

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE
Interview with general of Cuba's
Revolutionary Armed Forces
INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW — PAGES 5-12

VOL. 62 NO. 24 JUNE 22, 1998

Auto workers strike GM

Unionists resist bosses' drive to cut jobs and speed line

BY JOHN SARGE

FLINT, Michigan — To a cacophony of honking horns and shouts of unionists gathered outside, members of United Auto Workers Local 659 streamed out of the General Motors (GM) Metal Fabrication Center here June 5. The workers immediately established picket lines numbering in the dozens at each of the factory's three gates. One handmade sign spoke for many workers, pledging, "For as long as it takes."

This is the first strike at this facility since the last national strike against GM, in 1970. The strike was called over local health and safety issues, production standards, and subcontracting. But at the root of the walkout is the auto giant's refusal to live up to a 1996 agreement to invest in the plant and guarantee the jobs of the 3,400 local union members. Press reports indicate that GM wants to eliminate almost 200 jobs at the plant.

Auto workers in Flint, the birthplace of GM, have been a special target of the company's drive to cut its workforce and raise productivity as its market share shrinks. In the last 20 years the auto bosses have slashed almost 50,000 jobs in this city. In 1978 GM had 77,000 employees here; today it has 27,000. The Buick City assembly plant is slated to close in 1999, affecting another 2,900 union workers.

Bill Kyle, a quality technician at the plant with almost 24 years' seniority, summed up what worker after worker on the picket line had to say. "We can't give anymore," he said. "You have to do something. Every time you turn around, they're taking jobs out of here."

Spirits on the picket lines are high. Besides the red-and-white and green-and-white signs declaring "UAW on Strike" at each



Unionists pour out of General Motors plant in Flint, Michigan, June 5.

gate, some strikers carry handmade signs. One popular placard says, "You can't trust a thief in the night," referring to what the bosses did over the Memorial Day holiday.

That weekend the company announced a shutdown of the whole Metal Fabrication Center, even for skilled tradespeople, who usually work holidays. They then brought in contractors and removed dies and tools for forming sheet-metal panels from the factory. The dies are for GM's newest truck, scheduled to begin production this month. Two days before the strike, the bosses hired a trucking company to remove racks for the

parts the dies form, but the union mobilized about 100 officials and members to block the shipment.

This is the seventh strike against a GM plant in the last year and a half. The plant stamps fenders, hoods, engine cradles, and other parts for most of GM's full-size trucks, vans, and some cars, supplying 17 assembly plants from Oshawa, Ontario, to Silao, Mexico.

The effects of the work stoppage are being felt in other facilities around the country. As of June 10, the auto giant had closed

Continued on Page 13

Washington prepares military intervention in Kosova

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Posing as defenders of the national rights of Albanians in Kosova, Washington and London have announced plans for deepening the imperialist assault against Yugosla-

**No NATO intervention!
Self-determination for
Albanians in Kosova!**

— Editorial, page 14

via — a move that foreshadows the future of other workers states in Eastern and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, and beyond.

As the regime in Belgrade has unleashed
Continued on Page 14

Socialists call active workers conference in Pittsburgh

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

PITTSBURGH — The Socialist Workers Party here and in Cleveland, together with the Pittsburgh Young Socialists (YS), have announced they are hosting an active workers conference at the Marriott City Center in downtown Pittsburgh July 11-12. The YS National Committee and the steering committees of the SWP's national trade union fractions are cohosting the gathering. The members of these steering committees will hold a meeting after the conference.

The gathering will assess the progress the Socialist Workers Party has registered, and discuss the next steps, in building branches of the party and chapters of the Young Socialists while responding to the pick up in the class struggle in the United States and other countries. Participants will discuss the growing convergence of the political work of the party's branches and union fractions. (For more information on the program, schedule, and character of the conference see the ad on page 3.)

The Young Socialists National Committee has already organized speaking tours in the area to build the conference. During one tour at the end of May by Sarah Katz, a YS National Committee member from Chicago, a student at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, met the YS. Since then he has, among other activities, been helping to sell the *Militant* at the nearby Anheuser-Busch brewery, where workers voted May 1 to reject the company's contract offer.

Through sales of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books at plant gates, socialists from Pittsburgh have met a steelworker at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Co. and a coal miner in southern West Virginia who are interested in attending the conference.

Working people in Indonesia press for more rights, relief from crisis

BY NAOMI CRAINE
AND PATRICK BROWN

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Some 25,000 striking workers marched 12 miles from

Sidoarjo, East Java, to Surabaya June 8 to press demands against their employer before the provincial legislative council. They were attacked by police and military forces

near the city border. Thirty workers and three cops were injured and a police motorcycle burned before the workers forced their way through the barricade and continued to the city center, the *Jakarta Post* reported.

The workers were demanding that the Maspion Group, a company that produces household goods, provide transportation and meal allowances.

There are almost daily reports in the media here of strikes breaking out as workers fight for some relief from the economic crisis that has engulfed this country. Many workers have been laid off or seen their real wages plunge since the financial crisis began last July. The 80 percent drop in the value of the Indonesian rupiah against the U.S. dollar has sent the prices of imports skyrocketing.

The strikes and other labor protests are an expression of the political floodgates that have opened in Indonesia since the May 21 resignation of President Suharto, as working people and others push to use the space they have been able to open for the first time since the 1965 military coup.

In the capital city, 2,500 workers walked out of a shoe factory June 8 in response to intimidation by two cops who have been employed as executives for the last seven years. The workers are accusing the factory manager and personnel manager, Maj. Gatot Budisutopo and Maj. Budyono from the National Police headquarters, of forcing workers to quit without proper compensation. "We'll continue to strike until the two police officers are dismissed from our com-

Continued on Page 4

Philadelphia strikers keep SEPTA transit shut down

BY PETE SEIDMAN

PHILADELPHIA — The 5,300 members of the Transport Workers Union Local 234 here won a round June 9 in their strike against the city government and transit authorities.

Mayor Edward Rendell and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) announced that day they

were dropping threats to resume passenger service using administrative personnel on the struck Broad Street and Market-Frankford subway lines. The TWU strike has shut down these lines as well as all other rail, trolley, and bus service in SEPTA's City Transit Division since June 1.

SEPTA's climbdown came after members
Continued on Page 13

Northwest workers plan informational pickets

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — As we go to press, members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) at Northwest Airlines are preparing to hold informational picket lines at airports around the country June 12 to protest the employer's refusal to seriously negotiate a contract.

In Los Angeles, IAM members and other unionists will be leafleting airport workers and passengers as well as organizing a 3:00 p.m. rally at the airport. In

Miami, IAM members will be leafleting at Northwest in the early morning when several Northwest flights depart. Machinists in Miami will also be leafleting at United Airlines in support of the nationwide organizing drive for customer service representatives at that airline.

Among the other airports where *Militant* worker-correspondents have reported activities for June 12 are: Atlanta, Detroit, Minneapolis, Seattle, Duluth, Minnesota, and Washington, D.C.

'The Revolution Betrayed' is just off presses — page 13

UN 'inspectors' continue provocative probes in Iraq

William Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, claimed on June 4 that the Iraqi government was "deceiving" the UN Security Council about the existence of chemical weapons in Iraq, and warned that Washington might block the lifting of sanctions against that nation. This was despite previous assertions by UN "experts" to have accounted for nearly all chemical weaponry. After the U.S.-led war threats earlier this year, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein authorized UN officials to carry out extensive inspections inside Iraq as a condition for lifting the seven-year-old sanctions imposed on that country by imperialist governments.

Iraqi foreign minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf responded that UN officials "keep insisting on the same 'nonstarter' approach of casting doubts, building their understanding on assumptions, suspicions, and not on facts and figures."

Chief "inspector" Richard Butler will travel to Iraq June 13-14 to dictate further measures that Baghdad must accept before the sanctions are removed. Richardson reiterated Washington's policy that Iraq should be "contained." An armada of 20,000 U.S. troops, 15 warships, and an aircraft carrier remains in the Arab-Persian Gulf.

Aeroméxico strikers win

One thousand flight attendants at Aeroméxico won a contract after striking in early June, despite government intervention. The 1,000 flight attendants were demanding the hiring of more workers, wage improvements, and pensions, which 97 percent of the workers did not have. Pleading poverty, Aeroméxico officials broke off negotiations, refusing to discuss these demands.

The Mexican government took over the airline June 1 and threatened to deploy soldiers to replace the flight attendants on the company's 300 daily flights. Some workers went ahead with the walkout, while most others wore pins explaining they were working under protest. On June 6 the employer gave in. The workers, whose union is affiliated to the National Workers Union federation, won a retirement plan and an 18 percent wage increase. It was the first na-

Peasants in drought-stricken northeast Brazil seize food



Landless peasant challenges cop May 27 as protesters seize food truck in Ouricuri, northeastern Brazil, which has been devastated by drought. Thousands of working farmers there have organized seizures of food from stores and cargo shipments. Ten million people in eight Brazilian states are affected by the drought.

tionwide strike by one of the unions belonging to the new labor federation, founded last year.

U.S. gov't steps up military 'antidrug' operation in Colombia

The Clinton administration currently spends about \$100 million dollars a year in Colombia ostensibly to fight drug traffickers. But under this cover Washington is stepping up its military intervention against the guerrilla movement in that country. U.S. generals have launched an effort to reorganize the Colombian army. Unnamed senior U.S. officials admitted to the *New York Times* that Washington is providing military training, sophisticated helicopters and other equipment, and is creating an intelligence center run by U.S. officials in Colombia.

U.S. intervention occurs at a time of labor skirmishes in Colombia. Oil workers in Barrancabermeja, for example, went on

strike May 18.

Moscow tries to collect taxes

Trying to reassure International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials, Russian president Boris Yeltsin appointed Boris Fyodorov to head Russia's tax collection service. The IMF has suspended installments of its \$9.2 billion loan package to Russia three times in the past two years over the demand that Moscow increase tax collection. Fyodorov, former finance minister and World Bank representative for Moscow, has pushed for "market reforms" for the past half decade, cutting government subsidies to industries, and other measures.

His first week, Fyodorov fired top tax collectors and announced plans to investigate 1,000 wealthy celebrities. Fyodorov advocates jailing those who refuse to pay taxes and is looking to implement a tax code. Big-business commentators complain that most Russians today don't have a "tax culture" and simply refuse to pay taxes.

U.S. gov't, EU conflict over trade

Washington has threatened to retaliate against a European Union move to subsidize barley exports to the United States by providing subsidies on U.S. barley exports to Algeria, Cyprus, and Norway. U.S. agriculture secretary Dan Glickman insisted the move was made not to start "any kind of global trade war" but to "indicate the U.S. will respond to the use of inappropriate subsidies."

European Union farm commissioner Franz Fischler defended the EU subsidy saying U.S. barley is priced too high. U.S. sec-

retary of state Madeleine Albright sent a letter to European Commission president Jacques Santer warning that Washington would respond in an "appropriate" fashion.

Botha claims apartheid 'bad apples' killed black S. Africans

Former president P.W. Botha, in a contempt trial organized by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, claimed a few "bad apples" were responsible for the killings of thousands of black activists under the apartheid state. Botha is on trial for refusing to appear before the commission charged with investigating some of the brutal acts that took place under apartheid. "No, no. We cannot say that these are bad apples," retorted Truth Commission Chairperson Desmond Tutu. "They are people who were sitting on the State Security Council." A former national police commissioner and Eugene de Kock, commander of a notorious police death squad, testified to receiving orders to "eliminate" and "neutralize" antiapartheid activists. Botha, who claims no direct knowledge of the killings, said those commands were meant to merely arrest the activists.

Dock workers in S. Africa strike

South African shipping bosses have been hit by a strike of 3,700 dock workers that began in late May. The Technical Workers' Union, Salstaff, and the Employees' Union of South Africa are demanding that Portnet maintain monthly bonus payments of about \$100. The company offered a profit-sharing scheme, which unionists rejected. Ports in Durban, Saldanha, Richards Bay, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Cape Town have been affected. The strike's impact is greater because Portnet was just recovering from a weather-related two-week shutdown. Slowdowns had been in effect since early April.

While Portnet bosses claim "all ports are operating normally" with no customer complaints, Unicorn Liner executive Liam McKenzie reported docking delays of up to 150 hours. Productivity at Durban harbor fell about 50 percent, and dozens of ships were waiting to be unloaded outside Cape Town harbor.

900,000 more thrown off welfare

U.S. president William Clinton, at a White House gathering to celebrate the one-year anniversary of his "Welfare to Work Partnership," boasted his administration threw 900,000 people off public assistance since last September. Some 3.3 million people have been axed from the welfare rolls since Clinton, with bipartisan backing, signed the "welfare reform" law in August 1996. In 1997, according to the U.S. president's figures, only 135,000 former welfare recipients were hired under his \$3 billion "Partnership" program and only 94,500 of them had full-time jobs with health benefits.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

No NATO intervention in Kosova!

As working people in Kosova resist efforts by the Serb regime to crush the independence struggle, Washington is probing further military intervention in the region. The 'Militant' tells the truth about the conflicts in Yugoslavia and why working people should oppose imperialist occupation in the Balkans. Don't miss a single issue!



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The Militant

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Active Workers Conference ❖ Pittsburgh, July 11-12

Main Presentations

Sea change in working-class politics

JACK BARNES

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY NATIONAL SECRETARY

- Exhaustion of bosses' ability to demoralize workers and hold off defensive action by the working class
- A crisis of the working-class vanguard is precipitated worldwide
- The growing political convergence of party branch and trade union fraction work
- Facing the party's retreat and retaking the living knowledge and practice of Marxism
- Producing books and pamphlets as a combined responsibility of branches, fractions, volunteers, and the apparatus — The 'turtle' fights back
- Preparing the party's national convention by strengthening our continuity: 60th anniversary of founding of SWP, 70th anniversary of the *Militant* and Pathfinder Press, and 80th anniversary of the communist movement in North America
- From Cuba to the U.S., communist vanguard regardless of size faces challenge of sharply changed situation: lessons from interviews with generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and from the life of Manuel Piñeiro.

Discuss plans for year-end anniversary convention of the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco

Structuring party branches and union fractions through mass work

A PANEL OF WORKER-BOLSHEVIKS

LESSONS OF COMMUNIST WORK FROM MCDONALD'S TO CASE CORP., FROM FLINT STRIKE TO THE PHILADELPHIA TRANSIT WORKERS WALKOUT, FROM DENMARK TO AUSTRALIA

NORTON SANDLER, PANEL MODERATOR

Member, International Association of Machinists; San Francisco

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

TOM ALTER

Member, United Food and Commercial Workers; Des Moines, Iowa

DIANA NEWBERRY

Organizer of SWP's work in the coalfields; Pittsburgh

ANNA OLSON

Member, Transport Workers Union; Stockholm, Sweden

GAETAN WHISTON

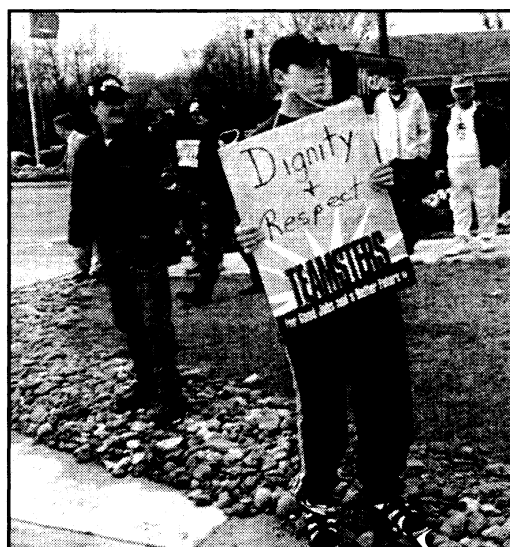
Member, United Steelworkers of America; Minneapolis

Puerto Rico: New rise of independence struggle as world imperialism weakens

VERÓNICA POSES

YOUNG SOCIALISTS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

- The uniqueness of the SWP's 60-year-long record placing support for Puerto Rican independence at the center of strategy for the coming American socialist revolution
- Cuba's socialist revolution: class litmus test among pro-independence forces
- Imperialist decline opens door to resurgence of national liberation struggles from Ireland to Quebec
- Build the July 25 actions! Independence for Puerto Rico! Free the political prisoners!



Workers strike McDonald's in Macedonia, Ohio, April 12.

CONFERENCE DISPLAYS

■
**Retaking Marxism:
Organizing branch socialist
summer schools**

■
**The reorganization of labor in the
party print shop and the
international volunteer brigade
digitizing Pathfinder books**

*'The Revolution Betrayed' comes off
presses: the first joint product of
volunteers and the print shop*

*First reduction in the print shop's size
and department structure*

*Floor plan for installation of
computer-to-plate technology and
photos of new equipment*

*Plans for launching international
volunteer reconstruction brigade
coming out of conference*

■
**Puerto Rico,
the Socialist Workers Party,
and the fight for independence**

CONFERENCE SITE

Marriott City Center

112 Washington Place, Pittsburgh, PA

**For transportation, hotel, and other
information call:**

Cleveland SWP

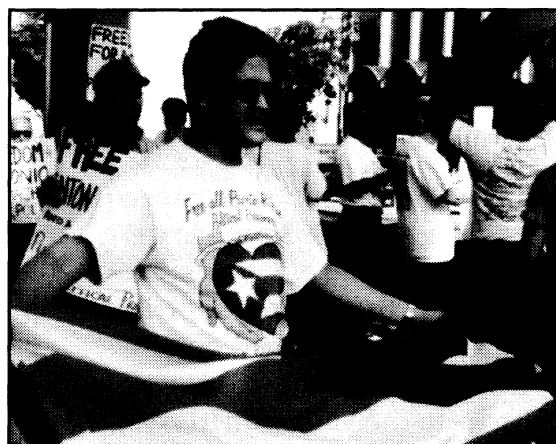
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Pittsburgh SWP

(412) 381-9785

YS National Committee

(773) 772-0551



Demonstrators in Miami demand release of Antonio Camacho and other Puerto Rican political prisoners, May 7.

