

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
Fidel Castro's 1959 speech  
on agrarian reform in Cuba

— PAGES 6-11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 21 MAY 31, 1999

## Cubans celebrate 40 years of land reform

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL,  
MARY-ALICE WATERS,  
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

HAVANA, Cuba — “On May 17, 1959, we crossed the Rubicon,” stated Cuban president Fidel Castro at a rally here celebrating the adoption, exactly 40 years ago, of a land reform law, one of the first — and defining — measures of the Cuban revolution. “It was a step from which there was no retreat.”

“The assault on the Moncada barracks allowed no turning back. The landing of the *Granma* was an action that allowed no turning back,” Castro continued, referring to

Continued on Page 14

## ‘All-out effort is needed in book sales campaign’

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

PITTSBURGH — With less than one month left in the campaign to sell 1,500 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, a special effort involving the entire socialist movement is needed to make the international goal. As of May 18, socialists had sold 507 copies of the recently published book by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes. Of this total, 169 have been sold by socialist workers through their work in the industrial unions.

“It’s not just a question of making numerical goals,” said Nan Bailey, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party’s trade union work, in a May 16 phone conference with organizers of the steering committees of socialist workers and youth in the trade unions. “The campaign goes to the heart of our ability to follow-up on the openings we see in world

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# NATO bombs kill Serb and Albanian workers

## Rifts grow between Washington, imperialist allies

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

After two months of incessant bombings that have devastated the industry and infrastructure of Serbia and killed more than 1,300 people, divisions have begun to widen between Washington and some of its imperialist allies in Europe participating in the U.S.-NATO assault on Yugoslavia.

On May 19 Italy’s parliament passed a resolution calling for a suspension of the bombing to allow negotiations with Belgrade to proceed. The government of Greece has taken a similar stance. The same day, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder said Bonn would block any attempt at a NATO ground invasion of Kosova, which is being pushed particularly by the British government.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-led NATO forces resumed air raids inside Belgrade. In the early morning of May 20, bombs hit two hospitals in the Dredinja residential neighborhood of the capital. “At least three people were killed and dozens wounded,” said Martina Vukosovic, a student at Belgrade University, in a telephone interview a few hours after the assault. “One of the two was a children’s hospital. It was the heaviest bombing inside the city after relative quiet for a little while, since the destruction of the Chinese embassy on May 7. They also attacked Rakovica, an



Top: Militant/Craig Honts  
Top: Some 400 Chinese students and others protested U.S. bombing of Yugoslavia at federal building in Los Angeles in mid-May. Left: May 9 NATO cluster bombing of street in Nis, Yugoslavia’s second-largest city, an important industrial center.



industrial area in the suburbs, and Batajnica, where there’s a military airport that has been hit many, many times.”

Milovan Bojic, director of one of the hos-  
Continued on Page 2

## Colorado miners strike over conditions

BY JEFF POWERS

RANGELY, Colorado — At midnight April 27 members of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1984 here struck the Deserado mine, owned by Blue Mountain Energy, Inc. The issues in the strike include health care for retirees, adequate pensions, seniority in job bids and vacation scheduling, control over job assignments, and pay. Deserado produces coal

exclusively for Blue Mountain’s power plant near Vernal, Utah.

The 105-to-2 strike vote seemed to catch the company by surprise, most union members said. “It even surprised us,” several

miners added.

This is one of only four UMWA locals in Colorado and Utah. Unlike union mines in the East, most of which are covered  
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Militant/Carole Lesnick  
UMWA Local 1984 strikers demand health care for retirees, limit on forced overtime.

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—Jack Barnes, December 1994

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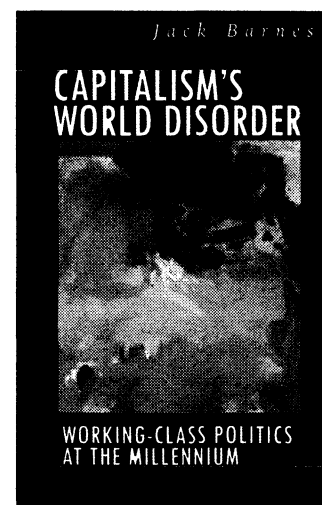
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# Attack on Yugoslavia

Continued from front page

pitals that suffered the greatest damage, called the attack "a savagery." Moma Jakovljevic, a doctor there, confirmed that three patients were killed and several others wounded. An operating room was demolished and an intensive care unit leveled. The nearby residence of Sweden's ambassador to Yugoslavia, and other houses in the area, were damaged.

U.S. Gen. Charles Wald claimed that the U.S.-NATO planes struck a petroleum storage area in central Belgrade during the May 20 attack. He didn't say a word about the bombing of the medical facilities. Reports in the big-business media claimed a Yugoslav army complex was near the hospitals.

This unceasing justification of killing civilians and systematically destroying factories, homes, bridges, railways, and clinics as "collateral" damage to firing on military targets is arousing deeper opposition to the U.S.-led war — inside Yugoslavia and around the world.

"I don't see how the U.S. and NATO can claim they are helping Albanians against the ethnic cleansing after what they did in Korisa," said Bojan, a college student in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia's third-largest city and the capital of Vojvodina.

## Attack on Korisa

Bojan, who prefers to use only his first name, spoke to the *Militant* by telephone May 19. He was referring to the May 13 air raids by U.S. F-16 bombers that blew apart Korisa, a village in southwestern Kosova, near Prizren, killing more than 80 Albanians and wounding over 50. "It's the second time their warplanes killed dozens of Albanians there," Bojan said.

The first time, U.S. planes bombed a caravan of trucks and tractors of Kosovars, killing 75 people. The taped conversation between the pilot who hit that convoy, twice, and his commander in a second jet further away showed the pilot initially objected to dropping the bombs on what was obviously a caravan of civilians. "These are just trac-

tors and cars," the pilot reportedly said. He was ordered to go ahead, as the site had been termed a military target by NATO planners. The transcript of the conversation, intercepted by the Yugoslav army, was released late April by Tanjug, the state-run news agency in Belgrade.

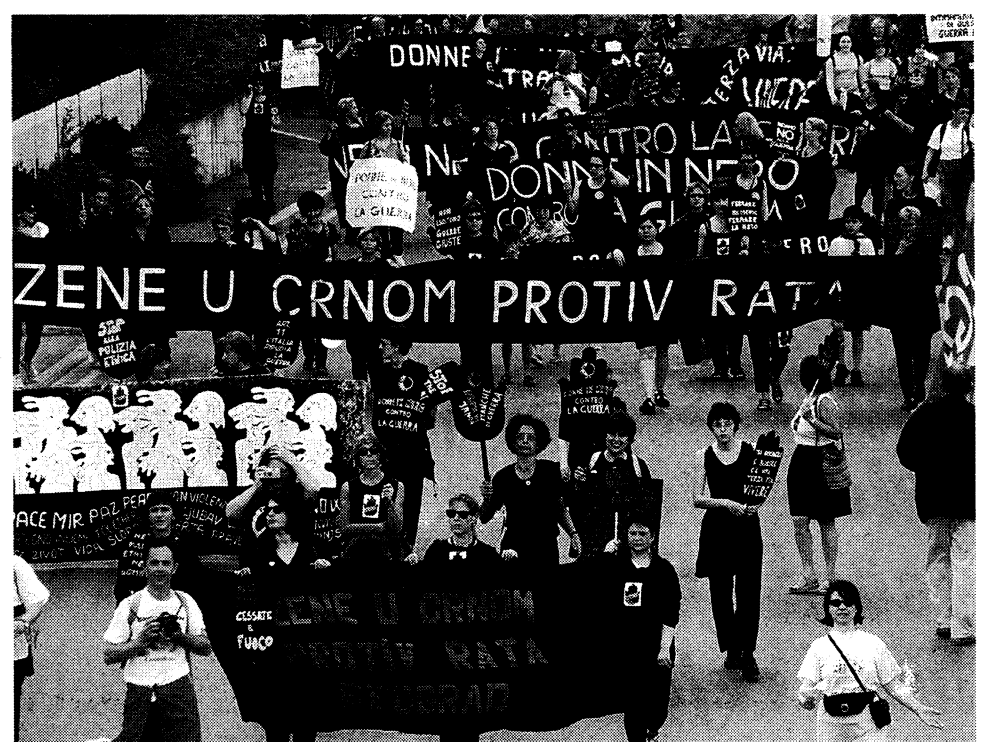
"It's clear NATO is an offensive and dangerous alliance," Bojan said. "And NATO is basically an arm of the U.S. government."

Dusan, a leader of the Students Union of Yugoslavia in Novi Sad who asked that his last name not be used, took apart the justification of the U.S. bombing of Korisa.

"At first NATO didn't admit anything, claiming Serbian troops probably shelled Korisa," he said in a May 19 telephone interview. "Twelve hours later they announced an investigation. It took them 36 hours to admit that NATO warplanes had bombed the village. Thirty-six hours! With all their sophisticated equipment they know in minutes where they strike. And then it was another day later that the stories flooded their media claiming that Belgrade was using these Albanian farmers and other people as human shields to protect military facilities. But their stories didn't include names or descriptions from survivors. None of the foreign reporters who went to Korisa claim to have spotted any army barracks or troop units nearby. Don't get me wrong. I am strongly opposed to the ethnic cleansing in Kosova and all of Milosevic's repressive policies. But the government of the United States is constantly making things up."

The Students Union organized daily demonstrations throughout Yugoslavia for four months in 1996-97 protesting the antidemocratic annulment of municipal election results by the Milosevic regime. The organization has also campaigned since then against the denial of national rights to Albanians in Kosova and tried to build alliances with student groups among Kosovar Albanians.

Dusan's descriptions were indirectly corroborated by others. Aleksandar Mitic, a reporter for Agence France-Press who was



AP Photo/Leonetto Medici

Up to 80,000 people marched from Perugia to Assisi in central Italy May 16 demanding an end to the U.S.-led assault on Yugoslavia, in one of the largest protests anywhere to date. Two days before, some 1,000 people protested at the U.S. consulate in Florence. Earlier in the week three fishermen off the coastal area of Venice were injured when bombs dropped into the sea by NATO planes exploded after being caught in their nets. Some 10,000 people marched past a British military base in Cyprus May 16 demanding an end to the NATO air strikes. Smaller protests have taken place from Brussels to New York.

on the scene hours after the bombing of Korisa, interviewed some of the survivors. Zecir Urimeraj, 62, told Mitic that a group of several hundred Albanians had been "hiding in the forests, but Serb authorities have assured us we can return to our homes." He said two of his daughters, two and three years old, and his brother-in-law had all died in the attack. After the first explosion, many fled toward surrounding fields, according to Urimeraj. "But they bombed us there also."

## Social, economic conditions deteriorate

This kind of indiscriminate bombing is continuing across Yugoslavia.

"Hours after we spoke last week a bomb fell about three meters from my house, but fortunately didn't explode," said Duci Petrovic, a student at the University of Nis, in a May 19 interview. "Another bomb exploded right across Ana's from house," he continued, referring to a friend. No one was injured in these attacks. "Two people were killed and several wounded in the last six days in Nis."

On May 17, NATO warplanes hit and destroyed the overpass on the Belgrade-Nis highway outside Nis, hampering transportation in central Serbia. They also struck the rail line there.

"After what happened last week no one walks in the streets now, day or night," Petrovic said. The previous week 40 people died in that city — the country's second-largest and one of Yugoslavia's main industrial centers — after repeated daily air raids with cluster bombs. In the deadliest assault in broad daylight, 15 people were killed and dozens injured in the May 7 bombing of the city's main market and hospital yard.

Conservative estimates put the toll among civilians at more than 1,300 dead and 5,500 wounded in Serbia and Montenegro. The destruction of most of the country's oil re-

fineries and an increasing portion of oil storage depots is exacerbating difficulties. So is the repeated use of special bombs with graphite filaments that stick to power lines and cause short circuits, cutting electrical power in much of the country.

"When there's not petrol or electricity a lot of other things don't work either," said Ana Morosev in a phone interview from Novi Sad. "Making food and delivering food stops."

Oliver Kokic, a student at Belgrade University, said that whenever power is cut off there's no bread or milk next morning. "Most bakeries run on electricity and milk spoils without refrigeration. The last time this happened in Belgrade was Friday, May 14."

"Today, and most of the past week, there's no public electricity," said Zorica Trifunovic, in a phone interview May 19. She added that the water supply seems to be contaminated, following the bombing of the oil refinery and chemical and fertilizer plants in Pancevo that spilled tens of thousands of gallons of poisonous substances into the Danube River. Trifunovic is a member of Women in Black, an organization that has opposed the breakup of Yugoslavia and organized demonstrations against Belgrade's repressive policies in Kosova.

Unemployment is much higher than the 70 percent level at the end of April, and more than one-third of Yugoslavia's 3 million wage workers have been without income for two months, according to Branislav Canak, president of Nezavisnost, the trade union federation independent of government control.

While food shortages have not appeared in Belgrade, Novi Sad, and many other cities so far, the situation is much tighter in industrial centers like Kragujevac. That city's economic life has come to a virtual standstill since the destruction in early April of the huge Zastava car manufacturing complex

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## The Militant

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that used to employ 38,000 workers. "We now depend almost entirely on humanitarian donations from trade unions in other countries and relatives in the countryside," said Christina Ranic, a member of the metal workers union who used to work at the Zastava plant, in a May 18 interview. "NATO is against working people."

On top of everything else, the U.S. rulers are contemplating further steps to hamper communication among workers, farmers, and students in the country. The destruction of bridges, railways, TV stations, and telecommunication centers has already made this more difficult. Postal services to and from abroad have stopped since March 24, when Washington launched the NATO assault. Long-distance telephone charges are prohibitive. Now the U.S. government may be cutting off, or making extremely difficult to get access to, e-mail.

U.S. president William Clinton signed an executive order May 1 enforcing sanctions, to prevent U.S. companies from dealing in "goods, software, technology (including technical services) and services" with Yugoslavia. Already companies like Informatika, which provided Internet access and software in Belgrade, and Loral Orion with satellite connections announced they will suspend business with Yugoslavia.

"It would be terrible if they succeed in this," said Bojan. "It's another window to the world they want to shut. They want to prevent us from talking to each other."

#### Protests by mothers of Serb soldiers

Bojan, Ana Morosev, and a number of other Serbians said in telephone interviews that determination to resist the U.S.-NATO assault is accompanied by growing resistance to the reactionary policies of the Milosevic regime. "Most people in Serbia are opposed to any kind of ethnic cleansing," said Bojan.

In recent days thousands have staged demonstrations in central and southern Serbia to protest the NATO bombing and demand "that their sons be brought back from Kosova alive, not in coffins," said Morosev on May 19. "Such demonstrations took place in Krusevac, Aleksandrovac, Lefkovac, and Vrenja yesterday."

According to a report provided by the Students Union of Yugoslavia, from their correspondent on the scene, "A group of 2,000 citizens of Krusevac, parents and rela-

tives of soldiers situated in Kosovo at the moment, protested in the town's streets. The reason for their dissatisfaction was the total lack of any information on the soldiers' whereabouts. Unofficial information coming from Kosovo and a number of funerals in Krusevac speak about great casualties. Anxious citizens demanded reception by municipal and army officials. None of their demands were met.

"The same day, demonstrators beat the mayor of Aleksandrovac, a town some 20 km (12 miles) southwest from Krusevac," for similar reasons.

"On May 18, the protests were repeated in Krusevac, but the number of demonstrators rose to 5,000. This time, as a response to the fact that their demands were not met by officials, citizens smashed windows of commune and army department buildings with eggs and stones. Also, the citizens broke into the rooms and studio of local television. Local police didn't intervene." The Krusevac Yugoslav army post published an announcement in which it accused organizers of the actions of treason.

Authorities, however, have reportedly refrained from trying to use any force to suppress these demonstrations so far.

As a number of Albanians forced out of Kosova have told *Militant* reporters, many of their Serb neighbors there opposed the nationalist campaign to drive them out of Kosova. Serb soldiers have deserted a number of units after being ordered to participate in ethnic cleansing operations. Inside Serbia, a sizable minority is not only demanding the return of autonomy to Kosova — which the Milosevic regime revoked in 1989 — but are also supporting the Kosovars struggle for self-determination. "The people of Kosova deserve to decide their future, deserve self-determination," said Duci Petrovic in an earlier interview. "Especially after what happened in the last two months."

The imperialist powers are trying to bolster their case by pointing to the demonstrators in southern Serbia, Morosev said. "But they should know these are the same people NATO is bombing and who will most likely join to defend Yugoslavia from a ground attack by the U.S."

#### Debate on ground invasion

As the NATO assault entered its third month, the Labor Party government of Brit-



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Albanians from Kosova at camp in Ulcinj, Montenegro, near border with Albania, April 25. At center is Cosmet Arifaj, an electrician from the village of Istock. He was forced to leave village by Serb paramilitary forces March 27. He opposed the U.S.-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, but as soon as he began explaining this view he was cut off by other Albanians surrounding him who supported Washington's course, the most vocal of whom identified themselves as members of the Kosova Liberation Army.

ish prime minister Anthony Blair pushed for intensifying the bombing to cripple the Yugoslav army in preparation for a ground invasion of Kosova. Editorials in the big-business press in the United Kingdom and United States repeated this view. The Clinton administration indicated that it was leaving all options open, including an invasion. Washington now has 6,000 troops in Albania as part of a NATO force of more than 20,000. Another force of similar size is deployed in Macedonia, on Kosova's southern flank.

Dusan from Novi Sad said reports from several sources in Serbia indicate NATO is collaborating with Croatia's air force to prepare a possible provocation in the camps with Kosovars in Macedonia or Albania that can be used as a pretext for a ground invasion. The Croatian air force has several Jastreb and Galeb airplanes, similar to those used by Yugoslavia's military. U.S.-NATO pilots are reportedly being trained on them. The insignia of the Yugoslav air force can be easily painted on these planes, which can then be used to stage a bombing of the refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania,

Dusan said.

Bonn, however, has balked at the prospect of a ground invasion. On May 19, Schröder, Germany's chancellor, stated his government would not go along with a ground attack on Kosova. "This is first and foremost a German position," he said. "That position is also the present position of NATO, and the strategy of an alliance can only be changed if all the parties involved agree on it... I will not participate in this specifically British debate on war theories."

