

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Workers assemblies in Cuba became schools of politics'

THESES FOR CTC CONGRESS — PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 60/NO. 14 APRIL 8, 1996

## Join the socialist campaign in 1996!

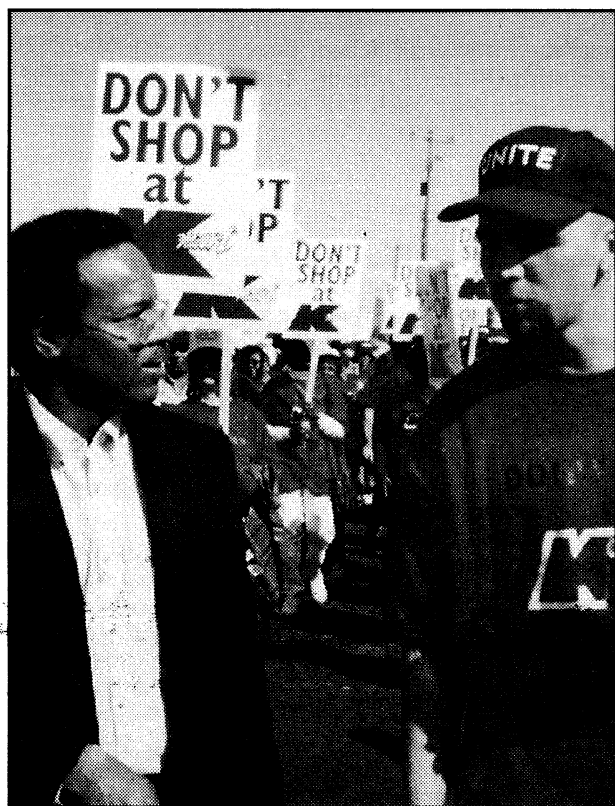
### Harris, Garza lead working-class alternative to parties of war, racism, and depression

BY NAOMI CRAINE

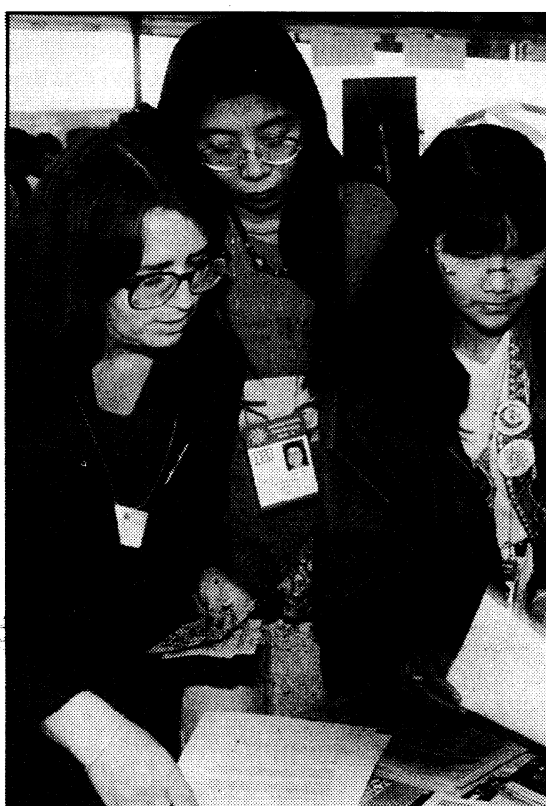
NEW YORK — The Socialist Workers Party National Committee announced March 25 its choices for the 1996 presidential elections. James Harris, a 48-year-old meatpacker from Atlanta, is the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president. Laura Garza, 37, until recently a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Miami and now a staff writer for the *Militant* newspaper residing in New York, is the vice presidential nominee.

"They are the working-class alternative to the parties of war, racism, and economic depression — the Democrats and Republicans — and other 'third' parties that accept capitalism," said national campaign director Greg McCartan. McCartan was the director of the Socialist Workers 1992 presidential election campaign.

The Young Socialists National Committee has invited Harris and Garza to attend their convention in Minneapolis April 6-7, and to solicit the endorsement of the revolutionary youth organization and the support of the international young socialists. A campaign rally will be held on Saturday evening, April 6.



Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president James Harris (left) at March 23, 1996, rally in Atlanta to support K-Mart workers fighting for a contract. Laura Garza (first from left on second picture), Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. vice president, selling communist literature to youth from Hong Kong at Beijing international women's conference, September 1995



Militant/Linda Joyce (left); Maggie Trowe (right)

"The Young Socialists national gathering will be the first stop of the election campaign," McCartan said. "We hope young people from all around the country who are looking for an alternative to the injustices of the capitalist system will come to Minneapolis. We look forward to shouldering responsibility together in the

fight for a better world and campaigning with all those who stand up against imperialism and war."

McCartan explained that statewide slates of socialist candidates will be announced over the coming weeks by SWP state committees around the country. Like

Continued on Page 6

## 'Come to Young Socialists convention!'

BY JON HILLSON

MINNEAPOLIS — "I met the Young Socialists in Cuba last summer," said Gabe Siert, a high school freshman in Sioux City, Iowa. Even though not a mem-

ber, he explained, "it's kind of neat to meet other young people with the same interests as me, who feel so strongly about what's going on in Cuba, South Africa, the people of the world." The 15-year-old activist showed books "about revolutionaries" he's read to a friend. "He liked the books, he wants to go to Cuba, and he's coming to the YS convention with me," Siert said.

One of the main projects YS delegates will discuss at the convention, which will be held here in Minneapolis April 6-7, will be joining with others to build the July 22-August 5 U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange.

The trip, coordi-

nated by the National Network on Cuba, builds on the success of the 1995 U.S. delegation to the "Cuba Lives!" international youth festival in Havana. Convention participants will also work out plans to encourage young unionists to be part of the U.S. delegation to the congress of the

Continued on Page 5

## UAW concludes 17-day strike against GM

BY JOHN SARGE

DAYTON, Ohio — "We said we would win and we did," was how Rodney Davis put it March 22 as he left a meeting where members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 696 voted overwhelming to return to work at two General Motors (GM) brake plants here. They had been on strike for 17 days.

Davis was one of 3,000 unionists who struck GM March 5 over the corporation's plans to cut the number of unionized jobs in Dayton by sending work to a nonunion supplier. This process, known as outsourcing in the auto industry, is part of the drive to restructure U.S. industry and make it more profitable by slashing wages and working conditions. Workers at the South Carolina plant where GM plans to outsource some of its production make on average \$5 an hour less in wages than UAW members in Dayton.

Strikers were also responding to massive overtime — including seven day work weeks. "You could work doubles all week if you want it," explained John, a janitor with 23 years at GM, describing

Continued on Page 3

## Campaign to sell 'Episodes' is extended

BY NAOMI CRAINE

On the initiative of leaders of the Socialist Workers Party's trade union work, supporters of Pathfinder books have decided to continue their campaign to sell copies of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by one month, to May 1. The party's National Trade Union Committee urged this step to allow socialist workers selling the book to advance this campaign while linking up with important events in defense of Cuba.

Dennis Richter, a member of the United Transportation Union, explained, "We can use the book campaign, along with the *Militant*, to build participation in the upcoming congress of Cuban unionists and promote discussion about Cuba in the U.S. labor movement. Socialist workers will combine selling *Episodes* with distributing the theses that Cuban unionists will discuss at their congress."

From April 25 to 30, the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) will

Continued on Page 5

## Curtis reapplies for parole

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

CHICAGO — "Mark Curtis reports that he received a memo from an Iowa State Penitentiary official yesterday that prison authorities there were resubmitting his application to be released to Illinois," John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, told a meeting of supporters here March 26.

The defense committee for the framed-up unionist and leader of the Socialist Workers Party meets weekly to discuss the ongoing campaign to win Curtis's release

from prison.

"Curtis's understanding," Studer said, "is that the resubmitted application will include a copy of his and [wife] Kate Kaku's marriage certificate, a requirement of the state of Illinois."

Studer explained that the next move is up to the Illinois authorities. "They say that to win parole here Mark needs a valid marriage certificate. He has one. We are going to work closely with his attorneys to follow the progress of his application. And

Continued on Page 10

Come to the

### Young Socialists National Convention and Organizing Conference

April 6-7 Minneapolis, Minnesota

The YS invites youth involved in activities to:

- Defend the Cuban Revolution • Protest Patrick Buchanan • Oppose imperialist war drive against Yugoslavia and China • Fight for Black freedom and against racist attacks on immigrants • Defend abortion rights • Support striking workers

WE CAN FIGHT BACK! JOIN US! Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2326, New York, NY 10009 Tel: (212) 475-6482.



Youth in Sweden defend Kurdish immigrants



## Israeli soldier killed in Lebanon

Ali Mounif Ashmar, a 20-year-old suicide bomber, killed an Israeli army captain and wounded seven soldiers in southern Lebanon when he blew himself up March 20. The Hezbollah guerrilla charged into an army convoy inside an Israeli-occupied enclave as part of stepped up attacks on the Zionist occupation force.

"There are many brothers in the resistance who are yearning and competing to join the party's human bomb battalion," declared Sheik Hassan Nasrallah at a news conference in Beirut. Nasrallah, a leader of Hezbollah, said the guerrilla war against the Israeli military would not end until Tel Aviv pulls its troops from the region it seized in 1985. "The only solution is the elimination of the occupation," he stated. "As long as the occupation persists, we'll continue the resistance."

## Cops assault Kurds in Germany

Some 1,000 Kurds were attacked by German police while participating in a March 9 demonstration in Bonn to mark International Women's Day. The cops tried to stop marchers from carrying banners of the Workers Party of Kurdistan, which is banned in Germany. On March 16, German cops assaulted Kurds again, trying to prevent a demonstration in Dortmund where more than 2,000 people had gathered. Another 1,500 protesters occupied a four-lane highway on the border with Belgium.

German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel hurled invective at the demonstrations, saying they "were tantamount to a declaration of war." He asserted that organizers of the actions should be "deported immediately." Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced that a bill has been prepared to allow the deportation of any immigrant convicted of allegedly disturbing the peace during a major event like a mass demonstration.

## Uproar over British beef

Officials in several European countries including France, Germany, and Belgium, banned the importation of British beef citing possible links between the beef and 10 recent cases of young people who died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, a fatal degenerative brain disease.



Militant/Ed Fruit

More than 700 people rallied March 18 against the Pittsburgh School Board plan to eliminate busing as step toward desegregating the city's schools. Leaders of civil rights organizations said the plan "is setting us back 100 years," citing the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896 where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled "separate but equal" was the law of the land.

erative brain disease. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease) — another fatal brain disease — was discovered to be infecting British cattle in 1985. British health secretary Stephen Dorrell admitted that one of the options being considered to stem the crisis was to destroy the country's entire herd of 11 million cattle at an estimated cost of \$23-\$31 billion.

Nora Greenhalgh, the mother of 38-year-old Jean Wake, who died in September, told the *New York Times*, "I was always convinced that Jean's illness was caused by eating infected beef and had a lot to do with her time working in a factory putting the fillings into pies."

## General strike set in Bolivia

The Bolivian Workers Confederation

(COB) called for a national strike March 18 to protest the sale of the state oil company and demand a wage increase. Cops attacked and injured striking workers and students March 21 as demonstrators set up roadblocks in downtown La Paz, the Bolivian capital.

Bolivian troops were mobilized to occupy refineries and natural gas facilities March 22, anticipating a strike by oil workers that could shut down a natural gas pipeline to Argentina. Other union officials announced they would join the strike, which has already closed public schools and universities, on March 25.

## 50,000 peasants protest government in Paraguay

Some 50,000 peasants paralyzed Asunción, the capital of Paraguay, March 15, in a protest against the agrarian policies of president Juan Carlos Wasmosy. Up to 10,000 cops were mobilized against the peasants' march, while several armed platoons of the army and air force guarded the government palace 200 meters away.

In 1995, Wasmosy vetoed a law expropriating 400,000 hectares of farm land belonging to landowner Roberto Antebi, which covers nearly half the Concepción state, north of Asunción. After fruitless negotiations between the peasant leaders and the president, the peasants warned that if Wasmosy and the parliament do not provide a quick alternative to their request to subsidize the price of cotton and expropriate land for landless families, they will

march again in the capital city.

## Peltier denied parole

The U.S. Parole Commission announced March 21 that it rejected Native American activist Leonard Peltier's request for parole. Peltier is serving two life sentences after being framed up for the deaths of two FBI agents who participated in an assault on a South Dakota reservation in 1975.

Last December, a parole hearing examiner recommended that the commission deny parole for Peltier. Larry Schilling, one of Peltier's lawyers in New York, stated, "We're very disappointed. It's a great injustice and we will continue a maximum effort to obtain his release."

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee issued a call for protest messages to be communicated to the U.S. Parole Commission, Tel: (301) 492-5952, Fax: (301) 492-6694, and for copies to be forwarded to the LPDC at P.O. Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044.

## Attacks on immigrant children

The U.S. House of Representatives voted March 20 in favor of a measure that allows states to deny public education to children of undocumented immigrants. The proposal was adopted 257 to 163, and is one piece of an immigration bill under debate in Congress. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that children of undocumented immigrants were entitled to a public education from kindergarten through the 12th grade.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich attacked the entitlement as "totally unfair" and a financial burden on states. "Come to America for opportunity. Do not come to live off law-abiding taxpayers," he declared.

## Ruling guts affirmative action

The United States Court of Appeals in New Orleans issued a decision March 18 that overturns the affirmative action programs at the University of Texas School of Law. The University of Texas temporarily suspended admission to all its undergraduate and graduate programs at its 15 campuses March 19.

The three-judge panel sent the case back to Federal District Judge Sam Sparks in Austin, who earlier ruled that the constitutional rights of the four white students who brought the original lawsuit were violated. Sparks had awarded the students just \$1 each, but will now reconsider damages for the students, who charged they were denied admission to the law school because of the affirmative action policy.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

## A note to our readers

For the next four weeks, the *Militant* will be publishing 12-page issues. We will resume our regular 16-page size with issue no. 18, which will be printed April 25.

## THE MILITANT

## Support the strikers in Canada

The Ontario strikers are resisting attempts by the government to eliminate thousands of public service jobs and gut pension rights. The *'Militant'* provides news and analysis on the class struggle in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada. Don't miss a single issue!



## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

### NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

RENEWAL

☐ \$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\$12 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 375 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,300 • New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

## The Militant

Vol. 60/No. 14

Closing news date: March 28, 1996

Editor: STEVE CLARK

Business Manager: NAOMI CRAINE

Editorial Staff: Naomi Craine, Hilda Cuzco, Laura Garza, Martín Koppel, Paul Mailhot, Argiris Malapanis, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and three weeks in July 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: 73311,2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The *Militant* can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:70/11/pubs/militant

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

Second-class 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: U.S.: for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address. **Latin America,**

**Caribbean:** for one-year subscription 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 FF300 for one-year subscription to *Militant*, 8 allée Berlioz, 94800 Villejuif cheque postale: 25-465-01-S, Paris. **Belgium:** BF 1,900 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of 1Mei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp. **Iceland:** Send 5,000 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to *Militant*, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. **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 \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 2000, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$90 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.



