frequently malfunctioned was reset several times without checking for a leak.

Clive Turnbull is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-406.

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**Get you coming and going** — "MILL VALLEY, Calif. — landlord can keep the security deposit of a tenant who failed to give 30 days notice because he died, a small claims court commissioner has ruled." — News item.



Harry Ring

**Yo, anyone got a ruler?** — After an October crash that killed 68 people, the feds banned ATR pro-

peller planes from flying in icy weather. The ban was lifted recently, with the proviso that dispatchers and pilots take due precautions. Like, pilots must now watch for a trapezoidal shape of ice forming on unheated side cockpit windows. We checked Webster's, which says a trapezoid is a quadrilateral figure with two sides not parallel.

**And more profitable than cocaine** — At Grand Canyon National Park rangers are killing off more than 24 deer that have become so addicted to junk food that they've lost their ability to digest vegetation. Hooked on the sugar and salt so heavily used in junk

"snacks," their lack of proper nourishment brings on muscular degeneration.

**Think about it** — According to UN data, more than 550 million people go to sleep hungry at night, and 1 billion subsist on less than \$1 a day.

**Vow of poverty** — Ed Broadbent, ex-chief of Canada's New Democratic Party, was given another three years as head of a government "human rights" agency, at more than \$117,000 a year. He did say that he would not also take the \$60,000 pension available to him as an ex-MP.

An aide noted that this was de-

spite the fact that he "really doesn't make much."

**Environmental breakthrough** — Top dogs in the Canadian energy industry announced a voluntary program to persuade energy companies that cleaner air can be profitable.

A Canadian official termed the pact "historic." An industry official modestly said: "We don't have any specific targets or estimates. We have to see how this program evolves."

**Taking care of business** — For years big timber companies logging in national forests have been ripping off taxpayers by chopping

down more and better trees than they pay for. Finally, the National Forest Service created a task force to investigate. Now, a majority of the force charges the Forest Service is blocking prosecutions and is, instead, messing them over.

**Thought for the week** — "The financial crisis in Mexico is real and serious enough; in response, investors have been stampeding out of markets as ludicrously discrepant as Thailand and Bulgaria.... Perhaps in the end, the simplest rule for investors is the gloomy maxim of the banking community: never give money to anyone that really needs it." — *Financial Times* of London.

## Rape, murder frame-up case collapses in Canada

BY GEORGE ROSE

TORONTO — A 10-year campaign by police, prosecutors, and courts to frame Guy Paul Morin for the murder of Christine Jessop collapsed January 23 when the Ontario Court of Appeals reversed Morin's conviction. Recent DNA tests proved Morin could not have been the killer.

Ontario attorney general Marion Boyd is now stalling on demands by Morin's lawyers for a full public inquiry into the conduct of police and prosecutors, claiming that such an inquiry might jeopardize a renewed police investigation into Jessop's murder.

Christine Jessop was nine years old when she was abducted Oct. 3, 1984, from her home in Queensville, Ontario. Her remains were found three months later in a field 45 kilometers (28 miles) away. She had been sexually assaulted and stabbed to death.

Police decided in early 1985 to pin the crime on Guy Paul Morin, a young factory worker and amateur musician who lived with his parents in the house next to the Jessops. There was never a shred of evidence against Morin, but police considered him "weird."

When the cops arrested Morin, they falsely told him they had abundant physical evidence linking him to Jessop's body, and demanded he confess. He refused.

### Cops use jailhouse snitch

An undercover cop wearing a tape recorder was then planted in Morin's jail cell, posing as a fellow inmate. The tapes picked up nothing but Morin's protestations of innocence, but the cop testified Morin made incriminating statements — all when the tape was inaudible.

Later another prisoner, Robert Dean May, claimed Morin had confessed to him. Prosecutors then dropped or reduced criminal charges against May. Psychologists testified that May was a pathological liar. Transcripts of his negotiations with the cops revealed him saying, "Before I sign anything, I want to be out of here. You know, get me off and I'll do what you want."

Police claimed that a few microscopic fibers and hairs found in Morin's car matched fibers found on the girl's body. The Jessop and Morin families lived next door to each other and used the same Laundromat.

To test whether the fibers might have been exchanged in the natural course of events, police went to the Laundromat and put two loads of clothes through the same drier. The result was not a microscopic exchange of a few fibers, but massive, visible transfer of threads from one set of clothes to the other.

Since the test discredited the case against Morin, cops and prosecutors hid it from the defense.

Police also concealed the fact that people living near the site where the body was found thought they heard screams of distress near midnight on the day Christine Jessop disappeared — when Morin was known to have been at home.