Following the May 19 meeting of government officials of the G-7 countries — Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and the United States — and Russia in Bonn, it was apparent that there is no agreement on how to coax Belgrade to the negotiating table on NATO's terms. Washington and most of its allies in Europe are demanding that Belgrade withdraw its forces from Kosova and accept an "international security force" under NATO's command in the region to supposedly guarantee the return of all the refugees, as a precondition to a halt in the bombing.

Moscow, however, is demanding a suspension of the air raids prior to proceeding with further negotiations and United Nations Security Council authorization of any deployment of a "peacekeeping force" in Kosova. Washington, which has been on a collision course with both Moscow and Beijing, is not eager at this point to use the UN Security Council, where both the Russian and Chinese governments have veto power.

In the wake of the U.S. bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade, tensions between Washington and Beijing have risen substantially.

"The eastward expansion of NATO in Europe, the strengthening of the U.S.-Japanese military alliance in the Asian and Pacific region, and the launching of the current aggression against Yugoslavia all constitute an important step in the U.S.'s strategy for world hegemony," said the May 17 *People's Daily*, the newspaper of the ruling Communist Party in China.

Chinese president Jiang Zemin, who has demanded an immediate halt to the NATO bombing, said, "The United States continues to pursue hegemony and power politics, and wantonly interferes in the internal affairs of other countries."

## Fund gets boost at Chicago meeting

### BY ESTELLE DEBATES

NEW YORK — The campaign to raise \$75,000 for the Socialist Workers 1999 Party Building Fund by June 15 has reached the halfway point. To date \$14,154 has been collected — we now need to collect \$15,200 every week for the remainder of the drive to meet the national goal. Supporters in every city need to step up the collection of funds and the effort to win new contributors among the workers, farmers, and youth they are

meeting in working-class struggles today.

Special fund meetings over the next week will be an aid to supporters in every city in getting the drive on target and assuring that each local goal will be met in full and on time.

The response of coal miners to the *Militant's* working-class reporting and explanation of the U.S.-NATO assault Yugoslavia — buying hundreds of copies of the paper — was echoed by a supporter in Salt Lake City who sent in a contribution of \$250 indicating his appreciation of the Balkans coverage as well.

Supporters in Chicago hosted one of the first special meetings for the fund. More than 50 people packed the Pathfinder bookstore May 16 to hear Argiris Malapanis give an eyewitness report from Yugoslavia and Albania. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Militant Labor Forum and the Socialist Workers 1999 Party Building Fund.

Malapanis's explanation of the U.S. war drive to divide up Yugoslavia and roll back the workers state there, and the response of workers in the Balkans, provoked both a lively discussion and a spirited response to the goal of raising \$5,000 for the Party Building Fund in the central Midwest. People came to the meeting not only from the Chicago area, but also from Springfield and DeKalb in central Illinois, Wisconsin, and Des Moines, Iowa.

The meeting attracted several workers who face contract expirations in the next few weeks, two workers who are originally from Colombia, and a woman who immigrated from Russia two years ago. In addition, a handful of students from DePaul University who are organizing to protest the U.S.-NATO war on campus participated in the meeting.

Zena McFadden, from DeKalb, reported that she is active in an antiwar group functioning at Northern Illinois University. Following the meeting she decided to take copies of the last few issues of the *Militant* newspaper with the coverage by the Balkans reporting team and use them to try and sell subscriptions to activists in the committee there.

The meeting concluded with an announcement encouraging participants to take part in two upcoming protests against the U.S. assault on Yugoslavia. One will take place at the June 12 commencement services at Northwestern University where U.S. president William Clinton is speaking. The other protest will be held June 18 when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright speaks at the University of Chicago.

The meeting raised \$4,354 in donations and pledges for the Party Building Fund. In addition, \$375 in literature was sold at the Pathfinder Bookstore, including five copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

**Contributions can be sent to 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Please make checks and money orders out to Socialist Workers Party.**

John Studer in Chicago contributed to this article.

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# California YS meets, plans summer schools

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 40393, San Francisco, California, 94140-0393. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY SAMANTHA KERN

SAN FRANCISCO — Members of the Los Angeles, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco chapters gathered here May 9 for a California State YS meeting. The meeting was called in order to discuss the challenges in building a more proletarian youth organization, the importance in functioning as a statewide YS, and campaigns of the Young Socialists leading up to the August 5-8 Active Workers

Conference sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and YS (see ad on back page).

"Our participation in the April 24 demonstration to demand freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal here in San Francisco is a prime example of how we can function as the California YS, and not just as individual chapters. This was key in our successful propaganda work done there, and in further recruitment of contacts we brought with us," said Samantha Kern, in a report titled, "Functioning as the California Young Socialists."

Members of Los Angeles chapter came up to the demonstration on buses with other activists and members of the Santa Cruz chapter carpooled to the action with other young people interested in the fight to free Abu-Jamal, a framed-up Black journalist who is on death row in Pennsylvania.

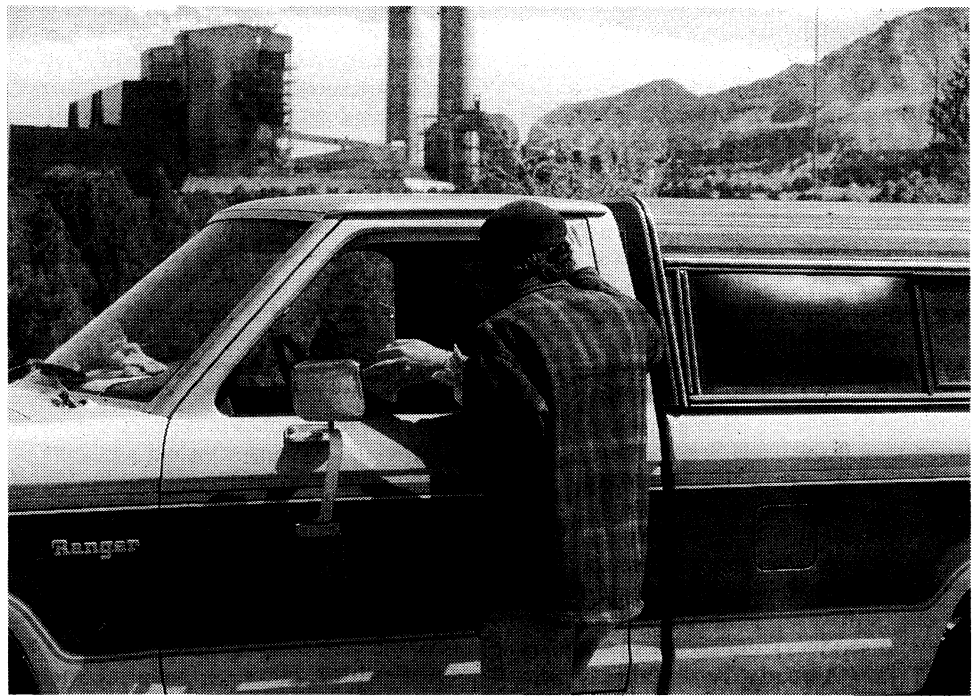
### Selling 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

Participating in this action and a simultaneous action in Philadelphia was an important part of the YS carrying out a decision made at its convention last December to join the fight to free Abu-Jamal and demand an end to the death penalty. Young Socialists also discussed how we can campaign at actions like these with the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*.

By setting up tables throughout the march and rally, young socialists met fighters all day who wanted to discuss the struggle against cop brutality and Washington's war in Yugoslavia. Twelve people bought copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

YS members also discussed the importance of participating in regional teams, and reaffirmed a past decision that none of these teams should head out on the road without at least one young socialist.

Following the meeting, a team was launched to Colorado and Utah to sell at coal mine portals that included Jason Alessio from the Santa Cruz chapter. A young person who has been working with the YS in Los Angeles also joined an ongoing team in the Central Valley of California.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

YS member Jason Alessio discusses *Militant* with miner in Utah. Regional teams will be part of socialist summer schools leading up to August Active Workers Conference.

### Summer school centers

In her report on the "YS Summer School Perspective," Cecilia Ortega said, "Every footloose young socialist should organize to move to one of the cities where the YS and SWP are organizing socialist summer schools. These include San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Birmingham, and New York. This will provide a great opportunity to study Marxism and the history of the communist movement, while getting out to strikes, demonstrations against police brutality, and protests over the war in Yugoslavia."

Summer school participants who want to get the experience of working as part of an industrial union fraction can join the joint SWP-YS jobs committees in these cities and work collectively to find jobs in industry.

Following the California YS meeting, Manuel González from the Santa Cruz chapter and Olga Russi from the Los Angeles chapter decided to head to Atlanta for the summer

school there. Jason Alessio from Santa Cruz will move to Los Angeles to participate in that summer school.

Anyone who is interested in participating in the summer schools can contact the National Office of the Young Socialists.

Samantha Kern is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers and the California state YS organizer.

Young Socialists \$9,000 Fund Drive April 3-June 13			
City	Goal	Paid	%
Seattle	250	116	46%
Santa Cruz	300	75	25%
San Francisco	1000	80	8%
Atlanta	300	0	0%
Austin, MN	150	0	0%
Boston	200	0	0%
Chicago	500	0	0%
Detroit	200	0	0%
Houston	100	0	0%
Los Angeles	1000	0	0%
New York	1000	0	0%
Newark	200	0	0%
Philadelphia	50	0	0%
Salt Lake City	100	0	0%
Springfield, IL	75	0	0%
Twin Cities	400	0	0%
Washington, D.C.	200	0	0%
Other		500	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6025</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>13%</b>
*Raised goal			

## Network will help productivity, quality in Pathfinder shop — funds needed

BY PETER THIERJUNG

NEW YORK — The volunteer workers who operate Pathfinder's printshop met May 15 to view a demonstration of plans to computerize the factory floor and discuss how it can help their efforts to increase productivity and efficiency. The collaborative network system, using Lotus Notes and computer work stations at each machine, will help track jobs, monitor production rates and labor hours, transmit production instructions and priorities, and monitor training and maintenance.

Making it possible to tie together the production process is another step in the transformation of the printshop, complementing the plans now in progress to establish a single modern pressroom. Pathfinder is appealing for \$250,000 in capital contributions to carry out these steps. So far \$75,000 has been raised.

The printshop is the final stage in an international production line to keep all of Pathfinder's 350 titles in print. Printshop workers are scheduled to deliver 10 titles in May, which means all of the publisher's books and pamphlets that have been digitally prepared so far by volunteers around the world will be back in print.

This will immediately result in more than \$2,000 from sales of books currently out of stock. These sales include 325 copies of *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention* that have already been shipped out. Other back orders that will now be filled — a total of 109 books — include *Leon Trotsky Writings, 1932-33*, *The First Ten Years of American Communism* by James P. Cannon, and *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*.

Capital contributions by supporters of the project ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000 allowed the printshop to purchase a \$350,000

computer-to-plate system last November. The new equipment has made it possible for the shop's volunteers to eliminate labor-intensive prepress tasks and reduce the overall staff by nearly one-third from 46 to 32, while keeping pace with the growing flow of digitized Pathfinder books coming through the pipeline. This lowers the cost of reprints and allows just-in-time inventories that save on materials and warehousing costs.

Architects are now drawing up plans for the renovation of the new pressroom that will house the shop's three printing presses. The shop's worker-volunteers plan to take down the wall between the web press, which produces the *Militant*, and the two sheet-fed presses, which produce the text and covers for Pathfinder books and pamphlets. The physical separation of the presses is an obstacle on the press crew's capacity to crosstrain and increase productivity, efficiency, and savings. This is a long-postponed project that will accelerate the necessary reorganization of labor in the shop begun last year with acquiring the computer-to-plate equipment.

Computer networking on the factory floor will complement the reorganization of the press department. "The network system will help make the production process transparent and accessible to all the volunteers in the shop," said Paul Mailhot, who is organizing this effort by shop volunteers. "It will provide us the objective data needed to meet measurable benchmarks that register our progress in transforming the shop."

"The network will also be a gateway to the Internet," Mailhot added. "It will tie together the shop and the international Pathfinder team's production lines, as well as connect the shop to commercial customers, vendors, and technical support."

Paul Pederson, one of the members of the

press crew who operates the computer-to-plate equipment, reported, "We took further steps this week to establish a workflow that will allow the shop to more efficiently handle all aspects of a job — from the digital file that first comes in from a customer, to the plate that is generated for the press."

Pederson described working with technicians and a trainer from the manufacturer of the shop's computer-to-plate machine. They installed the most up-to-date software and conducted three days of training.

Another \$175,000 is needed for the capital fund. Contributions of \$1,000 to several thousand, as well as donations from those in a position to give larger amounts of capital, will be needed to complete this effort. Supporters of Pathfinder have made contributions from bequests, accident settlements, and other windfalls, as well as from bonuses and profit-sharing schemes that have been foisted on many industrial workers, often in return for concession contracts.

To find out how you can make a contribution, write: The Capital Fund Campaign, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

Peter Thierjung is the head of the shop's bindery department and is a member of the Capital Fund Committee.

### MILITANT PERSPECTIVA MUNDIAL Subscription drive

M A Y 1 - J U N E 2 7

	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden	16	4	25%	6	3	8	4
New Zealand							
Christchurch	16	4	25%	1	0	6	0
Auckland	30	5	17%	1	0	5	0
N.Z. total	46	9	20%	2	0	11	0
Australia	14	2	14%	3	0	12	1
Canada							
Montreal	20	5	25%	10	1	30	4
Vancouver	30	5	17%	3	1	15	1
Toronto	35	2	6%	5	1	25	4
Canada total	85	12	14%	18	3	70	9
Iceland	8	1	13%			2	0
United States							
Birmingham, AL	35	9	26%	6	0	10	0
Atlanta	28	7	25%	7	2	16	2
Cleveland	40	8	20%	8	0	10	1
Los Angeles	65	13	20%	30	9	40	17
Philadelphia	32	6	19%	6	1	15	0
Houston	35	6	17%	15	1	20	1
Washington, D.C.	50	8	16%	15	0	30	4
Des Moines	40	6	15%	20	14	20	0
Boston	35	5	14%	15	2	25	4
Miami	35	5	14%	15	4	20	0
New York	120	15	13%	50	14	75	6
Twin Cities, MN	50	6	12%	12	2	15	1
Seattle	45	5	11%	15	1	15	0
Pittsburgh	30	3	10%	5	0	20	0
Detroit	35	3	9%	8	1	15	1
San Francisco	90	7	8%	40	2	40	4
Newark, NJ	125	9	7%	50	7	60	10
Chicago	50	3	6%	15	1	30	4
Central Illinois	20	1	5%	4	0	7	0
So. Minnesota	8	0	0%				
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>55</b>
United Kingdom							
London	35	4	11%	8	0	30	3
Manchester							
UK total	35	4	11%	8	0	30	3
France	5	0	0%	3	0	25	3
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>1177</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>150</b>

# 'I read the book with co-workers at breaks'

Continued from front page

politics and in the labor and farm movements." Bailey noted that so far "this effort has not been led as a party-wide campaign." Socialist workers who are reading the book, bringing it to their workplaces, and talking about it to their co-workers are making progress on selling it, she said. "The main thing we need to change is to get everyone into the campaign. We need an all-out, 100 percent effort."

Over the coming weeks, leaders of the SWP's trade union work will spend substantially more time campaigning to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* and subscriptions to the *Militant*. Bailey described how she held up the book after a recent meeting on Yugoslavia at the University of Washington. Within minutes a young Black woman who studies at another campus bought a copy.

## Read and discuss on the job

Joe Swanson, a member of United Auto Workers Local 1672 in Des Moines, Iowa, has sold four copies through his work on the job. "I began by showing and explaining to co-workers the detailed handiwork that went into producing *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Then over breaks, lunch, and down time I would read sections of the book or show the photos in the book to my immediate co-workers," he said.

Swanson said he points to a section in the chapter entitled, "So Far from God, So Close to Orange County." On page 144, Barnes says, "The radical right trades in demagoguery. They seek to tap into fears and anxieties.... But the one thing they do not do is urge those to whom they are appealing to read books — to really read books. They want you to scapegoat two or three layers in society — immigrants, welfare mothers, labor unions, the 'femi-nazis,' whatever — and blame them for all the problems created by capitalism."

When workers read this it has a big impact, Swanson said. "Considering that many of my co-workers are immigrants and single mothers, and union members, it helps them to see a little more clearly why we should take the rightists more seriously." Swanson's most recent sale was to a worker on strike against Titan Tire who now works at his plant.

Nearly every day there are explosive political developments in the world that *Capitalism's World Disorder* helps to shed light on. Beginning in this issue, the *Militant* will run weekly selections from the book that do exactly that (see page 13).

## Sales to commercial stores count

Sales of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to commercial stores will now also be counted

toward the goal of selling 1,500. This will increase the possibility for working people to buy the book. "The owner of a Black-oriented bookstore in southern New Jersey called Pathfinder in Philadelphia in early May to find out how he could get *Capitalism's World Disorder*," reports Pathfinder editor Michael Baumann. "A customer had come with a flier

vices Administration.

Another dairy farmer from Washington County, Pennsylvania, also bought a copy of the book. "He had many questions about events in the Balkans," said Hamilton. "He was visibly suspicious of the motives of the U.S. government and its NATO allies."

In their first two days selling to miners and other workers in West Virginia, 32 miners bought copies of the *Militant* newspaper, reported Danny Booher, a Steelworker from Pittsburgh. In addition, teams members met with a former miner and longtime supporter of the *Militant* for a couple of hours. She bought a copy of the book, a pamphlet on the coal miners strike in the 1970s, and a one-year subscription.

The West Virginia and southern Ohio coal team will continue through the week. *Militant* supporters in Minnesota and Iowa are organizing a week-long team to reach out to meatpackers and other workers in their region beginning May 22. In addition to factory gates, they plan to go door-to-door and visit individuals who have already expressed interest in the *Militant* and socialist literature. To join this team, or another, see the listing on page 12.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Striking miner in Colorado reads the *Militant* at the picket line

and asked for the book, he explained, but he couldn't find a local wholesaler who had it in stock. He ordered six copies."