# UAW concludes 17-day strike against GM

Continued from front page

the work pace at the plant. Numerous health and safety violations were also at issue for many workers.

GM closed 26 out of 29 North American assembly plants by the end of the Dayton strike, laying off nearly 180,000 GM workers in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The company then attempted to persuade state governments to cut off unemployment insurance payments for the affected workers. Most states eventually agreed to pay unemployment benefits, but Texas denied them. Tens of thousands of other auto parts workers were also idled.

An article by Keith Bradshaw in the *New York Times* at the end of the walkout noted, "It was management, not labor, that was on the offensive during much of the strike. GM resisted bargaining with the UAW for the first week of the confrontation, which lasted 17 days." GM's stock rose \$1.12 over the length of the strike.

Many workers this reporter talked to shared Davis's view that the strike had been successful, but one woman leaving the March 22 union meeting pointed out that "We got a little bit of job security if GM lives up to their word. We'll see."

According to union officials, GM agreed to bring enough new work into the two struck plants to replace the 125 jobs lost to the planned outsourcing to the Robert Bosch plant in South Carolina. The union dropped its challenge to GM contracting out work there.

There was also an agreement to hire 200 production workers to reduce overtime levels, which have been averaging

over 12 hours a week. Another 117 skilled trades workers are to be added over the next three years as well.

In addition, because of the company's failure to live up to agreements in 1994 and 1995 — this was the third strike over similar issues in the last decade — GM's vice chairman of the board of directors signed a special letter promising to abide by this agreement. The auto maker agreed to cash payments for violations of earlier contract language on outsourcing. Nowell Padgett, a GM worker with 35 years seniority, said as he left the meeting "It's costing GM over \$11 million to settle for not doing what they said they would do."

## Big issues still to be settled

Some commentators in the big-business press have described this strike as a critical battle leading up to the national negotiations between the UAW and the Big Three, which will open this summer. The national contracts expire September 14. They point out that GM, which produces a higher percentage of its own parts in unionized plants than its competitors, is counting on increased outsourcing to compete with other auto makers.

The U.S. auto titans recorded earnings of more than \$13 billion in 1995. According to a February 16 report by the UAW, "General Motors Corp. led the profit parade" with \$6.9 billion, its largest annual profit ever. Ford Motor Co. raked in \$4.1 billion, while Chrysler's profit for 1995 was \$2 billion — a decline compared to 1994 for both companies. GM's chief financial officer Mike Losh said the profits



Militant/Jon Hillson

UAW members on picket line March 11, 1996, in Dayton, Ohio. Job slashing plans of GM were pushed back, but big issues have not been settled.

were "the kind of good progress we need to make, but still there's a ways to go."

The Dayton workers were able to slow down the job slashing plans of the auto giant, but none of the big issues have been settled. "One thing is clear about last week's strike settlement in Dayton, Ohio," noted an article in the March 25 *Wall Street Journal*. "It was only the end of the beginning."

One thing other auto workers can expect as they head into new rounds with the

auto giants is what Local 696 members found: when you fight you get support. David Brockman, a worker in Dayton, explained, "We got support from all over. Auto workers came down from Canada, Michigan, Illinois, we had a bus from New York. We even had Ford workers come down to show their support."

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 in Detroit. Val Libby and Bobbi Sacks from Cincinnati contributed to this article.

## Socialists push back probe against political rights

BY PAUL MAILHOT

"Supporters of Mark Curtis and backers of democratic rights around the world have won an important victory," Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes told the *Militant*.

Barnes said that attorneys for the Workers League, a small Michigan group with a long history of disruptive activities within the labor movement, have been forced to pull back from a probe against the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists. At the end of last year, the Workers League had threatened the party with a lawsuit unless the Young Socialists, a revolutionary youth organization, immediately stopped using that name.

Since the mid-1970s the Workers League has targeted not only the SWP but also other vanguard fighters in the unions. Striking workers from the meatpacking plants in Minnesota, to the paper mills in Pennsylvania, to the coal mines of West Virginia have first-hand experience with the methods and aims of this group.

For the past eight years, one of the Workers League's main efforts has been to promote the frame-up of Mark Curtis and keep him behind bars. In 1988 Curtis, a unionist and socialist, was convicted in Des Moines, Iowa, on trumped-up charges of attempted rape and burglary and sentenced to 25 years in jail. At the time of his arrest he was involved in a fight to defend immigrant workers at the meat-packing plant where he worked and in the city.

On Dec. 6, 1995, just a couple of weeks after Iowa authorities ruled that Curtis was eligible for parole, New York attorney Daniel Kornstein wrote Barnes, stating that "it had come to the attention of our client [the Workers League] that Militant, the newspaper of the Socialist Workers Party, is publicizing meetings and other activities by the 'Young Socialists.'"

Kornstein said that the Workers League had "established the Young Socialists as its youth organization in December 1971," and he demanded that the SWP "cease and desist from further use of name 'Young Socialists,' which serves to mislead and confuse the public."

Michael Krinsky, attorney for the Socialist Workers Party, replied to Kornstein on December 22. Krinsky wrote that he found "your client's claim to be lacking for at least the following reasons:

"1. The Socialist Workers Party is not responsible for the actions of the Young Socialists," which is an independent youth organization in political solidarity with the SWP.

"2. The Socialist Workers Party is not responsible for the actions of the Militant newspaper," which is a socialist weekly "whose reportage is in any case protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

"3. Based on the representations in your letter and our own research, we believe that the Workers League cannot make a valid claim to the right to exclusive use of the term 'young socialist' or 'young socialists'...."

Krinsky pointed out that groups calling themselves "young socialists" have functioned actively in politics across the United States before, during, and after the formation of the Workers League group. A newspaper called the *Young Socialist* was published and distributed nationwide from 1957 through the closing years of the 1980s. That paper was widely distributed by the Young Socialist Alliance and its chapters across the country.

The new nationwide socialist youth group targeted by the Workers League is planning its first national convention for April 6-7 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

A highlight of that Young Socialists gathering will be the opening rally of the 1996 Socialist Workers campaign of James Harris for president and Laura Garza for vice president. At the convention, Young Socialists leaders have announced they will propose that members of the YS from Georgia to Michigan to Washington state petition and campaign for the socialist alternative to the twin parties of big business between now and November 1996.

## Earlier disruption efforts

In 1975, the Workers League's sister organization in Britain headed by Gerry Healy began an agent-baiting campaign against a prominent founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, Joseph Hansen. Hansen, one of the party's outstanding writers on the Cuban revolution, was charged by Healy and the Workers League with complicity in the 1940 assassination of Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. Hansen was serving as Trotsky's secretary in Mexico at the time of the assassination, which was incontestably proven to be the work of Joseph Stalin's secret police.

A broad array of forces in the communist movement and democratic-minded circles internationally roundly condemned the slanders against Hansen and the Socialist Workers Party.

In response to the latest probe, legal

counsel for the Socialist Workers Party also brought to the attention of the Workers League attorney an earlier victory by the SWP against another attack on its rights. Alan Gelfand, a lawyer who had been expelled from the Los Angeles branch of the SWP, petitioned the Federal courts in 1979 to throw out the entire SWP Political Committee, claiming they were all FBI agents.

The purpose of Gelfand's suit — funded and publicized by the Workers League and its international supporters — was to tie up the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party in court and drain the party's financial resources.

After allowing the case to drag on for almost a decade, Federal Judge Marianna Pfaelzer was forced to admit in 1989 that Gelfand's case "is groundless and always was." The judge ruled against Gelfand and awarded the SWP some of its court costs.

## Victory for all

"The decision by the Workers League's attorney not to pursue the threat made in Kornstein's letter to me nearly four months ago," said SWP leader Barnes, "comes as a result of the strengths of the party and the previous victories it and its co-thinkers worldwide have scored in defending political rights. A success for Gelfand would have dealt a blow to the freedom of political association of all, as

would this more recent effort to weaken the SWP and deprive a political organization of the right to function with its chosen name."

As part of the effort to turn back the renewed Workers League probe, an *Education for Socialists* bulletin was issued at the end of last year documenting the Workers League's record of disruptive activities. This booklet helped alert democratic-minded fighters around the world to this new threat against the communist movement and against their own rights as well.

The refusal by members and supporters of the SWP or Young Socialists to be intimidated by the Workers League's threats, and their rapid steps to quickly inform the broader working-class public, helped silence the new legal guns aimed at communist workers and youth.

Government-inspired disruption campaigns of this sort often coincide with stirrings in the labor movement, aiming to drive a wedge between vanguard fighters and communist workers battling alongside them.

"The victory in turning back this latest probe," said Barnes, "registers the welcome fact that the relationship of forces has shifted further against the Workers League, limiting still more the effectiveness of their antilabor and anticommunist activity."

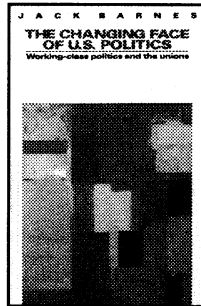
## Education for Socialists

### A New Probe by the Workers League against the Communist Movement

Record of an Antilabor Outfit, from the Gelfand Harassment Case to the Campaign against Mark Curtis  
\$5

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Jack Barnes  
A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. \$19.95



## EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

### A New Probe by the Workers League against the Communist Movement

Record of an Antilabor Outfit, from the Gelfand Harassment Case to the Campaign against Mark Curtis

Healy's Big Lie  
The Slander Campaign against Joseph Hansen and George Novack, and the Fourth International  
\$10

Available from bookstores listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax (212) 727-0150.

# Rebel Army marches from Santiago to Havana

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

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

This week's installment — the eleventh — consists of excerpts from a speech given by Fidel Castro on Jan. 1, 1989, at a rally in Santiago de Cuba, the country's second largest city. It was held at the spot where Castro spoke 30 years earlier to a mass rally after Batista had fled Cuba and the Rebel Army had entered the city. The entire speech is contained in Fidel Castro's *In Defense of Socialism: Four Speeches on the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution* published by Pathfinder.

The excerpts are copyright © Pathfinder Press and are reprinted by permission. Sub-headings are by the *Militant*.



## BY FIDEL CASTRO

January 1 marked not just the culmination of a long effort of struggle by our people over the course of many years, over nearly 100 years at that time. That day was not just the day of victory; it was also a day of great decisions, fundamental decisions, and a day of great definitions, great lessons, and great training. Because on January 1 victory was not only won, it also had to be defended.

At dawn on that day in 1959, while we were in the town of Contramaestre — or rather at the sugar mill located there — we heard what we could say were the first rumors that the dictatorship had collapsed or rather that Batista had fled the country. A few minutes later the news began to be confirmed. We immediately realized what was going on because prior to this a series of important events had taken place.

The war had already been won. Three days earlier a meeting was held that had been requested previously — around December 25 — by the head of the enemy troops in the country's eastern region, General Eulogio Cantillo....

We were already preparing the advance on Santiago de Cuba and he told us they had lost the war — they openly admitted it — and that they were prepared to bring the fighting to an end.

We told him that the issue now was to find a practical way to put a stop to the war. In reality we were generous because we said that the army was sunk and that perhaps a number of officers not involved with crimes could be saved. So I proposed to him that in order to bring the fighting to an end in an honorable manner, an uprising should take place among the troops in Oriente Province — the former Oriente Province — mainly the troops of the Santiago de Cuba garrison, and that it should appear to be a revolutionary military movement that brought the fighting to an end, adding that such an event would immediately topple the

**Right: Fidel Castro reads call for nationwide general strike, Jan. 1, 1959, to counter attempted military coup following Batista's flight. Below: Havana, Jan. 8, 1959. Contingent of Dominican exiles greets arrival of Fidel Castro and Rebel Army columns.**



Top: Institute of Cuban History/ Bottom: Bohemia

dictatorship.

We warned him — as we had always warned throughout the fighting — that we were resolutely against any kind of coup d'état. We preached this constantly throughout the war, based on the experience of Latin America and of Cuba itself. Because in the past, great struggles had been waged against tyrannical governments and at a given moment a group of army officers always turned up, toppling the government and presenting themselves as saviors of the nation....

### An eleventh hour coup d'état

What did the army want to do at the eleventh hour, unquestionably following the advice of the United States? To carry out a coup d'état, confuse the people, saying: "Batista is gone, the tyranny is over, a democratic era has begun," while keeping the military apparatus intact, maintaining the system, and thus preventing the triumph of the revolution.... It must not be forgotten that on January 1 a government was proclaimed. Those carrying out the coup appointed a Supreme Court justice named Piedra as president of the republic. Actually, that government was not even inaugurated.

That same day we made the decision, without wasting a minute, without wasting a second, to denounce the coup and issue instructions to all Rebel forces to continue operations. We didn't want even a minute of truce between the revolutionary forces and the enemy forces.

And on that January 1 an event occurred that we had foreseen on July 26, 1953. Our plan following the attack on the Moncada garrison was to issue a call to the people for a revolutionary general strike, and the time

for calling a revolutionary general strike came precisely on the morning of January 1. I believe that was an exceptional event. All the trade unions were in the hands of official leaders tied to the dictatorship. There was not a single official trade union leadership body working with the revolution.

Immediately after denouncing the coup and issuing the instructions to heads of Rebel columns, a call went out to the people over Radio Rebelde for a general strike. At the same time, a proclamation was broadcast to Santiago de Cuba instructing the city to come to a total stop as of 3:00 p.m., except for the power station, to keep communications open with the population, and we warned the population we would proceed to attack the city. All those decisions were made one after the other on January 1.

At the same time as the Rebels were approaching Santiago de Cuba, Camilo [Cienfuegos] and Che [Guevara] were instructed to advance toward the capital, without stopping and without let up....

### Taking Santiago

This was the situation as we approached the city of Santiago de Cuba on the north, from Palma Soriano, when the first contacts took place requested by the heads of the Santiago de Cuba garrison. The police headquarters immediately surrendered; the commanding officers of two heavily armed naval frigates docked in the Santiago de Cuba port surrendered; the naval district chief surrendered; and the heads of the garrison tried to contact us. All this was happening during the afternoon. Following the first contacts, I told the head of the Santiago de Cuba garrison that I wanted to meet with all the officers in the garrison....

It so happened that Compañero Raúl [Castro] went there to arrange for the meeting agreed upon with the Santiago de Cuba garrison officers. He entered the garrison, spoke to the officers, tore down a portrait of Batista and ripped it up right in front of all of them, and he also spoke to the troops. He went with the officers to the meeting they had with me. We didn't mention surrender — because, I repeat again, the situation was very confused at the time — we didn't want to humiliate them. We asked them to condemn the military coup; I denounced the maneuvering of the promoters of the coup; I denounced Cantillo, the man who up to that moment had been their head. I told them about what we had agreed on, his lack of compliance, I called on them to disobey Cantillo's orders and to come over to our side, and they agreed.