Cops preyed on the grief and anger of the Jessop family to enlist them in the frame-up. After Morin became a suspect, Janet Jessop, Christine's mother, pushed back her estimate of the time she returned home and found Christine missing. Only by getting Janet Jessop to change her story



Guy Paul Morin celebrates after his acquittal. The government's attempt to frame up Morin for rape and murder fell apart as more and more facts about the prosecution's misconduct came to light.

could police claim Morin had time to rush home from his job and snatch Christine.

Morin was found innocent by a jury in 1986. But under Canadian law, appeals courts can overturn a jury acquittal. In 1987 the Ontario Court of Appeals ordered Morin to stand trial again, a decision confirmed the following year by the Supreme Court of Canada.

By the time of Morin's second trial more of the suppression and distortion of evidence was coming to light. Police had hidden the fact that they found a cigarette butt near Christine Jessop's body — Morin is a non-smoker. The cigarette and other evidence from the murder scene disappeared.

One cop was indicted for perjury and obstruction of justice, but never brought to trial due to his allegedly poor health.

A second jury convicted Morin in 1992. Although the cops and prosecutors succeeded in winning a guilty verdict, the frame-up was becoming widely discredited. Newspaper articles, television shows, and a best-selling book about the case cited the police misconduct and suppression of evidence. Supporters formed a Justice for Guy Paul Morin Committee.

### Defense lawyers cite bias

A 1,900-page legal appeal filed by Morin's lawyers cited numerous examples of bias by the trial judge and refusal to allow the jury to hear evidence favorable to Morin.

In February 1993 a judge took the almost unprecedented step of releasing Morin from prison pending his appeal. The judge cited the extent of public support for Morin, along with his clean record, in ordering his release.

Morin's case was one of those discussed at a conference of 500 people held in Toronto in February 1994 to found the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted (AIDWYC). Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, an AIDWYC leader, has been a strong Morin supporter. Carter was exonerated after serving 19 years in prison in New Jersey on a murder frame-up.

Also in 1994, three friends of Robert Dean May — the inmate who claimed to have heard the "jailhouse confession" by

Morin — said May admitted to them he had fabricated the story in order to win his own release. May's parents gave sworn affidavits that their son had written a letter to them acknowledging that he lied.

A forensic scientist whose studies on fiber evidence had been cited against

Morin stated in an affidavit that the prosecutor had given jurors a "deceptive" account of his work.

The latest DNA test results, far from being startling new evidence of Morin's innocence, were the final blow to a frame-up that was already crumbling.

### 'Best justice system in the world'

Less than an hour after Morin's acquittal, the Ontario government organized a news conference at which the lead prosecutor in Morin's second trial vehemently denied there had been any trace of misconduct and insisted that "our system of justice in Canada is still the best in the world."

But several of the jurors who convicted Morin voiced anger at the way they were misled. "I just have no faith in it [the justice system] any more," said juror Heather Dryfhout.

Christine Jessop's brother Kenneth said he felt he had been "brainwashed" by the police, who told him for 10 years that Morin had murdered his sister. "After 10 years he becomes a demon; this face you can throw darts at. Right now, I don't have faith in any police force."

Guy Paul Morin has emphasized that "it could happen to anybody.... It happened to an innocent bystander like myself. They can pluck an innocent bystander and throw him through the system for 10 years. People don't realize how often this probably goes on."

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People  
February 13, 1970 Price 10¢

SEATTLE — While announcing the firing of 18,000 more Boeing workers, a Boeing Company economist stated that it "is not a disaster, not panic news... we can live with it if we keep it cool." This is undoubtedly true for Lowell P. Mickelwait, Boeing vice president and member of its board of directors, who made the announcement of the mass layoffs. Neither he nor any of the Boeing directors that are firing thousands of workers are taking even a once-cent cut in their own pay.

Washington, with its 100,000 unemployed workers, is a major victim of the Nixon administration's economic policy. The state is one of the hardest hit by the inflationary spiral caused by the huge spending for the Vietnam war. This inflation is cutting deeply into the earnings of the working people who are now being fired from their jobs. The rise in the cost of living has been more rapid than the rise in the wages of workers. This fact is a clear refutation of the claims of bosses of corporations like General Electric or Boeing that it is the cost of labor that causes inflation.

The real cause of the inflation is to be found in the \$30-billion required each year to finance [Richard] Nixon's war in Vietnam and the additional billions spent on "defense."

The Nixon administration, with the sup-

port of the Democratic Party, has decided that it will continue the war in Vietnam and the spending which has made corporations such as Boeing wealthy. In order to do this, the government has decided to cut costs by further attacking the standard of living of the American working people.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

February 10, 1945

Strikes — political and economic — are breaking out on every continent as a result of soaring costs of living and devastation created by the war.