"We'll be meeting with supporters of the Socialist Workers Party who want to help get this book into commercial stores next Monday to map out a plan," said Salm Kolis in Pittsburgh. "A lot of stores have 'millennium' displays right now, full of books whose purpose is to mystify and obscure reality. Workers should be able to buy *Capitalism's World Disorder*, which helps clarify what is happening in the world today and what we can do to change it."

## Books, subs go hand-in-hand

Lea Sherman reports from Houston that a contingent of 250 locked-out Steelworkers from five Kaiser Aluminum plants and their supporters joined environmentalists in a May 17-19 series of forums and actions against Kaiser parent Maxxam Corp. and its major

stockholder, Charles Hurwitz. Participants bought eight copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and six *Militant* subscriptions in the course of the events — look for a full report next week.

In the past few weeks, members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Union (PACE) in Houston, Texas, have sold 10 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* out of a goal of 15 (see article below).

Supporters of the campaign to sell the book should reach out to farmers and working people in rural areas in their region. Recently, Linn Hamilton, a retired dairy farmer from Pennsylvania, reported that he sold a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to a office worker who had been laid off from the Farm Ser-

vice Administration.

Workers bought the book for many reasons. One locked-out Crown worker bought his copy at the picket line after carefully examining all the pictures and captions. Even though he thought that NATO was helping the Kosovars by bombing Serbia and Kosovo, he wanted to find out more about why the U.S. government was so interested in Yugoslavia.

Big Mac, a co-worker of mine at Lyondell-Citgo Refinery, liked the international perspectives the book

presented. The picture section "makes you want to read more about what the captions present." He was especially interested in the old pictures from World War II. "You see the same old thing today that existed then — the racism, the colonialism — and the need to stand up and fight," he commented.

Steelworkers locked out by Kaiser Aluminum have also bought the book. One of them got it at a Militant Labor Forum. "I wasn't in the habit of reading much that was serious before the lockout," he said. "But I'm finding that I really need to read books like this to understand what's happening to me and in the world."

Another Kaiser Aluminum worker, Dave Locklin, said he bought *Capitalism's World Disorder* because "I thought it would benefit both me and the strike to read about how working people can organize together to build a new society that's not based on corporate greed."

Tom Boots, a PACE member locked out at the Crown Central Petroleum refinery, said three weeks after buying the book, "Well, I started reading, but it's rough going." He was happy to hear that the Houston SWP branch is planning a summer school series on the book. "I'm writing down all my questions to bring to the discussion and looking forward to talking about these ideas with other people."

## BY PATTI HIYAMA

HOUSTON — Members of PACE (formerly the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union) here took a while to start selling *Capitalism's World Disorder*, but once we took the



## CAMPAIGN TO SELL 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

April 1 - June 14

Country	Goal	Sold	%
Iceland	4	3	75%
Sweden	6	4	67%
New Zealand			
Christchurch	14	9	64%
Auckland	12	7	58%
N.Z. Total	26	16	62%
United Kingdom			
London	41	27	66%
Manchester	17	5	29%
UK Total	58	32	55%

Country	Goal	Sold	%
Canada			
Vancouver	21	12	57%
Montreal	7	3	43%
Toronto	50	18	36%
Canada Total	78	33	42%

Country	Goal	Sold	%
United States			
Atlanta	40	23	58%
Washington, D.C.	60	32	53%
Los Angeles	82	37	45%
Pittsburgh	40	17	43%
San Francisco	136	57	42%
Seattle	50	20	40%
Detroit	78	28	36%
C. Illinois	17	6	35%
Des Moines	55	18	33%
Newark	150	42	28%
Boston	50	12	24%
Chicago	75	18	24%
Philadelphia	50	12	24%
Twin Cities, MN	50	12	24%
Cleveland	60	14	23%
Houston	70	16	23%
New York	120	27	23%
Miami	45	10	22%
Birmingham	60	13	22%
S. Minnesota	14	1	7%
U.S. Total	1302	415	32%
Australia	20	6	30%
International total	1490	509	34%
Total goal/should be	1500	975	65%

## CAMPAIGN TO SELL 'Capitalism's World Disorder' IN THE UNIONS

	Goals	Sold	%
United States			
PACE (Houston)	15	9	60%
UTU	80	37	46%
UAW	75	33	44%
IAM	110	39	35%
USWA	80	24	30%
UFCW	80	18	23%
UNITE	70	9	13%
Total	510	169	33%
Should be	500	360	72%

	Goals	Sold	%
United Kingdom			
RMT	4	2	50%
TGWU	7	1	14%
AEEU	2	0	0%
Total	9	3	33%
Australia			
AMWU	5	2	40%
MUA	4	0	0%
Total	9	2	22%
Canada			
IAM	7	2	29%
USWA	7	1	14%
UFCW	3	0	0%
Canada total	17	3	18%

AEEU—Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU—Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW—Canadian Auto Workers Union; EU—Engineers Union; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; MWU—Meat Workers Union; IAM—International Association of Machinists; PACE—Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers; RMT—National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; SFWU—Service & Food Workers Union; TGWU—Transport and General Workers Union; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union

## MILITANT SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE In the unions

	Militant		PM		NI		
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
New Zealand							
EU	3	1	33%				
MWU	2	0	0%				
SFWU	2	0	0%				
N.Z. total	7	1	14%				
Canada							
IAM	5	1	20%		4	0	
USWA	7	1	14%	1	0	6	0
UNITE	4	0	0%	1	1	6	0
Canada total	16	2	13%	2	1	16	0
United States							
UNITE	15	2	13%	20	1	12	1
IAM	50	0	0%	12	0	20	0
UAW	40	0	0%	4	0	15	0
UFCW	35	0	0%	25	0	20	0
USWA	35	0	0%	4	0	20	0
UTU	50	0	0%	5	0	20	0
PACE (Houston)							
U.S. total	225	2	1%	70	1	107	1
Australia							
AMWU	3	0	0%		2	0	
MUA	2	0	0%		1	0	
Australia total	5	0	0%		3	0	

# 'We have put an end to the eviction of the Fidel Castro's June 1959 speech on implementing

BY FIDEL CASTRO

People of Villa Clara:

Today is exactly five months and twenty-one days since the triumph of the revolution. This is the third rally we have held in this province: the first was when we were crossing through the province on our way to the capital; the second was at the University of Las Villas — possibly many of those here today were present at that rally too — and this is the third. But what is striking about this third rally is that, after five months and twenty-one days of revolutionary government, this is without doubt the largest of them all. [Applause]

This demonstrates that the revolution, far from weakening in strength, is getting stronger by the day. And it gives us an idea of the magnitude of the rally we're going to hold in the capital of the republic this coming July 26.

Today's gathering is part of the preparatory work for the rally of a half million peasants we're going to bring to the capital of the republic [Applause] in support of the agrarian reform.

This coming July 26 half a million peasants will attest to the support that the Cuban revolution enjoys. They will carry machetes, if possible, [Applause] with guayabera shirts and palm-leaf hats, in the style of the *mambises*.<sup>1</sup> [Applause] with Cuban flags on the front of their hats, like some we've seen today, reminding us that this struggle is a continuation of the struggles for our independence.

## Workers prepare to welcome peasants

In the capital of the republic, all the people

<sup>1</sup> *Mambi* refers to fighters in Cuba's wars of independence from Spain, many of them freed slaves or agricultural workers. These wars took place during 1868-78 and 1895-98. The term "mambi" originated in the 1840s during the fight for independence from Spain in the nearby island of Santo Domingo. After a Black Spanish officer named Juan Ethninius Mamby joined the Dominican independence fighters, Spanish forces began referring to the guerrillas by the derogatory term "mambies." Later the related term "mambises" was applied to the freedom fighters in Cuba, who adopted it as a badge of honor.

¡LA REFORMA AGRARIA AVANZA...!

¡LA REFORMA AGRARIA AVANZA...!

## FIRMA FIDEL EL PRIMER TITULO

"Comenzamos a dar la tierra a los campesinos por donde mismo empezaron a quitársela los conquistadores a los indios, por Baracoa"

REVOLUCION

ORGANO DEL MOVIMIENTO 26 DE JULIO

Año II • La Habana, jueves, 10 de Diciembre de 1959

2ª EDICION • 5 Centavos • Director: Carlos Franqui • No. 313

Hay un primer el certificado de defen-  
sión el Gobierno tiene que hacer  
para un millón de hectáreas y no  
colocar solo un documento burocrático  
de un proceso que, según a todos  
debe



Front page of *Revolución*, newspaper of July 26 Movement, December 10, 1959. Headline reads, "Fidel signs the first title. 'We're beginning to distribute land to the peasants in the same spot where the conquistadores started to take it away from the Indians — in Baracoa.'" First agrarian reform deed signed was in Baracoa region, where Spanish colonialists killed Taino Indian chief Hatuey in 1511.

are awaiting the peasants. Since it is virtually impossible to transport half a million peasants from all over the republic in a single day, since it is virtually impossible to find hotels to put up half a million peasants, and since the rally will be organized and paid for by the people, therefore ever since we launched the slogan of assembling half a million peasants in Havana and asked for the people's cooperation, tens of thousands of offers to house the peasants have been coming in. [Applause]

That rally will constitute the most moving event in the political and revolutionary history of our country, because the men of the city are going to open wide their doors to the men of the countryside. They're going to turn their houses over to the men of the countryside, have them be their guests, [Applause] in order to make that demonstra-

tion possible — a demonstration that will show the entire world that the Cuban revolution enjoys the invincible backing of the peasants, the workers, the students, the professionals, and all those citizens who put the interests of our homeland above petty personal interests. [Applause]

The rally on July 26 will constitute the grandest and most moving challenge that has been seen in any nation of Latin America since the republics of this continent were founded. Because for the first time in the history of the Latin American nations, a movement is taking place with the degree of popular backing that the Cuban revolutionary movement has.... [Applause]

## How the agrarian reform law works

I want to explain to you how we are going to carry out the agrarian reform. I want

to explain to you in detail what the agrarian reform is, so that the reactionaries, the big plantation owners, and the counterrevolutionaries can't come around trying to confuse the peasants. [Applause]

The vast majority of the cultivated land of Cuba is in the hands of less than 2 percent of the owners of land. Landowners targeted by the agrarian reform constitute less than 1 percent of those holding land in Cuba. That is, out of every 100 owners of land, only 1 percent have been adversely affected by the agrarian reform. But that 1 percent holds the majority of the cultivated land of Cuba in its hands. That is, 99 percent of those owning land — who are owners of one *caballería*,<sup>2</sup> or two, or three, or five, or less than thirty — is a greater percentage than those who have more than thirty. Those who have more than thirty *caballerías* are less than 1 percent. But they are the ones who have the best lands, and the largest part of the land of Cuba. It is that 1 percent who have been targeted by the agrarian reform.

Who is going to benefit? First of all, more than two hundred thousand peasant families. [Applause] Secondly, the entire people of Cuba; 99 percent of the people of Cuba. Because if the peasants have resources, if the peasants have money, they're not going to hoard that money in some bank; they're going to spend that money on shoes, on clothing, on food.

And who will that benefit? It will benefit all those who work in the cities, who will have more work and better wages when all the peasants have enough money to acquire everything they need. [Applause]

What does the agrarian reform state? The agrarian reform law states: "No one may possess more than thirty *caballerías* of land, unless they have the land producing at maximum yield." That is, a well-cultivated rice farm is allowed to exceed thirty *caballerías*, but never more than a hundred. A well-tended and well-run livestock farm may exceed thirty *caballerías* but never more than a hundred. [Applause] A well-run sugarcane farm, producing a high yield per *caballería*, may exceed thirty, but never more than a hundred.

If someone has more than thirty *caballerías*, but they are not well utilized, then everything in excess of thirty will be expropriated by INRA<sup>3</sup> and distributed among the peasants. [Applause]

If a peasant is a squatter on state lands, and has in his possession less than two *caballerías* of land, the state will give him title to that land free of charge. [Applause]

## Land, credits, implements, and housing

We've put an end forever to the evictions of peasants. [Applause] Has any peasant been evicted since the triumph of the revolution? But we were not content with that; we have also turned those peasants into the owners of the land. [Applause] Moreover, we have given them credit at low interest — 4 percent — so that they can work. We gave them implements, because we gave them the land free of charge. The implements and the credit can be paid off in as much time as needed, and at only 4 percent. We not only give them the land, the implements, and the credits, but we are also going to build houses for them. [Applause] Not only have we put an end to the evictions, but we are going to give them the land. We are going to give them the implements and credits. We are going to guarantee them a price for their products. We are going to build houses for

<sup>2</sup> One *caballería* is approximately 33 acres, or 13.5 hectares.

<sup>3</sup> The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) was formed by the Agrarian Reform Law as the instrument for its implementation. Staffed by cadres of the Rebel Army and the July 26 Movement, INRA was granted sweeping powers over virtually every aspect of the economy.

## 80,000 listened to Castro speak at mass rally

BY SARA LOBMAN

The speech by Fidel Castro, major excerpts of which are featured in this issue, was given to a mass rally of 80,000 peasants and workers in Santa Clara, Cuba's third-largest city, on June 21, 1959.

Just five weeks earlier, on May 17, Castro had signed into law a far-reaching agrarian reform. The rally in Santa Clara, the capital of central Cuba's Las Villas province, was one of numerous events held across the country to explain the Agrarian Reform Law, mobilize support for it, and build toward a national demonstration in Havana on July 26. That date marked the sixth anniversary of the 1953 attack on the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba by 160 combatants under Castro's command — the action that opened the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Hundreds of thousands of peasants from across Cuba traveled to Havana, many for the first time in their lives, to take part in the gigantic July 26 mobilization. Workers in the capital opened their homes to these *campesinos*, strengthening the alliance of exploited producers in city and countryside on which the revolution was based.

The 1959 Agrarian Reform Law was "one of the most important events in the life of Cuba," as Castro put it in proclaiming the law on May 17. The government's rapid action to organize rural toilers to implement the land reform consolidated the worker-peasant alliance and brought the revolution into head-on confrontation with U.S. imperialism and its allies among the exploiting

classes in Cuba.

Prior to the revolution, 85 percent of Cuba's small farmers rented rather than owned land. They lived under the constant threat of eviction. Some 200,000 peasant families did not have a single acre to till for their own use. Meanwhile, more than 50 percent of the most productive land was in the hands of wealthy plantation owners abroad, primarily from the United States.

Eradicating these oppressive and inequitable conditions was central to the struggle against Batista from its origins, codified in the programmatic manifesto of the revolutionary July 26 Movement — "History Will Absolve Me," Fidel Castro's 1953 speech to the court that convicted and sentenced him following the Moncada attack. And in October 1958, toward the close of the revolutionary war that brought down the Batista regime three months later, the Rebel Army put its political authority and military power behind the peasants' demands, decreeing "Law no. 3" redistributing land in areas liberated from the tyranny.

The goal of the May 1959 law was to expropriate the large plantations, eliminate the system of rents and mortgages crushing the peasantry, and guarantee use of the land to those who worked it. It granted each peasant family a "vital minimum" of two *caballerías*, or 67 acres. Every tenant, sharecropper, or squatter cultivating up to 165 acres was given clear title to that land.

Land could be mortgaged only to the state, not to banks or private individuals. This freed peasants from the threat of foreclosure and lessened their enslavement to debt by

making credit available at favorable rates. The law limited the amount of land an individual family could own to 1,000 acres in most cases, and prohibited foreign ownership.

As the accompanying article by Mike Taber explains, the 1959 Agrarian Reform Law was a watershed in the revolution, accelerating its anticapitalist course. It was a far-reaching, revolutionary, and anti-imperialist measure, one that could only be carried out by the workers and peasants. But it did not end capitalist relations on the land. Many privately owned estates between 165 and 1,000 acres continued to be cultivated by agricultural workers who faced brutal exploitation at the hands of landowners.

In 1963 the revolutionary government in Cuba organized the toilers to implement a second agrarian reform, which will be the topic of the September installment in this series. The new law expropriated capitalist farmers with holdings in excess of 165 acres — still 20 percent of the agricultural land at the time. Working farmers and their families were guaranteed the right to remain on their land and produce for as long as they wished. They would receive as much aid as the resources of the revolution permitted. These guarantees have been honored to this day.

The June 1959 speech by Fidel Castro excerpted above will appear in full in the first volume of a collection of his talks from the early years of the revolution. The translation is copyright © Pathfinder Press and reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

# peasants, made them owners of the land' agrarian revolution

them. And we are also going to build schools for them. [Applause]

So, I repeat, the advantages for the peasants on state lands who have less than two caballerías are the following:

First: the land grabbers and the big plantation owners, the ones who used to evict the peasants, will disappear.

Second: the peasants will become the owners of their land, free of charge.

Third: the peasants will receive the implements they need, to be paid off in as much time as necessary, at just 4 percent interest.

Fourth: the peasants will receive credits for each year's harvest at 4 percent interest.

Fifth: the peasants will receive decently built housing, to be paid for in twenty years without interest. [Applause]

Sixth: the peasants will receive a guaranteed price for their produce, and will be assured that they can sell it, from the moment they start planting. [Applause]

Seventh: the peasants will have consumer stores, consumer cooperatives to receive food items at cost plus expenses.

Eighth: the peasants will have roads to transport their produce.

Ninth: the children of the peasants will

## The New York Times

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 1959.

### Cuban Farm Law Imperils U.S. Sugar Concerns' Land

#### Companies With Foreign Stockholders Banned From Owning Plantations—Property Inheritance Curbed

By R. HART PHILLIPS

Special to The New York Times

HAVANA, May 18 — United States-owned sugar mills in Cuba will be stripped of their cane plantations under Premier Fidel Castro's new agrarian reform law, which was approved by the Cabinet last night and signed by President Manuel Urrutia Lleo.

The law specifies that no cane plantation can be operated by a stock company unless every stockholder is a Cuban citizen. It also states that only citizens will be permitted to purchase land and that no foreigner can inherit land here.

All the Cuban sugar mills, including those under United States ownership, have large areas of land on which they cultivate cane in addition to that they buy from nearby planters. Some of the largest land holdings are those of the United Fruit Company in Oriente Province, where the company operates two large sugar mills at Preston and Boston. The Cu-

ban-American Sugar Company also has thousands of acres of land under cultivation for its Delicias and Chaparra mills in Oriente.