I would say it was really a generous proposal on our part and an absolutely correct one, given that developments in the rest of the country still weren't clear.

What interested us were the frigates, the tanks, and the artillery in Santiago de Cuba, and also those who knew how to handle

those weapons.

Although its forces had already lost all capacity to resist, the enemy continued its maneuvering. They dispatched a plane to the Isle of Pines — that was its name then — to bring back a group of officers who had plotted against Batista, primarily to bring back a colonel who hadn't really been involved with Batista — he had gained a certain authority precisely for having opposed Batista, for having plotted against him, and he had been kept imprisoned on the Isle of Pines. Since that officer had about him an aura of having fought against the dictatorship, they sent for him in an attempt to hold the army together. The colonel's group was known as the "pure ones"; this was how it was known nationwide.

So they sent for Colonel Barquín, who, in addition, was very friendly and close to the Yankees, they brought him back to Camp Columbia, and gave him command of the army — all of this, mind you, on January 1. They carried out this move together with the American embassy. And, indeed, the man arrived at Camp Columbia during the night....

### On to Havana

All these events were happening that night, and then, as soon as the rally here in this plaza had concluded, we took the tanks and the artillery and, gaining strength, we advanced on Bayamo. We had to see what was happening with the Bayamo troops; the situation wasn't entirely clear, and no one knew what might happen. Upon reaching Bayamo I met with the troops there; I spoke to them and they joined us. They had bigger tanks with heavier guns, they had artillery. All this was happening around the morning of January 3. I was then heading toward Havana leading a column of 1,000 Rebels and 2,000 Batista soldiers, artillery, and tanks.

On January 2, as our forces were approaching the capital as quickly as possible in view of what could happen there, the troops of Camilo and Che were advancing along the highway and capturing garrisons without combat. So the effort to get a leading figure out of jail, capable of holding the army together and boosting its morale, was to no avail.

I don't remember the exact date, but already by January 3 things were becoming clear and it was evident there would be no more resistance. Of course, heeding the call of the Rebel Army broadcast over Radio Rebelde, the general strike paralyzed the country from one end to the other in an impressive manner.

That strike played an extremely important role; it was a tremendous blow. It completely demoralized the enemy forces, avoided bloodshed, and saved lives. The workers of the radio and television networks hooked up with Radio Rebelde and at a certain point Radio Rebelde was broadcasting to the entire country by radio and television over all the stations. The people were mobilized everywhere and in the capital itself....

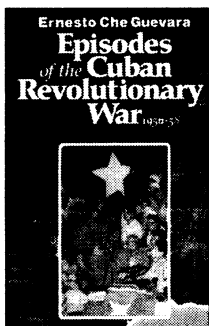
One can say that in seventy-two hours all the country's garrisons were under control and the weapons were in the hands of the people. In the span of a few days tens of thousands of compañeros had armed themselves....

Camilo and Che carried out their missions and at a certain moment they had control over the capital's military forces. Then our journey toward the capital became more a political tour than a military one....

That January 1 was a day of definitions, in which we said something that still had to be said. In view of the long record of deceit and corrupt politicians throughout the period of the pseudorepublic we had to say that this time we were serious, that a coup d'état could not be confused with a revolution. That was one of the big things our people learned on that January 1, when they confronted and defeated the maneuver. Because our people wanted change, our people wanted a revolution, and the changes had to be deep-going and fundamental, the exploiting society had to disappear. And we told the people that this time the revolution had triumphed, that the demands of the revolution would be fulfilled!

## Special offer from Pathfinder

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



*Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* is a firsthand account of the military battles and political campaigns that culminated in the January 1959 mass armed insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship.

Guevara's *Episodes* shows how he and other Rebel Army combatants were transformed by their experiences into battle-tested leaders of working people in Cuba.

Writing with clarity and humor, he shows how the revolution's social program emerged out of deepening class-struggle experience by workers and peasants themselves. He explains how the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement grew into a movement capable of leading millions to carry through a socialist revolution in the years after the 1959 victory.

Special offer to members of the  
**Pathfinder Readers Club**  
Regular price \$23.95  
**Special offer \$18 (25% off)**  
offer good until April 1

Join the **Pathfinder Readers Club** for a \$10 annual fee, and receive special discounts like this, as well as a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder titles from bookstores listed on page 11 and direct from the publisher. Contact the Pathfinder bookstore nearest you, or write **Pathfinder**, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 for postage and handling.



SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Continued from front page  
hold its 17th congress in the capital city of Havana.

Hundreds of thousands of workers in Cuba have been discussing the convention theses, a resolution that offers a perspective for combating the effects of the worldwide depression and defending workers power and the conquests of the revolution in Cuba. The *Militant*, with the installment in this issue, has now printed the entire document.

Campaign participants are encouraged to take advantage of the extension to raise their goals. Campaigners in the trade unions now have the opportunity to map out battle plans to erase their deficit and meet their projections.

Airline workers debate Buchanan

Recent sales stories by supporters underscore this opportunity. Airline worker Mary Martin, a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 1759 in Herndon, Virginia, reported that at her recent monthly union meeting, discussion broke on the candidacy of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, when one worker said Buchanan "wouldn't give our jobs away." The one Hispanic worker at the meeting replied that he didn't support Buchanan because the Republican candidate thinks workers are stupid. At the same meeting, local member Brian Taylor announced the CTC convention and encouraged co-workers to attend it. After the meeting, the discussion continued and two workers purchased the *Militant*.

Simone Berg from Newark, New Jersey, reports that Pathfinder supporters in the United Transportation Union in the New York area have already sold nearly double their monthly goal of 12 Pathfinder books and

pamphlets on the job. March sales include four copies of the *Communist Manifesto*, two copies of the magazine *New Internationalist* with the title article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," and a copy of *American Railroads: The Case for Nationalization*. They have sold 13 copies of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, out of their goal of 16.

High sales at conference

The Guevara book effort is part of a campaign to increase overall monthly sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets to 1,800 through Pathfinder bookstores and to 1,400 through other commercial stores, libraries, and universities.

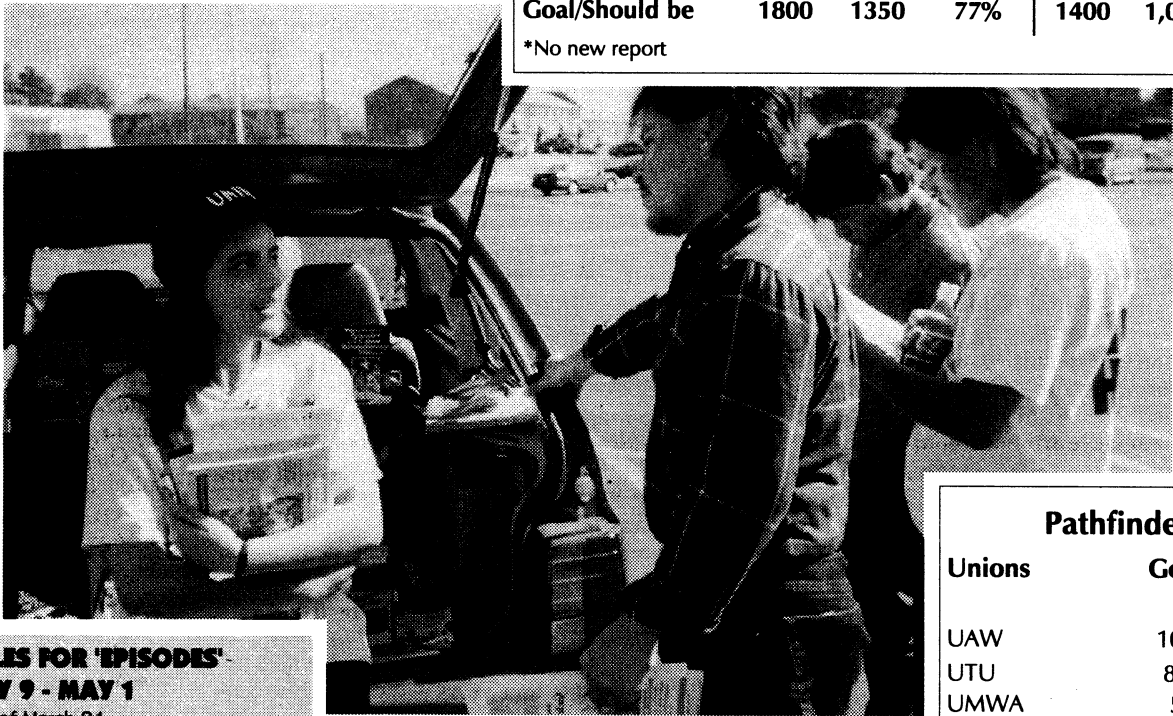
Pathfinder supporters in Des Moines leapt to the top of the chart this week

March 24: 54%  
Should be: 77%

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

Cities	Through Pathfinder Bookstores			To Commercial distributors			Readers Club Membership	
	Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold	% sold	Goal	Sold
Des Moines	45	98	218%	35	26	74%	80	155%
Atlanta	48	43	90%	32	37	116%	80	100%
Miami	55	81	147%	42	0	0%	97	84%
Houston	45	31	69%	32	26	81%	77	74%
Twin Cities	86	98	114%	67	12	18%	153	72%
Brooklyn	165	149	90%	130	46	35%	295	66%
Los Angeles	120	91	76%	95	44	46%	215	63%
Detroit	77	83	108%	60	0	0%	137	61%
Washington, D.C.	54	58	107%	42	0	0%	96	60%
Boston	65	61	94%	50	7	14%	115	59%
Philadelphia	63	41	65%	49	19	39%	112	54%
Seattle	80	60	75%	60	8	13%	140	49%
Birmingham	63	53	84%	49	0	0%	112	47%
San Francisco	95	79	83%	74	0	0%	169	47%
Chicago*	77	62	81%	60	0	0%	137	45%
New York	175	112	64%	175	20	11%	350	38%
Newark	171	110	64%	133	0	0%	304	36%
Cleveland	50	32	64%	40	0	0%	90	36%
Morgantown	32	19	59%	25	0	0%	57	33%
Pittsburgh	63	36	57%	49	0	0%	112	32%
Peoria	36	16	44%	28	4	14%	64	31%
Greensboro	41	22	54%	36	0	0%	77	29%
Salt Lake City	63	30	48%	49	0	0%	112	27%
Total	1769	1465	83%	1412	249	18%	3181	54%
Goal/Should be	1800	1350	77%	1400	1,050	77%	3200	77%

\*No new report



Pathfinder. Nine copies of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* were sold. More than a dozen students at the conference expressed interest in attending the upcoming convention of the Young Socialists. Nine subscribed to the *Militant* and two signed up for *Perspectiva Mundial*. Fifty people requested copies of Pathfinder's new 1996 catalog — providing new opportunities for follow-up that may lead to increased classroom adoptions of Pathfinder books.

GOALS AND SALES FOR 'EPISODES'			
FEBRUARY 9 - MAY 1			
Totals as of March 24			
City	Goal	Sold	%
Twin Cities	80	75	94%
Los Angeles	100	92	92%
Des Moines	45	41	91%
Houston	39	35	90%
San Francisco	95	82	86%
Miami	50	41	82%
Greensboro	45	36	80%
Boston	60	48	80%
Atlanta, GA	45	35	78%
Seattle	80	62	78%
Birmingham, AL	60	43	72%
Newark	133	94	71%
Philadelphia	60	41	68%
Salt Lake City	60	41	68%
Detroit	60	38	63%
Cleveland	45	28	62%
New York	140	87	62%
Chicago	60	36	60%
Brooklyn	130	75	58%
Washington, D.C.	75	42	56%
Pittsburgh	55	30	55%
Peoria, IL	30	16	53%
Morgantown	27	14	52%
TOTAL	1574	1132	73%
SHOULD BE	1550	899	58%
IN THE UNIONS			
UTU	80	51	64%
OCAW	60	36	60%
UMWA	7	4	57%
UFCW	12	6	50%
UAW	110	41	37%
USWA	60	17	28%
UNITE	42	9	21%
IAM	90	19	21%
TOTAL	461	290	37%
SHOULD BE	500	440	58%

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

Verónica Póses talks up the YS convention and sells socialist literature on team in Georgia.

after attending a conference entitled "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" in Omaha, Nebraska. Joined by salespeople from Minnesota and Nebraska, the socialists found

many professors and students interested in the breadth of titles produced by

Building the Young Socialists Convention April 6-7

Continued from front page  
Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) at the end of April.

YS members have been organizing convention-building teams across the country. That's how a young Swedish woman found the YS in Athens, Georgia, at a Pathfinder literature table at the University of Georgia campus.

"She's only been in the United States a couple of months," YS team member Verónica Póses from Miami said, "but she'd seen Pathfinder in Sweden, and she's been to Cuba. She wants to go back to Cuba and she likes the fact we're serious about defending the Cuban revolution."

Póses and fellow team member Chris Michalovic, a student at Alabama's Auburn University, met with the young woman, and later with a restaurant worker from Greensboro, North Carolina, who also wants to get on the

U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange delegation. "They're both coming to Minneapolis," Póses says.

New YS chapter in Detroit

Detroit YS member Mark Gilsdorf, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, said participating in a protest against ultrarightist candidate Patrick Buchanan at a campus meeting at the University of Toledo helped two high school students decide to join the Young Socialists in the Motor City. Now, Gilsdorf says, the Detroit YS is one of the organization's newest chapters. All of its members are coming to Minneapolis, along with a college student who made the trip to the Toledo protest.

Young Socialists in Boston are completing a swing of New England campus speaking engagements at Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire, Simon's Rock College in central Massachusetts, and Bates College in Maine.

The YS has raised \$200 from the presentations on topics ranging from the fight for women's liberation, to the character of the "Buchanan movement," and the function of the FBI, reports YS member Ryan Kelly. "Out of this," he says, "we've got a working list of students who want to go Minneapolis."

In the Twin Cities, Young Socialists are gearing up for the national gathering. The local Pathfinder Bookstore, where the convention-building office is located, has expanded its hours to attract activists interested in revolutionary literature. Distributors of Pathfinder books and pamphlets here report selling nearly \$1,000 of their publications in March, much of it to Cuba solidarity activists, youth who've been attending Militant Labor Forums, to co-workers on the job, and at campus literature tables.

Take day off to build YS convention

Members of the Socialist Workers Party are taking days off from work to help field convention-building teams to area colleges, and have volunteered to help with a multitude of tasks required to ensure a national gathering that runs smoothly.

"In the next 12 days we will need to draw on the history and experience of our movement, in all of its generations to pitch together in the final preparations of the convention," YS convention coordinator Megan Arney told a special meeting here of Young Socialists, members of the SWP, and active supporters of the party. "We need to organize our energy to win every young fighter we know to come to Minneapolis April 6-7."