In Belgium a coal miners' strike spread on January 26 to the Charleroi pits where 6,000 miners walked out. 12,000 more were reported to be idle between Charleroi and Mons. The strikers are demanding a 40 percent pay increase, the same food rations as the fighting men, and permission to form workmen's committees to take part in the management of the mines.

In Latin America, 50,000 Argentina packinghouse workers went on strike last week as continent-wide token strikes against the Argentina dictatorial regime took place in other Latin American countries, Uruguay, Mexico, and elsewhere. The Argentina packinghouse workers are demanding wage increases and the release of their general secretary, Jose Peter, and other political prisoners.

A railway strike in January paralyzed a large part of New Zealand. In the Near East, a recent wave of strikes in Palestine included metal workers, textile and silk workers and brick workers.



## Stop Israeli attacks on Palestinians

The demagogic calls by Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and other politicians for a "separation" of Israelis and Palestinians as the supposed road to peace in the region should be condemned by working people around the world. Tel Aviv's reactionary rhetoric, complete with Rabin's racist references to Arabs as "knife wielders," has nothing to do with the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state.

The true aim of Rabin and other Israeli capitalist politicians in both the governing Labor and opposition Likud parties is not to "separate" from the Palestinians but to oppress and superexploit them. That has been true since the dispossession of the Palestinians from their homeland and establishment of the Israeli state in 1948.

All the measures taken so far — barring Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from reaching their jobs in Israel, using dogs and possibly fences to control the "border" established in Tel Aviv's 1967 land grab, rounding up hundreds of Arabs for detention and demanding the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip and Jericho do the same — are an attempt to perpetuate an

oppressed population that is marginalized, denied democratic rights, and used as a cheap reserve army of labor by Israeli capital.

Especially hypocritical is the Rabin government's decision to expand settlements in the West Bank around Jerusalem, violating all prior signed pledges to put this on hold. Rabin's opponents in the Israeli parliament offer no better perspective, with their proposals to annex still greater hunks of Palestinian land outright.

This latest step up in Israeli repression, however, will not succeed in quelling the thirst of Palestinian working people and youth — neither in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, nor within Israel's own borders — to restore their national rights and achieve social justice. When Palestinians began forging an independent movement in the late 1960s to reverse their dispossession, they raised the call for a democratic, secular Palestine for all who live and work there. The struggle to advance toward that goal remains in the interests of all working people in the region and the world over, regardless of nationality or religion.

## Build cutbacks protest in Montreal

The February 12 Montreal demonstration for jobs and against the Canadian government's threatened massive cutbacks in education and social services deserves the support of working people both in that country and internationally. Called by a coalition of Quebec's three labor federations, students opposed to the education cuts, and women's rights and other organizations, the Montreal march points toward the kind of unity in action and the broad social forces needed to defeat the capitalist rulers' attacks.

The February 12 demonstration has picked up momentum from the January 25 Canada-wide student protests, which succeeded in mobilizing some 75,000 people across the country despite a massive effort by the ruling rich to undermine it. In order to block the development of resistance to their austerity drive, and set the working class up for much deeper attacks, the employers are seeking to break down solidarity among working people. They try to exploit divisions on the basis of nationality, language, sex, skin color, and age.

January 25 was an impressive repudiation of the rulers' divide-and-conquer tactics. French- and English-speaking students stood together chanting slogans in both languages. Striking workers from the Ogilvy Flour Mill in Montreal greeted the marchers with chants of "Workers, students, solidarity!" — effectively answering Ottawa's attempt to turn workers against students by claiming their demands against education cutbacks serve the interests of a "privileged elite."

The Canadian rulers, like their counterparts around the world, seek to turn workers currently holding down jobs against those on unemployment insurance or receiving welfare benefits. The rulers try to turn younger workers against retirees whose pensions, they claim, have become "too expensive" because they're living longer and longer. The capitalists want to turn Canadian-born workers against immigrants, whom they blame for unemployment.

These attempts to scapegoat the most vulnerable sections of the working class are aimed at diverting working people's attention from the true cause of the economic crisis — the capitalist system. But the January 25 and February 12 protests show how the sweeping attacks by the employing class against entitlements won by the labor movement through decades of struggle can push working people closer together and undermine the very divisions the bosses seek to perpetuate.

The rulers' deepening offensive sharply poses the need to rebuild the kind of fighting labor movement that won those social gains in the first place — a labor movement that champions the interests of the entire working class and of the oppressed and exploited as a whole. That's why the February 12 protest should be supported by everyone who defends the rights and common interests of the overwhelming majority — workers, farmers, and youth — against the real privileged elite, the tiny handful of billionaire families that rule in Canada and other capitalist countries.