All sugar mills are given ninety days to comply with the requirements of the agrarian reform law. After this period their land will be expropriated and their sugar quotas canceled unless they have met the requirement that all stock be owned by Cuban citizens unconnected with the mills.

One thousand acres is set as the maximum amount of land that any person or company may own in Cuba. Land in excess of that amount will be expropriated and divided among the landless. Only cane and rice plantations and cattle ranches belonging to Cuban citizens are exempt from this clause.

A large number of American landowners, like Arthur Vining

Continued on Page 12, Column 3



U.S. imperialism's reaction to Cuba's Agrarian Reform Law, as reflected in the *New York Times* on May 19, 1959, at left. The vast majority of the best cultivated land in Cuba was in the hands of less than 2 percent of all owners. U.S. companies owned nearly half of the land used for sugar cane production. Above, one of 40 peasant families thrown off land by U.S.-owned Francisco Sugar Co., the eighth-largest sugar producer in Cuba, in 1942.

and the corrupt politicians, will for the first time count as an essential factor of the nation. [Applause] From now on, a peasant will be a person. From now on, a peasant will have everyone's respect and consideration. From now on, a peasant who goes to the city won't have to feel ashamed and embarrassed; on the contrary, everyone will treat him for what he is, for what he is worth, [Applause] as a good man, a noble man, a working man, a

brother, and the most committed and enthusiastic defender of this revolution.

#### Today the peasant is respected

Now, when a peasant comes to Santa Clara or goes to Havana, nobody laughs at him. Nobody makes jokes about the peasant, because today the peasant is a hero. Everyone treats the peasant with respect.

Continued on Page 8

have schools and sports fields [Applause] and medical care.

Tenth: the peasants, who until now have been the victims of the big plantation owners

## Series marks key steps by Cuban revolution

BY MIKE TABER

This is the sixth piece in a series appearing in the *Militant* each month throughout 1999 celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Cuban revolution. The series features speeches by central leaders of the revolution marking turning points and accomplishments as the workers and farmers of Cuba pressed ahead in the opening years of the revolution, defending their interests against the capitalists, landlords, and imperialist rulers in the United States.

The revolutionary struggle that toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959, was led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro. These organizations had mobilized Cuba's toilers to bring down the bloody regime, throw off the yoke of Yankee economic and political domination, and initiate radical land reform. Also opposing Batista were substantial bourgeois forces, most of whom did little to bring down the dictatorship but were energetic in seeking to block the Rebel Army's victory.

When it became clear this could not be prevented, these forces — in league with Washington — set their hopes on buying off and corrupting the revolutionary leadership. They confidently expected to engineer the sequence of events often seen elsewhere in Latin America throughout the 20th century: that the July 26 Movement's program would remain only a piece of paper, while in practice the interests of Washington and of Cuba's landlords and capitalists would be secure. Eventually, they anticipated, the situation would "stabilize" enough so that the bearded rebels could be discarded altogether and more reliable political and military forces reinstated.

They were wrong. From the beginning, Washington and its Cuban bourgeois soul mates underestimated the political caliber, class firmness, and repeated bold initiatives of the leadership forged by the Rebel Army, and the determination of Cuba's workers and farmers to defend

their interests.

The first government that came to power in January 1959 was a coalition of the revolutionary forces led by the July 26 Movement and bourgeois opposition figures, among them the new president, Manuel Urrutia. Fidel Castro remained commander-in-chief of the Rebel Army. He had no position in the new government.

The July 26 Movement and Rebel Army forces under Castro's leadership, both inside and outside the government, continued to mobilize the toilers to carry out the program they had fought for. As the revolution deepened, Fidel Castro became prime minister in mid-February. Among the measures decreed by the government in early 1959 and implemented in practice by the Rebel Army at the head of the workers and farmers vanguard were the dismantling of the military and police forces of the Batista regime; the eradication of the extremely profitable U.S.-dominated gambling and prostitution operations; the outlawing of racist discrimination in hiring and social services; and the slashing of rents and prices for other basic goods and services, such as telephone and utility rates, that consume most workers' income.

Most decisively, in May 1959 an agrarian reform law — the topic of this month's feature — was implemented. Millions of acres of large landed estates held by U.S. and Cuban ruling-class families were confiscated, and hundreds of thousands of peasants received title to the land they worked. To implement the land reform, the new government established the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and Castro was named INRA's president.

These measures provoked a sharpening class polarization inside Cuba, including within the coalition government. During the summer and fall of 1959, as the land reform advanced, Washington's economic and military hostility escalated. As Cuban workers and peasants responded, they deepened their determination to defend their gains and realize their dreams. Under popular pressure, the representatives of capitalist forces resigned from the government one after the other. These included Urrutia, who was re-

placed as president by Osvaldo Dorticós, a prominent lawyer with ample credentials as an anti-imperialist and anti-Batista fighter and a member of the July 26 Movement.

The July 26 Movement as well as other groups that participated in the fight against Batista were profoundly affected as procapitalist forces split away. More than a few joined armed counterrevolutionary organizations.

By November 1959, the last of the bourgeois forces had left the government. Washington launched a full-scale political, economic, and military campaign to overthrow the workers and farmers government.

From August to October 1960, in direct response to the escalating U.S. attacks, Cuba's working people mobilized by the millions to support and implement government decrees nationalizing the factories, refineries, mills, and other holdings of U.S.- and Cuban-owned corporations. The domination of capital was broken and the foundations laid for beginning a transition to socialism. In April 1961, the day after U.S.-organized bombing assaults on Cuban airfields and on the eve of the landing of U.S.-trained and -financed mercenary troops at the Bay of Pigs, the socialist character of the revolution was proclaimed. The invaders at the Bay of Pigs were defeated in 72 hours.

The standoff between the two irreconcilable forces represented by Havana and Washington, which continues to this day, has marked much of world politics throughout the last 40 years.

Most of the speeches that will be included in this series will appear in books that Pathfinder is preparing for publication. These include two volumes of speeches by Fidel Castro from the first decade of the revolution, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and a new edition of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*.

The next installment in this series will be the opening speech by Ernesto Che Guevara to the Latin American Youth Congress held in Havana in July-August 1960. Later installments will take up the nationalization of imperialist-owned property in August 1960 and the October 1962 "missile crisis."

Some of the speeches planned for this series have never before appeared in English. Others have been out of print for many years. *Militant* readers who are interested in helping with the translation are invited to contact Pathfinder Press at (212) 741-0690. Messages can also be sent to 73321.414@compuserve.com or mailed to Pathfinder at 410 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014.

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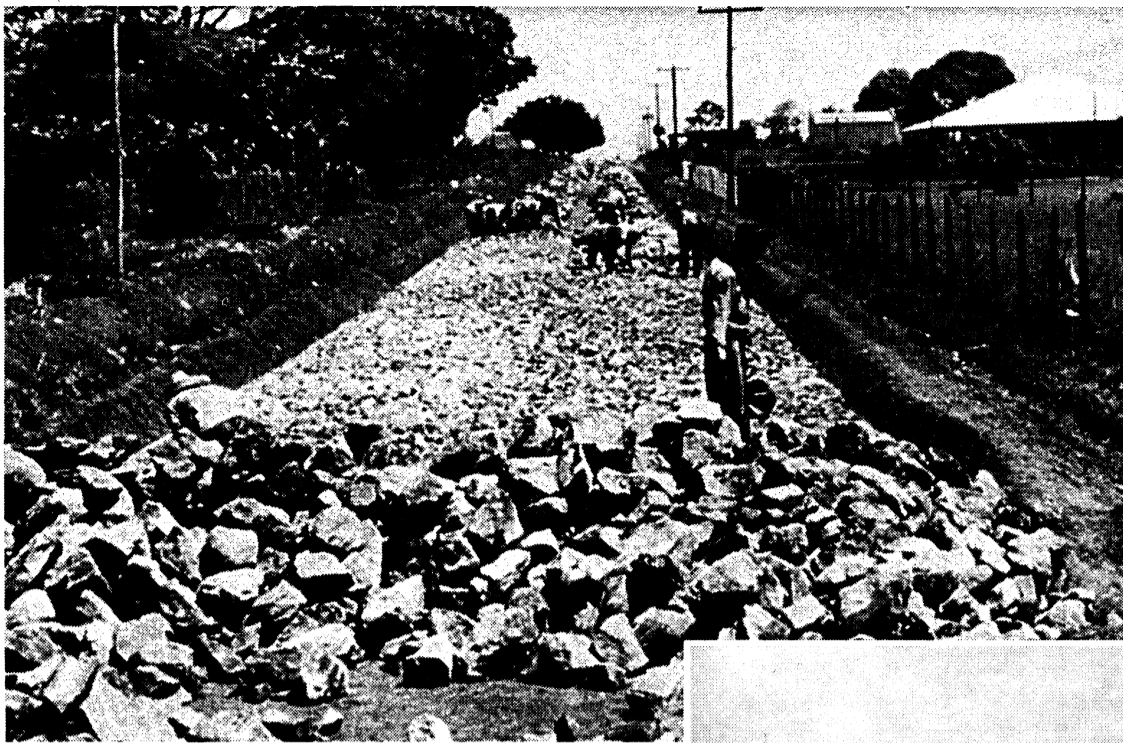
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If you missed any of these, you can order them for \$1.50 each from the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



As part of the Agrarian Reform Law, for the first time peasants were guaranteed decent roads, schools, housing, and medical care. Above, the construction of a road by INRA on the Isle of Pines. Right, the Camilo Cienfuegos School City in the foothills of the Sierra Maestra before completion in the early 1960s, built to educate 20,000 rural peasant children.



**Continued from Page 7**

When a peasant comes to the city nowadays, nobody is going to watch to see how he walks, nobody is going to watch to see how he eats, nobody is going to watch to see how he holds his knife, nobody is going to watch to see how he shops and what color dress his wife or sister is wearing, or what his other close relatives are wearing.

Because now the peasant comes to buy whatever he wants, however he wants, and it's nobody else's business. Why? Because that feeling of hostility toward peasants, that sentiment the big plantation owners had created, that timidity that used to exist in the peasants who were always being mistreated by the Rural Guards,<sup>4</sup> by the big plantation owners, by the corrupt politicians, by the

<sup>4</sup> Organized into forty-four squadrons, the Rural Guard served as the repressive force of the Batista regime in the countryside. There were more than 300 Rural Guard posts across Cuba during the years of the Batista tyranny.

snitches, by the numbers racketeers, everywhere. All that has ended. If peasants come to the city now, everyone respects them. And to demonstrate that the peasants have conquered the city, on July 26 all the homes in Havana will open their doors to them. [Applause]

So that's what the agrarian reform means. In the future, no peasant's child will remain a brute as they say, without learning to read and write. And the peasants who have not had the opportunity to learn how will have the opportunity now if they want to do so. What was the peasant up to now? For whom did the peasant vote when the elections came around? Who got elected? The big plantation owner.

The big plantation owners were the ones

who got elected because they came around with their money, with their political sergeants, and they carried out politics based on money. They bought votes. Since the peasant didn't have anyone to help him, the big plantation owners spent their time doing little favors, sometimes helping a person get admitted to the hospital, sometimes getting medicine for him. Sometimes they gave him nothing but a hug or a pat on the shoulder when election time came around. They gave out money, gathered everybody together, especially those people who had lots of friends, and they made them political sergeants. It's not true that the people are

That land is also expropriated and handed over to the peasant free of charge.

Let's consider the case of a tobacco farmer, who is also given, free of charge, title to the land on which he plants tobacco. He is also given credits, implements, fertilizers, everything he needs.

**Small farm owners are compensated**

If we consider the case of a small sharecropper, or a small tenant farmer, INRA will try to find a way to allow him to convert those bonds into cash immediately. For a small property owner who has no more than a little farm and who loses it, we will look for a way to pay him a satisfactory indemnity, what he needs to be able to continue living as he used to, from his rents. We will pay him in bonds, but we will try to find a way for him to be able to negotiate those bonds immediately and receive his money in cash. Now do you understand? [Applause]

We have no choice but to act against small property holders who have leased their farms, because the principle defended by the revolution is that he who cultivates the land and works there every year should be its owner, so that he might love it more, take care of it, improve it, protect the vegetation. Because when a man is working land that is not his own, he cannot love it or take care of it as he would for land he knows is his, as he would if he and his children had the certainty that this land is theirs and that nobody is going to take it away from them. [Applause]

When we act against a big plantation owner in order to carry out the agrarian reform, we pay him in bonds. But when we act against a small property holder, INRA will take responsibility for compensating him satisfactorily, and that family will not go hungry. But neither will a peasant have to be paying rent to support that family, because it isn't fair that a poor family working one caballeria of land should be supporting another family as well. That's not fair. [Applause]

Now what requirements does INRA insist on for that land? The peasants are the owners of that land, and nobody will be able to seize it from them. Nobody. It can only be seized for reasons of the credits extended to them by credit agencies of the state, if they don't repay the credits because they don't want to work. But nobody can take that land away from them now. Can a peasant trade his farm for someone else's? Yes, he can. A peasant who has one caballeria of land here and wants to trade it for a caballeria of land in Oriente province can do so. He can sell it, yes, but I'm going to explain how. He can sell it to INRA or he can sell it to someone else, applying for INRA's authorization. Why? Because if the institute doesn't keep an eye on this, some gentleman might come along who has won the lottery and starts buying up farms, paying good prices for them, to reestablish a vast plantation, without us doing anything about it.

Peasants can dispose of that land. They can dispose of it freely — with just one condition: that they have to ask for permission from INRA to sell it. If a peasant wants to sell his farm of one or two caballerias that the state gave him, he can sell it to INRA if INRA wants to buy it. Or if he wants to sell it to a private individual he can do that, and then INRA will investigate who is going to buy it. If you're a big plantation owner, you can't. A gentleman with caballerias can't buy it. If two people want to buy it for ten thousand pesos, but one of them has three caballerias and the other doesn't have any, then the institute will sell it to the one who doesn't have any. [Applause]

The peasants have credit, but they can also sell the land, with just the one requirement that INRA give them permission to carry out the sale, in order to maintain control so that he doesn't sell the land and have it wind up back in the hands of a few people who go around buying up small farms. Do you understand now? [Shouts of "Yes!"]

**Cooperatives of landless peasants**

Now we'll turn to the peasants who don't have land. What are the landless peasants going to do? Well, we're going to give them

fooled, ladies and gentlemen. But it is true that these people were pulling everybody around by the hair, and that the peasant didn't have a chance to defend himself.

The peasant didn't have a chance to fight for agrarian reform and fight for land, because they were the ones who had the money, the propaganda, the lawyers, the power. And if the peasants assembled together, a couple of Rural Guards would be sent over to drive them away. If the peasants assembled together, the Rural Guard would be sent on horseback and they would beat up those who were protesting. Between the Rural Guards, the corrupt politicians, the numbers racketeers, the big plantation owners, the thugs, and the speculators, the peasants were being driven into the ground.

**Conditions before the revolution**

Where did the peasants live? In those thatched huts. Their children were without schools, often without shoes, without clothes, without medicines. And what future did the children of peasant families have? What future did they have? What types of jobs were there? They were paid piecework, and the minimum daily wage became something like six reales or seven and a half reales.<sup>5</sup> What could they do with such an amount? Absolutely nothing.

I am explaining these things so that it can be seen what the revolution means for the peasant, so that the reactionaries and the counterrevolutionaries don't come around and confuse the people.

I already explained to you what happened to squatters living on state lands. Let's take the case now of a squatter on private lands. What happens to someone who has less than ten caballerias and is a squatter on land belonging to a private individual? Simply put, INRA — the Agrarian Reform Institute — comes along, expropriates that land, and gives ownership of it to the peasant, who receives the same ten advantages that I just enumerated. That peasant is given title to the land, credits, implements, schools; he's given guarantees and all the advantages that I enumerated.

Let's consider the case of someone who is not a squatter, but is a small sugarcane grower and has less than two caballerias. The state expropriates that land and gives it to this farmer. In addition it gives him credits, machinery, and all the benefits that are given to squatters on state or private lands.

Suppose there is a tenant farmer who has leased a farm of less than two caballerias and is using it to grow fruits or whatever.

<sup>5</sup> One real is an eighth of a peso. One peso equaled one U.S. dollar.

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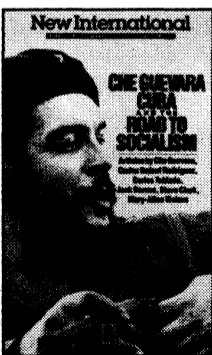
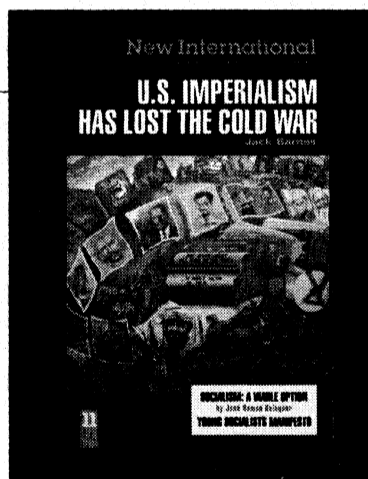
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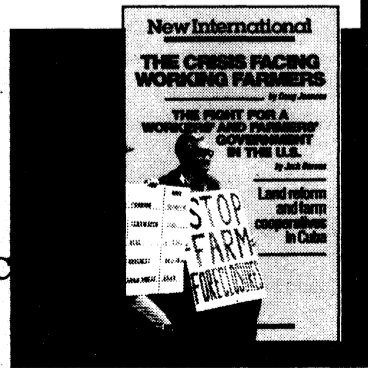
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land. [Applause]

How? I'll explain to you.

The enemies of the agrarian reform say that we are going to harm the economy because if we divide up a vast plantation into little pieces, then production will diminish. Because if you take a big rice farm of two hundred caballerías of good land for growing rice, and divide it into two hundred little pieces, then one peasant is going to get the best land and another is going to wind up with the worst. That's not fair. Besides, if everyone has a parcel, each one will need implements, irrigation, which is going to be awfully expensive. What do we do then?

What do we do? Imagine, a rice farm of 200 caballerías. Along comes the agrarian reform and it leaves one hundred with the person who's there and takes over the other hundred. What does it do then? There's not a single land parcel there, not one single peasant. It's not like when the peasants already have their parcels of land and when they've been working there for some time. In that case, they'd be given the property. But where there are no peasants, the land is not parceled out. Instead those peasants — say, one hundred families, for example — will be gathered together, an administration will be formed, and the one hundred caballerías will be cultivated jointly. Everyone will work on the crops, they'll receive the proceeds of their work, they'll have their store there, and at the end of the year the harvest will be sold and the profits will be distributed among all the families that hold the land. [Applause]

So if we seize a sugarcane holding of a hundred caballerías, we don't destroy it. No, if we seize a sugarcane holding of one hundred caballerías that today produces 40,000 arrobas<sup>6</sup> per caballería, we won't destroy it. We will bring together the families of the agricultural workers on that farm, we will call on them, we will form a cooperative, we will found a town with schools, sporting fields, a medical dispensary, and a people's store there, so that they can buy cheaply. The landholding will be farmed cooperatively with plows, fertilizers, and irrigation if possible. And instead of 40,000 arrobas in one hundred caballerías, we will farm fifty or sixty caballerías. On fifty or sixty caballerías we will produce as much as used to be produced on one hundred. On the other forty we'll plant fruits, we'll use it for pastureland, we'll organize a dairy there and a livestock ranch for those families, and the proceeds will be divided up among the families who work there. [Applause] So instead of reducing production we'll increase it. Instead of dividing up the landholding we'll organize it as a cooperative. Everybody will have work, everybody will have credit, the land will be utilized, twice as much will be produced, and the peasants will receive the proceeds. [Applause]

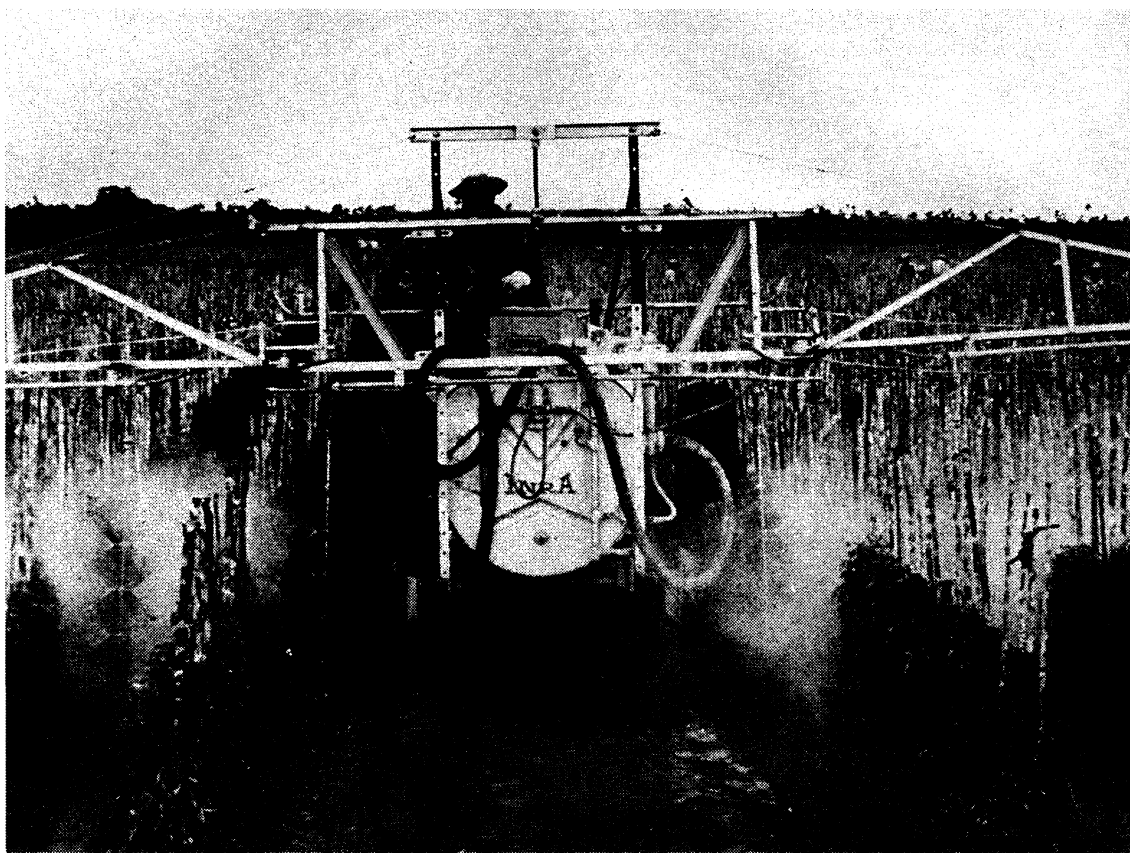
#### Big plantation owners' lies

What do the big plantation owners say? What were they telling the peasants? I'm going to explain it to you, because peasants have to be very aware, so that nobody deceives them. The big plantation owners are telling the peasants that they will be working for the state — see how shameless they are. [Applause] I'm going to cite one example for you. Imagine one of those companies that has thousands of caballerías, that has many sugarcane holdings, that has agricultural workers who work only during the sugar harvest and a little bit during the dead season.<sup>7</sup> I want you to pay attention, because this is very important.

How do the peasants live on those big landholdings? They don't have houses, they don't have schools. When they go to the grocery store they sell to them on credit for twice what the merchandise is worth. They work three or four months out of the year, and receive a total of two or three hundred pesos a year, if that, and by the time the harvest begins they already owe it all to the store. Imagine, with shoes and clothing being as expensive as they are, how is a peasant

<sup>6</sup> Forty thousand arrobas equals 500 tons.

<sup>7</sup> The dead season was the eight months of the year between sugar harvests. During this period tens of thousands of sugarcane workers were left without work and steady income.



The Agrarian Reform Law, implemented through the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), made equipment, credit, and a guaranteed price for commodities available to peasants to increase production. Above, an INRA irrigation tractor.

ant who has seven children and works four months out of the year and doesn't have any land, how is he going to support that family, ladies and gentlemen?

They don't have land to plant, so how are they going to plant? Along the guardarrayas, if they're allowed to.<sup>8</sup> That land is Cuban, isn't it? The peasants are Cubans, aren't they? Maybe the land belongs to a foreign company or to a big plantation owner who has two thousand caballerías, but those peasants can't plant the land. Maybe along the guardarrayas, if they let them. And maybe they let them plant a little bit of corn there, some yucca, a little bit of plantain, a little bit of boniato.<sup>9</sup> They

<sup>8</sup> Guardarrayas were tracts of land located between canefields or on the edge of landed estates. During the months of unemployment between sugar harvests many agricultural workers, if allowed, planted these lands trying to survive.

<sup>9</sup> A boniato is a root vegetable similar to a sweet potato or yam.

gather a bunch of plantains or two, which they eat boiled or roasted, putting a little bit of lard on them if they have any lard, eating them for breakfast before going to work, if they have work. Those peasants don't have the right to live off their own land, and they are dying of hunger.

#### Few peasants even had a book

When did those peasants ever go to the movies? They never went to the movies. The most they ever go to, perhaps, is the circus when it comes around at harvest time. When did they ever take a trip? Never. When did they go to the beach? Never. When did they go get to know their country? When did they ever buy a book? Very few peasants even have a book.

I remember that one of the most moving things for me when we were in the midst of the military campaign in the Sierra Maestra was the first times that soldiers of the dictatorship ordered the peasants there evicted. We were seeing the abandoned houses, and

in some houses we came across a little book about agriculture, a little book about the land, a little book about geography, a little book about history. We didn't have any books then so when we came across a book we became very happy. And it moved me greatly to see that a peasant had obtained a book and had it in his house.

Often the soldiers of the dictatorship came and burned the books, along with a hammock, a child's cradle, and the furniture. These poor peasants would work three or four years to get together a few furnishings, a machine to grind corn, a dresser, a little clothing, some shoes, a few dresses for the women. And then those degenerates, those criminals would come along.

And without the peasant having done anything — anything more than being a peasant, anything more than living there — these criminals would come along, throw a match at that thatch-roof hut and within fifteen minutes it was up in flames. And that humble home, which had cost many years to build, was turned into ashes.

When that happened, the big plantation owners didn't hold protest meetings. When that happened they didn't wage campaigns of protest.

They kept their mouths shut. They were friends of the colonel, the general, the senator, the mayor, the ministers, and the dictator. They waged no campaigns, none at all. This was when they kept their mouths shut. When they were killing peasants, they kept their mouths shut. When they were burning peasants' homes, they kept their mouths shut. Back then they didn't protest. They kept their mouths shut and made statements in support of the dictatorship. They kept their mouths shut. Those inhuman crimes, those abuses, were of no importance to them. Those outrages were of no importance to them.

But when the revolution comes to build houses for the peasants, to build schools and hospitals, to give them tractors and stores, to give land to the peasants — that's when they protest. That's when they wage campaigns. That's when they come around and say that the people are being lied to. When the revolution comes to give the peasants houses, land, medicines, everything, the

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## The day the Agrarian Reform Law was signed

[The following article, titled "You came with Fidel?" was published in the May 12 issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*. The newspaper has been publishing a series of articles highlighting the 40th anniversary of the Cuban revolution's first agrarian reform law, adopted in May 1959. The translation is by the Militant.]

At the time the revolution triumphed [on Jan. 1, 1959], Enrique Oltuski, currently vice-minister of the fishing industry, was the coordinator of the July 26 Movement in what was then the province of Las Villas. A few days later he was named minister of communications in the first cabinet of the revolutionary government. As such, he was a signer of the major laws passed in the first months of 1959, among them the Agrarian Reform Law. His recollection of that memorable May 17 in the general command of the Rebel Army at La Plata was recorded in notes he wrote a few hours after that historic event, notes that until now were unpublished (they are part of a still-unpublished book). Because of the priceless value of this eyewitness account, *Granma* is reprinting these notes for its readers.

#### BY ENRIQUE OLTUSKI

La Plata is located in the heights of the Sierra Maestra mountains. It's almost inaccessible. There are mountains all around, with huts dotting the slopes. Some planted fields are carved out of the vegetation. The clouds blend with the mountain tops.... The air is invigorating and there is a sense of grandeur. One feels a desire to take the footpaths to see what's on the other side.

The general command of the Rebel

Army was located in La Plata. The men of the revolution are meeting at the home of "The Villa Claran," a peasant in La Plata. Today they're going to sign the Agrarian Reform Law. A group of *compañeros* are putting the finishing touches on the law, as many poke their heads through windows and doorways to try to hear what's being said there. Fidel is inside. He speaks, smiles, becomes serious. His voice envelops us. I've never seen him happier. His voice shakes us. He looks like a youth. The emotion seizes us. I step outside.

Outside there are hundreds of people who live in the mountains, the same ones who shared the hardships of war with the rebels. Many encounter former comrades among those who just arrived, and they recall past experiences. Others talk among themselves, probably about the law. They don't understand very well the strange words of the men inside the hut. These are new words to their ears, but they trust and hope.

An old man comes up to me.

"You came with Fidel?" he asks me.

When I respond affirmatively, others approach me, surrounding and looking at me. I feel like a strange animal.

"Excuse us, but we notice there are a lot of important people here."

"We notice this because before, they didn't use to come up the Sierra Maestra."

"That's true. If they had only seen this...."

"And what do you think about the law?" I ask.

"We have confidence in Fidel," the old man replies.

The ice is broken. Now we are part of the Sierra. I am bombarded with questions. No one asks for anything — they just want to know. I try to explain it to them. I tell them about the vital minimum of land that all

peasants should have, about the people's stores, about the doctors and teachers. As I speak, the expressions on the faces surrounding me start to change. Their eyes become lost in the distance. The desire for land is a primordial thing.

"What about you, old man — do you have land?"

"Yes, one third of a caballería [one caballería equals 33 acres] planted with coffee."

"And what did you get paid for your last harvest?"

"One hundred sixty pesos. That amount has to last for the whole year, and I have a wife and eight kids."

"One hundred sixty pesos a year is 45 cents a day. How can 10 people live on that?"

"Well, that was spent on lard and on odds and ends. We eat malanga all the time, sometimes an egg, and a chicken when we come across it. We haven't eaten any more beef since the Rebel Army left."

"And if you get sick...?"

"Well, some herbs, and whatever God dispenses."

There is another man who looks old, but he turns out to be 28 years old.

"Are you married?"

"Well, I'm 'engaged.' We have a two-year-old daughter."

"Do you have land?"

"I work half a caballería belonging to my father-in-law. I'm trying coffee, but I still haven't brought in my first harvest."

"So what do you live on?"

"Malanga... without lard. We can barely sustain ourselves. It's hunger that makes us old."

A bony hand guides the hands that sign the law.

Continued from Page 9

peasants are told they are going to be working for the state.

**Work for three months**

That peasant who worked three months out of the year, who lived in a house with a dirt floor, who never ate eggs, fish, meat, who never drank milk — because how many agricultural workers on the sugarcane plantations ate meat, drank milk, or consumed fresh fish? Those peasants had no hens, and they couldn't eat meat or eggs.

Now that peasant, with the advent of the revolution, which bans the system of vast plantations, takes over one of those plantations, organizes a cooperative, creates a town with a school, establishes social centers where the peasants can attend with their family, organizes a consumers' store to give him credit and sell him goods at cost, gives him work and divides up the product at the end of the year. It gives them land, so they can plant fruits there, if they want, allows them to eat eggs, because in those stores they'll sell them cheap. They'll be able to eat fish, because the stores will be prepared to handle fresh fish. And we'll organize the fishermen in cooperatives, too; we'll give them boats, ice, and refrigerated trucks to transport the fish cheaply to the peasants' stores. On those same sugar holdings we are going to set up dairies. We're going to produce the same amount of sugarcane on less land, because we'll give them special grasses to plant. We'll establish dairies there, so that the peasants of each dairy farm can have cheap milk for their children, for eight, nine, or ten cents, or whatever it costs to have it there.

So the revolution comes, finds the peasants without houses, without land, working there for three months, going hungry, without schools, without hospitals. The revolution comes along, organizes a cooperative, builds a town for them, builds schools for them, builds dispensaries for them, builds houses for them, builds sports centers for them, good houses — as good as the owner of any of those farms could have. It also provides merchandise at low prices, it educates their children, it gives them work, it gives them food, which they've never had, and it distributes the profits among them.

Part of the proceeds will be used to make the farm more profitable, and the other part, after paying the taxes that all farms have to pay, will be distributed. Doing this, they come tell us, means putting the peasants to work for the state. Who are they going to work for? Who did they used to work for? For the big plantation owners. Who are they going to work for now? For themselves. I say this so that you don't let yourselves to be fooled. Peasants can dispose freely of their small parcels of land. All farms less than two caballerías held by sharecroppers, tenant farmers, or squatters, which the state gives them free of charge, can be sold, so long as it is with the permission of INRA, so that they don't get sold to someone who already has land, but rather to someone who doesn't have land. Does this make sense? [Applause]

**There will be stores and schools**

Someone who doesn't have land — suppose there is a forty-caballería farm and the owner is allowed to keep thirty, while eight or nine caballerías have to be distributed. Since it's not possible to set up a big cooperative there, because it's not a potato or tobacco farm, the land will be distributed among six or seven peasants. If it's 200 caballerías, then the land won't be distributed; it will be turned into a cooperative, because that's better. If you use the same irrigation equipment for everybody, the same implements for everybody, the same store for everybody, then it's more economical. The peasants will earn more if they all farm it together rather than giving each of them a parcel to farm on his own. It will be much more economical for them and they will earn more, and they'll live there as a family, in the town. Instead of someone living over here and someone one over there,



Caravan of peasants rides into Havana by horse for national demonstration July 26, 1959, celebrating sixth anniversary of 1953 attack on Moncada barracks, which opened revolutionary struggle against the Batista regime. "The peasants, who until now have been the victims of the big plantation owners and the corrupt politicians, will for the first time count as an essential factor of the nation. From now on, a peasant will be a person. From now on, a peasant who goes to the city won't have to feel ashamed and embarrassed; on the contrary, everyone will treat him for what he is, for what he is worth, as a good man, a noble man, a working man, a brother, and the most committed and enthusiastic defender of this revolution."

they will come together in a town and there will be a school, so the kids won't have to walk three kilometers. [Applause]

I'm explaining to you the advantages. We're going to create cooperatives of producers of livestock, of sugarcane, of tomatoes....

With respect to inheritance, all the children can inherit. The children can continue working the farm. What we don't want is for them to divide it up, because if a one-caballería farm is divided up among seven children, then there will be less for each, and the time will come when each grandchild has one-twentieth of a caballería, which is not enough. That's what we think. Three children can continue working the farm if their father dies. If they want, they can sell it, and split the money among the three of them, or they can sell it to one of them, and that person is the one who continues farming while the others pay him for it. What we don't want is for them to divide up the little farm, because if one caballería is enough for one family to make a living today and the family has five children who divide it up among the five of them, and those five children later divide it up among their own children, then they'll have split it into twenty-five parts. If those five children divide it again among five more children, and so on, successively, then at the end of a hundred years they'll have to be dividing it into a hundred little pieces. Do you understand? [Shouts of "Yes."]

What we don't want is to have those receiving two caballerías or less free of charge to divide it up. But their children can inherit it. What they cannot do is parcel it out into many little parts, but rather work it together. Do you understand? [Voices say "Yes." Applause]

So a tenant farmer who has between five and thirty caballerías has the right to buy them. Do you understand? [Shouts of "Yes."]

Who are the ones hurt by this? A handful. Who are the ones who benefit? The vast majority of the rural population — 99 percent of the rural population. That is the agrarian reform. Do you understand now? [Shouts of "Yes." Applause.]

**Production will increase with tractors**

They say production is going to decrease. Yes, it's going to decrease this year, because we still don't have the land in our hands, and we can't carry out the reform in six months. But next year we'll see.