# Socialist campaign

Continued from front page

Harris and Garza, the SWP standard-bearers in these efforts will be communist workers who are part of the fighting rank-and-file in the labor movement. They are known on the job for their activity in defense of Cuba, the fight for women's rights and against racism, for immigrant rights, and for getting revolutionary books and other literature distributed by Pathfinder Press into the hands of workers and youth.

"Socialist candidates and their supporters will build a working-class campaign," McCartan said, "that joins the continuing resistance of working people today like strikers in the recent fight by the United Auto Workers at General Motors. It's a campaign that organizes to protest Patrick Buchanan and the rightist movement his presidential campaign reinforces, that joins actions such as those organized by Chicano and Mexican workers and youth against anti-immigrant and racist policies and for affirmative action in a number of states; and that tells the truth about Washington's war preparations, be they against Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, or elsewhere."

## Activity as part of labor movement

Presidential candidate Harris is a member of the SWP National Committee. He has a more than 30-year record of activity as a young socialist, as part of the labor movement, the fight for Black rights, and in defense of the socialist revolution in Cuba. He is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union at the Geo. A. Hormel & Co. meatpacking plant where he works in Atlanta. The presidential candidate has filed for a leave of absence from his job to be able to campaign around the country through November.

Laura Garza is a long-time unionist. She has worked in garment and other industries. While still in high school, Garza became an organized young socialist and part of the fight of Chicano, Mexicano, and Filipino workers to organize the United Farm Workers union in California, and has been involved in organizing against Washington's wars, from Vietnam to Nicaragua to Iraq. She is also a member of the party's National Committee.

This past week the major capitalist parties narrowed down who the alternatives will be to represent the ruling rich in the November elections. U.S. Sen. Robert Dole locked up the nomination of the Republican Party and President William Clinton, who has run unopposed, will be the Democratic Party nominee.

But dissatisfaction among millions as a result of the effects of the capitalist crisis continues to fuel the more and more evident strains in the two-party system. Ross Perot is marching ahead with campaigns for ballot status in all 50 states. As Buchanan heads for the Republican Party convention to press his rightist agenda there, he also holds out the possibility to his supporters of running a third-party campaign, that could help consolidate cadre for an incipient fascist coalition. And recently Green Party candidate Ralph Nader, who is on the ballot in California, is gaining attention in the big-business media.

The officialdom of the trade union movement continues its slavish adherence to the parties of the bosses, with its endorsement of the Democratic front-runner, McCartan noted. The AFL-CIO tops gave their nearly unanimous backing to Clinton on March 25, and set a special dues assessment to raise at least \$25 million to aid the Democratic Party candidates. This will be paid for either directly or indirectly out of the ever-diminishing wages of rank-and-file workers and used to help insure the election of candidates who undermine the interests of working people.

"Our campaign presents a working-class voice in the campaign," McCartan said, "and advocates that working people chart a political course — independent of the two parties — that relies on our collective power, our unions, and our actions in the streets to advance our interests as a class."

The Socialist Workers nominations were made this week by the party's National Committee, following meetings of communist workers who are leaders of the party's trade union work, and a subsequent party leadership conference Febru-

ary 24-26. The political framework of the campaign was decided at that meeting, which was attended by members of the party National Committee and by delegates chosen by each branch of the SWP.

The meeting proved to be a launching-pad for responding to Washington's latest round of threats against Cuba, this time following the shooting down by the Cuban air force of two aircraft flown by "Brothers to the Rescue" pilots into Cuban airspace. Later in April, James Harris will be joining a delegation of trade unionists from the United States to attend the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), which will culminate in a May Day march in Havana. The CTC is the Cuban workers' trade union federation. In preparation for the congress a comprehensive theses is being discussed by workers in Cuba (see pages 8-9).

The CTC leadership issued a call for trade unionists and other workers from throughout the world to attend their congress. SWP national trade union director Joel Britton, who will head the delegation of party members, is also among those who are encouraging rank-and-file unionists to attend the Cuban workers' congress. In addition to the CTC gathering, the group will visit factories and meet with Cuban workers and union leaders.

Reading the theses, encouraging rank-and-file workers to attend the congress, and setting up discussions with unionists in the United States following the trip is a central task of socialists in the unions, the campaign director said. Carrying out consistent communist work in the labor movement today includes explaining that Cuban workers are the ruling class in Cuba, why they continue to defend socialism arms in hand, and why such a revolution is needed in the United States.

## Responding to war pressures

The central theme of the February party leadership meeting was how a proletarian party responds to war pressures through turning more deeply to the working class and its organizations. In the weeks and months leading up to the meeting Washington organized a massive military mobilization of troops, ships, and aircraft as the lead force of 60,000 soldiers in NATO's war drive against Yugoslavia. Sharpening war threats were also being sounded against China over the Taiwan Strait, as Washington sent its largest naval armada to the region since the Vietnam War.

The working class faces a different situation in the current war preparations than leading into Washington's assault on Iraq in 1991, SWP leaders noted. Since the end of that brutal slaughter of Iraqi workers and peasants in uniform by Washington, a world capitalist economic depression has begun. The workings of capitalism under these conditions have generated high and long-term unemployment, massive layoffs affecting middle-class layers, and downward pressure on workers' wages, even in advanced imperialist countries such as Germany, France, and the United States.

"Under these conditions the effects of war preparations are an impetus to the development of fascist-type elements," explained McCartan.

Politicians like Buchanan peddle a counterfeit socialism, promoting "our national interests" against workers in other countries. For instance, Buchanan's stance in relation to the Boeing strike was to attack the company for plans to outsource work to China. He took a similar position when GM workers went out on strike in Dayton, Ohio, scoring the auto maker for sending work to Mexico.

The Socialist Workers campaign raises communist answers to the crisis: building a fighting movement of working people based on proletarian internationalism, projecting confidence in the collective power and ability of workers to break down divisions maintained and reinforced by capitalist society, and its ability to march along a route to political power.

"Our campaign will identify with the struggles of the oppressed and exploited against the increasingly brutal assault by the wealthy minority the world over," McCartan explained. "It wholeheartedly and unconditionally supports the right of Cuba to defend its sovereignty and socialism. It backs the actions of the oppressed in this country, and stands shoulder to shoulder



Militant/Barbara Bowman

March 2, 1996, protest against killing of Native American woman by cops in Souix City, Iowa. Socialist candidates and supporters join in struggles of working people.

with all those who are fighting to lift up their conditions of life and labor."

"We place the international struggle for 'Jobs for all!' at the center of the demands of our campaign and what the labor movement should champion," McCartan said. "We fight for measures to combat the effects of unemployment and sudden inflationary surges that devastate workers' wages."

This fight for employment for all includes demands for shortening the workweek, with no cut in pay, to spread available work around, and a massive public works program to put millions to work building much needed housing, schools, and public infrastructure such as roads and mass transportation. Socialists also demand cost-of-living escalators that would correspond to increases in inflation.

In all countries of the world, women, members of oppressed nationalities, and youth are among those hardest hit by the capitalist economic crisis. In order to keep the workings of the capitalist economy and social relations from deepening divisions with the working class, the socialist campaign demands government and business extend affirmative action programs in employment, housing, and education.

Fighting for equal rights for immigrants and against deportations is part of this same fight to unite working people against the divide and rule tactics of the government and the employers, McCartan said.

One aspect of the affirmative action fight is to raise the minimum wage to union scale. After promising limited action on this four years ago during his campaign for president, the minimum remains at \$4.25 under Clinton's administration.

A paltry increase — stretched out over 15 months — to \$5.15 an hour was proposed by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts this week. Kennedy immediately proposed to Republican Dole that the vote be put off at least until June.

Holding down the minimum wage for four years is a piece of the broader assault on the social wage carried out by the Democrats and Republicans alike. It is a piece with the attacks on social security, unemployment compensation, workers compensation, and programs that guarantee those thrown out of work for various reasons are entitled to some measure of protection from economic ruin.

This is a bipartisan assault, pressed forward by both the Democratic and Republican parties. Clinton has continued to advance steps to make good on his pledge to "end welfare as we know it," promising fake, make-work jobs.

McCartan explained that the socialist candidates will take on the whole framework of how those who rule this country present world politics. The bourgeois politicians attempt to blame working people — those who create all of the wealth — for the problems and breakdowns in society today.

Part and parcel of this assault is what Buchanan has dubbed the cultural war — the propaganda offensive against abortion rights, to bring back prayer in the schools, to introduce "order and discipline," and promoting family values as the answer to the uncertainties and breakdowns in society.

Also a feature of the socialist platform is cancellation of the onerous debt Third World countries owe to imperialist banks and financial institutions. To keep these debt payments flowing in, the bankers de-

mand that governments in the oppressed countries cut wages and increase speed-up, slash even minimal social expenditures, and implement other brutal austerity measures aimed at squeezing more out of working people.

"The socialist campaign rejects the nationalist framework of all the Democratic, Republican, Reform, and Green party candidates that pits workers in this country against their allies abroad," McCartan said. "These demands must be fought for as part of an international movement of working people, who have a common interest against a common enemy."

"The campaign will raise the need to forge a revolutionary movement of working people that can replace the government of the wealthy minority in Washington with one of workers and farmers, open up the fight to overturn capitalism, and join the worldwide struggle for socialism."

"This course," McCartan said, "is what can defeat the plans the billionaire ruling families have in store for humanity: forcing more of the burden of the capitalist economic crisis onto the backs of working people and the oppressed; meeting resistance by workers and the oppressed to this assault through increasingly harsh methods, including the imposition of fascism when needed; and pressing toward wars in an attempt to reestablish stable foundations for their economic and social order."

## 'Join in campaigning!'

Following the Young Socialists convention, Harris will join the delegation to the CTC congress. The candidates will participate in conferences and protests such as the April 14 march to defend affirmative action and women's rights in San Francisco, California. The "March to Fight the Right," called by the National Organization for Women, will draw thousands who want to stand up and fight the bipartisan offensive under way today. Garza will continue for several weeks to write as part of the *Militant* staff on issues of concern to working people.

Campaign supporters in each state will discuss plans for getting the socialist ticket on the ballot, or organizing a write-in campaign where undemocratic laws prevent working-class parties from obtaining ballot status any other way.

McCartan said funds are needed for the national campaign. Supporters are encouraged to make initial contributions to help get the national campaign under way. Seed money is needed for preparatory work, travel arrangements, and press work. Checks can be made out to the Socialist Workers 1996 National Campaign Committee. Funds, inquiries, or offers of support should be sent to P.O. Box 2652, New York, N.Y. 10009.

"We urge all those who want to fight the increasingly reactionary course — the march toward fascism and war — of the wealthy families in whose interests this country is run, to join in campaigning with the socialist candidates," the campaign director told the *Militant*. "We will wage this campaign as part of the working class movement, reach out to struggles, and utilize the campaign as a platform for fighters everywhere possible."

"The socialist workers campaign is an integral part of the fight to unite working people in a revolutionary struggle for a government of workers and farmers, a government that will represent the vast majority."



# Harris, Garza are working-class fighters

## James Harris

**Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. president**

James Harris, a unionist and member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, has been involved in the fight for Black rights, in mobilizations against imperialism and its wars, and in working-class politics for over three decades. Harris, 48, is a resident of Atlanta, a worker at the Hormel meatpacking company, and a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Harris helped initiate recent protests in Atlanta to condemn Washington's threats against Cuba and to oppose the bipartisan drive to tighten the economic embargo imposed on that nation. He has led trade union members of the Socialist Workers Party in stepping up their defense of the socialist revolution in Cuba among co-workers, and in selling revolutionary books and newspapers to fellow unionists.

Before moving to Atlanta, Harris lived and worked in Detroit in the early 1990s and was a member of the United Auto Workers union. He helped build solidarity with struggles by working people wherever they broke out, especially those of workers on strike against Caterpillar, and others locked-out or on strike and fighting to defend their union in Decatur and Peoria, Illinois. Harris spent months in Peoria, helping to establish a branch of the Socialist Workers Party there in response to the deep-going battle by members of the UAW against Caterpillar.

Born into a working-class family in Cleveland, Ohio, Harris's first political activity was as part of the civil rights movement. With growing protests against racist discrimination in all aspects of life, tens of thousands of Black families in the city staged a school strike in the early 1960s, setting up "Freedom Schools" for several days to study African-American history as part of the fight.

Upon graduating from high school in the mid-1960s, Harris attended Cleveland State University, where he was a founding member of the Black Student Union. He organized fellow students into demonstrations opposing the U.S. war against the Vietnamese people as well as actions to combat the racist practices of the college, which at that time had only a small percentage of Black students. Harris became a member of the Student Mobilization Committee Against the War in Vietnam (SMC) and later served on its national staff in Washington, D.C.

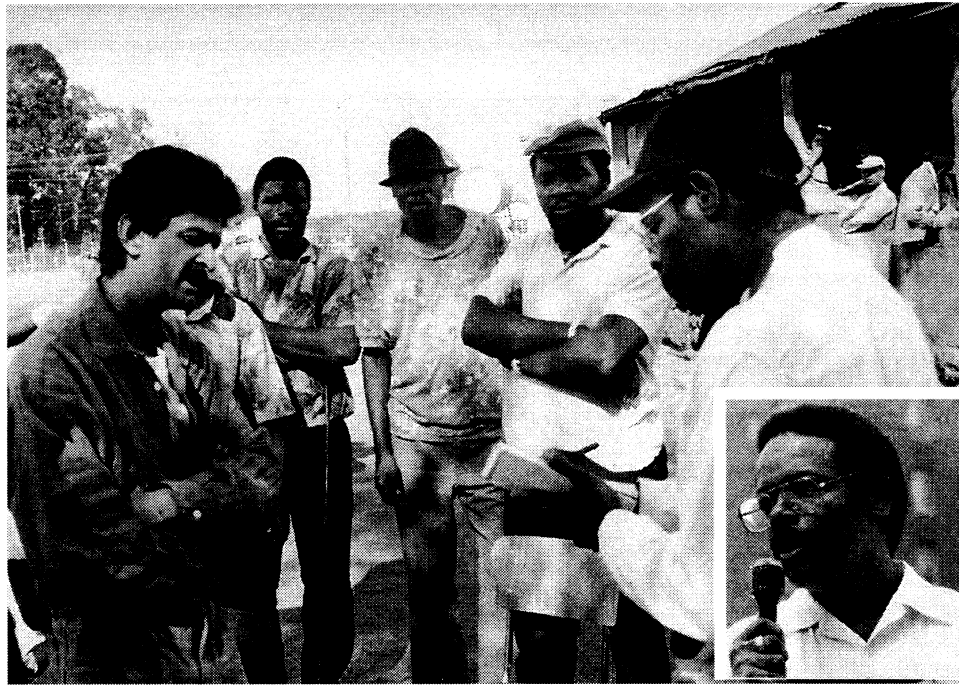
During the third-party presidential campaign of Alabama racist George Wallace in 1968, Harris organized protests when the candidate came to Cleveland.