## Cop frame ups and 'conspiracies'

The acquittal of Guy Paul Morin on murder charges in Ontario, Canada, reported on page 13, is a victory for Morin, his family and supporters, and for all working people. The exposure of the 10-year frame-up against Morin shines a spotlight on methods that are the stock-in-trade of police in every capitalist state. Morin's victory provides inspiration and aid to those fighting to free other victims of cop frame-ups, such as Canadian gold miner Roger Warren and Iowa unionist and socialist political activist Mark Curtis.

Warren is serving a life sentence on false charges of planting a bomb that killed nine strikebreakers during a 1991-92 strike by miners in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Curtis has been in prison for six years, framed up for rape and burglary while he was in the middle of a campaign to defend immigrant workers in the meatpacking plant where he worked.

The prosecutor in Morin's trial, in his final speech to the jury, ridiculed the idea that police might have framed the young factory worker. He said such a claim implied a vast conspiracy involving several police forces, prosecutors, and forensics experts. "If you accept defense counsel's allegations, this is one of the biggest conspiracies in modern judicial history to wrongly convict an accused," he sneered.

The prosecutor of Curtis made almost exactly the same speech at his trial in 1988. How absurd, she insisted, to think that police and prosecutors would conspire to frame Curtis!

But the Morin case shows that no elaborate conspiracy is required to railroad a worker or young person to jail — merely the normal workings of the capitalist "justice" system. In Morin's case, the cops weren't even acting out of racist prejudice, or because he was a union militant or political activist as in the cases of Warren and Curtis. The police simply decided Morin was a convenient person to blame for the crime.

The cops then set in motion their standard practices — suppression of evidence, coercion of witnesses, browbeating to try to extract a confession, lying testimony by police and by jailhouse informers.

Once he was arrested, Morin, like Warren and Curtis, was presumed guilty by prosecutors, judges, and the big-business news media. He was required to prove the cops framed him, rather than the prosecution having to prove his guilt beyond a shadow of a doubt. Morin's case also shows how the cop version, no matter how flimsy, will be accepted and promoted by prosecutors, judges, and appeals courts, since the political stakes are high not to give the slightest hint that frame-ups of workers are standard police practice. That's why the Ontario government continues to defend the conduct of the prosecutors who framed Morin, and why it is stalling on his demand for a full public investigation into the frame-up.

While celebrating this victory for Morin, supporters of democratic rights should also back his demand for a public inquiry and renew our efforts to win justice for Roger Warren and Mark Curtis.

## Mexico crisis

Continued from front page

politicians in the United States and other countries were united in their determination to head off the potential for a world capitalist banking and financial collapse posed by the mounting crisis in Mexico. On January 30 the White House released "a declaration of support" for Clinton's earlier \$40 billion package signed by former presidents George Bush, Jimmy Carter, and Gerald Ford.

The plan announced by Clinton one day later included loans and guarantees by other capitalist powers and imperialist financial institutions. In addition to the \$20 billion put up by the White House, the International Monetary Fund is to extend \$17.8 billion in loans, and Washington expects Tokyo and Bonn to contribute to the bailout as well.

All of this money will be used to stand behind the payoff of interest and principal to capitalist holders of Mexican government bonds.

As part of the new deal, the Mexican government must fork over billions of dollars in annual oil earnings from the state-owned Pemex oil company as collateral on the loans and guarantees.

### Right-wing "American" demagoguery

Rightist demagogue and Republican presidential aspirant Patrick Buchanan is exploiting this massive giveaway to big business to scapegoat immigrants from Mexico and elsewhere and whip up nationalist sentiment in the United States. Buchanan seeks to appeal to growing sections of the middle class under pressure from today's depression conditions, as well as to layers of working people facing rising unemployment, declining real wages, farm and home foreclosures, and mounting economic and social instability.

"The Wall Street boys have hatched a brilliant scheme," wrote the ultrarightist bourgeois politician and columnist about the initial bipartisan proposals from the White House and Congress. With thinly-veiled anti-Semitic overtones, Buchanan continued, "Working with their old buddies Alan Greenspan and Robert Rubin, they are going to bail themselves out — by bailing you and me in."

"Our corporate and financial elites pocketed the profits from squandering America's seed corn in the 'emerging markets' of the Third World," Buchanan said. "Now let them live with the consequences of their blunders, just as the rest of us have to live with ours." Buchanan's solution: build "that barrier fence on our Southern border. Because this time, we are really going to need it."

