

# THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

**INSIDE**  
**Raúl Castro on 1953 launching**  
**of revolutionary fight in Cuba**  
— PAGES 7-10

VOL. 63 NO. 27 AUGUST 2, 1999

## No gov't strikebreaking! Join shipyard strikers' rally to protest U.S. Navy

"Stop Navy Strikebreaking!" That is the call printed in big black letters on the leaflet put out by striking Steelworkers in Newport News, Virginia, to build a July 23 action in Washington, D.C., in support of their fight. The *Militant* urges workers, farmers, advocates of social justice, opponents of U.S. foreign policy, and others to heed their call and be at the Navy Memorial at 11:30 a.m. that day with co-workers, friends, and family.

The three-month strike by nearly 9,000 shipyard workers captures the growing mood in the working class today, where the bosses

### EDITORIAL

and the government that represents them have failed to impede workers' desire to fight and show solidarity for others in struggle.

The stakes for labor in the battle at Newport News Shipbuilding are high. The members of United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 build and repair war vessels the U.S. government deploys all over the world, and they walked off the job in the midst of the U.S. war against Yugoslavia. The ruling billionaire families, whose interests the U.S. armed forces are put together to defend, have a special concern about this fight. For this reason shipyard workers have had to stand up not only to the company and cops, but to the U.S. Navy.

Many of the Newport News strikers are veterans of the 1979 strike for union recognition, as well as decades of struggle in the fight for Black rights. They bring these experiences to younger generations coming into the shipyard—who bring their own leav-  
**Continued on Page 14**



Militant/Tony Kennedy

**Locked-out Kaiser Aluminum worker Bill Harmon from Newark, Ohio, speaks at July 10 solidarity rally with strikers at Newport News Shipbuilding outside Virginia shipyard.**

## Locked-out Kaiser workers rally with strikers at Newport News

BY DANNY BOOHER  
AND TONY KENNEDY

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia — Chants of "No Justice No Peace!" and "What Do We Want? A Contract! When Do We Want It? Now!" broke out as Steelworkers on strike at Newport News Shipbuilding and locked out at Kaiser Aluminum greeted each other by slap-

ping hands on the picket line here July 10. The strikers carried picket signs that read: "Locked-out workers at Kaiser support Local 8888," and "Local 8888 supports locked-out Kaiser workers."

Fourteen locked-out Kaiser workers from United Steelworkers of America (USWA)  
**Continued on Page 14**

## UN committee on decolonization affirms Puerto Rican right to self-determination

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization held hearings here July 6 on Puerto Rico's co-

lonial status and approved a resolution supporting that Latin American nation's right to self-determination, including independence. The committee, which has always been boy-

cotted by the U.S. government, has approved similar resolutions for most years since the early 1970s.

The UN committee heard testimony from almost two dozen representatives of organizations. The big majority were pro-independence groups. Their testimony hammered away at two issues in particular that highlight the consequences of U.S. colonial rule. One was the campaign to free 17 Puerto Rican political prisoners who are locked up in U.S. prisons because of their pro-independence activities. The other was the renewed fight to get the U.S. Navy out of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

The final resolution adopted by the UN committee, which as in most previous years was sponsored by the revolutionary government of Cuba, explicitly supports these two campaigns.

### Calls for U.S. Navy to leave Vieques

"For almost 60 years our island [Vieques] has been used by the Navy for U.S. wars," stated Ismael Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques. "The presence of that military apparatus comes as a result of a political situation in which decision-making powers do not lie within our country, but in another country."

The committee has been leading sustained protests in Vieques, including on restricted Navy territory, since April 19, when the U.S. Navy "accidentally" bombed and killed David Sanes in a military training exercise taking place during Washington's assault on Yugo-  
**Continued on Page 12**

## Students in Iran demand rights, end to cop attacks

BY MA'MUD SHIRVANI

Students in Iran demonstrated in and around universities for five days straight to defend democratic rights and to oppose police brutality. They gained the support of working people and forced government officials to promise to act on their demands. These were the largest national protest actions since Iran's revolution of 1979, when mass worker and peasant struggles toppled the U.S.-backed monarchy.

Students started protesting July 8 after they found out the Tehran daily *Salam*, which supports President Mohammad Khatami, was shut down the previous day by order of the judiciary, which is under the control of the conservative wing of the regime. That evening some 200 students held a protest rally around Tehran University dormitories in Amirabad, located a few miles north of the university.

At the same time security forces, antiriot police, and extralegal thugs in civilian clothes began to assemble in the area trying to provoke a confrontation. Shortly after 3:00 a.m. they started firing tear gas and raided the dormitories without warning. They broke down bedroom doors, beating students indiscriminately and setting their rooms on fire. Tehran papers reported that some students were thrown from second- and third-floor windows. About 500 students were reportedly arrested; the number of injuries has not been announced.

Authorities have reported that one person, Ezzat Ibrahim-Nejad, was killed. He was a  
**Continued on Page 3**

## Join caravans to Active Workers Conference

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND STEVE CLARK

Over four days from August 5 through 8, hundreds of socialist workers, youth, and other militants involved in struggles against class exploitation and national oppression will gather for an Active Workers Conference at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio.

"On August 1, a car caravan will leave from the Bay Area for Ohio," said Norton Sandler, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's Trade Union Committee and organizer of the California State Committee of the SWP, in a July 14 interview.

"On the way it will stop by Fresno to pick up a contact of the Young Socialists and meet others driving up from Los Angeles. Where else the caravan will stop will be decided in the next two weeks," Sandler added, "as party and YS members join picket lines by workers fighting a lockout by Nestle near Stockton, actions by hotel and restaurant workers trying to unionize the Marriott in San Francisco, and rolling job slowdowns by dock workers up and down the West Coast."

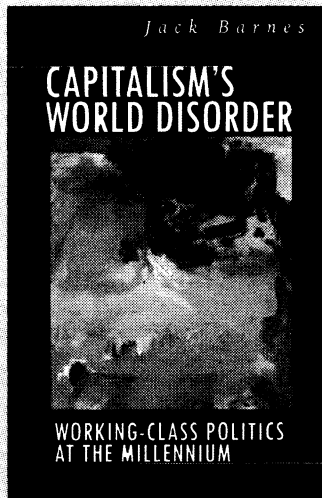
All across the United States, resistance to assaults by the employers continues to erupt — from the successful union organizing drive by textile workers in Kannapolis, North Carolina, to the 14-week-long strike by Steelworkers at Newport News, Virginia. These fights are fur-  
**Continued on Page 5**

### FROM PATHFINDER

## CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER: Working-class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

"The greatest danger now is not recognizing the degree to which every fighting worker and workers grouping that uses its strength, imagination, commitment, integrity, and capacity — that acts in a timely fashion, with all the weight it has — can work in a way that brings together on a national and international scale these experiences of working people. It can affect events. It can attract other sections of the population to the liberating spirit of these battles—beginning with the youth, beginning with those who don't have a million conservatizing worries and commitments draped on them from the past." \$23.95



AVAILABLE FROM BOOKSTORES, INCLUDING THOSE LISTED ON PAGE 12,  
OR WRITE PATHFINDER, 410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

**Communist League in United Kingdom holds congress — page 6**



## Baghdad expels U.N. official

The Iraqi government July 8 expelled a U.N. official, Ian Broughton, after accusing him of attempting to sabotage the country's crops by breeding locusts. Iraqi government officials said Broughton, a former officer with the New Zealand Army, planted boxes of locust eggs on April 8 near Khanaqin, close to the Iranian border. Earlier this year, Clinton administration officials were forced to admit U.S. spies worked under cover on the UN Special Commission as "weapons inspectors."

Meanwhile, U.S. warplanes bombed an Iraqi communications site in the country's northern "no-fly zone" July 8. It was the 58th time that U.S. imperialist planes attacked Iraqi facilities in the northern area since December 28. Washington imposed two "no-fly zones" on the country after it led the slaughter of Iraqi people in the 1990-91 Gulf War.

## Greek workers protest job cuts

Workers at Olympic Airways in Greece held a 24-hour strike July 7, forcing the company to cancel 50 of its 79 domestic and international flights. It was the second one-day job action against the state-owned company in two weeks. The unionists were protesting the possibility of layoffs as the airline's management was taken over by Speedwing, a consulting firm for British Airways. Speedwing bosses seek to cut labor costs to make Olympic more profitable. A week earlier the airline's new chief executive officer, Rod Lynch, threatened workers to submit to the "restructuring" or see Olympic shut down.

## Moscow plans military exercises

The Russian defense ministry announced July 8 it will conduct military maneuvers in Northern Caucasus, the region between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Airborne troops, ships from the Black Sea Fleet, and units from the North Caucasus military district will participate in the exercises, scheduled July 13-16. Last month the Russian military practiced "West-99," which involved repelling aggression from imperialist countries. While Moscow would not state what force would launch an assault on the country, the Russian newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* asserted, "Few doubt that the enemy is NATO's armed forces in Europe."



Workers at Olympic Airlines in Greece demonstrate last April against cutbacks

## Washington imposes tariff on New Zealand, Australia lamb...

U.S. president William Clinton announced July 7 that Washington would impose quotas on lamb imports from Australia and New Zealand and duties of 9, 6, and 3 percent over three years. Any sales above the quota will be subject to a 40 percent tariff. Combined imports for both countries will be set at 1998 levels for one year, rising slightly for the following two years. Australia and New Zealand account for about 95 percent of U.S. lamb imports, worth \$146 million. Australian trade minister Mark Valle, warned that Washington is provoking a "global trade war."

## ...squeezes Brazilian steel trade

The U.S. Commerce Department announced July 7 the Brazilian government will restrict the level of hot-rolled steel exported to the United States by 28 percent in exchange

for Washington suspending anti-dumping investigations of Brazilian steel exports. Brazilian officials also agreed to set a minimum price their steel producers would sell their commodities for in the U.S. market. Last June the U.S. Senate narrowly rejected legislation that would have imposed quotas on steel imports. U.S. commerce secretary William Daley said the decision does not effect the "investigations" into whether Brazil and several other countries were selling large amounts of cold-rolled steel at low prices to grab more of U.S. market share.

## Argentina: truckers win strike

After tens of thousands of truck drivers throughout Argentina struck for three days, the government voted to postpone a proposed vehicle tax until November 15. The two main truckers organizations warned they were prepared to paralyze the nation's highways indefinitely. The regime of President Carlos Menem threatened to declare a state of siege that would suspend constitutional rights and give the military and cops the power to arrest striking truckers and seize their vehicles. But the Argentine ruling class and imperialist investors feared that the strike would wreak economic havoc on the already deepening recession in the country, and bowed to the truckers' demands for now.

## Cuban economic growth is up

The Cuban economy registered a growth rate of 6.1 percent in the first half of 1999, Carlos Lage, the secretary of the Cuban Counsel of State, reported in early July. An upturn in sugar production, which increased by half a million tons from the previous year, was a key factor in

the overall increase. Sugar production has dropped precipitously since the early 1990s, hit by the cut in fuel, fertilizers, and other inputs that came with the collapse in trade with the Soviet Union, as well as several natural disasters. Overall, Lage said, industrial output grew 6.4 percent, including a 23.4 percent upturn in sugar processing. The growth rate in agriculture for the first half of 1999 was 10.7 percent compared to the previous year.

## N.Y. cop acquitted after shooting Black 'squeegee' man

Acting Justice John Collins of the State Supreme Court dismissed all criminal charges July 8 against New York cop Michael Meyer, who shot and wounded an unarmed man. Meyer was charged with attempted murder and lesser counts in the June 1998 shooting of Antoine Reid, who had soaped up the windshield of the off-duty cop's car to clean it for a few dollars at an exit ramp in New York City.

Collins had dismissed the attempted murder charge two days earlier, saying the prosecution had failed to disprove Meyer's assertion that he shot Reid because "he feared for his life." The acquittal in the nonjury trial came after several witnesses testified that Meyer stepped out of his car, backed up Reid across several lanes of traffic, and then shot him point blank in the chest. After the decision, Reid, who lost his spleen as a result of the shooting, said the verdict was "an outrage. Just because you're a cop doesn't give you the right to shoot somebody."

## Heat wave toll rises to 27 in N.Y.

The death count rose to 27 people in New York City during the second week of July when record temperatures reached more than 100 degrees for three days in the Northeastern part of the United States. Some 7,000 calls were made to city ambulances and other emergency agencies in the city. The New York City administration responded to the heat wave by throwing sprinklers on a few open fire hydrants, and 15 schools were opened with air conditioning. After a record demand for electricity, Con Edison, the giant utility monopoly in New York City, cut off the power in working-class neighborhoods in upper Manhattan, leaving more than 200,000 people with no refrigeration, air conditioning, or fans for 18 hours.

— MEGANARNEY

# THE MILITANT

## Stop U.S. attacks on Iran

Twenty years ago working people in Iran overthrew the U.S.-backed monarchy of the shah, dealing a blow to U.S. imperialism and showing the potential of the toilers to take power. The 'Militant' told the truth about the Iranian revolution then, and today. Don't miss a single issue!



# SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

## NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

### RENEWAL

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT,  
410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 500 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,700 New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

## The Militant

Vol. 63/No. 27

Closing news date: July 15, 1999

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argriss Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from July to August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: TheMilitant or via Peacenet at: themilitant

Internet: TheMilitant@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/pubs/militant

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

**Latin America, Caribbean:** for one-year sub-

scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. **Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

**Canada:** Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4.

**Britain, Ireland:** £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England.

**Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East:** £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address.

**France:** Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U. **Belgium:** BF 2,400 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of 1Mei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp.

**Iceland:** Send 5,800 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. **Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark:** 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

**New Zealand:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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



# Students in Iran demand rights, end to thug attacks

Continued from front page

conscript soldier visiting a friend at the dormitory and had read a poem at the rally that evening. Ibrahim-Nejad's father, a peasant in Pole Dokhtar in the south, told reporters he first learned of his son's death on television along with everyone else in his town. Since then students have been coming to his house to extend their solidarity.

## Protests spread across country

National radio and television did not publicize the assault on Tehran students, but as the news spread by other means, students in other cities began to organize protest demonstrations. Some 5,000 students in the northern city of Tabriz, in Azerbaijan, mobilized early in the morning July 11 demanding the immediate release of the students arrested in Tehran. They also shouted, "Long live Khatami, down with the dictator!" They were attacked by the same combination of forces as the Tehran students, leading to injuries and the death of an Islamic clerical student by unknown assailants later in the day. These forces are usually spearheaded by a group called Ansare Hezbollah (Supporters of the Party of God).

The Tehran daily *Neshat* reported July 12 that people rallied to students' defense in defiance of the orders by security forces. The mass intervention brought down the tensions and further bloodshed was averted.

Student demonstrations of comparable size to those in Tabriz were held at the Ferdowsi University in Mashhad in the East, Urmia in the West, Kermanshah in Kurdistan, Isfahan, Shiraz Hamadan, Gilan south of the Caspian Sea, Zanzan, Ardabil in Azerbaijan, and in some smaller towns. Presidents of 30 universities around the country issued a statement protesting the violation of the sanctuary of universities by security forces and the trampling of students' rights.

The minister of culture and higher education resigned in protest. Ayatollah Khamenei, the head of state, and President Khatami both denounced the attack on the Tehran students. Even Ansare Hezbollah issued a curt statement denying their involvement in the July 9 raid.

Most of those assaulted at the Tehran university dormitory were students from outside Tehran. Many of them come from working-class and peasant families thanks to the 1979 revolution, which brought forth a certain degree of affirmative action in favor of working people. Papers reported that of some 500 students arrested during the assault in Tehran, at least 80 came from families of martyrs in the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88. In that war, volunteers from villages, working-class neighborhoods, and factories mobilized to go to the war front and defend the revolution against the military assault of the capitalist government of Iraq, which was launched with the

complicity of Washington and imperialist powers. The Tehran daily *Kar va Kargar* (Work and Worker) quoted a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war at one of the rallies at Tehran university as saying, "They would tell us in the front to treat Iraqi prisoners of war with respect and kindness, but here they bloody the Iranian students and drag them to the ground!"

As they marched to join students in the Amirabad dormitories for a sit-in July 11, students from other universities in Tehran chanted rhythmic slogans in Farsi patterned after slogans during the revolution: "Militant students, unity, unity!"; "Bats, clubs, and knives no longer intimidate us." In reference to the Ansare Hezbollah and the rightist 1973 coup in Chile led by Augusto Pinochet, they chanted, "Ansare Pinochet, can't turn Iran into Chile!"

## Working people support students

Following the assault in the early hours of July 9, students from around the city rushed to Amirabad and took control of the dormitory complex. They organized checkpoints, established security, and did not allow in any provocateurs or government security forces. Thousands of working people and students in Tehran and other cities converged there in solidarity. Parents and family members even traveled from other cities to be with the students. This prevented any further assaults.

People came forward and took collections to help get food and other necessities for the students occupying the buildings and for those dormitory residents who had lost their belongings during the raid and fires set by the invaders. This buoyed the students' spirits. "We have not yet reached our goals; we want freedom of expression and will keep on till we get it," a student named Ahmad told the Tehran daily *Khordad* July 11.

"People are supporting us; they organize to get water and food for us. So long as we are on the right track we are confident they will support us," Ahmad, an accounting student at Roodhen Azad University on the north side of the Alborz mountains, had traveled to Tehran to join the students in struggle. This kind of relationship of the general population to demonstrators and strikers was established during the months of Iran's revolution of 1978-79.

The main student organization that called the protest demonstrations around the country and the Amirabad sit-ins and security was Daftare Tahkeem Vahdat (Center to Strengthen Unity.) It is based on Islamic Associations at the universities and its origins go back to the anti-imperialist students who occupied the U.S. embassy in November 1979. At the time the occupation was a protest against Washington's moves to organize a counter-revolutionary coup, as it had done in 1953 to



Students protest in Tehran July 10 after being attacked by Iranian security forces

defeat a democratic anti-imperialist movement and bring the shah (king) to power.

The occupation became a rallying point for workers and peasants to come back on the center stage of politics to defend the gains of the revolution. Tahkeem is supportive of Khatami and is also associated with the Khane Kargar (Workers' House) a pro-government umbrella organization of workers, an offshoot of the workers shoras (councils) formed during the revolution. Khane Kargar issued a statement in support of students.

## Regime seizes on riots to clamp down

A split took place among the students July 12. Some people, frustrated by the lack of decisive action from the president and high levels of government in arresting and prosecuting those responsible for the July 9 dormitory raid, began to branch off to central points in the city. Petty-bourgeois and bourgeois currents who favor the overthrow of the government were included in this split. As they moved through the streets they attracted others to these demonstrations, which ended with attacking stores and smashing windows and cars. Some banks were attacked and the door of the Ministry of the Interior was set on fire.

Some unemployed youth angry with the capitalist government's unfulfilled promises to lift the "oppressed of the earth" were attracted to these demonstrations. A young man who had joined a demonstration of 500 roaming the city told a bystander, "I am unemployed. For 20 years they have been lying to us. I have come to give my life for them [the students]." He said he had earlier participated in the Islamabad riots. Islamabad is a district outside the Tehran city limits, mostly inhabited by newly arrived workers from the countryside. Tensions exploded there in 1995 when the gasoline prices and transportation costs were raised sharply. Cars were smashed and burned and security forces were attacked. Military units were brought in to beat and arrest the demonstrators.

