

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'The right to a job is one of highest ideals of revolution'

—THESES FOR CTC CONGRESS; PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Washington intensifies economic war on Cuba

Havana: 'No pressure will make us give up sovereignty'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

President Bill Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill into law March 12, in Washington's latest attempt to squeeze Cuba economically and undermine its socialist revolution. The legislation, which Congress approved the week before with bipartisan support, tightens the U.S. trade embargo against Cuba by penalizing businessmen in other countries who invest in the Caribbean nation.

A few days earlier in Montreal, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rejected Washington's demand to condemn Havana before conducting an investigation of the events of February 24 and the background to them.

That day, after repeated violations of Cuban airspace over months by hostile U.S. planes, two such aircraft were shot down over Cuban waters. The international body decided to organize an investigative commission.

Surrounded by Democratic and Republican politicians at the signing of the



"USA, CIA, Hands Off Cuba!" and "Cuba yes, embargo no!" chanted some 50 people picketing outside U.S. passport office at Rockefeller Center in Manhattan March 13. The previous day, U.S. president Bill Clinton signed the Helms-Burton bill into law—significantly tightening Washington's economic embargo. Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, said the new legislation is a prime example of U.S. "arrogance, haughtiness, and desperation in face of a failed policy."

Helms-Burton bill, Clinton declared, "We're here today around a common commitment to bring democracy to Cuba," re-

ferring to Washington's ultimate goal of overthrowing the revolution and reim-

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

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U.S. warships sail toward China

BY BOB MILLER

Warships from the U.S. Seventh Fleet, including two aircraft carrier battle groups, sailed near the coast of Taiwan March 11 as tensions sharpened between the governments of China and Taiwan.

Beijing is carrying out large-scale military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, including test firings of unarmed missiles and naval and air force exercises with live ammunition in a 6,600 square-mile area off the mainland coast.

3,000 UAW members strike GM, idling most assembly plants

— see article page 4

China's military maneuvers are meant as a warning to the government of Taiwan, which has been on a campaign to win international recognition as an independent state. Taiwan was declared a separate entity from mainland China in 1949 by the fleeing forces of the defeated Nationalist Party following the victory of the Chinese

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Socialists campaign to raise sales of Pathfinder books

BY NAOMI CRAINE

To make a revolution it takes revolutionaries. Talking socialism and recruiting workers and rebel youth to a party capable of leading the working class to take state power is the key task before socialist workers today. One of the best ways to do this over the next three weeks is by campaigning to meet the goal of selling 1,550 copies of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by April 1. So far 907 copies have been sold.

The effort to sell this book by Ernesto Che Guevara — just republished in a new English-language edition by Pathfinder Press — is part of a campaign by socialist workers to increase overall sales of Pathfinder books.

Branches of the Socialist Workers Party, working with Young Socialists and other supporters of the socialist movement, have taken goals to sell 1,800 Pathfinder books and pamphlets each month through local Pathfinder bookstores — including off street tables, to co-workers on the job, and at political events — and 1,400 a month to other commercial bookstores, libraries, and universities. Socialist workers who are union members have also taken goals for selling *Episodes* and other Pathfinder books to

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Young Socialists build convention

Come to the

Young Socialists National Convention

April 6-7 Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Young Socialists (YS) invites students and young workers involved in or interested in planning activities to:

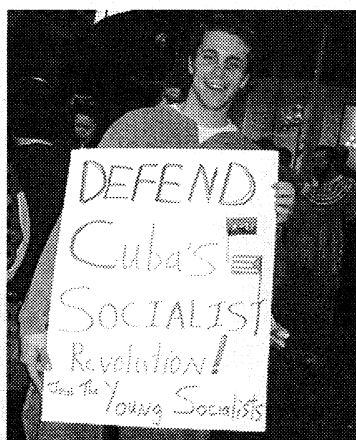
- Defend the Cuban Revolution • Protest Patrick Buchanan • Oppose US-NATO imperialist war drive against Yugoslavia and China • Fight for Black freedom and against racist attacks on immigrants • Defend abortion rights • Support striking workers • Oppose police brutality • Defend Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Mark Curtis • Oppose cutbacks in education and affirmative action

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BY MEGAN ARNEY AND TONY LANE

MINNEAPOLIS — Protesting Buchanan. Joining pickets in defense of Cuba and against Washington's attacks on the island. Selling socialist literature.

From Atlanta to Seattle members of the Young Socialists are finding other youth in action who want to fight against the evils of capitalism and inviting them to the event they've been looking for — a national convention of Young Socialists to be held here April 6-7.

In the Twin Cities, the YS has met four people who are interested in joining the organization and nearly ten who are interested in attending the April convention.

Jason Drake, who recently joined the YS, bought a copy of the *Militant* at a YS table at the University of Minnesota and began attending Militant Labor Forums. Drake said he was attracted to the socialist youth group because "they had a lot of energy and were organized. I was looking for a way to effectively do politics," he said.

A student at St. Cloud State University picked up a copy of the *Militant* and also bought a copy of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Che Guevara at a literature table during a student environmental conference.

He is now planning to organize tables and a report back on Cuba at his campus.

Members in the local YS chapter have

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Iowa prison authorities stop censorship of Curtis — pages 4-5



GIs convicted in Japan rape case

On March 7 an Okinawa court convicted three U.S. soldiers for the rape of a 12-year-old Japanese girl, who they assaulted on September 4. The rape outraged many people on the island. Tens of thousands hit the streets demanding the U.S. military get out of Japan. In October the largest protest ever against U.S. military bases on Japanese territory took place on the island, when 85,000 Okinawans marched and chanted slogans such as "Yankee Go Home."

The government of Okinawa asserts that the rape was only one of more than 4,600 serious crimes committed by U.S. servicemen since Washington's military occupation of the island formally ended in 1972. About 28,000 — three-fifths — of the 47,000 U.S. soldiers stationed in Japan are located in Okinawa.

Rebels retake part of Chechnya

In another blow to Russian president Boris Yeltsin, hundreds of Chechen fighters launched an offensive in the capital city Grozny in early March, retaking part of the city. They seized an electrical power station, a water plant, and a fuel depot. Dozens of Russian soldiers were killed in the battle and many others were forced to flee. "The city of Grozny will be taken," rebel leader Dzhokar Dudayev declared on Chechnya's main television channel.

In the last few weeks the Russian military intensified assaults on villages in Chechnya near neighboring Ingushetia. Moscow's bloody war against the Chechens is "the heaviest burden the president carries into the election," groaned Oleg Soskovets, Yeltsin's first deputy prime minister and campaign chairman.

Killer cop convicted in France

Pascal Compain, a police inspector in Paris, was convicted February 16 of involuntary manslaughter in the murder of 17-year-old Makomé M'Bowole. While questioning the Zairian youth in 1993, Compain put a gun to his temple and pulled the trigger. The killer cop claimed he only intended to scare M'Bowole and did not know the gun was loaded.

Hundreds of youth, most of them immi-



Some 3,000 Indian women supporters of the Zapatista guerrillas demonstrated March 8 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico, to celebrate International Women's Day. The marchers also demanded the withdrawal of federal troops from their communities, sent there by Ernesto Zedillo's administration.

grants from Zaire, left the courtroom filled with anger after the sentencing of Compain. "When you are Black and steal a packet of cigarettes you get the death sentence. But if you kill a youth stealing cigarettes and you are white, you just get a light jail term," said M'Bowole's father.

Paris deports workers to Zaire

French interior minister Jean-Louis Debre announced March 1 that 65 undocumented workers were deported to Zaire February 1, in the 14th mass deportation since Jacques Chirac was elected president of France in May 1995. "The fight against illegal immigration is a priority," Debre said in a statement.

Government officials and other capitalist politicians are scapegoating immigrant workers for the economic crisis in France, where 3 million people are jobless and the unemployment rate soared to 11.8 percent in January. Ultrarightist politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, who won 15 percent of the vote in the last presidential election,

vowed during his campaign to push for deporting 3 million immigrants.

'Slave' workers get \$1 million

Seventy-one Thai and 29 Latino workers were awarded \$1.1 million in back wages by the California Department of Industrial Relations at a ceremony March 9. The immigrants were owed \$9 million in back pay by a Los Angeles-area garment "slave shop" in El Monte, where they worked for less than \$1 an hour, under guard behind barbed wire.

State and federal cops raided the shop last August after one of the workers escaped and blew the whistle. After the raid, the workers were initially jailed by immigration police, but a wave of protests won their release and they were granted work permits. Seven of the operators and a former manager of the shop plea bargained with federal authorities to serve prison terms of two to seven years.

Immigration bill debated

U.S. Congress began debate February 29 on a new immigration bill that will further restrict democratic rights. The proposed legislation includes developing a national data system supposedly to enable bosses to verify the identity and employment eligibility of every person hired in the United States. Another proposal involves restricting the number of legal immigrants to the United States by 30 percent or more. If passed, it will be the first cut in the number of immigrants permitted to enter the country since the 1920s.

Last year U.S. president Bill Clinton endorsed a federal advisory panel recommendation to slash legal immigration by one-third. About 775,000 people migrate

legally to the United States each year.

Protest for immigrant rights

Some 150 people chanted "No human being is illegal!" as they marched in front of the U.S. Department of Justice February 29 protesting attacks on immigrant workers. The demonstration was organized by the Pro-Immigrant Coalition of the Washington Metropolitan Area. Immigrant rights activists formed the coalition in response to a massive raid by Immigration and Naturalization Service agents on February 1, where 83 undocumented workers were arrested in Maryland. The group stated plans for more actions. "We will stand up to defend all immigrants...both documented and undocumented," declared Pedro Avilés, one of the coordinators of the coalition.

Cops fired for debauchery

New York police commissioner William Bratton announced February 23 the dismissal of police officers James Morrow and Wayne Hagmaier for their role in a May 1995 incident where scores of cops went on a drunken rampage. New York cops spent \$98,000 at a Washington, D.C., convention bar during three days of revelry, where they supposedly joined with 10,000 cops for a memorial service.

Morrow, known to his cohorts as "Naked Man," joined other cops in a drunken romp, sliding naked down banisters, pouring beer down escalators, harassing guests at a nurses convention, and setting off fire alarms, forcing evacuation of the hotel in the early morning of May 15. Many witnesses to the debauchery who were quoted on television and in newspapers changed their story after interrogation by Internal Affairs detectives. Only seven cops have been disciplined for the May 15 incident.

'Three strikes' law hits Blacks

Blacks are sent to prison at a rate 13 times that of whites under California's "three strikes and you're out" law, according to a study released March 4 by the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice in San Francisco. One recent survey of 1,000 cases in Los Angeles revealed that Blacks were charged 17 times the rate of whites under the law, which has been in effect for two years.

While they comprise only 7 percent of the state's population, Blacks account for 43 percent of those imprisoned under the new law, which mandates sentences of 25 years to life for those convicted of three felonies. "If one were writing a law to deliberately target Blacks, one could scarcely have done it more effectively than 'three strikes,'" Vincent Schiraldi, the center's executive director, told the *Washington Post*.

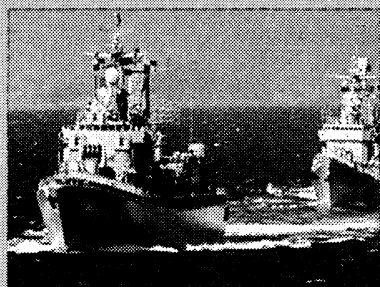
— MAURICE WILLIAMS

Nat London in Paris, Harry Ring in Los Angeles, and Brian Taylor in Washington, D.C., contributed to this column.

THE MILITANT

Behind China-Taiwan conflict

The Chinese people are trying to take back what's rightfully theirs — Taiwan. In the process they are coming into sharper conflict with Washington's military might. The 'Militant' brings you the facts behind the confrontation. Don't miss a single issue!



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UK gov't 'won't just hand us freedom'

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON — The setting of June 10 for the beginning of all-party talks on the future of Northern Ireland by the London and Dublin governments has been given a "cautious welcome" by Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams. The demand for such talks has been the central campaigning focus of fighters for Irish national self-determination over the last 18 months. While London has abandoned its precondition that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) totally decommission its arms prior to Sinn Fein being admitted to talks, Adams warned that many will remain "sceptical about this commitment in the context of consistent British bad faith and stalling."

London now says the condition for Sinn Fein's participation is that the IRA renew its cease-fire prior to the talks. Since ending its cease-fire on February 9, the IRA has claimed responsibility for three bomb explosions in London. The London-Dublin communiqué stated, however, that only after talks began would Sinn Fein be required to make a "total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence" laid down in a report issued by former U.S. senator George Mitchell in January. An editorial in the Sinn Fein paper *An Phoblacht* warned, "Clearly we are not out of the woods yet."

In announcing the date for talks, British prime minister John Major said they would be preceded by special Northern Ireland elections to determine the negotiating group for the talks. Sinn Fein, the leading party in the fight for Irish self-determination, has opposed such elections

but says it will consider taking part.

Multilateral negotiations were held March 4-13 to determine the electoral method. This consultative process was described by Sinn Fein as a farce when its delegation was refused entry because of the continuation of the IRA campaign. *An Phoblacht* reported, "While Sinn Fein was not invited and then locked out of talks, the two main unionist parties who were invited boycotted the venue, because of the presence of Dublin government representatives."

In addition to the unionist parties boycotting the talks, the pro-British loyalist paramilitaries issued a threat March 12 to match the IRA "blow by blow."

Despite this filibustering and bombast, the naming of a date for talks is widely seen as a concession to fighters for self-determination. The *Daily Telegraph*, for example, ran an editorial headlined "The bombing has worked." The *Guardian* commented, "In truth there is no disguising the fact that the Government has given ground by agreeing a fixed date for all-party talks."

Many working people, both in Ireland and in the United Kingdom, place the responsibility for the IRA's bombing campaign with the Major government's stalling on all-party talks. An opinion poll for the London *Sunday Times* said two out of three voters favor talks with Sinn Fein. In Ireland, opinion polls showed 70 percent of people held the British government responsible for the break in the cease-fire, while 85 percent were in favor of talks without preconditions.

London and Dublin are responding to



Despite heavy propaganda, most blame British government for end to cease-fire. Sinn Fein supporters were able to carry their signs in "peace" demonstrations intended by organizers to condemn IRA, such as February 25 rally in Dublin, above.

this by seeking to isolate nationalist fighters. In Dublin, Irish prime minister John Bruton made an attack on the IRA the centerpiece of his address to the annual conference of his Fine Gael party.

In London, Labour Party spokesperson Jack Straw announced Labour intends to drop its 13-year formal opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). Originally introduced by a Labour government, the law provides for seven-day detention without charge. Numerous people have been framed up through it, including the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four. The *Irish Post* reported that a survey it conducted "suggested that by 1993, one Irish person in every ten had experienced the effects or been touched by the PTA in

some way." The *Post* added, "In police eyes the Irish became a 'suspect community' " under the PTA. The London government was scheduled to renew the law March 14.

Speaking in London, Sinn Fein leader Francie Molloy responded to those who blamed the IRA for the ending of the cease-fire. "The failure we've seen is of constitutional nationalism," he said. "They failed to provide an alternative to armed struggle." Before a crowd of 300 in the Camden Irish center he emphasized, "No one thought or believes they will hand us freedom on a plate." He called on the audience to redouble their efforts to "end the exclusion of Sinn Fein and force Britain to sit down."

Sinn Fein leader gets warm welcome in New York

BY TONI GORTON

THE BRONX, New York — "There is that section of the British government that still believes it's got an empire — and that we're it!" said Gerry Adams, speaking here March 12. "They need to be told to leave the Irish people in peace — leave the nationalists, republicans, and Unionists to work out a future for ourselves."

A boisterous, youthful, overflow crowd of about 1,000 jammed Gaelic Park hall in the north Bronx to hear Adams, the president of Sinn Fein, the leading party in the fight to end British domination of Ireland.

Adams noted that it had been just over two years since he first spoke in the United States. Until 1994 Washington had denied him a visa to enter the country. At that time, Adams recalled, he had stressed Sinn Fein's aim to "take all the guns out of Irish politics" — those of the British troops, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, the pro-British Unionists, and the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

He added, "We silenced the guns for a year and a half. And for 18 months the British government frustrated and tried to undermine and subvert the opportunity for peace." Adams pointed to the case of Irish republican prisoner Paddy Kelly as an example. "In the course of that [18 months] Paddy Kelly was refused medical attention by [British prime minister] John Major's government. We're now told Paddy Kelly is going to die," he said.

'Stop Irish political deportations'

Adams received especially loud applause when he pointed out, "I'm wearing a green ribbon, which is the symbol of the Saoirse [prisoner] campaign, and a badge against the deportation of Irish prisoners back to Ireland." Many people at the rally wore buttons that read, "Stop Irish Political Deportations."

"I am very sorry that the IRA cessation is over," Adams said. "My heart went out to those who were killed and the families of those who were killed" in IRA bombings in London in February.

He and John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, recently met with leaders of the IRA, Adams said. They "told us they weren't defeated, that they had fought the British for 25 years, that they had fought the British to a standstill, and that they wanted to give the British an opportunity...to put together a

resolution to the conflict."

All-party talks are scheduled to start June 10, Adams said, but "the British government has put almost a barbed wire entanglement around them," setting preconditions. "How can there be all-party talks if Sinn Fein isn't involved; there can't be. They don't want change. The Unionists don't want change."

Adams called on those present to actively support the Irish struggle. "If it's just to wear the green ribbon in support of Irish political prisoners, that will part of the peace effort. If the British government is stubborn, intransigent, and stupid, if the British government thinks the Irish are second-class citizens, then you have to tell them that isn't the case."

Steven Toth, a 23-year-old construction worker from Northern Ireland, was one of many young people at the rally. "This side of the struggle is not being told," he said. "The IRA wasn't being recognized after 17 months of peace. Adams is speaking for the people, trying to bring peace in a fair and just way. The British are stalling."

Deirdre Noonan, 24, said she didn't like the bombing but "peace is more up to the

British." Another participant, Sheila Horohoe, said she came because she had never been able to hear Adams when she lived in Ireland.

'I want to shake his hand'

While the big majority of those attending the meeting were Irish or Irish-American, others turned out as well. A young Jordanian immigrant stopped by a Pathfinder book table outside the rally, drawn by a placard saying "For a free, united Ireland." When asked if going in to hear Adams he replied, "Of course. I want to go in and shake his hand."

Adams answered a series of written questions from the audience, many of them about the future for all-party talks and about what people in the United States can do to help the peace process.

Some participants in the rally proposed supporting Democratic president Bill Clinton. The event was chaired by Frank Durkan, a lawyer with Americans for a New Irish Agenda, which grew out of Irish Americans for Clinton-Gore in the 1992 presidential election. Adams commented, "I acknowledge that this president

has done more than any other president."

Toward the end, a supporter of the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization shouted a complaint about their continued ban from the March 16 St. Patrick's Day parade. Adams called for the audience, many of whom booed, to "let the woman speak."

"The Easter Proclamation [from the Easter 1916 uprising against British rule] says to 'cherish all the children of the nation,'" Adams said. "Enough people are against the Irish that we shouldn't shout the woman down. As someone who has been excluded from many places, I would like to think we're inclusive enough to allow everyone to participate in our celebrations." A minority of the audience clapped their approval. Adams is to march in the New York St. Patrick's Day parade.

Concluding the meeting, Adams said, "There are sections of the establishment that don't want peace in Ireland. Are we going to let them condemn us to the type of past we have had to live for decades and centuries? The answer is very straightforward: No, we are not."

Lisa Rottach contributed to this article.