This "America First" demagoguery was echoed by more mainstream bourgeois politicians such as Texas senator Phil Gramm, who indicated he would ultimately back a bailout but took advantage of the opportunity to boost his campaign for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination.

The U.S. labor officialdom and some liberals also joined in the reactionary, nationalist opposition to the deal, saying it will lead to the loss of more "American jobs" to Mexico. "Mexico bailout an outrage to workers," was the headline on a February 2 press release by International Union of Electronic Workers president William Bywater.

### Protests in Mexico

Many working people and youth in Mexico have begun to speak out against the deals worked out between the Mexican bourgeoisie, middle-class technocrats and representatives of imperialist finance capital.

The latest Clinton package, like all the others floated before it, comes down to the same elements: more cuts in social spending by the Mexican government, a sharp reduction in real wages of workers in Mexico, and an accelerated sell-off of the national patrimony to imperialist big business.

Since the peso was devalued in December, Ford, Mercedes-Benz, and Volkswagen have temporarily shut down their Mexican assembly plants to clear swelling inventories. The Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) reports that at least two small businesses a day have closed. Volkswagen is rumored to be laying off 1,400 employees, and Pemex announced it might cut 3,000 workers.

In marches and demonstrations over the past few weeks, thousands of workers have condemned Washington's proposed conditions on a bailout. These included a march of some 30,000 in downtown Mexico City on January 12, which also featured demands for an end to the government's attacks on peasants in Chiapas.

More than 2,600 workers at the Thomson Consumer Electronics plant in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, walked off the job January 31 and blocked the entrance to the plant. "We suspect this discontent is not necessarily directed at Thomson," a company spokesman said, "but toward the general instability of the economy."

After nearly a decade marked by privatizations and "free trade" agreements, average real wages in Mexico are still below their 1980 level and peasants are being driven off the land at a growing rate. The gap continues to widen between the income and social conditions of the local bourgeoisie and growing middle class, on the one hand, and urban and rural working people on the other.



# Immigrant workers protest conditions in S. Korea

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your

or without documents, their pay is less than that of their South Korean coworkers.

Personnel agencies that specialize in recruiting immigrants for low-wage jobs brought the Nepalese workers to South Korea. "Before I decided to come to Korea, the agency said that I could make \$400 a month as a taxi driver. But I earn just \$210 a month," said Luidel Long.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

More than a dozen immigrant workers from Nepal held a protest against slave-like working conditions January 9 in Chung-gu, South Korea, a suburb of Seoul. They were joined by some South Korean unionists and student activists.

"Even though we are from a poor country, our souls are not poor in terms of human dignity," said Mugdagian, 26, a former history student at Nepal University. South Koreans "should remember what you went through as a Japanese colony. This kind of unfair labor practice that we immigrant workers are forced to endure is the same as what your ancestors suffered."

Some 78,000 immigrants labor in South Korea, many with work permits euphemistically named "training" programs. They hold what South Koreans call "3-D" jobs — slang for the English words "dirty, difficult, and dangerous." Whether immigrants come to South Korea as "trainees"

The protesters fled South Korean textile and furniture plants where they were forced to work 12-13 hours a day. They lived in dormitories adjoining the factories. Workers there were harassed by security guards armed with pellet guns whenever they tried to leave the plant.

According to the Seoul daily *Chosun Ilbo*, wages are supposed to be sent directly to workers' families in Nepal after the company takes deductions for living expenses. The families, however, say they have never received a cent. The workers received only small sums based on overtime worked, to purchase incidentals.

### Philips workers set strike against 12-hour day

Workers at Philips Semiconductors in Stockport, England, voted to strike when company-imposed 12-hour shifts begin February 1.

Members of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineers Union met after two-thirds of those voting through the mail approved some form of strike action.

On behalf of the shop stewards

committee, a union official at the meeting proposed holding one-day strikes every Monday after the new shift pattern starts. He said that anyone unable to work the 12-hour shifts would have to quit. From the floor, a worker proposed an all-out strike. The membership overturned the officialdom's plan and adopted the strike proposal with a 57 percent majority.

Plant manager Brian Smith called the new shift pattern "the next step" in making the factory more competitive. Management wants to double production at the plant.

### Trucker careens into URW picket shack

A truck driver leaving the Bridgestone/Firestone plant in Des Moines, Iowa, where members of United Rubber Workers (URW) Local 310 have been on strike for six months, intentionally drove his vehicle into the picket shack January 19. No one was injured in the incident. A half-dozen pickets fled the shack moments before the driver, Clinton Siddell, carried out his threat to demolish it.

Siddell was charged with assault with a weapon. A few days earlier, a federal judge issued a temporary injunction barring the URW from "interfering with access" to the Des Moines plant.

Representatives of the union and the company met January 18 in Chicago with federal mediators. It was not clear if the meeting constituted a negotiating session; there have been no talks since July 10, two days before the strike began. The URW offered a proposal to Bridgestone/Firestone in the Chicago meeting, but neither side indicated what it contained.



Militant/Dan Fein

Strikers picket Caterpillar parts plant in Denver January 17

Meanwhile, the union has filed an unfair labor practices complaint with the National Labor Relations Board over the hiring of permanent replacement workers.

### Denver Cat pickets voice opinions on Clinton

Striking members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1415 walking the picket lines outside Caterpillar's parts plant in Denver January 17 said none of them went to hear President Bill Clinton speak there the day before.

"Clinton stepped into the baseball strike, but he does nothing for our strike, the unions, or working people," UAW member Andrew Mattren told a visiting rail worker and other unionists who dropped by the picket line to show their support. He said that's why he voted for Ross Perot in the election.

Perot is no better, responded Dick Kauffman, another striker. "He just faked concern for saving jobs to get the votes of workers."

Striker Bill Cunningham was earning \$7 an hour with the promise of a 25 cent-a-year raise when he walked out. That's almost half of what other union members were paid for doing the same job. Cunningham said eliminating the two-tier wage scale is a major issue in the strike.

The following people contributed to this week's column: Kim Young, a member of the Young Socialists in Sydney, Australia; Chris Morris, member of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineers Union at Philips Semiconductors in Stockport; John Cox in Des Moines; and Dan Fein, member of United Transportation Union Local 1416 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

## LETTERS

### Support Roger Warren

Today [Jan. 26, 1995.] is a day which should live in the minds of Canadians as a day of national shame. Today, the presiding judge of the Territorial Supreme Court pronounced sentence on Roger Wallace Warren.

The prosecutor was very eloquent, speaking as though he were the official voice of the Lord. Effectually, his description of Roger Warren, the Man, left you thinking that this man materialized on the face of the earth in late May of 1992 and existed as a quiet radical until September when he finished maturing into a full blown terrorist.

This "masterful oratory" terminated with the demand that this unrepentant and deceitful, near genius murderer, be kept in a welded shut iron Bastille for not less than 25 years before anyone should do anything so reckless as to consider him for parole. And several other comments designed to elicit sympathy for the poor, poor scabs who were innocent victims. Amen.

I believe the defense counsel should be commended for keeping things in perspective. Roger is a community member who was a sportsman, and a highly effective professional at his job.

Defense counsel questioned, "Why should he feel remorse for an act which he never committed," and rightly so. The courts would have to reach desperately far to find any incident expandable to fit the definition of violence, never mind the example of despicable terrorism suggested by the Crown. No danger to others or himself, the minimum allowable

sentence under law, of 10 years is far too excessive. "After all, he is innocent."

The judge was highly influenced by the "will of the people," or so he said, without saying which people. He jawed and mumbled. He went with the jury recommendation, which was highly questionable, in light of a few of the jurors.

"Twenty years," he said. And so closed a very sad chapter in the horror story, chronicles of the CA-SAW [Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers] lock-out of '92.

The rest of the story must be told. Roger is not a young man and 20 years would kill him. We must fight relentlessly for justice for not only Mark Curtis but also now for Roger Warren.

Tim Bettger  
Yellowknife,  
Northwest Territories

### Crisis in Mexico

I hope to give an inside perspective of what's going on down here.

The right-wing "official party," PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party), which has had a 65-year rule in Mexico, is going through a serious crisis. More political action is being taken by the people as a result of the Zapatista Army for National Liberation, a rebel army composed of indigenous peasants from the southern part of Mexico, Chiapas, who are in favor of political independence, democracy, and land. This is living proof of the failure of a decaying capitalist system and the people's will to protest against it.

The crisis in the economy demonstrates capitalist decay by



its incapability to satisfy the people's needs and their profits (which always come first) at the same time.

As industry is going bankrupt, the result is reflected on the workers and peasants. Poverty shot up, which equals more discontent. In 1994 there was an awakening in popular struggle that started with the Zapatista movement in Chiapas.

The government is finding it harder to keep together their structure of injustice and corruption disguised as progress with the "social and political" reforms that they use to calm down social disorder without solving Mexico's problem on a nationwide scale. They give land to peasants in Chiapas instead of at a national level only to try to calm things down in that area of southern Mexico.

The economic crisis is a promising factor to strengthen these protests and to expand them

from peasants to the workers, who are living in growing poverty. Peasants and workers are taking stronger actions than before, such as land take-overs in Chiapas and workers' resistance against the Tabasco (southeast Mexico) electoral fraud. Workers there blocked the entrance of the PEMEX (Mexican Petroleum) plant and after many arrests, more people came to block it.

Although many of these struggles don't have a concrete social and political program, there is a strengthening political consciousness that leads towards a great change in favor of the workers and peasants and against the institutionalized corruption.

Victor Millán  
Mexico City

### Defend affirmative action

I have just finished reading Paul Mailhot's article, "Clinton,

Congress take aim at labor's gains" on the front page of the January 23 issue. His statement, "While strident proposals to demolish welfare programs get the most attention and seem the most likely to succeed, the capitalist politicians are after a much larger target, cuts in the Social Security system," has helped put those attacks in perspective for me.

I feel affirmative action is another topic for the *Militant* to address. A great deal of attention is being given to arguments for dismantling affirmative action programs too.

I am aware of an editorial by Lance Morrow in *Time* magazine, Dec. 5, 1994; a debate featuring Patrick Buchanan and former California speaker of the House Willie Brown on CNN's "Crossfire" January 12; and occasional attacks by radio talks show hosts Dennis Prager and Larry Elder on KABC in Los Angeles.

Perhaps I am over-reacting to this flood of propaganda, but I feel one of the three points of the *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* is being undercut. Please consider something in the *Militant* to refute the arguments falling on the ears of the masses.

Thanks again. Keep up the good work.

Tim Elliot  
Los Angeles

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.



## Canadian gov't disbands airborne regiment exposed for racist abuses

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Overruling his top military commanders, Canada's defense minister David Colenette has ordered that the scandal-ridden Canadian Airborne Regiment be disbanded. The 700-member division is the first Canadian military unit to be disbanded in disgrace.

"For the morale of the rest of the troops and the prestige of Canada, we had no choice," said Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, commenting on the political storm around the airborne.

In March 1993, soldiers from the airborne brutally tortured and murdered a Somali youth, Shidane Arone, in Belet Huen, Somalia. The regiment has been under scrutiny ever since the incident was exposed. The situation with the airborne developed into a full-scale government crisis, however, after the broadcast of two videos depicting racist comments by regiment members in Somalia and brutal, dehumanizing hazing rituals of troops at the air force base in Petawawa, Ontario.

Millions watching CBC and CTV news reports January 15 and 18 were appalled and sickened by what they saw.

The first video, aired on CBC, had been filmed in Somalia before Arone's murder. Journalists edited the two-hour tape down to two minutes of footage showing Canadian soldiers making racist and threatening comments toward Somalis — the people they were allegedly there to protect. Airborne regiment members are heard saying they hadn't "killed enough niggers yet" and wanted to break "arms, legs, and limbs." One soldier called Somalis "slobs"



Militant/John Steele

September 1993 demonstration in Toronto against occupation of Somalia. Later revelations of torture and murder of Somali youth by airborne helped bring its demise.

and said they "stink."

The regiment members in Somalia were part of Commando Two — one of the airborne's three commando units. Nine members of Commando Two were court-martialed for beating to death the Somali teenager. Three have been convicted on charges of manslaughter, torture, and neg-

ligence. The final trial is set to resume February 21 in Petawawa.

Then justice minister Kim Campbell convened a military board of inquiry in 1993 into the regiment's conduct. The investigation was suspended on the grounds it might interfere with the trials. Last November Defense Minister Colenette

promised to conduct a full public inquiry into allegations of widespread brutality toward Somalis by Canadian "peacekeepers." The call came after newspapers published color photos of Arone just before his death.

The second video, aired first on a CTV affiliate, features members of Commando One in a "hazing" ceremony on the Petawawa base. It shows soldiers being forced to eat vomit, urine-soaked bread, and excrement. They defecated on each other. A Black soldier was paraded on a leash on all fours with "I love the KKK" written on his back. The video had been taken in July 1992 — several months before the airborne was sent to Somalia.

Prior to being dismantled, the airborne regiment had been training to go to Croatia to join United Nations troops. Colenette said that his January 23 decision means that Canada's armed forces will be unable to take additional "peacekeeping" assignments until the army reorganizes its units. Soldiers from the airborne will be reassigned to other infantry units.

Colenette has pledged to expand the public inquiry to include the hazing incident, as well as questions of discipline and command of the regiment.

In disbanding the airborne, the government overruled the recommendation of Canada's chief of defense staff Gen. John de Chastelain, who was portrayed as a hero during the army's occupation of Oka, Quebec, in 1990 during a fight by Native people for their land rights. The affair has raised questions as to whether de Chastelain can survive as the country's top military officer.