Similar eruptions have taken place in other cities, always ending in defeat. In Tehran these demonstrators invariably clash with the security forces and Ansar, leading to victimizations. After July 12, Tahkeem pulled out of demonstrations and their character changed. Workers who had been supportive of the earlier student protests pulled back.

As events unfolded the conservative wing of the ruling class, which had been on the defensive since July 9, got wind in its sails and called for calm and unity. They took the propaganda offensive in the name of protecting the state.

Forces associated with this wing called a demonstration for July 14 and began to use their positions in the state apparatus to build it. The liberal wing associated with Khatami went along. Governmental ministries and factory managers were told to mobilize for the demonstration.

Estimates of the size of the July 14 demonstration vary from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands. But industrial workers generally stayed away. The organizers tried to set the stage to curtail some of the political space gained earlier for democratic rights and against police brutality. They threatened that some of those arrested would be given the death penalty. But they did not go as far as reversing the general condemnation of those who attacked students at Tehran University.

The demonstration was also a factional move against Khatami, who had endorsed it. His picture was as conspicuously absent from the placards as Ayatollah Khamenei's was abundant.

Regardless of the fortunes of the factions in the regime, the country went through a series of intense experiences in a period of less than one week. The bond established in struggle between students and working people in defense of democratic rights and against police and vigilante violence points to the opening of a new chapter in the class struggle. And this does not bode well for the imperialists' interests in the region.

# What U.S. imperialism lost in Iranian revolution

In 1979 a revolutionary upsurge by Iranian workers and peasants overturned the U.S.-backed regime of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, also known as the shah. This victory dealt an enormous blow to Washington's domination in the region. Below is an excerpt from *New International no. 7* featuring the article "The opening guns of World War III: Washington's assault on Iraq," by Jack Barnes, on U.S. imperialism's goal in the 1990-91 Gulf War and political developments in the region since the defeat of one of the U.S. rulers' most reliable client states. *New International* is copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission.

## BY JACK BARNES

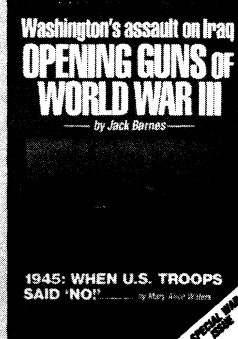
The U.S. rulers' aim is to shift the relationship of class forces in the Middle East to its advantage, to take back some of what has been lost over the past three decades. The most recent big blow to Washington's power in the region came in 1979 with the victory of the Iranian revolution.

Prior to the overthrow of the shah, Iran had been one of Washington's most reliable client

states. In the configuration of imperialist props in the region, the shah's "peacock throne" had formed the third leg of a tripod. The other two were Israel — by far the strongest leg, in its capacity as a massively armed junior imperialist power — and the Saudi and Gulf state monarchies, the weakest.

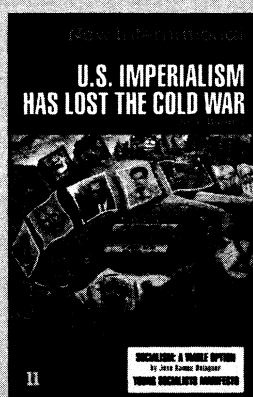
For more than ten years the U.S. rulers have been trying to recoup some of what they lost with the overthrow of the monarchy in Iran. For much of the past decade they did so by providing encouragement to Saddam Hussein's war against Iran and supporting the course of their imperialist allies, especially the French government, in supplying arms to Iraq for the war effort. That conflict, launched in 1980 with a massive Iraqi invasion of southern Iran, has been among the most slaughterous conflicts in this century, with hundreds of thousands of deaths and injuries. Despite Washington's thinly disguised aid and comfort to Baghdad, however, that murderous eight-year war brought the U.S. rulers no closer to their goal of establishing another subservient regime in the region directly beholden to imperialist interests and reliant on imperialist military support.

For further reading



**New International no. 7**  
**Opening Guns of World War III:**  
**Washington's Assault on Iraq**  
by Jack Barnes  
**Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War**  
by Samad Sharif  
**1945: When U.S. Troops said "No!"**  
by Mary-Alice Waters \$12.00  
Available in English, French, Spanish, and Swedish

**New International no. 11**  
**U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War**  
by Jack Barnes  
**The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today**  
by Mary-Alice Waters  
**Socialism: A Viable Option**  
by José Ramón Balaguer  
**Young Socialists Manifesto** \$14.00  
Available in English, French, and Spanish



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.

# SWP supporters campaign to increase annual contributions

BY NAN BAILEY

SEATTLE — Pledges so far have reached \$169,780 in the campaign launched by the Socialist Workers Party to raise monthly contributions from supporters of the party to \$175,000 annually. The campaign's goal is to increase these contributions — which totaled \$139,000 over the last year — to the new level by August 8, the last day of the Active Workers conference in Oberlin, Ohio.

The increase in pledges reflects goals taken and pledges raised in eight cities so far: Boston, Houston, Miami, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle, Twin Cities, and Washington, D.C.

The pledges that have been raised so rapidly reflect a tremendous response from supporters in several cities. They are reacting with enthusiasm to the party's appeal to help raise the funds that will be put to use by the party to help take advantage of the political opportunities opening as we participate as communist workers in struggles taking place across the country: from union struggles like those of Steelworkers striking against Newport News Shipbuilding and Kaiser Aluminum, to political protests such as actions demanding freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoners.

Below we reprint a letter written by Sara Gates, a supporter in Seattle who has agreed to coordinate the campaign nationally. Supporters interested in helping with this campaign are welcome to join us by making a pledge or raising the amount of a current pledge.

Nan Bailey is a member of the SWP's Trade Union Committee.

July 12, 1999

Dear Supporters,

Now is an exciting time to be a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party. Mary-Alice Waters' report to the Toronto convention and conference organized by the Communist League in Canada in April of last year registered the qualitative increase in numbers and breadth of supporters coming forward to help increase the striking power of the SWP and its sister parties around the world. The successful work of the Pathfinder re-

print project was cited in that report as one of the important ways supporters are stepping up their activity.

Politics today presents the party with new opportunities, and the party is responding with decisions like establishing a branch organizing committee in St. Louis, to forming two new organizing committees in the coal fields. All these opportunities present new challenges. Finances is one challenge, and is an area where supporters of the party have been of particular help in the past. The party is proposing that we increase that support in an organized way.

The SWP has embarked on a campaign to raise the annual contributions to the party by supporters to the National Office from its present level of \$139,000 to \$175,000 by the end of the Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, on August 8. Supporters around the country are encouraged to participate in this campaign, which begins with working with branch executive committees in your area to set a goal for how much the level of monthly contributions can be raised in your area to help meet the \$175,000 goal.

Here in Seattle we held a meeting on Sunday, June 20, at which time we discussed this campaign. The jump from \$139,000 to \$175,000 is a 26 percent increase, so we decided to increase our participation by that amount. Currently, supporters in Seattle contribute \$1,692 monthly. We decided to



Militant/Bob Bruneau

**Socialist Workers Party supporters in Seattle at June meeting that decided to help lead national campaign to increase contributions to party. From left, Louise Goodman, Sara Gates, SWP branch leader Lieff Gutthudschmitt, and Stuart Crome.**

raise that by \$440 to \$2,132 monthly. We had a good discussion about how we can reach this goal. We suggested that each supporter who now contributes should consider whether he or she can raise their pledge. We discussed a number of other party supporters who do not currently pledge and agreed that we should suggest to the branch executive committee that we meet with these people and discuss the campaign.

With some preliminary work done before the meeting, and with some raises offered at the meeting, we've raised the amount pledged monthly to \$222, more than halfway toward our goal! We think that other areas will be inspired by this campaign, too.

I have been asked to organize the campaign among supporters and a steering committee

of other supporters in Seattle is working with me to coordinate this effort. We are asking supporters in every area to contact us directly about the progress you are registering in this campaign, including the local goal you've taken. We will be keeping a chart of our progress nationally and will distribute it to local areas. If you haven't already done so, please contact me at the E-mail address below.

We'd also like to receive the name and E-mail address of the supporter in each area who takes responsibility for collecting the monthly contributions.

In solidarity,  
Sara Gates  
gatesbruneau@compuserve.com

## Bookstores stock up on Pathfinder books

BY SARA LOBMAN

Workers and youth interested in the fight for socialism and a Marxist analysis of the crisis of capitalism can now purchase copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, from at least 15 additional bookstores as a direct result of the sales efforts in June by supporters of Pathfinder Press. Visits and phone calls with buyers at the stores resulted in sales of 35 copies of the book, which has been on the top of Pathfinder's "best sellers" list since it came out earlier this year.

In addition to the copies of *Capitalism's*

*World Disorder*, the bookstores purchased 300 other books, for a total of \$3,600 of sales at wholesale prices. More than 70 different titles were ordered, including Marxist classics like the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Imperialism* by V.I. Lenin, and *The History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky; titles on the Cuban revolution; and books on the labor movement, and fights for Black rights and women's liberation. This clearly indicates that the increased interest in working-class politics is having an impact on the possibilities to place Pathfinder titles in local, chain, and college bookstores.

Orders came in as a result of volunteer sales work from Atlanta, Birmingham, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.

When sales volunteer Cindy Jaquith called a university bookstore in Alabama, the buyer initially said she didn't have time for a meeting, but agreed to talk briefly if Jaquith came right over. "This was right at the height of the U.S. and NATO attacks on Yugoslavia," Jaquith reports, "so I decided to focus on some of the titles related to that first. They seemed to be just what she was looking for to strengthen the main trade section of the store." The buyer ended up ordering two copies each of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *The Truth about Yugoslavia*, and *The Balkan Wars*.

Margaret Savage reports from Detroit that when she and sales volunteer Frank Gorton visited a bookstore in Ferndale, a suburb north

of the city, they already had *The Truth about Yugoslavia* displayed on the front counter. The buyer commented that it was selling well. After a discussion on how the material in *Capitalism's World Disorder* and *New International* no. 11 help explain what's happening in world politics today, the buyer decided to get three copies each of those titles. He also ordered a dozen other books, including *Coal Miners on Strike*, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, and *John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s*.

In Atlanta, Jill Fein visited three bookstores at the Atlanta airport. All placed orders, for a total of 55 books including eight copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Sales volunteers in New York got orders from five different bookstores, totaling 93 books. Their efforts added more than \$1,000 to Pathfinder's June sales. One buyer ordered five copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* after being shown the index to the book and discussing how it covers a broad range of politics in the current period. Another bookstore in New York, at one of the city colleges, bought two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, as well as copies of *New International* nos. 7 and 11 and a dozen other titles.

Pathfinder is encouraging supporters who get bookstore orders to place their names on the top of the order form. If the store uses their own purchase orders, please drop Pathfinder a note so the staff can keep accurate records of how this work is progressing. Any reports on visits can also be sent to Pathfinder.

## — YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD — Iceland YS speaks out against NATO

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, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

Email: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY ÓLÖF ANDRA PROPPÉ  
AND FJÓLA DÍSA SKÚLADÓTTIR

REYKJAVÍK, Iceland — "No to NATO!" and "NATO out of the Balkans!" said demonstrators in Reykjavik June 23. They were protesting a drill called North Viking that has been held every other year in Iceland since 1983.

An army helicopter was supposed to land in Hljómskálagarður, a public park in downtown Reykjavik. The soldiers aboard were to run through a residential neighborhood to the U.S. embassy to free some "hostages" and bring them to the U.S. military base in Keflavik.

Iceland, a founding member of NATO, has hosted a U.S. base since 1951. NATO and the base has always been a big issue here, although the debate has diminished in the last decade. The 2,000 soldiers from the base took part in the drill together with an additional force from the United States. Units from Germany and the United Kingdom played the role of environmental terrorists. Dozens of Icelanders participated as well, mostly from the Coast Guard and the police.

The Young Socialists in Iceland issued a statement that was printed in one of the newspapers. It said, "The NATO drills in Iceland ... are used to prepare for more military conflicts and make people used to the idea of soldiers running heavily armed in their backyards. They are carried out under the pretext of defending the country from imaginary terrorist acts, but their real target is working people."

More than 100 people came to the park, where the helicopter was supposed to land. Some people stayed for a short stop, others stayed there all day. There were people from various organizations, such as the Campaign Against Military Bases; Briet, an organization of young feminists drawing its name from a pioneer in the fight for women's rights in Iceland; Anarchists in Iceland, who ran for the parliamentary elections this spring; the YS; and many others.

The weather was bad, but spirits were high. People were playing soccer, listening to music, chatting, and talking politics. A group of people had brought cultured milk to throw at the soldiers. YS members discussed this with some people there and most of them disagreed with this method of protesting.

In the evening, when the exercise had not yet been carried out, the protesters declared victory. The army helicopter never landed in the park. As a result of this and previous activities of the YS, a group of young people came to the Pathfinder bookstore two days later. They stayed for two and a half hours discussing politics and showed interest in coming to a forum scheduled a week later.

AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER

### Pathfinder Press Was Born with the October Revolution

THREE REPORTS BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

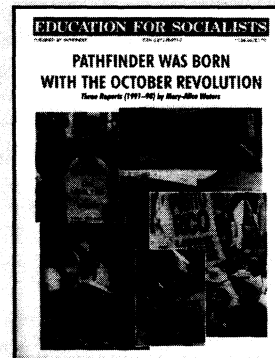
\* Transforming Pathfinder production and ourselves as we respond to growing workers' resistance (Toronto, April 1998)

\* Pathfinder was born with the October revolution (Havana, February 1988)

\* Extending the arsenal of communist propaganda and reconquering the apparatus through revolutionary centralism (the "turtle report," adopted by Socialist Workers Party convention, Chicago, June 1991)

An Education for Socialists booklet. \$8.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.





# Conference

Continued from front page

ther evidence of a sea change in the mass psychology of the working class since at least 1997.

The Ohio conference — sponsored by the SWP and Young Socialists — will register the progress worker-bolsheviks have made over the last year in fusing their activity with struggles by other vanguard workers and farmers. It will be an opportunity for those involved in such struggles, and building solidarity with them in the labor movement, to exchange experiences and learn from each other, and from the past battles of the workers movement.

“Structuring party branches and union fractions through mass work” — that theme will run throughout the August gathering, as it did during a previous Active Workers Conference in Pittsburgh in July of last year. The Ohio conference will register what the communist movement has accomplished since the Pittsburgh gathering in responding to the opportunities and obligations presented by the new situation in the working class.

Progress has been made in an accelerated way since the end of 1998. In December, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes presented a talk at the closing session of a conference in Los Angeles jointly sponsored by the Young Socialists and SWP. The conference coincided with the third YS national convention.

Pointing to the expanding numbers of vanguard workers and farmers engaged in strikes, lockout conflicts, and farm struggles around the United States — several of whom were present at that meeting — Barnes observed that as socialist workers and youth turn toward these fights by other working people, “We will transform our movement together. We will find ourselves in small towns as well as large cities.” This talk is the opening chapter of the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Barnes, published early this year.

“I’m not making a prediction,” Barnes said. “I’m not saying we should go someplace in particular. I’m saying we are open to that course, and we will follow it. We will have the courage of our convictions, and our movement’s leadership will be defined by a sensitivity, a responsiveness, and a competence in moving in this direction. Political openings and responsibilities will determine organizational forms.”

A rolling panel discussion that will open the Ohio Active Workers Conference and continue over the next two days will put the spotlight on the best examples marking progress the communist movement has made along this course. Sandler and Jack Willey, also a member of the SWP’s Trade Union Committee, will be the moderators.

The panel will include SWP members and Young Socialists active in working-class politics and the industrial unions, operating equipment in the party printshop, as well as other workers and farmers engaged in struggles. In addition, the panel will feature supporters of the communist movement organizing to help advance the party’s work in a range of ways.

On the first evening, following the opening panel, Barnes will address the overall theme of the conference from the standpoint of shifts in U.S. and world politics, accelerating class polarization, and perspectives for building proletarian parties.

## Follow natural lines of resistance

Sandler pointed out that following the July 1998 Active Workers Conference in Pittsburgh, the National Committee of the SWP launched a campaign to increase the number of party members working in meatpacking jobs organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and garment and textile jobs organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), as well as to rebuild a national fraction of coal miners in the United Mine Workers (UMWA).

Doing so, Sandler said, was the road to bringing to bear in today’s new situation the political lessons, working-class habits, and disciplined functioning conquered by the party in the late 1970s when it made a turn toward getting the overwhelming majority of its membership and leadership into industry and the industrial unions. These accomplishments are recorded in the book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes.

“Coming out of the Pittsburgh gathering, we knew the party’s structures would be transformed through mass work,” said Sandler. “But we had no preconceived notions of the forms this would take. We followed the natural lines of resistance in the working class.

“Since last fall there have been at least three contract battles by UMWA miners: the

Help build and participate in the

# Active Workers Conference

August 5–8 ■ Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio

## Structuring Party Units and Trade Union Fractions through Mass Work

... that will be the unifying theme of panels, talks, and classes, including ...



Militant/Tim Mailhot  
March in Des Moines, Iowa, by workers on strike against Titan Tire, November 1998

- A rolling, three-day panel of socialist workers, other unionists, farmers, and young socialists engaged in land and labor actions, reaching out through the unions to broader social struggles, and keeping the continuity of the communist workers movement in print.
- Talks by **Jack Barnes**, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, and by **Mary-Alice Waters**, editor of the Marxist magazine *New International*.
- **Classes** based on *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes, *Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, and other books. Classes will focus on clarifying questions discussed in summer schools organized across North America by Young Socialists and the SWP.

## Exhibits

- **Books and pamphlets** will be on sale throughout the conference — many at special discounts.
- **Socialist summer schools.**
- **Keeping the arsenal of Pathfinder books and pamphlets in print.**
- **Expanding the use of the internet and network computing** to advance political centralization and collaboration in the communist movement. Preview the new website of the *Militant* newspaper to be rolled out soon after the conference!

## Social events & fun Sports & swimming



Militant/Mike Italie  
Selling *Capitalism's World Disorder* to strikers at Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, May 1999

## Schedule

August 5		August 7	
8:00 am - 12:30 pm	Registration	9:00 am - 11:30 am	Panel discussion (3rd session)
1:00 pm - 1:30 pm	Welcome to Ohio 1999 Active Workers Conference— <i>Jack Willey</i>	1:30 pm - 4:00 pm	Classes
1:30 pm - 4:00 pm	Panel discussion (1st session)	7:00 pm - 11:00 pm	Organizing to Carry Out the Perspectives of the Active Workers Conference — <i>Jack Barnes</i>
7:00 pm - 10:30 pm	Structuring Party Units and Trade Union Fractions through Mass Work — <i>Jack Barnes</i>	<b>Launching the Pathfinder Fund</b>	
		11:30 pm - 1:00 am	Party
August 6		August 8	
9:00 am - 11:30 am	Panel discussion (2nd session)	(All day)	
1:30 pm - 4:00 pm	The Place of the Party's Auxiliary Organizations — the Young Socialists and Party Supporters — in Building the Communist Movement — <i>Mary-Alice Waters</i>	Joint meeting of steering committee members of the SWP's national trade union fractions	
7:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Classes	Meeting of Young Socialists Workshops for conference participants volunteering for the Pathfinder reprint project	

Immediately after the conference, participants are encouraged to join a volunteer brigade to repaint and make other improvements in the Pathfinder Building in New York City. Start making your plans now.

## Monday, August 9

SWP National Committee meets to discuss how party branches, organizing committees, and union fractions can advance the course registered at conference

FOR TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER INFORMATION CALL:  
YS and SWP supporters nearest you (at numbers listed on page 12)  
YS National Committee: (415) 824-1429

**SPONSORED BY: Young Socialists, Socialist Workers Party**

strike against Freeman United Coal in central Illinois; the walkout by anthracite miners in Hazelton, Pennsylvania; and the Deserado strike in Colorado. At the same time, hiring for coal mine jobs increased in certain areas of the country — including hiring of younger generations of workers and of women. The combination of the job openings and our involvement in helping to organize solidarity with these struggles led the party to set up two organizing committees in the coalfields. We are in these areas early, before important class battles unfold.”

A third organizing committee was formed to advance the party’s work among packing-house workers in the Midwest, Jack Willey said. “Many recent struggles by meatpack-

ers,” he pointed out, “have been tied to the fight for equal rights for immigrants, against the raids by the hated *la migra* and its Operation Vanguard that allows the INS to look through employers’ records and deputize local cops to be INS agents.”

Members of the SWP and YS are also strengthening union fractions in garment and textile plants in cities where the party has branches and in mills in surrounding areas. Willey pointed to an important recent victory won by textile workers — the successful unionization drive in Kannapolis, North Carolina.

“Reinvigorating the party’s political and trade union work among workers in garment and textile factories, packinghouses, and coal mines,” Sandler added, “is also the best way

to put SWP and YS members in the auto, steel, rail, and machinists unions back on the disciplined footing we conquered during the opening years of the party’s turn to industry.”

Willey said that as the party makes progress along this course, “We are meeting people again we had gotten to know years ago, as well as meeting new militant workers.” For example, he said, the SWP last month established a branch organizing committee in St. Louis, where there had been a party branch until the mid-1990s. Socialist workers have maintained contact with airline workers there who have been engaged in fights at TWA over the past year, as well as with workers in other industries. And they are getting to know other

Continued on Page 11

# Communist League holds congress in United Kingdom

BY PETE CLIFFORD  
AND PAUL DAVIES

LONDON — The Communist League in the United Kingdom held its Sixth Congress here June 26–27. Twenty voting delegates discussed and adopted political and organizational reports, as well as electing a new Central Committee. Fraternal delegates from the Communist League in Canada and Sweden, as well as the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, were seated, as was a representative of supporters of the communist movement in Iceland. Representatives of the Young Socialists in Iceland, Sweden, and the United States also attended.

Prior to the congress, members of the Communist League had centered their discussions on “A sea change in working-class politics,” the opening chapter of the new Pathfinder title *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes, as well as the preface to that book. Both documents discuss the challenge for communists and other fighting workers and farmers to respond to the openings in politics today. In addition League members discussed the preface to the new edition of *El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos* the Spanish translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Barnes. The preface, focuses on the fight for a politically homogenous international communist movement. The delegates at the congress voted to adopt all three.

## Reaching towards workers resistance

In the opening report to the congress, Communist League leader Tony Hunt explained, “We are at the beginning of a process of change in the working class.... It's a profound shift in the mood and attitudes of workers, and there is an increase in workers' resistance.” He challenged the conclusions of a report published by the Trades Union Congress a few weeks earlier that claimed the number of strikes in 1998 was the lowest since 1891. “The TUC misleaders are now calling for more ‘partnership deals,’ ” Hunt said, “because they say the bosses have ‘nothing to fear’ from the union.”

He pointed to the experience of a *Militant* sales team the previous week to Felixstowe docks, east of London. After a 87 percent vote for strike action by these 1,800 dockers, there was a “combative spirit, the first move toward action in nine years.” Although their action was called off, this was not likely to be the end of the story, Hunt noted.

## US Airways workers reject concession contract

BY DAVE WELTERS

PITTSBURGH — Maintenance workers at US Airways have voted down a contract proposal that union officials said would provide “the best wages and working conditions in the industry.” After almost four years without a contract, many workers felt the offer was too little too late and introduced serious concessions, such as part-time workers for the first time ever. About 74 percent of workers voted against the proposal, and 81 percent voted for strike authorization, according to initial results announced July 14.

The tentative agreement, reached June 6 between USAirways and officials of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), covers 7,000 mechanics, utility, and stores workers. Many workers are unhappy that after more than four years without a raise the agreement offered only a 3.57 percent wage increase for all workers. For cleaners, who are at the bottom of the pay scale, the raise is just 28 cents, bringing their pay to \$8.11.

Future raises would be determined by a “parity” formula that ties wage rates to those at four competing airlines, weighted heavily toward nonunion Delta Airlines. Ron Jackson, a cleaner for 10 years, said “You have to get away from all the mumbo jumbo about parity-plus-1-percent and get to the core issue — keeping up with the cost of living.”

“Responding to this change is more than seeing the need for more sales and discussions with workers,” he continued. “It poses the opportunity to be part of these fights, working and fighting together with others.”

Hunt pointed to the continued significance of the fight for union rights by 278 members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) workers who were sacked after a one-day strike at LSG Skycheffs at Heathrow airport. These workers led and dominated the 3,000-strong May Day march in the London this year. Two days later 400 people took part in a rally at the Skycheffs picket line. Several League members accompanied workmates to join this action. The company has recently agreed to talk with the strikers, but as yet refuses to reemploy them. After initially pulling back from reaching out for solidarity during these talks, the strikers are now organizing to step up the pressure again.

Two delegates at the CL congress who recently started work at the airports described how the Skycheffs strike is part of a broader picture in the industry. Aer Lingus workers at Heathrow, for example, are also discussing how to respond to an attack on their jobs and conditions as the company prepares to sell its operation there to Swissair. At the Manchester airport there have been a number of wildcat actions in recent weeks.

At Heathrow, Skycheffs strikers are now taking other jobs at the airport while continuing to sustain their 24-hour picket. “This poses an opportunity to work alongside these fighters” to build support and solidarity, explained one delegate. Steps like this can significantly strengthen the union fractions that the League organizes in the TGWU; Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT); and Amalgamated Engineers and Electricians Union (AEEU), Hunt explained.

Delegates at the Congress pointed to other examples of the new openings for communist work in the trade unions. Paul Galloway from Manchester, a member of the AEEU at a tractor plant, reported that 60 of his workmates had signed a protest letter in the last week, after their former workmate Antonis Partsasis had received a court summons from Wigan Borough Council. Partsasis was charged under undemocratic street trading laws for promoting the *Militant* and Pathfinder books on a Communist League stall in February. Some workers signed the protest letter to register support for his political activity, and others simply to show their support for free speech.

The proposal would have introduced part-time cleaners for a proportion up to 35 percent of full-time cleaners in line maintenance in any station, or 25 percent system-wide. It also allows mandatory overtime for the first time for mechanics de-icing aircraft.

“If they start with some part-time with this contract, they'll make it larger next time until this is a part-time job altogether,” said Yvonne Key, a cleaner at US Airways in Philadelphia. “Then we'll all be working two part-time jobs just to make a living.”

Opposition to the proposed contract was widespread. In Pittsburgh workers in one hanger made and distributed 100 bright red T-shirts proclaiming, “I am voting No,” in large letters.

Meanwhile, on June 25 the National Mediation Board ordered that a new union representation election for 9,500 US Airways passenger service agents, over company objections, take place by August 20. The Communication Workers of America, which won a September 1997, election to bargain for passenger service agents and was in the midst of negotiating their first contract, was decertified by a federal appeals court in May.

*Dave Walters is a member of IAM Local 1976 in Pittsburgh. Rebecca Arenson and Nancy Cole, members of IAM Local 1776 in Philadelphia, contributed to this article.*



Militant/Caroline Bellamy

Picket line rally of 300 for striking Skycheffs workers at Heathrow airport in February.

Other delegates pointed to the impact the progress of the nationalist struggle in Ireland is having on the confidence of workers who are Irish living in Britain. Among a delegation of 27 from London to join nationalist fighters defending the Garvaghy Road July 3–4 were several Irish workers. In the previous years, few would have taken this step, fearing both possible state repression and also isolation from their workmates.

The Communist League has to respond to fights where they break out, Hunt said in his summary. He pointed to the importance of recent teams to the Yorkshire coalfields, which could only be done with two branches reaching outwards, as part of a national organization. The team in Yorkshire had higher sales than previous teams to coal miners, indicating how despite the blows these workers had suffered after the 1984–85 strike, their experience of using union power was likely to become important as more fights open up. Deepening contact with this layer of workers means that both branches of the League have to do work in the coalfields.

In the week following the congress, three League members formed a five-day team to Scotland, a few days after the opening of the first Scottish parliament to meet in nearly 300 years. As well as discussing the national question, they went to meet with shipyard workers who are discussing how to respond to redundancy (layoff) threats and also seek commercial orders for Pathfinder books. Hunt explained it is through working with fighters in other parts of the United Kingdom that League members will be able to become part of the resistance and begin changing the work that they do in the union fractions in the cities where the branches are based.

## Imperialist occupation of Yugoslavia

A special report was given to the congress by Anne Howie, who had participated in the three-week *Militant* reporting team to the Balkans during the height of the bombing. Howie explained that the agreement being implemented in Yugoslavia “registers a major blow to the Yugoslav federation and to the fight for self-determination of the Kosovo Albanians.” Nevertheless, she argued, this blow has not resolved the situation and imperialism's quagmire has deepened.

She pointed out the Blair government isn't stronger today coming out of the war. “There is no wave of nationalism, no boost to the ability to drive through attacks against workers here, or in Ireland. Think about what [former prime minister Margaret] Thatcher was able to do after the Malvinas war” against Argentina in 1982. Thatcher “came out of that and won the election and took on the miners. This isn't the same.” Howie explained that imperialism has not accomplished its goals in Yugoslavia and that as union resistance continues in the United Kingdom, discussions among working people on the military occupation of Yugoslavia remain wide open.

Several delegates reported on their experiences in the last three weeks on teams in South Wales and Yorkshire meeting working farmers. The impact of the deflationary crisis of world capitalism on these producers has been ruinous; one Scottish paper reported that the average annual income of dairy farmers there was £47 (\$70). Delegates reported that farmers wanted to talk not just about the devastation they face, but were keen to hear how farmers in other countries are resisting the impact of the capitalist crisis. At the same time, the actions organized by farmers in Britain in recent months remained in a nationalist framework, targeting the produce of farmers in other

countries rather than the capitalist class in the UK, and as yet there were no attempts by farmers organizations or trade unions to build links in their struggles.

## Building the Young Socialists

The second day of the congress spent some time addressing the error that the League had made by not building and recruiting to chapters of the Young Socialists over the last period. In doing this, the League had followed a different course than its co-thinkers in communist leagues around the world. Many delegates joined this discussion, pointing to how this had to be reversed to take full advantage of the openings today — to not wait for young people to join the CL, but work to win revolutionary-minded young fighters to the YS. Delegates pointed to how recent teams in the Yorkshire coalfield and to meet dockers at Felixstowe had been stronger through youth being a part of them. “If we don't build the Young Socialists, we won't build the Communist League,” Hunt said, summarizing the discussion. “If we take young people to the new lines of working-class resistance and fight to build chapters of the YS we can build the League through this.”

Midway through the congress a Militant Labour Forum was held titled, “Forty years of the Cuban revolution: workers and farmers can follow its example in the UK.” Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of *New International* magazine, shared the platform with Communist League leader Pete Clifford and Young Socialists leader Samantha Kern. Clifford described the openings for communists in the United Kingdom. Kern spoke about the strengthening of the YS as a communist youth organization, and described the summer schools and other activities young socialists and socialist workers are organizing across the United States.

This opening to the program was “the best possible context for talking about 40 years of the Cuban revolution,” Waters said. She had participated in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* team reporting the 40th anniversary celebrations of Cuba's agrarian reform. She said this was “not about something 40 years ago, it was about today and advancing the socialist revolution today in Cuba and around the world.” She explained “the Cuban revolution is not about something long ago or far away, but it's about advancing the struggles of workers, farmers, and youth here in the UK and internationally. Its about us acting in such a way that we push forward the development of a real class-struggle vanguard from the strikers at Skycheffs, to the Garvaghy Road, to the farmers in Yorkshire and Wales.” Waters went on to describe how in this way fighters in Cuba, like participants at the congress, were starting not only with their own reality but with the world reality.

Among the participants at the forum were nearly a dozen supporters of the communist movement who, in response to the openings discussed at the congress, have over recent months extended the time they have contributed to different tasks. Many have been involved in aiding the reprint project of Pathfinder books, others have taken on staffing the Pathfinder bookshop in London. At the forum the speakers encouraged these supporters to join with other fighters in attending the Active Workers Conference to be held August 5–7 in Oberlin, Ohio. Some £750 was donated at the forum towards a special party-building fund of £3,000 launched by the League.

*Pete Clifford and Paul Davies are members of the TGWU.*



# Raúl Castro on 1953 Moncada assault: 'Aim was to spark revolutionary armed action'

BY RAUL CASTRO

Eight years ago, all of Cuba was shaken by an event that the censored and venal press covered only partially and in a distorted way: the assault on the Moncada garrison, the military fortress of the eastern province.

What most people knew at the time was that on July 26, 1953, a large group of young people, led by Fidel Castro, had launched a bold military operation to capture the Moncada garrison, that there had been a fierce battle, that more than eighty young people had been taken prisoner and then murdered, and that in the days that followed, others had been arrested and jailed.

July 26, 1953, opened a new phase in Cuban history, the phase of armed action as the principal method of struggle against the Batista tyranny and against the semicolonial foreign domination of our country.

In his trial, Fidel was both his own defense attorney and an implacable accuser of the tyranny and of the existing social and economic system in Cuba. In his speech to the court, which became known as "History Will Absolve Me," he explained the basis and justification for that historic attack, which the tyranny turned into a blood-soaked massacre, and the political ends he intended to achieve.

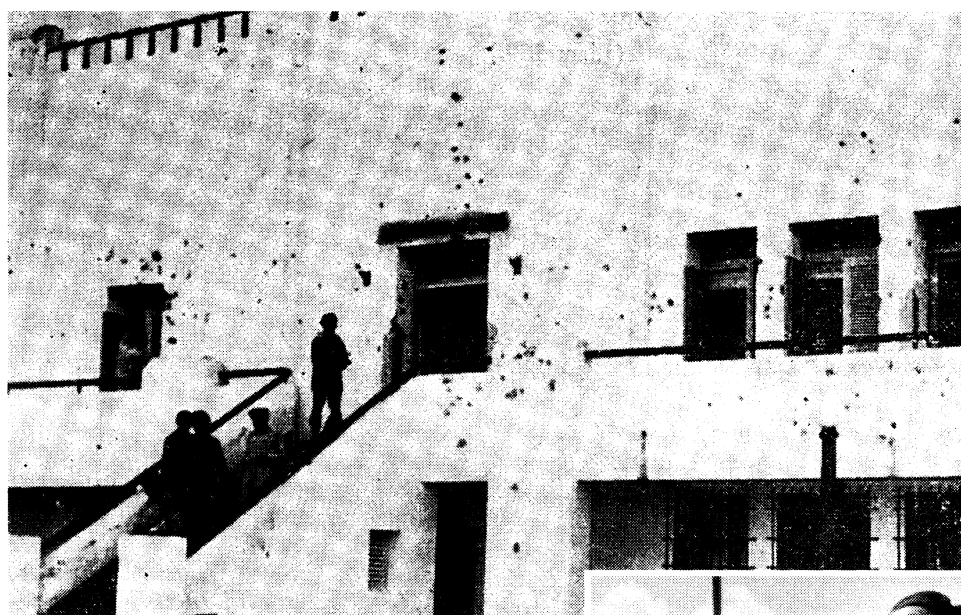
The assault on the fortress did not aim to achieve power through the action of a hundred men. Rather, it was meant as the first step by a determined group to arm the people of Cuba and begin the revolution.

It was not a putsch that sought an easy victory without the support of the people.<sup>1</sup> Rather, it was a surprise attack to disarm the enemy and arm the people, with the aim of sparking revolutionary armed action.

## Not a putsch

It was not simply a blow to take power from Batista and his accomplices in power. Rather, it was the opening shot of an effort to transform the whole political, economic, and social system in Cuba. It sought to end foreign oppression, poverty, unemployment, unhealthy living conditions, and lack of culture, all of which weighed heavily on the homeland and the people.

At that time Fidel did not have an organization built around and committed to those ends. Fidel was confident that, given the political



Right: National Institute of Agrarian Reform  
Above, view of Moncada garrison, showing bullet holes from the attack by Cuban revolutionaries in 1953. At right, Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Raúl Castro, speaking at 1960 ceremony where Moncada was handed over to the ministry of education to be made into a school.



situation and discontent in the country, fighters would come forward spontaneously as soon as there were arms and leaders. It is important to point out, however, that he was not trying to organize an action behind the back of the masses, but rather to find the means to arm and mobilize them for the armed struggle. The goal was not to take over the seat of government and grab power, but rather to initiate revolutionary action to bring the people to power.

The government of Carlos Prío was coming to an end. Like earlier governments, it had fallen into discredit because of its subordination to imperialist interests; because of gangsterism;<sup>2</sup>

labor movement; the closing down of the revolutionary press and the murder of many of its leaders. The Authentic Party, which brought Prío to power, had been greatly weakened. It lost many members and lacked any semblance

## Moncada "was the opening shot of an effort to transform the whole political, economic, and social system of Cuba."

the shameless theft of public funds; its intervention into the unions and the imposition of handpicked leaders; the repression against the

of mass support. The Authentic Party, together with the Liberal, Democratic, and Republican Parties, had formed a government coalition that came to be known as the "hip pocket parties," representing a small minority of old-time corrupt politicians, who in turn represented the traditional dominant sectors of Cuban society. These "corks" were accustomed to floating atop all the political tides and storms in the country, showing that the earlier political upheavals in our country had not yet been enough to keep them down under water for good.

The people were dissatisfied, but they expected change in the next general elections, for which everyone was preparing.

In the opposition camp the Orthodox Party, with great influence in the petty bourgeoisie, had the most authority. The Popular Socialist Party had broad influence among the masses of workers and peasants.<sup>3</sup> The United Action Party (PAU), created by Batista and others of his ilk, had no chance of victory.

The Orthodox Party, with its founder Eduardo Chibás dead,<sup>4</sup> turned down a unity pact proposed by the PSP, which had offered to support the Orthodox Party's presidential candidate.<sup>5</sup> While the *ortodoxos* rejected unity with other political forces, however, they opened their doors and offered important leadership posts to a large number of old-time politicians, plantation owners, bankers, Platt Amendment types,<sup>6</sup> and so on.

Nevertheless, with admirable discipline and a spirit of sacrifice, the Cuban Communists thought only about what was best for Cuba at the time, despite rejection by the Orthodox Party and daily warnings from that party's principal leaders that they wanted no agreement with the Communists. These warnings were aimed above all at the ears of the imperialists so they would look favorably on an Orthodox Party government in Cuba. The PSP decided to support the Orthodox Party presidential candidate while running their own independent candidates for the Senate and House of Representatives on a deep-going program of measures: against imperialism, landlordism, discrimination, unemployment, attacks on unionists, and Mujalism.<sup>7</sup>

## Batista's coup

Thus there was no doubt that, as the major opposition party and with the backing of the Popular Socialist Party, the Orthodox Party's victory in the next elections would be easily attained.

That was where things stood in Cuba on March 10, 1952, eighty-two days before the elections. On that day a coup d'état led by Batista took place, with imperialist sponsorship, aimed at reinforcing Cuba's semicolonial status and preventing an Orthodox Party victory in the elections. The coup makers had nothing to fear from that party's top leadership. But there was indeed reason to fear the masses who supported the Orthodox Party, as well as their demands after the party came to power. These masses would not be satisfied with formal liberties.

In a matter of hours, the government collapsed like a house of cards and the president, Carlos Prío, cowardly fled.

There was generalized national indignation; the masses filled the streets—but then returned to their homes discouraged. The opposition leaders, who were to spend the seven long years of anti-Batista struggle at podiums each claim-

<sup>3</sup> The Popular Socialist Party was the name taken in 1944 by the Communist Party of Cuba.

<sup>4</sup> Eduardo Chibás was founding leader of the opposition Cuban People's (Orthodox) Party in 1947. The party attracted support from many workers and youth who opposed the corruption and subordination to Washington of Prío's Authentic Party. Fidel Castro was a leader of the left wing of the Orthodox Party. In August 1951, Chibás committed suicide at the conclusion of a radio address as protest against government corruption.

<sup>5</sup> The PSP regularly supported candidates of bourgeois parties.

<sup>6</sup> The Platt Amendment, named after U.S. Senator Orville Platt, was a provision imposed on the Cuban government that was established during the U.S. military occupation following 1898. Under the terms of that amendment — incorporated in Cuba's new constitution — Washington was given the "right" to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time and to establish military bases on Cuban soil. These provisions were eliminated from the Cuban constitution in the wake of the 1933–34 revolutionary upsurge there.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebio Mujal was head of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). Originally a supporter of Prío's Authentic Party, he became a firm adherent of Batista, and sought to use the CTC officialdom as a vehicle to police the labor movement for the dictatorship.

## Moncada assault opened Cuban revolutionary struggle

BY MIKE TABER

On July 26, 1953, some 160 revolutionaries under the command of Fidel Castro launched an insurrectionary attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba's second-largest city, and a simultaneous attack on the garrison in nearby Bayamo. The attacks failed, and more than fifty of the captured revolutionaries were massacred.

This action marked the beginning of revolutionary armed struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

Batista had seized power March 10, 1952, in a military coup against the government of Carlos Prío and canceled scheduled elections. Batista was a retired general who had been the strongman in successive governments in Cuba from 1934 — in the wake of a revolutionary upsurge that toppled dictator Gerardo Machado — until 1944. As the Cuban bourgeoisie and their Yankee patrons reconsolidated power following the initial battles of late 1933, Batista bought off most of the insurgent political leaders,

using repression against those who resisted.

Following the 1952 coup, Batista imposed a brutal military dictatorship that lasted until January 1, 1959. On that date Batista fled the country as his military and police forces crumbled under the combined weight of the victories won by the advancing Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro and the growing popular support for the July 26 Movement, culminating in a revolutionary general strike.

In the wake of the attack on the Moncada garrison, Fidel Castro and twenty-seven other combatants were tried and sentenced to up to fifteen years in prison. Acting as his own defense attorney, Castro gave a courtroom speech that was reconstructed by him in prison, smuggled out, and published as "History Will Absolve Me," which subsequently became the program of the July 26 Movement. An English-language translation is available in *Fidel Castro's Political Strategy* (Pathfinder, 1987).

The Moncada prisoners were released in May 1955 after a public defense campaign forced Batista's regime to issue an amnesty.

Raúl Castro participated in the Moncada

attack and was one of the imprisoned fighters. He rose to the rank of commander in the Rebel Army during Cuba's revolutionary war. Since 1959 he has carried the responsibilities of minister of the armed forces. In addition he is today vice president of the Council of State and Council of Ministers, and second secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba.

The accompanying article by Raúl Castro was written in 1961. In it, he writes, "Several chapters of a book would be warranted to fully recount this whole historical event."

Cuban historian Mario Mencía has told this story in *El grito del Moncada* [The cry of Moncada], published in 1986. A revised edition, *The Assault on Moncada: The Opening of the Cuban Revolution*, will be published in English next year by Pathfinder.

The article is reprinted from Raúl Castro, *Selección de discursos y artículos*, vol. 1 (Havana: Editora Política, 1988). Translation, and all subheads, are by the *Militant*.



ing to best represent the people, immediately revealed their timidity and weakness.

The coup not only produced a political crisis in the country. At the same time it brought about a deeper crisis in the leadership of the Orthodox Party, which had come so close to power and now was so far from it. All their weaknesses, ambitions, and incapacity—with the exceptions we're all aware of—came to the fore.

Neither the party nor any of the innumerable factions its leaders were divided into, could offer a road forward, much less a program of struggle, to the masses who yearned for something more than formal rights. The masses had shown even before the coup that they wanted something more than a mini-program of honesty in government, which would not solve anything. They were beginning to understand that the reactionary coup was not aimed against the previous government but against them and their honest aspirations. In face of this situation, a leadership that advocated doing nothing, supposedly out of "dignity," while making useless complaints to the Organization of American States, and raising such pitiful slogans as not buying shoes and clothes, not going to the movies, buying as little as possible, moral repudiation, etc., etc., would not do. These things would not even have scared the mayor of a small town.

Worst of all was that their influence and proposals posed a genuine obstacle to mobilizing the masses in revolutionary struggle against the tyranny; they blocked unity in action of the revolutionary forces. Their most prominent leaders practiced and preached anticommunism, without which no bourgeois leader would get a green light from the Yankees in order to obtain power. So, we had a sizable task before us: to fight Batista as well as what many of the opposition leaders represented.

#### Opposition to the tyranny

The results were not long in coming. Five months after the coup, the first anniversary of the death of Chibás was approaching. On that day thousands of citizens went to his tomb,



Members of the Orthodox youth demonstrate in Havana, Jan. 27, 1953.

more to pay tribute to him and take advantage of the opportunity to hold a demonstration against the tyranny than to listen to the usual empty words of the speakers.

There among the crowd a small mimeographed newspaper of several pages was circulated, called *El Acusador* [The Accuser], edited by Fidel Castro and several *ortodoxos*. It carried an article entitled "A Critical Assessment of the PPC<sup>8</sup>," signed by Fidel and expressing the sentiments of the *ortodoxo* masses. It stated:

"Above the tumult of the cowards, the mediocrities, and the weak-spirited, it is necessary to make a brief, yet useful and constructive assessment of the *ortodoxo* movement since the death of its great leader, Eduardo Chibás."

Later it stated:

"Whoever believes that everything we've done up to now was good and was correct, that

<sup>8</sup> The initials in Spanish for the Cuban People's Party, commonly known as the Orthodox Party.

we need not criticize ourselves, is rather loose and easy with his conscience."

"Those sterile quarrels after Chibás's death, those huge conflicts, not ideological but purely selfish and personal, still ring as bitter hammerblows in our conscience.

"That disgraceful act of using public forums to air Byzantine quarrels was a deep symptom of indiscipline and irresponsibility.

"March 10 came unexpectedly. It was to be hoped that such a serious event would pull up by its roots the petty squabbles and sterile personal issues in the party. But was this what happened?

"To the surprise and indignation of the party's ranks, the stupid quarrels began to resurface. Those responsible showed total lack of sense in not noticing that while the opportunity to attack the regime in the press was limited, the door to attack each other was wide open. There have been many such examples of this type of conduct, which has served Batista.

"No one will be shocked that such a necessary assessment is being made today. It is now

the turn of the masses, who in bitter silence have suffered these mistakes. There could be no more appropriate moment than today, when we render accounts to Chibás at his tomb.

"These vast masses of the PPC are ready, more determined than ever. Ask yourselves in these moments of sacrifice: 'Where are the aspirants—those who wanted to be first in the seats of honor in the assemblies and government councils; those who ran for office and formed tendencies; those who demanded to be up at the speakers' stage at the mass rallies?' Today they are not running for office, not mobilizing in the streets, not demanding places of honor in the front lines of combat.

"Faced with this picture, those who have a traditional concept of politics might feel pessimistic. For those with blind faith in the masses, however, those who believe in the indestructible strength of great ideas, the indecision of the leaders will not give rise to weakening or discouragement, *because the vacuum will quickly be filled by honest men from the ranks*.

"The hour is revolutionary and not political. Politics is the consecration of opportunism by those who possess means and resources. The revolution opens the door to true merit, to those with courage and sincere ideals, to those who offer up their bare chests and take the banner in their hands. A revolutionary party must have a leadership that is revolutionary, young, and of popular origin. That is what will save Cuba."

In that article Fidel expressed the concerns of the *ortodoxo* masses. He had decided to make these ideas public after several months of knocking on all the doors of those politicians for whom Batista and imperialism, with their coup and its deep consequences, had placed a gravestone on their public lives with the initials R.I.P. on it. Seven years later it would be the turn of Batista and imperialism, which fought to keep him in power. They would be buried by the hands of the people and their revolution of January 1959.

#### Youth take to the streets

The masses who supported the Orthodox Party ended up like an army whose officers had

## Series marks key steps by Cuban revolution

BY MIKE TABER

This is the seventh 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 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 replaced 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 second agrarian reform in 1963 and the October 1962 "misile 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.

**Don't miss this series!**  
**Subscribe to the *Militant* today**  
**Coming next:**

■ Ernesto Che Guevara to the Latin American Youth Congress held in Havana in July-August 1960

**Earlier installments were:**

■ "The democratic victory of the people must be complete" — radio address by Fidel Castro, January 1, 1959 (January 18 issue)

■ Cuba's first war of independence, the revolutionary struggle against slavery, and the forging of the Cuban nation — speech by Ricardo Alarcón, October 10, 1998 (February 1 issue)

■ The social aims of the Rebel Army — speech by Ernesto Che Guevara, January 27, 1959 (March 22 issue)

■ The battle to end racial discrimination — speech by Fidel Castro, March 22, 1959 (April 19 issue)

■ "Imperialism misjudged the courage of the Cuban people, the strength of the revolution" — Fidel Castro, on the anniversary of the U.S.-organized invasion at Bay of Pigs (May 10 issue)

■ The first agrarian reform law — June 1959 speech by Fidel Castro, on the agrarian reform law signed May 17 (May 31 issue)

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



fled in disorder and for good. Its youth still participated in any activity called against the tyranny, while new leaders were emerging from its ranks. Through struggle these forces were evolving politically. While fighting against the tyranny, they formed circles where Marxism was studied, pamphlets were printed—single sheets, small mimeographed newspapers—and they prepared themselves for the struggle. Many joined the Socialist Youth.<sup>9</sup>

A few months later, on January 28, 1953—the hundredth anniversary of the birth of José Martí—a large demonstration of workers, students, white collar employees, and the people in general set off from the steps of the University of Havana. Within the crowd, attention was drawn to a group of several thousand youths who marched in perfect formation, filling up six blocks. At their head was Fidel. These were the youth, in their majority from the Orthodox Party, who had now found a leader and were searching for new methods of struggle.<sup>10</sup>

Batista, feeling himself invulnerable, with his stubbornness and blindness, as well as his specific role as imperialism's guard dog, had led the country to a dead end. All that was possible through peaceful means would be a contest among the various leaderships of bourgeois parties who were vying for power behind the backs of the people and against their interests. There were four parties that, together with the Authentic Party, had made up the government coalition of Carlos Prío. One of these, the Republican Party, lined up behind Batista only two days after the coup. Before the end of the year, the Democratic and Liberal Parties were in power once more, together with Batista. It was an example of how politics in Cuba was a thieves' picnic. Among the working class, the ouster of its honest leaders was intensifying. The gangster-like imposition of false leaders, armed assaults on the unions, the gradual loss of many of the workers' conquests, and the offensive of the bosses allied with Mugal and imperialism, was deepening the divisions within it. Their banner was anticommunism, carefully fed by the U.S. embassy through its agents in leading posts in the CTC. All this meant that the day when the mass workers movement would be ready to fight was far off.

**“Youth participated in activity against the tyranny, while new leaders were emerging. They formed circles where Marxism was studied, pamphlets were printed, and they prepared themselves for struggle.”**

In the countryside, the now-vanished Rural Guard, a type of rural political police, carried out the same role as do the *carabineros* today in sister countries. They did not even allow our peasants to meet to form organizations allowing them to fight for their most immediate demands. Only a few such fighters remained, who at a heavy cost had been able to resist the attacks of the land grabbers and their Rural Guard defenders. These included peasant fighters at Realengo 18, Las Maboas, and El Cobre.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The Socialist Youth was the youth organization of the Popular Socialist Party.

<sup>10</sup> José Martí (1853-1895) was a noted poet, writer, speaker, and journalist, who founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party to fight Spanish rule and oppose U.S. designs on Cuba. Under Martí's leadership, the party launched an independence war in 1895 in which he was killed in battle. Martí's revolutionary anti-imperialist program is part of the internationalist traditions and political heritage of the Cuban revolution.

Within Cuba the young anti-Batista fighters were closely identified with defending Martí's legacy. Because of this, during 1953 they were given the name Generation of the Centennial.

<sup>11</sup> In 1953 the Maisi Company, backed by the Rural Guard, attempted to force peasants living on Realengo 18 to pay them rent. The peasants fought back and were able to prevent this move. In 1955 peasants in El Cobre in Oriente province waged a battle against eviction at the hands of the large landowners.

In 1957-58 the Batista dictatorship gave the U.S.-owned Francisco Sugar Company state lands in Las Maboas, in Camagüey province. Large struggles were waged by peasants and other working people both to defend Cuba's national patrimony and in defense of the peasants' rights.

Whenever they had the opportunity, the students took to the streets in demonstrations and confrontations with the police. But in spite of their growing combativity, they remained a small part of society. Keeping their heroic tradition of struggle alive, they constituted a permanent agitational factor, but by themselves they could do little or nothing.

We were all in agreement, and were conscious that to destroy the tyranny it was necessary to set in motion a mass movement. But

son, everything else would fall apart. One thing depended on the other, the big engine on the smaller one. But it was possible, and we threw ourselves into it.

July 26, St. Ann's Sunday, was chosen



Top, young revolutionaries just before the Moncada assault. From left to right, Calixto García, Raúl Castro, José Luis Tasende, and Níco López. Above, national sugar workers' strike shook Cuba two years after Moncada attack.

given everything that had happened as mentioned above, how could this be done? At that time Fidel was saying, “A little engine is needed that will help start up the big engine.”

The little engine would be an initial action with those same young people who, marching in virtual military formation, followed Fidel that January 28, 1953. They began receiving basic military training, including the handling of arms and target practice. Sometimes this was done in small groups at the university; other times it was conducted at small farms of friendly peasants in Havana province.

#### Movement of working-class youth

These youth came from poor families. The majority consisted of workers and white collar employees, along with a few peasants. Most came from Havana and provincial towns in Havana province. Some were from Pinar del Río.

meant that our men could travel from Havana to Santiago, passing themselves off as just other tourists. Together with the movement of masses of people and luggage, the transport of weapons was also made easier.

Well over a year had passed since Fidel had begun assembling together the movement. Up to that point it remained without a name. It was known simply as “The Movement” to the best of the *ortodoxo* youth who were able to have contact with it.

Several chapters of a book would be warranted to fully recount this whole historical event, including the period of advance preparation for the Moncada action. I will limit myself here to pointing out the essential features.

#### Financed by those who gave everything

The success of the operation depended to a large extent on the military strength available to us, and therefore largely on the economic resources we could assemble. Unfortunately, after many sacrifices, only 20,000 pesos were raised. Three examples are sufficient to show how the money was raised, to cite cases of *compañeros* who were killed. Elpidio Sosa sold his small business and appeared before Fidel with three hundred pesos “for the cause.” Fernando Chenard sold the equipment from his photography studio, from which he earned his living. Pedro Marrero borrowed against many months' future wages, and he had to be prevented from selling all the furniture from his home. There were other cases like this. It's easy to imagine how the funds were raised, among those who gave everything, and later on gave their lives. There is no way to measure the gap between the honorable and patriotic attitude of these young Cubans and the attitude of those politicians who spent millions on their electoral campaigns but were incapable of giving one cent to free the country. And I don't think it was because they were aware that later on we would free ourselves from them too. Because at that time, neither they, much less “their en-



because, as everyone knows, on that day Carnival is at its high point in Santiago de Cuba. Thousands of Cubans from all over the country, including many tourists from Havana, as well as natives of Santiago who return to their home town for a week to enjoy the traditional popular celebration. This

enemy” Batista and imperialism, could imagine what would come later.

With such limited resources, arms were few and of low quality. One by one, several dozen automatic five-cartridge 12 gauge shotguns and a similar number of semi-automatic .22 caliber rifles were purchased. We obtained only one .45 caliber Browning machine gun, an M-1 carbine, several .44 caliber Winchester rifles—like those used by cowboys in U.S. Westerns—and some pistols of various calibers. This was our entire arsenal. It was enough, at one weapon per fighter, to arm 150 men. It was easy to obtain such arms with fake licenses, using them over and over in different gun shops. This was because in spite of the vigilance and control the regime maintained over the sale of arms in the capital, no one could imagine that a military fortress would be attacked with rifles meant for shooting birds.

The plan moved forward amidst all sorts of anxieties and unimaginable difficulties, including economic strains and government vigilance. It was true that such vigilance had not reached the brutal and implacable forms of bloody persecution as it would in years to come; yet it nevertheless required that we observe all the rules and security measures of clandestine struggle.

There was a small general staff, led by Fidel. It was composed of Abel Santamaría, our second in command; José Luis Tasende; Renato Guitart; Antonio “Níco” López Fernández; Pedro Miret; and Jesús Montané. Of them, only Fidel and the latter two are still alive. Níco López died in the *Granma* landing three years later.

The principal tasks were divided among these *compañeros*. Each pursued the plans in his own area of responsibility. The other men were grouped in cells, which became something like seven-man squads. Later on, as organization became further refined, they were organized into groups made up of several squads each.

These conditions made for difficult working conditions. No less difficult was the situation created by the hostility, humiliations, underestimation, contempt, and ridicule that we suffered in that “opposition to Batista” environment, where it was not clear who was being opposed more—Batista, or those who worked honestly against Batista. Although the people and nearly the entire youth had lost faith in them, there were still a lot of “big chiefs” full of the “dignity of doing nothing”; big shots who looked down on us with scorn, especially toward Fidel. There were a lot of pompous individuals, coffeehouse strategists who in well-known restaurants were jotting down on napkins their plans for solving Cuba's problems. In a not very disguised way, they

## History Will Absolve Me by Fidel Castro

Featured in

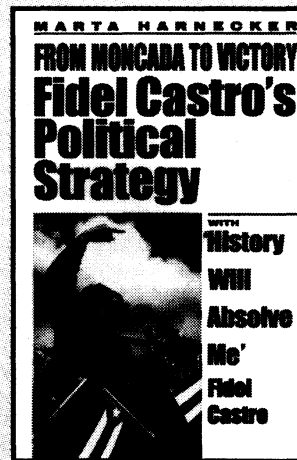
**Fidel Castro's Political Strategy:**

**From Moncada to Victory**

**Marta Harnecker, Fidel Castro**

Traces the political course along which Fidel Castro organized a revolutionary movement that culminated in the 1959 victory of workers and farmers over the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Contains the full text of “History Will Absolve Me,” Castro's reconstruction of his 1953 courtroom speech explaining the political and social goals of the revolution. \$13.95

Available from Pathfinder, see page 12 for bookstores.





were seeking to advance their personal aspirations for the future.

But our plans went ahead, ignoring these triflers who, through the heat of battle, the fall of Batista, and the coming of the revolution, would see their clay pedestals dissolve and would be unable to tolerate or understand, much less assimilate, the revolutionary storm in our country that would engulf them all: the pseudorevolutionaries as well as Batista and imperialism. [...]

[The article then details the attack and the reasons for its failure — ed.]

#### Program benefiting workers, peasants

The Moncada attack was not aimed simply at overthrowing the tyranny. Nor were its aims separate and apart from the economic and social situation the country was in.

Its basis was precisely the total repudiation of Batista, his government, and what it represented. The general crisis of our semicolonial structure was worsening. Unemployment was increasing. The workers, the peasants, all the popular sectors in our country were showing great dissatisfaction. Our bourgeoisie was dissatisfied too, because of the economic stagnation Cuba was suffering and the ruinous competition of the voracious Yankee imperialist monopolies. The latter did not worry too much about the bourgeoisie's concerns, however, knowing that it was paralyzed by fear—above all in Latin America—that the working class and the peasants would lead a patriotic and democratic struggle and win power. The Yankee imperialist monopolies were confident that in a crisis the national bourgeoisie would take their side against the sovereignty and independence of its own country.

For our part, the plan was the following: [Together with the Moncada attack] we would simultaneously attack the Bayamo garrison, with the aim of placing forward units at the Cauto River. We would arm the people with weapons taken from the dictatorship's soldiers. We would cut the highway and railroad by taking the bridges. We would occupy the airport and radio stations. We would then address the people with a program that would take effect immediately in the territory under our control, a program benefitting workers and peasants, professionals, the petty bourgeoisie, middle-class layers in the city. We were convinced that by our action, we would unleash the revolutionary storm throughout the country.

A description of the basic aims of our struggle were an important part of the combative speech Fidel gave in his own defense—an accusation and a program delivered before the nervous judges (who hours later would sentence him to fifteen years in prison) and the watchful and open-mouthed soldiers guarding him.

Amidst absolute silence Fidel's words were heard clearly. How far were these judges and soldiers from imagining that the words of a prisoner being tried secretly so that no one would find out what he said, would, years later, for the benefit of the people, become the laws of the nation!

I stated that the second consideration on which we based our chances for success as one of social order. Why were we sure of the people's support? When we speak of the people we are not talking about those who live in comfort, the conservative elements of the nation, who welcome any oppressive regime, any dictatorship, any despotism—prostrating themselves before the masters of the moment until they grind their foreheads into the ground. When we speak of struggle and we mention the people, we mean the vast unredeemed masses those to whom everyone makes promises and who are deceived by all; we mean the people who yearn for a better, more dignified, and more just nation; those who are moved by ancestral aspirations of justice, for they have suffered injustice and mockery generation after generation; those who long for great and wise changes in all aspects of their life; people who, to attain those changes, are ready to give even the very last breath they have, when they believe in something or in someone, especially when they believe in themselves. The first condition of sincerity and good faith in any endeavor is to do precisely what nobody else ever does, that is, to speak with absolute clarity, without fear. The demagogues and professional politicians who manage to perform the miracle of being right about everything and of pleasing everyone are, necessarily, deceiving everyone about everything. The revolutionaries must proclaim their ideas courageously, define their principles, and express their intentions so that no one is deceived, neither friend nor foe.

In terms of struggle, when we talk



Fidel Castro, at far right, and other detainees in the Santiago de Cuba jail after the Moncada attack. Left, Abel Santamaría, second in command at Moncada, who was tortured and killed.



about people we're talking about the six hundred thousand Cubans without work, who want to earn their daily bread honestly without having to emigrate from their homeland in search of a livelihood; the five hundred thousand farm laborers who live in miserable shacks, who work four months of the year and starve the rest, sharing their misery with their children, who don't have an inch of land to till and whose existence would move any heart not made of stone; the four hundred thousand industrial workers and laborers whose retirement funds have been embezzled, whose benefits are being taken away, whose homes are wretched quarters, whose salaries pass from the hands of the boss to those of the moneylender, whose future is a pay reduction and dismissal, whose life is endless work and whose only rest is the tomb; the one hundred thousand small farmers who live and die working land that is not theirs. [...] These are the people, the ones who know misfortune and, therefore, are capable of fighting with limitless courage! To these people whose desperate roads through life have been paved with the bricks of betrayal and false promises, we were not going to say: "We will give you..." but rather "Here it is, now fight for it with everything you have, so that liberty and happiness may be yours!" [...]

#### Historic results of Moncada

To get to today, the historic results of the failed attack on the Moncada garrison were of vital importance.

First, it initiated a period of armed struggle that did not end until the tyranny's defeat.

Second, it created a new leadership and a new organization that repudiated passivity and reformism; that was determined and combative; and that, in the trial itself, raised a program with the key social, economic, and political demands needed to transform Cuba. They rejected the Platt Amendment spirit of the old-time leaders, who were left behind, losing influence among the masses.

As a concrete demonstration of this loss of influence, the following appeared in the "Political Parade" section of the magazine *Bohemia*, on December 4, 1955:<sup>13</sup> "Fidel Castro is too dangerous an opponent for some of the opposition leaders who in three and a half years have not seen fit to take a straightforward stance on Cuba's situation. These leaders know it very well. They already feel themselves displaced due to the strength of *fidelismo* in the battle against the military.

<sup>13</sup> *Bohemia* was Cuba's leading newsmagazine in the 1950s, with a weekly circulation of over a quarter of a million.

"The logical reaction of the opposition politicians in face of this clear fact should be to answer the revolutionary action of *fidelismo* with some resolute political action of their own."

Third, it brought Fidel Castro to prominence as the leader and organizer of the armed struggle and of radical political action by the Cuban people.

Fourth, it served as a lesson subsequently in organizing the *Granma* expedition and the guerrilla action in the Sierra Maestra.

Fidel has not come to be Cuba's national leader solely for demonstrating courage and daring, firmness and decisiveness in organizing the Moncada assault. Rather, because together with that, he presented the program of the country and the people. And he not only put forward that program, but he had the will to bring it about, and he showed the road to its realization.

If Karl Marx said that the Paris Commune was "storming the heavens,"<sup>14</sup> we should say of the dozens of young people armed with bird guns who attacked the Moncada garrison, that they "tried to take the heavens by surprise."

Years later, on the *Granma*, the little engine would come again. Conditions had ripened; we were not counting on the success of a single action, making all other plans dependent on it. Rather, we made it so that one or more failures would not doom the entire effort. And in spite of the early, serious setbacks

<sup>14</sup> The Paris Commune of 1871 represented the first attempt to establish a revolutionary government of the toilers. The working people of Paris held and administered the city from March 18 until May 28, when their resistance was crushed by the forces of the French bourgeoisie, working in league with the Prussian army. In the ensuing terror more than seventeen thousand working people of Paris were massacred. The quotation by Marx is from a letter to Ludwig Kugelmann dated April 12, 1871 (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 131-32).

that the *Granma* expeditionaries suffered at the beginning of the guerrilla struggle, the firmness and tenacity of Fidel in inculcating in those first few fighters the idea of never giving up sustained the guerrillas in those early days. The support of the peasants and agricultural workers were obtained first; the support of the working class and the rest of the population came later. All this constituted the big engine that toppled the tyranny and began the revolution. This did not happen on that July morning in 1953 but rather on January 1, 1959, when, with a firm base, we began the storming of the heavens, which for a true revolutionary, for a Marxist-Leninist, is conquered here on earth: progress, well-being, and the happiness of our people.

July 26 is a great anniversary date of the revolution.

July 26 is a great day in the history of our homeland.

July 26 was extended in the *Granma*, in the mountains, in the plains. It materialized in January 1959; on May 17 in the agrarian reform; in the urban reform;<sup>15</sup> in the army garrisons transformed into schools; in the nationalization of the electricity and telephone monopolies, of the banks, the sugar mills and other large industrial enterprises in the country, all of which allowed the revolution to take into its hands all the main pieces of our economy, a basic measure to strengthen ourselves and move forward under the circumstances that surround us. It is tied together and extended in the Declaration of Havana,<sup>16</sup> in the victory at Playa Girón<sup>17</sup> and with the proclamation of the socialist character of our revolution, which realizes in our beloved Cuban land the highest and most cherished ideal of human society: putting an end to the exploitation of man by man.

<sup>15</sup> The agrarian reform law of May 17, 1959, set a limit of 30 caballerías (approximately 1,000 acres) on individual landholdings. Implementation of the law resulted in confiscation of the vast estates in Cuba—many of them owned by U.S. companies. These lands passed into the hands of the new government. The law also granted sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and squatters a deed to the land they tilled. Another provision of the law established the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).

The urban reform law of October 1960 gave all Cubans either outright ownership of their dwellings or permanent use of them with a monthly fee not to exceed 10 percent of their income.

<sup>16</sup> The First Declaration of Havana, adopted at a mass rally in Havana in September 1960, was a condemnation of U.S. imperialism and its domination of Latin America. It was expanded and deepened by the Second Declaration of Havana of February 1962. Both documents are contained in the pamphlet, *The Second Declaration of Havana* (Pathfinder, 1962).

<sup>17</sup> On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The counterrevolutionaries, organized and financed by Washington, aimed to declare a provisional government to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. The invaders, however, were defeated within seventy-two hours by Cuba's militia and its Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which is the name Cubans use to designate the battle. (The fifth installment in this series, in the May 10 *Militant*, was a speech by Fidel Castro on the battle of Playa Girón.)

For further reading from Pathfinder

#### Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

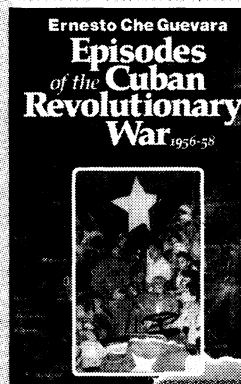
Ernesto Che Guevara, Argentine by birth, became a central leader of the Cuban revolution and one of the outstanding communists of the 20th century. This book is his firsthand account of the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba. With clarity and humor, Guevara describes his own political education. He explains how the struggle transformed the men and women of the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement led by Fidel Castro. And how these combatants forged a political leadership capable of guiding millions of workers and peasants to open the socialist revolution in the Americas. Guevara's *Episodes* appears here complete for the first time in English. \$23.95

#### Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution A Marxist Appreciation

JOSEPH HANSEN

How did the Cuban revolution come about? Why does it represent an "unbearable challenge" to U.S. imperialism? What political challenges has it confronted? \$20.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder.





# Ohio conference

Continued from front page

working people in St. Louis who have been involved in union battles and in building solidarity with fights elsewhere in Missouri, Illinois, and Iowa.

The party looks a little different today than a year ago, Willey said. "We are expanding to some smaller towns, often surrounded by cornfields or ranches." Both there and in larger cities where SWP units are organized, worker-bolsheviks are now gaining some new experience in integrating their political work with efforts by farmers fighting — in face of declining produce prices and rising indebtedness — to hold on to land and to their means of livelihood.

Across the South, SWP and YS members have taken part in at least a dozen meetings by farmers this year, most around the settlement in a class-action discrimination suit filed last year against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) by farmers who are Black, said James Harris, who works in a UNITE-organized warehouse in Atlanta.

"A few of these farmers have been attending Militant Labor Forums in Atlanta occasionally, driving hours to do so. They have also invited us to take part in fights in their areas, like a rally against racist violence in Ashburn, Georgia."

In response to the shifts in class politics, socialist workers have found receptivity among co-workers to taking part not only in union solidarity activity, but also in actions to support working farmers and protests around a range of social and political issues. In the New York and New Jersey area, for example, a party member working in rail brought a co-worker to a Militant Labor Forum on the fight for Puerto Rican independence, while two other party members there brought independence activists from Puerto Rico they had met to a picket line for striking Domino Sugar workers.

## Structures that meet party needs

As the SWP has responded to changes in working-class politics by extending its reach geographically, it has needed to make use of the state and district structures provided for by the party constitution. State organizations of the SWP have been established in California and Minnesota, as well as a Southern regional committee and a district organization in New York and New Jersey.

In early June, the SWP National Committee also made a number of decisions to structure party units along lines better suited to meeting current political opportunities. "Establishing organizing committees in new areas means we'll have smaller units in some other places right now," Sandler said.

"More than half of SWP branches are in the process of moving to headquarters that fit their current size and financial resources by the end of September," he said. "And all

branches are on a campaign to become debt free and reconquer a proletarian approach to financing a nationally centralized party."

The party's nationally organized supporters have also taken an August 5 goal of increasing monthly contributions to the SWP from just under \$140,000 to \$175,000 per year. To advance towards this goal, all party units are organizing meetings of supporters in their areas this month. "At the Active Workers Conference we'll work to meet this goal and discuss the next steps," Sandler said.

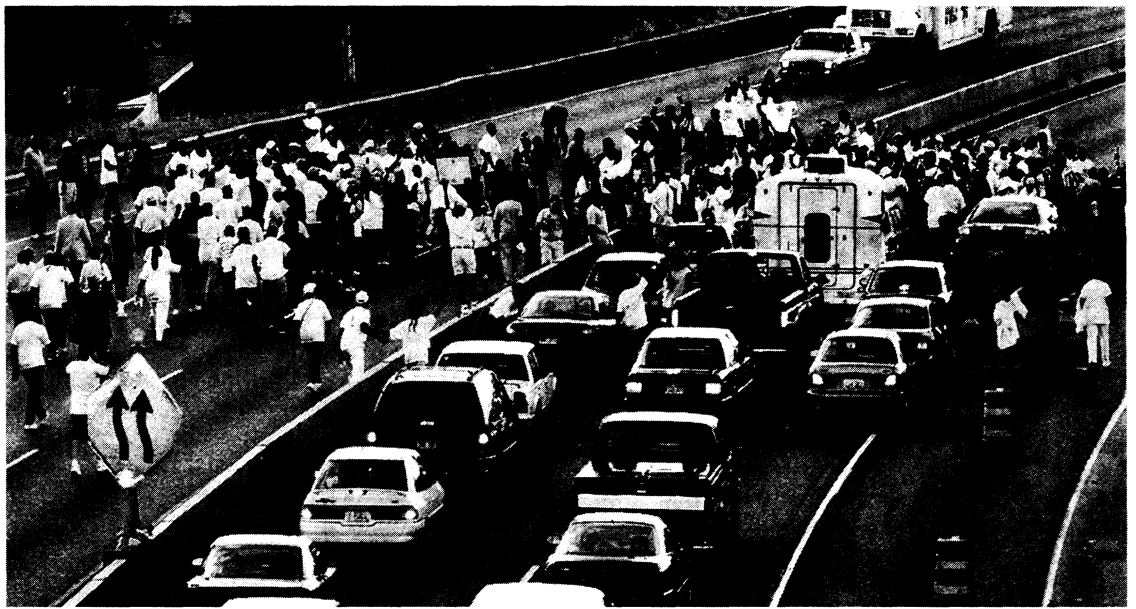
## Summer schools, conference classes

In June and July, the Young Socialists and SWP organized summer schools in cities across North America to study and discuss central questions in world politics, the lessons and history of struggles for power by the working class and its allies, and the continuity of efforts by vanguard workers to build communist parties. Readings include *Capitalism's World Disorder*, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by founding SWP leader James P. Cannon, and *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the Bolshevik-led October 1917 revolution in Russia.

Classes at the Ohio conference will focus on clarifying questions that came up during these summer schools.

"What's a 'nascent country' and what's the continuity of communism on the fight against national oppression?" This is one of the questions discussed at the summer school classes on James P. Cannon's *History of American Trotskyism* in Birmingham, said Roberto Guerrero, a YS member who recently moved there from Houston. "We've discussed the struggle for Quebec independence, spurred by the presence here of two YS members from Canada, and we plan to read something by Lenin on the right of self-determination of oppressed nations."

Guerrero said another question that has sparked a lot of interest there is the historic weight of workers who are Black in the changing South. He had just returned from a visit to Phoenix City, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia, where YS and party members sold nine copies of the *Militant* at the plant gates of two Fieldcrest Cannon mills and talked to workers about the union rep-



About 900 construction workers block Interstate 70 in St. Louis July 12, calling for affirmative action in highway-construction jobs and contracts. SWP just established branch organizing committee there.

resentation victory in Kannapolis and the Steelworkers strike in Newport News, Virginia. YS and party members had also set up a literature table the day before at Auburn University in Alabama, where five students have purchased copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. "We have now set up a class on campus with one of these students who is interested in coming to the Active Workers Conference."

Reading, studying, and discussing with each other, while actively taking part in the class struggle — that's been the pattern of the summer schools that have been the most successful. This is especially true in areas where Young Socialists moved for the summer, creating new concentrations of YS members.

In Los Angeles, for example, two YS members who moved there from northern California got jobs in a union meatpacking plant. A third YS member from Chicago got into a UNITE-organized garment plant two weeks earlier.

"This had a big impact on the 40 workers and young people who took part in the July 11-12 statewide educational weekend at a mountain camp in Ben Lomand, California," said Samantha Kern, California state organizer of the Young Socialists and a member of the YS National Committee. "One of the YS members who got the meatpacking job in LA gave a class on 'Leading the party into industry' from *Changing Face of U.S. Politics*. We now have union fractions in meatpacking in both San Francisco and Los Angeles."

YS National Committee member Cecilia Ortega and another party member, who work in a UFCW-organized meat-processing plant in the Bay Area, brought one of their co-

workers to the California summer school special weekend. In addition, a farmworker from Watsonville — who took part in a drive to unionize Coastal Berry farms last year and was beaten up by company thugs — attended the first day of the educational weekend.

During the weekend, Kern said, one participant asked why the SWP since the early 1980s had resumed its call for a workers and farmers government, instead of a workers government as it had done for a number of years in the 1960s and 1970s. This initiated a discussion on the central place of the worker-farmer alliance in the revolutionary struggle for power in the United States and other imperialist countries.

The California SWP State Committee and party branches in Los Angeles and San Francisco are making a special effort, including fundraising, to ensure that every YS member and contact come to the Ohio conference. A similar effort is needed across the United States.

YS and party members in California are now organizing a team to join steelworkers locked out by Kaiser Aluminum at a July 17 solidarity rally in Spokane, Washington, Kern said. "We will bring these experiences, and hopefully some of these fighters, to the Active Workers Conference."

## Place of Young Socialists, supporters

On the second day of the conference, Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New Internationalist* magazine and president of Pathfinder Press, will present a talk on the place of the SWP's auxiliary organizations — the Young Socialists and nationally organized party

Continued on Page 14

## Colorado miners end two-month strike

BY RON KASPER

Members of United Mineworkers of America Local 1984 in Rangely, Colorado, settled a more than two-month strike against Blue Mountain Energy at their Deserado mine July 4. In a telephone interview Carol Amy, the union local's recording secretary, reported that the 74-14 vote put in place a five-year contract with a raise in wages of \$1.85 over that period. The strikers were able to cut down mandatory overtime hours to 250 per year and stave off all cut-backs on health care.

## CORRECTION

The final chart printed in issue no. 26 should have listed the *Militant* subscription sales for supporters in Los Angeles at 66, putting them over their goal of 65.

The final results in the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* by socialists in the Steelworkers union in the United States was 57 not 49.

In the same issue, the article "Quebec: 47,000 nurses defy back-to-work order," the entry level wages for nurses in Quebec was converted incorrectly in U.S. dollars. Can\$30,340 is about US\$20,500.

# Clinton's 'reform' would weaken Medicare

BY MEGAN ARNEY

In the name of proposing a "reform plan" for Medicare June 29, President William Clinton took the lead in attacking the 34-year-old national medical entitlement for the elderly.

The White House scheme aims to weaken Medicare as an entitlement, increasing the payments workers make out of their pockets for the limited coverage it provides. Clinton says the plan would cut \$72 billion from the government budget over 10 years.

Medicare, which provides medical benefits for those who are disabled or over the age of 65, was established in 1965. Along with Medicaid, which provides medical coverage for low-income families, it was a by-product of the gains of the civil rights movement and an extension of the 1935 Social Security Act.

Anyone over the age of 65 is eligible for Medicare at a cost of \$45.50 a month; 39 million people receive coverage.

Clinton touts his plan as an expansion of Medicare because it will allow recipients to purchase additional coverage for prescriptions drugs, which currently must be paid out of pocket. There are substantial costs and limitations to this coverage, however. Medicare would cover half of the beneficiary's drug costs up to an annual limit of \$1,000 for a monthly premium of \$24 (or \$288 a year) in 2002. The premium increases to \$44 a month in 2008, with an annual limit of \$5,000. All costs above these caps would be paid by the recipient.

The White House proposal also includes adding a 20 percent co-payment for clinical laboratory services, which currently costs nothing. The deductible for doctor's office visits — set at \$100 per visit since 1991 —

would go up \$2-3 each year.

The scheme would also push more Medicare patients into health maintenance organizations (HMOs), which often offer poorer quality care, especially affecting working people who cannot afford private insurance. Cuts in Medicare payments to most health care providers from 1997, which were due to expire in 2003, will be extended.

As part of the package, Clinton revived his earlier scheme to "adapt" Medicare to include U.S. citizens between the ages of 55 and 65. Instead of lowering the age for eligibility, since 3.2 million people between the ages of 55 to 64 are uninsured, the president proposed allowing laid-off workers age 55 or older the option to pay up to \$400 a month for health benefits. Medicare recipients between 62 and 65 would pay \$300 —

still well out of reach for many who need it.

This Medicare proposal is still to be debated before Congress. The Clinton administration has already led greater inroads against Medicaid. A recent study by Families USA, reports that 675,000 people — including 420,000 children — lost Medicaid coverage in 1997 because of the Clinton administration's assault on welfare. That was the year Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the main federally funded cash relief program set up in 1935, was eliminated.

According to the study, at least one in five former welfare recipients do not have medical insurance today. In New York City, a Federal district judge ruled that thousands of people were improperly denied Medicaid at city welfare offices.

AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER

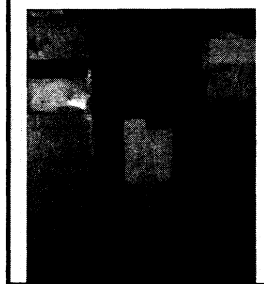
## The Changing Face of U.S. Politics Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

JACK BARNES

"This book grows out of the experience of the working class over the last twenty years. It reflects hard-earned lessons drawn from the activity of the organized class-conscious and revolutionary-minded section of that class." — from the introduction. Includes sections on the 1979 Newport News strike and the revolutions in Iran, Grenada, and Nicaragua that year. **\$19.95** Also available in Spanish and French.

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12

JACK BARNES  
THE CHANGING FACE  
OF U.S. POLITICS  
Working-class politics and the unions



# UN hearings: 'Free Puerto Rico'

Continued from front page

slavia. The protests have drawn fishermen, students, religious leaders, and others.

"In carrying out these actions in open defiance of the U.S. Navy," said Guadalupe, "we have four principal demands: demilitarization of Vieques, the return of our land, decontamination, and the development of that land." Vieques residents have long accused the Navy not only of occupying three-fourths of their land, but of polluting it and devastating the island's economic development.

"On Feb. 6, 1978, a group of Vieques fishermen, armed only with their own little boats, slings, stones, and the willingness to risk their lives, met NATO warships at sea," testified Zoé Lugo-Mendoza, 24, a member of the Vieques Support Campaign in New York City. "They succeeded many times and more than 30 war maneuvers had to be aborted [over the years]....

"It was after the recent death of a civilian by a U.S. bomb that the whole island of Puerto Rico has finally heard the message. Now all of Puerto Rico along with Vieques is demanding, 'Stop the bombing of Puerto Rico. U.S. Navy out of Vieques.'"

"In 101 years of military occupation of Puerto Rico we have had the dubious reputation of serving the U.S. empire in several wars, conflicts carried out under the concept of 'common defense,' which in our view is nothing but a subterfuge," said Olga Cintrón of the Great Eastern National Masonic Lodge of Puerto Rico, a pro-independence group.

The chair of the committee hearings, Cuban ambassador Rafael Dausá, opened the floor for discussion after each presentation, which a number of UN delegates took advantage of. After hearing several petitioners expose the U.S. Navy for its use of depleted uranium-coated bullets in Vieques and the high levels of cancer among Vieques residents, Iraqi representative Mowafak Mahmoud Ayoub asked a question and said, "I am speaking because the United States used the same type of weaponry in Iraq, particularly in the South. Cancer has risen in those areas."

## Free Puerto Rican political prisoners

A number of speakers pointed to the frame-up of Puerto Rican independence advocate José Solís and the U.S. government's incarceration of 17 Puerto Rican *independentista* prisoners, some of whom are serving jail sentences of up to 98 or 105 years.

"Even as we testify," said Marisol Corretjer, vice president of the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico, addressing the case of José Solís, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico, "the United States is seeking the incarceration of yet another political prisoner, a distinguished university professor who dared teach students to question their colonial status. These violations of our human rights can stop only when we are a free and independent nation." Wilma Reverón, co-chair of the Hostos National Congress, made

a similar point.

Jorge Farinacci, a leader of the Socialist Front of Puerto Rico, told the UN delegates, "The U.S. government continues to be deaf to the universal call for the freedom of our political prisoners, who are the longest-held political prisoners in the western hemisphere."

Rodolfo Benítez, Cuba's delegate at the hearings, asked for more information on the frame-up of Solís. Farinacci took the opportunity to announce demonstrations planned at federal buildings across the United States and in Puerto Rico on July 7, when Solís was due to be sentenced, to demand his immediate release.

Martin Koppel, who spoke as a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, focused on why the fight for Puerto Rico's independence is in the interests of workers and farmers in the United States. "Colonial rule of Puerto Rico gives the U.S. government a freer hand to attack the democratic rights of those in the United States who struggle in defense of our livelihood," he stated. "A successful struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico will deal a powerful blow to our common enemy. It will show that it is possible to stand up to the most brutal capitalist class in the world and break its domination."

Other petitioners included Juan Mari Brás and Lolita Lebrón, longtime figures in the independence movement. Also speaking in favor of independence were Fernando Martín, vice president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party; Julio Muriente, president of the New Independence Movement of Puerto Rico (NMIP); Vanessa Ramos, general secretary of the American Association of Jurists; and Eunice Santana of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

In an unusual appearance for the head of Puerto Rico's colonial administration, pro-



Militant/ Joe Swanson

**July 7 picket in Des Moines, Iowa, demanding release of José Solís and other Puerto Rican political prisoners. Most of the dozen pickets were meatpackers from the region.**

statehood governor Pedro Rosselló addressed the UN decolonization committee. He called for the U.S. Navy to leave Vieques and used Puerto Rico's colonial status as an argument for why it should become the 51st U.S. state. His administration had earlier appointed a commission that issued a 53-page report detailing the U.S. Navy's atrocities, which ended with a call for the U.S. military to withdraw from Vieques.

Representatives of a few other pro-statehood organizations spoke. Nearly every speaker at the hearing denounced the U.S. military occupation of Vieques. Unlike previous years, no representative of organizations supporting the current "commonwealth" setup attended the hearings.

The UN resolution in support of Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and independence was approved with 12 votes in favor, none opposed, and 6 abstentions.

While in town, several of the indepen-

dence fighters from Puerto Rico spoke at public meetings that took place all over New York City. The evening after testifying at the United Nations, Fernando Martín, Ramos, Muriente, Reverón, Eduardo Villanueva Muñoz of the Lawyers Guild of Puerto Rico, and others spoke on a panel before an audience of 90 people at Hunter College.

Following a July 8 picket line in front of the United Nations, the Vieques Support Campaign in New York sponsored a forum that also featured a broad panel of speakers, which Corretjer, Farinacci, Guadalupe, Muriente, and Santana addressed.

The next day Guadalupe and Farinacci got a warm reception when they visited the picket line of striking Domino Sugar workers in Brooklyn, New York. Guadalupe spoke with strikers about his participation in the struggle in Vieques, while learning about the sugar workers' fight against job cuts and for better wages.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**Defend the Cuban revolution: Celebrate 40 Years of Workers and Farmers in Power.** Speaker: Melissa Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., July 23, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. Donation: \$4. For more information, call (973) 643-3341.

### NEWYORK

#### New York

**Celebrate 40 Years of the Cuban revolution.** Speaker: Brian Taylor, staff writer for the *Militant* who recently returned from Cuba where he at-

tended events commemorating the 1959 agrarian reform law. Fri., June 23, 7:30 p.m. 59 Fourth Avenue (corner of Bergen). Donation: \$4. For more information, call (718) 399-7257.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**Rightists Pushed Back in Northern Ireland.** Speakers: Representative of Irish Northern Aid; Connie Allen, 1999 Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Philadelphia. Fri., June 23, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South Street (at 19th Street). Donation: \$5. For more information, call (215) 546-8218.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Protest and Dissent in Iran.** Speaker: Colin Parker, Communist League. Fri., June 23, 7 p.m. 59 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. For more information, call (9) 319-3075.

#### Christchurch

**The Struggle Inside Indonesia Today: Eyewitness Report.** Speaker: Participant in the recent *Militant* reporting team to Indonesia. Sat., June 24, 7 p.m. 199 High Street. Donation: \$3. For more information, call 365-6055.

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

**Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.**

### UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA: Birmingham:** 111 21st St. South Zip 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 73712,3561

**CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles:** 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

**FLORIDA: Miami:** 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. Compuserve: 103171,1674

**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 230 Auburn Ave. N.E. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-7976. Compuserve: 104226,1245

**ILLINOIS: Chicago:** 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Compuserve: 104077,511

**IOWA: Des Moines:** 2724 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 277-4600. Compuserve: 104107,1412

**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** 683 Washington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 282-2254. Compuserve: 103426,3430

**MICHIGAN: Detroit:** 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 104127,3505 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

**MINNESOTA: St. Paul:** 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (651) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

**NEW JERSEY: Newark:** 87A Halsey. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. Compuserve: 104216,2703

**NEW YORK: New York City:** 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642 ; 167 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

**OHIO: Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Compuserve: 104502,1757 **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. Compuserve: 103122,720

**TEXAS: Houston:** 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 847-0704. Compuserve: 102527,2271

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

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

### AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. Compuserve: 106450,2216

### BRITAIN

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

**Manchester:** Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

### CANADA

**Montreal:** 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 104614,2606

**Toronto:** 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

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

### FRANCE

**Paris:** Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

### ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: milph@mmedia.is

### NEW ZEALAND

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

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

### SWEDEN

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

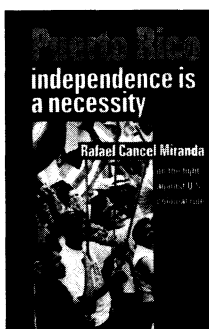
from Pathfinder

## Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA

In two interviews, Cancel Miranda—one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979—speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free 16 Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today." In English and Spanish. \$3.00

Available at bookstores listed at right





# Fascism: What it is and how to fight it

The following selection is from the discussion following a Nov. 7, 1992, talk on "The vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 elections revealed," by Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The entire talk and discussion period appear as the final chapter in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The book is copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY JACK BARNES

COMMENT: In a talk you gave earlier this year on the fight against Buchananimism you made the point that fascism is not a form of capitalist rule.<sup>1</sup> I wonder if you could explain that, because I've always thought of fascism as being precisely a form of capitalist rule.

RESPONSE: The communist movement has written a great deal about "fascism, what it is and how to fight," to use the name of a very valuable pamphlet by Leon Trotsky that is published by Pathfinder. But the person from whom I learned the most about fascism concretely was Farrell Dobbs. Farrell was the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 until 1972, and in the 1930s was a central leader of the strikes and over-the-road organizing campaigns that built the Teamsters in the upper Midwest into a fighting industrial union move-

## from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

ment. I learned from Farrell both directly, in the course of our work together for nearly a quarter century until his death in 1983, and from his four-volume series on the Teamsters struggles published by Pathfinder.

In the third volume, *Teamster Politics*, Farrell explains how small fascist outfits began to grow in this country in response to the deep economic and social crisis and the rise of workers' struggles in the 1930s. "Clashes between capital and labor in times of social crisis tend to stimulate activity among political demagogues with a fascist mentality," he wrote. "They anticipate that intensification of the class struggle will cause sections of the ruling class to turn away from parliamentary democracy and its methods of rule, and resort to fascism as the way to hold on to state power and protect special privilege."<sup>2</sup>

Farrell understood that if workers are misled into believing there is some choice between capitalism as they know it and some qualitatively worse form of capitalism called fascism, then the argument to choose capitalism as it is — and even to fight to defend it under certain conditions — can appear strong. For decades, that is the way the Stalinists have misled working people, convincing them to subordinate their own class interests and organizations to various bourgeois parties and governments — to prevent something worse from happening. There are the "democratic capitalists" and the fascists, the Stalinists say, so workers must support the democratic capitalists in order to stop the fascists.

### Fascism is bred by capitalism

But fascism is precisely a movement set in motion and financed by sections of the ruling class in desperate circumstances in order to maintain capitalist rule. It is not an alternative to "democratic capitalism"; it is bred by "democratic capitalism." When workers understand what fascism really is, then the enormity of the responsibility to get rid of capitalism — a task only the working class can organize and lead — becomes that much clearer.

<sup>1</sup> The March 28, 1992, talk by Jack Barnes, entitled "Buchananimism: What It Is and How to Fight It," was reported on in an article by Steve Clark in the *International Socialist Review* supplement to the April 10, 1992, issue of the *Militant*. Reprints of the supplement, including biographies of the SWP's 1992 presidential and vice presidential candidates, were widely distributed over the next several months by supporters of the SWP campaign.

<sup>2</sup> *Teamster Politics* (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), pp. 139-48.

When we say that fascism is not a form of capitalist rule, but a way of maintaining capitalist rule, we do so in order to stress that fascism is not a way of organizing capitalism. Instead, it is a radical petty-bourgeois movement in the streets — the most horrible, malignant such movement in history. Banal, mediocre, figures — but ones adept at radical demagoguery, nationalism, phrase-mongering, and organization — rise to leadership in these movements. Thugs rise among the cadres. The fascists ape much of the language of currents in the workers movement. "Nazi" was short for National Socialist German Workers Party.

These movements never begin with broad ruling-class support. At first, the rulers in their majority alternately scorn and fear this rowdy "rabble"; only handfuls of capitalists back them at the outset. But as the bourgeoisie become convinced they confront an irresolvable social crisis, and as the working class puts up an increasingly serious challenge to capitalist rule itself, growing layers of the exploiters start supporting, or tolerating, the fascists in order to try to smash the workers and their organizations. That is the job the fascists are finally enlisted to do by the bourgeoisie when the threat to capitalist rule reaches a certain threshold.

The fascists' stock of "ideas," encrusted with historical mystification, are borrowed from the sewers of the bourgeoisie's own views, values, and attitudes. The things the capitalist rulers say privately among themselves, the subtle and not-so-subtle bigotry they promote, are taken up as the banners of a radical mass movement. The demagogues use these banners to mobilize and channel the energies of radicalized layers of the frightened, resentful, and ruined middle classes in bourgeois society.

The fascists initially rail against "high finance" and the bankers, lacing their nationalist demagoguery with anticapitalist rhetoric. When they come to power with support from weighty sectors of finance capital, however, the anticapitalist rhetoric slacks off quickly. That is what happened in Italy under Benito Mussolini in the early 1920s after *il duce* also became premier. That is what happened in Germany under Adolf Hitler a decade later after the *führer* also became chancellor. Once these new regimes set about reviving industry, building roads, and preparing for war, radical diatribes against capital went into rapid decline....

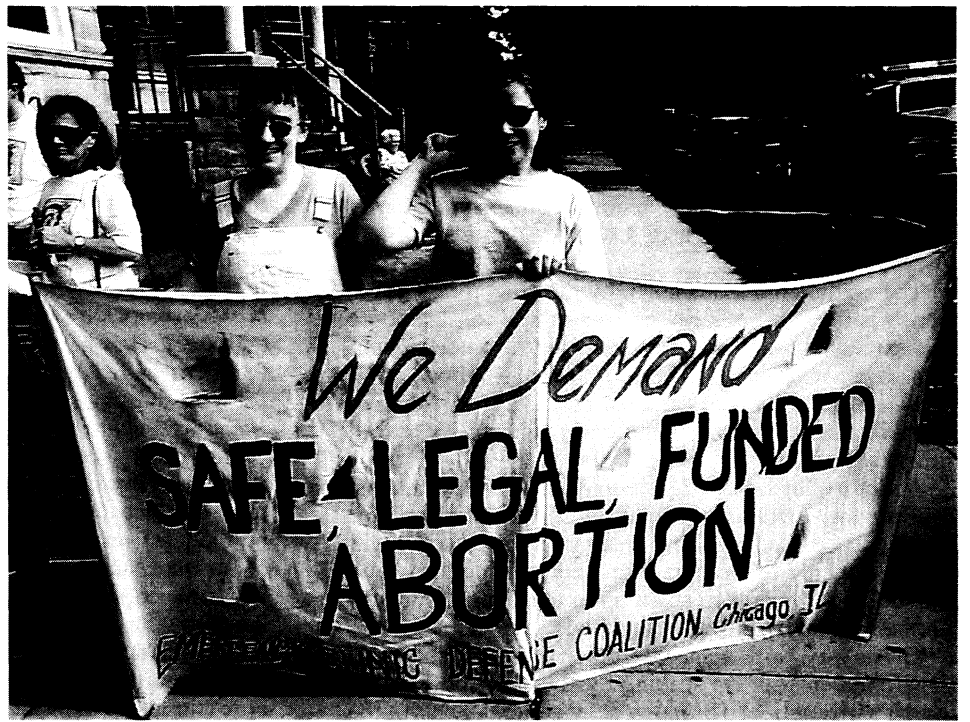
### A course to mobilize working class

The workers vanguard must chart a course to mobilize and lead the working class and our allies to take power. Along the way, the labor movement will have to defend our organizations and those of other oppressed layers against fascist thuggery and murderous violence.

Back in the early 1970s, at the height of the youth radicalization engendered by the Vietnamese resistance to U.S. imperialism, some petty-bourgeois ultraleft groups, in Europe especially, adopted a stance of "crushing fascism in the egg." But a small group of socialists cannot organize to physically smash equally tiny groups of fascists and think they have contributed to stopping fascism. In fact, they will have actually done the opposite by disorienting potentially valuable cadres within the communist youth movement, misleading them to believe fascist movements can be defeated by small armed groups outside the main battalions of the workers movement. As we argued against ultraleft currents in our own movement at the time, "Our egg can't crush their egg."

Fascist movements will be bred and rebred by capitalism in crisis, and workers cannot defeat them by going "egg on egg." Nor — and this is the other side of the same coin — can fascist forces be defeated by calling on the bourgeois state to ban their speech and writings, or curtail their right to organize. At various times opportunist, centrist, and other petty-bourgeois currents in the workers movement all combine ultraleft adventures with a dependence on the cops, courts, and parties of the capitalist rulers in the name of the fight against fascism.

Communist workers defend our meetings, our meeting halls, our demonstrations and picket lines, as well as those of other workers and farmers who come under attack. But the workers movement will begin to deal devastating blows to the fascists only as experience is gained in real class combat, as picket squads are transformed into defense organizations, as we take the moral high ground in defense of



Militant/Jay Paradiso

June 26 picket in Chicago to counter rightist action against women's rights

all workers' rights, and as a mass communist party is forged in revolutionary struggle.

Fascism is nowhere close to conquering anywhere in the world right now. What we are seeing today — and this is new — is the development of nuclei of incipient fascist movements in more and more countries, including here in the United States. They are finding ways of legitimizing themselves in bourgeois politics. In parts of Europe, some of these fascist outfits have carried out violent mobilizations in the streets, especially against immigrants. Because of the nationalist, class-collaborationist character of the labor misleadership throughout the imperialist world, the workers movement has been blunted from effectively explaining the dangerous logic of these incipient fascist currents or responding in a timely and vigorous way to their reactionary acts. All this is part of the battle ahead of class-conscious workers.

### Economic and social crisis accelerates

Before fascism triumphs anywhere, however, the capitalist economic and social crisis must first have accelerated to the point that intolerable pressures and tensions are hammering broad sections of the middle classes in particular. And before fascist organizations begin enlisting enraged petty-bourgeois cadres by the tens and then hundreds of thousands, the labor movement itself must be engaged in a sustained fightback against assaults by the exploiters. The revolutionary workers move-

ment will already be rallying masses of toilers and impoverished middle-class layers to our banner and actually beginning to threaten capitalist rule. Only then does the ruling class increasingly turn to the fascist movement for help.

Under these conditions, the working class will have the opportunity once again — as on numerous occasions during the two decades between the first and second world wars — to stop the march toward fascism and war by taking power out of the hands of the capitalists. If proletarian combat parties have not been built that are capable of leading the workers and farmers in making a socialist revolution, however, then the effort will fail, horrible disappointment in the potential of the working-class movement will set in, and the fascists can and will make their own bid for power. Never in this century has a fascist movement conquered and taken the reins of government except under these conditions — after the working-class movement has first had a chance at victory and been defeated.

We are not currently at that stage in the class struggle anywhere in the world. But that is what communist workers must be preparing for right now, as we carry out our political work and develop the habits and discipline of proletarian functioning. Otherwise, labor will have no tested and competent revolutionary leadership as mass working-class combat begins to unfold — as it will, with explosive rhythms and a pace that neither we nor the exploiters can foresee.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



July 26, 1974

Chanting, "We need jobs, not welfare," Blacks and Puerto Ricans occupied and shut down 10 blocks of construction on Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn on June 24.

They were protesting the refusal by Columbia Asphalt Corporation, which is paving the avenue, to provide 12 jobs on the construction site for members of the Fort Green community. The action was called by Black Economic Survival, Fight Back, and Manpower, three Black organizations involved in the struggle to win more construction jobs for minority workers.

Negotiations were held at the on-site office between the three groups, the contractor, and union representatives. The contractor said he would quit the site before he'd give up more than two jobs. An official of Local 1010 of the Laborers' Union also said he would order his men off the job if the 12 were hired, since they would not have union books.

Black Economic Survival leaders Moses Harris, Mike Thomas, and Oscar Fomby replied that two jobs were not enough and that the action would continue until their demands were met. The contractor then proceeded to pull his equipment off the site. In further negotiations, however, he agreed to provide nine jobs right away and three more in two weeks.

During the past year, Black Economic Survival has carried out 90 such job-site occupations in Brooklyn and obtained 160 jobs in the industry for Black and Puerto Rican workers.



July 25, 1949

Groveland, Fla., a small town in the central portion of this Jim Crow state, has been the scene of unbridled Ku Klux terror for several days. Motor caravans have repeatedly raided the Negro quarter of this little town, pumping bullets indiscriminately into streets and dwellings. They have burned to the ground two houses and have threatened to reduce the entire community to ashes.

The orgy was touched off by the arrest of two young Negro veterans charged with robbing a white native and kidnapping his wife. Gangs of lynchers immediately converged on the local jail but found themselves foiled by the removal of the intended victims to a different jail. The would-be lynchers then proceeded to unleash their reign of terror. Two other Negroes are allegedly involved.

The entire Negro population of Groveland, some 400 in number, has been reportedly removed in trucks at night to neighboring communities and towns. State and local authorities have issued repeated assurances that they have the situation "well in hand."

# No to Navy strikebreaking!

Continued from front page

ening of rebelliousness to the fight—and to other workers who stand with them in solidarity. This strengthens the Steelworkers and other unions who show solidarity by posing the need to take a stance supporting equal rights for Blacks.

The antiunion actions taken by the Navy brass in ordering sailors and other personnel to scab on the strike and extending production deadlines for the bosses — under war president William Clinton — shows that Washington's aggression against working people abroad, from Yugoslavia to Iraq, is the same as its policy toward toilers at home.

A victory for Local 8888 would strike a blow against Washington, a common enemy of all those fighting for social justice. And in taking on a major employer, it will set an example to workers throughout the country who are looking for ways to stand up to their bosses' attacks on their dignity and living standards.

This is why working people, union and nonunion alike, should march with the striking Steelworkers on July 23. And it's why anti-cop brutality activists, opponents of the death penalty, and advocates for the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal, youth who have protested Washington's assault on Yugoslavia, and fighters of the rights of immigrants, should get to Washington to join in denouncing

the antiunion policies of the U.S. government. Many of the strikers will take interest in other fights as well.

A rally will be taking place in Washington the same day to demand the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners (see back-page calendar). Supporters of this fight, as well as advocates of Puerto Rico's independence, have a special stake in participating in the Steelworkers action. The Newport News strikers are among the strongest potential allies in their fight. They have been up against the shipyard bosses, the cops, the U.S. government, and its Navy — the same Navy that occupies two-thirds of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques for bombing practice.

As working people get more of a taste of what capitalism has in store us — more wars, more unemployment, more union busting, more police brutality, and more deaths on the job from unsafe conditions — one thing will become increasingly apparent: capitalism is not our system.

Many people who buy the *Militant* get it because they are thirsty for answers about the economic and social crisis of capitalism and have sensed the marked shift taking place inside the working class. We encourage all supporters of this paper to make sure such people have the opportunity to also pick up *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, a book that helps to explain and demystify the world today—so we can be equipped to fight to change it.

## Kaiser, Newport News workers

Continued from front page

Local 341 in Newark, Ohio, together with several youth and other supporters, made the trip here by bus, after spending a day talking to other Kaiser workers in Bellwood, Virginia. Kim Collins, the bus captain and a 20-year Kaiser employee, explained, "Our purpose was to get our word out to the Bellwood Kaiser workers on what they might be facing in 2001 when their contract comes up, and to support the workers on strike in Newport News."

Kaiser Aluminum workers went out on strike at five plants in Washington, Louisiana, and Ohio September 30, to fight the company's plan to eliminate hundreds of jobs from its factories. The union offered to return to work under the terms of the old contract January 13, and Kaiser responded by locking out the workers.

Speaking to a rally of the Newport News strikers at the 50th Street gate to the massive shipyard, Kaiser worker Dave Lockland from Spokane, Washington, pointed to the disparity in wages and benefits between northern shipyard workers and the predominantly Black shipyard workers in Newport News, Mississippi, and New Orleans. The fight at Newport News, where nearly 9,000 workers have been on strike since April 5, is a fight for civil rights and social justice, he said.

### 'Stop Navy strikebreakers'

Pensions for Newport News workers are notoriously low. Edward Artis, a welder on nuclear ships, has worked at the shipyard for 35 years. He explained, "If I retired today my pension would be \$300 dollars. Now how is my family going to live on that?"

Artis is the picket captain at Gate 50. He was the picket captain at the same gate in 1979 when the members of USWA Local 8888 at Newport News battled the shipbuilding company for union recognition and for a contract. Artis continued, "This fight is for my life and for my family's life. It's for all of us."

Another issue Newport News workers are addressing is the strikebreaking role of the U.S. Navy. While Local 8888 is on strike, U.S. Navy personnel are in the shipyard working on the ships. The Navy has also extended deadlines for completion of work to help the company cope with the strike. The union has called a July 23 march and rally in Washington, D.C., to protest the strikebreaking role of the Navy. Local 8888 is organizing buses to Washington for the rally.

After lunch in the Local 8888 union hall, several Newport News strikers took the Kaiser workers onto the James River in boats to look at the back side of the shipyard, which stretches for two and a half miles.

These workers are part of the "boat patrol" that the union organizes to ensure the company does not try to bring in strikebreakers by water. Brian Newsome, a pipefitter on dry dock 12, is active in the boat patrol. He explained, "We organize boat patrol every day, 24 hours a day." The strikers have faced occasional harassment from both the company's boat security and the Coast Guard, "But our boat pickets will continue. This is our picket line on the river."

### Kaiser workers reach out for support

The first stop for the bus from Newark was in Bellwood, Virginia, the site of a plant that Kaiser bought from Reynolds Aluminum in 1997. The 350 workers there, organized by the USWA and the International Association of Machinists, are under a contract that expires in 2001.

The Newark workers leafleted the Bellwood plant during shift changes July 9, getting a very favorable response. Almost all of the workers stopped to talk and take literature. Many took extra copies to bring into the plant. One worker coming out of the afternoon shift change spoke to a leafleteer for several minutes, and then drove up to Greg Bowman, president of USWA Local 440 at the plant, and asked to be reinstated into the union. Since Virginia is a "right-to-work" state, not all the workers in the plant belong to the union, though most do.

The Kaiser workers, a busload of Newport News strikers, and some of the workers from the Bellwood plant held a lunchtime rally in front of the factory the same day. Workers from USWA Local 341 in Newark and Local 8888 from Newport News spoke, as well as the presidents of the USWA and IAM locals at the plant and officials of the USWA and the Virginia AFL-CIO. Locked-out Kaiser workers from Gramercy, Tacoma, and Spokane also spoke.

Whitney Jasmin, a locked-out Kaiser worker from Gramercy, described the devastation caused by a massive explosion that ripped through the Gramercy plant on July 5. Twenty-four people in the plant were injured. According to an article in the July 7 New Orleans *Times Picayune*, one-quarter of the 1,200-acre plant was damaged. The explosion shook houses, knocked out windows as far away as a mile from the plant, and covered the town in red bauxite dust.

Jasmin told the *Militant* that Kaiser is now talking of closing the Gramercy plant altogether, though other plants in the Kaiser system rely on it for the initial step of processing alumina out of bauxite. In addition, the company faces dozens of lawsuits from residents of Gramercy and the surrounding area.

Union members in Gramercy responded to the blast by going into the community and helping their friends and neighbors to try to repair the damage to their property.

The chairman of the Local 8888 organizing committee, Jerry Good, also spoke at the Bellwood rally, introducing half a dozen members of the committee, who are known as the "pit bulls." These workers were responsible for helping to lead the campaign to increase the percentage of union members leading up to the strike.

Eddie Whitley, one of the pit bulls, said that the key to their success was that "We told the people the truth. And if we said we were going to stand behind them, we stood behind them all the way."

Heading back to Ohio, the Kaiser workers felt their efforts had been worthwhile. "We made a bridge with the Bellwood and Newport News workers that will hopefully bring northern and southern unions more together," said Jarrod Whitlatch, a 27-year-old worker.

Sixteen-year-old John Pennington, who accompanied his stepfather on the trip, commented, "We informed the people at Bellwood about what was going on. I feel if one person read the literature we passed out we accomplished our goal." Pennington, who initiated discussions in his classes and brought videos to school about the Kaiser lock-out, concluded, "The strike has hit me pretty strongly. I really believe in it."

Steve Smyers, a 24-year-old worker who was the victim of a police assault on the picket line in Newark, said, "I'm coming back from this trip really pumped up. I knew we had support, but when you see it for yourself it makes you feel a lot better. I'm looking forward to the future."

*Danny Booher is a member of the USWA in Pittsburgh.*

# August 5–8 Active Workers Conference

Continued from Page 11

supporters — in building the communist movement today.

Since its launching half a decade ago, the Young Socialists — building on the continuity of its predecessor, the Young Socialist Alliance — has proven itself as a training ground for cadre of the revolutionary party and in helping to deepen the proletarianization of the communist movement.

Experience from the past few years also confirms the importance of organized party supporters in maximizing the striking power of the proletarian party, helping to finance the SWP, and aiding the party's effort to keep in print the revolutionary political continuity of the workers movement.

An indispensable part of this expanding support movement are the 100-plus volunteers around the world who have been digitizing Pathfinder books. "At the Pittsburgh conference last year," said Sandler, "volunteers had completed putting into electronic form two titles. They have now finished 34 and will be close to 40 by the beginning of August."

Their work has become an integral part of Pathfinder book production, allowing the communist movement to keep its revolutionary arsenal of books and pamphlets available to workers, farmers, and youth at a lower cost and with improved quality. As the communist movement transforms the timeliness and consistency of its mass work, reprinting Pathfinder titles is needed more frequently.

"*Capitalism's World Disorder* is proving itself to be a book never to be seen without, on the job or wherever else you are," said Willey. "Whatever political question explodes in U.S. and world politics — the war in Yugoslavia, a deadly refinery explosion, a racist cop beating, an assault on abortion rights — this book has something to say from a working-class point of view. It helps workers, farmers, and youth better understand what we can do about the system of capitalist exploitation that is dragging humanity toward social devastation, fascism, and world war." Members and supporters of the communist movement have sold more than 1,200 copies of the book between mid-March and the end of June, and its publisher, Pathfinder Press, has sold 2,800 copies in all since it came off the presses earlier this year.

The growing political receptivity to revolutionary books and newspapers among fighting workers and farmers is being confirmed every week. In early July, Danny Booher, a Steelworkers union member from Pittsburgh, joined USWA members locked-out by Kaiser on a solidarity bus from Newark, Ohio, to Newport News (see front-page article). During the trip, Booher and another socialist worker from Cleveland sold eight *Militant* subscriptions and four Pathfinder books, including a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, to workers on the bus and at union rallies. Kaiser workers from Tacoma and Spokane, Washington, and from Gramercy, Louisiana, took part in the weekend's events.

"A number of these workers have gotten to know and respect party members from Houston to Seattle and Cleveland because of their systematic solidarity work and had bought copies of the *Militant* before," Booher said. "We'll be working hard to get some of these workers to the Ohio conference."

### Saturday rally, Sunday events

At a Saturday evening, August 8, rally, Barnes will review what has been registered through the panels, educational classes, and discussion over the previous three days and point to some conclusions for the party's ongoing political and trade union work coming out of the conference.

On Sunday, many conference participants will stay over for a fourth day of activities.

Members of the steering committees of the SWP's industrial union fractions will hold a joint meeting with the Trade Union Committee for a full day of discussion to help guide the party's trade union work.

The Young Socialists are organizing a Sunday meeting. And there will be a range of training workshops for participants in the Active Workers Conference who are volunteers in the international Pathfinder reprint project.

On Monday, August 9, the SWP National Committee will meet to discuss and adopt decisions to continue advancing the party along the course registered at the Active Workers Conference.

Over the week following the conference, a volunteer brigade of participants will travel to New York to join in a special effort to repaint and make other improvements in the Pathfinder Building, where the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and revolutionary books and pamphlets are produced.

There will be a \$20 per day conference registration fee for Thursday through Saturday, as well as \$14.25 per night for rooms (\$5 for budget housing). A breakfast and dinner plan will be available for \$12.75 a day, a three-meal plan for \$18.

For information on participating in the conference, see the ad on page 5.



# 1,000 dock workers shut Oakland port

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

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

OAKLAND, California — More than 1,000 members of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 10 shut down the Port of Oakland July 6-7 by refusing to load and unload cargo. The work stoppage in the country's fourth-largest port, which ended July 8, coincided with a slowdown by members of the ILWU at shipping terminals in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Workers at the Oakland port were demanding a signalman be added to the crews to ensure safety. The bosses refused to hire an extra worker under each crane to keep track of cargo container movements on the docks.

The action takes place as 10,000 West Coast members of the ILWU who work for 90 U.S. and international shipping operators continue their fight for a contract. The ILWU's 1996 contract expired July 1. The union is negotiating for better wages, pension benefits, and job security.

Since mid-May the ILWU has been negotiating a contract with the San Francisco-based Pacific Maritime Association (PMA), which represents the owners at ports all along the West Coast. The ports include Seattle and Tacoma in Washington State; Portland, Oregon; and Oakland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Long Beach, California, with a projected \$300 billion worth of cargo moving in and out.

New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. in Fremont is the single-largest importer through the Port of Oakland, bringing "just-in-time" parts from Nagoya City, Japan, to California's only auto plant.

### Georgia carpenters strike for dignity, overtime pay

GAINESVILLE, Georgia — "Stop Slavery" and "Does Dr. Lowell Treat Animals Better than his Workers?" were among the signs carried at a June 19 rally by 20 striking construction workers and their supporters. The strike began June 3 after con-

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

tract negotiations broke down between the newly-organized members of Carpenters Local 225 and Universal Concrete Walls (UCW), owned by V.C. Lowell, a local veterinarian. UCW builds private homes in the wealthy, expanding north Atlanta suburbs.

Strikers attended and spoke at a June 24 meeting on the Right to Organize sponsored by the Atlanta Central Labor Council, along with other unionists in the area. Strikers received a standing ovation from the 250 people in attendance, and more than \$1,100 was contributed to their food bank.

### Titan Tire strikers rally in Quincy, Illinois

QUINCY, Illinois — A busload of Titan Tire strikers, members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 in Des Moines, Iowa, joined with other supporters for a day of protests and a picnic here July 10.

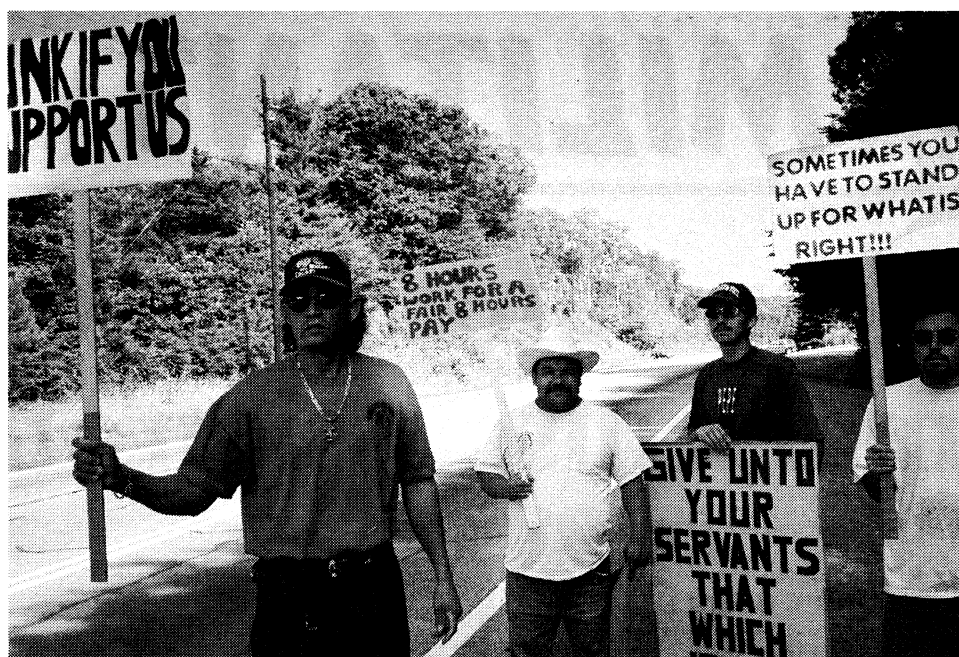
The 670 Titan Tire workers in Des Moines began their strike in May 1998 against forced overtime, two-tier wages, and for pension and health-care benefits for retirees. In September 1998, 500 members of USWA Local 303L joined the fight against Titan at its plant in Natchez, Mississippi.

Titan corporate headquarters are located in Quincy, along with the large Titan Wheel plant, which the USWA is working to unionize along with other Titan plants in Clinton, Tennessee, and Brownsville, Texas. At the union picnic held on the banks of the Mississippi River, several Titan Wheel workers came to meet the Des Moines strikers. A number of Local 303L fighters, and other unionists from the Quincy area were there as well.

The main action was a boisterous march through Spring Lake Estates, a posh neighborhood on the outskirts of town and home to Sheri Holley, a Titan corporate lawyer and sister of Titan owner Maurice Taylor, Jr. Both Taylor and Holley have become notorious among strikers and their supporters for rude and deceitful attacks on the unionists in the media.

After an hour police arrived and an Adams County sheriff's deputy conferred with Holley, then attempted to set up one of the protesters by claiming that his keys were stolen from inside his vehicle.

The deputy grew hysterical and demanded the return of his keys. While a number of strikers stepped in to deny the theft of the keys, others stood close by filming the confrontation. Eventually another cop stepped in, overruling the deputy, and allowed the protest to wrap up without inter-



Striking construction workers at rally June 19 in Gainesville, Georgia.

Militant/Mike Italie

ference.

Other activities to build support for the fight include a "road warrior" team that has been visiting Titan tire dealers throughout the Midwest to tell the union's story.

Contract negotiations between the two union locals and the company resumed in late June.

### Teamsters fight lockout, win solidarity at Nestle

LATHROP, California — Seventy members of Teamsters Local 601 have been staffing picket lines and winning support since the Nestle Corp. in Lathrop locked them out May 25. Picket signs saying "Nestle Unfair Lockout" along the road in front of the facility are easy to see from Interstate Highway 5. Two large signs in front of the facility's main gate say "Scab Entrance." Truckers and others driving down the highway honk in support of the locked-out unionists as they drive by.

"It feels nice that other people support you. Every honk feels good. I know when there's a honk, the plant manager can hear it inside," said Shawna Eichelberger, a young worker who has been at the plant for nine months. She is one of the three locked-out workers fired by the company for "behavior on the picket line."

Many workers stated that they would not go back to work without the three fired workers.

"It wasn't fair what they did to us, shutting the doors without us having a chance to vote. I was on strike for eight years at Diamond Walnut," said Minnie Chávez, referring to the ongoing strike by the Teamsters union against that area company.

"I will have two years working at Nestle's this November," Chávez continued, "A lot of people show they're supporting us, they're on our side. They [the company] hire people, put them up in a hotel, give them free food, pay them."

One worker from Teamsters Local 439, Paul Martinez, who works at a Safeway distribution center in

nearby Tracy, comes to the picket line every day after work. Martinez has at times come to the picket line with up to 20 of his co-workers. Members of the United Steelworkers of America who are fighting Kaiser Aluminum's lock-out against its union workforce have also been to the picket line at Nestle three times. Some truck drivers refuse to cross the picket line.

A major concern of the locked-out workers in the negotiations for the new contract, which expired May 15, is the elimination of the position of pull pack operator. Pull pack operators make \$16.60/hour. Nestle wants to shift the work onto the Class A drivers and Class B order pullers, who make \$13.30 and \$12.05 per hour.

The union is also fighting for company contributions to the pension fund based on all hours worked per week, including overtime, not just based on 40 hours per week; for an increase in the per-hour pension contribution amount; and for wage increases.

"In the first days of the lock-out replacement workers got out of their cars and on the third day they got out with baseball bats and attacked the locked-out workers. Lawsuits have been filed against the company because we hold the company responsible," said Local 601 secretary-treasurer Lucio Reyes. Two of the pickets were hospitalized. Since then at least one of the assailants has been arrested and charged in one of the attacks.

One measure the pickets have taken since the attack is making sure there is an adequate number of pickets, especially at night. Nestle attorneys have gotten temporary restraining orders limiting pickets to six per entrance gate.

Deborah Liatos, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 101 in San Francisco; Mike Italie, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Atlanta; Ray Parsons, a member of USWA Local 310 in Des Moines; and Walter Blades in San Francisco contributed to this column.

## — LETTERS —

### For the prisoners' fund

I am making this contribution in memory of my older brother, Pierre. He died last month at the age of 39. It was a second burst aortic aneurysm.

Very much a proletarian, Pierre worked as a miner, a logger, and a fisher. For the past 10 years, he was a blue-collar worker for the Parks Department of the town we grew up in, Richmond. It's a suburb of Vancouver.

Growing up, Pierre fell in love with New York City. The Sharks and the Jets. The Rockettes. "Kilroy was here." He had to get there one day.

So, when he was 14 years old, he ran away from home. (He had smashed up dad's car.) In the rail yards of North Vancouver, he got into the first boxcar he could. But the door was shut behind him. It was opened three days later, and he hadn't even made it to the Rockies. From then on he traveled at the end of grain cars, or

used the keys from windshields to sit in trucks and autos. Moving across the Prairies, all he had was a duffel-bag full of bubble gum. Some Natives he met in Manitoba thought that was pretty funny and shared their red wine and macaroni.

Eventually, he made it to Detroit. But the border guards wouldn't let him cross, said he was a vagrant. So he hitchhiked to Buffalo. There, he told them he was from New York and they let him cross.

For the next eight months, he had the time of his life. He got to stay in a boys' home in Brooklyn called Jennings Hall. He wrote home and told us how there were 400 other boys — mostly Black, some Latinos, and a few Irish. Mom figured they must have took him for a Puerto Rican because he had fairly dark skin considering his Quebecois-Ukrainian ancestry.

With his food, clothing, and shelter taken care of, Pierre was free to roam the boroughs — Queens, Bronx, Manhattan. Coney Island and Long Island too.

But the city was going bankrupt and decided to cut back social services. When they found that Pierre wasn't supposed to be there, he was immediately deported. Our parents got a letter saying, "... your son is an illegal alien..." I remember, I was 10 years old, reading that and thinking, "Oh no, if my brother is an alien, what does that make me?"

It seems that from hanging around with the boys of New York, their hero became his hero. Because Pierre adored Malcolm X. His favorite story was how Malcolm avoided the draft. (By telling the recruiting officer, "I can't wait to get a hold of a rifle so I can shoot me up some crackers.")

Over the years, on his birthday or

at Christmas, I gave Pierre some Pathfinder books; *Malcolm X Speaks*, *By Any Means Necessary*, and *The Final Speeches: February 1965*. He read them all, several times each, and then passed them on to friends and co-workers. So he knew that the *Militant* provided a forum for Malcolm X. He also knew about the mural on the Pathfinder Press building. I have the posters of the mural and the close-up of Malcolm X in big, fancy picture frames that Pierre gave me to put them in. In fact, one of the last times we talked, he had called to let me know that Spike Lee's movie, *Malcolm X*, was on TV in case I wanted to see it, again.

Like Malcolm, Pierre too, for a time, was cubically contained. At 17 years old, he took off from home, again. (He smashed up dad's car, again.) He ended up in Northern Ontario, freezing and starving. So he

broke into a railway shack and got caught. He couldn't pay the fine, so he had to do the time. Years later, I gave him a T-shirt that he liked so much, he wore it all the time. It said, "Alcatraz triathlon: 100 yard dig, 3/4 mile run, 1.3 mile swim."

Pierre was a worker who loved New York City and Malcolm X. He hated prisons and cops. That's why I think he would have liked more prisoners to read the *Militant* newspaper and Pathfinder books.

For a world without prisons! Robert Demorest Vancouver, British Columbia

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.

## Deepening struggles by working people mark discussion on Indonesia elections

(Second in a series)

BY BOBAIKEN  
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

JAKARTA — Despite an extremely slow count in the weeks following June 7 elections in Indonesia, it has become clear that the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle will top the polls. The PDI-P, now with about 36 percent of the vote, is the party of the main pro-capitalist opposition figure, Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia's first president, Sukarno. In the elections candidates from 48 parties stood for 462 seats in the House of Representatives, with a further 38 seats reserved for military appointees.

The ballot took place just over one year after Suharto, the former president, was forced to resign amidst massive student-led protests against his dictatorial, military based, rule. It occurred as working people across Indonesia, hit by the impact of a devastating economic crisis, seek to use new political space to fight for union rights, wage increases, and land rights. Struggles for national self-determination also continue to deepen in Aceh, West Papua, and East Timor.

The election campaign featured huge, celebratory parades by PDI-P supporters. Many working people used these, and other election rallies, to express their deep opposition to the ruling Golkar party, headed by President B.J. Habibie.

More a machine for the dispensation of patronage and power than a political party, Golkar routinely "won" 62-75 percent of the vote in the tightly controlled elections held during Suharto's 33-year rule. Working people's contempt for those stage-managed elections was reflected on June 7, when many gathered to watch the ballot counting. Osid, a leader of a peasant land struggle in the Agrabinta district of West Java, who monitored the vote in the town of Cibinong, told the *Militant* June 22 that it was "a fair election [there] compared with previous elections" when, "if people didn't vote for Golkar the counters would rip up" their ballots.

Suharto came to power in a bloody 1965 coup. Hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants were slaughtered by the military and rightist thugs as their struggles were crushed in the coup and the wave of repression that followed. The Suharto regime was marked by the "dual function" of the military — begun by Sukarno and continuing to today — which gives the military a central role in the government apparatus down to the village level, and widespread participation in business. The Suharto family and their close associates also used their control of the government to enrich themselves on the backs of the toilers while pushing aside rival capitalists.

As the economy and banking system went into a tailspin following the collapse of the national currency, the rupiah, in mid-1997, Suharto lost the long-standing backing of the imperialist powers. He was forced to "step aside" in May 1998 when mass protests against his rule erupted. Indonesia's People's Consultative Assembly is scheduled to elect a new president in November. This undemocratic body is made up of the House of Representatives, plus a further 200 appointees.

### Suharto's party discredited

Reflecting the concern in imperialist circles that the return of a Golkar-led government would spark widespread riots and protests, Martin Anidjar, an "Asian debt analyst" at J.P. Morgan, told Reuters June 3 that in his view, "The best result would be a majority vote for the opposition, not because I think the Golkar party would be bad, but because there is already too much hope in the population for an end to this ... regime."

The five main capitalist parties got about 90 percent of the vote June 7 and will thrash out the make up of the new government in the coming weeks and months, along with the



Students, farmers protest in Bogor, Indonesia, September 1998. Sign reads: Agrarian reform.

military top brass. While a Megawati presidency is the most likely outcome, it is by no means assured.

Golkar is running second with 22 percent of the vote. It fared badly in Java, the island where 60 percent of the country's 210 million people live, especially in the cities, but remains a significant force in many rural areas and in other islands less shaken by the crisis. In Sulawesi, for instance, the ruling party is claiming a majority of the vote. Charges of electoral violations and corruption have centered on such areas.

Though the Indonesian economy officially declined 13.68 percent in 1998, some exporters of raw materials and crops reaped windfall profits — in rupiah terms — from the collapse of Indonesia's currency, helping to strengthen the governing party's apparatus and vote. The allotment of parliamentary seats is weighted in favor of the less populated outer island provinces, where many of these exports come from, giving Golkar a disproportionate number of seats in the House of Representatives.

### IMF 'bailout' squeeze

Stanley Fischer, the International Monetary Fund's deputy chief, met with leaders from all five major parties following the elections, to confirm their continued support for the IMF's conditions for a \$45 billion bailout package begun in late 1997. "There are no great differences in economic policy among the people and parties we have met," he said June 19.

The IMF and World Bank's "bailout" has focused on salvaging Indonesia's main banks and corporations from the weight of bad debts stemming from the currency crisis. The restructuring of the banks alone is expected to cost US\$87 billion, equivalent to 82 percent of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product. Their prescription for "structural reform" in Indonesia involves cutting price subsidies and opening Indonesia's resources even further to imperialist ownership. Pertamina, the state company that handles all contracts in Indonesia's oil and gas industry, is being privatized, and government officials have cited plans to sell \$10 billion in state assets.

Workers are being squeezed as the price of basic staples like rice has trebled over the last two years while small increases in the official minimum wage, and even the minimum wage itself, are often ignored by the bosses. Unemployment has soared much higher than the official figure of 15 million.

The rupiah has "stabilized" in recent months, reaching 6,600 to the dollar since the elections, after plummeting by 80 percent to reach 14,700 to the dollar in June 1998. Economics Minister Ginandjar Kartasasmita has predicted economic growth of between zero and 2 percent in the coming year, reflecting hopes that the free

fall of the economy has slowed.

### Workers, farmers resist effects of crisis

Many struggles by workers, peasants, and young people are continuing to erupt as this economic crisis grinds on. Several thousand employees of the state-owned Bank BTN protested July 5 in Central Jakarta against plans to lay off more than 1,280 staff in the near future. The same day about 1,000 bus conductors and drivers protested across town outside the offices of a state-owned city bus company, PPD. After a two-day strike the bus workers won a promise of a 120 percent pay hike, bringing them up to the minimum wage.

"Workers are becoming more bold because of the *reformasi* [reform against Suharto]," Popo Hermawan, the director of the Medan Industrial Park in North Sumatra, complained to the June 17 *Far Eastern Economic Review*. Despite almost four dozen soldiers patrolling the park's 142 factories, nine strikes have erupted there this year.

Likewise in the countryside, peasants are taking up often decades-old grievances over lands stolen by state-owned plantations, other

capitalist enterprises, and the military. These reporters traveled to Agrabinta, south of Bandung on the Javanese coast, and met peasants demanding their rights to land taken by a state-owned coconut plantation. They had organized protests of up to 3,000 over three days, April 29-May 1.

Many student groups remain active as part of the opposition to the Habibie government and Golkar. As we were meeting with a student group from Padjadjaran University in Bandung June 21, several activists returned from a protest of 100 students from 11 campuses, typical in size and political thrust of the student protests today. Demands they are raising include putting Suharto on trial for corruption, abolishing the dual function of the military, banning the Golkar party, nationalizing New Order [Suharto family] assets, and supporting autonomy for each province. Short of a "transitional" government that would begin to implement their demands, one of the students, Muladi, said, they hoped for a "civil democratic" government with "no connections with Golkar."

Surya, another student helping to build solidarity with peasants fighting for their land in Agrabinta, told the *Militant*, "We have to build the political empowerment of workers, peasants, and the urban poor" because last year's student movement [against Suharto] "couldn't make a fundamental change in our society."

The political ferment promises to continue, whatever the outcome of the horse-trading now taking place among the capitalist parties. Many working people expect to see a Megawati-led government, and expect such a government to take some steps to alleviate the crisis they face. Arin Sobarin, a textile worker from Banjaran, near Bandung, told the *Militant* June 20, "If Megawati is elected president I hope for better economic conditions." Sobarin is the leader of the union at a state-owned textile plant where workers enforced the minimum wage in two strikes during April and May. Osid also backed Megawati. He "hopes the new government will end KKN [the term for the 'corruption, collusion, and nepotism' of the Suharto regime] and decrease prices." He also made it clear that the fight for their land is far from over. "We are brave," he said, without a trace of boasting.

Bob Aiken is a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union in Sydney.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sat., July 17

#### All-Unions Rally at Kaiser's Mead plant

Spokane, Washington — 3-7 p.m. Rally for locked-out Kaiser workers. There will be a barbecue afterwards. For more information look up [www.uswa329.org](http://www.uswa329.org)

Tues., July 20

Mon., July 19

#### Hear Consuelo Elba Alvarez, Cuban Artist and Revolutionary

Chicago — 6 p.m. Served in the Rebel Army column headed by Fidel Castro, director of "Amiga," a film on women in Cuba today. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. (Division and Ashland) Donation: \$4.

Tues., July 20

#### Kentucky Minority Farmers Annual Meeting

Brandenburg, Kentucky — 5 p.m. Senior Citizens Building, Old State Road. For more information, call Mattie Mack at (502) 422-2838.

Fri., July 23

#### Stop Navy Strikebreakers! End Inequality at Navy-funded Shipyards

Washington, D.C. — 11:30 a.m.

Support striking United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 from Newport News and other shipyard workers Protest: 11:30 a.m. at the Navy Memorial; March: Noon at the Capitol; and Rally: 12:30 p.m. at the West Steps of the Capitol. For information, call (757) 896-9045.

Fri., July 23

#### All-Out to Washington, D.C. It's time to bring Puerto Rican Prisoners home! (New date)

Washington, D.C.; Nat'l march Sat., July 23 For more information, call: (773) 278-0885 or (212) 927-9065.

Sat., July 24

#### Celebrate the 46th Anniversary of the Attack on the Moncada Barracks

New York City — 8:00 p.m. Casa de las Américas. 33 West 14th Street. (between 5th and 6th Avenues) Donation: \$10