Shortly afterwards he joined and later became a leader of the Young Socialist Alliance. Fielded as a candidate for school board as part of the Socialist Workers Party ticket in 1969, he quickly decided to join the SWP.

A supporter of the Cuban revolution, Harris participated in the second Venceremos Brigade to Cuba in 1969 along with hundreds of other young people from the United States. Brigade members cut cane for a couple of months in an effort to maximize production of the island's main export crop, and thereby generate badly-needed income to provide resources for the advancement of the social and economic aims of the revolution. Working along with Cuban workers, and meeting volunteers from Vietnam, Korea, and elsewhere deepened his sense of internationalism.

Harris moved to Atlanta in the early 1970s, and joined in the struggle of the Black community against police brutality. At the time a number of young Blacks had been killed by police SWAT units. Later Harris took part in the effort to mobilize supporters of Black rights to back the unfolding battle for busing and school desegregation in Boston, helping to organize bus loads of supporters from Atlanta to mobilizations in Massachusetts.

In 1977 Harris moved to New York to join the staff of the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR), which had helped lead the mobilizations in defense of school desegregation. He became a national chairperson of the coalition.



**Harris (right) in town of Iswepe, Eastern Transvaal, listens to ANC branch chair Zunaid Kotwal describe struggle by rural workers in South Africa for land, Sept. 22, 1994. Inset: Harris speaking at march for Puerto Rican rights in New York, 1989.**

tion. NSCAR also helped mobilize support in defense of victims of a racist frame-up, known as the Wilmington 10, as well as protests demanding affirmative action programs and against apartheid in South Africa.

In the late 1970s the SWP responded to the first signs of growing capitalist economic crisis, employer and government attacks on the trade unions, and working-class resistance by organizing to get a big majority of its members into the industrial unions. Harris helped lead this effort, and became a production line worker at the Ford Motor Co. auto plant in Metuchen, New Jersey, in 1978 where he joined the United Auto Workers.

Harris later worked in a garment factory in Los Angeles as the party deepened its turn to industrial workers by building fractions of party members in the garment unions. While in Los Angeles he helped the branch reach out to the growing numbers of immigrant workers coming into the United States, and was the chairperson of the party in the city.

He also participated in brigades to solidarize with and help defend the Nicaraguan revolution in the mid-1980s, and joined a delegation to visit revolutionary Grenada in the early 1980s, to help bring the truth about the first revolution in a Black and English-speaking country in the Caribbean to workers and youth in the United States.

He has traveled to Trinidad, Grenada, Zimbabwe, and South Africa helping to get revolutionary literature into the hands of workers and others seeking to organize to fight the devastating consequences of the economic and social decline of capitalism. While Harris was helping to distribute Pathfinder books in Grenada in 1988, five years after the overthrow of the revolutionary government headed by Maurice Bishop, a Pathfinder shipment was banned by the reactionary U.S.-backed government.

Harris served for a time as the national organization secretary of the SWP. He was a staff writer for the socialist newsweekly the *Militant* in the late 1980s in New York City. He helped cover the rising battle of the South African masses to bring down the apartheid system and the strike by members of the International Association of Machinists at Eastern Airlines. In September, 1994, Harris traveled to South Africa to attend the Congress of South African Trade Unions national congress.

A longtime advocate of independent working-class political action, Harris participated in the National Black Independent Political Party, formed in Philadelphia in November 1980. In a well-publicized campaign in 1971 in Washington, D.C., Harris was the SWP candidate for non-voting delegate. A centerpiece of the campaign was the struggle to advance Black self-determination.

Harris is a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Atlanta Network on Cuba, and the United Food and Commercial Workers.

## Laura Garza

**Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. vice president**

Laura Garza, currently a staff writer for the socialist newsweekly the *Militant*, has a 25-year record in the fight for socialism — from struggles in the labor movement to battles for women's emancipation and Chicano liberation.

Prior to moving to New York, Garza lived in Miami, where she was a production worker and member of the United Steelworkers of America. She helped organize meetings, picket lines, and protests against the U.S. embargo of Cuba, for the right to travel freely to the island, and in defense of free speech in Miami.

Garza visited Cuba several times, helping to lead delegations of youth to learn about the revolution, and to report for the *Militant* during the "rafters crisis" and subsequent military and economic threats by Washington in August 1994. As the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami in 1993, and one year later for U.S. Congress, she participated in debates and was an outspoken defender of the Cuban revolution. She advocated following the same road — that of workers and farmers taking power and overthrowing capitalism — throughout the world.

Garza built protests in support of abortion rights and joined in defending clinics that provide abortion, which were the target of rightist assaults in Pensacola, Florida, where two doctors and a clinic volunteer were murdered in 1993 and 1994. She joined others in initiating actions against police brutality in Miami and in defending the rights of Haitian refugees and opposing deportation of immigrant workers. Garza opposed the U.S. government support to Haiti's ruling rich and military and stood up against Washington's 1994 invasion and subsequent military occupation of the country.

Born in New York, Garza, 37, joined

classmates at her junior high school in a walkout to protest Washington's escalation of the Vietnam War with the invasion of Cambodia. Her family moved to Chicago a short time later, where she involved fellow high school students in the fight for women's rights, organizing to get young women to a conference in support of legalizing abortion. She joined the Young Socialist Alliance while involved in this struggle.

Finishing high school in Los Angeles, Garza joined with other YSA members and students in the anti-Vietnam War movement. She volunteered full-time in the NAACP office during the battle to desegregate the Boston school system, and helped build a march in Los Angeles to back the fight for desegregation in Boston and Los Angeles.

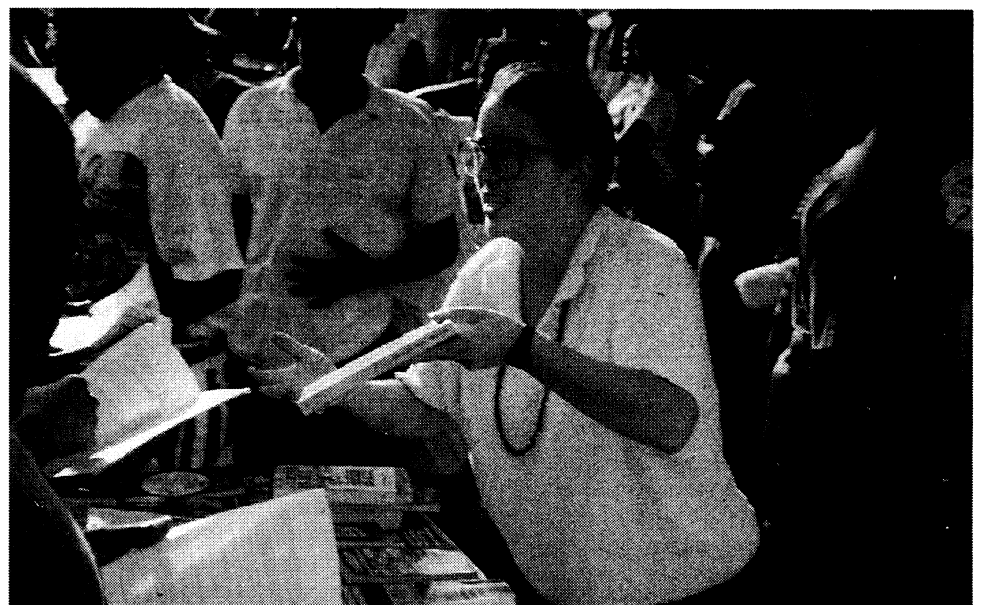
During the 1970s, the struggle by Chicano, Mexicano, and Filipino farm workers to unionize the giant "factories in the fields" in California gained national prominence. Garza participated in protest marches in the countryside and in the cities, also building the boycott of grapes called by the United Farm Workers.

With the growing weight of the struggles for Chicano liberation and for the rights of the immigrant population from Mexico and Latin America, the SWP sought to expand the number of party branches in the Southwest. Garza moved to San Antonio, Texas, to build the party. While there, she helped establish a chapter of the Chicano student group Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) at the University of Texas. Garza then worked in several factories organized by the International Union of Electrical workers, and later as a presser at a Levi-Strauss plant where she was a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

Garza volunteered for months at the Washington, D.C., mobilization office for a march against the moves by the James Carter administration to reintroduce the draft, part of Washington's militarization drive in response to the Iranian revolution and overthrow of the U.S.-backed shah in 1979 and the anti-capitalist revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua. Garza also joined the staff for a national mobilization in 1980 against U.S. intervention in Central America, opposing Washington's support of the contras in Nicaragua, and aid to the military regime in El Salvador.

She was elected a national officer of the Young Socialist Alliance in 1985, leading the organization in actions to demand that Washington break all ties with the racist apartheid regime in South Africa.

Garza has traveled widely, helping to lead teams of socialists to sell Pathfinder books, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial* in Puerto Rico, Mexico, and across the United States. Following the Mexico City book fair last year, she took part in a *Militant* reporting team to Chiapas, where she participated in a peasant congress. She also attended the international women's conference in Beijing, China, last September. Garza is a member of the National Organization for Women, an activist in New York in building solidarity with the socialist revolution in Cuba, and a member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.



**Garza campaigning as Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress at Haitian rights demonstration in Miami, August 1994.**

*Militant*/Jean Luc Duval

# 'Workers assemblies became genuine

## Central Organization of Cuban Workers discusses theses in preparation for

Printed below is the fourth and final installment of the Theses for the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC). This document was discussed at thousands of factory assemblies and other workplace meetings throughout Cuba between January 15 and March 15, in preparation for the congress of the country's nationwide trade union federation.

The CTC leadership has issued a call to trade unionists and other workers from around the world to attend the congress, scheduled for April 25-30 in Havana (for travel from the United States see ad below).

The theses, prepared by the federation's National Committee after a round of CTC conferences organized in every municipality, consist of 11 sections. The last three issues of the *Militant* published the first eight. Sections nine through eleven are printed below.

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

The *Militant* would appreciate articles, letters, and comments from our readers on the theses. We are especially interested in the reactions of workers and unionists who have been reading and discussing this document.



### IX. Unions are by and for the workers

117. In the period since the 16th Congress, the CTC and the unions have gained ground in improving our methods and style of work.<sup>1</sup> This has helped increase our influence on the shop floor, in mobilizing workers for the main tasks the country faces, and in defending their legitimate interests before administrative and governmental bodies.

118. Among the things we have accomplished in the last two years, the workers assemblies stand out in particular.<sup>2</sup> They became genuine schools of economics and politics for the masses, the fullest expression of socialist democracy. And they embody a way of functioning we should adopt in circumstances that pose similar challenges.

119. The discussion on the need to reestablish direct contributions to the Social Security fund played a similar role. It reflected an increase in workers' consciousness and understanding of this sensitive question, even at a moment when their real incomes had declined to very low levels.<sup>3</sup>

120. What has been accomplished up to now, however, requires continual review in order to incorporate systematically the best experiences and eliminate those things that have proven to get in the way of trade union work.

121. Our unions do not everywhere live up to what is expected of them. Our leaders do not always give the rank-and-file organizations the support they need. Not all union leaders know how to speak their own mind and consistently defend their points of view. We have not on every occasion shown ourselves capable of taking advantage of the space and autonomy at our disposal. And we have not focused on our priorities as systematically and with as much personal attention as they deserved.

122. As the voluntary organizations of the most revolutionary class in society, where the fullest democracy reigns, unions are by and for the workers.

123. Wherever there is a matter of concern in a workplace or among a group of workers, trade union leaders must listen, discuss the problem with the workers, and, if their demands are just, appropriate, and realizable, lead consistent efforts to resolve or clarify the matter.

124. Our congress stands for maintaining high levels of union membership, which, like the collection of union dues, is a political task of the first order. Levels of union affiliation are a direct reflection of the degree of influence of local organizations and the entire union structure. They are also an index of our functioning and of our capability to represent the interests of workers.

125. We should set the goal of reaching every single worker with our union organizing efforts. We must work hard to ensure this task is not treated as a mere formality. Rather, we should consciously seek to be faithful to the understanding that already exists about the CTC and the unions — that we are in fact, from top to bottom, carrying out a consistent, just, and valiant defense of workers' legitimate interests, both collective and individual. And that we are adjusting thoughtfully and with an independent view to the new realities of our economy and the new working conditions.

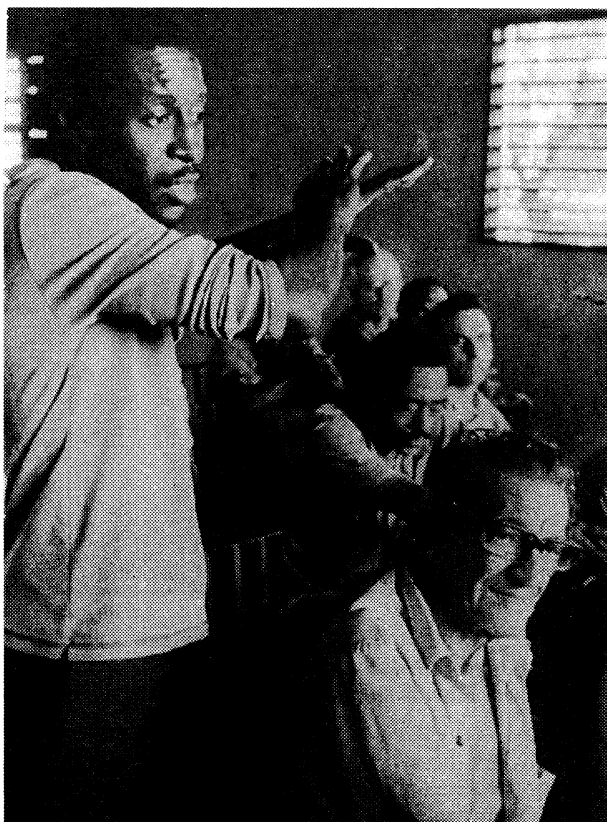
126. The union has an essential function to perform on the shop floor as a counterpart to the administration and as a co-participant in management, both in economic management and production. In addition to assuring that workers fulfill their obligations, the union also represents and defends their rights — collective and individual — in face of any possible arbitrary action by administrative officials.

127. The previous point, important as it is, covers only part of the union's responsibilities on the shop floor. It is also our duty, on a daily basis, to bring to workers' attention the importance of emulation,<sup>4</sup> of adhering to the contract and labor legislation, and, above all, increasing economic efficiency, savings, and productivity. These are vital issues, and it is up to the union to make sure the views and demands of the masses are heard on how to improve in these areas. And it is up to the union to call attention to the problems and shortcomings that emerge.

128. The union belongs to all its members, regardless of sex, skin color, age, religious belief, and way of thinking. All workers are equal in the union and have the same right to elect and be elected, to participate in implementing its tasks, to discuss the questions that concern it, and to have their just interests protected.

129. This assumes full exercise of the rights and responsibilities our statutes guarantee to every member, enjoyment of the benefits this confers, and fulfillment of the corresponding obligations.