## Judge sentences framed union miner to life

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Framed-up miner Roger Warren has been sentenced to life in prison for second degree murder after a 15-week trial. On January 26 Chief Justice Mark De Weerd ordered the 51-year-old Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) member to spend 20 years in jail before being eligible for parole. Warren's lawyers have filed an appeal.

Warren was tried on nine counts of murder for an explosion that occurred at the Royal Oak company's Giant Gold Mine in September 1992 in the course of a bitter 18-month strike during which management tried unsuccessfully to break the union. Nine replacement workers were killed in the blast.

In concurring with the jury recommendation that there be no parole for 20 years, De Weerd said that Warren "will carry the guilt of this stupid and despicable crime for the rest of his life.... It was done with some sophistication and calculation.... It was nothing less than an act of terrorism."

The courthouse was packed when the verdict was read. Some supporters of the prosecution later expressed disappointment that Warren had not been given the death penalty.

But many workers strongly disagreed. "This is a horrible sentence for an innocent man," CAW member Amos Simon, who attended the trial, told the *Militant*. "We've got to keep fighting to get at the truth and support Roger's appeal."

"People I work with in the mine can't believe Roger was convicted, based on the doubts and lack of real evidence in the trial," said Jack MacPhee, a member of the United Steelworkers of America who works at the nearby Miramar gold mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. "I don't see how the jury didn't see there was more than reasonable doubt."

### Not a shred of evidence

Commenting on De Weerd's claims to have been influenced by the will of the people, CAW member Tim Bettger responded, "I ask which people, the cops? The company management?" Along with CAW member Al Shearing, Bettger is facing trumped-up charges on several strike-related incidents not connected to the mine blast. Many miners in Yellowknife believe the explosion was a result of unsafe company practices whereby, in order to save time and speed up production, men and explosives are transported on the same mancars.

At the trial De Weerd admitted that all the prosecution evidence was "circum-

stantial." During the 13-month pretrial investigation, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) had been unable to come up with a shred of evidence linking Warren to the blast. Hundreds of strikers, family members, and strike supporters across Canada were interrogated and harassed by the RCMP leading up to the trial.

The centerpiece of the frame-up was the false confession Warren gave to the police. During the trial he and other miners described the intense police harassment of strikers and their backers in the wake of the blast, and the efforts by Royal Oak to use this cop campaign to discredit and destroy the union. A year after the explosion, Royal Oak owner Peggy Witte announced that she would not negotiate with the union until an arrest was made. It was under these circumstances that Warren confessed.

"The false confession was given under pressure and shouldn't have been entered as evidence because it wasn't voluntary," defense lawyer Glenn Orris said.

"We were also denied the opportunity to present evidence from experts dealing with false confessions," he noted. The psychologist the defense sought to question on these matters, Orris explained, "would have dealt with cases like the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six to give the jury a better picture of how false statements and confessions have been used to falsely convict."

Orris was referring to two sensationalized "terrorism" trials and convictions by the British government in the 1970s — part of its efforts to whip up hysteria against supporters of a united Ireland — that were exposed in 1989 and 1991 as frame-ups based on coerced confessions. All the convictions in both cases were overturned.

Orris said the defense will appeal the

conviction and sentencing on 18 grounds, including the false confession, denial of the right to counsel, illegal searches, and denial of the right to call up evidence in the trial that could have connected other people to the blast. "We don't believe the jury was charged properly" by the judge, Orris said. "It's important that unionists support the Warren appeal," said CAW member Bill Schramm.

### 'Union movement on trial'

Roger Warren "was not on trial, it was the union movement," explained Al Shearing. He said the frame-up was aimed at undermining the victory achieved by the gold miners in beating back company attempts to undermine safety conditions and seniority rights and bust the union.

In a January 23 article, the *Toronto Globe and Mail* ran an article subtitled, "Some Giant miners still have doubts despite Warren's murder conviction." The article, hardly characteristic of the paper's coverage of the case, explained that "underground at the Giant mine, there remain workers who are not so sure RCMP investigators got their man. Mr. Riggs has grown accustomed to talk that police arrested an innocent miner — or that others were involved in planning the act or setting the device and remain free."

The article was referring to Peter Riggs, who works as a miner at Giant and whose brother Shane died in the 1992 blast. The article continued, "The guys I worked with last night still think [Warren] didn't do it," Mr. Riggs said Friday shortly after the jury announced its verdict."

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 692 in British Columbia. Susan Berman, a member of CAW Local 1285 in Ontario, also contributed to this article.

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