Schedule

Saturday, July 11

- 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. Registration
- 11:00 – 12:00 p.m. Welcome reception / Lunch
- 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. Talk on Puerto Rico and discussion
- 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. Panel discussion (1st session)
- 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Dinner
- 7:30 – 11:30 p.m. Talk on Sea Change in Working-Class Politics and discussion

LAUNCHING OF CAPITAL FUND TO UPGRADE PRINTING EQUIPMENT

- 12:00 – 1:30 a.m. Party

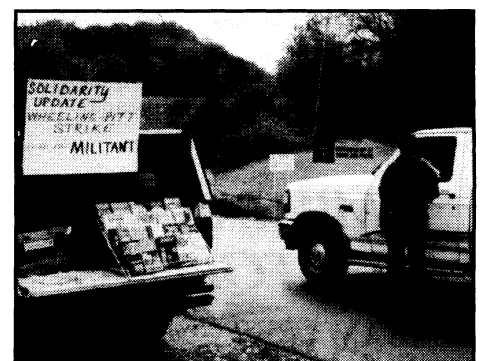
Sunday, July 12

- 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. Panel discussion (2nd session)
- 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. Summary of conference

- 4:30 p.m. – Meeting of the members of the SWP's national trade union fraction steering committees

Monday-Tuesday, July 13-14

Meeting of the SWP's National Committee



Selling *Militant* outside Consol Loveridge Mine portal near Morgantown, West Virginia, May 1997.

HOSTS

Pittsburgh Socialist Workers Party,
Cleveland Socialist Workers Party,
Pittsburgh Young Socialists,
Young Socialists National Committee,
SWP National Trade Union
Fraction Steering Committees



Union leader Mukhtar Pakpahan (left) waves from prison just before his release on May 25, following resignation of Suharto, Indonesia's former president. Pakpahan has called for labor demonstrations to demand immediate elections, as the weight of trade unions in protest actions in Indonesia today begins to grow.

Indonesia: struggles rise

Continued from front page

pany," Pratigto, the workers' representative, told the *Jakarta Post*. The workers are also demanding wage bonuses and adequate safety equipment.

According to students in the city of Bandung, between 1,000 and 2,000 textile workers at the Kasta factory in the nearby town of Ujungberung held a one-day strike June 6. Like the Maspion workers, they are demanding the company pay for their meals and transportation.

The same day, *Militant* reporters met a number of bus workers who had organized a strike against the state-owned PPD bus company three days earlier to win an increase in their take-home pay, which often falls below the Jakarta minimum wage. They also protested the fact that money deducted from their pay for pensions, health insurance, and social security had not been accumulated.

Through the strike and a mass rally at the company's head office on June 3, the workers forced the Minister of Transportation to agree that PPD would pay them the money owed. Workers told the *Militant* that if they had taken such action during Suharto's rule they would have faced abductions by the military.

Pickup in strikes

Laid-off workers are also mounting protests. On June 3, several hundred Wal-Mart workers protested their dismissal with a rally here at the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation, which provides legal representation. Wearing Wal-Mart T-shirts sporting the slogan "Our people make the difference," the workers cheered as speakers announced the support of students from the University of Indonesia.

These struggles follow a nearly year-long lull in work stoppages, according to Teten Masduki, head of the labor division of the Legal Aid Foundation. While accurate figures are hard to come by, he estimated the number of strikes in Indonesia averaged 13 per year in the mid- to late 1980s. Then, from 1990 to 1995, the number of work stoppages grew every year. There were more than 1,000 strikes in 1995, and 900 the following year. This momentum ground to a halt after June 1997, when the financial crisis sweeping Asia hit Indonesia. Workers tried to adjust to the devastating impact of "the crisis," as everyone here refers to the economic collapse, and the widespread layoffs it triggered.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Eyewitness Report: Workers in Denmark Discuss Lessons of General Strike. Fri., June 19, Program: 7:30 p.m., Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 111 21st St. South. Donation: \$5/6. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

U.S. Hands Off Yugoslavia and Kosovo! Fri., June 19, 7:30 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. (at Division on CTA Blue Line). Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1870.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

India, Pakistan, and the Crisis in South Asia. Speaker: Gaetan Whiston, a leader of the Young Socialists, and member of the United Steelworkers of America. Fri., June 19, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. (at Hwy. 280). Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

How Indonesian Students and Workers Broke the Rules by Fighting Suharto and the IMF's Demands. Speakers: Valerie Kilmer, local activist; representative of East-Timor Action Network; and Candace Wagner, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 19, 7:30 p.m.

What Next for Ireland After the Approval of the "Good Friday Agreement?" Panel discussion. Fri., June 27, 7:30 p.m.

Both events to be held at 1906 South Street (at 19th). Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Israel: 50 Years of Palestinian Resistance to the Zionist State. Speaker: Nathan Simms, Young Socialists. Fri., June 19, 7 p.m. 199 High Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

The economic catastrophe spurred the wave of student protests that began a few months ago. At first the students were mostly protesting the government's austerity measures, which raised the price of many staples. The regime imposed these as a condition for receiving loans from the International Monetary Fund. The protests soon took on an explicitly antigovernment character, with students demanding that Suharto step down.

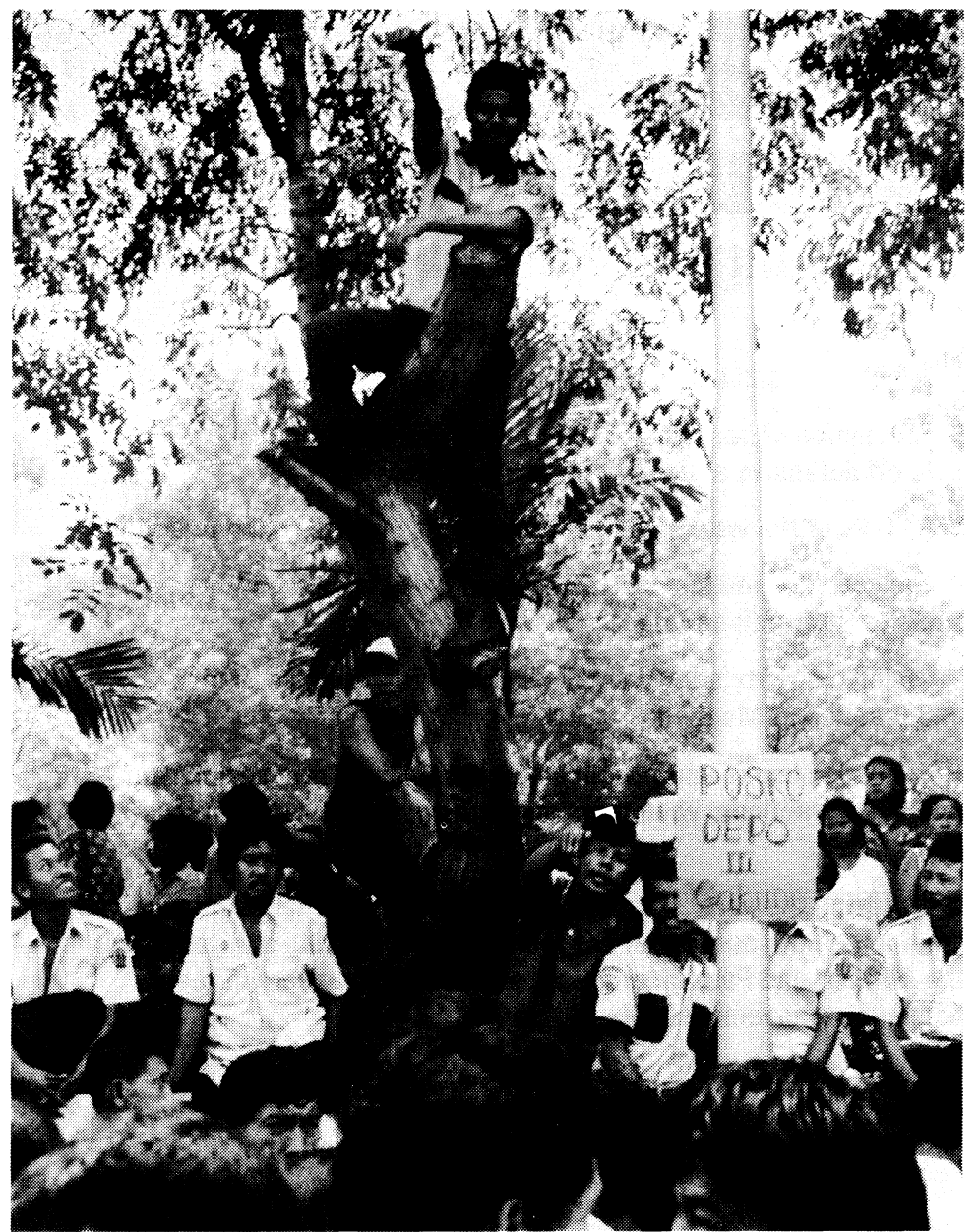
May 12 marked a turning point. Police and military forces attacked a student protest just outside the walls of Trisakti University in Jakarta that day, fatally shooting four students. This was the spark that ignited the deepening social tensions into riots in the capital May 13-15, as well as in Solo, Surabaya, Medan, and other urban centers.

Thousands of students began an occupation of the House of Representatives May 18 demanding Suharto resign, and won support from workers and farmers who heard about the action. Mass demonstrations took place in Yogyakarta, Bandung, and other cities May 20, the holiday marking the start of the Indonesian struggle for independence from Dutch colonial rule 90 years ago.

In face of this situation, Washington and a growing list of ruling-class figures in Indonesia, including prominent military officers, began to call for Suharto to step aside. He did so May 21, and vice president B.J. Habibie, a longtime supporter of Suharto, took office as president.

'New Order' based on workers' defeat

Suharto, an army general, came to power based on one of history's worst defeats for the workers movement internationally. In October 1965, military officers launched a crackdown and reactionary mobilizations against the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) and other workers organizations. Politically disarmed by the Stalinist misleadership of the PKI, more than 500,000 workers and peasants were massacred over



Striking bus drivers rally in Jakarta in early June

the following months.

Suharto called his regime the "New Order." The only legal political organizations were the ruling Golkar and two opposition parties that never ran candidates against Suharto. Golkar functions not as a political

party but as an umbrella group comprising various social organizations, including the only legal organizations of workers and farmers. Civil servants—who include a wide range of workers—were often pressured to

Continued on Page 14

How Indonesian textile workers organized union to fight for shorter hours and higher pay

BY NAOMI CRAINE

MAJALAYA, Indonesia — Before 1996 the 500 workers at the P.T. Tribakti textile factory here were earning less than the minimum wage, working 12-hour shifts without a break. Through a fight that lasted more than a year, including a three-day strike, they organized a union and won concessions from the boss, who is a local landlord. Nearly a year later, however, the company closed, citing the impact of the economic crisis that is gripping Indonesia.

"The first time we met [in 1995] it was only six people. We have had weekly discussions since then," including after the factory closed, said Oman, the chairman of the union at Tribakti.

Majalaya is an industrial district just south of Bandung, the third-largest city in Indonesia. It is the site of dozens of textile plants, many of them built since 1990, which employed some 50,000 workers before the financial crisis began in mid-1997. About 20,000 have been laid off since.

Many of the workers at the textile mills and other factories here are from this area.

Help fund 'Militant' reporting trip to Indonesia

The *Militant* sent a reporting team — editor Naomi Craine, Bob Aiken from Sydney, Australia, and Patrick Brown from Auckland, New Zealand — to Indonesia to get eyewitness coverage of the class struggle unfolding there. Funds are needed to finance this trip. Send your contribution, earmarked for the reporting trip, to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

Clusters of workers' homes are nestled among the rice paddies that surround the city. Others migrated from various parts of the country to find work and rent apartments in town, often three or more workers to a room. Some of those who are laid off from the factories find jobs as agricultural laborers, when there is work available.

Meeting with *Militant* reporters in his house June 2, Oman related the story of the workers' struggle at Tribakti.

When the organizing efforts began, he and other workers in the sarong factory were getting paid 4,500 rupiahs for a 12-hour shift — about \$2 at that time. Holiday pay was 2,500 rupiahs, and maternity benefits were 45,000 rupiahs. Most other social benefits did not exist.

Most workers in Indonesia are formally members of the SPSI (All-Indonesia Workers Union), part of the ruling Golkar organization set up by President Suharto. This is a union in name only, however, and other unions were illegal under the Suharto regime. On Feb. 3, 1996, a group of workers from the Tribakti factory went to the SPSI to try to improve their situation. The result was only a 2.6 percent raise in wages, and no action to improve the social conditions.

Since this was clearly a dead end, the workers next tried the local Manpower office, the government ministry that supposedly exists to safeguard workers' rights. "We went to that office about 10 times, starting May 3, 1996," Oman said. "Manpower just sent a letter to the factory inquiring why conditions were so bad." The boss didn't respond, and the local Manpower office finally referred the case to the district level.

On July 16, a group of 60 workers from the factory went to the provincial Manpower office in Bandung to press their case. The government agency told the owner he should pay the minimum wage, "but it was just a document," said Oman. So 45 workers from the plant went to the West Java provincial assembly. The head of social conditions there said it wasn't the responsibility of that office, and referred them to the labor dispute office.

A meeting with the company was finally

scheduled for Sept. 2, 1996, but the boss postponed it. "So we organized a strike from September 3 to 5," Oman explained.

Regime acts against strike

"The local military acted against the strike, and so did the intelligence agency in Bandung. Before the strike they tried to intimidate leaders of the fight." Officials from Manpower and the SPSI also went to the factory, trying to defuse the strike. The company finally met with workers September 6, but still wouldn't resolve the workers' demands.

The fight continued for another four months, which included a press conference organized with the Legal Aid Institute in Bandung and a demonstration by the Tribakti workers at the West Java provincial assembly. Sixty-five workers then traveled to Jakarta in January 1997 to bring their demands to the Manpower office there. Finally the boss entered real negotiations over wages and social benefits in April. An agreement was finalized in May of that year recognizing the union at Tribakti. It was the only plant in Majalaya to have a recognized union, outside of the SPSI.

After the strike, workers at Tribakti won a wage of 5,250 rupiahs for a seven-hour workday — still very low, but a big improvement over the earlier conditions. This was part of an overall change in the textile industry in Majalaya to seven-hour shifts instead of 12 hours, at the urging of the Ministry of Manpower, said Saut Christianos Manalu, who works at the Legal Aid Institute in Bandung. "When the workers started organizing, Manpower had to do something" to try to head things off, he said.

Textile workers have been hit hard by the economic crisis, and the organizing efforts and spontaneous walkouts that had become common in Majalaya have slowed down compared to the previous period. Workers are finding ways to keep in touch, however. Since the Tribakti factory closed, the "workers continue to meet every week, organized around a traditional music group," Oman said.

'The Cuban people are armed, ready to defend the revolution'

Interview with Division General Néstor López Cuba

Div. Gen. Néstor López Cuba was born sixty years ago into a peasant family in eastern Cuba. As a young man he worked on his family's farm and as a sugarcane cutter. In 1957 he joined the July 26 Movement, which was leading the struggle in Cuba to bring down the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. In May 1958 López Cuba became a member of the Rebel Army and fought in the revolutionary war that culminated in the triumphant popular uprising and general strike of January 1959.

López Cuba commanded the tank battalion of the Cuban army at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. In the 1970s he carried out internationalist missions in Syria and Angola, and he headed the Cuban military mission in Nicaragua in the 1980s. He is currently responsible for political education in the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) of Cuba.

The following interview with López Cuba was conducted in Havana, Cuba, on October 20, 1997, by Jack Barnes, Mary-Alice Waters, and Martín Koppel. Barnes and Waters were in Havana to participate in the October 21-23 international workshop on "Socialism as the 21st Century Approaches," sponsored by the Communist Party of Cuba, and to cover that conference for the *Militant* and the Spanish-language monthly magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*. Barnes is national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, and Waters is editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. Koppel is editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

In coming issues, the *Militant* will publish interviews they conducted with two other veteran revolutionaries and high-ranking officers of the FAR, Div. Gen. Enrique Carreras and Brig. Gen. José Ramón Fernández.

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Waters: We would like to begin by asking you about the book *Secretos de generales* (*Secrets of Generals*) published here in Cuba earlier this year.¹ How did this book come about, and how are you using it?

The experience of the Rebel Army and the formation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces — their place in the history and political course of the Cuban revolution — are very important to young workers, students, and soldiers in the United States today who are trying to figure out how to fight effectively against imperialism. Among the young people being won to the communist movement, the



Division General Néstor López Cuba

Militant/Martín Koppel

fighters of the Rebel Army are heroes. They know about men and women like Vaquerito,² and draw inspiration from such examples. "We want to be the same type of revolutionaries," they say.

So the interviews in this book are important to us in the United States, and we'd like to get your comments on it.

López Cuba: Since the first years after the revolution's triumph, our leaders, the commander in chief [Fidel Castro] and the minister [of the armed forces, Raúl Castro], have said that we were capable of making history but not of writing it.

Writing was quite difficult for those of us in the Rebel Army, since almost all of us were peasants and workers, with a low cultural level. Even if we had wanted to devote ourselves to writing history during the first years of the revolution, I believe it would have been impossible, given our lack of skills.

What's more, since the very first days of the revolution we faced constant threats. We had to remain by our tanks, by our artillery, training and preparing ourselves. Because we knew an attack was imminent. That's another very powerful reason.

During those early years, Che wrote a little about the

² The nickname of Roberto Rodríguez, head of the "Suicide Squad" in the Rebel Army column led by Ernesto Che Guevara. He was killed December 30, 1958, in the battle of Santa Clara. For Guevara's tribute to Rodríguez, see *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58*, published by Pathfinder, pp. 150-51, 337.

guerrilla, about the experience of the guerrillas. He wrote *Socialism and Man in Cuba*. Some diaries, such as those by Almeida and Che and Raúl, had been filed away somewhere and not released publicly; they began to be published sometime after the twentieth anniversary, and around the thirtieth anniversary of the *Granma* landing.³

The first years were difficult. We had no arms. We tried to get them from capitalist countries, but they sabotaged our efforts to do so. Later, at the end of 1960, arms began to arrive from the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. We continued the difficult task of training ourselves, of preparing ourselves, because everything pointed to an imminent attack.

In April 1961 the first invasion took place.⁴ Of course, there had been acts of sabotage even before that, in 1959 and 1960. Our sugar mills and plantations had been bombed. The freighter *La Coubre* was blown up, with its shipment of arms we had purchased from Belgium at enormous effort, collecting funds from the people for anti-aircraft weapons.⁵

All this, I believe, made it impossible for the protagonists of that early chapter in the struggle of the Rebel Army to write things down.

Later our country began to strengthen itself defensively. The relations we had with the socialist camp were a big help in improving our economy a bit. We were training ourselves, studying, raising our skill level. We now faced a different situation.

Our internationalist missions began, and they were very complex during the first years. Beginning in 1963 we aided Algeria, and then came our support to some of the liberation movements in Africa. The missions became a little more massive in Syria in 1973, in Angola in 1975, in Ethiopia in 1977.⁶

Through the international assistance we were providing other nations, we were accumulating many years of military training, of schooling. We were raising our cultural level and, of course, our combat experience. And that's leaving aside our own guerrilla experience of 1957

³ Guevara's writings on the revolutionary war are contained in *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58*. *Socialism and Man in Cuba* is available as a pamphlet from Pathfinder. Juan Almeida and Raúl Castro were commanders of the Rebel Army and are central leaders of the revolution today; Castro is minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces; Almeida is a vice president of the Council of State. Several volumes of Almeida's memoirs have been published since the mid-1980s. Excerpts from the diaries of Guevara and Raúl Castro were first published in the late 1980s and have been reissued in *La conquista de la esperanza* (Havana: Casa Editora Abril, 1996).

The *Granma* was the yacht used by eighty-two revolutionary fighters, including Fidel Castro, Raúl Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Juan Almeida to sail from Mexico to Cuba to initiate the revolutionary war against the U.S.-backed regime of Fulgencio Batista. The expeditionaries landed in southeast Cuba on December 2, 1956.

⁴ On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The mercenaries, organized and financed by Washington, aimed to declare a provisional government to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. The invaders, however, were defeated within seventy-two hours by Cuba's militia and its Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the name Cubans use to designate the battle.

⁵ *La Coubre*, a French ship carrying Belgian arms, exploded in Havana harbor on March 4, 1960, under mysterious circumstances, killing eighty-one people.

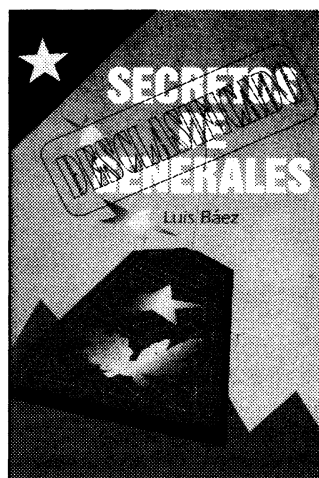
⁶ In 1963 Cuban troops went to Algeria, at the request of the revolutionary government of Ahmed Ben Bella, to combat an imperialist-inspired invasion of that country by Morocco. In 1965 Cuban volunteers led by Che Guevara fought alongside forces in the Congo against Belgian- and U.S.-backed mercenaries — one of numerous such operations to aid African liberation movements over the years. Cuban volunteers went to Syria in 1973, to help that country's forces repel aggression by the Israeli regime. In 1975 Cuban forces were sent to Angola, at the request of the newly independent government there, to defend that country against a South African invasion; they remained there until 1991. In late 1977 and early 1978 Cuban troops were sent to Ethiopia, at the request of its government, to help that country's forces beat back a U.S.-supported invasion by Somalia.

Available soon from Pathfinder

Secretos de generales (Secrets of Generals)

By LUIS BÁEZ

In this collection of 41 interviews, top officers of Cuba's armed forces tell how they joined the revolutionary movement to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencia Batista in the 1950s and discuss their experiences around the world spanning several decades as they fought alongside national liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This "is not a textbook on the past but living history," explains Revolutionary Armed Forces Minister Raúl Castro in the preface, a "treasure of moral values and accumulated combat experience." In Spanish.



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and 1958.

Our Rebel Army had by now become a more modern armed force — more capable, better trained, with an educated cadre.

Beginning many years ago the journalist Luis Báez — who has had some experience in doing interviews in *Los que se quedaron* [Those who stayed]⁷ — started insisting that something had to be written about our armed forces. There were years of attempts, but no results. So that's where the idea came from. Báez raised this with Almeida in 1994 and Almeida consulted Raúl. Raúl liked the idea, because he had always thought we should write down our experiences.

Previously there had been no interviews with generals except about particular historical dates and events. Then the anniversary of Girón came around, and there were interviews about the individual experiences each of us had at Girón. And that's when the book was authorized — to collect together interviews with a group of generals.

Preparing this book was not an easy task, of course. Because when you read it, if you have read it, you'll see that the book contains things our people themselves didn't know about, and that were completely new for the rest of the world. It contains things that had been kept on a need-to-know basis, held in the strictest secrecy.

The minister was asked whether the interviews could be completely open. Would we be able to tell all? And he said yes, there would be no restrictions. Some interviews are a little longer than others, more extensive, but they were all cut down a little. This is how *Secretos de generales* came about.

The book, of course, does not include all the generals; we have ninety or a hundred generals, and there are interviews with only forty-one of us in the book. In addition, there is a group of combatants who were commanders of the Rebel Army, heads of columns in the Sierra.⁸ An effort is now being made to collect together interviews with them, so that none of their experiences are lost. Many of these compañeros are now retired, but they have rich experiences to tell about, since they played a decisive role in the fight against the Batista tyranny.

This is the origin of *Secretos de generales*. And that is why it has had such an impact on the population. Because there are things in the book that I and other compañeros tell about that not even our families, not even our wives or children, knew beforehand. This has been very valu-

⁷ Báez's book, published by Editora Política in 1993, is a collection of interviews with Cubans already prominent in 1959 who remained in Cuba following the revolutionary victory that year.

⁸ The Sierra Maestra mountains of eastern Cuba served as the base of the Rebel Army during its 1956-58 revolutionary war against the Batista regime.



Cuban militia members mobilize to defend the revolution during the October 1962 missile crisis. Slogans on truck read "We stand firmly with Fidel" and "No more tolerance of shoddy work," a sign produced by the Ministry of Domestic Trade of the revolutionary government.

able for the Cuban people, as well as for our friends abroad, who have found out many things from the book for the first time. That is what makes *Secretos de generales* so interesting, I believe.

October 1962 'missile crisis'

Barnes: As you know, the way the history of the 1962 October Crisis is written in the United States, [U.S. president John] Kennedy and [Soviet premier Nikita] Khrushchev saved the world from nuclear holocaust. But we have always told people that the truth lies elsewhere. It was the Cuban people and the Revolutionary Armed Forces that saved the world.⁹

Kennedy fully intended to mount an invasion of Cuba in October 1962, as he had been planning to do for more than a year. Previously classified documents released in the past few years, however, show that his hand was stayed when the Pentagon informed him that he could expect an estimated 18,000 U.S. troop casualties just during the first ten days of an invasion. The Cuban people were armed

⁹ In the face of escalating preparations by Washington for an invasion of Cuba in the spring and summer of 1962, the Cuban government signed a mutual defense agreement with the Soviet Union. In October 1962 President Kennedy demanded removal of Soviet nuclear missiles installed in Cuba following the signing of that pact. Washington ordered a naval blockade of Cuba, stepped up its preparations to invade, and placed U.S. armed forces on nuclear alert. Cuban workers and farmers mobilized in the millions to defend the revolution. Following an exchange of communications between Washington and Moscow, Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, without consulting the Cuban government, announced his decision to remove the missiles on October 28.

and mobilized on a massive scale, Kennedy was told by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And the Cuban army was large for a small country, and, together with the militias, very combat-ready.

Kennedy feared the domestic political consequences as a flood of body bags began coming home. So that's when he started probing Khrushchev for a deal.

Just two nights ago, Mary-Alice and I spoke at a public meeting in Chicago that was a send-off for this trip to Cuba. There were over a hundred workers and youth in attendance, and we told them that among other things we would be interviewing several generals of the FAR while we were here. And we promised we would pass along to you our conviction, as revolutionists who work and fight in the United States, that the Cuban people and their armed forces saved the world, because you were ready to fight.

So we'd like to ask you about where you were during the October Crisis and your memory

of the response by workers and farmers, in an out of uniform, during those days.

López Cuba: It's very true, as you say, that the armed forces, and the people of Cuba above all, played a decisive role in preventing a nuclear holocaust. Because it was understood in Washington that the people would fight and the invasion would be costly. This has been the attitude of

"In the October Crisis the Cuban people played a decisive role in preventing a nuclear holocaust. Washington knew an invasion would be costly."

our people from the triumph of the revolution until today, I believe. Had this consciousness not existed, they would have invaded us.

At the time of Girón, there is no question that [former U.S. president Dwight] Eisenhower had bequeathed the mercenary brigades to Kennedy, and Kennedy had to support them in the invasion. The one decision Kennedy made on his own was not to land the U.S. Marines behind the mercenaries. Had Eisenhower been in power, we believe, things would have been different; they would have sent in the marines. But Kennedy had just become president, and I think this made him stop and think a bit.

The North Americans have presented their version of the October Crisis. The Russians have told theirs. Cuba has issued important statements and published documents, above all during the conference held in Havana on the thirtieth anniversary of the crisis, attended by Fidel and McNamara,¹⁰ but we have not yet said the final word.

I believe that much remains to be told about the events of the October Crisis, about the role played by Fidel, the leadership of the revolution, our people, and the armed forces.

Of course, the fact that many documents have now been declassified in the United States and Russia adds new elements that make our position much clearer.

In any case, leaving aside the decisions taken by both the U.S. and Soviet governments — both of them nuclear powers — I believe the stance and position of the Cuban people and its armed forces in defending Cuba during the crisis played a decisive role. That factor carried a lot of weight in the decisions made by both governments, especially the United States government.

At military academy in Russia

Now, let me turn to your question about what I was doing during the October Crisis. After Girón I went to the Soviet Union to take my first study course as a tank operator. That's where I was when the October Crisis hit. So I was not one of the protagonists in those events.

¹⁰ A conference on the October 1962 "missile crisis" was held in Havana on January 9-12, 1992, involving contemporary participants in those events from the Cuban, U.S., and Soviet governments. Major portions of the transcripts of that conference are published in the book, *Cuba on the Brink: Castro, the Missile Crisis, and the Soviet Collapse*, edited by James Blight, Bruce Allyn, and David Welch (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993). Robert McNamara was secretary of defense in the Kennedy administration during the October Crisis.



"Many cadres and leaders of the revolution received their fundamental political education in the guerrilla in the mountains." Above, members of the Rebel Army at the Caballete de Casa school for recruits in the Escambray mountains during Cuba's revolutionary war, December 1958.

Barnes: Perhaps you can tell us what the atmosphere was like among the Cubans who were in Russia during the crisis? And among those in the Russian military who were training you?

López Cuba: Well, information began to arrive immediately. Those of us at the military academy were told that the instructions from Cuba were for us to remain calm, that there were sufficient forces there to solve the problem.

But we planned to hijack a plane from the Moscow airport and return to Cuba. This coincided with a visit by Che to Africa, so our leaders sent him to Moscow to meet with us and calm us down, since they knew we were prepared to return to Cuba at all costs. We were ready to head to the airport and seize a plane by force, militarily. We were going to steal the guns from the storerooms at the school. But we had it all planned, because we knew we were not going to be allowed to leave otherwise.

That was the situation. But there was something else. We had already spent eight months at the academy, and were well liked by the teachers and personnel, who were also closely following the situation in Cuba. So we had volunteers to come join us in the expedition!

I didn't include this anecdote in *Secretos de generales*, but that's what happened. We came up with a plot to figure out how we were going to return to Cuba, no matter what.

The Soviet people — our teachers, the common people — showed a great deal of solidarity with us. They knew about the unilateral decisions taken by the Khrushchev government and were against them. They also knew about Fidel's declaration that the moral missiles we possessed in Cuba were more powerful than the nuclear missiles. All these speeches reached the Soviet people.

Protests in the United States

Waters: That's very useful to learn about. During those same days in October 1962, we were organizing demonstrations in the United States. Jack and I were both university students at that time, in different cities.

López Cuba: You were organizing support activities?

Waters: Yes. To demand "U.S. Hands Off Cuba!" "U.S. Out of Guantánamo!" "Stop the Invasion!"

Barnes: Communists in the United States had had no contact with revolutionists in Cuba when the crisis began, of course. But we supported the Cuban revolution, wholeheartedly. Some revolutionary-minded young people in the U.S., including myself, were actually won to communism in Cuba. I spent several months here in Cuba in the summer of 1960. I recall asking a Cuban compañero I had come to trust whether he thought I should stay in Cuba or go back to the United States. I wanted to stay, because we all knew the invasion was coming.

"Go back to the United States," he told me, "and make a revolution there."

I decided he was right. And I've never gone back on that agreement.

During the October Crisis there were a few older socialists in the United States who had been worn down by the retreat of the labor movement and the McCarthyite witch-hunt during the 1950s; they held the view that there was nothing much anyone could do. "Either the Russians and the Americans will go to war or they won't," they said. "It's too late to demonstrate; too late to go onto the streets."

We responded, "Well, all we can do is fight. Washington has to know they will pay a price if they go to war against Cuba."

The big majority in the communist movement in the U.S. — young or old — responded as we did. We knew the Cuban people were ready to fight, and we were deter-

mined to fight alongside them. Understanding that facing those who are ready to fight like in Cuba is what holds off the imperialists is the most important lesson for young revolutionists to learn. Otherwise they start believing that all of history is negotiated deals by big governments.

López Cuba: What you say is very important because popular pressure in the United States is what forced the U.S. government to pull its troops out of Vietnam.

The Cuban revolution today remains on a firm footing. At the same time, the U.S. government knows that the progressive people of the United States, the working people, will take to the streets to stop an attack on Cuba, as they did during Vietnam. There is solidarity with Cuba around the world, as well, and this too has acted as a brake on Washington.

Of course, we continue to be under blockade. During the October Crisis it was a military blockade, but the economic blockade is just as cruel and violent. We will overcome this one too.

Revolution in Nicaragua

Waters: In *Secretos de generales* you talk about your experiences in Nicaragua as head of Cuba's military advisors to the Sandinista government. You explain there that it takes a high level of leadership to be able to advise and



Militant
Picket line in New York in October 1962 against U.S. government's war moves during Cuban missile crisis. Socialists in the United States knew the Cuban people were ready to defend themselves against imperialist attack and responded by helping initiate protests such as this one.

ary-minded workers and youth in Cuba. So it would be useful for us if you could say a few words about your experiences in Nicaragua, and about the differences between serving as an advisor there and commanding your own forces here in Cuba.

López Cuba: That is a complex question. As you noted, I made an attempt in *Secretos de generales* to give a little

"Nicaragua needed an army capable of eliminating the irregular forces they confronted. An irregular struggle had to be fought with irregular forces, with volunteers."

provide aid, even when not everything is being done the way you would do it. That it is harder to act ...

López Cuba: ... as an adviser than to be a combatant. Yes, that is the hardest task.

Barnes: I have been asked by some of our youngest and most fiery comrades: "Why didn't the FAR make them act like the FAR in Nicaragua?" And I tell them that a very important political question was at stake here: Either the Nicaraguan revolution will be made by Nicaraguans, or it will not be made. Another day will come, and the Nicaraguans must look at Cuba as people who always treated them with utter respect and dignity, under the most difficult circumstances.

Clearly, this must have been a very difficult responsibility you shouldered in Nicaragua. There are many young workers and revolutionists in the United States who would like to know: Would you do anything differently if you had it to do over again?

The Nicaraguan and Grenada revolutions were central to the revitalization of our movement in the United States, and they had a similar impact on millions of revolution-

bit of a picture of what Nicaragua was facing.

Let me begin by going back in time to the defeat of the Batista army, which had U.S. government advisors. To understand how we were able to defeat this army, it is important to look at where the rebel forces that fought Batista came from — to look at our origins as a popular army.

The armed forces across the continent, of course, were prepared to back the existing governments. They were ready to defend the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landlords of their respective countries, as well as the U.S. interests in these countries.

But these armed forces were not prepared for one major contingency — that is, they were not prepared to confront an internal struggle, fought by irregular forces with popular support.

Following the triumph of the revolution in 1959, the U.S. government took a series of measures to ensure that Cuba would not be repeated elsewhere on the continent. The approach of the U.S. government, and accordingly of governments in other countries in the region, began to change in order to prepare these armies for whatever contingency might occur.

In Nicaragua, the Sandinista guerrillas had spent many years fighting heroically to defeat [the dictatorship of Anastasio] Somoza and we know how many years the guerrillas fought in El Salvador too. The U.S. imperialists gave the reactionary forces in those countries a great deal of support to prevent the triumph of the revolutionary forces.

Following the Nicaraguan revolution, the guerrilla movement that took up arms against the Sandinista regime was not the same in its composition as the one that had done so against the Cuban regime in the Escambray mountains. In the Escambray, those who took up arms were the interests who wanted to regain their wealth with the support of the United States. They were the ones who joined the invasion force at Girón.

In Nicaragua the situation was unique. It was the poor, the people of humble background — supported and equipped by the U.S. — who were actually engaged in fighting the government. This was a government that had declared itself revolutionary, right in the heart of Central America — in a location the United States considered very dangerous, since the revolution's influence could spread both north and south. The North Americans were willing to spend their last dime in Nicaragua to make sure the Sandinistas failed.

This was the situation we faced. We had supported the Sandinista guerrillas before the triumph in 1979, and we began to advise and to assist the new government immediately. But the Nicaraguans were the ones who would decide — that was always our conception. They were the

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION AND WORLD POLITICS

Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy, 1975-80

Fidel Castro

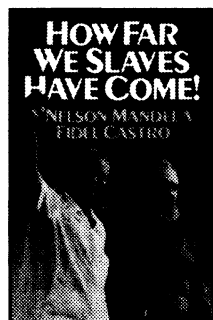
Castro discusses the historic importance of the anticapitalist revolutions in 1979 in Grenada and Nicaragua; Cuba's internationalist missions in Angola and Ethiopia; relations with the U.S. government and with Cubans living in the United States; the fight within the Nonaligned Movement to forge a front of struggle against imperialist exploitation; and the proletarian internationalism that has guided the foreign policy of the Cuban government since the 1959 revolution. \$20.95

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Militant/Michael Baumann

"The first units of the Sandinista People's Army in the opening years were trained in irregular warfare and composed of volunteers." Above, reserve units of the Sandinista People's Army in Masaya head toward Nicaragua's northern border in 1982 to defend the revolution against U.S.-backed mercenary army.

ones who would defend their revolution. We could not interfere in their decisions, nor take positions that would undermine their authority.

That is how we functioned during the ten, almost eleven years we were in Nicaragua — with a great deal of tact, a great deal of care, a great deal of respect.

The government confronted a very difficult situation. The war was a protracted one. It was taking a cruel toll on the people, and on their children. The external pressures

serve the revolution.

Today Nicaragua is suffering the consequences of a neoliberal government. During the years of the revolution, Sandinismo registered some gains for the exploited classes, for the peasants and workers, but all this is being dismantled today. The government is taking away the land from the peasants, and nationalized properties are being liquidated. That is the situation in Nicaragua today — a sad one, but the reality.

"When I was in Syria I was sometimes asked, 'How many dollars did they give you to come here?' And I would reply that I received nothing."

on the Sandinistas were very powerful, and they saw a way out through elections.

We tried to convince them that under those circumstances of war, elections were not the correct way to resolve the problems they faced. We knew that imperialism was going to throw all its economic power into the balance around those elections. Owing to Nicaragua's extreme poverty, it would have been very difficult for the Sandinistas to defeat the opposition, which was supported by reaction and by foreign capital. We foresaw what the outcome was likely to be. But the decision was one the Nicaraguans had to make.

Draft army or volunteers?

The Sandinistas had both Cuban and Soviet military advisers, and we didn't always agree on our advice. The Soviets argued for a large, professional, technically sophisticated, regular army. We, on the other hand, believed Nicaragua needed an army capable of eliminating the irregular forces they confronted internally, and that this could not be accomplished by a regular army. These differences over the conception of the struggle and structure of the army were ones we also faced in Angola and elsewhere in Africa.

An irregular struggle, we pointed out, had to be fought with irregular forces prepared for such a struggle, not with large regular units. It had to be fought by volunteers. That's how we defeated the bandits in the early years of the Cuban revolution.¹¹

Under difficult and complex conditions such as those in Nicaragua at the time, it is hard to draft a soldier, put him under discipline, and take him to war. Given the country's poverty, a soldier called up to serve often had to leave his family in hunger. And the war, which had begun barely a year after the Sandinista triumph, dragged on for eight or nine years.

As I said in *Secretos de generales*, there were brave and excellent soldiers, excellent combatants — on both sides. They were all Nicaraguans, with different ideals, different interests. It was a cruel struggle, one that bled the Nicaraguan people.

That's the situation we found ourselves in the middle of, as we sought to aid the Sandinista government during the more than ten years it existed. All of us are aware of the outcome, but I believe they made a big effort to pre-

¹¹ During the early 1960s, bands of counterrevolutionaries, armed and financed by Washington, carried out sabotage and other attacks against the revolution. Centered in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba, these bands were eliminated by the Cuban army and militias by the mid-1960s.

Waters: Many of us spent time in Nicaragua during the years of the revolution, and the Militant and Perspectiva Mundial maintained a news bureau there for more than a decade, beginning within weeks after the victory in July 1979. We followed the revolution closely. I remember what happened when the Sandinistas decided in 1983 to institute compulsory military service, rather than continuing to build an army based on politically motivated volunteers. The landlord-capitalist opposition and their sponsors in Washington immediately launched a political campaign to turn layers of the toilers against the revolution.

López Cuba: The enemy and other reactionary forces in Nicaragua exploited the issue of the draft, demanding that it be eliminated. I think this was a decisive factor in the outcome.

The conditions existed to create a volunteer army without the need for conscription, since Sandinismo had the support of broad popular forces in Nicaragua. Due to the conception of the need for a large regular army to fight an external enemy, however, they continued applying the military service law in order to achieve such professional military structures.

In fact, the first units of the Sandinista People's Army in the opening years were trained in irregular warfare and composed of volunteers. They could have eliminated the counterrevolution with volunteer forces — without the need for a draft army.

Political education in army

Waters: The young generation here in Cuba does not have opportunities right now to participate in internationalist missions, in the way that your generation and others have. Such missions have provided not only essential military experience but have been a central element of political education as well. Could you talk a little about political education and training within the armed forces today?

López Cuba: The political work in the armed forces has a very rich history. It goes back to our war of independence against Spain, and later to the irregular war against Batista. Many cadres and leaders of the revolution received their fundamental political education in the guerrilla in the mountains.

During the period since the triumph of the revolution, it has been the aggressive policy of the United States itself — its unrelenting pres-

sure — that has been the biggest stimulus to political and ideological work among the combatants and the people. To underline this point, I'll remind you that early this year we decided to hold our congress¹² in the midst of the tense, difficult, and complex economic conditions created by the U.S. blockade.

By chance, Che's remains were found in Bolivia¹³ just a few months after the party congress had been called. It's incredible what it has meant to bring back Che's remains — as well as those of the compañeros who fell with him in combat — right in the midst of our preparations for the congress, and then the congress itself. And you saw the ceremonies giving posthumous tribute to Che and his compañeros, and laying their remains to rest in Santa Clara. It's incredible to see the effect this has had on the political morale and consciousness of our people.

Ever since the triumph of the revolution, there have been particular events that have strengthened the unity of the people and the leadership of our country. During the early years, for example, there were all the threats we confronted and repelled with our small Rebel Army, reinforced by the volunteer militias. There was the fight against the bandits in the Escambray, Girón, the October Crisis. In 1964 we faced a crisis when the U.S. Navy seized some Cuban fishermen and our government cut off the water supply to the Guantánamo naval base.¹⁴

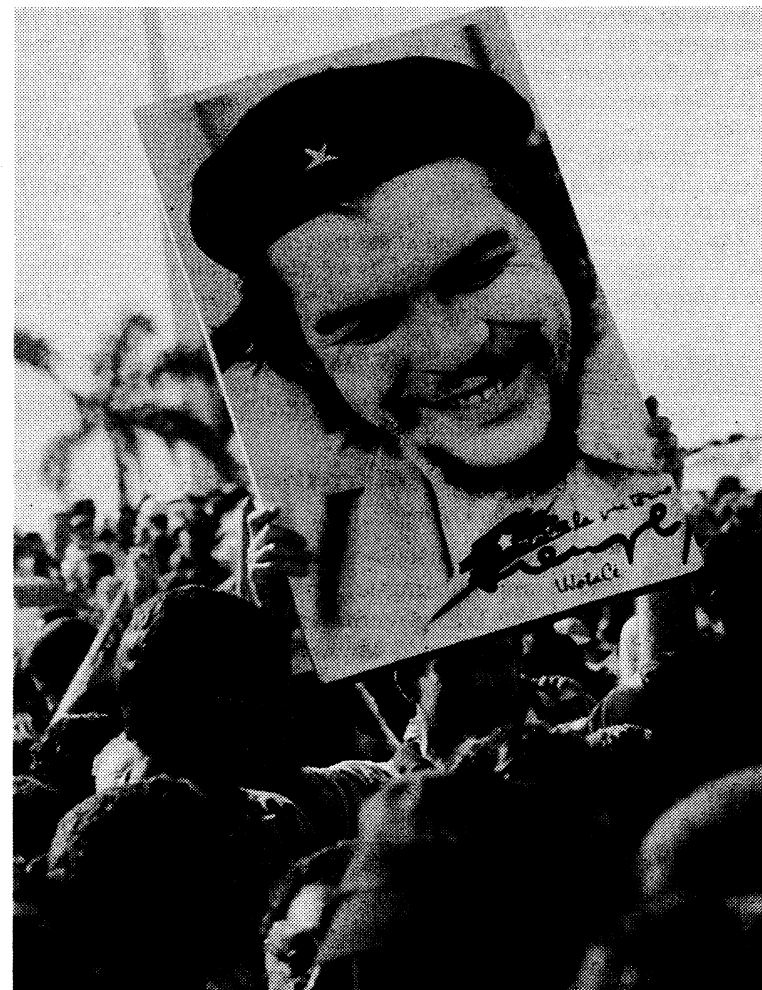
Not a year has passed without threats, I believe. And that fact, of course, makes it necessary for the military and political cadres of the revolution to base ourselves on the population. There's no other way to have confronted what we've lived through over the past thirty-eight years. We've had to work hard; we've had to carry out political work with the combatants, with the militias, with the people. And all this has forged greater unity among the people.

There's no question, as you pointed out, that our inter-

¹² The fifth congress of the Communist Party of Cuba opened in Havana on October 8, 1997 — the thirtieth anniversary of Ernesto Che Guevara's capture in Bolivia and murder at the hands of his captors the following day. The call for the congress was issued in April 1997.

¹³ Che Guevara's remains were found in Bolivia in July 1997, together with those of six other revolutionary combatants from Bolivia, Cuba, and Peru. They were brought back to Cuba, where hundreds of thousands of Cuban workers and youth mobilized to express their determination to continue Guevara's course in advancing the revolution. At the October 17 ceremony in Santa Clara, where the remains were buried, Cuban president Fidel Castro told participants that he viewed "Che and his men as reinforcements, as a detachment of invincible combatants that this time includes not just Cubans. It includes Latin Americans who have come to fight at our side and to write new pages of history and glory."

¹⁴ On February 3, 1964, the U.S. navy seized four Cuban fishing boats with thirty-eight crew members. In response, the Cuban government cut off the water supply to the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo. The fishermen were released two weeks later.



Militant/Martin Koppel

"It's incredible to see the effect that bringing back Che's remains has had on the political morale and consciousness of our people." Above, 70,000 people gather in Santa Clara, Oct. 17, 1997, for ceremony marking thirtieth anniversary of death in combat of Che Guevara, during which remains of Guevara and six fellow combatants in Bolivia were interred.

nationalist missions have been a catalyst for the values that exist among the Cuban people. Being willing to fight for Cuba is one thing. But it's quite another thing to say: let's go to Angola, let's go to Ethiopia, let's go to Nicaragua, let's go to Mozambique, let's go to Syria.

When I was in Syria¹⁵ I was sometimes asked: "How many dollars did they give you to come here?" The same question was sometimes asked when I was in Angola, and in Nicaragua. And I would reply that I received nothing. "We are not mercenaries," I would say. "My salary is given to my family in Cuba, and they are provided with what they need. I don't need anything here."

This is something very difficult for anybody in a capitalist army to understand, of course. But it also gives an insight into the qualities of our people and armed forces.

During the war in Nicaragua we decided to send teachers there, and thirty thousand Cubans volunteered to take part in this internationalist mission. Two of these teachers were killed by the contras, and within a few hours of learning about these deaths one hundred thousand Cubans volunteered to go.

That's the way it is in Cuba. Throughout difficult years, the people have been on the side of the revolution. And this has been the foundation upon which we have organized political and ideological work within the armed forces.

Impact of economic measures

There is no question that the economic measures we've had to take in recent years — the agricultural markets, self-employment, the UBPCs, the decriminalization of the use of hard currency¹⁶ — represent a big challenge for us today. These measures undoubtedly transform consciousness somewhat, particularly in the new generations. Because among those called up to serve in the armed forces today may be the son of a self-employed person, the son of a UBPC member, the son of someone who receives money from relatives living in the United States.

So, we've had to refine and improve our political education work in light of this reality. What is our starting point? We start from the fact that after the triumph of the revolution, right up until 1967, we had self-employed people, we had a farmers' market. In other words, all the things we've now had to reintroduce out of economic necessity have existed before in the history of the revolution. But the sons and daughters from all those social layers took part in internationalist missions.

During the fight against Batista, there were people who sold their photographic equipment or their carpentry shop to raise funds to buy arms for the July 26 Movement. Later on, during the first years of the revolution, people left their jobs or gave up their businesses to go to the Escambray to fight the bandits. Others closed up their shops and went to Girón to repel the invaders — just like that, in an instant! They simply closed their doors and went. Later, after they had returned, we had to mobilize some of these people again — for months at a time, in some cases — and meanwhile their shops remained closed. I'm talking here about people who made their living through those shops.

In other words, our experience shows that all sectors of

people can be patriots and fight for the revolution. This is where our great task lies. You can be a self-employed person and also be a communist and a revolutionary. You can receive money from your family in the United States and also be a patriot — that is, also be someone who fights on the side of the revolution.

It's true that a Cuban who gets \$25 or \$30 sent from the United States has the equivalent of the monthly wage I receive as a general. That's a mathematical fact, if you look at the exchange rate between the dollar and the peso. Our real wage, of course, is not just our paycheck of 500 or 600 pesos. We also receive ben-



J. González/Verde Olivo

efits such as education, health care, social welfare. All sorts of things that would be very expensive in any other country — housing, for example; schools; telephone bills — are very inexpensive in Cuba. We receive all these things as a result of the revolution, but they are not included in our paycheck.

Cubans today who work in a mixed enterprise, or who have jobs related to tourism, receive benefits that the rest of the population does not. This is the challenge we confront today in political and ideological work, I believe. We face it in the armed forces — because we get young people in the FAR who are under all these influences — but also more broadly in Cuba as a whole. During the recent party congress, the commander in chief pointed out that in face of these challenges we must not overlook the kind of political work we have to carry out every day.

The youth is the sector of our society where many of these influences I've been describing are the greatest. So while we don't have any internationalist missions today, we must involve young people in the big effort to pull the economy of our country out of the Special Period. And this, of course, involves a great deal of political and ideological work.

The documents of the recent party congress are now being studied not only by all 770,000 members of the party and half million members of the Union of Young Communists, but also by the combatants in the armed forces and the rest of the population. Nothing about the congress is a secret. Everything will be accessible to the people, so



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

In face of the effects in Cuba today of the world capitalist economic crisis, Cubans are striving "to show the enemies of the revolution that we are capable of developing ourselves, of improving the economy, of bettering the living conditions of the people." Above, mechanics at La Esperanza sugarcane cooperative in Cienfuegos, Cuba, April 1997, who have found ways to save resources while maintaining production.

"Our internationalist missions have been a catalyst for the values that exist among the Cuban people." Left, Cuban troops in Angola, February 1990. Some 300,000 Cuban volunteers took part in internationalist effort there over fifteen years to help that nation defend itself from U.S.-backed rightist forces and invasion by South African apartheid regime.

they know what was discussed, how it was discussed, and what they can do to help get out of the difficult situation we still face.

Throughout this thirty-eight-year historic process in Cuba, the armed forces have relied on patriotism and motivation to keep our troops at a high level of combat morale and combat readiness. This is at the heart of our work. In carrying it out, we have the great advantage that despite their age — the commander is 71 and the minister is 66 — Fidel and Raúl have great vitality. They are our best political workers. They have a direct rapport with the troops through their speeches. The minister is constantly visiting the units and talking with individual soldiers, as well as with the leadership of the party and of the Union of Young Communists in the armed forces. The commander works directly through his own intervention, as well as through written instructions.

It's important that we have a minister of the armed forces, Raúl, who is very demanding in the training and political education of our troops. This helps us a great deal in carrying out our responsibilities for political and ideological work in the armed forces.

That is what I can tell you. This was a difficult and complicated question, but an interesting one nonetheless, since it's something the enemies of the revolution understand very little about. Isn't that right? Many of them were predicting that we would collapse when the Soviet Union and the socialist camp disappeared, but the truth is that we are not going to disappear.

¹⁵ López Cuba headed a volunteer tank squadron in Syria from October 1973 through February 1975. The aim of this internationalist mission was to help Syria defend itself against further aggression by Israel, which had seized the Golan Heights from that country in 1967 as part of the Zionist regime's effort to maintain its dispossession of the Palestinian people.

¹⁶ These measures have been adopted since the early 1990s in face of the severe economic squeeze in Cuba — referred to there as the Special Period — precipitated by the abrupt decline in aid and trade on favorable terms with the disintegrating regimes of the Soviet bloc, compounded by the ongoing economic warfare organized by Washington. By 1996 the sharp decline in industrial and agricultural production was bottoming out.

The agricultural markets were opened throughout the country in October 1994 so that individual family farmers, cooperatives, and state farms, after fulfilling delivery quotas to state distribution agencies at fixed prices, could sell surplus agricultural products directly to the population. Most Cubans purchase goods at these markets to supplement what is available, at lower prices, through rationing.

In September 1993 the government legalized self-employment in some 140 occupations, to provide services to the population unavailable from the state. Individuals receive licenses from the government and pay taxes on their income.

The UBPCs are Basic Units of Cooperative Production. These were formed in 1993, reorganizing the majority of state farms into smaller cooperative units. Almost 4,000 UBPCs existed by late 1997, producing sugar cane, food crops, and other agricultural products.

In July 1993, the government made it legal for ordinary Cubans to possess U.S. dollars and other hard currency and opened up a network of stores where imported goods could be purchased for dollars. This measure authorized hundreds of thousands of Cubans to receive remittances from family members working in the United States and other countries.

Basic works of Ernesto Che Guevara

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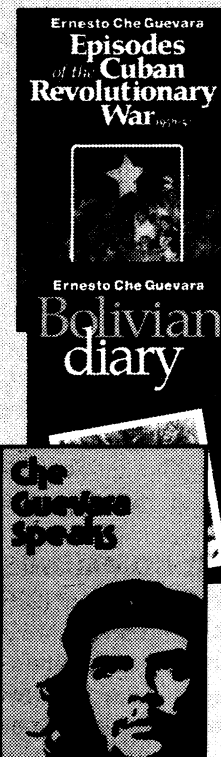
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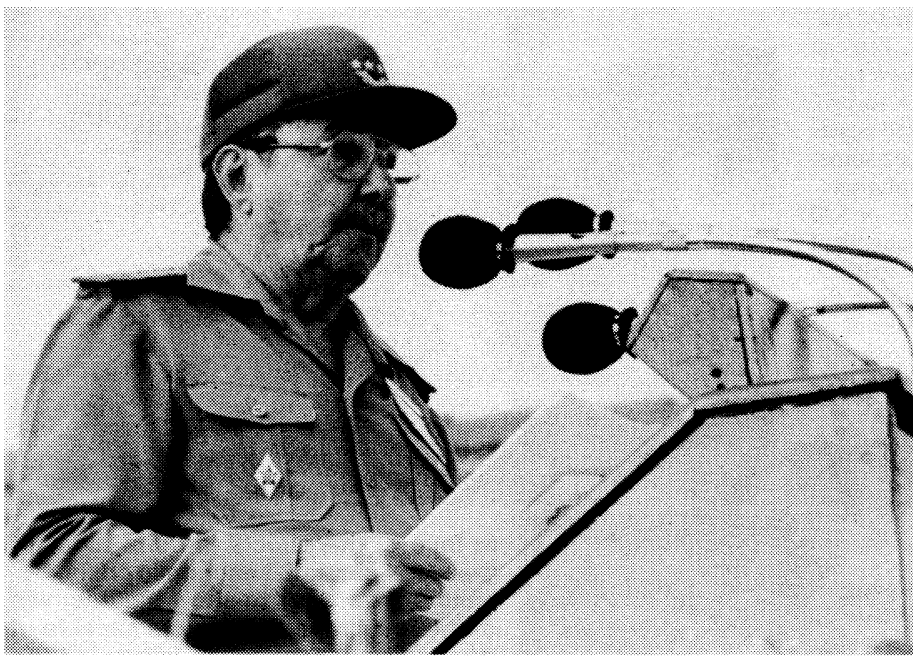
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Granma

Minister of Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro

Raúl and Che

Barnes: What you've just said about Raúl is particularly useful for us, since he has long been a special target of scurrilous propaganda in the United States. Raúl is portrayed as brutal, as a thug.

Those of us who have been able to follow the Cuban revolution from the beginning recognize this deception for what it is. But the U.S. press and politicians keep hammering on this theme, as one of the ways they try to undermine support for the Cuban revolution among new layers of workers and young people. We'd appreciate anything you could say to help us be more effective in telling the truth about Raúl and other Cuban leaders.

López Cuba: Yes, the image they present of Raúl is of an unfeeling person, an authoritarian person. Unfortunately they know little of his virtues: his simplicity, his humanity, his concern for the individual, for his subordinates, for his family, for the people.

This false image is more and more being broken, I believe. But the enemies of the revolution still exploit it.

You will notice that when Fidel refers to Raúl, he doesn't talk about him as "my brother." No, he says Raúl is second secretary of the party because he has earned that responsibility during the years of the revolution.

The world needs to become better acquainted with Raúl's qualities as a leader, as a man, as a human being, as a person of feeling. That's undoubtedly true.

Barnes: It's very difficult to be a commander in a revolutionary army. You must make decisions that affect people's lives, so you have to be objective. Friendship can have nothing to do with it. As you're making those decisions, however, a revolutionary commander cares deeply about every single soldier and his or her family.

López Cuba: That's true.

Barnes: But officers in capitalist armies are not like that, so they don't understand these leadership qualities you've been describing. At the same time, these are quali-

ties that revolutionary-minded fighters in mass work and in the trade unions in the United States deeply admire in the FAR. They look to it as a revolutionary institution that produces the kind of leaders they seek to emulate. That's why what you say about Raúl is important for reasons above and beyond setting the record straight.

Washington lives on the hope there will be a division in the FAR and in the party leadership in Cuba. But they don't understand the FAR. They confuse their hopes with reality.

López Cuba: Yes, that's true. This is an old wish of theirs. When Che left Cuba in 1965, the enemies of the revolution began speculating about disagreements between Che and Fidel. These stories began circulating before Fidel made public Che's farewell letter to him a few months later

in 1965, but they've continued ever since. There is no more convincing explanation as to why Che left, however, than that letter to Fidel. It is extremely valuable as a political testament.¹⁷

Land mines: 'Weapon of the poor'

Waters: An interesting interview appeared in *Granma International* a few weeks ago with Cuban Brigadier General Luis Pérez Róspide, who heads up military industries for the Revolutionary Armed Forces.¹⁸ The interviewer

"When Fidel refers to Raúl he doesn't talk about 'my brother.' Raúl is second secretary of the party, because he has earned that responsibility during the revolution."

paraphrases Róspide as saying that his department of the FAR has the "basic mission of guaranteeing that each Cuban has a rifle, a land mine, and a grenade to defend the country."

The article continues, noting that when the general was asked about the manufacture and utilization of land mines, which are opposed by some rich countries, Róspide "gave his opinion that no one discussed this issue with the poor or those who are threatened by nuclear weapons and have none of their own. 'Land mines are the weapon of the poor,' General Róspide declared."

We'd like to get your opinion on this question, since a very big campaign is under way in the capitalist world, promoted by the governments of Canada and various members of the European Union, to sign an international treaty banning land mines.

López Cuba: Yes, and unfortunately this campaign also

¹⁷ Guevara's 1965 letter to Castro is contained in several books published by Pathfinder, including *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, and *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58*.

¹⁸ An interview with Brig. Gen. Luis Pérez Róspide, director of the Union of Military Industries, was published in *Granma International*, September 28, 1997.

has broad backing among persons who are very progressive, very humanitarian, and who have enormous respect in world public opinion. To some extent this is understandable, since this is a very human question.

But one has to ask: What about the two flights by B-29s that dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? How many people were killed? How many victims are still dying from the effects? If a nuclear arsenal exists capable of annihilating the world, why not fight against this?

Because mines are the weapon of the poor. They are the weapon of those who don't have the resources to buy a B-52 bomber or an F-16 fighter jet.

A number of years ago, when the collapse of socialism had already begun, the Soviets gave us a final squadron of MIG-29 fighters. Six were delivered.

Recently, the Russian government proposed to sell the FAR more of these MIG-29s. The minister asked them: "How much do they cost?"

"Twenty million dollars," he was told.

So the minister replied: "We'll sell you the six we already have!"

Actually, we have been making an effort to sell these MIG-29s, and to get authorization from the Russians to collect payment. Because a poor country like Cuba, whose armed forces and budget depend on the our economic possibilities, cannot afford these expensive aircraft. We cannot afford other types of expensive and sophisticated weaponry, nor are they particularly necessary if we take into account the popular character and strictly defensive purpose of our weapons, including the antipersonnel mines we have, which are not for use in another country.

So what can we use to resist? Weapons that are the least expensive — rifles, mines, molotov cocktails, antitank grenades. That is why we have to adopt this stance against banning land mines.

How many billions of dollars does the United States sell in arms to Third World governments? It's an incredible figure — and at the cost of hunger, of dire poverty. How many millions are killed by the "bombs" of starvation, lack of electric power, health care, food? And why does this happen? Because of the dependency of these countries on big capital. Because of the exploitation of the people of those countries. That's the truth.

Yet they single out mines to be against — because they are weapons of the poor. If we had our way, we would rather not have mines, or rifles, or any other weapons. Let them respect the sovereignty of the peoples. Let there be justice. But as long as we continue to be under constant threat, we are the ones who are accountable for the security of our people.

That is why we have been very cautious in giving our opinion on this world campaign against mines.

We know all about land mines. The majority of the combatants we lost in internationalist missions were due to mines. The majority of those crippled were due to mines. We know the effects of this weapon. But isn't that true of all weapons? In any case, there are weapons that are much more deadly than mines.

That's the reality. That is the reason for our position.

Barnes: It's when the peoples give up their right to defend themselves that they will be slaughtered.

López Cuba: Yes, that's the truth.

Barnes: People sometimes ask us, "Do you really believe the Americans will use their nuclear weapons someday?" We reply, "They've already used them! Against the peoples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." And it is only the readiness of people around the world to fight that stops the U.S. rulers from using those weapons of mass destruction once again.

López Cuba: Exactly.

Barnes: So that gives us time to fight to take their arms away from them. American workers will come to understand this very well.

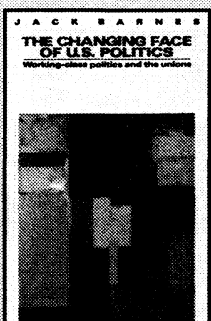
Bay of Pigs

Waters: We would be very interested if you would discuss your experiences as a tank commander at Playa Girón.

López Cuba: This is treated quite extensively in *Secretos de generales*. Not just in my account, but also in those by Fernández and by Carreras.¹⁹

In my account, I stressed that the propaganda campaign in the United States — both by Cubans living there, as well as by other reactionary forces — created an impression that an invasion of Cuba would have the support of the entire people, who were against

¹⁹ Brig. Gen. José Ramón Fernández and Div. Gen. Enrique Carreras are included in *Secretos de generales*. Interviews with them by Barnes, Waters, and Koppel will appear in coming issues of the *Militant*.



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From Pathfinder



the revolution. This would make it easier for the United States to support the mercenary brigades and later, of course, would facilitate the coming to power of a provisional government and the occupation of Cuba.

Instead, from the moment the mercenaries landed, they were met by machine-gun fire that lasted right up until the invasion was crushed seventy-two hours later. So the North Americans discovered very early the truth behind the lie they themselves had been promoting — that the Cuban people dislike the revolution. From that time on, and especially following the mobilization during the October Crisis, they knew the Cuban people were willing to fight.

The top U.S. leadership is well aware of the price of an invasion of Cuba. That is what has saved us from drastic measures by them.

There was a risk they might have become emboldened as a result of the disappearance of the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. That could have led them to believe that our armed forces might lose their fighting capacity.

That is precisely why we have taken important steps to make sure they know the truth. The truth is that at the time of Girón, half a million people were armed. Today three million people are armed — all the people — and ready to defend the revolution. *The entire people.*

This is what has prevented U.S. aggression from taking on an armed character, I believe. Instead they have chosen two other routes, track one and track two,²⁰ that start with economic warfare and then move on to ideological confrontation. These are our two real enemies.

Waters: I was struck by your description in *Secretos de generales* of the intense period of training shortly before Playa Girón, when your first tank units were being formed. Everything you and other combatants were learning from Soviet instructors in the morning you were teaching to the rest of the unit later that same day.

López Cuba: Yes, we were still basically a guerrilla army when we had to begin confronting U.S. aggression. At the time of Girón, the units of the future armed forces had not yet been formed. The tank operators, artillerymen, and anti-aircraft operators had not yet completed their training courses. Our pilots were still flying the broken-down old planes inherited from Batista's air force. Most of the weapons and equipment we had purchased to outfit the new armed forces had not yet arrived. In short, we faced a situation that was very dangerous for the revolution.

It was the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people that made the difference at Girón. Our brigades were made up not only of troops, but also of volunteers who just showed up. They knew Fidel was there, and the fact that the com-



"At the time of Girón, half a million people were armed. Today three million are armed and ready to defend the revolution. The entire people."

mander in chief was present throughout the entire battle had an enormous impact. He was very insistent, very hard-headed. When we wouldn't let him get into one of our tanks, he got in a tank in another column coming from the other direction.

We were accustomed to this, since it had been the same in the Sierra. Later, during Hurricane Flora it was the same.²¹ During the October Crisis it was the same. Whatever the situation — an assault on the revolution, a natural disaster — the commander in chief was always there.

²⁰ These are terms often used to describe provisions of the so-called Cuban Democracy Act, also called the Torricelli law, after New Jersey liberal Democratic congressman Robert Torricelli, enacted by Washington in 1992. "Track one" refers to the tightening of the U.S. economic embargo, while "track two" refers to provisions that — in the guise of promoting the "free flow of ideas" between the United States and Cuba — aim to corrupt and buy off Cuban academics and professionals.

²¹ Hurricane Flora slammed into Cuba in October 1963, killing more than a thousand people and causing severe economic damage.



Fidel Castro, above right, with tank crew at Playa Girón, as they battle the April 1961 U.S.-organized Bay of Pigs invasion. Cuban militia and army units defeated the counterrevolutionary forces in the air and on the ground within seventy-two hours.

Imperialist governments "single out land mines to be against — because they are weapons of the poor." Left, combatants of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador in the 1980s. Salvadoran revolutionary forces fought the U.S.-equipped regime, and its technically superior army, using any weapons at their disposal.

The same was true August 5.²² He has always been in the front trench, without fear of the risks. That is one of the reasons the revolution still lives, I believe.

FAR's leadership role

Barnes: Following the crisis in the Revolutionary Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior in 1989, involving Ochoa and Abrantes and several others,²³ fighters in the United States and elsewhere noticed that the FAR took on even more leadership responsibility throughout Cuba. The breadth of what the armed forces were responsible for seemed to expand. The revolutionary integrity exemplified by the FAR seemed to take on even greater importance. I wondered if you could comment on whether or not this perception is an accurate one? Because those habits and values of revolutionary honor and discipline set a very important example for workers and youth in the United States and elsewhere.

²² On August 5, 1994, a group of some twenty Cubans tried to hijack a boat in Havana harbor to go to Florida. There had been four previous boat hijackings that month, including one a day earlier in which hijackers killed a young Cuban police officer.

The August 5 hijacking was repelled by dock workers and the police in Havana. Later that day a crowd of several hundred gathered along the Malecón, Havana's oceanfront boulevard, throwing rocks and bottles at police, hotels, and other targets. Several thousand workers and youth, supporters of the revolution, poured into the streets to respond to the provocation, effectively quelling the riot. They were joined on foot by President Fidel Castro.

Two days later, on August 7, half a million Cubans paid their last respects to the slain police officer and demonstrated their support for the revolution in the streets of Havana. Every year since then, August 5 has been celebrated by mass demonstrations in Havana reaffirming the determination of the Cuban people to defend their revolution.

²³ In June-July 1989, General Arnaldo Ochoa and three other high-ranking officers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and Ministry of the Interior were tried, convicted, and executed for hostile acts against a foreign state, drug trafficking, and abuse of office. At the same trial, several other Cuban army and Ministry of the Interior officers were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from ten to thirty years. The following month José Abrantes, Cuba's minister of the interior, was tried and convicted on charges of abuse of authority, negligence in carrying out his duties, and improper use of government funds and resources. He was sentenced to twenty years in prison.

López Cuba: Yes, that's accurate, if one looks at this from the standpoint of moral authority and prestige — without this diminishing in any way the FAR's subordination to the party, to the constitution, and to the authorities democratically elected by our people. And the leadership qualities of Raúl that we were discussing earlier also had a big influence here, I believe.

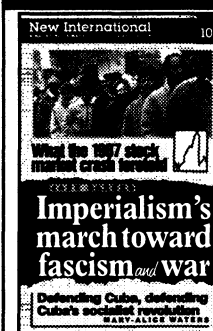
Since the triumph of the revolution, there has never been an economic battle, there has never been a natural disaster, where the armed forces have not been at the side of the people. Over thirty-eight years of revolution, there has never been a moment when the armed forces have not fought shoulder to shoulder with the people: whether in social efforts, economic tasks, or defense. This gives the FAR a great deal of authority.

Moreover, we have never allowed corruption in the armed forces. We are intransigent: the armed forces must be kept free of all personal interest. This is also an important aspect of the education of the cadres.

In capitalist countries, I believe, it is not unusual for an army officer to engage in business, to have capital, and he often devotes more time to business than to the armed forces. In the FAR no one is going to find any officer involved in activities beyond the revolutionary tasks we have taken on and the principles we have established.

In the 1980s, although the armed forces were very professional and technically proficient, we had some gaps in

New International



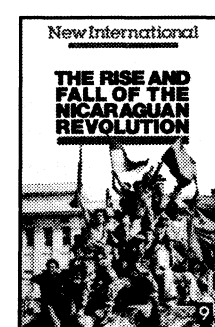
Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution

MARY-ALICE WATERS

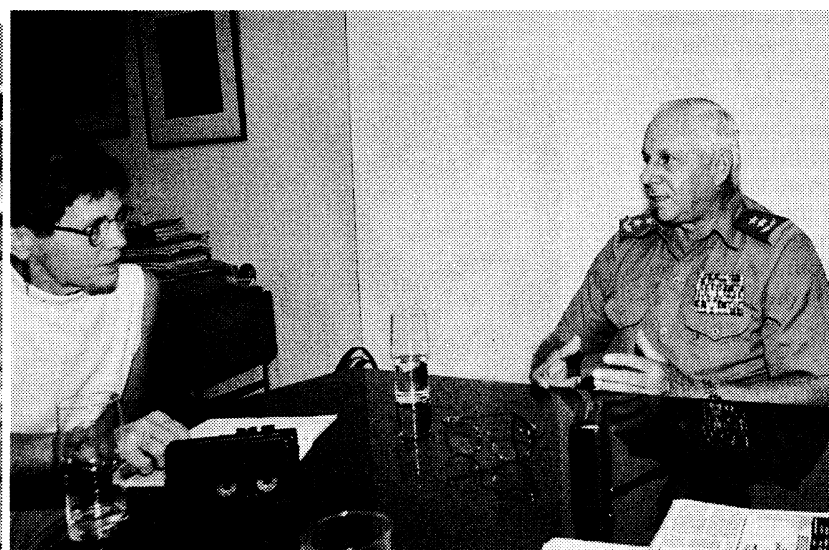
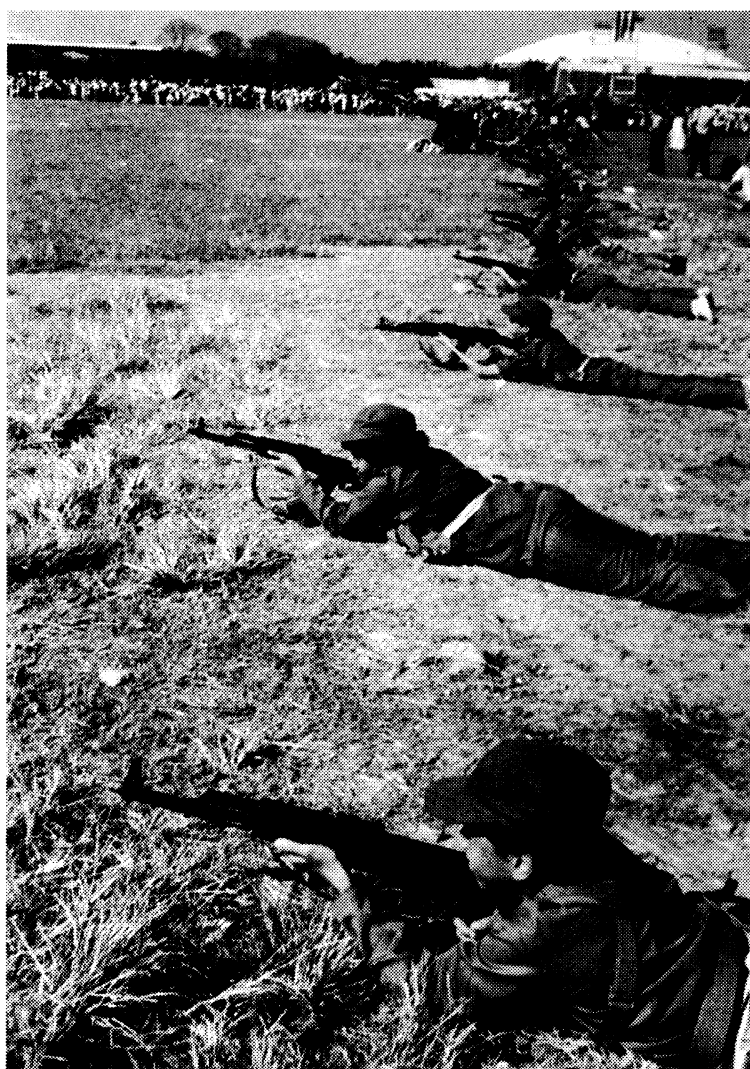
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Above: Militant/Martin Koppel
Mary-Alice Waters interviewing Néstor López Cuba in Havana

"The top U.S. leadership is well aware of the price of an invasion of Cuba." Left, military training of Cuban youth.

soil. I have not lost sight of my origins.

Barnes: When your brothers tried to grab you at the time of the triumph and take you back to the farm, you didn't know then that thirty-eight years later you'd still be in the revolutionary army. But you are!²⁵

On a related subject, in the United States, when officers retire — they're often still quite young — they are immediately hired by big corporations as advisers and board members, and are given bourgeois salaries and stock options. What's the situation of retired officers here

in Cuba?

López Cuba: Our officers retire quite a bit older than in the United States, although we've been forced to retire people at a younger age in recent years due to the economic difficulties we've faced. Because of our concern to maintain the reputation of the armed forces and in line with a strict sense of equality, retired officers, along with

the areas of administration, finances, and production. So, in 1990 the minister called on the FAR to address these problems.

Raúl has demanded four things from the cadres of the armed forces. First, they must be political cadres, with high political, ideological, and moral qualities. Second, they must be highly skilled military professionals. Third,

"Our officer corps includes farmers and workers. Fifty percent of cadets must be the children of workers and farmers. It is a requirement so the army does not lose its class origins."

they must have the basic skills of food production and agriculture. And fourth, they must have a rudimentary knowledge of economic affairs. They don't need to be economists, but they do need to know where each peso we spend comes from, and how to use it effectively.

We have integrated these requirements into the professional training of our cadres — both of older officers such as myself, and of the youngest ones. This is part of the program of study for new officers, and the veteran officers are given regular refresher courses on techniques of leadership, planning, economics, and production.

An army of workers and peasants

All this gives the armed forces in Cuba more authority, more prestige. I think the origins of our Revolutionary Armed Forces and of its cadres has a lot to do with this, as well. It's no secret to anyone that there are not many Colin Powells who can make it to the rank he achieved in the United States. Because generally the officers in capitalist armies are the sons of the bourgeoisie, of generals, of high officials, of better-off families.

In our army we make sure that our officer corps includes farmers, workers, those from the ranks of the humble, from the masses. Without such a policy, the social composition of the officer corps will slowly be transformed, and in the end will have negative results.

We pay conscious attention to the social background of those who go to officers' school — the Camilitos.²⁴ Fifty percent of the Camilitos must be the children of workers and farmers. The other 50 percent is made up of children of teachers, doctors, officials, and others. But it's a requirement that half must be from families of workers and farmers, so the army does not lose its class origins.

In spite of spending forty years in the struggle, for example, I continue to think like a peasant, like someone who tills the

²⁴ Students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School.

all other retired citizens, are not allowed to take jobs in the mixed enterprises.

Nonetheless, an officer who is fifty, with thirty or more years of active service behind him, still has fifteen years of working life ahead of him. There is room for improvement in this area, since these are people who are highly disciplined, highly trained, very trustworthy and patriotic. We could take better advantage of these compañeros for the benefit of society; they could be more productive in

²⁵ In *Secretos de generales*, López Cuba explains that right after the fall of the Batista tyranny in early 1959, his father sent his brothers to the Rebel Army camp where he was stationed to bring him back to the nearby family farm. López Cuba started to go, but his commanding officer stopped him saying, "You can't go now. Things are just beginning."

Four decades in Revolutionary Armed Forces

In *Secretos de generales*, Néstor López Cuba provides additional details of his four decades within the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

Describing the military training that tens of thousands of Cubans underwent in the months and weeks prior to the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, he states: "Commander Guillermo García asked me to select the best graduates of the two courses on American tanks we had just completed and organize classes on operating the Soviet tanks. I picked 22 graduates...."

"It was a very intense period of training. Everything we learned in the morning from the Soviet instructors we had to teach at night to the rest of the compañeros using whatever tools we had at our disposal."

During the Bay of Pigs invasion, López Cuba led a newly trained tank contingent into battle against the U.S.-backed mercenary forces, in which he was wounded.

In the interview he also describes the military mission Cuban internationalists were

part of in Syria between 1973 and 1975. Syrian and Egyptian forces fought a war against the Israeli army in 1973 to try to retake Israeli-occupied territory. López Cuba headed a tank battalion in Syria that later grew to a regiment.

While the Cubans did not participate directly in combat to take back the Golan Heights, seized by the Israeli regime in 1967, he says, "We maintained a unit at the front for a year. It was a tank squadron. There was some exchange of artillery fire. They damaged two of our tanks. We lived in a hole, in a *chabola* [hut], in conditions of a military campaign."

Shortly after returning to Cuba, López Cuba was part of the first unit of Cuban internationalist volunteers in Angola in late 1975, heading a tank regiment. "I participated in various battles. For most of the time I remained out in the field, with our tank column advancing toward the south, getting very little sleep. In March 1976 I reached the border with Namibia. Our column was

retirement.

Cuba's internationalism

Barnes: When we return home following these interviews, I'm confident we can tell young fighters in the United States — as we have been doing for many years — that when revolutions occur once again anywhere in the world, Cubans will respond to calls for solidarity by organizing internationalist volunteers. The same people who carried out internationalist missions yesterday are leading in the efforts to overcome the difficulties of the Special Period today. And the cadres being trained in the Special Period will be part of the internationalist missions still to come.

López Cuba: By no means have we renounced internationalism. It remains a fundamental ethical principle of the revolution.

The most important internationalist mission we have is right here. That mission is to show the enemies of the

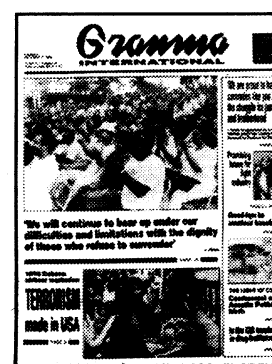
revolution that we are capable of developing ourselves, of improving the economy, of bettering the living conditions of the people.

This is the most strategic task we face right now. And all of us who are conscious of its importance need to be a part of accomplishing that task.

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SEPTA transit strike

Continued from front page
of the United Transportation Union (UTU), who represent conductors, and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) refused to cross TWU picket lines at four SEPTA suburban commuter lines. These lines, whose ridership has increased by some 50 percent since the strike began, have taken some pressure off SEPTA management by providing alternative service for some passengers.

At the Roberts Avenue Yard, 50 UTU and BLE members declined to cross an eight-person TWU picket line that had been put up at 4:00 a.m. on June 8. A boss who came out and ordered them to cross was answered by a unionist who pushed his way through the crowd to insist, "We decline to cross a picket line." Cheers went up from the BLE and UTU workers each time a car turned away as it came upon the TWU's picket line.

By that afternoon, however, U.S. district court judge Eduardo Robreno ordered the engineers back to work.

Union solidarity was "tremendous," TWU train operator Jeannie Robinson told the *Militant* at the Upper Darby station picket line the next day. "It showed that we're united and that we're not going to buckle."

Since the strike began, SEPTA has waged a high-pitched media campaign trying to shift public blame onto the union for the traffic jams and other strike-related inconveniences. But the employers' antilabor campaign has for the most part failed.

Militant reporters found few passengers against the strike. "With the strike, it's really hard to get around," Martin Hartley, a student who just started a job at a nursing home said as he waited for a ride. "But people need their rights." David Smith, a painter originally from Barbados, explained that he supported the strikers because "anytime a person stands up for their rights they

face a problem. We have to fight against the same things back home all the time."

Strikers on the picket lines also report overwhelming support from passing motorists expressed by honks and friendly waves.

On June 8 the *Philadelphia Daily News* ran a phone survey indicating that 58.7 percent of the nearly 22,000 people who called in took the union's side over SEPTA's.

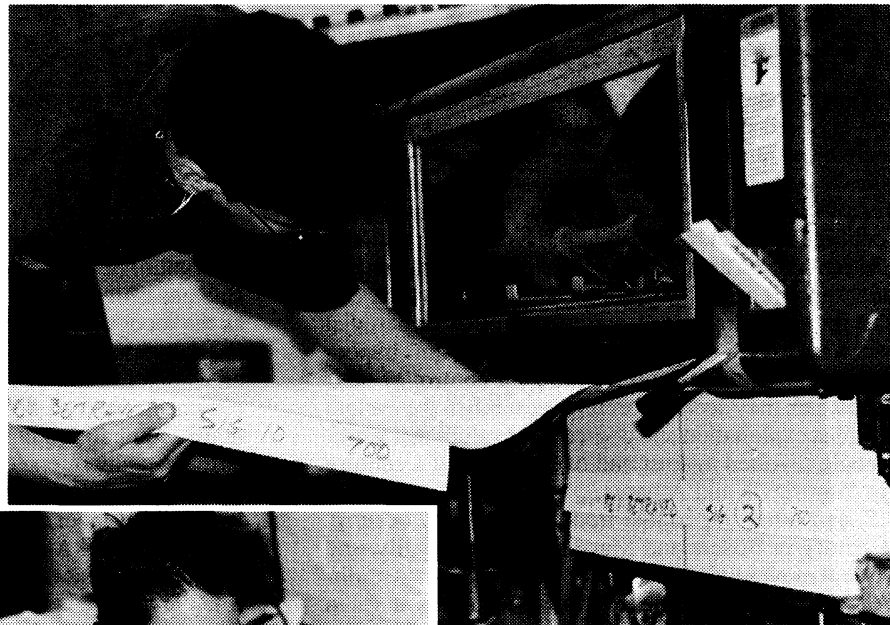
After more than 1,000 chanting members of TWU Local 234 packed the visitors gallery at a June 4 meeting, the City Council passed a resolution blaming SEPTA for the breakdown in negotiations and urging Comptroller Jonathan Sidel to withhold the city's \$56.7 million subsidy to the authority. City Council president John Street has distanced himself from the mayor's open call to break the strike.

Some 1,500 strikers and members of other unions including the Teamsters; Communications Workers of America; American Postal Workers Union; American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; and the Health and Hospital Workers Union Local 1199, rallied here June 10 to support the SEPTA workers. AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka joined numerous local AFL-CIO officials on the platform.

Aurelius Noble, a union member and janitor who has not been able to get to work since the strike started, came on his own to support the TWU. "This strike is taking food off of the strikers' table just like it is taking it off mine," he said. "But what SEPTA is doing is wrong, taking away their health care and their union rights. That is why I came out here to support them today."

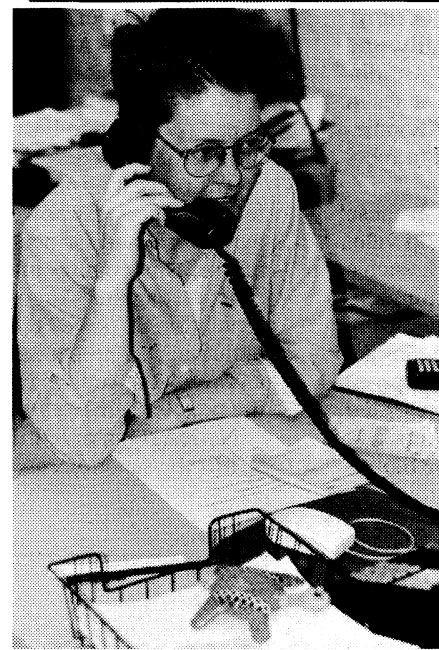
Pete Seidman is a member of United Auto Workers Local 2372 in Newark, Delaware; Betsy Farley, Nancy Cole, and John Staggs contributed to this article.

The 'Revolution Betrayed' is hot off the presses: first joint product of volunteers and Pathfinder's print shop



Militant photos by Brian Taylor

The new reprint of *The Revolution Betrayed* by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky comes off the presses June 10 (above). It is the first book produced by a joint effort of volunteers putting Pathfinder titles into electronic format and the publisher's print shop. Nell Wheeler (left), a print shop production manager, calls Ruth Cheney in Oakland, California, the same day to give her news of the printing of *The Revolution Betrayed*. Cheney heads a steering committee that organizes some 100 volunteers around the world who are scanning, proofreading, and formatting Pathfinder books into finished electronic page layouts, ready to be used to produce printing plates through state-of-the-art computer-to-plate technology.



UMWA officials assault protesting union members

**BY DAVE WELTERS
AND CHRIS REMPLE**

WASHINGTON, Pennsylvania — Local 1197 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) faces the prospect of being placed under "trusteeship" and three of its members being disciplined by the union's International Executive Board in relation to an April 1 protest by union members in Bentleyville, Pennsylvania.

On April 1, a protest by UMW members at the union's annual Mitchell Day celebration was attacked by UMWA officials. Several coal miners were punched, knocked to the ground, and kicked. One miner, Rich Cicci, required nine stitches to close a wound to his ear where he was struck by a board. The miners were protesting forced overtime and use of money from the union's strike fund for non-strike related purposes.

Ed Bell, a miner who works at the McElroy mine in northern West Virginia, testified at a preliminary court hearing on charges against five union officials that he was one of 10 to 20 miners who met beforehand to draw up an agenda of their concerns.

"We planned the protest as a forum and to express dissatisfaction with the union policies," Bell said. He did not agree that the protest was disruptive. "I see it as democracy in action," he stated.

At the hearing, Cicci said they organized a protest because Mitchell Day "celebrates the eight-hour day. We were protesting that we don't have the eight hour day." In an interview, he explained that miners at the 84 Mine, where he is employed, work six days a week. Production crews work nine-and-a-half or 10-hour days, and the company has recently begun working long-wall mining crews in 12-hour shifts on weekends.

The flyer distributed at the protest included other issues miners felt should have been addressed in the recent contract settlement with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association. The five-year agreement provides for three raises totaling one dollar. "We've had nine years of raises in 15 years," the miners said in the flyer. "We'll be further behind at the end of this contract." Cicci said miners' take-home pay is the same as it was in 1983, after deductions for the increased Social Security deductions and for the strike fund assessment.

He told the *Militant* that miners have different views on the strike fund. Some want it eliminated; others want tighter restrictions on how the money can be used. Miner Jim

DeBarer said the strike fund was set up to help miners survive a strike. "What we're opposed to is the use of the strike fund beyond what it was originally intended to do."

Bell said many miners were upset about paying 1 percent of their salaries into a strike fund when there hasn't been a strike in years.

Several miners said pensions should have been improved. "What happened to '30 [years] and out' like workers in other industries have?" Cicci asked. "Instead of dropping the 75-cent-per-ton royalty for pensions, why not raise the pension?" DeBarer said the new provision, which offers a modest pension to miners with 20 years service if they get laid off, puts miners in a bind because they also lose medical benefits after one year until they reach age 55.

The Mitchell Day event is an annual celebration named after John Mitchell, who was president of the union at the turn of the century when miners won the eight-hour workday. UMWA president Cecil Roberts and AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka were speakers at this year's event.

The morning of April 1, some 30-40 miners assembled outside the Bentleyville social hall with signs and leaflets that explained their concerns. Another group led by union officials started arguing with them and then charged the protesting miners, ripping up their signs and beating several people.

James Gibbs, a director of organizing for the international union, led the assault. Rich Cicci testified at a court hearing May 27 that Gibbs "charged Russ Walker, hit him with his forearm, flipped him over on his back, reached down and grabbed his stick and ripped off his sign." Gibbs was "swinging at him when he was down on the ground," and "struck him five or six times when he was trying to get up." Cicci and several others testified to seeing the union officials kicking Walker and Glen McClure, another miner at the protest, after they had been punched and knocked to the ground.

The confrontation lasted only a couple minutes, but 75-100 state troopers, county deputies, and local police descended on Bentleyville's main street. UMWA international representative Clemmy Allen was charged with disorderly conduct. Later, charges were brought against international representatives James Gibbs, Donnie Samms, Martin Hudson, and Jerry Kerns Sr., and Jerry Kerns Jr. The most serious charges were against Gibbs: simple assault, aggravated assault, reckless endangerment, ha-

arrassment, disorderly conduct, criminal conspiracy, disrupting a meeting, and rioting.

After the assault, union president Roberts entered the hall for the meeting, surrounded by police and bodyguards. He said the miners who were opposed to the new contract will be used as "poster boys for nonunion coal companies." Trumka and Roberts were repeatedly booed by about half the crowd of 400. On April 16, Roberts convened a panel made up of three international UMWA officials to investigate the incident. In early June the panel recommended filing disciplinary charges against Cicci, Segedi, and a third Local 1197 member, Ronald Martos, and placing the local in a "limited trusteeship" for "not operating effectively."

Meanwhile, at the May 27 court hearing, union lawyers argued that charges against the five UMWA officials should be dropped except the charge of simple assault against Gibbs, claiming insufficient evidence and lack of serious injury. They tried to establish that miners had been drinking before the protest and had used racial slurs against Gibbs, who is Black, and that miners had organized to disrupt the meeting and were equally responsible for the violence.

The miners who testified, however, contradicted these claims. Besides assaulting Cicci, Walker, and McClure, the officials punched Mark Segedi, a safety committeeman from Local 1197. Ed Bell was also knocked to the ground and kicked. Butch Patterson, a miner from Local 1197 who is Black, refuted the accusation that miners made racist comments. "I heard no racial slurs — at that time, that day, all day," he stated. No miners gave any evidence of racial slurs or of drinking before the protest.

The judge dismissed all charges except harassment against Hudson, Samms and Kerns Sr., and the charge of simple assault against Kerns Jr. Gibbs, however, will stand trial on charges of aggravated assault, harassment, and reckless endangerment. Allen's case will be handled separately.

McClure said, "The UMWA leadership is not running the union for the rank and file. Miners need to have access to knowledge" about how the union is run, he said.

Cicci said that this year, "miners didn't have enough time to look over the contract before voting on it. The agreement was reached on Friday, they had a presentation on the highlights on Sunday, and voted on Tuesday. What was the big hurry?" He said the agreement was reached eight months be-

fore the old contract expired.

"We lost a prime opportunity to get a good contract," Cicci said. "The economy is good. There's \$100 million in the strike fund. But they want to use that to fight the global warming treaty," he said, referring to a recent international treaty that places limits on emissions from carbon-based fuels. The UMWA officials are trying to get miners to see the fight for jobs as a joint effort with the coal companies to defeat the treaty.

"We were up for a fight," Cicci said, referring to preparations for the new contract. "But they [top union officials] didn't give us any way to do it. So we had to make our own way."

Dave Walters is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1976 and Chris Remple is a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Pittsburgh.

GM strike

Continued from front page

seven assembly plants in the United States and Canada, as well as three parts plants. More than 18,000 workers have been idled.

The auto giant has made it clear it plans to drive ahead with its speedup and job cuts. GM official Donald Hackworth said, "The real issues are the noncompetitive work practices at this plant that do not allow the equipment to reach its designed output."

In March 1996 GM tried to turn a 17-day strike at two UAW-organized parts plants in Dayton, Ohio, into a lockout of 180,000 auto workers in North America by refusing to meet the workers' demands and shutting down 26 of its 29 North American assembly plants, blaming parts shortages due to the strike. The auto bosses then tried to block unemployment and other benefits for the laid-off workers. In face of the auto giant's demands, however, many workers have expressed their readiness for a fight. Mike Gillespie, with 23 years on the line at GM, said, "We've got to settle all the grievances, bring the dies back, and make them keep their promises." He added, "No matter how long it takes, we're going to stay out here."

John Sarge is a member of the UAW in Wayne, Michigan, and is the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in Michigan's 14th District.

U.S., NATO hands off Kosova!

Unionists and other working people should oppose the current U.S.-led steps toward NATO military intervention in Kosova and neighboring Albania. They need to explain to fellow workers why these war moves are not in the interests of our class — in the Balkans or anywhere else. The courageous fight by Albanians in Kosova for national self-determination and independence deserves the unconditional support of working people around the world. But the last thing Washington, London, and other imperialist powers want to do — despite their “humanitarian” hypocrisy — is help the Albanian people gain control of their lives. Instead, they seek to forcibly reestablish the system of capitalist exploitation and dog-eat-dog values that working people revolted against and overthrew half a century ago in Yugoslavia and Albania.

U.S. and other imperialist troops are already occupying territory in Bosnia and Macedonia. This reality, and the current moves to invade and occupy Kosova and northern Albania, point to the future in all the workers states in Central and Eastern Europe: a head-on confrontation between imperialist armed forces and workers and farmers throughout the region.

The overturning of capitalist social relations in these workers states was a huge blow to capitalism worldwide. For several decades after World War II, unable to launch a direct war, the imperialist powers, led by Washington, waged a “cold war” against the workers states, pressuring the ruling bureaucratic castes to police working people. But imperialism suffered a historic defeat when these privileged castes — and the Stalinist parties that represented them — shattered in 1989-91. Millions of workers and farmers who had been frozen out of politics by the Stalin-

ist rulers began to burst onto the political arena to press for their interests. The latest example is the fight by the Albanian people in Kosova to win their independence — a road toward working people gaining confidence in their capacity to rule and uniting with fellow toilers across national boundaries.

What impels the imperialist powers to intervene in the Balkans is the crisis of their world market system, as well as the recognition that they cannot bring back capitalism in the workers states by peaceful means. It is the same crisis that in capitalist Europe is leading to record unemployment, the rise of rightist currents, and sharpening economic competition between capitalist ruling classes. Just as the wealthy rulers of the capitalist world seek to get out of this crisis by trying to roll back the historic social gains won by the labor movement, in workers states such as Yugoslavia and Albania they have no option but to intervene with naked military force and try to reimpose their rule. The same forces are fueling the U.S.-led drive to expand NATO into Eastern Europe and militarily encircle the Russian workers state.

The biggest obstacle to the goals of Washington and its fellow imperialist powers in this region is the resistance by workers and farmers to the regimes’ “market reform” measures in country after country. To those who call for sanctions against Yugoslavia and for NATO military intervention to “save” the “helpless” people in Kosova — including by procapitalist figures inside Kosova — the answer is the actions by hundreds of thousands of working people themselves fighting for their rights.

No NATO intervention in Yugoslavia or Albania!
Lift the sanctions against Yugoslavia!

Washington prepares military intervention against Kosova

Continued from front page

a full-scale military assault against Albanians fighting for self-determination, the U.S. and British rulers have set in motion plans for NATO air strikes inside Serbia, deployment of imperialist combat forces in neighboring Albania and Macedonia, and invasion of Kosova by NATO troops.

“NATO should examine all military options,” said U.S. secretary of defense William Cohen, on his way to a June 11 meeting of defense ministers of NATO member countries in Brussels. “I would not confine it to air or land or sea or any combination of the three.”

At the Brussels meeting, NATO authorized simulated air raids and bombing runs over Albania and Macedonia, using U.S., British, and French aircraft on NATO carriers in the Adriatic Sea. Germany’s defense minister, Volker Ruehe, said the military exercise “would serve as a serious warning to Belgrade.”

According to Ruehe, the NATO defense ministers also instructed the commanders of the Atlantic imperialist alliance to draw up plans for direct military action into Kosova, with “particular consideration to air strikes against selected targets and the employment of air or ground forces if necessary to enforce a settlement for Kosova.”

Meanwhile, the British government has drafted a resolution for adoption by the United Nations Security Council authorizing deployment of NATO forces along Kosova’s borders with Albania and inside the province. Kosova, whose population of 2.1 million are 90 percent Albanians and overwhelmingly support independence, has been ruled by brute force by Belgrade since the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic revoked the province’s autonomous status in 1989.

Moves highlight confrontation with Moscow

The moves toward a new direct imperialist assault on Yugoslavia have highlighted once again Washington’s collision course with Moscow. Russian president Boris Yeltsin indicated during a June 9 visit to Bonn that his government will most likely veto any UN Security Council resolution calling for NATO attacks on Serbia.

The preparations for intervention in Kosova go hand-in-hand with NATO’s expansion into Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which will bring U.S. troops closer to Russia’s border. This imperialist encirclement of Russia extends to the oil-rich Caspian Sea region and further east, as the U.S. rulers build a zone of influence and pressure along Russia’s southern flank and position their forces for possible military use to overturn the noncapitalist social relations in the republics of the former USSR.

Washington maintains 8,500 troops in Bosnia, dominating a NATO occupation force of 34,000 there, which is deployed indefinitely to enforce the terms of the Dayton accords. That was the agreement the U.S. rulers forced the rival regimes of the formerly federated Yugoslav republics to sign at the Wright-Patterson air force base, near the small city of Dayton in southeastern Ohio, paving the way for the NATO occupation and partition of Bosnia. One of the clauses of the Dayton treaty was the reestab-

lishment of a “free market” — that is, the destruction of the remaining gains of the anticapitalist revolution of the 1940s and the return of the domination of capitalist social relations in Yugoslavia.

Assault by Belgrade rages

The Milosevic-led Socialist Party that rules the “new” Yugoslavia — comprised of the republics of Serbia and Montenegro — is a remnant of the former League of Yugoslav Communists, which broke up in 1989 as part of the sea change throughout Eastern Europe. The would-be capitalists of the Milosevic regime have attempted unsuccessfully to integrate Yugoslavia into the world capitalist market. They have often clashed with Washington and other imperialist powers, as they are presiding over a state where the mines, factories, mills, and land remain largely nationalized and where foreign investment yields little profit as long as the imperialist powers have not defeated working people and brought back capitalism.

The struggle of Kosovar Albanians for self-determination has threatened the privileges and bourgeois way of life of the government bureaucrats in Belgrade. After the first major crackdown in March by Serbian police and army forces, pro-independence Albanians in Kosova stepped up protests in Pristina, Kosova’s capital, and other towns and villages.

At the same time, the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) escalated resistance and gained in recruits and popularity. The UCK is a guerrilla group that has been waging an armed struggle for independence for several years. In May and early June, many photographs and interviews were published in the media documenting an influx of volunteers into Kosova to join the UCK in response to Belgrade’s aggression.

The Milosevic regime, for its part, unleashed the most widespread and indiscriminate assault on Kosovar Albanians at the end of May, using tanks, heavy artillery, and its air force. Entire villages near the border with Albania have been burned to the ground. About 10,000 peasants and other Albanians have fled from Kosova into Albania as of June 10. Since March, 250 people have died in Kosova, mostly Albanians.

In response to the latest wave of attacks by Belgrade, more than 20,000 people demonstrated in Pristina June 10 demanding an end to the terror by Belgrade. “UCK! UCK!” was one of the most popular chants, according to the Kosova Information Center. A number of demonstrators called for NATO intervention, echoing the pro-imperialist perspective of the Democratic League of Kosova, the dominant political party among Albanians there.

A number of students and other working people, however, continue to distance themselves from reliance on the “international community” and support for Washington, which continues to describe the Kosova Liberation Army as a “terrorist group.” As Lulezon Jagxhiu, a leader of the Independent Students at the University of Pristina, has repeatedly told *Militant* reporters in telephone interviews, “We rely on our own strength.”

Indonesia

Continued from Page 4

vote for Golkar.

The military is a pervasive component of the government setup. A portion of the seats in the People’s Consultative Assembly, which elects the president, are allocated directly to the officer caste. The police are a division of the armed forces. The armed forces own businesses and land, and the individual members of the top brass control much more.

The Habibie government cannot easily hold this structure together. There are increasing rifts within Golkar, including calls for the resignation of its chairman, Harmoko.

Beginning to lose fear

The June 6 opening of the military trial of 18 cops charged in the killings of the four students at Trisakti University gave a glimpse of the fact that many people are beginning to lose their fear of the military. About 500 Trisakti students traveled by bus to the military court on the outskirts of Jakarta to witness the trial. Most sat in the yard surrounding the court, unable to enter the packed room, listening to the proceedings over loudspeakers. Hundreds of local residents and students from other campuses poured into the compound, in front of the military police and groups of soldiers from several military branches. It was the first time anyone could recall such an attendance at a military trial. The Trisakti students brought banners demanding, among other things, that the military commander at the scene be held responsible for the killings, not just the police who are accused.

The Habibie government has been compelled to grant a range of democratic concessions, including lifting bans on the formation of unions and political parties, in hopes of containing the widening political and social demands raised in many protest actions — captured in the popular watchword *reformasi* (reform).

Minister of Information Muhammad Yunus announced June 5 he was rescinding the measure under which his office could arbitrarily revoke the license of media publications. The ministry can still suspend a newspaper’s license for a “certain period of time,” however.

Ending “corruption, collusion, and nepotism”—often referred to by the Indonesian acronym KKN—is a focus of many protest actions. Suharto, his family, and close associates amassed billions in industry, banks, land, and other capital over the last 32 years. More facts about his fortune are reported daily in papers that would not have dared to publish such articles even three weeks earlier.

In Bali, a week of protests by thousands of students and others forced the entire provincial legislature to agree to resign June 8. The protesters had initially demanded that the legislators sign a statement refusing to recognize Habibie as president. When they refused, the demonstrators demanded the lawmakers themselves resign. Similar protests have taken place in other provinces.

Some pro-government forces have struck a nationalist pose. Dozens of pro-Habibie students from the Indonesian Development Youth Movement rallied outside the U.S. embassy in Jakarta and the U.S. consulate in Surabaya June 5. According to the *Jakarta Post*, the demonstrators accused Washington of funding efforts to force Suharto’s resignation and pushing the IMF to impose austerity measures on Indonesia.

The economy continues to contract. Import activities have dropped more than 80 percent over the last few months. Stocks of rice, the country’s staple food, are reportedly sufficient for three months only.

Amid this crisis, banks from imperialist countries are trying to stabilize Indonesia as a source of profits.

The government has agreed to appoint nine international investment banks to assist in the “partial privatization” of 12 state-owned companies, ranging from toll road operator PT Jasa Marga to plantation company PT Perkebunan Nusantara. In one deal already announced, Netherlands-based Ispat International will buy 49 percent of PT Krakatau Steel for \$400 million, a price described in the daily press as “relatively low.”

Imperialist concerns over further social rebellions mark the continued uncertainty about the International Monetary Fund’s \$43 billion loan package. The Suharto government’s agreement with the IMF stipulated that subsidies on all commodities except rice must be eliminated by October 1. Price rises under this program sparked the protests in May.

Now Beddu Amang, chairman of the State Logistics Agency (Bulog), has claimed that the IMF agreed that “if we are not able to scrap the subsidies” on basic commodities, “then we don’t have to.” Striking a pose typical of the Habibie government in its current efforts to establish some popular credibility, Amang said, “We have to help our people.”

Working people are seeking ways to resist the impact of the economic crisis. This takes many forms in addition to strikes. The same day in Majalengba, West Java, a fish pond belonging to the bupati, or provincial chief, was reportedly raided by unknown people who took more than 400 pounds of fish.

And in Bandung, about 300 market vendors organized a caravan to city hall to protest the local government’s failure to provide adequate services at the market where they work and plans to remove the market for a bus station. After an initial attempt to keep the vendors away from city hall, officials relented and allowed them to rally in front of the building while a delegation entered to present their demands.

Farm workers in Greece wage strike, win demands

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

the bosses locked them out for the rest of the shift.

Firefighters are planning to strike June 12 and June 15. In the meantime the CFA has called on the army to provide firefighting service. Solidarity

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

ATHENS, Greece — After a six-day strike and mobilizations, 200 farm workers in the village of Aghios Giorgios won their demands May 27 for an eight-hour work day and wage increases. It is reportedly the first strike ever by immigrant farm workers in Greece.

The workers are immigrants from Albania and Romania. Most farm workers in Greece are undocumented immigrant workers. Besides being paid starvation wages they face racist attacks and the threat of deportation, especially on payday.

"We are paid 3,000 drachmas (\$1=330dr) a day without food and we work nine hours," Seli Haki, a 32-year-old Albanian worker, told the Athens daily *Eleftherotipia*. "But things have changed. I won rights." Dimitri Biran, 33, said, "I brought my family from Tirana and I can't work for 10-12 hours a day for 4,000 drachmas."

The farm workers won the shorter work day with wages of 4,500 drachmas including one paid meal, or 4,000 drachmas with three paid meals. The bosses were forced to take back all striking workers.

The farm workers' fight is part of the response of working people to the austerity measures by the capitalists and their government, led by the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK). On May 27 public transportation, rail, hospital, dock, construction, bank, and other workers participated in a one-day general strike.

Riot police attacked a protest rally that was called in solidarity with bank workers, who have been on strike since May 11. They are fighting the sell-off of the state-owned Ionian Bank, which will result in mass layoffs — a probe by Greek capitalists to push through austerity measures to qualify as a member to the European Monetary Union by 2001. On May 28 a court declared the strike "illegal and abusive." The next day at dawn, the cops attacked the picket line at the computer center in Piraeus; the strikers fought back for about half an hour. Despite the court order, participation in the strike is about 70 percent.

Firefighters in Britain strike for jobs, service

LONDON — Nearly 1,000 firefighters in county Essex, southeastern England, went on strike June 8 against cuts in jobs and service. County officials are pressing a budget cut of £1.24 million (\$2 million) that will mean removing an aerial ladder platform used for rescues and fighting fires in high buildings. The measure will also cut essential training and eliminate 16 jobs.

On June 5 the Essex Combined Fire Authority (CFA) sent letters to all firefighters threatening dismissal should they "breach their contract" by joining the strike. The Fire Brigades Union officials threatened a national strike if the Essex firefighters were sacked. Strike action was authorized by a 70 percent vote. After their four-hour strike June 8,

diers have taken a "crash course" in firefighting.

Teamsters organize owner-operators in Washington state

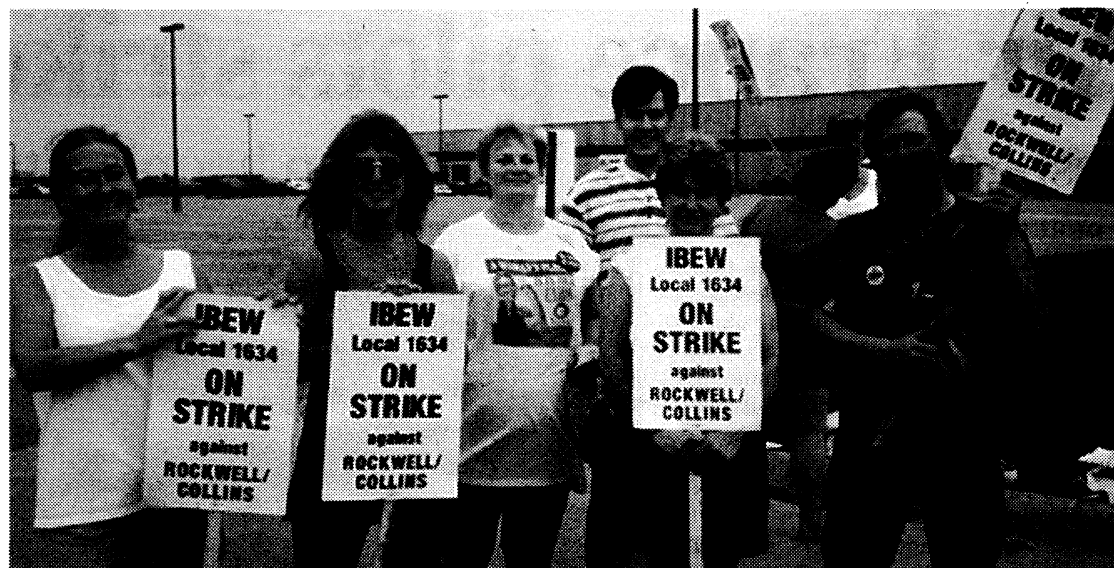
SEATTLE — Nearly 250 truck drivers, owner-operators, and supporters rallied at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 hall in support of a Teamsters campaign to organize the drivers. The truckers — including many immigrants — haul freight at Seattle and Tacoma ports, and are feeling the worsening conditions in the trucking industry. Competition between truckers — nonunion and union — has increased as a result of the deregulation of the trucking industry instituted in 1979 by the Carter administration.

"I'm not really an owner — the truck owns me. I have no medical insurance; I have no money in my savings account; I have a five-acre farm that I can't support. That's why I'm in this for the duration," Darlene Reynolds, an owner-operator in the Eagle System, told the crowd at the rally. Most of the owner-operators can only work for one freight firm, such as Eagle, acting as their broker. Many of these companies won't allow truckers to go anywhere else even if there is no work at that firm. Truckers get paid by the load, no matter how much time they must wait to pick it up or unload it.

The National Labor Relations Board treats the owner-operators as businesses, exempt from the protection of labor laws. "I'm making the same money today as I did five years ago, but my costs have gone up 33 to 100 percent," said an operator who hauls for United Motor Freight. She said 90 percent of the owner-operators have no medical insurance.

The Teamsters are seeking a master agreement with the 50 trucking companies that bid on local con-

Unionists rally to back Rockwell strikers in Iowa



Militant/Ray Parsons

Nearly 200 people rallied in Coralville, Iowa, June 7 in support of the 1,200 members of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1634, on strike against Rockwell International since May 28. They rejected the bosses' offer of a paltry raise, less medical coverage, and a five-year contract. Members of IBEW Local 1362 from Rockwell's plant in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Teamsters from UPS came to show their support. "People remain optimistic. We're getting a lot of support. This helps the new people who've never been in a labor dispute. I think a lot of people didn't realize how big unions are," said striker Reggie Grassfield. Strikers have set up a web page. Messages of support can be sent to: <http://www.geocities.com/siliconvalleyhaven4059>

tainer-shipping terminal work. The union will also target shipping lines and those who haul containers to and from the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe and Union Pacific railways.

The Teamsters are sponsoring Truck Rallies in Seattle on June 24 at 7:30 a.m., and in Tacoma on July 1 at 7:30 a.m. For more information contact Teamsters Local 174 at 1-800-221-9952.

Toronto construction workers shut down sites

TORONTO — Some 2,000 dry-wall installers walked off the job May 1 after all housing construction contracts expired the day before, shutting down hundreds of residential construction sites throughout the Toronto area. They were joined two weeks later by 300 trim carpenters who together with the drywallers set up roving picket lines to shut down more than 200 residential construction sites. The strikers have also kept sites using nonunion labor from operating.

On June 4, at a meeting of the

United Brotherhood of Carpenters—Drywall Acoustic Local 675, hundreds of workers voted down the latest employer offer by 82 percent. Three days before, some 3,500 member of Laborers' International Union Local 183 walked out against the contractors' paltry wage offer and their demand to lengthen the workweek. The strikers are residential house framers, drain workers, and low-rise concrete forming workers.

At the Local 675 meeting, striker Tony Loncar, who has been putting up drywall for 30 years, told the *Militant*, "They are offering nothing, very little." Their offer "amounts to just \$25 more per house per man. That's three days' work putting up 10,000 square feet of board."

Lennox Niles, a drywall worker for nine years, said, "We've been out almost five weeks and have lost \$6,000. It is not worth it to go back now. The strike by Local 183 will help get the contractors back to the bargaining table."

A leaflet in English, Italian, Por-

tuguese, and Czech, distributed at the Local 675 meeting, explained that the bosses are refusing to pay extra for work on corner beads, cathedral ceilings, showers, and pot lights. The drywallers are on a piece-work system slows them down, cutting take-home pay. Workers are demanding a rate of 17.5 cents a square foot, up from 14 cents. The drywallers have not had a raise in seven years.

The Local 183 strikers rejected an offer of a yearly 4 percent increase over three years. The bosses also demanded the workweek without overtime pay be extended to 48 hours from 44. The workers see this as a health and safety issue and rejected this demand.

Bobbis Misailides in Athens; Ian Grant and Jean-Louis Salfati, members of the Transport and General Workers' Union in London; Scott Breen, member of International Association of Machinists Local 751A in Seattle; and John Steele, member of IAM Local 2113 in Toronto, contributed to this column.

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Air France pilots strike over takebacks

Despite French rulers' World Cup hoopla, strikers roll back two-tier pay scale

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS — After a 10-day strike that grounded two-thirds of the airline's fleet and created a headache for the French rulers, pilots at Air France reached an agreement June 10. The pilots succeeded in eliminating a two-tier pay scale. The airline had also demanded a pay cut in exchange for shares in the company. Under the agreement, the shares-for-pay exchange will be voluntary for individual pilots.

Meanwhile, baggage handlers, railroad workers, electric company employees and others have also been organizing strike actions.

French employers and the Socialist Party-led government of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin launched a propaganda campaign against the pilots by accusing them of interfering with the World Cup soccer tournament taking place in France. Air France is the official carrier for the World Cup. The sports event, which began June 10, was expected to draw one million visitors.

The main pilots organization, the National Union of Airline Pilots (SNPL), called out the 3,200 Air France pilots June 1 against the bosses' demand for wage concessions totaling 500 million francs per year (FF6=US\$1). The concessions demanded are part of a company plan to cut costs by 3 billion francs annually. Employers hoped that this attack could set a pattern for other unions.

The pilots union demanded the end of a two-tier pay system, introduced last year, in which new pilots start out as low as 240,000 francs per year, as against 350,000 francs previously (\$40,000 and \$58,000, respectively).

The bosses called for a 15 percent cut in pilots' salaries in exchange for shares in Air France, a state-owned company scheduled to be partially sold off to private investors later this year. Air France announced profits of 1.87 billion francs last year.

After several lengthy negotiating sessions during the first days of the strike, Jospin declared his support for Air France president Jean-Cyril Spinetta. Jospin asserted that "the future of the company depends on improving its competitiveness." This was widely seen as a signal that the government was going to intervene against the pilots strike.

Campaign against strikers

The government counted on the help of the French Communist Party, junior partner in the Jospin government, to isolate the pilots and try to push through the concessions. Transportation Minister Jean-Claude Gayssot, to whom Air France managers are officially responsible, is a member of the Communist Party.

At the June 3-4 meeting of its national committee, Communist Party national secretary Robert Hue reaffirmed his support for Gayssot: "I think [he] gives the image of a responsible minister.... I do think that you have to know when to end negotiations." Portraying his party as "responsible," Hue said the CP was putting the interests of the "nation" first. "The World Cup has been in the minds of the national committee," he emphasized.

Nicole Notat, leader of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), called the pilots selfish and said they were "forgetting to keep in mind the collective interests of other workers and of the company."

Officials from both Workers Force (FO) and the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT) unions at Air France took their distance from the pilots, alleging concern about supposedly unfavorable repercussions of the strike for the other 42,000 workers at the airline.

Unlike the CFDT and FO, the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) made statements supporting the strike at Air France, although it took no action in defense of the embattled pilots.



Air France pilot at Paris labor rally. Pilots grounded two-thirds of airline's planes.

"The government should conscript the pilots," said Charles Pasqua, a prominent Gaullist politician and leader of a new party, "Tomorrow France."

Le Figaro, one of the main bourgeois dailies, blamed the conflict on the government's failure thus far to sell off Air France. The main headline in the June 8 issue read: "Air France: the urgency of privatization."

One of the arguments pushed by the capitalist media was that the Air France pilots are "among the best-paid wage-earners in Europe." This is part of the campaign to get working people in France to identify with "their" employer and government in the economic competition between Paris, Bonn, and other capitalist powers — often waged

under the banner of meeting the criteria for joining the common European currency, the euro.

The attempt to isolate the pilots was only partially successful, however. During a discussion by several workers at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant in the Paris suburb of Saint-Ouen June 8, skepticism was expressed about the reasons for the attack on the pilots.

"I think the lowering of salaries is simply to prepare for the privatization," said 38-year-old Patrick Garnier.

Joel Lejeannic, an Air France technician at the Orly airport and CGT member, told *the Militant*, "If the pilots win and break the two-tier system, it will be really hard to stop

the flight attendants from striking to get rid of the two-tier system forced on them two years ago."

In a poll published June 7 by the national *Journal du Dimanche*, 38 percent were favorable to the pilots' strike and 34 percent were unfavorable. The poll, however, indicated significantly less public support for the pilots' action than for major strikes of the last few years. It reflected the impact of the propaganda campaign whipped up by the government, capitalist press, and all political parties, which portrayed the pilots as undeserving of support because of their "privileged" conditions and "high" salaries.

Other strikes break out

The strikers received the support of pilots in a dozen countries, from Germany to Kenya, Brazil, and Japan. The pilots of the U.S. airline Delta have refused to fly Air France planes as they were asked to do by their employer.

Other strikes are also taking place. Baggage handlers at the principal French airport, Roissy, went on strike June 2 and were back to work June 6 after obtaining a 1,500 franc bonus for the extra work attributed to the World Cup. Taxi drivers have taken strike action at Roissy as well.

On June 4 tens of thousands of electric and gas company workers demonstrated in Paris against the threatened sale of the state-owned Electricity of France and Gas of France. They joined with department store workers threatened by the extension of working hours to evenings, holidays, and Sundays, as well as a march of unemployed workers organized by the CGT. One of the main railroad engineer unions called for a June 9-11 strike for wage increases.

Derek Jeffers is a member of the CGT at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant in Saint Ouen, near Paris.

Puerto Rican activist in Chicago fights frame-up by U.S. government

BY VERÓNICA POSES AND JOSHUA CARROLL

CHICAGO — Early in the morning of Nov. 6, 1997, well over a dozen heavily armed FBI agents surrounded the home of professor José Solís Jordán in a suburb of San Juan, Puerto Rico. They released pepper spray into his house, and then, in front of his terrified children, handcuffed him and took him into custody.

The cops transported him to a U.S. federal building where he was interrogated for more than five hours before he was allowed to speak to his lawyer. Federal agents did not inform Solís of his counsel's presence in the building until two and a half hours after the lawyer's arrival.

The U.S. government is trying to frame Solís for a 1992 bombing at a military recruitment facility in Chicago. He is being charged with conspiracy to destroy government property, two counts of destruction of government property by means of explosives, and illegal possession of explosives, according to Mervin Mendez from the Committee in Solidarity with José Solís Jordán.

Solís is a professor at the University of Puerto Rico and a long-time activist in the fight for Puerto Rican independence. From 1992 to 1995, Solís taught in the education department at DePaul University here.

In April Solís was a featured speaker at a conference at DePaul University marking 100 years of resistance to U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico. In his presentation he described the growing student struggles on the island against efforts by the government to privatize the University of Puerto Rico.

In an interview with the magazine *Chicago Ink*, Solís explained that his arrest was

part of the U.S. government's broader response to the rise in struggles by workers and students in Puerto Rico. A few weeks before his arrest, 100,000 workers marched in San Juan against the sell-off of the state-owned phone company. Students had also stepped up their fight to defend public education. The Puerto Rican colonial government tried to use the protest actions by students to legitimize a crackdown and "impose some discipline on a campus getting out of control," he said.

The attack on Solís is one of a number of assaults on fighters for Puerto Rican independence in the United States and Puerto Rico. Two independence activists, Juan Marcos Vilar and Ruben Rivera, were subpoenaed May 28 to appear before a federal grand jury as part of the government's supposed investigation into the 1992 bombing.

Vilar is the national coordinator for the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners. He is also one of the organizers of the July 25 national march in Washington, D.C., to demand release of the Puerto Rican political prisoners and self-determination for the Caribbean island. Rivera is a former student of Solís at DePaul.

"This was not just about intimidating me," Solís explained in the *Chicago Ink* interview. "It was about sending a signal to the people of Puerto Rico that this is what happens to you if you dare the authority of the United States government in Puerto Rico."

The lead witness for the government against Solís is Rafael Marrero, a government informer who was once active in the Puerto Rican independence movement in Chicago. Marrero is also the lead witness in

an investigation by several state agencies that claim government funds were misappropriated by supporters of independence at Roberto Clemente High School and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center.

Solís has received support from students and faculty at the University of Puerto Rico and DePaul University. On March 6 the faculty of the Department of Education at DePaul voted unanimously to affirm publicly their support for him.

At the University of Puerto Rico he has received resolutions of support from the faculty and the student council at the Education Department, the university senate, and the board of directors of the union of non-teaching staff.

On May 13 Solís appeared in a federal court here. The court was scheduled to hear a motion from Solís's counsel to suppress all evidence that had been gathered after his arrest based on the denial of his right to counsel. At the hearing, the U.S. district attorney was granted a continuance to further prepare his case. Solís will have to appear again in court on June 25.

Contributions to Solís's defense fund can be sent to: José Solís Jordán Defense Fund, c/o The Law Offices of Jed Stone, 434 W. Ontario, Suite 400, Chicago, IL 60610.

To find out how to help or to request speaking engagements for supporters of José Solís, contact: Mervin Mendez, Committee in Solidarity with José Solís Jordán, 1851 W. Armitage, Chicago, IL 60622. Or call: (773) 278-9361.

Elizabeth Stone, a member of the International Association of Machinists, contributed to this article.