130. Under the current economic conditions in our country, reality forces us to postpone some revolutionary dreams while fighting to maintain to the greatest extent possible the equality and social justice that have already been conquered. Un-



Workers assembly at animal feed production plant in Havana, Cuba, February 1994.

Juventud Rebelde/Angelito Baldaia

der these circumstances we should raise higher the banner of solidarity among workers, and collectively extend solidarity to those sectors who need it most.

131. Now and for the next few years we have to promote and extend the practice of contributing a portion of tips and of payments in hard currency or convertible pesos, for use in buying medicine and meeting other needs of the national health system.<sup>5</sup>

132. Among the collective interests the union movement will continue to safeguard is compliance with the laws on working conditions, safety and health, the quality and supply of cafeteria food, providing workers with services, scheduling breaks, and, where possible, transportation to and from work. These must be included in collective bargaining agreements in each workplace.

133. Initiatives that can be taken to build and repair housing are part of this concept. So, too, are initiatives to revitalize the sugar refineries and surrounding communities, and to make cultural activities, sports, recreation, and tourism accessible to workers and their families.

134. It will be particularly important to fight to maintain the policy of differentiated treatment for women workers, given the special conditions they face. In many vitally important workplaces women are the majority of the workforce.

135. It is reasonable that the unions

sponsor initiatives — both in the community and in the workplace itself — to meet the need for child-care centers, boarding schools, and other facilities that can help women carry out their responsibilities on the job and in society as a whole.

136. Similarly, union locals must defend the right of young people to work, as well as ensure that promotions and training are not unfairly denied to them. It is also necessary to ensure that young people participate fully in union activities. The unions should join forces with the youth organizations, with the goal of making work-related activities more varied, more pleasant, and more educational.

137. Working with retirees is another very important activity and will remain so in the future. Retired workers make up more than 10 percent of the population today; their proportion will increase in coming years.

138. It is an absolutely unbreakable moral principle that our unions pay attention to these retired workers. This means meeting with them, making them feel part of our continuity as a collective organization, and getting them involved in solving problems. Above all, it means using them to educate the new generation of workers, who should see them as their most capable and self-sacrificing teachers.

139. It is entirely up to the cadres of the union movement to see to it that these projections are transformed into a material force and concrete reality.

140. We will be successful to the extent that we are able to count on comrades, both from the ranks of the unions and the national level, who are not only dedicated to their work but also are energetic, demanding, tenacious, intelligent, and audacious, and who are loyal unto death to the working class and its revolution. These cadres will constantly be interacting with the masses, in order to lead them and learn from them, and will be capable of uniting and mobilizing the masses to tackle our problems.

### X. Defending the revolution means guaranteeing our power

141. Defense of the revolution in all fields is the first responsibility of the workers, because the revolution is the essential guarantee of the nation's existence, of its independence, and of maintaining workers' power. Defense of the revolution is also a duty of international solidarity toward all progressive forces around the world, who see Cuba as a beacon of hope, and who have done so much to help us both morally and materially.

142. In the words of General of the Army Raúl Castro, at the closing session of the Congress of Civilian Workers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), our union movement recognizes the class sen-

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The CTC's 16th Congress was held Jan. 24-28, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> The CTC initiated the workers assemblies in January 1994, following the December 1993 meeting of Cuba's National Assembly. During that session of the Assembly, deputies discussed but deferred decision on a series of proposed fiscal and other measures aimed at reviving industrial and agricultural production, which had plummeted after the cutoff of aid and trade on favorable terms with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries beginning in 1989. Since the measures under debate by the National Assembly would have an impact on the prices paid by Cuban workers for a number of goods and services, the deputies decided to first organize discussion of the country's economic crisis in every factory and other workplace and solicit opinions from the workers on the measures being considered (see two series of articles in the April 4, 11, and 18 issues of the *Militant* in 1994; and the Jan. 30, Feb. 6, and April 10 issues in 1995; and the article "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution" by Mary-Alice Waters in the magazine *New Internationalist* no. 10).

<sup>3</sup> In August 1994, Cuba's National Assembly adopted a new tax code. Its provisions include a social security tax on all employers, and "in principle" a direct contribution to be paid by all who benefit from the social security system. Whether to implement the social security deduction from workers' pay was debated at factory and other workplace assemblies throughout Cuba in the fall of 1994. While most workers voted in favor of the direct contribution, seeing it as an act of class solidarity, many expressed concern at implementing the measure under current conditions. Specific legislation initiating direct pay-

ment by workers has not yet been adopted (see "Cuba: signs of economic stabilization put workers on footing to meet new challenges" in April 10, 1995, *Militant*.)

<sup>4</sup> Emulation, as opposed to the cutthroat competition inherent in all social relations under capitalism, refers to the organized effort to increase productivity and efficiency and improve on what other production units are already doing.

Emulation was proposed by Ernesto Che Guevara, one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution, in the early 1960s as one of the central pillars of the new social relations of production that began to emerge after workers and farmers in Cuba expropriated the plantations, factories, and mines owned by the wealthy capitalists and landlords — both Cuban and American — abolished capitalism, and began the construction of a socialist society. As against the competition generated by the capitalist law of value, Guevara counterposed a fraternal competition based on socialist comradeship that favored an effort to equal or excel achievements of other production units (see *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* by Carlos Tablada, published by Pathfinder Press, pp. 174-201).

<sup>5</sup> The convertible peso is currency issued by the Cuban government that can be used only inside Cuba as an equivalent to the U.S. dollar to purchase items available only in dollar stores. Workers in the tourist trade can receive tips in hard currency. Workers in some industries such as tobacco, electricity, and longshore — who have good attendance and productivity records receive bonuses or part of their pay in convertible pesos, enabling them to purchase scarce essential items like soap and oil.

**Be a Part of a Labor Delegation to the XVII Congress of the CTC**

**April 25-30 Havana, Cuba**

The U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange is organizing participation in a seminar to learn more about life in Cuba today, including observing the CTC Congress. The dates are:  
One week seminar — April 24-May 2  
Two week seminar — April 20-May 4

**For more information and to get an application contact:**  
**U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange**  
P.O. Box 39188  
Redford, MI 48239  
Phone and Fax: 313-836-3752



# schools of politics'

## convention of trade union federation

timents that characterize our armed institutions and their undeniable unity with the people:

"Our army," said Raúl, "which has had three names and is today called the Revolutionary Armed Forces, is the raised sword of our workers, of the honest and patriotic men and women of our country; it is the raised sword of our nation; it was, is, and always shall be the raised sword of our teachers, Martí and Fidel."

143. That raised sword is made up of millions of regular combatants and reservists, all armed with weapons that are well cared for and protected by tunnels the workers and the entire population dug with picks and shovels.

144. The Cuban union movement is proud that our armed institutions, models of patriotic loyalty and professionalism, are setting the pace in relation to economizing resources, rationalizing and creating jobs, reviewing methods of administration, and paying attention to workers and their families.

145. It is indispensable to emphasize the example of the Revolutionary Armed Forces to economize resources during these hard years of the Special Period. Without lowering their high level of training and readiness for combat, they have cut their budget in half and achieved self-sufficiency in food for their personnel.

146. An excellent expression of the growing link of the FAR with the economy is the Youth Army of Labor. Besides its extraordinary role as a school for training future workers, it has taken on new responsibilities in state agricultural production, providing the people with increasing quantities of food.

147. We, the workers, continue to be the fundamental pillar of the country's defense system. It is the responsibility of the unions to give the task of defense a high priority, and to encourage their members to carry out their obligations as reservists, militia members, members of the Production and Defense Brigades, and in other



**Territorial Troop Militias perform exercises in Havana, 1981. Inset: women's unit of the militia during May 1, 1989, workers celebrations, Havana. "Defense of the revolution in all fields is the first responsibility of the workers," says the CTC document.**

activities.<sup>10</sup>

148. At the same time, we should not overlook those workers who participate selflessly in the labors of preparing the theater of military operations.

149. Particular importance should be given to making sure that union members understand the patriotic and economic value of continuing to donate a day's pay — and of participating in special projects of voluntary work — to help defray the costs of the territorial defense system.

150. Together with the armed defense of the homeland, the fight against crime in general and economic crimes in particular becomes today a task of strategic importance for workers and the union movement.

151. Economic crimes and corruption take direct aim against the cohesiveness of the revolutionary state itself and represent the main threat of social disintegration, departure from principles, and loss of values. We must act resolutely to stop them from spreading. We cannot allow the inevitable contact of our country with the world capitalist economy to spread deformations like bribery, favoritism and nepotism, the abuse of power, fraud, and lies.

152. Energetic action by the working class and its union organizations should make itself felt in the front lines of this battle. That includes reinforcing the workers guard and our participation in the Unified System of Vigilance and Protection.<sup>12</sup>

153. In our local executive committees we have tens of thousands of compañeros who devotedly carry out the duties that they were elected for, without neglecting their obligations on the job. The union movement should back them up in this

work, orient them, and train them. This can be done through our school system, and in daily practice through assemblies and individual contact with co-workers. We can teach them to use the persuasive force of ideas, frank discussion, and communication with workers.

154. The newspaper *Trabajadores* plays an important role in informing and orienting our union leaders and activists. Our principal positions and ideas are expressed there.

The CTC and the unions want this weekly to get to the entire rank and file. Our organizations need to learn to use it in the daily work of analysis and discussion with the masses.

155. Today, and even more so in the immediate future, the defense of the ideas that sustain the revolution, their relevance, and social fairness becomes extraordinarily important. That is why ideological combat becomes a central responsibility of workers, one that the entire union movement must dedicate itself to.

156. The Cuban working class, all the workers, the decisive participants in this battle, count in their ranks the new intelligentsia created by the revolution. Scientists, engineers, artists and writers, journalists, teachers and professors, economists, doctors, jurists, and many other professionals in the technical and social branches have the task of continuing to enrich the ideology of the revolution. They have the duty of helping to prepare the younger generations, of arguing for the superiority of our values, the defense of our culture and national identity, and the right of the Cuban people to continue along the road we have outlined.

### XI. Maintaining unity in the ranks of the workers

157. Maintaining unity and cohesion in the ranks of the unions and among Cuban workers has been and will remain of vital interest to our labor movement, since it is necessary not only for its combativity and strength but also for its ability to lead other classes and patriotic layers in a united effort to successfully defend the independence of the Cuban nation against currents instigated from abroad that threaten our historical and cultural roots.

158. This tradition of unity has its roots in the founding of our union organization in 1939, when working-class leaders of various political and religious affiliations, united around the unforgettable communist mentor of union cadres, Lázaro Peña,<sup>13</sup> agreed to organize the industrial, regional, and union federations as a single national organization, the Confederation of Cuban Workers.

159. The strategic implications of this decision were confirmed by the subsequent upturn in struggles by Cuban workers over labor demands and in defense of class and national interests, as well as by the savage repression that — from the start of the cold war until 1959 — the different neocolonial and pro-imperialist governments unleashed against the CTC, its institutions, and its leaders, embodied in the outstanding figure of Jesús Menéndez.<sup>14</sup>

160. The Cuban revolution has instilled in our men and women the importance of unity in defending and maintaining the gains it has brought in all aspects of our country's life.

161. The neo-Plattists,<sup>15</sup> both outside and inside the country, who serve those who want to impose on us the "democratic models" that have become discredited in many countries, continually promote divisions in Cuban society, including the fracturing of the trade union movement, with the aim of overthrowing workers power and subjecting workers to the humiliations of the past.

162. In face of such moves, our response must be to redouble the practical and daily actions by the CTC, the unions, and all institutions to maintain our unforsakable principles, as we have done so far.

163. Promoting unity in action by our own organizations must be a top priority for the labor movement, based on a conscious and voluntary recognition of the leading role of the party<sup>16</sup> as the main guide of Cuban society.

164. By carrying out the initiatives and responsibilities that correspond to its role

**Continued on Page 10**

### Militant Labor Forums

discuss the CTC theses

**Friday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.**

- Chicago
- Manhattan
- Pittsburgh
- Washington, D.C.

For location, speakers, and more information on these events, and to find out about similar programs in other cities, contact nearest Pathfinder bookstore, listed in directory, page 11.

<sup>6</sup> The congress of civilian employees of the Revolutionary Armed Forces referred to here was held in April 1995.

<sup>7</sup> José Martí (1853-1895) is the national hero of Cuba. He was a noted poet, writer, speaker, and journalist who founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party in 1892 to fight Spanish colonial rule and oppose U.S. imperialist designs on Cuba. Martí launched the 1895 independence war and was killed in battle. His revolutionary anti-imperialist program is part of the political heritage of the Cuban revolution.

Fidel Castro organized the revolutionary forces that led the armed insurrection to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He has been the central political leader of the Cuban revolution for more than 40 years. He is the first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, the commander in chief of the armed forces, and the president of the Council of State and Council of Ministers.

<sup>8</sup> "Special period" is the term used by Cubans to describe the economic crisis triggered by the post-1989 disruption of aid and trade with the former Soviet bloc countries.

<sup>9</sup> The Youth Army of Labor (EJT), created in 1973, consists of special units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces that work on state farms alongside agricultural workers. The EJT has played an increasingly important role in the last few years. In 1994, the army-run farms were supplying almost 50 percent of vegetables and other food crops for the two provinces surrounding Havana. They bring their produce into the cities and often sell directly off the trucks at cheaper prices than those offered at the agricultural markets, thus helping to keep down prices.

<sup>10</sup> The Production and Defense Brigades are voluntary brigades organized in neighborhoods near ma-

jor industrial facilities. In case of a military mobilization of workers at these plants, the brigades are prepared to reinforce or replace the regular workforce, both in helping to maintain production and in providing defense of the premises. They were initiated in the mid-1980s as part of the policy to prepare the entire Cuban population in all aspects of military defense, a policy known as the "war of the entire people."

<sup>11</sup> The Territorial Troops Militias were established in 1980 as millions of Cubans mobilized in the Marches of the Fighting People in response to escalating U.S. military pressure against Cuba and the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada, which had triumphed a year earlier. The militia, made up of 1.5 million workers, farmers, students, and housewives, has become a symbol of Cuba's determination to defend its revolution by arming its people.

<sup>12</sup> In every factory, workers volunteer on regular shifts each month, on top of working hours, to guard the facilities at night. This workers' guard has been expanded during the special period to prevent theft of raw materials, machinery, and finished products, which shot up as scarcities mushroomed in the early 1990s. Every production facility also has some full-time security personnel. But the volunteer shifts by workers are the heart of security at the plants, mines, and farms.

The Unified System of Vigilance and Protection integrates all the mass organizations, such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and the Federation of Cuban Women, in tasks of vigilance and defense on a neighborhood level. Like the Production and Defense Brigades, this system was created in the mid-1980s.