How is production going to decrease if you replace the wooden plow and yoke of oxen with a tractor? [Applause]

What can you do more work with? What can you plow more with: a wooden plow or a tractor? [Shouts of "A tractor!"] Which will get the plowing done sooner: a yoke of oxen or a tractor? [Shouts of "A tractor!"] Which

duce them here, and we give work to hundreds of thousands of peasants — then which will see more produced: before the agrarian reform or after the agrarian reform? [Applause]

**Guaranteed price for the crop**

It's a lie and a falsehood when they say that the agrarian reform is going to bring hunger and is going to result in a decline of production. If there is hunger this year, why is it? Because the land is in the hands of the big plantation owners. If there is hunger, it's the fault of the big plantation owners who don't want to plant as revenge for the agrarian law. But within six months, when everything is organized, there won't be a single peasant out of work, not a single peasant going hungry. Then we'll see. In the first year of the



Above, peasant militia from Jovellanos, Matanzas. "We tell the enemies of the people: try to come back if you can, dare to set foot on the soil of our homeland, where you will confront an entire people ready to die. But realize that here you are going to have to fight until your death throes, because we will defend the revolution and the homeland block by block, house by house, hill by hill, river by river, trench by trench, and field by field."

requires fewer hours of labor: a yoke of oxen or a tractor? [Shouts of "A tractor!"] How do you produce better tomatoes, or better potatoes, or better avocados, or better mameys, or better fruit of any kind: using ordinary seed or special seed? [Shouts of "Special seed!"] How do you produce more: fertilizing the soil or not fertilizing it? [Shouts of "Fertilizing the soil!"] How do you produce more: irrigating the land or not irrigating it? [Shouts of "Irrigating the land!"]

If we are going to replace the wooden plow and yoke of oxen and ordinary seed and unfertilized crops and nonirrigated crops with tractors, with quality seed, with fertilization, with irrigation, and with modern methods of cultivation — then which situation will have a higher productivity: after the agrarian reform or before the agrarian reform? [Applause] If we take all those lands covered with marabú, with dense brush, with scrub, and we plant them with fruits, vegetables, garlic, onion, rice, cotton, soybeans, with all those crops — then which situation will see more produced: before the agrarian reform or after the agrarian reform? [Applause]

If we come and drain the Zapata Swamp, then instead of a marsh we will have 14,000 caballerías of fertile land, and we will put 14,000 or 15,000 families to work there. Which will see more produced: before the agrarian reform or after the agrarian reform? [Applause]

When, instead of importing 150 million pesos worth of rice, oils, fodder, and fertilizers from abroad, we pro-

duce more: irrigating the land or not irrigating it? [Shouts of "Irrigating the land!"]

agrarian reform, we won't be as well off as in the second year or the third year. We won't be as well off a year from now as we will be when we have the Zapata Swamp drained. But when we have all these houses built, all the sports fields, and all the schools, and we have the land in full production, we will be much better off each year.

Besides that, we will build roads. Projects are being carried out like never before. In the next six months 120 million pesos are going to be invested in public works. In the next six months five thousand new classrooms are going to be created. [Applause] We are going to crisscross all the fields of Cuba with highways and roads, and we are going to establish cold storage facilities. We are going to give each product a good, guar-



"So if we seize a sugarcane holding of a hundred caballerías, we don't destroy it. We will bring together the families of the agricultural workers on that farm, we will call on them, we will form a cooperative, we will found a town with schools, sporting fields, a medical dispensary, and a people's store there, so that they can buy cheaply. The landholding will be farmed cooperatively with plows, fertilizers, and irrigation if possible." Above, peasant meeting, early 1960s.

anteed price, so that when the peasants start to plant, they will already know how much they are going to receive from the price of their product. Because INRA will guarantee the peasants which crop suits them best, so that each peasant plants what is best for them on land that is most suited for it.

This is the agrarian reform. What did they do to the people before? What did they do to the peasants before? The Rural Guard was there, beating people with the side of a machete. The Rural Guard didn't respect the peasants or their families. They came to a guajiro's house, leaned a stool against a post, and considered themselves the owners of lives and homes.<sup>10</sup> When Christmas came around, what did the Rural Guard do? What did the Rural Guard go to the countryside looking for? They went there looking for roast pork. When September 4 came around, what did the Rural Guard come to the countryside looking for? When March 10 came around,<sup>11</sup> what did the Rural Guard go there looking for? A suckling pig, a chicken, a turkey.

When they didn't go looking for a pig, what did they go for? To abuse the peasants' families, their daughters, their wives. That's what they did — I don't want to pronounce the words here. Because there they shaved, they put on their revolver and their machete. There they starched their suits and put on their boots, and since they didn't have to work, they went there. The Rural Guard, in general — because there were a few good ones — in general, they were the owners of the town, the big shots, they lived off their "respects." And who was it who beat people with the side of a machete there? They received a salary from the big plantation owner, they were in the pay of the big plantation owner.

#### An end to evictions, abuses, disrespect

So the revolution comes along and puts an end to the evictions, the abuses, the disrespect. It is going to put an end to the plantation system. It is going to provide schools, hospitals, houses, highways. It redeems the guajiros, who have ceased being victims of the corrupt politicians, who are no longer victims of the thugs, no longer victims of the numbers racketeers.

There are no more dice, no more card games, no more numbers, lotteries, raffles, and all those things they had, that gave a cut to the sergeant and the lieutenant and the captain and a cut to the mayor. And who lost? The guajiro. And when the tickets were sold, who lost? Today, when bonds are sold, who wins? The guajiro. If he is patient, if he holds onto his bonds, at the end of five years he will be given his money back with interest, and at the end of ten years, for every peso he'll get 1.25 pesos. Before, if he didn't win the prize, he'd lose everything.

Today the peasants have the bad habit of buying — and that's not something you can break in a day, because there are those who become physically ill if they don't spend something gambling. So since we're not able to break that bad habit overnight, we let him gamble if he wants, but we return the money to him, even if he doesn't want us to. Today he's not exploited, that money doesn't go to the political sergeants or to the generals. The money is going to be returned to him, and with interest. When could we ever have imagined that in Cuba? The ticket, which used to be thrown away, today is a bond that will return the money with interest to those who don't withdraw any of it.

There are some who want the plan to be changed, so things will be as before. But no, it can't be as it was before. All those who want things to continue as they have been up to now, raise your hands. Those who used to devote themselves to gambling operations now want us to put them back as they were, so they can bring back the lotteries and the numbers racket — and that can't happen. So the revolution comes along, rescues the guajiro from beatings with machetes, from abuse, from gambling, from exploitation. It

<sup>10</sup> Guajiro is a Cuban term for "peasant."

<sup>11</sup> On September 4, 1933, a group of junior army officers that included Sgt. Fulgencio Batista took power in a coup designed to undercut the revolutionary upsurge that had toppled the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado earlier in the year. By early 1934, Batista had begun to suppress the anti-imperialist forces, in the process consolidating his position as Cuba's strongman. Batista held power until 1944. He seized power again in a second coup on March 10, 1952 and established a brutal dictatorship backed by Washington.



Militant/Brian Williams  
**Cuban revolution sets an example for farmers around the world. Above, March 2, 1999, rally in Washington, D.C., of farmers and supporters fighting to keep their land and against racist discrimination by the U.S. government. Right, peasants from the Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil at a rally demanding land in 1998.**

is going to give him houses, schools, it is going to give him land, a future for him and his children. It converts the peasant into one of the most beloved sectors of the population in the country. It redeems the peasant so he can walk with his head held high, without fear of anything or anybody.

That is what the revolution has done. It has united the interests of the peasants with the workers. It has brought the workers, the students, and the middle class tightly together in a great national patriotic effort. That is what the revolution has done. What did it do to the war criminals? It shot them or put them in jail.<sup>12</sup> What used to be done with the abusers? Nothing. When did an abuser ever go to jail? Never. Now what happened to the abusers? They went to jail, and the criminals went to the firing squad. That is what the revolution did. [Applause]

What used to happen with public funds, with the money in the treasury? They stole it. What happens now with the people's money, with public funds? They are invested in roads, highways, schools, hospitals, streets, public beaches, aqueducts, sewers, invested to drain the Zapata Swamp. We haven't done more because there aren't more resources or more time, but here all the ministers work.

Today ministers don't come around in panama hats. They come wearing guayabera shirts, because now ministers earn less than they used to. They earn a tiny salary. That is the revolution. The revolution came along to put an end to abuses, to plantations, to gambling. It came along to get rid of all the thugs, the high rents, the high prices for medicines and for the telephone. It lowered electricity rates within the republic, and it still has before it a plan for distributing sporting goods all over the republic. In five months it has distributed more baseball gloves and boxing gloves, and more equipment than had been distributed in the last fifty years. That is what it has done. We are going to build five thousand new schools. Besides that, we have raised teachers' wages. We are going to raise wages gradually for all sectors. That is what the revolution has done. And yet, what do the war criminals want? What do the counterrevolutionaries want?

[Sounds of fireworks and skyrockets are heard.]

#### Politicking of the past is gone

Why are you setting off fireworks? Those kinds of political rallies are over. Why so much racket with fireworks? People are living in the past. They think these are rallies like before, and they go on shooting off fireworks. There's no need to make a racket. What greater demonstration is there than this? What greater force is there than this?

<sup>12</sup> In the first weeks after the victory of the revolution, several hundred of the most notorious murderers and torturers of the Batista regime were executed. This measure had the overwhelming support of the Cuban people.



What more noise do you need than this, ladies and gentlemen, that we're making here? Let's save the gunpowder, in case we have to fight, let's not waste the money. Let's save the gunpowder and the dynamite to make grenades and Molotov cocktails and mines and whatever has to be made, if we have to fight here again.

What's needed now is to have the people here. And later what's needed is whatever may be necessary. So I am going to ask those compañeros, in a fraternal manner, not to set off any more fireworks, to save your gunpowder for war, if necessary, and save your money for the agrarian reform. If we take what we have spent already today on fireworks and skyrockets and use it to buy tomato seeds, we'd have enough to produce all the tomatoes that are consumed here in a day. We are in new times. These events don't at all resemble those of the past. Here the people come with a stalk of sugarcane in their hand, with a stalk of corn, with a Cuban flag, with a horse, with a flag on the front of their hat. Nobody pays them, but everybody comes. These are revolutionary events. The politicking of the past is long gone. This is the people, because only a great

cause and a great ideal are capable of bringing the people together this way. [Applause]

Next time we'll organize a rally with "zero fireworks." Skyrockets? What do we need them for?

What do our enemies want to do with this revolution, with this revolution that recovers the lands that were in foreign hands, with this revolution that is going to recover for all Cubans more than fifty thousand caballerias that were in the hands of foreign companies? What do they want to do with it? What they want is to defeat it. What they want is to smash it. And why do they want to smash it? To go back to the way things were. [Applause]

What do the big plantation owners want? They want to have their plantations back. What do those gentlemen, those henchmen, want? What do they want? To once again put on a uniform, a big machete, a revolver, a big rifle, yellow khakis, to once again — [applause]

What do the numbers dealers and the numbers bankers want? To bring back the numbers racket. What do the club-wielding thugs want? To bring back their clubs. What do the graft-spongers want? To bring back graft. What do the corrupt politicians want? To bring back corrupt politicking. [Applause]

What do the thieves want, the ones who got away with money from the public treasury, those smugglers who had business dealings with the dictator? What do they want? For robbery to come back, and them along with it.

#### What happens if war criminals return?

What do the generals want? They want to go back to being generals, and here there are no more generals. Generals? What do we need them for? What do the war criminals want? To go back to being police chiefs, here in Santa Clara, in Santiago, in Havana. And what would happen here if the war criminals do come back? What would happen here if — I won't say that Olayón could come back, for example, I won't say that Casillas could come back, we won't say that those who have been shot could come

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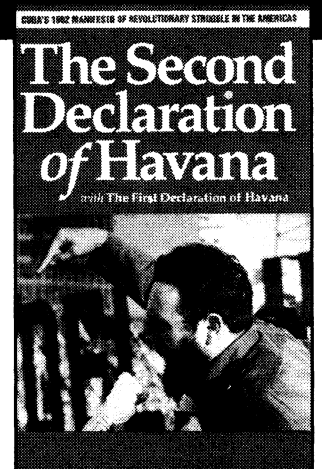
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**All in a day's police work** — Under Chicago police grilling, Eddie Huggins, 16, "confessed" to stabbing a woman to death. He spent more than a year in jail awaiting trial.



**Harry Ring**

A judge then acquitted him when a medical expert testified the victim was beaten and strangled, not

stabbed.

**The humane society (I)** — The Austrian government said it's seeking the return of the body of a Nigerian, identified only as "Marcus O," whom it had deported on a Balkan Air flight to Bulgaria. He was bound and gagged, reportedly because the flight captain refused to carry him otherwise. He died of asphyxiation.

**The humane society (II)** — A U.S. citizen, Thomas Sylvain was deported to Haiti. Finally, the Immigration and Naturalization Service was forced to bring him back. On

his return to Miami, Sylvain, who has AIDS, suffered a heart attack and, at last report, was in critical condition.

Although he had provided his birth certificate and an expired passport as proof of citizenship, officials blamed him for the "mistake."

**Saves prudently** — "A mid-level Border Patrol agent owned a \$200,000 home with a five-car garage, an Olympic-sized pool housed in its own building, \$45,000 in Treasury bills, 40 acres of land, six vehicles, two boats and 100 weapons." — AP report of probe of cor-

ruption in *la migra*.

**Pious concern** — Catholic bishop in the United Kingdom gave their blessing to NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia because, they said, there's a grave need to alleviate the suffering there.

**Die and be done with it** — In England, a poll found that almost 2 million people felt they were treated differently by the National Health Service after they passed the 50 mark. At least one hospital flatly refuses to accept new patients over 65.

**One man's fancy** — CNN owner Ted Turner just bought 50,000 acres of ranch land in South Dakota to raise buffalo and also cut a deal to buy another 31,000 acres. All of which is hardly worth mentioning compared to the 1.4 million acres he owns throughout the west. He has one of the biggest buffalo herds in the country.

**Cheaper than parking tickets?** — In Barrington, Illinois, an apparently prosperous family bought a vacant \$180,000 house near their son's high school so he could use the driveway as a parking spot.

# How Mexico 'bailout' tightened squeeze on toilers

When U.S. treasury secretary Robert Rubin announced his planned resignation May 12, the *New York Times* gushed, "Mr. Rubin was almost universally praised on Wall Street, Capitol Hill, and in many foreign financial centers as a stabilizing influence on the financial markets." A selection from pages 54-58 of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, points to the real record of the Clinton administration and its chief financial officers, as it affects millions of working people around the world.

from the pages of

## Capitalism's World Disorder

This excerpt is from a talk given at a regional socialist conference in Los Angeles over the 1994-95 New Years weekend. On December 20, Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo had announced a devaluation of the peso. Over the following week, the Mexican currency plummeted 40 percent, in a harbinger of the financial crisis that swept much of Asia in 1997.

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BY JACK BARNES

The newspapers are now saying that Zedillo will soon announce his "plan" to deal with the crisis. But the terms of a deal have already been worked out and dictated by Wall Street and Washington, with the craven concurrence of the most powerful capitalist families in Mexico.

More of the national patrimony will be put on the auction block. This includes many assets considered off limits to Yankee and other foreign capital since the high point of the Mexican revolution in the second decade of this century and the resurgence of anti-imperialist mobilizations in the late 1930s. The latest plans are already being floated in the press. Finance capital is pressing for bigger openings for U.S., Canadian, German, British, Spanish, and Japanese banks to operate in Mexico, including for the first time to establish outright ownership of Mexican banks. The government had nationalized all banks in 1982 at the height of Wall Street's debt squeeze on Mexico, but had begun reprivatizing them in 1991. And earlier this year Salinas permitted imperialist banks to set up shop in the country for the first time in decades.<sup>1</sup>

Wall Street and Washington are demand-

1. Of the eighteen banks that were privatized, one-half collapsed and were placed under government control following the peso crisis. Under new legislation, several Mexican banks were for the first time taken over by imperialist banks, including Wall Street's Citibank. An extension of that legislation in December 1998 authorized 100 percent foreign takeover even of Mexico's three largest banks, which had previously been exempted; that same new law ratified a government "bailout" of the Mexican banking system of some \$60 billion — 16 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

Bourgeois propaganda to the contrary, Mexico's banks never "recovered" from the 1994-95 crisis. Their Wall Street bank ratings remain among the world's lowest (an "E" in August 1998, defined as "very weak intrinsic financial strength"). Loans granted by Mexican banks in 1997 remained at about one-tenth the level of several years earlier. And the peso itself has continued to slide, from about 3.5 pesos to the dollar prior to the December 1994 devaluation to roughly 10 pesos to the dollar in late 1998.

ing that the Mexican government accelerate the privatization and sale of other previous "untouchables," such as the ports, public utilities, and the railroads and other transportation. Above all, the imperialists want to make inroads against Pemex, the state oil enterprise. Pemex has been regarded by Mexican working people as a symbol of national sovereignty and dignity since the country's petroleum resources were taken back from pillage by British and U.S. monopolies in 1938. Just a few years ago, Salinas had to back off from an initial probe to begin privatizing petrochemical operations. But government and Pemex officials are now using the peso crisis to float a variant of the idea as a trial balloon.<sup>2</sup>

Far from defending the economic and human rights of Mexican working people — on either side of the border — Zedillo and his new finance minister are readying their "anti-inflation" program. Interest rates are being driven up, prices are soaring, and government officials are already predicting that inflation — which had been hovering around 7 percent this year — will reach 15 to 20 percent in 1995; it will actually be a miracle if it is held to that. So the Mexican president is now gravely reminding us that wage hikes are responsible for inflation — a reactionary falsehood — and trying to convince workers that "all of us" must sacrifice for the good of the nation.

The employing class and their government in Mexico are now demanding that the three-way pact, the "Pacto," with the trade unions be renegotiated to guarantee that wage hikes are capped at 7 percent and no more. It does not take a Yale Ph.D. to figure out what is bound to happen to real wages and take-home pay of those who work for a living. Or to know that many more of Mexico's 25 million peasants are going to be driven off the land by rising costs and interest rates.<sup>3</sup> Nor will there be the promised national crusade for universal secondary education. To the contrary, the government will try to slash budget expenditures for schools, hospitals, housing, food subsidies, pensions, and other programs that have been won by workers and peasants, and through which a tiny portion of the wealth they, and they alone, produce is restored to them. In fact, Zedillo and his advisers north and south of the Rio Bravo will undoubtedly soon announce their "discovery" that a too rapid increase in social spending was among the causes of the peso's collapse.

Those in Mexico's relatively sizable new urban middle class and professional layers are being hit hard too. The Mexican bourgeoisie has fostered enlargement of the middle class as a buffer between themselves and the

2. In mid-1995 the Mexican government announced plans to sell off sixty-one secondary petrochemical plants, at an estimated price of \$1.5 billion. In face of mounting nationalist opposition to the planned privatization, the Zedillo regime in October 1996 revised these plans, saying that only a minority stake in these operations would be put up for sale. Only in late 1998 did Mexico's Energy Ministry begin the sell-off of the first of these plants.

3. In fact, the official inflation in 1995 peaked at almost 50 percent in Mexico, and still stood at nearly 19 percent at the close of 1998. Rates on mortgages, car loans, and credit cards ranged as high as 180 percent in the wake of the crisis, and short-term rates remained at nearly 35 percent in November 1998. Class polarization has deepened, as real wages have dropped each year since the 1994-95 crisis. The government-set minimum wage, in real terms, fell by a third between 1990 and the end of 1998.

While inflation soared during 1995 and the first half of 1996, Mexico sank into its worst recession since the 1930s. According to official figures, the gross domestic product fell by 7 percent in 1995. Some two million workers were laid off during the year.

much more rapidly expanding urban proletariat. But Mexico is still far from having the modern class structure that has helped maintain substantial social and political stability in most imperialist countries since the wave of capitalist expansion that began soon after World War II. Salinas's class, nonetheless, stakes a great deal on the solidity and political support of the middle class.

These petty-bourgeois layers have seen their incomes rise over the past decade. They have become used to purchasing increasing amounts of imported goods from the United States, Japan, and Europe. They have gone into debt to buy houses and cars, and they have racked up credit card bills for washing machines, CD players, computers, and other consumer appliances. But now every borrower is feeling the squeeze that comes when interest rates start soaring.

If we tighten our belts, Zedillo and Co. are preparing to announce, then our friends in Washington and Ottawa and the International Monetary Fund have pledged to stand behind us 100 percent. Of course, these "friends" in Washington have no direct interest in "rescuing the peso." They intend to do what is necessary to defend the dollar and make sure that U.S. holders of Mexican bonds — the Yankee ruling families — get paid. And that will undoubtedly bring Mexico's "friends" in Washington into conflict with Mexico's "friends" in Ottawa, London, and elsewhere, who have



Militant/Margrethe Siem  
**Peasant protest in Mexico City, March 1995. Imperialist "bailout" of Mexico meant accelerated sell-off and austerity.**

no interest in "rescuing" either the peso or the dollar.<sup>4</sup>

4. In return for a promised \$50 billion in "loan guarantees" patched together by Washington, the U.S. rulers wrested agreement from the Mexican government that all Pemex export revenues would be deposited in an account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York before being transferred to Mexico — or seized in the event of a loan default. Mexico's foreign debt to imperialist-owned banks and financial institutions at the end of 1997 remained at the staggering level of \$150 billion. Substantial publicity was given to the Mexican government's early payback in January 1997 of its loan from Washington, including the whopping \$580 million in interest extorted by the U.S. Treasury. Less attention, however, was given to the fact that this payback to the U.S. government was financed by other foreign loans, doing little or nothing to lessen Mexico's overall debt slavery to finance capital.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



May 31, 1974

Los Angeles — Representatives of Black church and community groups joined with the American Civil Liberties Union in assailing actions of the Los Angeles police in the assault on the entrapped Symbionese Liberation Army group here May 17.

Reverend Edgar Edwards declared, "The police must not be allowed to act as prosecuting attorney, jury of peers, sentencing judge, and executioner all in one."

Noting press reports that the various police agencies had a force of as many as 500 in the area, Edwards attacked their failure to evacuate people from the danger zone. He added that with a ratio of about 100 police to 1 suspect, "We believe a more humane solution could have been found than burning people to death."

The bodies of six alleged members of the SLA were found in the burned-down house after the shoot-out. The SLA suspects were sought in connection with the Patricia Hearst kidnapping. People were also angered by the way the police obviously relished the show of force they were staging in a Black neighborhood. Prior to the beginning of the shoot-out, they said, as cops arrived some of them "playfully" pointed their weapons at youngsters in a nearby playground to scare them.

A number of people said that 24 hours later their eyes were still irritated from the

tear gas that drenched the area. To them, police indifference to the safety of their community was underlined by the failure even to evacuate children from the nearby playground.



May 30, 1949

Lake Success — The Bevin-Sforza-Wall Street plot to partition Libya and reimpose Italy's rule over most of its former African colonies was defeated in the final sessions of the United Nations.

Delegates of the National Council for the Liberation of Libya, elated by this "great moral victory" are making plans to renew the battle when the UN meets again Sept. 20. Well aware that the huge mass demonstrations rocking Tripolitania were decisive in blocking the imperialist scheme, they assured me that "things will not be quiet at home" in the coming months.

The UN vote, of course, only means a postponement of the issue. The Libyans' demand for unification and immediate independence of their country was supported in the UN only by the Arab bloc. The Libyans themselves have no vote and were limited to two presentations of their views. Behind this plan was the determination of Washington and London to cement relations with Italy and guarantee her adherence to the Marshall Plan, the cold war, and the "hot war" to come.

# Cuba land reform: no going back

Continued from front page

other turning points in the revolutionary struggle that led Cuba's workers and farmers to overthrow a U.S.-backed dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959, and take political power.

The rally, held in the auditorium of the ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, was sponsored by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). Hundreds of peasants from around the country were among the special guests at the event, which was the culmination of activities marking the 40th anniversary of Cuba's first agrarian reform law.

Through that 1959 measure, the revolutionary government confiscated millions of acres of large landholdings owned by U.S. and Cuban capitalist families, and hundreds of thousands of small farmers received titles to the land they worked (see the text of Castro's June 21, 1959, speech on the agrarian reform beginning on page 6). A second agrarian reform measure in October 1963 further limited the size of landholdings.

Over the previous weekend, Peasants Day, as May 17 is known, was marked by popular festivities in all of Cuba's provinces. In Pinar del Río province, ANAP members gathered at a farm cooperative to celebrate four decades since the first peasant militias were initiated by a group of farmers in that region to defend the revolution against growing threats by Washington and attacks by local capitalist-backed counterrevolutionaries.

A similar celebration was held in the town of Cruces, Cienfuegos province, which was awarded first place in an emulation campaign for strengthening the work of ANAP.

Also that weekend, ANAP hosted an international gathering that brought together, at ANAP's national leadership school in Havana province, about 100 delegates from more than a dozen countries from throughout the Americas and Spain. Earlier, ANAP together with the Institute of Cuban History and the ministries of sugar and agriculture sponsored a conference on "Agrarian Reform and Development: Past, Present, and Future" attended by several dozen historians, social scientists, teachers, and a number of peasants who were leaders of the early stages of the revolutionary struggle.

The ANAP-sponsored events were more than commemorations of a historical date. The thread running through them was the determination of Cuba's farmers and workers to strengthen their revolutionary gains today in face of the international capitalist economic crisis and Washington's unremitting hostility toward their revolution.

## Repudiation of assault on Yugoslavia

In one conversation after another, farmers and others interviewed by *Militant* reporters brought up the U.S.-led assault on Yugoslavia, voicing their repudiation of the imperialist savagery against the people of that country. Identification with the people of Yugoslavia is widespread, as is the understanding that what is happening there is a threat aimed at the Cuban revolution as well.

At the "Heroes of Bolivia" farm cooperative in Havana province, Alexander Leyva, 26, expressed his view of the NATO bombing campaign in the Balkans. "It's a slaughter," he declared. "They couldn't do that against Cuba. If the imperialists ever decided to launch an attack on us like they're doing against the Yugoslavs, they would be making a big mistake. We will defend our country, our land, and everything we have."

Castro condemned the imperialist war against Yugoslavia in his May 17 speech. "Yugoslavia is being bombed by swarms of planes. They are destroying everything — homes, bridges, communications, services, factories, fuel centers — depriving the country of all means of life," he said. "They want to wage a war without [NATO] casualties. But if it becomes a ground war, everything will change."

"With all their immense military might, the imperialists have been unable to crush the Yugoslav people," the Cuban president stressed.

Likewise, he added, echoing many working people here, "our people are capable of resisting any attack."

Castro pointed out that the Cuban people have come out stronger in the course of their battle against the effects of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis. The harshest consequences of this crisis, known here as the Special Period, were unleashed a decade ago with the abrupt collapse of favorable commercial relations with and aid from the Soviet bloc countries, which accounted for 85 percent of Cuba's trade. The island was brutally thrust into the world capitalist market.

"Cuba suffered blows," Castro said. "Our fields suffered the effects of not having fertilizer for years. They could not be tended adequately because of the lack of fuel" needed for tractors and other farm equipment. One result was that the sugar industry suffered damage over a several-year period that is still taking its toll on the production of Cuba's main crop, which generates much-needed hard currency for the country's social needs and economic development.

## Surviving Special Period a 'major feat'

The economic crisis has been compounded by Washington's tightening of the economic embargo, Castro said, pointing to the 1992 Torricelli law, the 1996 Helms-Burton law, and other measures tacked onto U.S. government budget appropriations bills that make it more difficult and costly for Cuba to obtain needed goods from other countries. In a recent provocation, a U.S. judge ruled in favor of the Bacardi family — former Cuban capitalists — granting their company the right to continue using the name "Havana Club" to sell its own, non-Cuban rum.

Revolutionary Cuba's ability to weather the Special Period "is a major feat," Castro underlined. "The collapse of the socialist camp shook up a lot of people" around the world, he noted, referring to the disintegration of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. "But the [Cuban] revolution did not crumble as some had hoped."

"Not a single school, child-care center, or clinic was closed. Not a single doctor was left unemployed. And during this same period, 300,000 new doctors became part of the health-care system," the Cuban president pointed out. In fact, despite the economic blows, Cuba today has a lower infant mortality rate than the United States, the wealthiest imperialist nation.

In contrast to countries in the semicolonial world, including most of Latin America, where governments have sold off state-owned companies to capitalist investors and slashed jobs and living standards of millions of working people in the process, "we haven't sold off the country. This country belongs to us," Castro emphasized.

Referring to the sweeping measures adopted in 1993 to turn most of the state farms into cooperatives known here as UBPCs (Basic Units of Cooperative Production), Castro noted to great applause that instead of selling off the land to real estate sharks or imperialist banks, "we turned it over to workers." That was the 'privatization' we carried out."

Despite the hardships, "the country is moving forward, and no one can stop it," the Cuban president stated. "During the lean years, these experiences have taught us" many things about producing more efficiently, with less waste and better quality.

Speaking before Castro, ANAP president Orlando Lugo Fonte reported that Cuban agriculture has improved in a number of areas over last year. This year's sugar harvest, while still about half of the average levels attained in the years prior to the Special Period, will be slightly larger than last year's harvest of 3.2 million tons. And non-sugar agricultural production grew by 35 percent over the previous year. There have been increases in the production of root vegetables and citrus fruits, and record or near-record harvests of potatoes, tomatoes, and other vegetables.

## Land reform law sparks U.S. hostility

Reviewing what Cuban working people have achieved since the first agrarian reform law was signed 40 years ago in the mountain village of La Plata in the Sierra Maestra, Castro explained that "with this just and necessary law, the conflict with imperialist interests began" because that measure gave land to hundreds of thousands of Cuban peasants, at the expense of U.S. companies, which had owned 3.7 million acres of prime agricultural land throughout the island.

Wealthy families left Cuba and rejected the revolutionary government's offer of compensation for the confiscated land, believing they would soon return to reimpose their rule — a miscalculation on their part.

"Beginning with that agrarian reform law, the U.S. government decided to try to overthrow the revolution," Castro stated. We were not yet talking about socialism, he noted. That came two years later, in April 1961, as Cuban working people were mobilizing to crush the U.S.-backed mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs (known in Cuba as Playa Girón).

The agrarian reform, which many Cubans today point out was in fact an agrarian revolution, is the foundation on which the alliance between Cuba's workers and farmers has been forged. It has defined the unity and strength of the Cuban revolution.

"The revolution gave peasants something more than a land reform law," Castro said. It "brought peasants education, health care, security, credit, the writing off of their debts after natural disasters, electrification, and education — for themselves and the opportunity for their children to pursue university studies to any career."

The creation of jobs and mechanization of the sugarcane harvest put an end to the scourge of the dead season, which before the Cuban revolution left hundreds of thousands of cane cutters jobless for nine months out of the year.

Cuban farmers, previously subjected to the rule of the bosses' political parties, now hold positions at all levels of government, Castro noted.

"The peasant began to fully become a person, instead of being a pariah as he was before the revolution," when peasants were supposed to tremble at the arrival of the Batista dictatorship's rural guards mounted on their big Texan horses, he said.

"It is the peasants who have defended the revolution, together with the farm workers, the workers in the cities, and students," Castro stated. Peasants fought against the U.S.-backed invasion at Playa Girón in 1961, and in the struggle in the early 1960s against counterrevolutionary bands operating in the Escambray mountains. "Forty thousand working people mobilized in the Escambray, and captured every single counterrevolutionary bandit," he said.

As a result of the gains made by working people and the active role played by working farmers in the fight for a socialist future, "imperialism will never have a social base among the peasants in Cuba," Castro said. "They have always been in the front trenches of the struggle to defend the revolution."

At a celebration of the agrarian reform law held at a local ANAP center south of Havana, two veteran revolutionary farmers brought home this point in a discussion with *Militant* reporters.

Before the triumph of the revolution, said Angel López Rivero, 71, he could only find work three or four months a year as a sugarcane cutter on big capitalist plantations.

—EDITORIAL—

# Jail guilty cops

The following statement was released by the New Jersey Socialist Workers Campaign on the April 11 police killing of Earl Faison and racist harassment by New Jersey state police.

Outrage and protests against so-called racial profiling and cop brutality have immersed the administration of New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman in a political crisis. More demonstrations are needed to put the Orange, New Jersey, police who killed Earl Faison behind bars and convict the two state troopers who fired 11 shots into a van of Black and Latino youth on the New Jersey turnpike last year, wounding three of them. This is the only way to win justice for Faison, the countless others who have been brutalized by cops, and victims of "racial profiling." Fighters against cop brutality should also attend the June 7 trial of Max Antoine, who was beaten by Irvington, New Jersey, cops and is now being charged with assaulting them!

The protests in Orange, New Jersey, are part of the pattern of increasing resistance among working people to racist police violence across the country — from the cop execution of Tyisha Miller in California to the slaughter of Amadou Diallo in New York City. Eyes around the world are now focused on the trial of the barbaric cops who tortured Abner Louima.

"Racial profiling" — the targeting of Blacks and Latinos on interstate highways by state troopers — is nothing new. Workers and others of oppressed nationalities have always been singled out for abuse by the brutes in blue, whose function in society is to mete out punishment to working people on the spot. This is what cops do in their role of protecting the property rights of the wealthy class that runs the capitalist system.

The indictment of the two New Jersey State Patrol cops and the belated acknowledgment by Whitman and the State Attorney General that New Jersey troopers systematically harass Blacks and Latinos on the turnpike is intertwined with the debate among capitalist politicians and petty-bourgeois political figures over how best to put a lid on the crisis and stymie mounting outrage among working people. This is also why Whitman dumped her superintendent of the New Jersey State Patrol for saying Blacks and "other minority groups" are the cause of "the drug problem."

The calls for more Black cops, consent decrees to reform the police, "outside monitors" to watch the highway patrol, or appointing civilian review boards to root out "bad apples," will never solve the problem of cop assaults on working people. In fact, the rulers will intensify their brutal methods as workers and farmers increasingly take action to defend our working conditions and standard of living in this period of accelerating capitalist decay. The establishment of a military defense command, paramilitary units to fight the "war on drugs," and mock "antiterrorist" invasions of U.S. cities by U.S. Marines highlight this reality. What the owners of capital in store for us are more executions, more prisons, and more time spent in jails.

The U.S.-led war on Yugoslavia is another example of the wealthy class's assault on working people. It shows how their foreign policy is an extension of their domestic policy — savage punishment for those who don't get on their knees and follow the rules of the capitalist bosses.

The way forward for working people is more mobilizations in the streets to demand jailing of guilty cops, including those who killed Faison. We should call for an end to the racist harassment and discrimination by state troopers along with their illegal searches. We should demand the Whitman administration abolish the cops "Hotel-Motel Program" — the snoop and snitch operation aimed at Latinos and West Indian immigrants that tramples on the democratic rights of all working people.

All convictions of Blacks and other oppressed nationalities arising from arrests on the New Jersey Turnpike and other state highways should be overturned. And any money paid for fines and court costs should be refunded.

Jail the guilty cops!

Justice for Earl Faison!

He had to live off those wages during the *tiempo muerto*, the dead season. Agueda Fernández Soto, 66, López's fellow fighter and lifelong companion, explained, "My father had a small plot of land and times were hard for us; they were even rougher for those who had no land. I had four kids with no shoes or clothes for them, nothing. There were simply no jobs. I was semiliterate."

Fernández learned to read and write through the literacy campaign in the early 1960s and today remains active in ANAP, carrying out local leadership responsibilities.

At the beginning of the revolution "we had doubts and fears about socialism," López said. "We heard stories that socialism in Cuba would mean an Iron Curtain and other such garbage. But when the revolution was victorious and the land reform started, we began to see the revolution with new eyes.

"We defended the revolution during the Playa Girón invasion. And we are ready to give our lives to defend the revolution against imperialism today," he said. López and Fernández added that these are the lessons, based on their firsthand experience with capitalism, they try to bring to the new generation.

# Alaska Airlines workers protest suspensions

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from

contract negotiations.

During the week of May 3, Alaska management fired six union members, five of whom had been originally suspended, and one additional customer service agent from Reno, Nevada. Workers have responded to these firings by organizing protest petitions and by collecting food

Health Science Association (HSA), and Hospital Employees Union (HEU). Eighty-five percent of the strikers are women. Their action has affected more than 200 agencies across the province that organize day care, pre-schools, homes for battered women, services for juvenile delinquents, programs for the mentally and physically disabled, and infant development programs. Many workers in the social service sector are Can\$4 to Can\$8 an hour behind the health care sector (Can\$1=US\$0.68).

"Many workers in the social service sector are casuals and part-time and receive little or no benefits," noted Kristen Charlebois, a striker who is co-chair on child care for the BCGEU.

## Health and education workers rally in Quebec

MONTREAL — Twelve thousand health and education workers from across Quebec, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), demonstrated at the parliament buildings in Quebec City May 8. The unionists, whose contract expired in June 1998, are demanding an 11.5 percent wage increase over three years, job security, and improvements in benefits such as a fifth vacation week for those with 20 years' seniority. At the same time, they were protesting job cuts in auxiliary services and subcontracting. Alain Blais, a maintenance mechanic at the Verdun Hospital, explained, "We're here today because we've had enough of the government using the excuse of the deficit to cut our working conditions. It's time we had our share of the pie."

The demonstration was in support of national contract demands made in June 1998. In February 1999 the Quebec government proposed that many clauses be negotiated locally and that there be a 5 percent increase. This was rejected by the CSN. There have been no negotiations since then.

A series of actions have been organized by these workers in the health and education sector, 80 percent of whom are women. More than half of the jobs are either part-time, temporary, or on-call. One hundred nurses aides camped out in front of

## N.Y. rally demands raises, no cuts



More than 30,000 transit workers, teachers, construction workers, nurses' aides, and others marched and rallied in New York May 12, demanding city and state governments raise wages and repeal cuts in health care and education.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

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.

SEATTLE — Members of International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) Local Lodge 2202 organized a rally at Seattle-Tacoma Airport here April 26 to protest the suspensions of eight IAM members by Alaska Airlines. Alaska claims the eight were involved in an illegal sick-out April 16. On that day, 28 Alaska flights were canceled; the airline claims more than 330 employees had called in sick. The suspended unionists were from Seattle, Las Vegas, Portland, and San Diego.

In San Diego, customer service agent Andre Thomas was suspended. He explained, "I was sitting home April 16, my scheduled day off, when it was reported on the news that there were problems with Alaska flights that day. I called the break room and spoke to one of my co-workers. I asked if she had heard anything about the problems. She said those working at the station had heard this on the news, but everyone scheduled to work that day was there. A few hours later, I received a phone call from my supervisor informing me that I was to be suspended for attempting to organize an illegal sick-out. A few days later they suspended my shop steward, Linda Grissom, when she objected in a company hearing to my suspension. We are the proof that all of these suspensions are not about an alleged sick-out. This is all about our contract and trying to scare and intimidate all of us into not standing up to Alaska Airlines."

Of the more than 100 workers at the rally, five of the eight suspended workers participated. In addition, approximately a dozen members of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) came to show their support for the suspended workers. AMFA represents mechanics at Alaska Airlines and is also in

and money.

Currently there are two contracts being negotiated by the IAM. One contract covering approximately 1,000 ramp and stores employees is 21 months past its amendable date. The other IAM contract covers 3,200 customer service and reservation agents. Those negotiations have been going on for four months. Most workers under these contracts are paid 30 to 50 percent below the average in the industry. The contract covering mechanics also became amendable in September of 1997 while mechanics were members of the IAM. AMFA began negotiations in the fall of 1998 with Alaska management. Just as the media coverage about the alleged sick-out, suspensions, and firings was fading, Alaska Airlines accused mechanics of being involved in an illegal work slowdown. Alaska filed a lawsuit in Seattle May 6 in U.S. District Court, naming as defendants AMFA, its national director O.V. Delle-Femine, and 200 unidentified mechanics. In statements to the press, AMFA denied any job action was occurring. Alaska management has threatened to dismiss mechanics whom they claim are involved in this alleged slowdown.

## Child-care workers walk out in British Columbia

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Some 10,000 child-care workers walked out across this province May 12, after two months of rotating job actions. They are protesting the employers' refusal to provide wage parity with health-care workers and include child-care workers in wage and benefit increases. More than 200 picketers shut down Henry Hudson School May 6, where child-care services are organized. "We have the support of the B.C. Teachers Federation," said Stephen Leblanc, a representative of the B.C. Government Employees Union (BCGEU).

Four unions are involved in the strike — the BCGEU, Canadian Union of Public Workers (CUPE),

the Quebec Hospital Association April 29 to demand an end to the job cuts and that practical experience programs be maintained in the hospitals and the local clinics. On May 3 in Abitibi, in the north of Quebec, 3,000 people demonstrated against the lack of doctors in their region. Since 1994, the number of nurses aides has been cut by 13.6 percent, the number of nurses by 2 percent, and the number of orderlies by 4 percent.

The Quebec budget of February 1995 made massive cuts in health care, including the closure of nine hospitals in the Montreal region. Can\$2.6 billion was cut from education spending. The protests that have taken place are central to defending the health and education system won through massive struggles against the oppression of the Quebecois that were waged from the 1950s through to the 1970s.

## Striking Sun Oil workers rally in Puerto Rico

YABUCOA, Puerto Rico — About 100 striking oil workers and their supporters attended a May 7 rally in front of the Sun Oil refinery here. The strikers are members of the Teamsters Union and have been walking the picket line for 80 days.

Teamsters are picketing two entrances to the plant and one at the tank farm across the street. Control panel operators William Charriez, with 26 years in the plant, and Jesus Vega, with 17 years, explained their fight. In February, when the old contract expired, the company cut workers' wages by \$2 per hour. Under the old contract the workers had been paying 8 percent of the costs

of the health plan; the company raised this to 25 percent. Both Charriez and Vega saw their pay go from \$17.21 per hour to \$15.21. In Pennsylvania, workers doing the same work make over \$20 per hour. Managers received a four percent raise.

This is the first strike by the union, which was organized in 1988, workers said. The union has 117 members. Seven or eight other workers are members of the bargaining unit, but are not members of the union. None of these people are crossing the picket line. The plant is being operated by 50 managers, 30 engineers, and 40 workers employed on a long-term basis by a contractor.

Eric Ortiz, a member of the negotiating committee, described an incident during the strike where naphtha, a volatile solvent, spilled onto the ground for four hours. Strikers assisted the police in closing the main highway from Yabucoa to San Juan, which passes in front of the plant. As of now, the contaminated soil has not been cleaned up, workers said.

"The abuses of Sun are not only the reduction in salary but environmental contamination," said Alberto Malavé, a leader of a local environmental group who spoke at the rally.

Mark Severs, a member of IAM Local 2202 in Seattle; Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of IAM Local 11 in Delta, British Columbia; Elssa Martinez, a member of the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers, and André Desgagnés, a member of the CSN, in Montreal; and Ron Richards in San Juan, Puerto Rico, contributed to this column.

## LETTERS

### Protest U.S. war in Illinois

Members of Northern Coalition for Peace at Northern Illinois University put up a table in the Martin Luther King Commons area to distribute leaflets and have petitions signed against the NATO/U.S. war in Yugoslavia on April 29. Student coalition members enthusiastically handed out stickers saying "Stop the Bombing" and engaged passersby in discussions about their views on the war. One young man who stopped to talk was a military reservist and the head of the veterans organization on campus. He expressed many reservations about the U.S. involvement and agreed to wear the "Stop the Bombing" sticker. Petitioners collected 64 signatures in six hours.

The coalition came into being after an ad-hoc forum on the war held April 22 drew close to 200 people. That gathering was called together by History Professor Jim

Schmid. Speakers included NIU student C.J. Grimes, Carl Nyberg from Illinois Peace Action, Dr. Bruce Field from NIU College of Education, and Dr. John Maher.

The group maintains an on-line discussion group in order to have continued talk around issues that arise. Topics that come up are: whether sending letters to Congress has any effect, mass actions vs. civil disobedience, whether to support Kosovar independence, how to relate to Serbian antiwar efforts, and why *The Nation* came out in support of the war.

There is ongoing talk about how to maintain the antiwar work now that the school year is ending. Many agree we should participate in the upcoming demonstration planned when [U.S. Secretary of State] Madeleine Albright will be delivering the commencement address.

Zena McFadden  
DeKalb, Illinois

### ...and in Arizona

Over 200 protesters denounced the U.S.-NATO bombings of Yugoslavia and Iraq before thousands of graduating students filing into the McKale Auditorium at the University of Arizona May 15th to hear Secretary of State Madeleine Albright address their commencement ceremony.

Among those carrying signs were about 40 Chinese students who held enlarged photos of three Chinese journalists killed when NATO bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

Their spokesperson, Li Duan, described the bombing as calculated and condemned it as exposing "U.S.-led NATO's disregard of international law and norms which demonstrates an ambition to dictate world politics."

Martin Taylor, spokesperson for the sponsoring Tucson Peace Action Coalition, denounced the uni-

versity for awarding an honorary law degree to Secretary Albright who flaunts the U.S. and NATO's violation of international law, bombing Yugoslavia and Iraq and using illegal weapons of mass destruction, including depleted uranium.

Meanwhile, I've noticed that the Communist Party, Worker's World Party, and many liberals are claiming that the Kosova Liberation Army is organized by the CIA. I am enclosing a quote from a local group, Pueblo Por La Paz.

"The US and allies supported extreme anti-Serb ethnic separatists in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo well before the civil war. The *NYT* reported that Albanian paramilitaries were attacking minority Serbs in Kosovo in 1987. Just as for the US client regimes of Tudjman on Croatia and Izetgebovic in Bosnia, the central plank of the KLA is an ethnically pure, Serb-free Greater Albania including Kosovo. Evidence is

mounting that the KLA is a CIA creation, like the contras in Nicaragua. The KLA are major heroin smugglers into Europe (Michel Chossudovsky). US special forces are training the KLA, and some 'KLA units' are actually US, German and Islamic mercenaries doing sabotage and directing bombing inside Kosovo."

It would be a help if Argiris [Malapanis] could explain the background to these allegations.  
Betsy McDonald  
Tucson, Arizona

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

## Shipyard strikers reject 'final wage offer'

BY JANICE LYNN  
AND MARY MARTIN

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia — Striking shipyard workers here continue their resolve to secure a just contract. "We are determined to stay out one day longer," said 50th Street gate captain Edward Artis during May 13 picketing. Artis has worked 35 years in the yard as a welder. He said if he retired right now his pension would be around \$175 month. "The pension rate hasn't been raised since the '60s," he said.

United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888 has been on strike since April 5, representing some 9,000 workers. They're fighting for \$3.95 an hour in raises over three years, pensions of \$30 a month for each year of service, and no cuts in the company contribution to health insurance.

On May 11 the company announced it would be implementing its March 30 "final wage offer" in an attempt to lure workers across the picket lines with an immediate pay raise. On May 14 USWA Local 8888 announced it had filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board protesting this move, explaining the company can only do this if negotiations have reached an impasse. A headline in the May 18 Newport News *Daily Press* noted, "Yard offer has little impact. Most Steelworkers stand united, refuse to cross picket lines." It quoted rigger Richard Murphy Jr., who said, "We ain't going in for that



Militant/Brian Williams

Striking Steelworkers on the picket line in Newport News, Virginia, April 11.

dollar. We want our whole package."

At a May 13 briefing, 82-year-old James Hamlin, Sr., who worked as a supply worker at the yard for 56 years, said he receives a pension check of \$289 a month. Under the union's proposal a 65-year-old employee retiring with 30 years of service would receive a monthly check of \$900. "I would just like

for the company to give the retirees more money. We deserve it," Hamlin said.

Shipfitter Frank Matthews said he did not participate in the 1979 organizing drive and strike for union recognition. "In 1979, I didn't see the need to strike. I can see now I was wrong then. Today we are striking for survival — retirement, health benefits, wages,

and we are willing to fight for it. All we want is a decent living. The strike outcome will set a trend for the future in the shipyard."

Wendall Clark, a nuclear reactor chemical cleaner in the yard and a veteran of the 1979 strike, remarked that this time the white and Black workers are a lot more united. "If we weren't together this time around, we'd be in trouble," he said.

On the line were also younger workers, including a 21-year-old apprentice electrician — one of a number of apprentice workers who decided to join the strike. She had been in the yard one year.

The shipyard has announced it is resuming defueling the nuclear aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz*. Newport News is the only private shipyard in the country equipped to perform carrier refueling. All of the yard's 250 nuclear-qualified workers who underwent a year's worth of training have been solidly on strike, however, raising safety questions.

Meanwhile, hundreds of workers at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Mississippi, refused to cross picket lines set up by the Machinists union May 17. Eleven of the 13 unions representing 8,000 Ingalls workers rejected the shipyard's contract proposal, which would have offset pay raises by hiking monthly insurance premiums.

Janice Lynn and Mary Martin are members of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, DC. Olympia Newton contributed to this article.

## Sinn Fein: We'll keep mobilizing for a free Ireland

BY CELIA PUGH  
AND PAUL DAVIES

DUBLIN—"We are conscious as we enter into the new millennium of defeating discrimination... of the final ebb of empire," said Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, addressing around 1,000 delegates and observers at the party's Ard Fheis, or annual conference, May 8. The conference took place 14 months after 2 million people in the north and south of Ireland voted for the Good Friday Agreement, signed by the British and Irish governments and major nationalist and Unionist (pro-British) parties. Adams explained that for Sinn Fein the agreement "is not an end in itself, but is a transition.... For Irish republicans the struggle for full independence and sovereignty is not over."

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of the Garvaghy Road," Adams declared. Residents of the mainly Catholic Garvaghy Road in Portadown, Northern Ireland, have been under siege for 10 months by loyalists — those who support the continued British occupation of the northeastern six counties of Ireland. This followed residents' victory last summer in preventing the loyalist Orange Order from staging a sectarian anti-Catholic march through their community. Anti-Catholic discrimination, combined with caste-like privileges for those who are Protestant, has been a central pillar of maintaining British rule in Northern Ireland.

"Friends of Garvaghy Road" groups are beginning to organize in several towns in the north and south of Ireland. Sinn Fein assembly member Dara O'Hagan described the reality of daily harassment for Catholics in Portadown. "Catholic homes have been burnt, Catholic children are abused on their way to school, and if you are a Catholic in Portadown, the Post Office, bank, and leisure center are off limits," O'Hagan said.

The republican newspaper *An Phoblacht* interviewed one resident, Thomas, whose neighbors fled their home after a loyalist mob erected flags outside. "It's like the Ku Klux Klan burning a cross on your front lawn," said Thomas. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the pro-British police force, told the family that they could not guarantee protection from loyalist attack.

Delegates were angry about British government and Unionists obstruction of

progress on other issues registered by nationalists in the Good Friday Agreement. The British and Irish governments have backed Unionist demands to block the convening of a new Northern Ireland Executive that includes Sinn Fein ministers, as well as an all-Ireland Ministerial Council. They demand that the Irish Republican Army (IRA) "decommission their weapons" before these bodies are set up.

Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness explained, "The threat to the Good Friday Agreement does not come from the IRA. For those who haven't noticed, the IRA called a cessation almost two years ago. The threat comes from Mr. Paisley, the loyalist death squads, the securocrats in the British establishment, from the Orange Order at Drumcree, and those who refuse to implement the Agreement." Ian Paisley is a Democratic Unionist Party leader.

Assembly member Gerry Kelly described "a dramatic increase in loyalist attacks" since the signing of the Agreement. These included 10 killings; 29 grenade and bomb attacks; 19 shootings; 11 death threats; 276 families intimidated in their homes; 231 attacks on churches, homes, and schools; 5 attempted abductions, and 48 attacks on persons — within the last year alone.

Responding to demands for IRA decommissioning, Dessie Murphy from South Armagh said, "The only 'D' word you'll get from republicans in South Armagh is demilitarization, and we want it now."

The British government is obliged under the Agreement to publish a strategy on demilitarization. This was promised in November 1998, and has not appeared. Sinn Fein demands the dismantling of hilltop forts in South Armagh and from rooftops in Derry and Belfast, the ending of British army street patrols, the withdrawal of plastic bullets, keeping the RUC out of sensitive areas, and the closure of interrogation centers.

Shane Feeney, from strongly nationalist Crossmaglen in South Armagh, told delegates that British army helicopter surveillance and patrols have increased. He told the *Militant*, "Army patrols on the street often shout 'Fenian bastard' as they pass you. The army claim they are dismantling the 29 hill forts. But this is just a publicity stunt. We have evidence that they are bringing in building materials at night to reinforce them." The conference demanded that British troops be withdrawn to barracks pending their return to Britain.

Feeney is 18 and a member of Ogra Shinn Féin, the youth section of Sinn Fein. He said

that OSF is growing in the north and south of Ireland. This was evident from the sizable and confident participation of OSF members in all aspects of the Ard Fheis.

Patrick Kelly addressed the conference on behalf of fellow prisoners in Portlaoise prison in the south of Ireland, where 20 political prisoners remain. "We will never countenance being used as pawns" by the Irish government, he said. "Our primary concern is the end of British rule, which is the reason why we are imprisoned in the first place."

The conference discussed increasing harassment of republican activists by the Gardai, the police force in the Irish Republic. Paul Cumberton, a member of OSF, said he was arrested by the Gardai for putting up posters supporting the Garvaghy Road residents.

To loud applause Adams demanded, "NATO bombing of Serbia must end. It is amazing how tons of bombs dropped in the Balkans are morally and politically acceptable, while the silent guns of the IRA, we are told, are a threat to peace." Adams called for "a peaceful negotiated settlement under

the auspices of the United Nations" and an "emergency meeting of the neutral member states of the European Union to bring forward a peaceful alternative." He challenged Dublin's refusal to open the borders to those fleeing Yugoslavia, saying, "We say no to racism and we say no to bigotry."

The conference established policy on a range of issues including housing, reform of local government, employment, health, the environment, women's affairs and the European Union. Sinn Fein is standing five candidates in the June elections for the European parliament and over 100 in council elections in the south. The conference reversed its previous position of "wholesale opposition" to the EU to one of "critical engagement."

Pearse Doherty, Sinn Fein national officer, stressed "mobilizations must continue." He told the *Militant*, "We'll be doing canvassing for the elections but we should remember that mobilization has brought us this far. We've brought our struggle onto the streets like we did around the hunger strikers, Bloody Sunday, and the political prisoners."

### COME TO AND BUILD AN

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