Argentine activists speak in Minnesota

BY JON HILLSON AND JENNY BENTON

MINNEAPOLIS — Her head covered in the traditional white scarf of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Evel de Petrini beamed a smile as she fielded a question about the stance of the Argentine group toward Cuba. "We are 100 percent in solidarity with Cuba," she said on March 5, to the applause of the majority of nearly 200 students at a University of Minnesota meeting.

"Why does a big country like the United States pick on such a little country like Cuba? What threat does it pose? Why doesn't the United States let Cuba live in peace? Because of what the Cubans think," said de Petrini, whose child was "disappeared" by Argentina's military dictatorship during the infamous "dirty war" of the late 1970s.

De Petrini and Elsa de Manzotti, another member of the organization, are currently touring the United States. In Minnesota they also spoke to crowds of 400 at

St. Olaf College and 250 at the Resource Center of the Americas. The majority of the nearly 900 people who attended the meetings were young women.

The group takes its name from weekly Thursday marches that mothers of disappeared children have made in the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires for the past 19 years. The group is seeking justice for 30,000 activists and other workers and students slain by the regime.

The massive brutality, de Petrini said, "was prepared in the United States, at the School of the Americas. The torture was prepared here, the rapes were prepared here, the killing was prepared here."

The dictatorship "bought the guns, the tanks, the weapons, and the bombs from the United States and it borrowed money in the United States to pay for it. So now we have a huge debt [to U.S. banks] that is immoral and unpayable."

"Tell the [U.S.] government," de Petrini urged the students, "to cancel this debt."

The two activists detailed the refusal of

the civilian governments that replaced the military tyranny to prosecute those who planned and executed the mass kidnappings and executions.

"So today," de Petrini said, "the murderers are back in the government," preparing more repression." As proof, the mothers showed a documentary of student protests, and cop and army repression, in La Plata, Argentina, on February 20.

Television cameras captured the image of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo leader Hebe de Bonafini being struck by a cop. Army troops and unidentified plainclothes goons are shown beating journalists and shooting rubber bullets into crowds of students running out of clouds of tear gas.

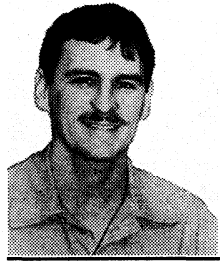
The mothers group had come to the aid of the students, who were protesting government assaults on public education. The demonstrations resulted in the release of 200 arrested student activists.

For more information on the itinerary of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, call Speak Out at (510) 601-0182.

Inmates discuss downing of planes by Cuban air force

BY MARK CURTIS

FT. MADISON, Iowa—When Cuban jet fighters shot down two light planes operated by anti-communist “cowboys” from Miami, there was a solid front by media and government spokespeople that “Castro’s flyers had committed murder.”



Mark Curtis

In the real world, however, thinking people were voicing a variety of opinions about the incident.

Here in the Iowa State Penitentiary prisoners favor everything from U.S. military action against the small island to agreement that the nation did the right thing to defend itself. “Just because they say they were in international waters doesn’t mean they were,” said a coworker of mine in the upholstery school the Monday morning after the shooting of the planes on February 24. “But it was overreaction to shoot

them down. What’s next,” he said, “commercial airliners?”

“It was a cat-and-mouse game these people were playing and they finally got caught,” a friend of mine told me when we met outside the chow hall. He was most impressed by the number of times Brothers to the Rescue had been warned to stop their flights over Cuba. “They were told right before that they were in danger and to turn back,” he said.

“I think Cuba’s been getting away with too much for a long time now,” was the unexpected comment from someone I know to be involved for years in the fight for Black rights. When I asked him what kind of things Cuba’s been getting away with he mentioned the rafters who left the island in 1994 to come to the United States. He did hear me out though, when I explained that it was the U.S. government that provoked the rafter crisis by encouraging immigration to a land of “milk and honey” while at the same time denying visas to those wanting to immigrate to the United States.

This latest incident has been an opportunity to remind people why Washington hates Cuba so much: the socialist revolution there nationalized the sugar cane plantations, the Havana Hilton Hotel, the

Bacardi Rum plant, and other property the wealthy here and their counterparts in Cuba thought would always be theirs to profit from. If you check out the Helms-Burton bill President Clinton says he’ll sign, you’ll see these wealthy individuals are still sore about “their Cuban property.”

Cuban workers and peasants in their great majority are loyal to their political party, the Communist Party of Cuba. They are eager to help any other small nation stand up to the U.S. government and fight for its own freedom. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans volunteered to fight in Angola to help defeat the invading racist army of South Africa, an internationalist feat that contributed in the struggle to bring down the apartheid regime.

Five years ago Cuba’s representative Ricardo Alarcón stood up in the United Nations Security Council and explained why “Operation Desert Shield” against Iraq was illegal, immoral, and should be stopped. Today it’s clearer than ever how right the Cuban leadership was.

One of my best friends here is a Native American man who joined me in a study group of the *Communist Manifesto*. We’ve been talking every morning over breakfast about Cuba and he brings me the questions and arguments of those he works

with. We talk it over and “reload” our arguments in defense of Cuba. We have found the Pathfinder title *To Speak the Truth* with speeches by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara to be very helpful in discussions and in our own education.

Probably the biggest question guys here have is couldn’t Cuban jets have simply forced the light planes down rather than launch rockets at them? But Brothers to the Rescue is not a nonviolent humanitarian group. When I told my pal that José Basulto, the group’s leader, had been an invader at the Bay of Pigs and had come back to Cuba to fire a handheld rocket from a speedboat, he asked me if Basulto was the same guy he read about who fired a grenade at the United Nations building when Che Guevara spoke there 30 years ago representing the Cuban government. No, I said, not the same guy but they were both “Brothers to the Rescue” for U.S. imperialism. Letting deadly counterrevolutionaries like these fly over children in their schools, farmers in the fields, and people living their lives would have been a foolish price to pay to satisfy “morally outraged” politicians in the United States. Castro made the right call. Because of this action working people here will respect and learn more from the Cuban revolution.

3,000 strike GM in Ohio

BY JOHN SARGE

DAYTON, Ohio — Three thousand auto workers struck two General Motors (GM) brake-parts plants here March 5, forcing the company to close many vehicle assembly factories and idling tens of thousands of workers.

“Jobs are the major issue,” said United Auto Workers (UAW) member Gene Felte as he walked the picket line here March 9. The workers, members of UAW Local 696, walked out over plans by GM’s Delphi Chassis Division to eliminate about 125 jobs from the plants and send them to other, usually nonunion parts manufacturers, a practice known as “outsourcing.”

The union also cited health and safety issues, centered on the risk from repetitive motion injuries, as contributing to the decision to walk out.

UAW Local 696 members were forced to strike over outsourcing for three days in 1994. Joe Hasenjager, president of the union local, reported that GM promised to create over 500 jobs under the 1994 agreement but had added only 76.

The workers who produce brake parts for most GM vehicles, and some parts for Chrysler and American Isuzu, quickly affected production at other GM facilities. By the end of the sixth day of the walkout, the auto giant was forced to close 14 of its 29 North American assembly plants — stretching from Oshawa, Ontario, to Shreveport, Louisiana — idling over 43,000 workers.

U.S. auto manufacturers use the “just in time” inventory system, which means assembly plants keep only a limited number of parts in stock. This practice strengthens the ability of workers in parts plants to affect production throughout the company.

UAW officials sent 300 workers back into the plants on the second day of the strike to resume production on Chrysler and Isuzu brake components. This action by the union officials provoked a discussion among strikers. The *Dayton Daily News* reported that at the union meeting where this decision was announced a layer of union members “opposed letting anyone cross the picket lines and wanted to shut down the plants completely.”

In describing the discussion over sending some workers back into the plants one picket at the Wisconsin Blvd. plant, a machinist with 20 years at GM, said, “Rumors are flying around that the company wants to outsource from 300 to 600 jobs. That’s why we’re out. But if we hadn’t sent those people in, Chrysler would have pulled their jobs and we would have lost 300 jobs.”

The UAW’s national contracts with the Big Three auto makers — GM, Ford and Chrysler — expire in September, so the decision to strike now has also stirred a discussion among union members about upcoming contract negotiations. The UAW has scheduled a contract bargaining conference April 1-3.

The *Dayton Daily News* highlighted



Militant/John Sarge

UAW members on strike at GM’s Wisconsin Blvd. plant, Dayton, Ohio, March 9.

comments by some workers opposed to the walkout. The paper, for example, quoted Deacon C.C. Johnson Jr., a Wisconsin Blvd. plant worker, saying, “I don’t like it. Why go out now? The contract will be up in September (and we may end up striking again.) Why go out twice?”

Many workers on the picket lines, however, have a different view. “We should just as well do it now than wait to the fall, it’s time to do it,” said Jim Thorpe, a UAW member with 22 years at GM, as he walked his picket duty.

A worker picketing March 11 commented, “There have been rumors for years that GM wants to sell this place, and maybe they will this time. But we’ve got to do what we’ve got to do.”

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that some auto industry analysts say this strike can be seen as preliminary to the national negotiations between the Big Three and the UAW that are expected to open in June. This is the eighth local strike against GM in the last two years and outsourcing has been a major issue in all of them.

GM may not settle this strike as quickly as previous strikes at critical parts operations. Negotiations were held the first three days of the walkout, but the company did not meet with the union for the next three days. GM may also be using the strike to reduce its North American production levels and inventories. The auto giant had already announced plans to produce 9 percent fewer vehicles in the first quarter this year than in the same period in 1995. The auto giant’s plans for the second quarter already call for an 8.4 percent drop in production over last year’s levels.

GM’s production cuts come in the framework of a general weakening of sales for new cars across North America. All of the Big Three have temporarily idled plants this year. Three assembly

plants, one Ford and two Chrysler, are scheduled to be closed the week of March 11 due to growing inventories.

In face of the intransigence of the auto bosses, UAW members are organizing resistance. A three-day work stoppage by members of UAW Local 869 at the Chrysler Truck Plant in Warren, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, last month was another such indication.

On Friday, February 9, assemblers producing full size pick-up trucks refused to work because of health and safety concerns. The company quickly moved to fire the local union president and a grievance committee person for organizing an “illegal” strike. The auto maker claimed there was no safety problem. Chrysler workers refused to work on February 17 to protest the firings.

The UAW’s national Chrysler department ordered the union ranks to return to work on February 19. Workers refused, with only 245 out of 1,800 production workers going in on the second shift to protest the firings of their local elected officials.

The UAW tops were able to pressure the local membership to return the next day without getting the two fired officials back to work, but not before Chrysler lost an estimated \$7 million in profits.

As the first three months of this year demonstrate, auto workers can expect the Big Three and other auto companies to continue to push for ever worsening working conditions and the weakening of the union as the upturn in auto sales comes to an end and the owners try to shore up their declining profit rates in face of sharper competition from rivals in other countries.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 at Ford in Detroit. Jon Hillson from Minneapolis contributed to this article.

‘Join April 14 women’s rights march’

BY ELLEN BERMAN

SAN FRANCISCO — Plans to build the April 14 national demonstration to “Fight the Right” called by the National Organization for Women (NOW) are in full swing in the Bay Area. The San Francisco NOW office has been transformed into an organizing center for the demonstration, which is being called around the demands: “No retreat on affirmative action,” “Fight racism,” “Protect abortion and reproductive rights,” “Stop all forms of violence against women,” “Demand lesbian, gay and bi-rights,” and “End the war on poor women.”

An all-out effort to recruit volunteers to help build the demonstration was launched January 20 at an open house featuring national NOW president Patricia Ireland as the guest speaker. Since then, the NOW office has been open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Volunteers are joining in the effort to reach out and spread the word. Phone-banking, which takes place every evening, has solicited over 300 volunteers so far toward a goal of 1,000 to help out during the march.

Speaking tours to campuses and out-

reach to labor, civil rights, and other community organizations are being organized by the NOW staff, including organizers from Washington, D.C. Kate Bedford, the chair of the San Francisco NOW Young Feminist Task Force, is contacting NOW groups at high schools across the state to help organize delegations. A Young Feminists conference for all members of teenage women’s rights groups in California will be held just before the march.

On Saturdays, teams of volunteers go out to various neighborhoods in the Bay Area to set up informational tables and to encourage storekeepers to display flyers advertising the march. Leaflets in Spanish and Chinese are also being produced.

Participants are being encouraged to come from all over the country to this national action. Staffers report receiving phone calls from as far away as North Carolina. Demonstrators will assemble on Sunday, April 14, at 11:00 a.m. for a march beginning at 1:00 p.m. and culminating with a rally at 2:00 p.m. For more information call (415) 436-9390 in San Francisco or (202) 331-0066 in Washington, D.C.

'Public pressure will win Curtis's release'

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

CHICAGO — On March 8 a column for the *Militant* by imprisoned political activist Mark Curtis arrived in Des Moines, Iowa. Supporters of the paper retyped and formatted the article into a computer file and electronically mailed it to the paper (see article on opposing page).

Since December, three articles by Curtis mailed to the *Militant* had not made it out of the prison mail system at the Iowa State Penitentiary, where the framed-up unionist is held. Curtis requested an explanation for this censorship by prison authorities and never received a reply.

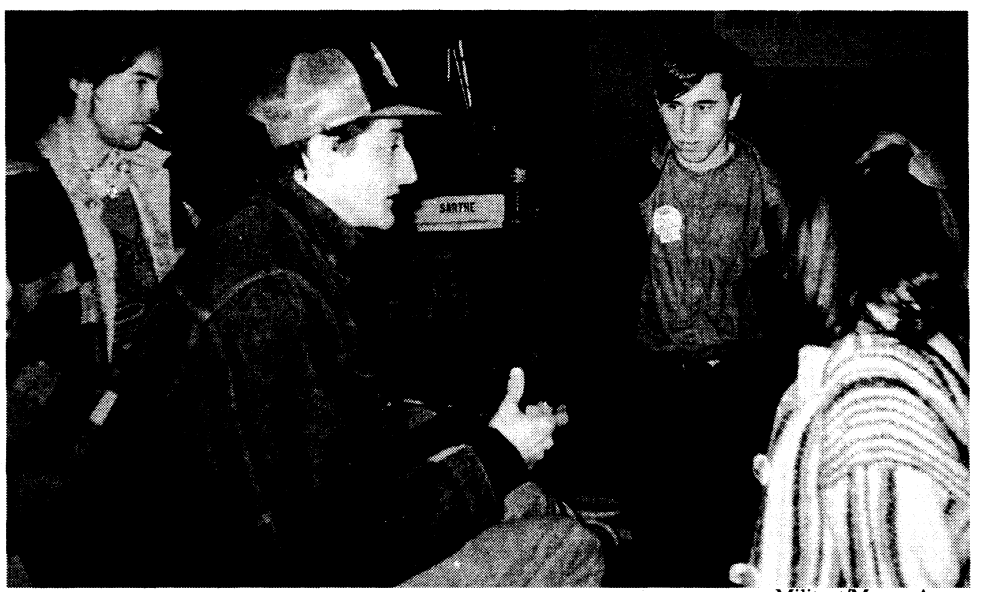
Recently, attorneys for Curtis called numerous times in an effort to reach prison officials to urge an end to this denial of Curtis's right to free speech. Steve Clark, editor of the *Militant*, wrote to the Gerardo Acevedo, warden of the penitentiary, requesting the immediate release of the articles and an end to such actions.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee, which organizes to fight for Curtis's release and to defend his rights in prison,

asked supporters around the world to write the warden and urge the censorship be lifted. Dozens wrote in from New Zealand to Sweden and numerous cities in the United States.

Finally, deputy prison warden Paul Hedgepath responded to William Kutmus, Curtis's attorney in Des Moines. Hedgepath told Kutmus that there was no censorship policy against Curtis and that there must have been some problem with the mail. He suggested that Curtis submit future articles by certified mail. The next article Curtis sent made it through the penitentiary's mail system. He is now working on another article describing the numerous letters of solidarity he has received recently.

Curtis was framed-up on charges of attempted rape and burglary while he was part of a fight at the Swift meatpacking company to defend 17 immigrant co-workers arrested in a raid by federal agents in 1988. The defense committee is asking activists to continue to write Curtis and express their support. "A steady



Militant/Megan Arney

Young Socialist leader Jack Willey (second from right), at Communist Youth congress in Paris. New support was won there for framed-up unionist Mark Curtis.

stream of letters going in to Mark helps serve notice on prison authorities that his supporters are following his activities closely and are ready to protest any further attacks on him or his rights," John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee said in an interview.

Letters can be sent to Mark Curtis,

#805338, Iowa State Penitentiary, Box 316, Fort Madison, Iowa 52627. The defense committee asks that copies of the letters be sent to the MCDC, Box 477419, Chicago, Illinois, 60647. Last November, Curtis was granted parole by the Iowa State Board of Parole after serving over seven and one-half years on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. He remains in the Iowa State Penitentiary because he applied for out-of-state parole to Illinois. Parole officials told Curtis that he should be released within three months.

Instead, Curtis has faced continual obstacles to winning his freedom from Illinois authorities. His application to be released in Illinois is based on the fact he plans to live and work there with Kate Kaku, his companion for over a decade. Authorities with the Illinois Department of Corrections have rejected his parole, arguing that he does not have sufficient "family ties" to the state.

On March 11 Curtis and Kaku formalized their marriage at the state penitentiary. Copies of the marriage certificate were sent to corrections authorities in Illinois by Iowa penitentiary authorities and by Jed Stone, an attorney for Curtis in Chicago. This reopens Curtis's application for parole to Illinois. "It is clear that only continuous public attention and pressure will win Curtis's freedom," Studer said.

Curtis wins support at youth congress

BY ANGEL LARISCY

PARIS — Framed-up trade unionist and socialist Mark Curtis won new support at youth conferences here for his efforts to be released on parole and to protest attempts by prison officials to censor him. Upon invitation by the Movement of Communist Youth of France (MJCF), I attended their national conference representing the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. The meeting was held February 9-March 3 and drew over 800 participants, including 100 international delegates from 43 countries. On March 4 representatives of youth groups from around the world held a meeting to discuss building an international festival of students and youth.

Hundreds of delegates received a copy of a February 27 letter from the Mark Curtis Defense Committee alerting supporters to the rejection of Curtis's request to be paroled to Illinois by officials of that state and the censorship by Ft. Madison, Iowa, prison authorities of three articles written by Curtis for the *Militant* newspaper.

Seventeen participants purchased copies of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Why is Mark Curtis Still in Prison* in English, French, and Spanish, along with two copies of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee pamphlet *The Stakes in the Campaign to Free Mark Curtis*.

A number of people who have followed Curtis's case and knew about the decision in November of the Iowa Parole Board to release him on parole were outraged to learn that state officials are stalling on his release and censoring Curtis's mail.

Rajaji Mathew Thomas, general secretary of the All India Youth Federation, said he first learned about the case of Mark Curtis at a meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in 1991 in Cyprus. He planned to write a protest

letter as soon as he returned to India and pass the information on to others. "In India, people are told that it [the United States] is the haven of democracy," he said. "This case is useful for our political work in India."

Many others from around the world heard about the frame-up case for the first time and agreed to send protest letters. Upon getting details of the events leading up to Curtis's arrest on false charges of sexual assault and burglary, Saheb Dabha of the Movement of Democratic Women of Algeria, said she identified with Curtis's efforts to defend immigrant workers. "We must all unite, being from the rich or the poor countries, the north or the south in order to have democracy and freedom of expression," she stated.

Communist youth in France hold congress

BY MEGAN ARNEY

PARIS — The Movement of Communist Youth of France (MJCF) held its congress here February 29 to March 3. More than 750 elected delegates attended the meeting along with representatives from 63 different youth organizations around the world.

The congress opened with an international forum, where international delegates explained the challenges facing youth in their respective countries. As part of the forum, a video on Yugoslavia provoked discussion about the warring factions there and the role of imperialist powers occupying the nation.

Many people saw the troop build-up in Yugoslavia as a step toward peace, but a few delegates voiced opposition to imperialist troops being there.

A debate broke out around Cuba after Rogelio Polanco, from the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, spoke about the recent aggression by the U.S. government following the downing of two U.S.-based planes by the Cuban armed forces.

Jack Willey, representing the Young Socialists in the United States, spoke about the importance of actions against Washington's aggression and pointed to the Cuban revolution as an example to emulate. A delegate from the MJCF responded, "I'm against the blockade of Cuba. But let's call a spade a spade, Fidel Castro is a dictator."

Several others, mostly from the MJCF, joined the debate in support of the Cuban revolution. Over the next three days Petro Alesandrini, the delegate who sparked the debate, spoke with Polanco and YS members from the United States and Canada, and decided to visit Cuba this summer to learn more for himself.

A political report opened the congress, with three days devoted to discussion. The delegates took up a range of issues, including military conscription, fighting the fascist politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, soli-

darity with Algeria, drug abuse, the recent nuclear tests by the French government in the Pacific, and unemployment.

On the third day of the congress, public workshops discussed several issues, including education, jobs, and the military. Unemployment in France is officially at more than 12 percent, and many youth work temporary or part-time jobs.

A lively exchange took place around the MJCF's support for the mandatory military service that all young men must participate in.

One MJCF delegate, who was a conscientious objector from military service, asked, "how can we be against nuclear testing or murder and turn around and support conscription? The military has even been used to break strikes."

Others explained their support for the mandatory service. "Conscription... educates youth and gives many people a future," stated one delegate.

Informal discussion during breaks was lively. Several delegates, especially a group from La Rochelle, were quite interested in the political situation in the United States. The first evening, one person asked YS members about the Black rights struggle in the United States, in particular the Million Man March and the fight to free Pennsylvania death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Thomas Nielson, from the Communist Youth Union in Czechoslovakia, discussed the challenges his group faces. "I definitely support the Cuban revolution and the fact that the people still fight with the economic situation they face," he said. "But it's very difficult to get the truth about Cuba in Czechoslovakia. I came here to meet other young communists and learn about struggles in their countries."

The congress ended with a speech by the general secretary of the Communist Party of France, Robert Hue, and a closing address by MJCF general secretary Sylvie Vassallo. Throughout the congress MJCF

members recalled their participation in the December strike movement protesting the French government's austerity drive, often singing the Internationale and chanting the popularized slogan, "Tous ensemble! Ouais!" (All together! Yes!)

Demand parole for Peltier now!

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee has issued a statement requesting all supporters of democratic rights demand the public release of the parole hearing officer's recommendation in the case of framed-up Native American activist Leonard Peltier. The defense committee urges supporters to send messages to the National Parole Commission demanding the immediate parole of Peltier.

Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement, was framed up by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and given two consecutive life sentences in 1977.

The parole hearing officer conducted the hearing on Peltier's case on Dec. 11, 1995, but no recommendation has been made public. A final decision was expected by the National Commission in January. This delay is cause for "great concern," said Peltier's committee.

The defense committee is asking supporters to contact the United States Parole Commission at the following telephone numbers: (301) 492-5952 or (301) 492-5821, or these fax numbers: (301) 492-6694, (301) 492-5525, (301) 492-5307.

The statement concludes, "Please don't sit by while justice is buried! Act now!"

Youth plan for festival in Cuba

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

PARIS — The 14th World Festival of Students and Youth "will allow people from around the world to discuss problems facing the international youth movement today, such as solidarity, the right to education, democracy, health care, sovereignty, self-determination, young women, children, sports, and discrimination," said Rogelio Polanco of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba.

Polanco was addressing an international meeting here March 4, initiated by youth groups in France, to discuss plans for the event, which will be held in Cuba in the summer of 1997. Representatives from youth organizations in Algeria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Greece, Guadeloupe, India, Iraq, North Korea, Spain, the United States, Venezuela, Vietnam, and elsewhere participated in the meeting.

Many of the groups represented in this meeting are affiliates of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which has organized previous world youth festivals.

The proposal for the 1997 gathering came out of the "Cuba Lives" international youth festival, which took place in Cuba and was attended by 1,300 people from over 60 countries. Polanco said hosts in Cuba are planning for 5,000-10,000 participants in the world festival. "Youth and student organizations in Cuba are already working on reducing the cost by proposing the delegates be lodged by Cuban families," he said.

As part of building the festival, Nieves Iliana Hernandez of the UJC of Cuba will be touring eight countries in Eastern Europe later this year.

U.S. base at Guantánamo supplied Batista's army

Pathfinder Press has recently released a new edition of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War — 1956-58*.

To promote this book the *Militant* is running "Pages from Cuba's Revolutionary History." This series features articles by and about combatants of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, which led the revolutionary war that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and opened the socialist revolution in the Americas.

This week's installment — the ninth — takes up the fight against U.S. support to the Batista dictatorship through Washington's naval base at Guantánamo on the southeastern part of the island. This base was set up shortly after the U.S. military occupation of Cuba in 1898. Since 1959 it has been held in spite of the demand of the Cuban government that it be returned, and has been used as a constant source of provocations against the Cuban revolution.

In mid-1958, Raúl Castro commanded the Rebel Army's Second Eastern Front whose area of operations encompassed the Guantánamo base. In an article published Sept. 22, 1963, in *Verde Olivo*, the Rebel commander wrote:

"At the end of May our Department of Rebel Intelligence sent me some photographs and a document of exceptional importance. Included were photographs taken inside the Guantánamo naval base, showing two of Batista's planes together with a U.S. truck parked beside it full of weapons. The insignia of the Cuban planes together with the U.S. insignia on the side of a shack on the runway left no doubt that these were Batista planes receiving aid from the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay.

"The other document, even more important, had come from the files of the Guantánamo naval base itself consisting of a shipping list dated May 8, 1958, and bearing the signature of the officer in charge. It detailed the war matériel shipped by the U.S. government to the Batista regime."

The U.S. weapons were used by Batista's air force to bomb peasant villages throughout the Sierra Maestra and Oriente province, killing numerous civilians.

To halt these attacks, Raúl Castro issued an order on June 22, 1958, calling for the seizure of U.S. personnel living in the area under the jurisdiction of the Second Eastern Front, to draw worldwide attention to the U.S.-supported bombings and the use of the Guantánamo base to supply Batista's troops. Some four dozen U.S. military and civilian personnel were soon detained in what the Rebels called "Operation Anti-Aircraft." During this period the bombings stopped.

In early July 1958 Fidel Castro, who had not authorized the action, ordered the operation halted and all detainees released.

Summing up the results of this effort, Raúl Castro wrote in 1963:

"Operation Anti-Aircraft had fully achieved its political, military, and moral objectives. In addition, the masses of workers and peasants who supported us throughout the liberated territory understood and at the same time enabled us to clearly see the



Granma

true face of the Cuban reality, and see who was fundamentally responsible for it. There was no doubt whatsoever that our struggle could not end with the fall of Batista, but had to go much further, up to the elimination of the true causes of the evils in our country.

"Days later, when our messenger and lawyer Capt. Jorge Serguera returned to the Sierra Maestra, he brought a letter by Fidel criticizing us, in which Fidel was entirely correct. As he had already said prior to Batista's offensive, the dictator was already defeated and the offensive constituted his last hope. Once it was repulsed by the Rebel Army — as had already happened — Batista and his regime had no salvation. Utilizing the pretext of the detention of the North Americans, the United States government could therefore have utilized this to intervene militarily in Cuba and try to save Batista, which would have dangerously aggravated the situation."

Below is an account of the seizure of 29 U.S. marines and sailors from the Guantánamo naval base, written by the commander of the rebel unit who carried it out. The article was published in *Verde Olivo*, Sept. 15, 1963. Translation and subheads are by the *Militant*.



BY JOSÉ Q. SANDINO

I was in my camp, on the banks of the rapidly moving Yateras river, at a place known as Vega Grande, in the municipality of Yateras, when I received a message from our immediate commanding officer, Capt. Félix Lugerio Peña, who headed the "Antonio Fernández" Column no. 18. Peña was urgently summoning me to his command post.

Those were difficult days for us and for all the people, particularly the peasants. We were subjected to intense aerial bombardment by planes of Batista's bloody and monstrous dictatorship. Every type of plane it had — from small propeller craft to jet planes, were dropping hundreds of bombs of all types and sizes on the fields and poor homes of our brothers, the defenseless peasants.

The shrapnel and bombs were being supplied by the U.S. naval base on the only

piece of Cuban soil where the United States flag flew, contrary to the desires of our people, and which one day will be free.

The dictatorship's planes landed and took off every day from the Yankee naval base with their lethal cargoes. From there they flew to various points of the zone encompassing the "Frank País" Second Front, to sow destruction and terror.

As soon as I received the message I set out for Captain Peña's command post, where I met other officers of our column. At the start of the meeting Peña informed us of the order issued by the head of the "Frank País" Second Front, Commander Raúl Castro, who had issued Military Order no. 30, informing the entire world of the crimes being committed. That same military dispatch by Commander Raúl ordered the capture of U.S. citizens living within the territory under our jurisdiction, so they would be witnesses, and at the same time drawing the attention of the entire world to how Yankee imperialism was aiding the murderous and traitorous government through the delivery of shrapnel and bombs.

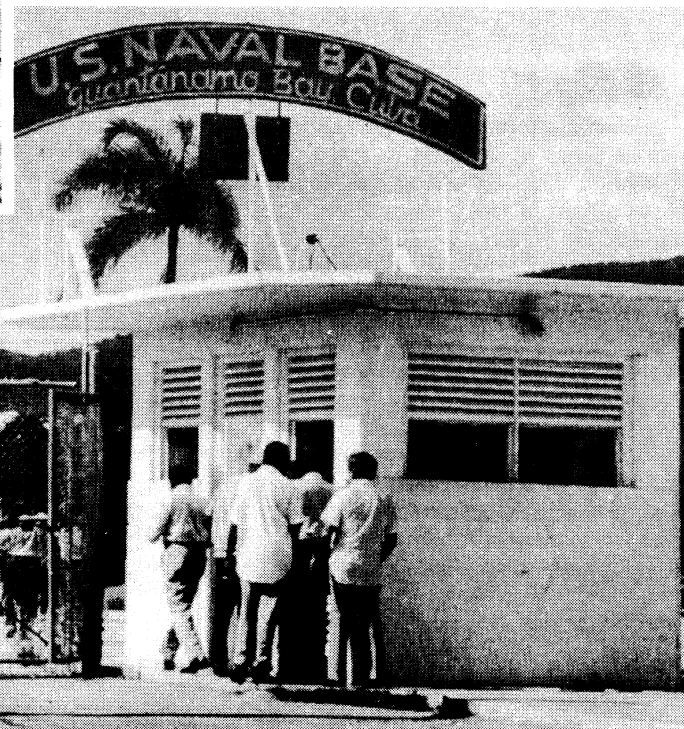
A dangerous mission

Receiving such a mission constituted an incentive for me; the more dangerous a mission, the greater was the incentive given us by our superiors. At the same time, we were concerned about selecting the comrades to participate in the action, since we knew well how our combatants would react; they were not afraid to face death, and would even cry when they were not included in an operation.

Everyone wanted to participate in the most dangerous missions, where a small error could cost the lives of everyone. During my return trip to the camp, I selected the personnel who would accompany me in capturing the U.S. citizens living at the Los Caños sugar mill, a very dangerous place where soldiers were all over. To arrive there we had to cross through 15 kilometers of flatland, where the sugarcane was less than a meter high. In the event we were discovered by the enemy, they could fall on us easily and none of us would have come out alive.

A group of 13 men left our camp in a small truck and a jeep. At two in the afternoon we crossed through pastureland, canefields, and hills until we reached the Infierno heights, consisting of some very tall mountains. We arrived around eight at night at the house of one of my messengers — a peasant who was trusted by the dictatorship's army — so that we could descend to the plains and go to Guantánamo. Our messenger used to pass in front of the Rural Guard garrison, and often said hello to the head of the post.

From left to right: Head of Batista's Gen. Staff Maj. Gen. Francisco Tabernilla Dolz, with Col. Harold Isaacson, head of U.S. Military Mission in Cuba. Also Gen. Eulogio Cantillo, head of Infantry Division; Col. Francisco Tabernilla Palmero, head of Mixed Tank Regiment; Col. Pedro A. Barrera, head of Infantry Regiment; Lt. Col. Rafael García Cásares, head of Gen. Staff of Infantry Division, with members of U.S. Mission, Cols. Keller and Estewart, and Maj. Cameron and Blackwell. Below, the Northeast Gate at Guantánamo is the only route between the Cuban side and the occupied territory of the U.S. base.



The guards did not imagine that among the packages this comrade was carrying were bullets, uniforms, correspondence, and so forth. The name of this peasant was Eduardo Ponciano. When I saw him he informed me that the plains were crawling with soldiers. That night we slept at Ponciano's house and the following day we left. We decided not to advance at night because of the poor conditions of the road and the risk of falling into an ambush.

At nine in the morning we reached the place I had set aside for leaving the vehicles hidden and picking them up later.

From there we went on foot down the mountains. When we reached the agreed-upon place, in the plains, a messenger named Ricardo Domínguez was waiting for me. He informed me that the Americans who lived in Los Caños had gone to Guantánamo. I thought for a minute that my mission could not be fulfilled.

The plans called for all units to carry out the operation at the same time on the same day. This could not fail. Anyone who lost time put his mission in risk, since as soon as news of the capture of the first North Americans was known, the tyranny's forces would take all measures necessary to prevent any more from being captured.

I made a quick decision. I asked Domínguez if any buses passed by along the Guantánamo highway carrying U.S. marines. He said yes....

With great care we took up positions. Soon a bus appeared coming around one of the curves in the road. I asked my second in command, Captain Sergeant Manuel Tames Guerra, if it was a marine bus. He waited to see it again, and immediately said: "It's one of theirs!"

I ordered the comrades to be ready for action, and I approached the road. I signaled the driver — it was a tremendous fright for the driver and the conductor who saw me. Perhaps they thought I was a ghost, since it was very strange for there to be a bearded man alone in that place, armed with a rifle and signaling them to stop.

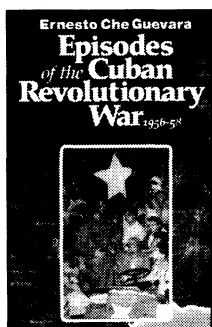
The driver became nervous, and when I realized he did not intend to stop, I shot at his tires. The man slammed on the brakes, with the idea that the soldiers were returning. I fired a shot and ran toward the bus, with the other comrades behind me. Three of our men remained at their posts in case the army troops came, where they could fire at them with a clear view.

Climbing aboard the bus, I found all the marines lying on the floor, some on top of each other. The driver could not respond to my questions. The marines got up and were startled to see me standing there. I ordered them to be seated and called three comrades

Continued on Page 13

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Continued from front page
their co-workers. At the same time SWP branches are taking steps to solidify the financial base of the party through the regular voluntary contributions of members and supporters.

After an initial boost from regular Pathfinder readers and socialist activists buying the book, sales of *Episodes* have slipped. According to the reports sent to the *Militant*, 81 copies were sold last week, compared to 96 the week before. To make the goal on time, Pathfinder supporters need to sell 214 copies per week for the rest of March. This will require reaching out to many people who have not bought Pathfinder books before.

Episodes is not just a book about the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba in January 1959. It explains concretely how workers and farmers can transform themselves through struggle, forge a political leadership capable of leading millions to open a socialist revolution, and organize to take state power.

Selling the book "has been integrated in everything we do," said Tony Lane from Twin Cities, Minnesota, explaining how socialist activists in his area got to the top of the chart in *Episodes* sales. "We've sold the book at all kinds of political meetings and campus tables, and we now have a list of 50-60 people to follow up on as well," he said. One recent sale was at a conference of the National Farmers Union. A farm activist and supporter of immigrant rights from Dodge City, Kansas, bought a *Militant* sub and a copy of *Episodes*.

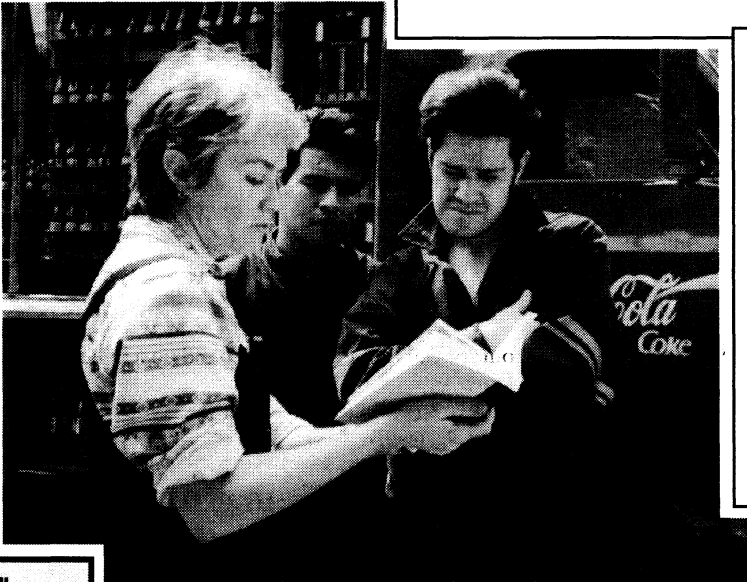
Holding a public celebration of the book early on in the campaign — February 16 — was a big boost, Lane said. "It helped us get out and talk to people." Several copies were sold at the event, and a couple more at an emergency Militant Labor Forum March 1 responding to Washington's threats against Cuba. Public classes to collectively discuss the book also helped get Pathfinder supporters in the campaign mode.

Meetings are planned to celebrate the publication of *Episodes* in San Francisco and Los Angeles the week-end of March 16-17. Róger Calero, who was part of the *Perspectiva Mundial* reporting team at the recent Havana book fair, will be one of the speakers at the two events.

Recruitment to YS

Getting out with the books is part of building the upcoming Young Socialists convention and recruiting to the organization. Lane reported that the Young Socialists in Twin Cities recruited a new member, Jason Drake, who first stopped by a socialist literature table at the University of Minnesota. One of the socialist workers staffing the table called Drake after the sale and gave him a ride to the next Militant Labor Forum. After coming to a few forums and other activities, he decided to join.

The YS also gained a new member in Newark, New Jer-



Militant/Susan Apstein

Pathfinder supporters attending Mexico City book fair were invited to set up table outside Chrysler auto plant. One worker there bought copy of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*.

sey. Aliyah Sabbá, 19, protested racist skinheads in Austria and also studied the history of the Black struggle in the United States. She is now working as a nanny, and was one of the people who stopped by a literature table in New Brunswick March 2. She came to a class on *Episodes* the next day at the Pathfinder bookstore in Newark, and joined the YS a week later after a second class.

Militant supporters across the country report high sales of the socialist newspaper over the last couple weeks, as they campaign against Washington's aggression toward Cuba. Selling the *Episodes*, as well as other Pathfinder titles such as the speeches by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in *To Speak the Truth — Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*, fits in well with defending the Cuban revolution and building activities like the upcoming tour of Cuban youth leaders to the United States and the congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers in April.

Campaigning with Pathfinder books and pamphlets provides a framework for other political work, such as reaching out to workers involved in labor struggles. Marty Ressler reported that a team of socialist workers from the General Motors plant in Tarrytown, New York, went to Peoria, Illinois, March 9-10 to talk with Caterpillar

March 10: 10%
Should be: 32%

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

| Cities | Through Pathfinder Bookstores | | | To Commercial Distributors | | | Readers Club Membership | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|------|--------|----------------------------|------|--------|-------------------------|------|
| | Goal | Sold | % sold | Goal | Sold | % sold | Goal | Sold |
| Miami | 55 | 31 | 56% | 42 | 0 | 0% | 97 | 32% |
| Philadelphia | 63 | 14 | 22% | 49 | 19 | 39% | 112 | 29% |
| Brooklyn | 165 | 86 | 52% | 130 | 0 | 0% | 295 | 29% |
| Des Moines | 45 | 21 | 47% | 35 | 0 | 0% | 80 | 26% |
| Washington, D.C. | 54 | 23 | 43% | 42 | 0 | 0% | 96 | 24% |
| Newark | 171 | 48 | 28% | 133 | 0 | 0% | 304 | 16% |
| Manhattan | 175 | 49 | 28% | 175 | 0 | 0% | 350 | 14% |
| Salt Lake City | 63 | 11 | 17% | 49 | 0 | 0% | 112 | 10% |
| Peoria | 36 | 5 | 14% | 28 | 0 | 0% | 64 | 8% |
| Atlanta | 48 | 0 | 0% | 32 | 0 | 0% | 80 | 0% |
| Birmingham | 63 | 0 | 0% | 49 | 0 | 0% | 112 | 0% |
| Boston | 65 | 0 | 0% | 50 | 0 | 0% | 115 | 0% |
| Chicago | 77 | 0 | 0% | 60 | 0 | 0% | 137 | 0% |
| Cleveland | 50 | 0 | 0% | 40 | 0 | 0% | 90 | 0% |
| Detroit | 77 | 0 | 0% | 60 | 0 | 0% | 137 | 0% |
| Greensboro | 41 | 0 | 0% | 36 | 0 | 0% | 77 | 0% |
| Houston | 50 | 0 | 0% | 39 | 0 | 0% | 89 | 0% |
| Los Angeles | 120 | 0 | 0% | 95 | 0 | 0% | 215 | 0% |
| Morgantown | 32 | 0 | 0% | 25 | 0 | 0% | 57 | 0% |
| Pittsburgh | 63 | 0 | 0% | 49 | 0 | 0% | 112 | 0% |
| San Francisco | 95 | 0 | 0% | 74 | 0 | 0% | 169 | 0% |
| Seattle | 80 | 0 | 0% | 60 | 0 | 0% | 140 | 0% |
| Twin Cities | 86 | 0 | 0% | 67 | 0 | 0% | 153 | 0% |
| Total | 1774 | 288 | 16% | 1419 | 19 | 1% | 3193 | 10% |
| Goal/Should be | 1800 | 576 | 32% | 1400 | 448 | 32% | 3200 | 32% |

Pathfinder books sold to Co-workers

| Unions | Goal | Sold | % sold | Readers Club | |
|----------------|------|------|--------|--------------|------|
| | | | | Goal | Sold |
| OCAW | 38 | 41 | 108% | 34 | 7 |
| UTU | 85 | 23 | 27% | 0 | 8 |
| UAW | 100 | 16 | 16% | 50 | 21 |
| USWA | 56 | 7 | 13% | 56 | 7 |
| IAM | 0 | 32 | 0% | 42 | 12 |
| UFCW | 12 | 0 | 0% | 11 | 0 |
| UMWA | 5 | 0 | 0% | 4 | 0 |
| UNITE | 22 | 0 | 0% | 14 | 2 |
| Total | 318 | 119 | 30% | 211 | 57 |
| Goal/Should be | 400 | 128 | 32% | 400 | 80 |

workers. They sold a copy of the *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, as well as 25 copies of the *Militant*, at

plant gates, door-to-door, and outside a shopping center. The goals for monthly sales of Pathfinder books are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of socialist workers when they reach out.

The experience of Pathfinder supporters in Brooklyn, March 10, demonstrates the cumulative impact of getting out on the streets and keeping Pathfinder bookstores open. It was the second "movement Sunday" in a row, where socialist workers met to plan their activities and then took a full day to campaign on the streets.

As the chart on this page shows, the *Militant* is not yet receiving weekly reports from every city on their sales totals. A reporting form was sent out by e-mail. It should be returned each Monday by 8 a.m. Eastern time so that the *Militant's* figures are up to date. Totals should include only Pathfinder books and pamphlets sold, not books from other publishers.

It's important to also get in stories and figures from on-the-job sales. Bob Miller reported the final February total at the Ford assembly plant in Edison, New Jersey, was 52 titles. "By March 8, 13 more titles have been snapped up by auto workers, including 4 copies of *Episodes*," he wrote. "Four more people joined the Pathfinder Readers Club, bringing the total to 14 new members."

BY LISA ROTTACH

BROOKLYN — Supporters of Pathfinder in Brooklyn sold 43 books and pamphlets on Sunday, March 10. The success resulted from the combined efforts to expand sales through extended bookstore

hours, commercial sales, and increased participation in political events.

Teams of socialist workers set up tables in Brooklyn and Queens featuring the *Militant* newspaper and books and pamphlets from the local Pathfinder bookstore. Ten books and pamphlets were sold off the tables and five titles were sold to people who came into the bookstore. A member of the International Association of Machinists also sold a copy of the *Second Declaration of Havana* to a co-worker.

Several people came to the bookstore as a result of flyers they had picked up at tables the preceding week. A young man from Spain bought a copy of *Nueva Internacional* no. 2 on Che Guevara. He ended up staying for a class on Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*. A student from Haiti also attended the class. He had bought a copy of the book several weeks ago from a team at Long Island University. A week later he came by the bookstore and bought a copy of *New Internacional* no. 10, with the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." After the class, several participants went over to a nearby home to view a video on the frame-up of Mark Curtis and to continue the political discussion.

A highlight of the weekend was the 27 books and pamphlets purchased at an event on Sunday commemorating the March 13 anniversary of the 1979 Grenadian revolution. Some 150 people attended the day-long event, where a team of six socialist workers staffed a table. Titles purchased included two copies of *Episodes*; eight copies each of *Maurice Bishop Speaks* and *New Internacional* no. 6, with the article "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop"; and others. "This is about the class struggle," Karen Richards, originally from Jamaica, said as she paged through a copy of *To Speak the Truth*. Richards volunteered to help organize an upcoming tour of two Cuban youth to the United States.

| GOALS AND SALES FOR 'EPISODES' | | | |
|--------------------------------|------|------|-----|
| FEBRUARY 9 - APRIL 1 | | | |
| Totals as of March 10 | | | |
| CITY | GOAL | SOLD | % |
| Atlanta, GA | 45 | 35 | 78% |
| Twin Cities | 80 | 62 | 78% |
| Los Angeles | 100 | 75 | 75% |
| San Francisco | 95 | 68 | 72% |
| Des Moines | 45 | 31 | 69% |
| Greensboro | 45 | 31 | 69% |
| Seattle | 80 | 50 | 63% |
| Newark | 133 | 83 | 62% |
| Houston | 39 | 24 | 62% |
| Boston | 60 | 36 | 60% |
| Miami | 50 | 30 | 60% |
| Cleveland | 45 | 27 | 60% |
| Salt Lake City | 60 | 35 | 58% |
| New York | 140 | 77 | 55% |
| Peoria, IL | 30 | 16 | 53% |
| Philadelphia | 60 | 32 | 53% |
| Birmingham, AL | 60 | 29 | 48% |
| Brooklyn | 130 | 62 | 48% |
| Chicago | 60 | 27 | 45% |
| Morgantown | 27 | 11 | 41% |
| Washington, D.C. | 75 | 30 | 40% |
| Detroit | 60 | 22 | 37% |
| Pittsburgh | 55 | 18 | 33% |
| TOTAL | 1574 | 911 | 59% |
| SHOULD BE | 1550 | 969 | 63% |
| IN THE UNIONS | | | |
| UTU | 80 | 42 | 53% |
| OCAW | 60 | 26 | 43% |
| UMWA | 7 | 3 | 43% |
| UAW | 110 | 35 | 32% |
| UNITE | 42 | 8 | 19% |
| USWA | 60 | 9 | 15% |
| IAM | 90 | 12 | 13% |
| UFCW | 12 | 1 | 8% |
| TOTAL | 461 | 136 | 27% |
| SHOULD BE | 500 | 250 | 63% |

IAM—International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW— United Auto Workers; UFCW— United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE— Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union.

'The right to work is one of highest ideals

Central Organization of Cuban Workers discusses theses in preparation for

Printed below is the second portion of the Theses for the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC). This document is being discussed at thousands of factory assemblies and other workplace meetings throughout Cuba in preparation for the congress of the country's nationwide trade union federation. The workers assemblies to discuss this document began January 15 and will last through March 15. The Congress is scheduled for April 25-30 in Havana.

The CTC leadership has issued a call to trade unionists and other workers from around the world to attend the congress (for travel from the United States see ad below).

CTC leaders, including the organization's general secretary, Pedro Ross, will also travel to Montreal for a March 15-16 conference in solidarity with Cuba sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress. This event will help build international participation from North America to the CTC gathering.

The theses, prepared by the federation's National Committee after a round of CTC conferences organized in every municipality, consist of 11 sections. Last week the *Militant* published the first installment — the preamble and the first three sections (see box with contents below).

The second installment, printed below, consists of sections four through seven.

The theses were published as a special supplement to the Nov. 20, 1995, issue of *Trabajadores*, the CTC's weekly newspaper. Translation from Spanish and footnotes are by the *Militant*.



"Sugar workers are entering the front lines of a battle we cannot afford to lose"

IV. The decisive effort to increase sugar production

54. Until sugar production begins to increase, the Cuban economy will not advance solidly on the path to recovery.¹

55. The last three harvests registered a steady decline in production that cost the country considerable income. In effect, that decline undercut the positive impact of the growth attained in 1994, and so far in 1995, in tourism, in most branches of industry, and in other areas.

56. This year the country secured financing abroad, at very high interest rates, to provide sugar production with the minimum indispensable resources to increase the availability of raw materials, a precondition for halting the decline in sugar production and beginning a firm stage of recovery.



Militant / Laura Garza

Harvesting sugarcane with a combine in Santa Clara Dec. 16, 1995.

57. As these theses are being discussed, the harvest is either about to start or has already begun in many parts of the country. When the 17th Congress of the CTC begins its final sessions, the battle for sugar production will for the most part be over.

58. That is why it is timely and appropriate to include in these theses an appeal to all workers and trade union leaders who will be part of the coming harvest — an appeal to carry out their responsibilities with the full consciousness that in harvesting or processing sugar, they are helping to save the homeland and to improve the life of our heroic people.

59. Once again the sugar workers and all the workers of the various enterprises that take part in the harvest have been entrusted with a task that is decisive and indispensable for the advance of the economy. Each of them plays an important role in this relentless machete charge of the new *Mambís* in this, the 100th anniversary of the invasion led by Gómez and Maceo.²

60. The importance of this harvest is such that we must bring to it the greatest possible will to fight, dedication to the task, and attention to detail in carrying it out. The aim is to reduce to a minimum the errors that occurred in the recent campaigns, which increased general costs and resulted in a loss of sugar.

61. The responsibility of the sugar workers is enormous; they are entering the front lines of a battle we cannot afford to lose.

62. We address them today with a message of encouragement and confidence, and with the pledge that they can count on the support of the entire trade union movement, the workers, and the people.

63. As the 17th Congress gets under way, there will be no better news for the revolution, for our commander in chief, for the delegates, and for a grateful homeland than word of a harvest that registers higher levels of production and efficiency, and that begins a sustained cycle of increase that will lift production to the levels the national economy requires.

V. The problem of employment and the reorganization of the labor force

64. Employment, the right to work, is one of the highest ideals of Cuban revolutionaries and of the workers movement in particular. Our socialist society would not be true to itself if at any time it passively and indifferently contemplated the existence of men and women, able and willing to work, who are without access to employment.

65. Employment, however, cannot continue to be seen as solely the result of political will. A job is, in the first place, the consequence of economic realities, and it is these realities that determine the quantity and quality of the jobs available.

66. Increasing production and efficiency is the only real and lasting road to increasing the number of jobs and keeping it in tune with the available workforce, including those who reach working age each year. Nevertheless, you cannot speak of a more efficient economy without first creating the

conditions necessary to increase the productivity of labor and maximize the use of available resources.

67. To do this it is essential, among other fundamental steps, to begin to reorganize the personnel at each workplace, beginning with those with assured productivity, those that are associated with generating hard currency or with import replacement, and those that are related to other activities that are vitally important for the country.

68. The 17th Congress of the CTC should reaffirm and enrich the conclusions of our revolutionary government on the reorganization of labor, conclusions it has drawn on the basis of the views expressed by workers and the union movement.³

69. The fundamental principle in reorganizing labor is that no worker will be left to his or her own resources as a consequence of this process. Reorganization will be carried out with a spirit of determination to find employment alternatives for those whose jobs are eliminated.

70. This determination is part and parcel of the correct view that reorganization of the labor force is more than simply an adjustment in the size of the workforce to reduce the wages paid by a given enterprise, branch, or sector.

71. The true real aim of this reorganization is to help increase social productivity, to create more values with the material, financial, and human resources that are within our reach.

72. Our social system, with its advantages, should help us to propose not only rationalizing but restructuring the distribution of our labor force. At present, we have too many people in a number of centers and too few in such vital areas of the economy as the canefields, the sugar industry, and agriculture. Many jobs directly related to production and a large number of useful and worthy jobs in health care and the service sector also remain to be filled.

73. The Central Organization of Cuban Workers and the unions will struggle to ensure an understanding everywhere that the same energy — not more nor less — should be devoted to the rationalization effort and to finding new jobs for workers who may end up being available for them.

74. Experience has shown that there are possibilities for creating new jobs in the work centers and enterprises themselves, with the aim of providing products and services that do not require investment but fill social needs.⁴

75. At the same time, we must recognize the central importance of areas and municipalities that, under the leadership of local governments, take effective steps to create useful jobs in the big centers of production and services, meet the shortfall in the labor force for sugar and agricultural production, and create new jobs in areas that include

"The fundamental principle in reorganizing labor is that no worker will be left to his or her own resources"

NOTES

1. Sugarcane production collapsed to record lows in the years 1993-95 as shortages of fuel, fertilizers, pesticides, and spare parts for cane-cutting machinery mounted. Heavy rains and flooding also took a toll. The acute shortages were triggered by the collapse of aid and trade at preferential prices with the former Soviet bloc countries, beginning in 1989. The 1994 harvest fell to 4 million tons from 4.2 million the previous year, less than half the 8.4 million tons produced in 1990. Last year, another disastrous crop yielded a 50-year low of 3.3 million tons. These shortfalls further cut into Cuba's capacity to import needed goods, since sugar remains the country's main export crop and a primary source of hard currency.

2. *Mambí* is a Cuban word that refers to the 19th century independence fighters against Spanish colonial rule.

Máximo Gómez (1836-1905) was a native of Santo Domingo who became a leader of the Cuban revolutionary armies during the 1868-78 and 1895-98 independence wars. He became commander in chief of Cuban independence forces in 1870.

Antonio Maceo (1845-1896) was a prominent military leader and strategist in the Cuban wars of independence from Spain. A leader of the 1895-96 invasion of the western provinces, Maceo was a symbol of revolutionary intransigence in Cuba. He was killed in battle Dec. 7, 1896. Last year marked the centennial of the invasion of the western provinces.

3. The restructuring and reallocation of the workforce began in 1986 with the rectification process (see footnote no. 11), well before the current economic crisis Cuba is living through. Efforts centered

on reducing inflated administrative layers not directly involved in production while significantly expanding construction.

The abrupt termination of long-standing trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries led to a virtual collapse of production in Cuba in the opening of the 1990s. This is what the Cubans refer to as the "special period." In 1993 Cuban industry operated at 15 percent of capacity, down from 20 percent in 1992. By 1995 that figure increased to 35 percent. In 1989, industry had operated at more than 85 percent of capacity. Imports in early 1994 stood at one-quarter of their 1989 level, and gross domestic product at an estimated 65 percent of the 1989 figure.

While production substantially collapsed, the large majority of workers remained on the job and received all or most of their wages — fueling inflation and feeding demoralization as "excess personnel" had little or nothing to do. These problems began to be addressed in 1994 with a series of leadership moves, fiscal measures, and increased efforts to reallocate the workforce. In 1995 industrial and food production edged upward with a growth of 2.5 percent in the Gross Domestic Product. The reorganization of the labor force underway includes substantial reductions of personnel in government ministries and in the armed forces.

4. In some industries the production process has been modified to manufacture new products. In dairy processing, for example, workers have adapted machinery and put on new lines to produce soy milk and yogurt since fresh or powdered milk is lacking (see "Workers in Cuba increase their management role through factory assemblies" in Feb. 6, 1995, *Militant*.)

Printed below are the contents of the CTC theses by section.

I. The world, the workers, and the situation in Cuba

II. Our strategy does not lead to capitalism

III. Fighting for an efficient and competitive economy

IV. The decisive effort to increase sugar production

V. The problem of employment and reorganization of the labor force

VI. Workers' wages

VII. Union action regarding collective contract agreements and labor legislation

VIII. Working for the consolidation and triumph of the UBPCs

IX. Unions are by and for the workers

X. Defending the revolution means guaranteeing our power

XI. Maintaining unity in the ranks of the workers

Be a Part of a Labor Delegation at the XVII Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC)

April 25-30 Havana, Cuba

The U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange is organizing participation in a seminar to learn more about life in Cuba today, including observing the CTC congress. The dates are:

One week seminar — April 24-May 2
Two week seminar — April 20-May 4

For more information and to get an application contact:

U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange
P.O. Box 39188
Redford, MI 48239
Phone and Fax: 313-836-3752

of revolutionaries'

congress of trade union federation

organoponic farms⁵, orchards, reforestation projects, plants that manufacture alternative materials for housing construction, and local industries.

76. Discussions at the 17th Congress are an excellent place to stress the need to eradicate the criteria of accepting only such jobs that are totally adapted to the preferences of each person, without considering that everyone must also adjust to the requirement of his or her job at a given moment and postpone their just aspirations until these can be met.⁶

77. Under the circumstances created by the rationalization of the workforce, it must also be stressed that our duty is to explain that the strongest claim to a job is suitability for it. All other considerations are secondary.

78. Suitability is understood as a set of qualifications for a given job, as agreed to jointly by the administration and the union, and without either party unilaterally being

"We call for a rigorous struggle for the rights of working women"

able to alter these requirements.

79. Likewise, we call for a rigorous struggle for the rights of working women, which should not be undermined by any tendencies or justifications of a technocratic or economist character. Our 17th Congress should adopt as its own and commit its support to the platform of defending and advancing women's rights that was put forward with realism and a deeply revolutionary spirit by the last congress of the Federation of Cuban Women.⁷

80. We reiterate our willingness to seek and find balanced formulas that offer job opportunities to those young people who reach working age in this period when employment opportunities are limited.

81. The union movement insists on the importance of retaining trained and experienced personnel at the workplace, even though temporarily they may have no tasks to perform. They will be needed tomorrow when conditions permit increased production.

82. The training and retraining of workers is an important source of employment stability, which the unions should defend in face of any indifference or thoughtlessness by a given administrative body. Moreover, this should be viewed not merely as a conjunctural tool to confront the reduction in employment. Rather it is a permanent prerequisite for technological development, one that also enables workers to increase their level of skill and acquire new trades.

83. It should be made clear, nevertheless, that we do not advocate the indiscriminate and universal application of this practice. We

believe it should be implemented selectively and on a case-by-case basis, using economic criteria. It should be seen as an investment aimed at preserving and developing the value of the workforce, taking into account the foreseeable future of each economic sector, branch, or enterprise.

84. The union movement should be vigilant and not permit violations of the rights of idled workers, registered with the employment service. For that purpose the union should maintain its links with the idled workers, look after them in every way and make an ongoing effort to locate new jobs for them. It is essential that the union act ahead of time and work out with the administration how to fill jobs in each new or expanded workplace as these open up.

85. Existing legislation recognizes the authority of the union to give its agreement both when jobs are eliminated and when workers are taken on. The reality, however, is that in the majority of cases this provision is not observed. Our congress should emphatically call for maintaining and strictly enforcing this union right, and put its foot down on any irregularities or violations of workers' legitimate interests.

VI. Workers' wages

86. Our society has reached a critical point where wages, the reorganization of finances, the revaluing of the peso, and the need to restructure the labor force come together in a complex and deeply interrelated whole that we must understand in order to move forward.⁸

87. There has been appreciable progress in absorbing excess currency in circulation, as well as in reducing the deficit in the national budget.⁹ This has had a positive impact in reducing absenteeism, increasing labor discipline, and raising productivity. Additional progress is needed, however, to reach the desired financial stability, and for this process to be fully reflected in economic efficiency, and thereby in improvement in people's lives.

88. The peso has already regained some value, but its purchasing power — which depends on the re-establishment of the country's productive capacity — is still severely depressed. As a result, there are many working people whose family incomes are insufficient to meet their needs.¹⁰

89. It is not possible to understand this phenomenon without linking the question of workers' wages and purchasing power to the situation created by the years of the special period, with its shortages of energy, raw materials, and other items necessary for production.

90. In these conditions there was no other option except to run the workplaces far below capacity and even shut many of them down. In practice this has meant subsidizing hundreds of thousands of workers — some at home while others are still at their job, but producing less. Moreover, it is well known that the country entered the special

5. The term in Spanish is *organopónico*, or organic agriculture. It describes cultivation of fruits and vegetables, especially perishable ones, using specially prepared organic mediums for fertilizing.

6. According to new regulations adopted in 1995, workers who lose their job receive 100 percent of their wages the first month and 70 percent for a period of three months. Beyond that, benefits depend on years of employment. Those with higher seniority also get preference in picking options for alternative employment. If workers whose jobs have been eliminated turn down offers to relocate elsewhere, including working in agriculture, they eventually lose these benefits.

7. The mass organization of Cuban women founded in August 1960. The congress referred to here took place in March 1995.

8. Wages for Cubans continue to reflect the high social wage represented by free medical care and education, low rents, and subsidized prices for basic food rations. Today, however, self-employed workers, especially those with special skills, often earn many times the salary of most factory workers. Individuals who receive hard currency from relatives abroad, or from special bonuses in some industries, are able to purchase scarce essential items like soap and oil that many Cubans are unable to obtain.

9. As production plummeted in the first half of the 1990s, layoffs were kept to a minimum. According to finance minister José Luis Rodríguez, government subsidies to state enterprises jumped 73 percent between 1989 and 1993. The government financed the growing budget deficit by printing more pesos, a policy that fed inflation. At the beginning of 1994 there were some 12 billion excess pesos in circulation, since most Cubans continued to receive their wages but there was

little in the market these workers could buy. A series of fiscal and other measures adopted by the country's National Assembly in 1994 and 1995 resulted in a significant decrease in the excess currency in circulation and the lowering of inflation by the end of last year.

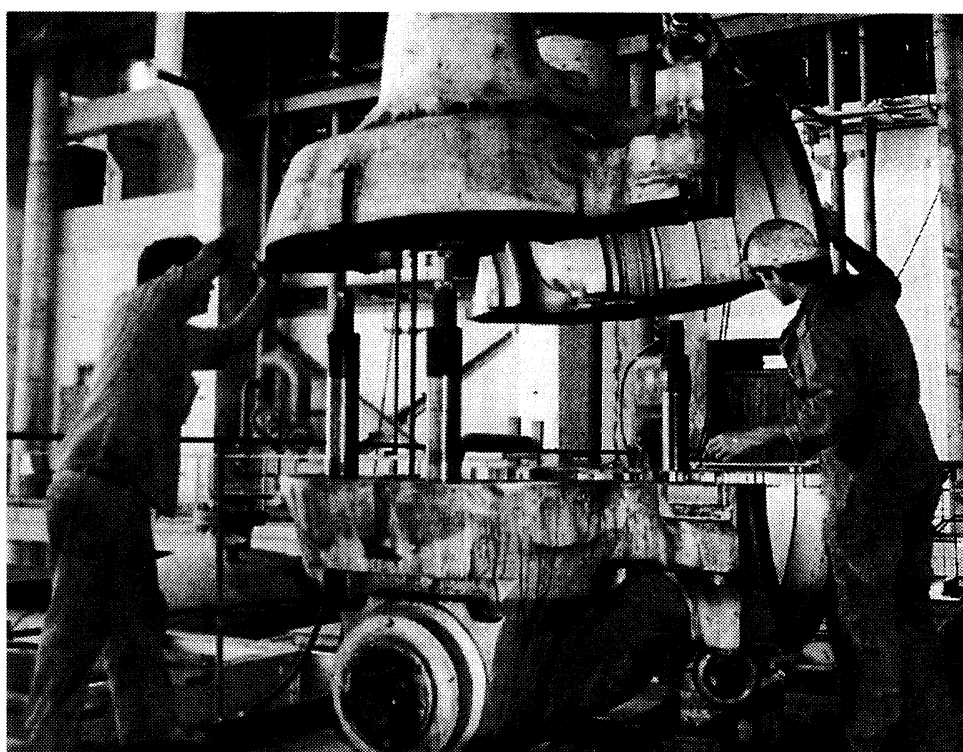
10. The official exchange rate of the Cuban currency remains one peso for one U.S. dollar. On the street the dollar is now exchanged for about 25 pesos, up from the low of the 150-1 rate in the summer of 1994.

11. The rectification process was initiated in 1986 by the Communist Party of Cuba to reverse the mounting negative political consequences of the economic planning and management policies the Cuban leadership had adopted in the early 1970s modeled on those of the bureaucratic Soviet regime.

Measures adopted during rectification included steps to reduce growing social inequalities; cutbacks in administrative and management personnel; sharp attacks on corruption; increased reliance on volunteer construction brigades to build badly needed housing, hospitals, day-care centers, and schools; and full-time volunteer labor contingents to take on larger construction and civil engineering projects such as roads, factories, and bridges.

The shortages and economic dislocation of the past several years have forced the Cuban government and Communist Party to put aside most of the programs set in motion in the latter half of the 1980s.

12. The convertible peso is currency issued by the Cuban government that can be used only inside Cuba as an equivalent to the U.S. dollar to purchase scarce essential items available in dollar stores. It is used to pay the special bonuses workers receive in hard currency in certain industries.



Editora Abril

Workers installing heavy equipment in Santa Cruz thermoelectric plant

period carrying the flaw of inflated payrolls. The rectification process¹¹ attempted to address this problem, but was unsuccessful due to the short time it had.

91. To stabilize production it is reasonable to introduce material incentives where resources exist to do so. The workforce can be adjusted to the size really needed. Other measures can also be taken to raise efficiency and productivity, so long as we are careful that they always rise at a faster pace than the average wage.

92. The possibility of increasing workers' incomes can be found, therefore, first of all in the sectors, branches, and enterprises that are linked to exports or to import-replacement, which are the areas that must generate the resources to revitalize the rest

nel for work incentives.

94. We must bear in mind that the ratio between the social wage and money wages is tending to change in the direction of increasing the role of the latter as the means of distribution.

95. Our wages are low, and cannot increase without an increase in productivity. The first step, then, is to ensure a direct material correlation between today's wages, on the one hand, and production and efficiency, on the other.

96. Without necessarily changing current wage scales, workers can increase their incomes through the linking of wages to production. This is especially true in sugar and agricultural production, where an individual's pay can be linked to what is

"The union should maintain its links with idled workers, look after them in every way, and make an ongoing effort to find new jobs for them"

of the economy. This does not rule out attention to other areas that provide vital goods and services for the population, as conditions improve in the country.

93. As a short-term measure, some of these sectors have implemented various "incentive programs," including the sale from time to time of essential goods to the best workers, or the payment of a certain portion of their wages in convertible pesos.¹² These have been transitory measures, justified by our economic situation, but in the future, when conditions return to normal, our policy must be that wages, paid in Cuban pesos, must become the fundamental chan-

produced in a given area. It is also true in any other sector where different systems of payment can be used, systems that increase the variable portion of wages and thereby provide an incentive for harder work. Those who do the most should be paid the most; the union movement will support such measures.

VII. Union action regarding collective bargaining agreements and labor legislation

97. At the heart of our revolutionary union work is the principle, insisted upon so often

Continued on Page 10

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Washington adopts Helms-Burton bill

Continued from front page

posing capitalist rule. He posed next to relatives of the four Cuban-American rightists whose planes were shot down.

In response, Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, said the Helms-Burton law was a prime example of U.S. "arrogance, haughtiness, and desperation in the face of a failed policy" toward Cuba. "No pressure will succeed in making Cuba give up its right to fight for independence and national sovereignty," declared a statement issued by the National Assembly.

Dole calls for indicting Cuban officials

Meanwhile, Republican candidates joined the bipartisan attack on Cuba. Senate majority leader Robert Dole released a letter he had sent Clinton backing the Helms-Burton law and calling on Attorney General Janet Reno to seek indictments for "capital murder in an act of international terrorism" against all Cuban government officials responsible for the February 24 downing of the intruding U.S. planes.

Emphasizing that such a charge "carries a penalty of death or life imprisonment," Dole's letter states, "U.S. indictments would mean the murderers would be subject to seizure and return to the United States or extradition to the United States any time they travel outside the territory of Cuba — in international airspace, in international waters, or in any country in the world."

Asked by reporters what individuals he wanted indicted, Dole replied, "We'll have to leave those little niceties up to the attorney general. But you know, that's how we got [Panamanian leader Manuel] Noriega," who was kidnapped by U.S. troops in 1989 and jailed in the United States.

In turn, Republican presidential contender Steve Forbes advocated launching a military strike against the nuclear power plant under construction in Cienfuegos, Cuba, "like the Israelis did in Iraq in 1981." He also called for intercepting any planes or ships carrying nuclear materials to Cuba.

Helms-Burton law

The Helms-Burton bill, named the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, turns the U.S. trade embargo, previously imposed by presidential executive orders, into Congressional law. Designed to stifle foreign investment on the island, it allows Cuban-American and other U.S. businessmen whose property was expropriated by Cuban workers to sue non-U.S. companies investing in those properties. The law also bars visas for non-U.S. residents who "traffic" in such property.

In addition, the new law calls for restricting aid to the former Soviet Union as long as it shares intelligence with Cuba, and withholding U.S. financing to any government that aids the completion of Cuba's nuclear power plant. The law also calls for opposing any loans to Cuba by

international financial institutions.

According to the law, sanctions will be lifted only after Cuba's revolutionary government is overthrown and a "transitional" regime approved by Washington is set up.

The governments of Canada and the European Union condemned the new U.S. legislation for interfering in their own business dealings.

Latin America's 14-member Rio Group expressed its "most energetic rejection" of the U.S. law, saying it violated international law and "the sovereignty of states."

Some critics of the new law point to a little-known provision allowing the richest Cuban exiles — those who owned at least \$50,000 worth of property at 1960s prices — to extort profits through the Helms-Burton act. Under the measure, these businessmen can sue an investor in a Cuban joint venture and then reach an out-of-court settlement by accepting a cut of the investment revenue.

In other words, some of the loudest proponents of the U.S. trade ban will profit from international investment on the island while wielding "a unilateral right to lift the U.S. embargo against Cuba on a case-by-case basis," remarked an attorney quoted in the London *Financial Times*.

International aviation agency meeting

Meeting in Montreal March 7, the ICAO rejected the U.S. government's proposal to immediately condemn Cuba for shooting down the U.S. planes. Instead, it decided to send an investigative commission to Cuba and the United States and release its findings in 60 days.

At a press conference in Montreal, Alarcón said, "This decision clearly means that the inquiry will study the 25 violations of Cuban territory by U.S. planes over the last 20 months."

Alarcón said Havana was ready to provide all necessary information on the history of U.S. violations of its airspace. He added, "The inquiry will show that the organization responsible for the flights over our territory, Brothers to the Rescue, repeatedly violated not only our sovereignty but also the laws of international civil aviation and even U.S. laws. We kept the U.S. government totally informed of all violations of our territory. When we decided to shoot down these planes, it was simply because we had no other choice."

The Cuban leader noted that Washington "denies our planes the right to fly over U.S. territory. Even the plane I took for coming to this ICAO meeting had to make a detour of close to an hour." He said the Cuban government might stop U.S. airlines from using its air corridors in view of Washington's failure to prevent violations of Cuba's airspace by Brothers to the Rescue.

Basulto: 'I am a soldier'

Despite claims by the White House that Brothers to the Rescue is a nonviolent, humanitarian organization that rescues rafters, Brothers chief José Basulto acknowledged in an interview in the March 8 *Miami Herald* that "we are in a mode of confrontation with the Castro government."

Asked how many rafters he had spotted at sea since August 1995, Basulto answered, "None." He admitted Brothers to the Rescue had repeatedly entered Cuban airspace, saying "I haven't counted" the times.

To the question of whether his planes had planned to drop antigovernment leaflets on February 24, as on past occasions, Basulto replied, "No, absolutely not.... If we were leafleting we wouldn't be taking, you may call it, civilians with us." The admission that their leafleting and other hostile actions over Cuban territory were not "civilian" missions exposes one of the Clinton administration main propaganda themes.

In another such "civilian" operation, two C-337 planes took off on Nov. 10, 1994, from the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo — Cuban soil occupied by Washington against the will of the Cuban people — and flew over the Punta Maisí lighthouse, dropping antigovernment leaflets. U.S. officials acknowledge these



Militant/Susan Apstein

While the U.S. government was preparing to turn the Helms-Burton bill into law against Cuba, protests condemning the embargo-tightening legislation continue to take place. Left, a young woman carrying a Cuban flag protested against U.S. secretary of State Warren Christopher during his recent visit at U.S. Chamber of Commerce in São Paulo, Brazil. Right, supporters of the Cuban revolution in Mexico City picket in front of the U.S. embassy. Similar actions took place in other parts of the world. Outside the International Civil Aviation Organization hearings in Montreal, Canada, 80 people condemned the Helms-Burton bill March 6. Defying the frigid temperatures, a picket of 20 people protested in front of a U.S. federal building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 7. In Christchurch, New Zealand, over 20 people picketed in defense of the Cuban revolution March 9.

were Brothers to the Rescue planes.

A longtime CIA collaborator and veteran of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961, Basulto defiantly added, "I am a soldier. Soldiers realize what they are in when they get in to it."

Apparently, Basulto realized what he was in when he took part in the February 24 provocation, in which three Brothers to the Rescue planes invaded Cuban airspace. By the time the MiG pilots from Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces approached them, two of the U.S. aircraft were 5-8 miles from the island's coast — well inside its 12-mile territorial limit. The third plane, flown by Basulto, was just outside the 12-mile limit. When the two U.S. planes ignored warning passes by the MiG fighters, they were shot down, while Basulto returned home to Florida.

At a February 28 press conference at the United Nations, Cuban foreign minister Roberto Robaina reported on disclosures by Juan Pablo Roque, a former Cuban air force pilot who had gone to Miami in 1992

and joined Brothers to the Rescue. Roque returned to Cuba in mid-February.

Before the February 24 incident, Roque warned Basulto that Cuban authorities were expecting a provocation and were ready to shoot down intruding U.S. aircraft. "Basulto's response was to carry out the action, enter into Cuba's jurisdiction, but for himself to remain outside the international line, aware of the fate his cohorts might suffer," Robaina told the press. Basulto's position, Roque reported, was that they "needed martyrs to help market his organization."

The FBI was stung by Roque's statements that the spy agency knew ahead of time that the aircraft were going to be shot down. FBI officials, who admit Roque reported to them on Brothers to the Rescue activities, angrily announced they might press murder conspiracy charges against Roque in connection with the shootdown of the counterrevolutionaries' planes. The Cuban ex-pilot, however, is now safely in Havana.

Theses for 17th CTC congress

Continued from Page 9

by Lázaro Peña, that responsibilities and rights must go hand in hand.¹³ That means we must be firm in exercising our ability to explain the ideas and sentiments of the workers and in defending their just interests. At the same time, however, we must demand they fully meet their responsibilities.

98. The conditions in which we must carry out our mission, now and in the future, underscore the necessity to pay careful attention to the fundamental principles behind our actions, and to ensure that contracts and legal documents are based upon these principles.

99. The 17th Congress, taking into account the new circumstances that prevail in our country, should spotlight the decisive role collective bargaining agreements play. They are the chief instrument guiding relations between the union and the workers, on the one hand, and administrative bodies (whether state, mixed, or of some other type), on the other, and serve as the foundation for the actions we take.

100. In previous periods, for reasons that are well-known, there was practically no possibility for major conflicts to arise between management and workers.

101. Today there are a variety of economic entities, with rights and powers that have changed. In these circumstances, it is the collective bargaining agreement, together with political and ethical factors, that must serve as a genuine guarantee of order, justice, coexistence, and legality in every workplace. To accomplish this, these agreements must express the general objectives that the revolutionary state demands and defends.

102. In these new circumstances the conditions in which the union leadership carries out its work are increasingly important. These conditions must be part of

the negotiations carried out.

103. The collective bargaining agreements express a legal commitment and therefore must be carried out to the letter. It is vital, however, that this legal force be complemented by the unbreakable will of the union cadres to win respect from both employers and employees for the norms the agreements establish.


104. Training of both leaders and union activists, and of all workers, in the culture of law and the authority of the law, must be an integral part of this proposal. Our educational system can and must do much along these lines.

105. At the same time, we insist on the importance of revitalizing teaching and research in the field of labor law. This is an area that unfortunately has been weakened in recent years, but one that will play an essential role in the study and codification of the entire spectrum of our labor relations, which are increasingly becoming more complex and fluid.

106. The CTC and the unions consider it equally necessary, when our transformations have advanced and been sufficiently consolidated, to propose a complete revision of the labor code and other labor regulations currently in effect, with the aim of adjusting them to the new realities and requirements of the country's labor conditions.

¹³ Lázaro Peña (1911-1974), a leader of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Cuba (later Popular Socialist Party), was general secretary of the Confederation of Cuban Workers from its founding in 1939 until 1944. After the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959 under the leadership of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army headed by Fidel Castro, the trade union movement was restructured as the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. Lázaro Peña served as general secretary from 1961-66 and from 1973-74.

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Continued from front page

also spoken at two high schools and a community college in recent weeks. YS member Doug Nelson said that in the high school classes he took part in the discussion focused on Cuba and Buchananism. "One student said that socialism 'may be good for Cuba, but we don't have those same problems,'" Nelson said. "So we pointed to the worsening conditions throughout the world, told him that the United States wouldn't be exempt from this, and that's why Cuba and socialism have relevance."

To help plan similar outreach in other cities and organize for the upcoming national gathering, a team of volunteers has come to Minneapolis. Diana Newberry from New York, and other convention coordinators Jennifer Banathy from Boston, and Megan Arney from Twin Cities, have been busy putting together a new national flyer that is being e-mailed or faxed to YS chapters and at-large members, convention organizing letters, and other materials.

Banathy came to town just after participating in a protest against ultrarightist presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan in Lexington, Massachusetts. She found out about the event when some high school students attended the Militant Labor Forum in Boston, hoping to be part of a discussion on Buchanan, and explained that they were organizing a protest for the next day. Banathy and three other YS members joined them. From Arizona to Massachusetts to Texas Buchanan has been met by protests — particularly from young students and workers.

In the Midwest, Young Socialists are organizing to be in Chicago for a protest against Buchanan when he speaks there on St. Patrick's Day. On March 13 socialist youth from Detroit joined with others in Toledo, Ohio, in a protest against the rightist politician.

Defending socialist Cuba

Across the country, YS members have also been at the center of activities to defend Cuba's socialist revolution in response to the provocations and threats by the U.S. government. In many cities Young Socialists were part of panels at special Militant Labor Forums held March 1 to speak out in defense of Cuba.



Militant/Dan Fein

Above, high school students in Salt Lake City, Utah, walk out February 23 to protest school board decision to abolish all school clubs. Right, young people in Arizona rally against ultrarightist presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan, February 22.



bill into law.

At York University in Toronto, Canada, YS members helped organize a meeting of 40 students to hear Arelys Santana, a leader of the Cuban Women's Federation. Santana explained the background to the recent U.S. provocations against Cuba, stating that there had been 25 attacks against Cuba from the United States in the past 20 months. She countered false news reports by stating that the planes had in fact trespassed Cuban airspace and added, "We are going to defend ourselves and we are not ever going to give up that right."

At the meeting, Mick McDonald from the Young Socialists reported on a youth brigade traveling to Cuba in August. Santana urged everyone to go. "It is difficult for me to tell you about Cuba," she explained, "the best way for you to understand is to actually experience it."

In Minneapolis, as well as joining protests at the Federal building, YS members took part in a campus discussion at the University of Minnesota organized by the La Raza Student Cultural Center. At this event six students volunteered to work on upcoming Cuba activities, like speaking tour of Cuban youth leaders on U.S. campuses in April and the US-Cuba Youth Exchange being organized by the National

War, and through asking a question, helped initiate a discussion on Cuba.

A similar response was reported in Brooklyn where Young Socialists and SWP members sold over \$400 worth in Pathfinder literature last weekend and met a number of young people interested in the YS convention and the speaking tour of Cuban youth. "We've doubled our sales and we've seen more interest in communist politics. Young people we have met through these activities have been coming to classes, forums, and are getting involved in Cuba defense work" said Lisa Rottach from Brooklyn. "And in Newark, a young woman just joined the Young Socialists!"

Regional teams

Convention coordinators here are helping to organize regional teams to build the YS convention. They will be speaking at high schools and colleges, setting up tables to sell Pathfinder literature and sign-up young students and workers to come to Minneapolis on April 6-7.

Tami Peterson from San Francisco and Tom Alter from Bloomington, Indiana, are heading to Chicago to join a team in that region. They'll start off by joining YS members and others from Peoria and the Twin Cities at the Chicago St. Patrick's Day protest against Buchanan.

Veronica Póses of Miami will be traveling to Greensboro for a few days and then to Atlanta where she will speak at a Militant Labor Forum on March 22 to help publicize the national youth meeting. A convention-building team is also planned to Des Moines, Iowa March 25-31. Diana Newberry explained that the convention coordinators are working with YS chapters to organize regional work in their own area to build the convention.

One of the first people to call the convention organizing office here was Mark Curtis. Curtis is a political activist and unionist jailed in Iowa after being framed up in 1988 on attempted rape and burglary charges. Last November he was granted parole, but authorities in Illinois, where he requested to be paroled to, have refused to accept his release there so he remains in prison.

Curtis called to see how the convention organizing was going. "He said he would be calling back to see how things were coming along," Newberry said. "We also discussed the efforts of the Young Socialists to get out Che Guevara's book, *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*. He said it's like a handbook for the YS. He also said that it's important to understand that this book wouldn't be there if Che hadn't taken the time to write down his experiences. We wouldn't have it to read and learn from."

The Young Socialists are campaigning to win Curtis's release. The YS National Committee has called on all YS members and friends to write Curtis in prison showing their solidarity (see article on page 5 for address).

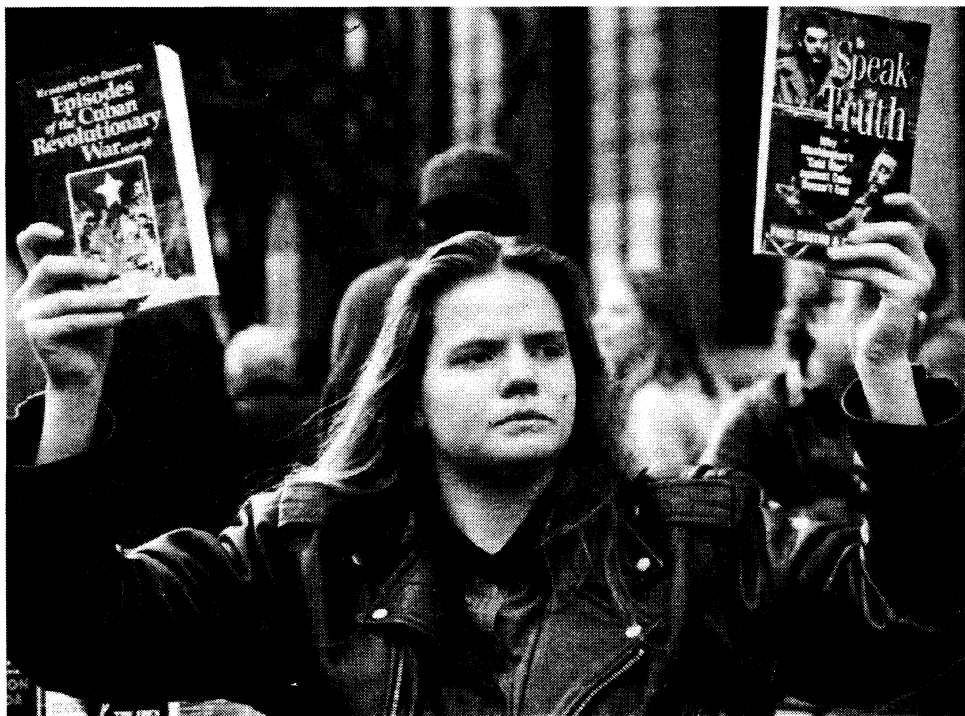
A recent meeting of the Young Socialists national committee and leaders of YS chapters around the country adopted a set of political and organizational principles. These will provide the basis for discussion at the Young Socialists convention. An-

other part of the weekend's events will be an organizing conference where all participants can join in discussions at classes and workshops.

The YS will also be discussing the central campaigns it will be involved in — opposition to the U.S.-NATO war drive against Yugoslavia, defense of the Cuban revolution, joining protests against Buchanan, and joining all resistance of workers and youth around the world against the horrors of capitalism. Supporting the Socialist Workers campaign in the 1996 elections will be at the center of these efforts. The first public rally of the campaign will be held during the YS convention.

Newberry explained that YS members need to act now to build the convention. "Now is the time to draw up a battle plan," she said, "to raise the money, organize the transportation, and help organize to get other young fighters to the convention and organizing conference by any means necessary. We must link up," she concluded, "with the revolutionary-minded youth who we are meeting as we go out to the fights, and who want to join us in the fight for socialism."

Rita Simonetta in Toronto, Canada, contributed to this article.



Militant/Joe Swanson

Young socialist selling Pathfinder books at San Francisco rally protesting Washington's aggression against the Cuban revolution, March 1, 1996.

The YS chapter in Bloomington, Indiana, called a picket against the U.S. provocations. The *Indiana Daily Student* reports that "twelve students, faculty and Bloomington residents" took part. At the picket, YS member Tom Alter explained that "the reason that relations between Cuba and the United States are bad is because of the United States' fear of Cuba. The U.S. fears the example Cuba sets for the rest of the world. Yes, there is an alternative to capitalism," Alter said.

Ivan Rosero explained the YS Statement of Principles includes defense of Cuba, so the Miami YS was helping to build a March 16 protest called by the Miami Coalition to End the Embargo to protest the passage of the Helms-Burton

Network on Cuba July 24-August 5.

Building interest in the Young Socialists convention here has been part of the same effort to get out the truth on Cuba. YS and Socialist Workers Party members have been making a special effort to sell the *Militant* at campus tables, political events, and at plant gates.

In the past week they've sold 115 copies of the *Militant* and 54 Pathfinder books and pamphlets. One team at the St. Paul campus sold 12 copies of the paper and signed up five students for more information on the YS convention. Another team at a meeting for speakers from the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo group in Argentina sold eight *Militants*, a copy of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary*

Young Socialists Fund Drive

The Young Socialists launched a \$10,000 fund drive on January 1 that will last until March 15.

The funds raised will enable YS members to carry out national and international responsibilities and meet expenses for the YS headquarters, as they build the first national convention of the YS in Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 6-7.

Listed below are the goals and payments received by YS chapters and at-large members.

| CITY | GOAL | PAID |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Boston | 750 | 530.00 |
| Cleveland | 500 | |
| Detroit | | 25.00 |
| Los Angeles | 1,000 | 333.85 |
| Miami | 400 | 30.00 |
| New York | 1,500 | 840.00 |
| Newark | 300 | 290.00 |
| Philadelphia | 300 | 200.00 |
| Pittsburgh | 150 | |
| Salt Lake City | 600 | 285.00 |
| San Francisco | 1,000 | 835.00 |
| Seattle | 1,000 | 385.00 |
| Twin Cities | 1,000 | 583.00 |
| Other | | 1,517.00 |
| Total | 8,500 | 5,853.85 |

Anyone interested can contribute to the fund drive. Please send pledges or contributions to: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2396, New York, N.Y. 10009. Tel: (212) 475-6482.

Washington's warships head toward Taiwan

Continued from front page

revolution. It is regarded by Beijing as a renegade province.

Taiwan's president Lee Teng-hui is running for re-election in the March 23 elections and has made winning international recognition the focus of his campaign.

One of largest armadas since Vietnam

Calling China "reckless," U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher announced the dispatch of a battle group of the U.S. Seventh Fleet led by the *USS Independence*, which moved to waters 100 miles off Taiwan on March 11. The destroyer *Hewitt* and the guided missile frigate *McClusky* joined the *Independence* north of Taiwan the same day. The guided missile cruiser *Bunker Hill* took up position south of the island.

"We're concerned to make sure those forces...are in a position to be helpful if need be," Christopher told the television talk show "Meet the Press" March 10.

U.S. officials said the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz*, an attack submarine, and six accompanying ships will arrive from the Persian Gulf a few days before Taiwan's March 23 presidential elections.

A Los Angeles-class attack submarine, the *USS Portsmouth*, is in the *Nimitz* group along with a guided missile cruiser, two destroyers, and a frigate. The *Independence* and *Nimitz* each carry about 55 combat aircraft: F-14 Tomcat fighters, F-A-18 Hornet strike fighters, and A-6 Intruder attack planes.

According to the *Washington Post*, this is one of the largest naval armadas sent to the region since the end of the Vietnam war.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen warned Washington to stay out of the dispute. "Taiwan is a part of China and not a protectorate of the United States," he said. "If foreign forces invade Taiwan we will not sit idly by."

U.S. secretary of defense William Perry called the armada "a signal to our partners that we are there for the long haul, and not a transitory presence in the region."

Washington's buildup drew bipartisan support. Sen. Robert Dole, front-runner for the Republican nomination for president, said he supported the Clinton administration's decision to send a "strong signal to China."

Washington dubs its doctrine toward China as "strategic ambiguity," under which the U.S. government refuses to say precisely how it will react if a military confrontation develops between Beijing and Taipei.

The *Post* reported that U.S. officials have no plans to send the U.S. warships though the Taiwan Strait at present. The *Nimitz* and four escort vessels sailed through the strait in December in a maneuver described as sending a message to Beijing.

Chinese military maneuvers

In pre-announced missile testing, three unarmed Chinese M-9 ballistic missiles landed within two sea target areas on March 8. One was 20 nautical miles off Taiwan's northeast coast, near the port of Keelung, the other was 30 nautical miles off the southwest coast, near Kaohsiung.

These two ports handle much of Taiwan's trade. Kaohsiung is the third busiest port in the world. This was the closest Chinese missiles, armed or unarmed, have come to the island since 1949.

On March 12 Beijing began live-fire military exercises off its southeast coast, across from Taiwan. Chinese combat planes and warships practiced bombing runs, formation drills, air cover and surveillance in a 6,600 square mile rectangle that stretches to the mid-point of the Taiwan Straits. The war games overlap with a series of missile tests off Keelung and Kaohsiung. The exercises involve China's air force, navy, and army. Some 150,000 Chinese troops are amassed in Fujian Province, facing Taiwan.

A Taiwanese military official said its 400,000-member armed forces were on heightened alert. "If they trespass into our territorial water, of course we will fight back," Taiwan's war minister Chiang Chung-lin said after an emergency cabinet meeting.

At the beginning of the military exer-

cises "stock markets in the region have plunged, investors are scrambling for dollars and gold, and newspaper headlines warn ominously of closed sea lanes, rice hoarding and instability in a region built on open trade routes and political calm," the *Wall Street Journal* reported. In Hong Kong the Hang Seng stock index plummeted 7.3 percent.

Tensions between China and Taiwan have deepened since Taiwan's president Lee visited Cornell University in the United States last June. This was the first such visit by a Taiwanese leader since 1972, when Washington reaffirmed a "one China" policy and started working toward normalization of ties with Beijing.

The government of China is pushing Lee to end his campaign to win international recognition and admission to the United Nations and World Trade Organization and to lift the ban on direct shipping and air traffic between Taiwan and the mainland.

Taiwan's trade through Hong Kong

The political and military uncertainty has also taken a toll on Taiwan's economy — the world's 14th largest in

terms of trade. Taiwan is also the 7th largest US trading partner, just behind China. The stock market has plunged 17 percent since Lee's visit to the United States last June.

Capitalists from Taiwan have invested about \$25 billion in the mainland and last year's trade with China totaled nearly \$21 billion. But almost all this trade went through Hong Kong since Taiwan bans direct trade with the mainland. This arrangement, however, will end June 30, 1997, when Hong Kong reverts to Chinese sovereignty from British colonial status. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, this will put Taipei in "a much weaker position than it enjoys now."

The military drills occur at a time when "Sino-US relations were already frayed," stated the *Journal*. Washington has charged Beijing with "pirating" U.S. compact discs and is threatening \$2 billion in trade sanctions.

In late February the Clinton administration told the Export-Import Bank to delay up to \$10 billion in loan guarantees for American business investments in China based on accusations that Beijing sold Pakistan specialized ring magnets to use

in uranium plants. The Chinese government says it will retaliate against any U.S. government sanctions.

The looming confrontation between U.S. imperialism and the Chinese workers state comes at a time of sharper competition between capitalist powers in the Pacific. Many commentators in the big-business media point out that Washington cannot count on its main "ally" in the region — Tokyo — for going along with sanctions against China.

Washington has 47,000 soldiers and a carrier fleet at Okinawa. This is the most important base in the Far East since the U.S. navy was expelled from the Philippines in the early 1990s. But Japan's rulers are not keen to let Washington gain dominance in Taiwan — a former Japanese colony from 1895 to the end of World War II.

Headlined "US Probably Shouldn't Count on Help From Japan in Resolving Taiwan Flap," an article in the March 11 *Journal* said that chief among the obstacles to Washington flexing its muscles on Taiwan's behalf are "questions about the reliability of America's No. 1 ally in the region, Japan."

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 welcome to attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

At the Militant Labor Forum you can express your opinion, listen to the views of fellow fighters, and exchange ideas on how best to advance the interests of workers and farmers the world over.

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ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (312) 342-1780. Compuserve: 76171,2307 **Peoria:** P.O. Box 302. Zip: 61650-0302. Tel: (309) 674-9441. Compuserve: 103435,1724

INDIANA: Bloomington: P.O. Box 1304. Zip: 47402. Tel: (812) 333-6859.

IOWA: Des Moines: 2105 Forest Ave. Zip: 50311. Tel: (515) 246-8249. Compuserve: 104107,1412

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772. Compuserve: 103426,3430

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 74767,1050 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA: Twin Cities: 2490 Uni-

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Celebration of Publication of Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War 1956-58. Speakers: Róger Calero, *Perspectiva Mundial* staff writer recently returned from Cuba; Bud Haithcoate, member of United Auto Workers. Fri., March 22, 7 p.m. reception, 7:30 p.m. program. 141 Halsey (corner of Raymond Blvd.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

The Irish Freedom Struggle Today. Speakers: Denis Donaldson, Sinn Fein representative in New York; Naomi Craine, staff writer for *Militant*. Fri., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 59 Fourth Ave. (corner of Bergen St. near Atlantic and Pacific subway stops). Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

The Fight for Women's Rights Today. Panel discussion. Fri., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

versity Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (612) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 141 Halsey. Mailing address: 1188 Raymond Blvd., Suite 222. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341. Compuserve: 102330,106

NEW YORK: Albany: P. O. Box 2357, E.S.P. Zip: 12220. Tel: (518) 465-0585. **Brooklyn:** 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642. **New York:** 214-16 Avenue A. Mailing address: P.O. Box 2652. Zip: 10009. Tel: (212) 388-9346; 167 Charles St. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973. Compuserve: 104113,2150

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TEXAS: Houston: 3260 South Loop West. Zip: 77025. Tel: (713) 349-0090. Compuserve: 102527,2271

UTAH: Salt Lake City: 147 E. 900 S. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124. Compuserve: 76714,1545

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Av.). Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185. Compuserve: 75407,3345.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461,2544.

WEST VIRGINIA: Morgantown: 242 Walnut. Mailing address: P.O. Box 203. Zip: 26507. Tel: (304) 296-0055. Compuserve: 70543,1637

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Buchananism: What It is and How to Fight It. Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 18th St. and Florida Ave. N.W. (entrance on Florida). Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

Reportback from the Havana Book Fair. Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League Sat., March 23, 7 p.m. 66 Albion St. Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

CANADA

Vancouver

Israel: No Justice, No Peace. Panel discussion. Fri., March 22, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. (Between 23 and 24 Ave.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Struggle for a Free and Secular Palestine Today. Fri., March 22, 7:30 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 19 Terry St., Surry Hills 2010. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 2000. Tel: 02-281-3297. Compuserve: 102174,1243

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 0171-928-7993. Compuserve: 101515,2702

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766.

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 75253,265

Toronto: 827 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M1. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343. Compuserve: 103430,1552

FRANCE

Paris: MBE 201, 208 rue de la Convention. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (1) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: gphssg@treknet.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

There is a silver lining — Last year, a reported 3.26 million U.S. employees were fired. Meanwhile chief executives at top companies received 23 percent pay increases, pocketing an average of \$4.37 million. In good part their income



Harry Ring

is pegged to profits, which were boosted by the job-chopping.

A fighting alternative — According to Doyle McManus of the

Los Angeles Times, Clinton and his staff have weighed how to deal with Buchanan's demagogic corporate bashing: So far, he reports, the answer is: "Let the GOPs Pat Buchanan run against Wall Street. Democrat Bill Clinton would rather run as a champion of enlightened capitalism."

No heliport? — On sale in L.A., an estate that boasts garage space that can accommodate "six stretch limos."

Bon appétit! — The Michigan Department of Public Health proudly announced that mercury and other poisons in the Great Lakes have declined and for the first time in 25 years, assertedly,

it's now safe to eat Great Lakes salmon. Meanwhile, they set tighter limits on trout. If it's smaller than 22 inches, it's OK to eat it once a week — women of child-bearing age and children under 15 excepted.

Sort of like when they go to war — "The layoffs associated with restructuring are far from over and will last a long time," advises Wall Street economist Donald Straszheim. He adds: "Companies don't lay off people because they enjoy it. They lay off people because they think they must compete."

Sighs all the way to the bank — Evangelist Jimmy

Bakker, who did 5.5 years for swindling followers out of millions, is back in the pulpit. He says prison changed him and he now believes "money is the root of all evil." He's embraced humility and meekness and, also, signed a contract for a book.

Sharp — Lady Fairfax, an Australian heiress, is unloading her New York triplex penthouse. Includes six master bedrooms, six fireplaces, three kitchens, eight baths — most with refrigerators and one with its own fireplace, terrace and heated marble floor. \$35 million, plus \$31,440 monthly carrying charges.

For the average Joe — Dale Brown scoffs at the hype sur-

rounding Armani and other high-price Italian clothing designers. He says, "They don't really take care of the average person." Brown is general manager at Sulka in San Francisco. You can pick up a made-to-measure set of threads there for a mere \$1,850 to \$4,250.

Just remember the Big Macs — *Wall Street Journal* reports the growing demand for presidential suites at plush hotels. Like, the Phoenician in Scottsdale, Arizona, has two at \$4,400 a night, and the price is nonnegotiable. Queried about Prez Clinton, who sometimes stays in such suites, a spokesperson sniffed, "The government does not negotiate rates with hotels."

U.S. base at Guantánamo supplied Batista's army

Continued from Page 6

in. They got on the bus and proceeded to fulfill instructions. They seated the marines in the back of the bus, and positioned themselves in front of the detainees, ready for whatever was necessary.

After ten minutes, the marines' commanding officer asked the combatant closest to him who the leader was. Immediately the officer asked to speak with me. With him was a Puerto Rican marine who served as interpreter. The first thing he asked was: "Do you know what you're doing?" I responded by asking him why he was asking me that question. He answered that this was the first time that members of the Armed Forces of the United States had ever been taken prisoner without a fight. I responded: "Then that honor belongs to us."

The officer told me the bad consequences that would befall us by capturing U.S. citizens. "Where are you taking me?" he asked again. I told him to stay calm, that nothing would happen to them, and that he was going to meet our leader, Commander Raúl Castro.

U.S. soldiers cheered

When the officer informed the others what I had said, they immediately began to cheer for Fidel and Raúl. The only one who did not seem happy was the Puerto Rican, who was all set to get married the next day. The most curious thing is that the only somber faces belonged to a Puerto Rican and a Mexican. On one occasion they fled the camp where we were holding them, but they were captured by some peasants of the zone. As for the Yankees, they accepted things calmly.

The marines wanted to meet the hero and head of the "Frank País" Second Eastern Front. Among our group was a comrade who could speak English named Pedro Pérez Tozís, whom we called Peruchón. He began to talk with them. In a little while the combatants had no more hats or armbands, because the marines had asked for them and put them on.

While some talked, others sang and

shared their cigars with the combatants. Meanwhile I was thinking about what was awaiting us only a few kilometers away, since we had to pass by an army ambush. According to our reports, there were no less than 250 soldiers, and their weapons included a .50 caliber machine gun and mortars.

The bus drove toward the ambush. "Tito," the driver, knew very well what was at the Yateras bridge, because he told me it was dangerous to pass through there. I responded that his life was in his own hands.

"This bus must pass over the bridge like an airplane," I told him.

He answered that the bus did not have enough power to build up the speed I was asking for.

"What if they shoot at us?" he asked.

"Bad luck then!" I answered.

I ordered him to turn off the inside lights of the bus and I told one of the combatants to begin singing to see if the marines imitated him. In a few seconds there was a tremendous racket inside the vehicle.

I kept my eyes on the movements of the driver, and was ready for anything. We passed through the ambush as fast as the bus could go and I was able to see a few soldiers with rifles in their hands. They clearly thought that inside the bus were some drunken marines headed toward the beach to party.

The next day, very early, the captain who commanded those troops was able to learn through the mouth of the owner of the reservoir—which supplied water to the base—what the truth was. When Mr. Victor Shue arrived at the reservoir, the captain, making conversation, told him that around eight o'clock the previous night a bus full of drunken Americans had passed through, heading toward the beach at Yateras, and apparently it was quite a party because they had still not returned. To the surprise of the captain and all those listening, Shue answered: "Do you know what happened to those marines? They're prisoners, and they're in the custody of Sandino and a group of his boys!" He had already heard of me.

Getting through the ambush was not yet the end of the danger. We had to travel along a very dangerous part (a highway in very poor conditions hugging the coast), where there were always two frigates stationed with their lights out. This highway was some 40 or 50 kilometers long, after which we would be out of danger, but only partially; if the bus that was awaiting them did not arrive in time, patrols would be sent out searching for them, and even the forces of the tyranny's army would be mobilized.

Mission completed successfully

We thought that after risking the lives of us all and having carried out the operation speedily and as planned, we could not allow everything to go down the drain.

Arriving at the town of San Antonio del Sur I felt more at ease, since we had left the highway and were taking other roads leading to Valle de Caujeri — free territory — where it was very difficult for the soldiers to enter. When we arrived at Abra de la Mariana — a chain of hills surrounding the valley — we found out that there was only a single entrance for vehicles into the valley. It was a road opened by

nature. Those hills were pockmarked by bombs, and the houses of the peasants were in ashes.

We climbed one of the most dangerous parts of the heights, Las Fuentes hill, and the bus's motor stopped and it began to go backwards. The driver was able to swerve the steering wheel before it picked up speed, leaving the vehicle stopped against the wall of the hill and thereby preventing everyone inside from perishing.

When everyone got out, I gathered all the marines together and checked that none were hurt. I gave instructions for two combatants to go to San Antonio del Sur to look for transportation. The rest of us would continue on foot. The marines were not very pleased by this and wanted to protest. We had some 30 kilometers ahead of us to reach our destination, and the walk served as exercise for them.

Leaving the heights, I ordered a halt to take advantage of the clear moonlight, and we could see the houses of the peasants burned by the bombs. I pointed these out to the North Americans and told them that their government was primarily responsible for it. We continued our way and as soon as we reached Los Letreros, the comrades we had sent to San Antonio del Sur arrived in a dump truck. We had already walked more than 25 kilometers on foot, in mud up to our knees. Some of the

marines were tired.

To reach our destination, Mameyal, we had to climb a hill in front of us more than three kilometers long. We drove the tired marines, since the dump truck could not fit everybody inside. Several times we even had to push it because the road was so bad.

After so much work, covered in mud from head to foot, we reached our destination at three in the morning. Upon our arrival the peasants awoke, having heard the Americans. We were alert because we didn't know how the peasants would react to seeing the marines. Many of them were indignant, but I explained to them that these were not the ones guilty of the bombings and strafing. The peasants understood, and in a little while they brought baskets of fruit to the marines.

I immediately sent a messenger to inform the head of our column, Capt. Félix L. Peña. I told him that we had arrived and had brought with us 29 members of the U.S. Marines, the driver of the bus, and the conductor, that everything had gone well and without problems. At six in the morning Captain Peña arrived and I filled him in on the mission. We withdrew to rest. I believe we had earned it.

This was the end of our mission, which went off without incident. We were ready to fulfill another mission, no matter how dangerous. That was our duty.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People
March 26, 1971 Price 10¢

More than 135,000 British workers streamed into Trafalgar Square on Feb. 21 to the strains of the "The Red Flag" and other working-class songs sung by the South Wales Bargoed choir. The demonstration, the largest such action ever organized in Britain, was a protest against the Tory government's proposed antilabor Industrial Relations Bill.

The Industrial Relations Bill embodies the basic features of the American Taft-Harley Act and state right-to-work laws in the United States. The bill comes at a time of mounting unrest among organized labor's ranks in Britain. A strike by nearly a quarter million postal workers, which completely paralyzed the mails, telegraphs and telephones for 47 days, came to an end when the workers voted to return to work March 6. It was the longest strike in Britain since the 1926 coal miners strike. The workers voted to end the strike. The workers voted to end the strike two days after their leadership agreed to binding arbitration.

Five days before the postal strike ended, more than a million workers took part in a one-day general strike against the union-busting Industrial Relations Bill. The cost of the one-day strike to British industry was estimated at \$25 million.

The March 1 general strike was carried out in the face of opposition from the Trade Union Congress (TUC) General Council, the official tradeunion leadership in Britain.

THE MILITANT

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

March 23, 1946

NEW YORK, March 10 — Delayed letters and clippings from Manila, P.I., have arrived here telling the hitherto censored story of the unsuccessful attempt last month of Army brass hats in the Philippines to force American merchant seamen on 40 ships in Manila harbor to scab on striking Filipino longshoremen.

Two thousand merchant seamen belonging to the CIO National Maritime Union, AFL Seafarers International Union, Independent Marine Firemen's Union, CIO Marine Cooks and Stewards, and other smaller unions refused to be used as scabs by the army in its attempt to break the strike.

The direct order from the labor-hating brass hats was to no avail. The seamen stood solid in their opposition to the strike-breaking order. Six seamen were arrested by the army and charged with refusal to obey a "lawful order under the Articles of War."

The arrests and arrogant provocations by the military brass drew a stormy reaction from the merchant seamen in the harbor. A Seamen's Strike and Sympathy Committee was organized and funds were immediately collected for the defense of the arrested men and also to aid the strikers.

Telling the brass, "you know what you can do with your order," the two thousand merchant seamen stood solidly together, all rival affiliations forgotten. This had an extremely heartening effect upon the Filipino strikers.

For further reading



Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution

A MARXIST APPRECIATION

Joseph Hansen

How did the Cuban revolution come about?

Why does it represent,

as Joseph Hansen put it, an "unbearable challenge" to U.S. imperialism? What political challenges has it confronted? This compilation, written with polemical clarity as the revolution advanced, is irreplaceable in understanding the Cuban revolution today. \$20.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or from **PATHFINDER**, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, Fax (212) 727-0150. Please add \$3.00 to cover postage and handling.

Build YS convention!

On the lookout for youth attracted to revolution. That is what members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party are focusing their attention on. Between now and the beginning of April young fighters can be offered the special opportunity of attending a national convention of people like themselves.

For the next three weeks, the *Militant* will be setting aside extra space to feature coverage of the efforts of the Young Socialists to build their April 6-7 national convention and organizing conference. As YS members reach out across the country at protests, picket lines, plant gates, campuses, and through regional convention-building teams, we encourage our readers to join with them in winning youth to the communist movement.

The pressures of the worldwide capitalist depression are causing layers of young workers, students, and other youth to radicalize. Some are attracted to the fascist-minded demagoguery offered up by figures like Patrick Buchanan. Others want to fight against Buchananism, and are attracted to revolution. They show up at all kinds of actions — from protests in defense of affirmative action in California to rallies supporting the Irish freedom struggle.

Communists need to organize to meet as many of these young people as possible, and offer them the opportunity to meet others like themselves at the YS convention. As Young Socialists chapters are learning, some new people can be recruited to join the organization even before the convention.

Through building the convention, the Young Socialists are already advancing in practice the campaigns adopted at their national leadership meeting in February, which will be placed before convention delegates. These include defending the socialist revolution in Cuba, opposing Washington's war preparations in Yugoslavia,

and demonstrating against ultrarightist candidate Buchanan, who "represents the true face of American fascism."

The group is also jumping into "all resistance to the horrors of capitalism, including joining picket lines of striking workers, abortion rights actions and clinic defense, protests against police brutality and the death penalty, mobilizations to defend affirmative action and equal rights for immigrants, protests against the destruction of the environment, protests against education cuts and others."

Convention delegates will vote on a series of political principles, beginning with, "The Young Socialists recognize the need to overthrow capitalism and fight for socialism." In addition to the convention sessions, there will be an organizing conference where all participants can take part in workshops and classes.

Socialist workers and others who support building a communist youth organization can help YS members to build their convention.

Host one of the regional teams the Young Socialists are organizing, join them staffing socialist literature tables and at political events, and tell every rebel-minded youth you meet about the convention. Be sure to always have a list where young people can sign up to get to the convention. Invite young workers and students who are interested to immediately start participating in political activity with socialist workers and young socialists, and work with them on the practical details of getting to Minneapolis April 6-7, such as transportation and fund-raising.

What the Young Socialists do in the next three weeks, together with socialist workers of all generations, can have an impact on the size and success of the convention. On to Minneapolis!

On the side of Chinese people

The U.S. government has deployed an armada from its Seventh Fleet toward China and Taiwan. The *USS Independence* and *Nimitz* aircraft carriers, with their accompanying submarines, battleships, and more than 100 combat aircraft, are one of the biggest naval mobilizations in the region since the Vietnam War. Working people everywhere should loudly protest Washington's war-mongering threats against China.

The heart of this conflict is China's right to national reunification. The Chinese people, who tore their country out of the hands of the world's capitalist exploiters half a century ago, are now making progress toward taking back Hong Kong and Macao, colonial enclaves that are due to return to China over the next three years. This brings reunification with Taiwan to the fore — a prospect the capitalist rulers in Taipei and Washington loathe.

The Chinese government is right when it affirms that "Taiwan is a part of China and not a protectorate of the United States." Even the U.S. government was forced to acknowledge China's right to reunification in 1972, when it began the normalization of relations with Beijing.

For decades before, the U.S. rulers had imposed a trade embargo and refused to recognize China and its nearly one billion people. The masters of the U.S. empire have never been able to stomach the fact that they "lost China" — to the Chinese workers and farmers. The socialist revolution in that country in the late 1940s and early 1950s was a giant victory for the world's working people and a deadly blow to imperialism.

Taiwan, where the U.S.-backed Chinese capitalists fled after the revolution, is now an important U.S. trad-

ing partner. Serving as a proxy for Washington, the regime there has built up a large imperialist-supplied military machine directed at Beijing. The Clinton administration has encouraged the government of President Lee Teng-hui to step up its campaign for international recognition. These probes have accelerated with the impending return of Hong Kong and Macao to China.

The confrontation between Washington and the Chinese workers state is fueled by the heightened economic competition between the capitalist powers in the Pacific — part of the growing interimperialist rivalries worldwide. The U.S. imperialist rulers are simultaneously carrying out war preparations against the workers state in Yugoslavia, and have made aggressive moves against revolutionary Cuba.

In the Pacific, both Washington and Tokyo are vying for markets and power. The Japanese capitalists don't want their U.S. rivals to gain further dominance in Taiwan, a former Japanese colony, and are thus reluctant to aid the U.S. government in the current conflict. This tense situation between the two imperialist powers is further strained by mass protests in Japan against the presence of U.S. military bases, especially in Okinawa.

The large deployment of U.S. naval forces and the face-off between the heavily armed forces of Taipei and Beijing create an explosive mixture. In this situation, the consequences of Washington's moves — including any provocation by the Taiwanese regime — are not wholly under its control.

Working people should demand that Washington immediately stop its threats against China and pull out its military forces from the region. All U.S. trade sanctions against China should be opposed.

Rail wrecks pile up

BY JON HILLSON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — The railroad industry's seemingly unending chain of crashes and wrecks continued when a Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight train went on the ground near Cushing, in rural central Minnesota, spilling deadly anhydrous ammonia gas and forcing the evacuation of 20 families in a two-mile area. Three BNSF crew members and six area residents were briefly hospitalized after the February 27 accident. The calamity was the third major derailment for the BNSF in Minnesota in 13 days.

In St. Paul an 89-car BNSF freight train lacking a rear-end brake device lost its stopping capacity February 14 and roared into the St. Paul Canadian Pacific-Soo Line terminal. The next day a BNSF train derailed in northern Minnesota, spilling fuel additive.

The spate of rail accidents in Minnesota, and a February string of crashes in California, Utah, New Jersey, and Maryland, killed 17 railroad workers and passengers. This industrial carnage has focused media attention on how the rail bosses have slashed crew sizes and gutted safety precautions. The employers have tried to dodge responsibility for the string of derailments.

The rail brass cover their lack of even the most minimum safety equipment by alleging there is a shortage of braking devices. Dick Russick, a BNSF spokesman, initially asserted, "There are not enough [two way braking devices] to put on all the trains."

Jim Pontious, spokesman for Pulse Electronics, a Westinghouse subsidiary, and the major manufacturer of the device, stated that "We have enormous capability to expand capacity. We are nowhere near being maxed out. We build to order."

On February 25, The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* reported the announcement of Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene Molitoris that "virtually all freight trains" will have the device by June 30, 1997.

But the narrow debate over the braking device begs the decisive question — the absence of the caboose, from which a conductor or brakeman could not only control brakes, but also observe the train's movement, be on the lookout as oncoming trains approached, and provide a key set of eyes, ears, hands, and brains critical for safer train operation.

The rail bosses, in their profit-driven drive to downsize crews, got top rail union officials to sign concessions contracts starting in 1985 which began to eliminate the brakeman, and hence, the caboose. Crew sizes were slashed, from a conductor and two brakemen, along with an engineer, to the current norm of an only an engineer and conductor.

In 1988, as railroad workers began to feel the impact of the slash in crew size and the removal of the caboose, the Minnesota state legislature made a token gesture in response to lobbying efforts of rail union officials. It passed a law, never enacted, requiring cabooses on trains longer than 2,000 feet, or about 40 cars. Challenged by the rail bosses, the measure was overturned by the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

BY VALERIE JOHNSON

SELKIRK, New York — A rail tank car containing 31,500 gallons of liquid propane exploded into a ball of fire March 6 at Conrail's huge rail yard here, near Albany. The blaze was visible 10 miles away. The burning tank car, along with two others coupled to it, took off like a rocket through the rail yard for more than a mile before derailling.

"It was a miracle no one was killed," said a messenger and member of the clerks' union who drives rail crews around the yard. She explained that right before the explosion a group of workers in the area had taken their lunch break and walked away shortly before the blast.

Jon Flanders, a member of the International Association of Machinists who works in the diesel repair shop only a few hundred yards from the site of the blast, said a big discussion is taking place over the fact that the company has no evacuation plan for such emergencies. That day the only way out for Flanders and his co-workers was to run, jump into their automobiles, and leave the area as fast as possible. A few workers who did not hear the explosion remained on site. No emergency alarm system is in place. "What's Conrail's evacuation policy? Run!!!" Flanders said.

While this is the first time a propane tank car has exploded in Selkirk, other recent accidents in the area include a 51-car train derailment in Fonda, New York, on December 14 that spilled 3,500 gallons of sodium hydroxide, a chemical that burns skin to the bone. Seven local families had to be evacuated.

On August 28 Lewis Laramie, who was on a "conductor only" job, was run over and killed by another train while working in his part of the yard. In the nearby town of Chatham, four major derailments have occurred since April 1994.

While tank cars loaded with hazardous materials have certain safety mechanisms that are supposed to prevent explosions, as conditions deteriorate in the industry more accidents become inevitable. Today more freight is moved by fewer workers over worsening track and roadbed due to cuts in the workforce by companies bent on higher profits.

Valerie Johnson is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1473 and works as road conductor for Conrail between Boston and Selkirk.

Liverpool dockers win international solidarity

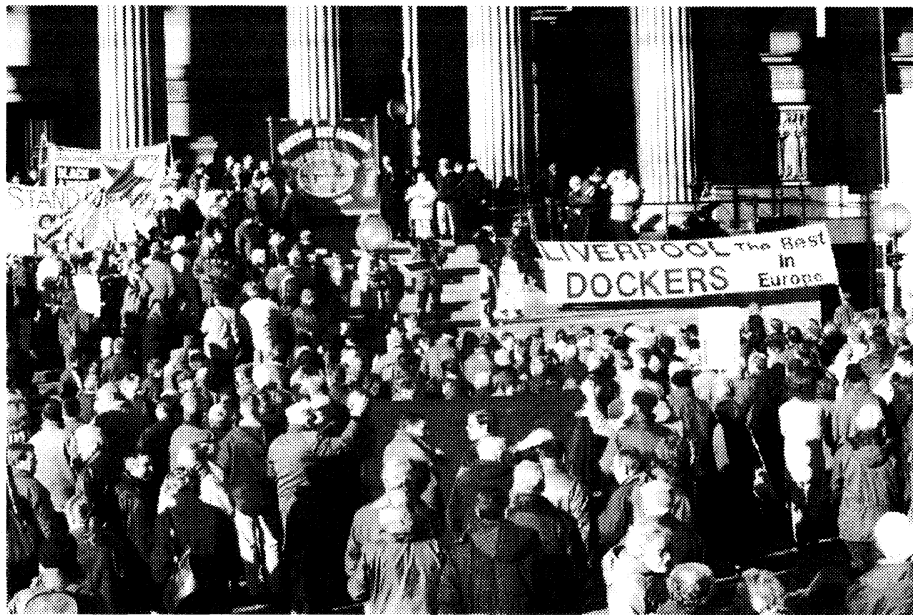
This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

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

in Liverpool February 2 to support the dockers. About a week later the workers rejected the port bosses' latest "final offer" to re-hire 40 workers and give £25,000 (\$38,000) to each remaining worker. The unionists demand all the workers be rehired. Another solidarity march and rally is set for March 23.

union executive committee member, André Laramée, remains fired.

The main issue for the unionists was working conditions. They wanted relief from the 12-hour shifts they have been working for more than six years. The union won the right to three days off without pay, but with many restrictions. Meanwhile, under the new agreement, workers who take more than eight days off per year will be subject to disciplinary measures, including firing.



Militant/Tim Rigby

More than 3,000 rally in Liverpool February 2 in support of the dock workers

ON THE PICKET LINE

struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

LIVERPOOL, England — Dockers here have been winning international solidarity for their fight against the Mersey Docks and Harbour Co. The shipping boss sacked 320 dock workers last September for refusing to cross a picket line set up by workers at a subcontractor.

Members of the International Longshoremen's Association in the eastern United States have refused to handle cargo from the Atlantic Container Line trading with Liverpool. This is the main shipping line that uses Liverpool's Seaforth container terminal. Dockers in Australia have held up a number of ships trading with Liverpool that belong to the Belgian-registered ABC line. At an international solidarity conference in February, delegates from dockers' unions in 17 countries pledged to boycott ships bound for Liverpool.

More than 3,000 people rallied

Firestone workers end strike in Quebec

JOLIETTE, Quebec — Workers at the Bridgestone-Firestone tire factory here voted February 23 to end their strike. The 734 members of the National Confederation of Trade Unions (CSN) had been on strike since August 22.

Many union members who voted to return to work did so out of financial hardship and concern about company threats to eliminate jobs, not because they liked the contract. The company waged an intense campaign, threatening to transfer 25 percent of production out of the plant if the offer was not accepted.

Two weeks earlier, workers had voted by an 84 percent margin against another "final offer." At that time, the company refused to apply seniority in a return to work. Now, workers will go back to work according to seniority and 90 percent of disciplinary measures imposed during the strike have been withdrawn. The union and several officials still face possible fines of up to \$243,500 for alleged labor code violations. One

Labor board: Firestone workers fired illegally

DES MOINES, Iowa — The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has issued several complaints against the Bridgestone-Firestone tire manufacturer, stemming from a 10-month strike that ended last year without a contract.

In February the general counsel of the NLRB ruled that Firestone had illegally fired seven workers at its plant here, including the local union president at the time, and directed its Minneapolis office to issue a complaint against the company if the firings were not resolved. The counsel upheld the strike-related firings of five other workers.

Additionally, the NLRB's Indianapolis office filed a complaint requiring Firestone reinstate union

members who haven't yet been called back to work at the five struck facilities.

The complaint also charges the company with illegally replacing union workers with nonunion replacements. If the complaint is validated, the company could be forced to pay affected union members back pay retroactive to January of last year.

Telephone workers hold protest in Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — On February 13 about 400 members of the Independent Union of Telephone Employees (UIET) held a lunchtime picket outside the central offices of the government-owned Puerto Rico Telephone Company.

The company reneged on a pre-

vious agreement to fill positions left vacant by workers who accepted an early retirement plan.

The telephone company had agreed to fill 30 percent of the slots with temporary employees who would work no more than one year. Temporary employees receive lower wages than regular workers and no benefits.

Contributors to this weeks column are: Tim Rigby, member of the Transport and General Workers Union in Manchester, England; Philippe Tremblay, member of the CSN at Bridgestone-Firestone in Joliette, Quebec, and Monica Jones, member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 728 in Ste. Thérèse, Quebec; Bill Kalman, member of the United Transportation Union in Des Moines, Iowa; and Ron Richards in San Juan.

LETTERS

Criticize IRA bombings

The editorial in the February 26 *Militant* (All-party talks on Ireland peace now) correctly targets British imperialism as the prime obstacle to the aspirations of the Irish people based on justice, equality, and self determination. Within this framework, however, it offers no critique of the tactic of individual terrorism as a means to enhance the struggle against national oppression. The result of the bombing in London alienated many British and Irish working people from support and involvement in the struggle. It is a tactic which substitutes the actions of a few for a political struggle based on the involvement of the broad masses of working people.

Tens of thousands marched on February 25 in Dublin, Belfast, and other towns throughout Ireland, North and South, focusing their demand for an end to the violence not at the real perpetrator, the British government, but at the IRA. Perhaps a review of Trotsky's "Against Individual Terrorism" would be helpful to clarify the role of terrorism the struggle for liberation from the yoke of oppression in general.

The editorial correctly summarizes what is necessary to achieve a just peace based on an independent and free Ireland — defending Irish political prisoners, engaging in mass marches to demand British troops out of N. Ireland, and supporting the demand for all-party talks now.

Gary Cohen
Arlington, Massachusetts

John Major is to blame

I would like to give a little background to the breakdown of the peace process in occupied Ireland and the end of the IRA cease-fire. The 17-month IRA cease-fire

was the result of a series of secret negotiations between representatives of the British government and the IRA. In return for a cease-fire the British government made a number of promises: a) release of political prisoners; b) removal of British troops from the streets of Northern Ireland; c) dismantling of bases in Nationalist areas; d) the opening of 200 some border crossings between the occupied 6 counties and the 26 county Republic of Ireland; and e) the convening of all party peace talks to negotiate a political settlement to the conflict in Northern Ireland. (The verbatim text of the negotiations is available from: Friends of Sinn Fein 1350 Conn. Ave. NW, #307, Wash., DC 20036.)

The history of the last 17 months is in large measure a record of the various excuses that the British government deployed to avoid peace talks.

In this same period the oppressed workers and farmers in the six counties took advantage of the cease-fire and fought their way back into politics. The last 17 months have seen a revival of mass demonstrations by the oppressed community.

In the fall of 1995 the British government, headed by John Major, came under a great deal of diplomatic pressure from their imperialist rivals, especially from the U.S.A., and agreed to a peace plan for Northern Ireland.

On Nov. 28, 1995, all the antagonists in Northern Ireland agreed to submit to binding arbitration by an international panel headed by [former] Senator [George] Mitchell of Maine. The Mitchell panel urged the British to end their obstructionism and begin peace



talks on February 28, as they had previously agreed.

For the umpteenth million time the British government broke their word. Instead of beginning peace talks February 28 as they had promised, the British government proposed the restoration of the pro-British, Protestant/sectarian police state that had ruled Northern Ireland for 70 years until it was broken by mass worker protests in the early 1970s.

This was the last straw for some of the Irish freedom fighters. On February 9 a bomb exploded in a car park on Canary Wharf in London. If we have to assign blame, then all the blame for the renewal of war must be laid at the door of #10 Downing St., the official residence of John Major. If the British had ever honored their word the conflict in Northern Ireland would have been solved long ago.

The British regime will try to

demonize the Irish republicans with accusations of terrorism. It will be useful to recall the facts. Ireland is occupied by British imperialist troops, not the other way around. The current struggle in Ireland only exists because Britain refuses to make peace. If British imperialism withdrew from occupied Ireland peace would be on the order of the day.

As socialists we must base our actions on an understanding of what course will advance the cause of socialism. Will the cause of socialism and the unity of the world working class, especially unity of Irish and English workers, be advanced by the withdrawal of British troops and the reunification of Ireland, or by a continuation of the British occupation and a continuing struggle? It has been obvious since Marx's time that the victory of the Irish national democratic revolution is in the interest of both the Irish and English workers.

P.S. I personally think that the resumption of armed actions is going to set back the mass struggle in Northern Ireland. There is no doubt that it will be harder to build demonstrations now that bombs and automatic weapons are again part of politics. Some such consideration probably was a factor in Major's policy of provocation and obstructionism.

Roy Inglee
Wilmington, Delaware

IRA not freedom fighters

I'm very disappointed to see what I perceive as the *Militant's* support of Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army. I do not feel that this is a socialist position as

the IRA have proven themselves to be not freedom fighters, but terrorists.

In your Feb. 12, 1996, issue an advertisement for the *Militant* calls for "British troops out of Ireland" and "All-party peace talks now." Britain *did* pull many troops off the streets of N. Ireland/Ulster, peace talks were being held, and the door was wide open to all who wished to participate. However, the IRA did not wish to cooperate, as was demonstrated by the latest bomb attacks in London.

The fact of the matter is, most Irish Catholics do NOT support the IRA. Most people of Ireland and N. Ireland do NOT support the IRA. Most people in N. Ireland and the U.K. want to finally have a life free of terror and bombings. That was achieved for 17 months. Why couldn't it have been for 18, 19, 20, 300? The IRA has smashed the hopes of the majority of people in the Republic of Ireland, N. Ireland, and mainland Britain.

I call myself a socialist because my father and many others in my family were exploited and injured due to their jobs, and because this is happening all over the world. I do NOT call myself a socialist in order to support terrorism. I fail to see why the *Militant* is lending support to this group or giving support to the Quebec Nationalist party which perceived English-speaking citizens as a "problem."

Nicole Lemley
Tallahassee, Florida

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.

Australia miners resist union busting

BY MARNIE KENNEDY

SYDNEY, Australia — Three hundred miners from across New South Wales rallied February 15 outside the offices here of Novacoal, a subsidiary of CRA Ltd. The rally marked six months on the picket line by 30 striking coal miners from the Vickery open-cut mine near Gunnedah in northern New South Wales. The strikers are resisting CRA's attempt to impose shifts of 12 and a half hours.

Late last year the Vickery miners, members of the United Mineworkers Division of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), rejected an agreement negotiated through the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) that included 12-hour shifts. The AIRC has recommended on several occasions that they return to work.

Bill Kelty, secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and John Maitland, national president of the CFMEU, addressed the rally. Also present were CFMEU members Alan Verzeletti and David Rutherford, who had been on strike against CRA at its Comalco bauxite mine in Weipa in far north Queensland. They traveled to the Vickery picket line after the demonstration.

In Weipa the following day, workers who are members of the CFMEU went on strike for 48 hours after stopping work for a meeting. The evening before the strike Nigel Gould, the CFMEU lodge secretary at Weipa, said in a phone interview that CRA is stalling on negotiations following a January 23 decision by the AIRC that awarded the strikers pay increases and back pay and ruled that CRA must recognize the workers' right to union representation.

For seven weeks in late 1995 some 75 workers in Weipa struck demanding the right to union representation, and equal pay with the majority of the workforce at the mine who are on individual contracts.

Over a two-year period CRA had signed up a large majority of the workforce at Weipa to individual contracts by offering wage increases of up to A\$20,000 (US\$15,300). This was part of a company-wide union-busting drive. Some 11,000 of CRA's 16,000 employees are now on nonunion individual contracts.

The contracts deny workers the right to



Mine workers on the wharf at Weipa. The unionists have received support from other workers.

strike or to be represented by a union. Work hours, pay rates, and sick pay are at the discretion of the company.

Labor turnover at the Weipa mine is up to 30 percent at times, Gould said, with these contracts imposed on all new hires.

Gould described the January 23 AIRC decision as "a stepping stone." He said, "We have got to win the hearts and minds of the majority. When we have got the

numbers, we can fight for a fair and equitable award [contract]."

The strikers' intransigence won them widespread solidarity, including national strikes of maritime and coal unions. During the strike they maintained a floating picket line that disrupted the shipping of bauxite. They defied an AIRC back-to-work order, legal action against their picket lines, and writs for damages against

individual strikers and their unions. The workers refused to be intimidated by arrests of pickets and surveillance by private security cops. Strikers report that they were supported by many of the workers on individual contracts.

On February 15 miners from CRA's Argyle diamond mine in the far north of Western Australia also walked off the job for 24 hours demanding that CRA negotiate with the union. Paul Baker, convener of the Argyle Combined Union Negotiating Committee, and an Argyle miner for 10 years, said in a phone interview that of the 450 workers at the mine, 150 have refused individual contracts and are still union members covered by collective bargaining contracts.

Individual contracts were brought in by CRA at Argyle in late 1994. About half the miners signed individual contracts at that time, Baker said, and others signed under pressure later, or quit their jobs. "The guys at Weipa have been a real inspiration to us," he said.

Reflecting their determination to press the fight against CRA, Weipa miner Verzeletti told the *Militant* at the February 15 rally in Sydney, "Everybody's ready to go again now. The strike is not over yet."

Marnie Kennedy is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union at F. Muller in Sydney. Bob Aiken, a member of the AWU-FIME union at the Capral aluminium sheet mill in Sydney, contributed to the article.

Public service workers strike in Ontario

BY JOANNE PRITCHARD

TORONTO — "No Justice, No Peace!" chanted more than 1,000 Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) strikers, fists in the air, at a rally here on March 8. The 55,000 union members are going into the third week of a province-wide strike. Rallies were held every day in downtown Toronto during the first week in March.

Earlier on the day of the rally, police and private security guards herded scabs through the picket lines at the Ontario Health Insurance Plan building. All indications are that a very small percentage of workers are crossing the lines, and strikers

at the rally vowed to "hold the line" in the coming week.

OPSEU picket lines have already been strengthened by members of the teachers' unions, the Canadian Autoworkers Union, the United Steelworkers of America, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and the Public Service Alliance of Canada. Four hundred teachers joined a picket line outside the Ontario Science Centre on February 29.

Strikers also urged 2,000 people attending a March 9 International Women's Day rally at the University of Toronto to come out to the picket lines. The theme of this rally was the fight against cuts in day care, welfare, hospitals, education, and immigrant services. OPSEU strikers were invited to lead the march that followed the rally.

The work stoppage was called in response to Ontario Premier Mike Harris's plan to eliminate between 13,000 and 27,000 jobs in the public sector. New legislation adopted by the government abolishes "successor rights."

As a result, OPSEU members will no longer have the right to keep jobs that are privatized by the government, and those that do are guaranteed neither union protection nor their previous wage rate. Laid off workers will lose existing pension rights.

This is the first strike ever by government employees in Ontario. The OPSEU members were eager to set up their picket lines and begin the fight. Leah Casselman, president of OPSEU, originally proposed the strike start in stages, with government services being withdrawn over a number of weeks. But within two days of the strike's starting, the determination of the rank and file to fight had swept this plan aside, and all eligible strikers had set up pickets lines.

Margo Roberts, who has worked at the Queen Street Mental Hospital for 25 years teaching vocational skills to patients, said she has been "deeply touched by the community support for the strike."

"One lady from the neighborhood brought us a pot of hot soup," she said. "The restaurant across the street gives us free muffins, and a doctor working inside

the hospital had three pizzas delivered to our line. I eat better on the picket line than I ever did at home!" Roberts declared to the laughter of other strikers.

A worker in the attorney general's office who participated in the March 8 rally said she saw the strike as "a holy war against the Harris government, with all the groups of people being affected by the cuts coming together." In the week before, high school students walked out to protest education cutbacks, hospital workers organized a meeting to protest hospital closings, and a meeting of 1,000 protested cuts in the Workers Compensation Program.

Dave Johnson, chief negotiator for the government, is leading a public campaign to paint the OPSEU members as irresponsible for striking in the face of the government's fiscal crisis. "The province of Ontario spends \$1 million an hour more than it takes in," he said. "The deficit does not go on strike."

The OPSEU officials have said they agree that cuts to jobs are necessary because the government has economic constraints. The union's negotiating position is to accept the layoffs but demand more severance pay for those who lose their jobs and reinstitute successor rights for those whose jobs are privatized.

Many on the picket lines say that cuts have to be made, but argue they should be implemented "humanely and fairly."

A Human Rights Commission worker expressed the resolve of the strikers when she said, "We're not going back until we win; we have too much to lose." Janice Moore, a striker from the Office of the Environment, explained, "We're not just fighting for respect and dignity for OPSEU. What we're doing will have an impact on everyone in society."

On March 12, the Ontario Federation of Labour meets to discuss the next protest against the Harris government's budget. The latest protest was in Hamilton and rallied more than 100,000 people.

Women's organizations are meeting on March 24 to plan an action for June 8, the first anniversary of the Harris government. On March 8, the government announced that it would go back to the bargaining table.

Maoris celebrate land seizure

BY MALCOLM McCALLISTER

WANGANUI, New Zealand — A year ago, Maoris here occupied the local park Moutoa Gardens for 79 days. On February 24, local tribes began a six-day gathering at the gardens to celebrate the anniversary of the occupation.

At the end of 1994 the conservative National Party government introduced a scheme to buy off all Maori land grievances for NZ\$1 billion [U.S.\$670 million] hoping to take the heat out of the myriad Maori claims and make sales of government land and assets more attractive to capitalist investors. The scheme met widespread opposition, including several land occupations. For several months the occupation in Wanganui was at the center of national politics.

The area where the park is situated had been a market place called Pakaitore in the last century, where the local tribes traded with the few British settlers. In a deal that rankles with Maoris to this day, the settler government purchased the block of land where the city now stands using trickery and divisions among the tribes. Pakaitore, in Maori eyes, was excluded from the purchase.

During the occupation tents and buildings were erected and the park was fenced off in the manner of a traditional village. The local City Council attempted eviction, but on at least one occasion was prevented

by supporters from around the country gathering at the site. As police assembled for another eviction last May the occupiers decided to leave the park with their heads held high rather than face bludgeoning and arrest.

The strength of the occupation was indicated by the decision of the City Council to allow the anniversary celebrations to take place at Pakaitore, although it issued a ban on guests staying overnight. A stream of visitors took part in the festivities.

In an interview, Maori leader Ken Mair talked about the importance of the occupation. "Without your land you can't assert your *tinorangitiranga* [sovereignty]," he said. "There has been much intense discussion from the time we came on here a year ago right to now. I think history will judge that this is the beginning of a renaissance in regard to the issues of *tinorangitiranga* — our young ones have become more aware of the issues as well as the *pakeha* [white] community and the community as a whole throughout the country."

After the celebration had ended, seven people were arrested at a nearby park when Maoris set up a tent as a protest against whites being allowed to stay overnight in that park while Maoris were banned from staying overnight in Moutoa Gardens.