<sup>13</sup> Lázaro Peña (1911-1974), a leader of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Cuba (later Popular

Socialist Party), was general secretary of the Confederation of Cuban Workers from its founding in 1939 until 1944. After the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959 under the leadership of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army headed by Fidel Castro, the trade union movement was reorganized as the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. Lázaro Peña served as general secretary from 1961-66 and from 1973-74.

<sup>14</sup> Jesús Menéndez was a central leader of the National Federation of Sugar Workers (FNOA) — one of the founding affiliates of the CTC — and of the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Cuba. He was general secretary of the FNOA from 1941 to 1948. Menéndez was assassinated by an army officer in January 1948 during the regime of Grau San Martín, as the FNOA was organizing a series of mobilizations and strikes by sugar workers for better pay.

<sup>15</sup> This is in reference to the Platt Amendment, incorporated into a U.S. military appropriations bill and approved by the U.S. Congress in 1901.

The Cuban government established during the U.S. military occupation of the island following the Spanish-American War incorporated the provisions of the Platt Amendment in the new Cuban constitution. Washington was given the right to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time and to establish military bases on Cuban soil. Cuba eliminated these provisions from its constitution in 1934.

<sup>16</sup> The Communist Party of Cuba, founded in 1965 under the leadership of Fidel Castro and other revolutionary cadres from the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army. Forces coming from the Popular Socialist Party and another group known as the Revolutionary Directorate fused with cadres of the July 26 Movement to form the new party.

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

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

**II. Our strategy does not lead to capitalism**

**III. Fighting for an efficient and competitive economy**

**IV. The decisive effort to increase sugar production**

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

**VI. Workers' wages**

**VII. Union action regarding collective contract agreements and labor legislation**

**VIII. Working for the consolidation and triumph of the UBPCs**

**IX. Unions are by and for the workers**

**X. Defending the revolution means guaranteeing our power**

**XI. Maintaining unity in the ranks of the workers**

## Go to CTC congress

*Apart from their original purposes, the trades unions must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation.*

— Karl Marx, 1866

Cuban workers and their unions are living up to this challenge.

The opening paragraphs of the Theses for the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) state that a central focus of the meeting will be “to assure, under whatever circumstances, the revolutionary power of the workers, by the workers, and for the workers.”

What makes this document so different from the empty and false proclamations by union officials in nearly every country is where it comes from.

The theses are a product of mass discussion by the working class, which defends the Cuban revolution with arms in hand, in the face of an unrelenting economic war and military provocations by Washington. They come out of the concrete experiences of the tenacious fight by Cuban workers and peasants to deal with the effects of the precipitous drop in their living standards, including caloric intake, over the past six years, in the wake of the collapse in trade on favorable terms with the Soviet Union.

The CTC document begins by putting Cuba in the world. It points to the “deep economic and social crisis...and a worsening of the catastrophic situation of the underdeveloped countries — conditions that now hit with growing force the workers in the highly industrialized countries as well.”

Reaffirming the internationalism that has been a hallmark of the Cuban revolution since 1959, the theses state, “Defense of the revolution is also a duty of international solidarity toward all progressive forces around the world, who see Cuba as a beacon of hope.”

The CTC theses provide a glimpse of what a revolutionary union is, what all trade unions should be.

Many of the points in the theses, which take up broad social questions that the working class shoulders and confronts upon taking power, were discussed and debated in several

rounds of workers assemblies in every factory and workplace over the last couple years. These workers assemblies “became genuine schools of economics and politics for the masses, the fullest expression of socialist democracy. And they embody a way of functioning we should adopt in circumstances that pose similar challenges.”

The document explains that the rights of women workers must be defended. It describes plans for increasing the production of sugar, Cuba’s main crop.

It takes up the question of reduction in workforce posed in many Cuban industries today, making the point that “no worker will be left to his or her own resources as a consequence of this process.”

How can the Cuban revolution, while making necessary concessions to foreign capital, combat the inevitable effects of growing differentiation and privilege? The theses raise that in the coming years the CTC needs to promote the practice of contributing a portion of tips and payments received in hard currency by some workers for use in buying medicines for the Cuban people. They also point out that union leaders must “give the rank-and-file organizations the support they need,” and “speak their own mind and consistently defend their points of view.”

How can the Cuban labor movement combat the creeping effects of capitalism’s law of value? One example is provided by the brigades of the Youth Army of Labor, which produced nearly half the food crops for two provinces surrounding Havana in 1994, and consciously sell the produce in the cities at low prices to drive down prices of unregulated markets.

No matter what country we live in, workers have a common struggle with working people in Cuba. Fighters in the U.S. labor movement in particular have a special responsibility to learn from and share experiences with our Cuban sisters and brothers.

This is a good time to read their document and discuss it, including at the Militant Labor Forums already planned in several cities across the United States and elsewhere. It is an even better time to organize to make the trip to Cuba to attend the CTC Congress.

## Defend Ontario strikers

The 55,000 Ontario government workers who set up picket lines one month ago in cities across that Canadian province are in the front line of the fight to defend social services and trade union rights.

Like their fellow workers in France, Germany, Argentina, and elsewhere, these unionists are resisting the belt-tightening drive mounted by federal and provincial governments in Canada.

Members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), on strike for the first time, have won broad support among working people through demonstrations and mass picket lines reinforced by teachers, steel, auto, and other workers.

OPSEU’s demands center on improved severance terms for the 13,000-27,000 government workers facing permanent layoff, and maintaining union rights in jobs that are privatized.

The struggle, however, has become part of a broadening fightback of working people against the government’s drive to slash deeply into social rights such as education, health care, welfare, and other vital services, as well as to gut the capacity of unions to defend workers’ rights.

The Ontario provincial premier, Mike Harris, is looked to by the employing class in Canada as the most brazen point man against workers’ social wage. His administration has responded to the strike with increased use of the courts, police, and scabs.

But physical attacks on strikers’ picket lines were met with large protests. After a March 18

attack by baton-swinging Ontario Provincial Police on a picket line in front of the Ontario legislature, large and broad protests were mounted. The provincial police, who had vowed to “whack ’em and stack ’em,” were nowhere to be seen when 4,000 people marched in protest a week later. The determined response and outrage of the strikers and other working people to the attack forced the government to call a public inquiry into the assault, which injured four workers.

Protests are taking place throughout Canada against the attempt to dump entitlements, living standards, and union rights. Two days prior to the OPSEU walkout, some 100,000 workers demonstrated in Hamilton, Ontario. Three thousand marched in Campbelltown, New Brunswick, March 10 against proposed cuts to unemployment insurance.

The Ontario Federation of Labor has now targeted the industrial region of Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge for its third one-day protest strike, called for April 19.

The OPSEU workers, who are keeping government buildings closed with picket lines, are showing how union power can be used to fight capitalist austerity programs, which are a consequence of the falling average rate of profit and intensified interimperialist competition.

The task of the hour is for working people and youth to bolster the OPSEU picket lines, demand that the government prosecute the cops that attacked the strikers on March 18, and mobilize the broadest possible numbers of working people and youth for the April 19 action in Kitchener-Waterloo.

## Mark Curtis resubmits parole application

**Continued from front page**

we know that there are many people in Illinois who will be watching along with us, ready to help if needed,” he said.

**Interest at Chicago political activities**

Studer also reported increased interest in Curtis’s fight at recent political activities in the Chicago area and pointed to the response representatives of the Chicago defense committee received on recent trips to speak and distribute information about the case.

“This past Friday supporters attended a demonstration of hundreds of Latinos outside the office of the *Chicago Tribune*. They were invited to come the next day to a national conference on Chicano studies being held at a downtown hotel and met people from all over the country,” Studer reported.

Other supporters traveled to Omaha to participate in a conference entitled “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” at the University of Nebraska campus there, Studer reported. People from the committee also spoke at public meetings in Toronto, and participated in a labor conference on solidarity with unionists in Cuba, held in Montreal.

When Curtis called the Chicago headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party on March 25, Studer reported, he expressed real interest in these events.

“Mark spoke to Joel Britton, a party leader who was in the office, and told him that he was looking forward to being in Chicago and getting involved in all the political activity taking place there. He wanted to know what kind of response there was to the party’s literature and how the Young Socialists were doing in building their first national convention April 6-7 in the Twin Cities,” Studer said.

**Getting out the word**

Supporters in Chicago have stepped up efforts to get news of Curtis’s fight out to their co-workers, to political activists, and to supporters of political rights. “Sandra Nelson told me that last Friday she met with the president of her Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union local to update him about Mark’s fight, and had discussions with four of her co-workers who expressed interest in continuing to follow Curtis’s efforts to win release here,” Studer reported.

Others at the meeting described their efforts to reach out and explain the stakes in Curtis’s fight.

“The best tool we have to explain how Mark’s fight developed and why it is in our interests to help win his release is the Pathfinder pamphlet *Why Is Mark Curtis Still in Prison?*” Studer said. “The pamphlet is available in English, Spanish, and French for \$6. And Mark’s supporters all around the world can join in the effort to get it out more widely.”

Studer also suggested supporters write to Mark to express their continued determination to help win his release.

“These letters show the prison officials that there are many people who are concerned about his situation and help prepare people to be ready to respond quickly if there are any attacks on his rights in prison or further obstacles to his release.”

Mail can be sent to Mark Curtis, #805338, Iowa State Penitentiary, Box 316, Ft. Madison, Iowa, 52627.

Funds are needed to pay legal and other expenses. For more information or to send a donation, contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 477419, Chicago, IL 60647.

*Frank Forrestal is a member of the United Auto Workers in Chicago, Illinois.*

## Theses for CTC congress

**Continued from Page 9**

in defending the general interests of the revolution and the specific interests of the unions, by faithfully representing the concerns, views, and needs of its individual members, the trade union movement fulfills its role not only as mobilizer and guide for our working people, but as champion of the rights and obligations that the state and Cuba’s entire political system confer on it.

165. As it approaches the 17th Congress of the CTC, the union movement proudly recognizes the selfless and consistent role of our commander-in-chief Fidel Castro in achieving and maintaining a united, revolutionary, and independent homeland, based on the principles of fairness and social justice, as well as the prestige and confidence he enjoys among the workers and their labor organizations. These are factors that have always contributed to a very high and conscious participation by the masses in the tasks proposed by the country’s leadership.

166. The labor movement, which did not exist in our country in the days of Céspedes and La Demajagua,<sup>17</sup> announced its place in history when thousands of humble immigrant tobacco workers responded to José Martí’s call, joined the clubs of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, which he had founded, elected him as the party’s delegate [president], made contributions of 10 percent of their meager wages to buy weapons for the Necessary War,<sup>18</sup> and, in many cases, exchanged their cutting tools for the machetes of liberation.

167. Faithful to that patriotic *Mambí* ancestry, the heart and hardened arm of the Cuban labor movement never failed in any of the political battles in our homeland for independence and justice, nor did they fail in the struggle for workers’ rights and emancipation. The fruit of this long road is our union organization, veteran of 56 years of combat, 36 of which have been devoted to the defense of the revolution and the building of socialism.

168. Today we dedicate all this history, all this power, to our mission of confronting the challenges we face, overcoming the current difficulties, and maintaining our free, just, and revolutionary homeland, the homeland of Martí and Fidel, which is the primary objective of all our efforts and the guarantee of our noblest hopes.

<sup>17</sup> Carlos Manuel de Céspedes was one of the central leaders of Cuba’s 1868-78 independence war against Spanish colonialism. “La Demajagua” was the plantation of Céspedes near Yara, in the vicinity of Manzanillo, from where he proclaimed the independence of Cuba in the historic *Grito de Yara* (Yara proclamation) on Oct. 10, 1868.

<sup>18</sup> The independence war against Spanish colonialism Martí launched in 1895. The 19th century Cuban independence fighters against Spanish colonial rule are known as the *Mambí*.



A chins-up guy — "People have to recognize we are all contingent [nonpermanent] workers in one form or another. We are all victims of time and place." — James Meadows, a "human re-



Harry Ring

sources" vice prez at AT&T.

**Charting imperialist course** — The March 13 *Miami Herald* reported the following radio exchange between a U.S. Navy ship and a Canadian source off New-

foundland: **Ship 1:** Please divert your ship 15 degrees to the north to avert a collision. **Ship 2:** Recommend you divert your course 15 degrees. **Ship 1:** This is the captain of a U.S. Navy ship. I say again divert your course. **Ship 2:** No, I say again divert your course. **Ship 1:** This is an aircraft carrier of the U.S. Navy. We are a large warship. Divert your course now! **Ship 2:** This is a lighthouse. Your call.

**Affirmative action for right people** — It was disclosed that a number of University of California regents who voted to ax affirmative action for minorities and women privately use their influence to get special consideration for the admission of relatives and children of business associates.

**No quotas?** — UC regent Leo Kolligian pushed, successfully, to get three children of a business partner into UCLA, including one who had lower grade-point averages than 6,000 other applicants. Kolligian is a lawyer in Fresno, a farming center. He urged admission of one low-score applicant on the grounds that she was from an underrepresented area.

**They do have a grades system** — It's also been disclosed that UCLA regularly gives special consideration to the children of wealthy donors and local politicians. Often applicants are graded A, B, or C, according to the amounts contributed.

**And that's by their definition** — In a survey of mainly white,

male cops in Ohio, 57 percent said they saw other cops use excessive force in making arrests.

**Gravediggers of capitalism will do better** — A Wellington, New Zealand, funeral party arrived at the cemetery to find the prepared plot was too small for the coffin.

A rattled funeral company staffer chased after a shovel, jumped into the plot, and dug furiously. The director finally joined her in the effort. A relative of the deceased said it seemed bizarre.

**Big ticket split** — We're poorly informed on the slated United Kingdom divorce of the Prince and Princess of Wales. But we were impressed with the inside scoop that Princess Diana may get a lump sum settlement of \$30 mil-

lion. The Queen will have to cough up some of this since Prince Charles has a take-home income of but \$2.2 million.

**Salute to snail-mail** — Our notice may have arrived late, but March 18-23 was National Card and Letter Writing Week. Sponsored by U.S. Postal Services.

**'Sins of the father'?** — The state of Washington seized a total of \$87.54 from the savings accounts of Dustin Stefan, 11, and his brother Brandon, 8. It was to pay part of their father's \$1,800 tax debt.

The mother said she had tried for five years to convince the state and other creditors that she was not responsible for her former husband's debts. And, she might have added, neither are the kids.

## LETTERS

### China-Taiwan conflict

I am writing this letter to express my ambivalence toward your editorial "On the side of Chinese people" (*Militant* vol. 60, no. 12, March 25, 1996). I know you are against the U.S. intervention in the China-Taiwan affair, which I appreciate. I am unimpressed, however, by your tendency to patronize anyone — in this case, the current Chinese regime — who might be an opponent to the U.S. hegemony. I expect more sophistication from you.

Although there are some capitalist interests at stake, the current U.S.-China conflict is not, in my opinion, a capitalist-vs.-"the Chinese workers state" one as your editorial describes, assuming that the People's Republic of China is a socialist country. Right now the Chinese have few things against capitalist economy per se; their confrontation with the U.S. is not mobilized by socialism, but nationalism.

The Chinese nationalism, as well as the current China-Taiwan situation, is a co-product of imperialism, colonialism, and cold-war politics, for which the Chinese could not be blamed alone. However, the current Chinese regime has done so many brutal things to their own students and the Tibetans, in the name of national safety and integrity, that China's "right" to national reunification — as your editorial romantically put it — actually scares many Taiwanese, including myself.

As a Taiwanese student managing to keep his Chinese identity, I do not pretend to be a spokesman for the Chinese/Taiwanese, whose opinions are highly divided; I just want you to be aware that the China-Taiwan issue should not be simplified as your well-willingly editorial (and related report in that issue) did.

Hsin-chih Chen  
Rego Park, New York

### Quebec debate

In the March 4 *Militant* Michel Prairie did a thorough job of debunking the claim that the Quebecois are not an oppressed nation. Using the Ottawa government's own statistics, Prairie demolished the "rational basis" of Shaw's and Chirgwin's arguments. Unfortunately, chauvinism is not based on logic or reason and will not go away just because it has been disproved.

Let's take a close look at Lavina G. Shaw's peculiar letter. Shaw begins by describing herself as a "a socialist and an avid reader of the *Militant*." This has to be some sort of misunderstanding, as the letter doesn't contain the least trace of socialism. The political essence of Shaw's letter can be isolated in the following words: "my husband owned a small manufacturing business and applied for an operating loan to the federal government... was told he would have to move to Quebec if he wanted a loan. Consequently... the business went under."

Shaw blames the Quebecois for her husband's business failure. This scapegoating is then extended to blame the Quebecois for all of Canada's social ills. Is there unemployment? Then the "French" are stealing jobs from the white people. (Oops, I mean Anglophones.) Is the federal government cutting back on funds for medical care and education? Then it's because the awful, Catholic, "French" are stealing all

the money!

World capitalism, including the Canadian variety, is in crisis. Unemployment is growing, farmers are losing their land, and small businesses are going under... because that's the way capitalism works. No plot by some special cabal is needed to explain the increasing impoverishment of the Canadian toilers; that's just the way capitalism behaves during a depression.

The logic of this kind of politics is to pit sections of the working class in struggle against on another, thus preventing any action against the ruling rich.

In addition to Shaw's effort, there have been two other letters in the Quebec discussion that are also rooted in Canadian imperialist patriotism. I am referring to the letter signed by J. C. Chirgwin (March 4 issue) and that signed by R. T. Jeroloman (March 18 issue).

Both Chirgwin and Jeroloman, in the end, ground their opposition to Quebec independence on the necessity of preserving the unity of the present Canadian state. They both justify this unity as necessary for military and economic war against the USA. Chirgwin derides support to Quebec independence as "a typical divide and conquer plan that would play right into the hands of the U.S. empire." Jeroloman says pretty much the same, but adds that the present Ottawa government is prosocialist (that should be news to Canadian work-

ers!) and that unnamed socialist parties support Canadian unity and the Socialist Workers Party should follow suit in the name of socialist unity.

This point is the defining difference between communism and various types of procapitalist, reformist substitutes for socialism. When Messrs. Chirgwin and Jeroloman attack [Susan] Berman and Prairie, on the principled question of national self-determination, they are in fact attacking a 130-year-old Marxist continuity on the national question.

The basic line of support to the progressive nationalism of oppressed peoples was laid out by Marx and Engels in their support to the Irish struggle. In the period of the rise of the Russian revolution, Lenin and the Bolshevik leadership refined and honed Marx's theory and it is that tradition that the *Militant* upholds today.

Communists begin with the necessity for working-class unity. When a given working class as in Canada or the USA is divided between privileged and oppressed national groupings, the communists work to bridge these differences. The last century and a half of experiences has shown that unity can only come about when the worker-communists of the oppressing nation show in practice that they really do support the human rights of their brothers and sisters of the oppressed nation.

Messrs. Chirgwin and Jeroloman, you

are typical representatives of that socialist tendency that Lenin called social imperialist, social patriot, meaning socialist in words, patriotic imperialist in real politics. Need I say that Lenin didn't mean this as a compliment?

There are serious political problems with being a patriot of an imperialist power like the USA or Canada. Being a Canadian patriot sort of rules out fighting for a revolution in Canada. After all, if a revolution in Quebec will undermine Canada's defense capability, think what an all Canada revolution will mean!

In the end it comes down to this: Are you a patriot of the imperialist fatherland, or a patriot of your class?

Roy Inglee  
Wilmington, Delaware

P.S. If anyone wants to do some independent study, I recommend three titles available from Pathfinder Press: *Ireland and the Irish Question* by Marx and Engels, *The National Liberation Movement in the East* by Lenin, and *Lenin's Final Fight*.

**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.**

## 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. Mailing address: Suite 252, 267 West Valley Avenue Zip 35209. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 103402,1231

**CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles:** 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460, 380-9640. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

**CONNECTICUT: New Haven:** Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516.

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

**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 803 Peachtree NE. Zip: 30308. Tel: (404) 724-9759. Compuserve: 75607,1455

**ILLINOIS: Chicago:** 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (312) 342-1780. Compuserve: 76171,2307 **Peoria:** 915 N. Western. Zip: 61650-0302. Mailing address: P.O. Box 302. Tel: (309) 676-2472. Compuserve: 103435,1724

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

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

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

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

**MINNESOTA: Twin Cities:** 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (612) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

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

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

**NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro:** 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St. Zip 27406. Tel: (910) 272-5996. Compuserve: 103475,672.

**OHIO: Cincinnati:** P.O. Box 19484. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 662-1931. **Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

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

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

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

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

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

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

70543,1637

### AUSTRALIA

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

### BRITAIN

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

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

### CANADA

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

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

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

### FRANCE

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

### ICELAND

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

### NEW ZEALAND

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

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

### SWEDEN

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

## Ontario strikers condemn cop attack

'If it had any impact on us, it was to make us more determined to fight'

BY AL CAPPE

TORONTO — Some 4,000 striking government workers, members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), raised their fists in the air and chanted "No Justice, No Peace" and "Hold that line" as they rallied near the Ontario legislature March 25. The demonstration was called by the Ontario Federation of Labor to protest the violent attack by the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) riot squad on OPSEU picket lines March 18.

After the rally, the OPSEU strikers, joined by hundreds of other trade unionists, marched past the legislature and then headed for a noisy rally at the offices of Solicitor-General Bob Runciman, the government minister responsible for the OPP. The demonstrators demanded his resignation and ended the protest chanting "We won't back down."

The march showed the growing confidence and determination of the 55,000 OPSEU strikers, now in their fifth week on the picket lines against the government of Premier Mike Harris. Faced with government plans to cut between 13,000 and 27,000 jobs in two years, OPSEU is demanding improved severance and retirement packages, protection of pension and seniority rights, as well as job security and union recognition in the case of privatization of government services.

### Police assault

The marchers voiced the outrage of the strikers and of many working people to the police violence on March 18.

That day, thousands of OPSEU strikers and other unionists mounted mass pickets in front of government offices and the legislature. The OPP riot squad attacked two picket lines, injuring at least four strikers. Metro Toronto Police Association president Paul Walter informed the media that the OPP officers boasted before the attack that they would "whack 'em and stack 'em."

At the Whitney building the cops charged into peaceful pickets, striking with their shields and batons and sending two people to hospital.

"There was no warning," said striker Anthony Singh, who was at the Whitney building when the attack took place.

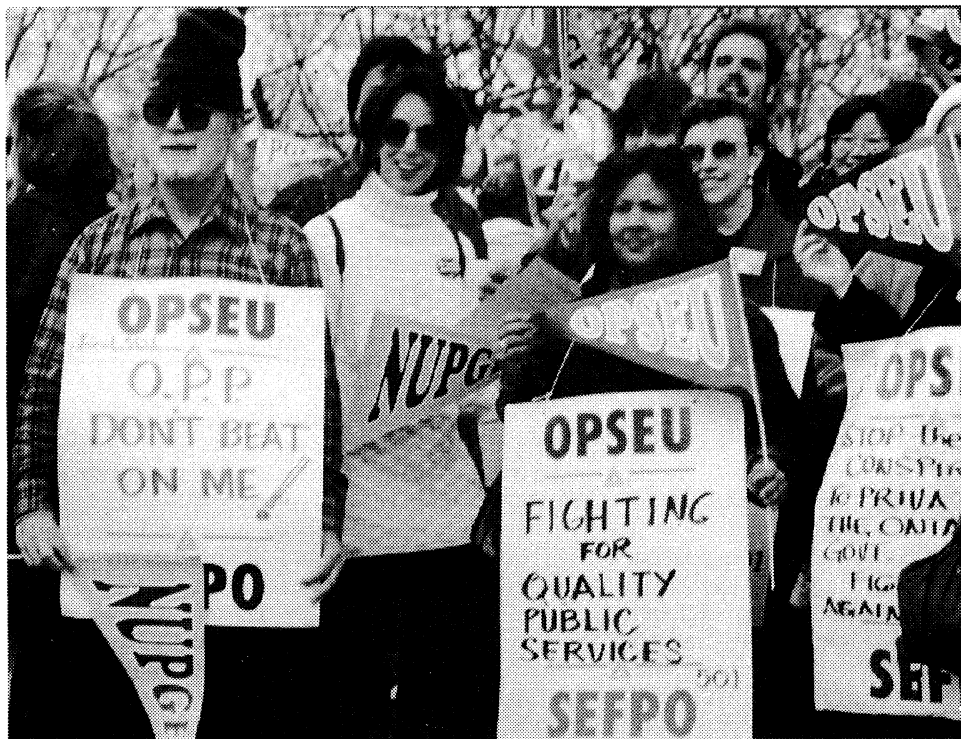
"The cops kept bashing me with their shields when I tried to help people who had fallen to the ground," said striker Andy Watson.

"After attacking, the cops blew kisses at us and made obscene gestures," said another striker whose finger had been cracked by the cops.

The police violence failed to intimidate the strikers.

"If it had any impact on us, it was to make us more determined to fight," said Rita Schreiber, picketing at Queen Street Mental Hospital March 22. Of the 800 striking employees at the hospital only six have crossed picket lines.

"This government is going to make people a lot more politically active," stated



Militant/Al Cappe

Striking members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union protested March 25 against the March 18 assault on picket lines by the Ontario Provincial Police.

Susan Beniston, another hospital employee.

On March 20, 100 strikers gathered at the Whitney building for a picket line press conference to condemn the assault. Workers were angered by the reports in the daily papers.

"I read the articles in the *Toronto Sun*," said Watson. "It was all lies. It makes me wonder about everything else in that paper."

Initial attempts by the government to justify the police violence failed to silence the mounting anger among working people.

Harris has been forced to order a public inquiry into the events.

The strikers have mobilized to maintain hundreds of picket lines across the province and to hold rallies and demonstrations.

### Reaching out to other struggles

"Harris thought we were a wimpy bunch of civil servants. But we've proved we're anything but that," said picket captain David Bolton as 50 strikers picketed the main entrance to MacDonald building in Toronto.

## China-Taiwan tensions ease, for now

BY BOB MILLER

Following the election in Taiwan of incumbent President Lee Teng-hui on March 23, tensions between Beijing and Taipei are easing as rhetoric on both sides tones down. Nevertheless, a highly volatile and unpredictable equilibrium will continue over the question of the reunification of Taiwan with China.

Two days after the election, Beijing ended 18 days of large-scale military exercises designed to warn the government of Taiwan against campaigning for increased international recognition and to signal that a declaration of independence would lead to military action by the Chinese government.

The military exercises included eight days of missile tests. The last round of maneuvers were held just 11 miles from outlying islets held by Taiwan. Some exercises brought Chinese and Taiwanese forces within six miles of each other.

Washington also assembled the largest U.S. naval armada in the region since the end of the Vietnam war, built around battle groups of the aircraft carriers *Nimitz* and *Independence*. U.S. naval forces remain in the region as a threat against the Chinese workers state.

Taiwan is regarded as a "renegade" province by China. The government in Taiwan was set up in 1949 by the defeated and fleeing forces of the Nationalist Party following the victory of the Chinese revolution by workers and peasants.

On March 24, Beijing called for a meeting between Lee and China's president Jiang Zemin, and for opening direct air, shipping, and mail links across the Taiwan Strait. Responding to this gesture of conciliation, the government of Taiwan announced the next day a plan to ease its decades-long ban on direct trade.

A spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, Shen Guo-fang, however, warned that his government would not drop its option of military intervention in Taiwan should the island's authorities move toward greater independence from the mainland or away from the concept of "one China."

Lee's attempts to secure a seat for Taiwan at the United Nations and a visit to the United States last June infuriated Beijing.

Shen also said that China's "one country two systems" formula, devised for Hong Kong, is appropriate for Taiwan as well. In June 1997 capitalist Hong Kong will return to Chinese sovereignty from British colonial rule.

The China-Taiwan tensions have taken a toll on Taiwan's economy. Some \$5 billion in capital was pulled out of Taiwan and the government poured billions into the stock markets in an attempt to main-

tain prices. A day after the election, Taiwan's newspapers urged Lee to heal the rift with China. In addition, right before the election, Taiwan's top general, Lo Pen-li, called for an end to any "unrealistic advocacy" of independence for the island.

Relations between Washington and Beijing have also been frayed. The U.S. government approved the sale to Taiwan of mobile "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles, and an advanced targeting and navigation system for fighter jets. Taipei is already in the process of buying 150 U.S.-produced F-16 fighter jets.

Referring to the gathering U.S. armada in the region, U.S. defense secretary William Perry said March 19, "This will remind them [China] that, while they are a great military power, the premier, the strongest military power in the western Pacific is the United States."

The Chinese government lashed out at the White House for meddling in the Taiwan Strait and warned that the People's Liberation Army would "bury" U.S. naval forces in the region if they came too close to China's coastline. "This constitutes a serious encroachment upon China's sovereignty and gross interference in China's internal affairs," foreign ministry spokesman Shen said.

The March 23 *Economist* reported that "Western analysts have been impressed with the latest Chinese exercises" and opined that China need not land a single soldier on the island to bring Taiwan to its knees. "That might be done with a combination of a naval blockade, the mining of harbors and missile strikes."

Meanwhile, Washington called off a "long awaited" visit to the United States by China's Defense Minister and extended a freeze on new financing for U.S. business deals in China.

Al Cappe is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5338 in Toronto.

### MARCH TO FIGHT THE RIGHT Sunday, April 14 San Francisco

- No retreat on affirmative action
- Fight racism
- Protect abortion and reproductive rights
- Stop all forms of violence against women
- Demand lesbian, gay and bi rights
- End the war on poor women

For more information contact:  
NOW Action Center, Washington DC  
202-331-0066, fax: 202-785-8576  
San Francisco Office  
415-436-9390, fax: 415-436-9810



SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN