

THE MILITANT INSIDE

Overnite strikers rally in Dayton, Ohio

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Cuba book fair event launches 'Che Talks to Young People'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND CLAUDIO BURGOS

HAVANA, Cuba—"This book by Che is useful for young people today in confronting the challenges they face in the world," said Iroel Sánchez at a February 11 meeting here to launch the English and Spanish editions of the brand-new Pathfinder book *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*.

The event was one of the highlights of the week-long International Havana Book Fair. Sánchez is the director of Casa Editora Abril, the publishing house of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba.

The content of the twin edition is a selection of speeches by Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born revolutionary who was one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution in its early years. The book also contains a tribute to Guevara by Cuban president Fidel Castro, a preface by longtime Cuban revolutionary cadre Armando Hart, an introduction by the book's editor Mary-Alice Waters, more than 20 pages of photos, and an extensive glossary, which will

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Militant/Jonathon Silberman

Speakers at the book launching were Mary-Alice Waters, Hassán Pérez, president of the Federation of University Students, and Iroel Sánchez.

Support grows for affirmative action protest

BY ANGEL LARISCY AND MIKE ITALIE

MIAMI—Momentum is building for a massive rally in defense of affirmative action March 7 in the Florida state capital of Tallahassee. At a February 14 organizing meeting in Miami, nearly 50 unionists, students, NAACP members, Haitian rights activists, and others enthusiastically discussed a plan that will involve at least 50 buses making an all-night bus ride from Miami to Tallahassee for the protest.

The March 7 action was called in the midst of weeks of protests and rallies involving thousands across the state in opposition to Florida Governor John Ellis Bush's executive order abolishing "racial or gender setasides, preferences, or quotas" in government hiring and contracting or in admissions to state universities.

The Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union announced it was organizing a bus for its members to attend the March 7 rally. The Florida state AFL-CIO; the Amalgamated Transit Union; Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; Service International Employees Union; American Federation of State, County and

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Truckers shut ports to protest gas price hikes

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—A strike by independent truck drivers has substantially slowed work at the port here. Drivers in other cities, such as Newark, New Jersey, and Boston also held rallies demanding relief from high gas prices and worsening conditions of work.

Drivers have both thrown up their own organizations and are looking to join established industrial unions, such as the Teamsters, in order to advance their fight.

A national day of action is planned February 18 to press the truck drivers' demands.

The February 11 *Miami Herald* reported, "On a busy day, more than 1,200 shipping containers—holding tons of goods each—may flow through the Port of Miami. The number now has fallen to just a few dozen."

Even the option of diverting shipments to Ft. Lauderdale's Port Everglades disappeared when the truckers there joined the work stoppage.

As of February 14 the truck drivers at the port, who are members of the International Longshoremen's Association, were honoring the picket lines.

Hundreds of truckers have shown their unity and economic power in daily protests that began here February 7. The actions are organized by the Support Trucking Group, made up of 450–500 lease owner-operators who contract to work for one shipping company only, as well as 800 dump truck drivers who are independent and work for more than one company at a time. Leaders of the Support Trucking Group said neither group will return to work until both are satisfied that their demands are met.

Both groups of truckers are protesting rising diesel fuel prices, which have increased more than 50 percent in the past year; low rates paid by shipping companies; and the charging of exorbitant insurance fees.



Militant/Stephanie Trice

Truckers at Newark port rally February 11 against diesel price increases. Actions have shut down ports in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale.

One trucker said that a job that used to pay \$45 now pays \$26–\$28, and that if you are undocumented, you get even less. "We can't continue to work this way," said Abel, who has been an owner-operator for six years. "We are losing our houses and our cars. Even when there is not enough work, the companies keep hiring because they charge us \$155 for insurance every week whether we work or not. So it is more money for them."

Oscar Pupo, a spokesman for the truckers in Miami-Dade County, said, "On the average, we make about \$600 a week, but of that we have to pay about \$140 on fuel, \$150 on insurance, \$80 on taxes and fees,

and \$60 on maintenance. That leaves us about \$170 per week."



BY MARK GILSDORF AND STEFANIE TRICE

NEWARK, New Jersey—Four hundred truck drivers rallied at the port here February 11. The noon rally, called by a loose association of independent owner-operator truck drivers, came after a convoy of some 100 trucks slowly wound its way through the port, snarling traffic.

At the February 11 rally, representatives

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Irish fighters demand assembly reconvene

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England—Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) have condemned London's attempt to push back the struggle for Irish independence through the reimposition of direct rule over Northern Ireland and demanded the reinstatement of the elected assembly there.

Under the terms of what is known as the Good Friday agreement reached between political parties and the British and Irish governments in April 1998, a new assembly—now ended—was given limited powers of self-government in the British occupied six counties in Northern Ireland. The IRA has now withdrawn from negotiations on the "decommissioning" of weapons and has taken off the table all proposals it had put forward since November on the issue.

The British government and Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) "obviously have no desire to deal with the issue of arms except on their own terms. Those who seek a military victory in this way need to understand that this cannot and will not happen," a February 15 statement released by the IRA said, which was widely quoted in the press here.

Sinn Fein is the political organization leading the struggle for a democratic and united Ireland, free from British rule. The IRA has organized a decades-long series of armed actions aimed at ending British occupation of the north.

Dublin proposed London reconvene the executive committee and the assembly. Irish

foreign minister Brian Cowen said he did not want "direct rule to continue for a moment longer than necessary."

The British government used as a pretext for the suspension of the assembly the lack of progress by the IRA in surrendering its weapons. But the timetable demanded by London was not part of the agreement, lead-

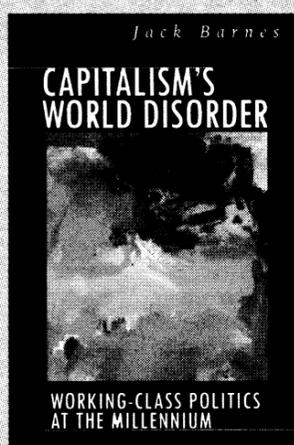
ing Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams to insist that the issue "no longer be used as a block on progress."

The British government's decision to suspend the assembly has more to do with the continued resistance of the Irish people to its rule and the growing fractures in the pro-

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Washington finally admits perils of radiation exposure

After nearly six decades of downplaying the dangers of radiation, Washington has admitted that many workers employed in the production of nuclear weapons have died from exposure to it. A government review states that workers at 14 nuclear weapons plants showed elevated rates of a range of cancers. Nearly 600,000 workers were diagnosed that have been employed in nuclear weapons manufacture since the start of World War II. Through a series of studies, overwhelming evidence documents the perils of the processes involved.

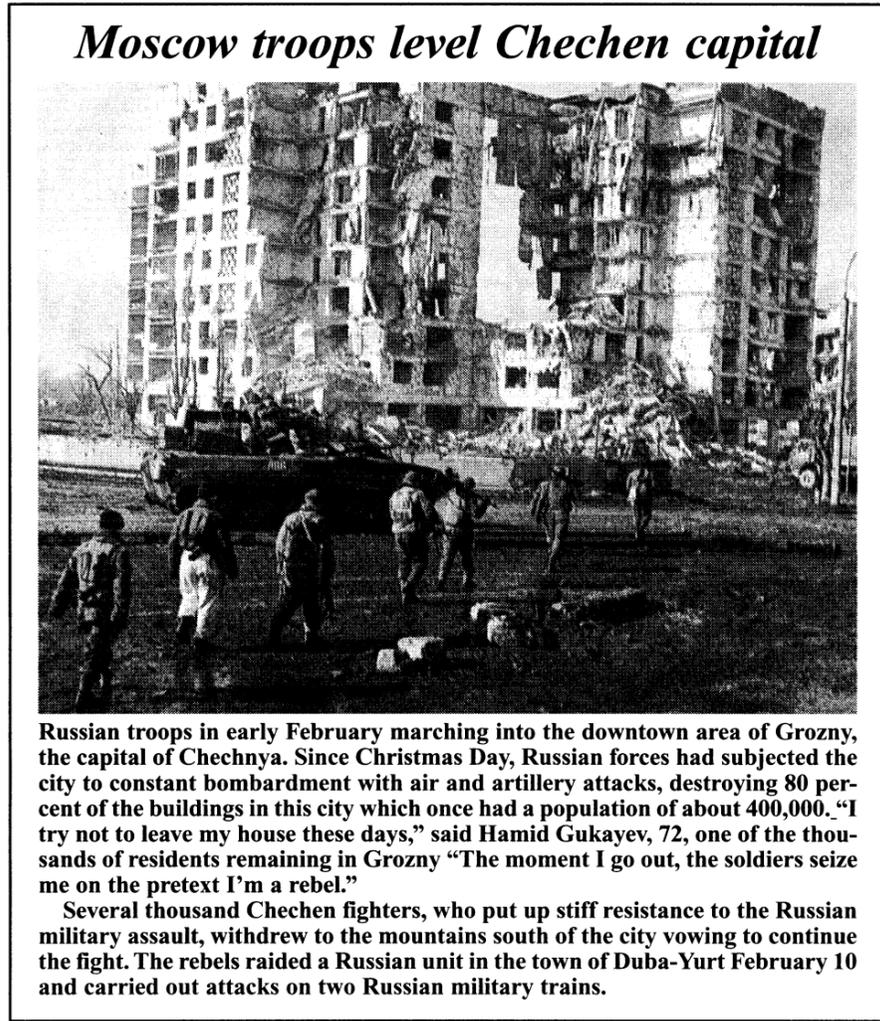
Last July, Energy Secretary William Richardson concluded that the government should compensate workers who fell sick while working at private plants manufacturing beryllium. This is yet to be done. The firms filling government contracts have claimed that the link to workers' illnesses and their plants could not be proved. Now the question of compensation for government-employed workers is on the agenda. Federal officials say that tens of millions of dollars might be involved in compensation for hundreds of families.

U.S gov't deposited 1,600 tons of nuke weapons parts in Kentucky

Washington recently admitted that since the 1950s it has stored more than 1,600 tons of nuclear weapons parts at its uranium plant in Paducah, Kentucky. Workers at the plant and the surrounding area were exposed to these hazardous waste products without their knowledge for decades. "I've been angry for about 10 years," stated Ronald Lamb, a farmer who lives two miles from the plant and a nearby contaminated creek. "We never suspected they were doing anything that would harm us. It's a federal facility."

Moratorium on executions urged

Shortly after Illinois governor George Ryan announced that he was suspending executions, the Philadelphia city council on February 10 adopted a resolution urging the Pennsylvania legislature to enact a similar moratorium on executing death row inmates. By a 12-4 vote, Philadelphia becomes the



Moscow troops level Chechen capital

Russian troops in early February marching into the downtown area of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya. Since Christmas Day, Russian forces had subjected the city to constant bombardment with air and artillery attacks, destroying 80 percent of the buildings in this city which once had a population of about 400,000. "I try not to leave my house these days," said Hamid Gukayev, 72, one of the thousands of residents remaining in Grozny "The moment I go out, the soldiers seize me on the pretext I'm a rebel."

Several thousand Chechen fighters, who put up stiff resistance to the Russian military assault, withdrew to the mountains south of the city vowing to continue the fight. The rebels raided a Russian unit in the town of Duba-Yurt February 10 and carried out attacks on two Russian military trains.

eighth—and largest—municipality to urge a halt to executions. Beside Pennsylvania, other states considering such legislation are Maryland, Alabama, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Washington. More than two-thirds of Pennsylvania's death row inmates are people of color, and more than 90 percent were too poor to afford their own attorney.

Baghdad rejects UN 'inspectors'

The Iraqi government on February 10

rejected demands promoted by Washington that UN "inspectors" be allowed back in the country. Last December the Security Council assigned Hans Blix of Sweden to be its new chief inspector of weapons in Iraq. "There will be no return of the so-called inspection teams" stated Taha Yassin Ramadan, Iraq's vice-president, "We reject the infiltration by spies using such cover." Moscow has sent an envoy to Baghdad in an effort to persuade the government to change its mind.

The Iraqi government halted UN inspection operations in December 1998 as Washington launched a massive bombing assault against the people of Iraq. Since then, the U.S. military has carried out virtually daily bombing of sites in Iraq as part of its enforcement of a "no-fly" zone over northern and southern Iraq. Three people were killed on one such attack February 9, which the U.S. Central Command said was a "measured response" against radar, artillery, and missile sites."

Kosova: U.S. troops investigated

In a sign of growing hostility to the presence of U.S. and other NATO-based troops occupying Kosova, the army brass announced that it was opening an investiga-

tion into possible acts of misconduct by its troops. A statement released by the army admits that soldiers "may have been involved in misconduct including improper use of physical force and threats against Kosovar males and inappropriate contact with Kosovar females." The troops under investigation are stationed in the same town where a U.S. soldier was accused of sexually abusing and murdering an 11-year-old Albanian girl in mid-January.

Spain: shipyard workers strike

Hundreds of striking shipyard workers clashed with police in the northern port city of Gijón February 10. The workers were protesting the dismissal of 91 employees — part of a restructuring plan imposed by management at the private Naval de Gijón shipyard. Dockworkers throughout the country have resisted efforts by the shipyard bosses to cut jobs and reduce hours of operation.

Chile: Anger over fuel price rise

Workers who drive trucks, buses, and taxis in Chile are threatening job actions in response to the rising prices they have to pay for petrol and diesel fuel. They are rejecting the decision of the Chilean government to pass this cost along to the workers and consumers. Gas prices increased about 9 percent the first week in February. The price increases come as the price of oil has risen by 16 percent this year to about \$28 a barrel. Chile imports about 95 percent of its petroleum supplies.

Tel Aviv bombards Lebanon

In the most massive bombing assault on Lebanon in months, the Israeli military destroyed the transformers that provide electricity for huge sections of the country in Beirut, Tripoli, and Baalbek on February 8. Houses of a number of civilians living in the areas were also destroyed. Tel Aviv claimed that the attack was in response to rocket attacks by Hezbollah that killed six Israeli soldiers stationed in southern Lebanon.

The Israeli regime occupied southern Lebanon in 1978. After withdrawing it carved out a military zone in south Lebanon that it has occupied since 1985. Hezbollah, or Party of God, has been leading the fight to end the Israeli occupation. Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak claims he will pull all Israeli troops out of southern Lebanon by July.

This was the third time in less than four years and the second time in a little more than seven months that Israeli planes have hit the Beirut power plant. After the attack on power plants in June, much of Beirut and its surrounding region was without power for four months. In the town of Baalbek, Ali Jaafar, 56, whose house was among a dozen reduced to rubble by the bombing, told the *New York Times*, "We don't need bridges. We don't need water. We don't need power. We need to resist."

—BRIAN WILLIAMS

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Editor: GREG McCARTAN

Young Socialists column editor: CECILIA ORTEGA

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Brian Taylor, Brian Williams, and Maurice Williams.

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Coal miners in west face bosses' profit drive

BY JIM POWELL

FORT COLLINS, Colorado—Coal miners working in Wyoming's Powder River basin face a concerted drive by the coal companies to boost their profits. In their efforts to do this without hiring new levies of workers, the bosses are upgrading equipment and intensifying the pace of work. To date the coal companies have kept the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) out of these highly productive mines.

"Meet the Caterpillar 797—the world's largest truck," exclaims the *Casper Star-Tribune* in an article published December 22, 1999. The 400-ton, 580-cubic-yard haul truck purchased by Peabody Coal's North Antelope-Rochelle mine is part of the ongoing effort to squeeze higher production with the same number of employees out of the massive surface mines in the basin. The new truck is 40 tons bigger than the largest truck presently in use here.

Bigger haul trucks aren't the only thing the coal bosses are spending their money on. Several of the area's mines sport massive new drag lines with 135-cubic-yard buckets, new shovels which sell for over \$10 million apiece, or new silos to load trains at an even more rapid rate. Conveyor systems and rail transport are also being upgraded.

Stagnating profit rates drive these measures by the bosses. Prices for Powder River basin coal have remained relatively stable at less than \$5 a ton over the past 20 years. The companies aim to increase their profits by investing in new equipment and massively increasing production, while holding down miners' wages and benefits.

As the mines expand production, they continue to increase the amount of explosives they use. The Black Thunder mine used 8 million tons of explosives in one recent blast. Two hundred people attended a recent forum in Gillette, Wyoming, to discuss cast blasting and its effects. Participants voiced concern about the clouds of nitrous oxide that drift off the mines after each blast. Suzanne Wurthele, a toxicology expert from the EPA, explained, "If one of those orange clouds was going to drift across Denver, I'd have to say I don't care if there is 250,000 people, we've got to evacuate."

Utility companies favor Wyoming coal because of its low sulfur content. Burning it, especially when it is mixed with Eastern

coal, which has a higher BTU (British Thermal Unit) rating, makes it easier to comply with provisions of Phase Two of the Clean Air Act—a federal law which went into effect January 1, 2000.

Boom in Powder River Basin coal

Last year, the basin produced 316.9 million tons of coal, up from 293.4 million tons in 1998, making it the second year in a row of record-breaking numbers. The North Antelope-Rochelle mine shipped 68.9 million tons, more than 5 percent of U.S. production. The area's 14 working mines produced over 26 percent of the country's coal output.

The dominance of Powder River basin coal is a recent phenomenon. Shovels broke ground for the area's first major mine, Belle Ayr, in 1972. Within five years it was this country's biggest producer. By 1982, Black Thunder, another local operation, had won that title, and last year North Antelope-Rochelle took the lead.

This coal lies close to the surface in seams that run 50 to 100 feet, making it about one-third as expensive to mine as underground operations.

Although wages and benefits for permanent miners are high—comparable to or even better than those in union mines—hours are long and safety issues tend to go unresolved. Almost every miner works 12 hours per day on rotating shifts. In the seven-day work schedule, overtime costs for Saturday and Sunday are eliminated.

Companies that provide temporary employees are big players in the Powder River Basin. Experienced equipment operators come here from all over the country, often from union mines that have been closed down. They sign up with a temporary agency, get sent to a mine, and work alongside permanent employees for less money and benefits—in many cases for years. The more fortunate ones are eventually put on full time.

In the Coal Creek mine Morrison and Knudsen (M-K), one of the nation's biggest construction companies, contracts the entire work force. Workers receive \$5 to \$7 per hour less than at many other mines. "We are union-free," states the M-K handbook.

Along with the introduction of larger-scale technology and production, the bosses'

strategy to boost their profits hinges on keeping the area nonunion. In an article that appeared in the July 1, 1981, *Washington Post*, the employee relations manager of Carter Mining Co. in Gillette wrote that "we don't have strikes and other work disruptions." Flexible work rules, allowing the company to shift workers around, and greater management control over production are among the benefits of being union free, he wrote.

None of the Powder River Basin mines are organized by the UMWA. At Belle Ayr, the first mine that opened, the UMWA won a representation election defeating the Progressive Miners of America, but in 1975 the coal bosses broke the union after a bitter, several-months-long strike, using company goons and strike breakers.

The last serious UMWA organizing effort was defeated at the Black Thunder Mine in the early 1990s.

UMWA struggles in Wyoming

One hundred and twenty miles away to the east the UMWA has had more success. In the late 1980s and early 1990s miners from locals 1972 and 2055 in Sheridan, Wyoming, waged a four-year-long strike at the Decker and Big Horn mines in Montana. The company used scabs, hired three private security firms to harass the strikers, and offered a \$250,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of individuals for "strike-related" acts. Despite their campaign, Decker and Big Horn were unable to defeat the UMWA. In the spring of 1999, 115 miners at the Deserado mine just outside Rangely, Colorado, struck for three months over health care for retirees and other issues. In describing their settlement UMWA members at Deserado say that although they did not accomplish everything they set out to do, their union emerged stronger from their fight.

A fight to organize is also posed for rail workers in the Powder River Basin. The rail bosses who own the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and the Union Pacific (UP) are among the biggest beneficiaries of the boom in basin coal. An average of 100 coal trains—110 to 135 cars long—leave the region each day. Rail transportation constitutes 80 percent of the total delivered cost of basin coal.

Rail workers organized into several

unions including the United Transportation Union, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and Building and Maintenance of Way Employees are now confronted by non-union companies like Rail Link and Midwest Rail.

The Dakota, Minnesota, and Eastern (DM & E) Railroad, which currently owns track that goes completely across the state of South Dakota from Rapid City to Minneapolis, is seeking a federal permit to come into the basin. The DM & E has raised \$1.4 billion to build 250 miles of new railroad and rebuild about 650 miles of existing track to modern standards. Ultimately they plan to run over 30 coal trains per day. Only the conductors at the DM & E are organized.

Long hours, disregard for safety, the use of contract labor, the environmental impact of cast blasting, and union busting are part of the profit drive of the capitalists here. Despite the increase in capital expenditures the profit margin per ton of coal for the mining corporations remains razor thin. These conditions will continue to fuel fightbacks and union-organizing efforts of Powder River basin workers.

Australia power workers forced to end strike

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—Striking power workers at the Yallourn Energy plant in Victoria's Latrobe Valley reluctantly obeyed a back-to-work order imposed February 7 by state Labor Premier Steven Bracks under the provisions of the state's Electricity Industry Act.

Bracks threatened the workers with individual fines of up to \$A10,000 and Yallourn Energy, which had rejected a mediated settlement that morning after three days of talks, with a fine of up to \$A1 million. But Yallourn Energy chief executive Michael Johnston said he was "very pleased that the government has taken the action it has." The order remains in effect for four weeks.

Workers at other power stations in the valley had been considering solidarity strikes to begin later in the week.

The plant generates 20 percent of Victoria's electricity. About 500 workers belonging to six unions walked out January 10 in the face of company demands for an unfettered right to outsource maintenance work to nonunion contractors.

In a move to turn public opinion against the workers, rolling blackouts were imposed by the state government February 3 as summer temperatures soared. Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, was also affected because it purchases power from the Victorian grid. Bracks then imposed power restrictions on homes and businesses from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on February 4 and February 7-9. That the restrictions were part of a political campaign became clear when—despite estimates of anywhere from three days to two weeks for the plant to return to full power—Bracks indicated they would be lifted after February 9. "I think we have got a good case to lift restrictions on Wednesday even with Yallourn down," he said.

The decision to impose rolling blackouts February 3 was used to pit workers and farmers against each other. In a February 7 Melbourne *Age* article entitled "Power cuts hit dairy farmers hard," Peter Walsh, president of the Victorian Farmers Federation, an organization that speaks for both capitalist and working farmers, used the specter of "animal welfare" to back government intervention. Yet Max Fehring, president of United Dairy Farmers of Victoria, admitted, "The state government showed little consideration for farmers.... The [February 3] cuts came in between 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.—peak milking time. There was little or no warning to farmers."

Doug Cooper is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

Dairy farmers protest low milk prices

BY MIKE GALATI

TUNKANHANNIC, Pennsylvania—Eighty determined dairy farmers and their supporters rallied here in northeastern Pennsylvania February 12 to protest the catastrophic drop in prices they receive for milk.

Dairy farmers around the country are facing the lowest prices for milk in more than two decades. Processing companies have driven down the price paid by almost 40 percent since September. Over the past two months farmers have received less than \$10

per hundredweight, about 11.6 gallons, for raw milk. The USDA estimates that in the Northeast it costs a dairy farmer \$19.12 to produce a hundredweight of milk.

In face of this dairy farmers have begun a series of protests and rallies throughout the region.

The action here was in the parking lot of a local hardware store. The Progressive Agricultural Organization of Pennsylvania was one of the main sponsors. Ardin Tewksbury, a dairy farmer and organizer of

the group, chaired the event. Tewksbury explained the devastating impact the crisis facing dairy farmers has on the entire rural economy in northeastern Pennsylvania. He also pointed to the squeeze that farmers face from rising production costs and falling milk prices, noting that a local milk processor announced a 15 cent per hundredweight surcharge for hauling our milk because of rising fuel prices.

The many handmade signs at the protest captured the mood of those attending. "Processors must pay dairy farmers a fair price"; "Handouts No!, Fair Prices Yes!" and "Why are dairy farmers receiving same prices as 1978?" read some of them. Other signs pointed to a discussion going on among farmers about the cause of the current crisis. One farmer's hand-lettered sign read "Free trade is killing dairy farmers."

Ken Benhart, a farmer with a small dairy herd from the area, said in an interview that this was the first protest that he had ever been to.

"I've been trying to just hang on for the last couple of years," Benhart said. "In January I got \$11 for my milk, but my break-even price is \$14, and I have low debt. Last year I got \$800 emergency aid from the government. Big deal! In a month and a half I went \$4,000 into debt."

Brenda Cochran, the wife of a dairy farmer, told the rally that the growing movement among dairy farmers is new and its leadership was still being tested. Speaking on behalf of Ag Action 2000, a campaign launched by dairy farmers with a series of protests February 1, she said farmers have "decided to politicize and socialize this issue." She pointed to the upcoming national events and a protest in Washington, D.C., March 21 as something farm families should attend.

Mike Galati is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 174.



Militant/Ruth Robinett

Dairy farmers' protest in La Fargeville, New York, on February 1. Another sign read, "Processors: enough is enough — no more stealing our milk." On that day, dairy farmers organized protests at 10 different sites in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and New York.

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Atlanta event sends off fact-finding tour of farmers to Cuba

BY PAUL CORNISH

ATLANTA—"By tomorrow afternoon six farmers will be in Havana on their fact-finding trip to Cuba," said Susan Stone, a leader of the Atlanta Network on Cuba at a February 11 send-off event. "This is a historic trip in many, many ways and who knows what will come of this great idea. But one important accomplishment, before the farmers even leave for Cuba, is that the Atlanta Network on Cuba has been granted a license for the trip."

The U.S. government prevents its citizens from freely traveling to Cuba as part of its attempt to isolate and overturn the Cuban revolution. Taking advantage of the fact that a large number of officials of various agricultural companies have been granted the right to travel to Cuba, the Atlanta Network on Cuba applied to the Secretary of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control last month and was granted a license. In addition, the Institute for Food and Development Policy, also known as Food First, made their license available after learning about the farmer's trip.

"We may be one of the first solidarity organizations to get a license, but we don't want to be the only one," said Stone. The Atlanta Network on Cuba sought the help of Georgia Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney in obtaining the license to travel. Pledging McKinney's ongoing support, her aide Jocco Baccus told the meeting, "if we've helped to open the door to travel to Cuba, that's great. Now we must help keep the door open."

The six farmers who are making the trip have been part of the struggles against farm foreclosures, the devastating effects of the drop in prices paid to farmers for their products, and the racist and sexist discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They have been invited by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) of Cuba, which has planned a full itinerary for the one-week trip.

Eddie Slaughter, a farmer from Buena Vista, Georgia, and the national vice-president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association cochaired the meeting. "The harsh conditions in America forced us to look to Cuba," he explained.

"I'm looking, searching for answers, for a method to bring some insight to the injustices farmers are faced with here," added Willie Head, a vegetable farmer from Pavo, Georgia. "Under the Democrats and the Republicans, people of color and the poor are mistreated. The United States Department of Agriculture is the last plantation—they have proven this to us. We don't matter to them. Change comes in a capitalist society through grassroots struggle."

Supporters of the farmers' trip attended the meeting from as far away as Miami, where they organized a car caravan to Tampa to pick up an activists from the Cuba Vive group. From there they drove to Plant City to pick up Karl Butts, a Florida farmer who

is a member of the delegation. Anna Marie Codario, a New Jersey farmer in the delegation, was en route to Atlanta and unable to attend the meeting. Other participants in the farmers' trip to Cuba include members of the Atlanta Network on Cuba, Bernardo Gómez, and James Harris, who also attended the send-off rally.

Butts told the meeting what it is like to be a working farmer today. "In gambling terms, each year is a gut-wrenching crap shoot. Commodity prices don't rise at the same rate as inputs, and inputs are the only way a farmer here has to produce more. We want to see what Cuba did with their revolution, in which peasants and landless workers were the backbone of the revolution."

Forty-five people attended the event, which was held at Emory University. Many of the participants were young. A group of four students from the Political Science Department of Clark/Atlanta University donated aspirins and pencils in a bag filled to the brim. Other youth included a student at the University of Georgia in Athens, who is also a farmer from Talking Rock, Georgia; two students from Emory University; a high school student from Tuscaloosa, Alabama; and several young women workers.

Gladys Williams, a farmer from Quitman, Georgia, made a pitch to the youth at the meeting. "Don't just be inspired by



Militant/Linda Joyce

Farmers stand at airport, ready to embark on fact-finding tour to Cuba. From left to right: Eddie Slaughter, Willie Head, Gladys Williams, Lee Dobbins, Karl Butts, and Anna Marie Codario. "I'm looking, searching for answers, for a method to bring some insight to the injustices farmers are faced with here," said Head.

us, be just like us. Go to Cuba." Williams held up a brochure from the 12th Continental Latin-American and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE) conference, which will be held in Havana, Cuba, April 1-4.

Overall, the Atlanta Network on Cuba raised more than \$5,000 for this project. Stone singled out for special note a \$363 check from the People's Tribunal, a Valdosta, Georgia, antipolice brutality organization.

Upon their return, the farmers have been scheduled to speak at several college cam-

pus, including Spelman College and Clark/Atlanta University in Atlanta, and Iowa State University of Science and Technology. They will also be writing articles for several newspapers, including the *Greene County Democrat*, in Eutaw, Alabama; the *Iguana*, in Gainesville, Florida; the *Buena Times* in Richland, New Jersey; and the *Post* in Valdosta, Georgia.

Paul Cornish is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Atlanta.

Truckers shut port to protest gas hikes

Continued from front page

from the Teamsters Port Division spoke from the platform and made a big push to sign up truckers into the union. Most drivers there filled out union cards. At one point some of the leaders of the rally allowed the manager of the Port of Newark and Elizabeth to speak. He appealed to the protesters to work together with him to resolve the issues without disruption of port commerce.

He was drowned out by a chant of, "No work!" and he was unable to continue. Hector, one of the organizers of the actions, responded, "No work today, no work Monday, no work Tuesday; no work until we get this fixed and we get some respect," which brought cheers from the protesters. Many workers at the rally carried handmade signs. One trucker held up two signs: one reading, "Slavery is over," and the other, "We want a union!"

The main issue fueling the protests has been a dramatic increase in the price of diesel fuel over the last 12 months. Most of the truck drivers own their own truck and have to pay for this increase out of their pockets. Although the truckers are owners of their rigs, most are employed by a handful of brokers who are paid by the big shipping companies, such as Sealand, Maersk, and Maher, to contract truckers to haul their containers.

Many truckers pointed to the need to in-

crease rates paid to drivers to compensate for increased fuel costs. One sign carried at the rally called on the governor of New Jersey to step in to control rising fuel prices.

Some of the other issues involved in the fight include demands to end the harassment of truckers by the Department of Transportation and the various port, state, and local police agencies. A number of truckers reported being routinely pulled over by the police and ticketed for minor infractions. Truck drivers were also angered over having to sit long hours outside shipping terminals without pay, waiting to pick up or drop off their loads.

"Sometimes we work six to seven hours without pay. We can waste the whole day and not earn anything," said trucker Efram Garcia. Carlos Salmientos, 34 years old with two years as a trucker, added, "And if you don't speak English, they make you wait longer. It's like they have an English-only policy."

A majority of the truckers at the rally were Spanish-speaking, although a layer of Caribbean and U.S.-born Blacks also attended.

A leaflet handed out at the rally by the Teamsters called for health care and pension benefits for truckers, as well as increased safety provisions to protect drivers and the public.

Workers met again Sunday to discuss the next steps in their fight, and plan to continue their convoy on Monday.

Carlos Rivera, 40 years old and a trucker for 20 years, said, "There's hundreds of us here, and together we're going to be able to change something. I was just waiting for the time when someone would do something like this so I could be part of it." Roberto Ferreira, also 40 years old and a trucker for seven years, added, "Next, we'll get the railroads to join us."



BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—Nearly 60 tractor-trailers ringed the State House in Providence, Rhode Island, the morning of February 9. After meeting with Rhode Island governor Lincoln Almond, the independent truckers went to Boston in a convoy and sent a delegation to the Massachusetts State House to talk with officials.

The truckers from Massachusetts and Rhode Island are demanding the state governments help them in the face of skyrocketing diesel fuel prices. "The price is sky-high," explained Louie Medicos, from Rehoboth, Massachusetts, who has been

driving for 13 years. "You can't afford to run a truck."

"I parked my truck last week," said Ray Mello, a trucker from Portsmouth, Rhode Island, explaining he could no longer afford operating costs. Many truckers are locked into contracts setting how much they can receive for each shipment and are expected to absorb fuel price increases.

Like many of the other independent truckers involved in the protest, Mello hauls salt this time of year. The salt comes into the Boston port and is shipped throughout New England by the truckers for use in salting highways and streets during snowstorms.

Jason Mello, who graduated from high school last year and works for his father, came to the protests with his friend. The young Mello explained how the protests got organized. "A couple days ago my dad and a couple guys got talking. There was a meeting of 25 truckers last night and they planned this action today."

In Massachusetts, the trucker delegation met with Gov. Paul Cellucci's senior aides and House minority leader Francis Marini. The state representative explained that he believes the price increase is due to a fuel shortage in Massachusetts, but the truckers disagreed. "They have the fuel. If I want to fill my tank, I can. The fuel is there. It just costs too much," explained Steve Schobanian, owner of Steve's Express trucking in Seekonk, Massachusetts.

In a short report-back to the truckers who waited outside the Massachusetts State House, the truckers who met with legislators and the governor's aides said officials indicated they would file a bill that would stop for 30 days the collection of the state's 21-cent a gallon excise tax on diesel fuel. They also reported there was an agreement to meet again next week to discuss further measures that could be taken.

Jim O'Connell, from Warwick, Rhode Island, said as the truckers were leaving Boston, "We're not going to stop here. We have to do what we have to do to get the prices down."

The independent truckers' fight against high fuel costs comes at the same time as home heating oil prices are rising rapidly. One year ago in New England the retail price for a gallon of heating oil was 79 cents; today it is \$2.04. This has especially affected low income families and households on fixed incomes.

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

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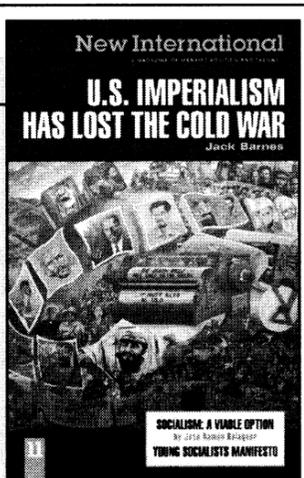
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Miner interested in 'socialism, Cuba, farmers'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"Our campaign with *Capitalism's World Disorder* in 2000 started off with a bang at a portal sale," writes Pete Seidman. He and another member of the steelworkers union in Philadelphia "went out last Friday to the anthracite mining area in the eastern part of the state. We sold six copies of the *Militant*—some to miners, others to workers from another plant, and to truck drivers.

"One miner looked the paper over on his way out. 'So if you're against both the Democrats and Republicans, do you run candidates of your own?' he asked." The two steelworkers explained that the Socialist Workers Party runs working-class candidates in opposition to the representatives of big business.

"He was interested in why we thought socialism would work, Cuba, farmers, and our explanation of the degeneration of the Soviet Union," reported Seidman. "He looked over the half dozen Pathfinder books and we talked about *Capitalism's World Disorder*."

Seidman's report shows how promoting *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* helps deepen political discussions among union members and other fighters. In the book, SWP national secretary Jack Barnes discusses the major political turning points of the 1990s. He describes the deep capitalist crisis that lies underneath those events, and the anticapitalist struggles by working people that point the way forward for humanity.

If the experiences of the successful campaign with the book in the months of 1999 are a gauge, the portal sale will have opened the door to more opportunities. The miner in Pennsylvania will probably want to discuss what he reads, and will have ideas about people who may want to read the book, and stores and libraries that may want to buy it. Those are the different elements of the campaign, which has been extended to March 15.

Doug Jenness writes from Minnesota that socialists there sold a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to a student attending a meetings organized by the Minnesota Farmers Union to build support for a national rally planned for March 21 in Washington, D.C. They went to three such events, attended by close to 200 people. "We sold 16 single copies of the *Militant*, and one introductory subscription to the paper," reports Jenness.

The campaign with *Capitalism's World Disorder* will lead into a two-month drive to sell introductory subscriptions to the socialist periodicals the *Militant* and

Perspectiva Mundial. Stefanie Trice reports from New Jersey that she got an early start on this effort at the February 11 rally by truck drivers reported on the front page.

"In an hour's time four truckers bought subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*—two for the three-month introductory period and two for six months—and one bought a *Militant* subscription. Truckers who asked about the paper were told by the new subscribers that they should also sign up. In this way, the four *PM* subscriptions were sold within about 15 minutes.

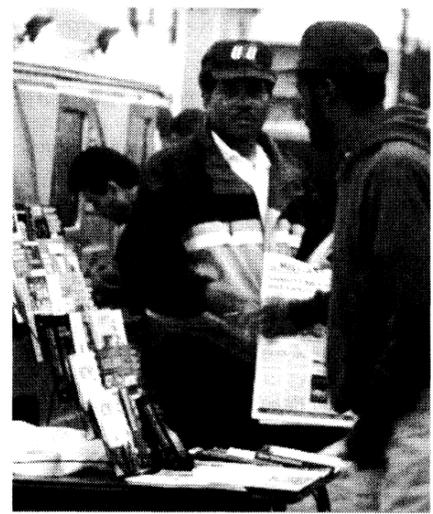
"Afterwards, with copies of the magazine in hand, the group of new subscribers—including one from Ecuador, one from Mexico, and one from Colombia—continued discussion with me about the paper, the demise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, and developments in the class struggle today," writes Trice. One is making plans to get the newly published *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*—the Spanish edition of

Capitalism's World Disorder.

"These workers were particularly interested in the fact the paper covers struggles like their own and the fight by dockworkers in South Carolina," she said.

Miami dockworkers are also interested in the socialist press, reports Rachele Fruit from Florida. "We sold 20 copies of the *Militant* at the hiring hall of the International Longshoremen's Association here on February 12." Workers snapped up both issues that reported on the fight by dockworkers in Charleston. "Several workers told us that the union is organizing buses to the rally to defend affirmative action in Tallahassee on March 7."

With one month to go in the campaign, socialist workers and youth should be stepping up their efforts. The *Militant* welcomes reports from teams organized to sell the book, and to place it in libraries and stores. Union members should inform the *Militant* of the goals they adopt for the campaign.



Militant/Carole Lesnick
Al Duncan (left) selling Pathfinder books and the *Militant* at docks in California.

Mexico protesters: 'Release jailed strikers'

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Calls of "Freedom for political prisoners!" and "The struggle continues!" peppered the crowd as more than 16,000 students, workers, and others took to the streets February 9, paralyzing the center of Mexico City, demanding the immediate release of more than 700 National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) strikers detained following a February 6 police raid of the campus.

That same day workers at the National Pedagogical University (UPN) and the Autonomous Metropolitan University also held a 12-hour strike. "We demand the unconditional release of the jailed students," read one sign posted at UPN.

Nearly 10 months ago, students—with some staff and employees—shut down and occupied the campus to oppose a massive government-initiated tuition hike. The student-led strike that began last April quickly pushed back Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo's plan to raise tuition fees from a few Mexican pesos to US\$140.

The strike affected more than 320,000 who work and/or study at UNAM. The strikers enjoyed a level of popular support. The superficial two-cent tuition made it possible for children of workers and peasants in Mexico and abroad to attend.

The Zedillo government made its move on the students following an international media campaign portraying them as unreasonable as its leadership made additional



Militant/Carole Lesnick
February protest in Los Angeles demands release of UNAM strikers in Mexico.

demands. This, combined with some lessening of support as some layers of students thought the campus should be reopened, laid the groundwork for the repressive measures.

On February 1, some 200 people—initially portrayed in the big business media as students—marched into a UNAM pre-university school. The next day, the *New York Times* and newspapers in Mexico turned reality on its head, describing the anti-strike action as a "peaceful protest" that was attacked by the strikers.

The government used the altercation as a pretext to send in federal cops who arrested

and jailed 156 strikers on felony and misdemeanor charges, some carrying 40-year sentences upon conviction.

On February 3, the *Times* ran a follow-up article correcting its earlier account. The "group opposed to the strike had not been peaceful.... The anti-strike faction forced its way through the front gates, roused a handful of strikers off the school grounds and then hurled stones at strikers who began to gather in the street." Furthermore, the article states, "Of 200 people in the anti-strike faction, only a small number were students or administrators from the preparatory school."

Zedillo ordered a 2,262-strong squad of cops to raid the campus February 6 at dawn to retake UNAM. Sending police onto a campus is virtually unheard of in Mexico in several decades.

UNAM president Ramón de la Fuente, reacting to this sentiment, urged the government to grant amnesty to all those not accused of violent crimes. By February 8, 579 strikers were released without charges. Fifty-two participants in the student occupation of UNAM were denied bail, including strike leaders Alejandro Echavarría and Alberto Pacheco, while about 200 others remain in jail, some of whom are not charged with any crime.

Protests to demand freedom for these fighters continue and have spilled over the border into the United States, as well as other countries.

FBI drops investigation of Crown workers

BY DEAN COOK

PASADENA, Texas—The Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union announced in an official press release February 14 that the FBI has dropped its investigation of union members locked-out by Crown Central Petroleum. The FBI was acting on charges of sabotage.

In February 1996 Crown locked 252 workers out of its refinery here during heated contract negotiations. The workers contend the charges of sabotage were nothing more than the company's attempt to force the workers to accept a concessionary contract.

The press release quotes Joe Campbell, a local union official, saying, "The dropping of the FBI investigation exonerates" the workers. "We are also confident that Crown's phony civil lawsuit will go nowhere due to lack of evidence."

The sabotage charges were leveled against the workers in 1996. Crown filed a civil lawsuit against the local union and 15 of its members two years later, repeating the same charges. The judge and Crown's lawyers have been under-terred by their lack of evidence or the FBI's decision to drop the case.

Dean Cook is a locked-out Crown worker.

Support grows for affirmative action rally

Continued from front page

Municipal Employees; and others are also actively building the protest.

Two thousand students from Florida A&M University protested this attack on affirmative action on February 8, and students from the Miami area are filling buses for the March 7 action. Students formed a youth committee at the February 14 planning meeting with student activists from Florida International University, Miami-Dade Community College, University of Miami, and other campuses.

The Florida Board of Regents will meet in Orlando on February 17 to vote on the "Talented 20" portion of the executive order. The regents, who oversee Florida's 10 public universities, are expected to approve the plan, which eliminates race and ethnicity as undergraduate admissions factors and claims to guarantee the top 20 percent of each public high school's graduating class a slot at one of those universities. The meeting has been moved to a larger location in anticipation of a crowd protesting the plan.

Local commentators have remarked that protesting is either futile or a dead end. Noted *Miami Herald* Black columnist Robert Steinback remarked in a February 13 column that while protesters were "fighting a noble fight" their "efforts won't matter." Asserting that "affirmative action in Florida is as good as dead," Steinback continues, "One Florida is a better alternative than ending affirmative action." Steinback encourages readers to give up the "lost cause" of

fighting for affirmative action and "expect to go it alone" by getting an education, learning computer skills, seeking entrepreneurial opportunities, and learning about investing.

Speaking as a part of a panel at a roundtable on affirmative action held at Miami-Dade Community College Wolfson campus, Rollande Girard, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami-Dade County, offered a different perspective. "There is not 'One Florida' but two Floridas—that of the majority of workers and farmers and the other of the bosses who seek to divide us to advance their drive for

profits. The fight for affirmative action is essential to keep the capitalists from tearing our class apart and to help us prepare for future struggles leading to the fight for a socialist society based on human solidarity not profits."

Girard urged those present to build and attend the March 7 action. "Affirmative action was won through the fights and mobilizations of working people and mobilizations are needed to defend and extend it," she said.

For more information on the March 7 action call (305) 623-3000, extension 111; (850) 877-0307; or view the web site at www.marchontallahassee.com.

Protest condemns London

Continued from front page
British forces.

For example, London's move came on the eve of a February 12 meeting of the UUP. Last fall, in order to win agreement to join the executive of the assembly from the increasingly divided party, UUP leader David Trimble submitted a postdated resignation letter to be effected if the IRA had not laid out plans to surrender its weapons. The letter was dated February 12.

This is why Adams puts the blame on London, saying it has been "driven by a unilateral unionist demand and deadline" and that "there is a deep sense of anger and frustration at the way in which the UUP has

dictated events and effectively set aside the spirit and the letter of the Good Friday agreement."

Adams went on to explain how the British government had chosen to ignore an initiative by the IRA in the hours before he announced the suspension of the assembly. The IRA offered a plan to "put its arms beyond use," in the "context of the removal of the causes of the conflict."

Since the British-orchestrated suspension of the assembly, the UUP has puffed up its chest, insisting that the body will not reconvene until the IRA has established the time, place, and method of surrendering its weapons.

'A book needed by fighters of all ages'

Pathfinder editor speaks at Havana event on Che Guevara's example for today

The following is the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, at the meeting to celebrate the publication of *Che Guevara habla a la juventud* and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, held February 11 as one of the events organized in conjunction with the Havana Book Fair. A news article on that book launching appears on the facing page. Waters is the editor of the book, published simultaneously in English and Spanish, and authored its introduction. Her remarks are copyright © 2000 by Pathfinder Press and are reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

On behalf of Pathfinder, I want to thank Casa Editora Abril for the collaboration that made possible the publication of *Che Guevara habla a la juventud* and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*.

I also want to thank compañera Aleida March, the director of Che's Personal Archive, and the many comrades throughout the leadership of the UJC [Union of Young Communists] whose support and enthusiasm for this magnificent collection of Che's speeches contributed to the quality of the book.

Pathfinder together with Editora Abril decided to publish this collection now for one reason: *because it is needed*.

Revolutionary-minded youth in both the United States and Cuba need Che's help today. You, better than I, know how relevant Che's ideas and example are for young people in Cuba. The valuable preface written by compañero Armando Hart, and the presentation by compañero Hassán Pérez here this evening, express this well.

I want only to add a few words on the importance of this book for a new generation of young people in the United States—and elsewhere outside Cuba as well.

Brutal capitalist offensive

It is not evident from the televised "factoids" spread around the world by the mass media of the U.S. rulers, nor reflected in what they consider "news," but profound changes are beginning to mark struggles by working people in the United States today. The brutal economic offensive ravaging the lives and futures of millions throughout Latin America and the rest of the imperialist-dominated Third World has a parallel course within the United States. More important, there is also a proletarian resistance and response gestating there.

- The capitalist economic boom that has marked much of the last 18 years has brought with it a deadly intensification of labor, threatening life and limb for millions of workers. A working day of 10 or 12 hours, while not the average, is increasingly common in the United States today.

- The standard of living of most working families, including those in the countryside, has been maintained only by more mem-



Granma

Politicizing every aspect of your daily work is road to becoming more deeply political yourself, Guevara told young Communists when he spoke at May 9, 1964 seminar at Ministry of Industry, above.

bers of the family, including young people, entering the labor market, and often working more than one job. Despite that, millions are worse off today than they were two decades ago. Until the end of the 1990s, real wages were still lower for the average worker in the United States than they were in 1973. The income of the bottom 20 percent of wage earners actually fell by 6 percent over the past 20 years.

- Declining commodity prices are driving small family farmers off their land at an accelerated rate, as they fall victim to the world reality of prices of production working through the capitalist market. More and more farmers become debt slaves at the mercy of the banks and giant agricultural monopolies.

- The system of social security, won by working-class struggles in the 1930s and through the mass civil rights battles of Blacks in the 1960s, is being weakened and restricted. We will see the devastating consequences with the next economic downturn in the capitalist economy, as millions in the United States will then feel they are falling off a cliff with no support.

- Racist, anti-immigrant, and semifascist currents are gaining ground among certain middle-class layers, fearful of their future. And policy divisions within the ruling class more often surface indirectly, publicly, and crudely—and with unpredictable consequences—as we saw around the impeachment and trial of William Clinton a year ago.

Proletarian resistance

Under these conditions, a new mood of resistance and struggle is developing among workers and farmers, and a new vanguard is emerging. Strikes more often end in a standoff, not a defeat. A wave of strikes that

end in real victories is still to come. But a small layer of workers emerge from more and more fights, regardless of the outcome, with increased confidence.

These working people, tested in struggle, are beginning to know and trust each other, to extend a hand of solidarity from one struggle to the next. They are weaving connections and thinking about the depth and common roots of the crisis they face. They are coming together, to read, to discuss, to

generation of young people are awakening to political consciousness and action, being drawn towards these struggles, choosing the social forces they will side with, and looking for answers to explain the world in which we live. Just as important, they are looking for examples of how to fight back—successfully—against the most powerful ruling class the oppressed and exploited of the world have ever had to take on and defeat.

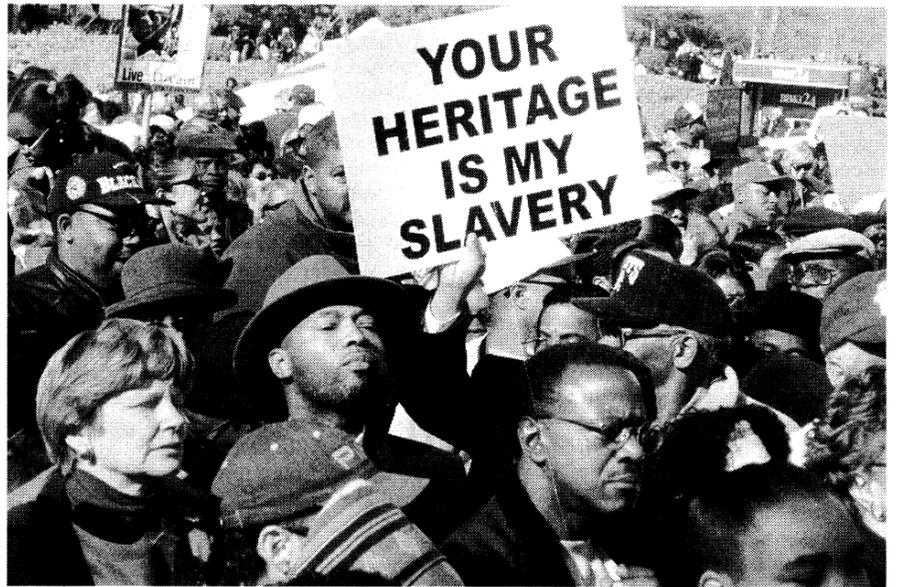
Cuban revolution a beacon

In this context the example of the Cuban revolution stands like a beacon. And despite all the ways Che's detractors and misrepresenters have tried to reduce him to a saint-like image on a T-shirt or a poster, Che Guevara is known throughout the world as a representative of this powerful revolution that for more than 40 years has faced down Yankee imperialism.

As they search for answers and an effective course of struggle, revolutionary-minded youth in the United States—and vanguard fighters of all ages—need Che's help.

They need Che's scientific precision to help them learn to analyze the tendencies and laws of motion of capital underlying the complex and fast-moving political events that mark the unfolding class struggle in this changing world.

They need Che's Marxism—the Marxism of Marx and Engels and Lenin. The Marxism of the *Communist Manifesto*, of *Capital*, of Lenin's *Imperialism and What Is To Be Done*—the Marxism that is not a set of preconceived ideas or formulas, set down in manuals, but the generalization of the line of march of a class fighting to achieve its



Militant/Floyd Fowler

Evidence of new rise in resistance among working people, some 50,000 people marched in Columbia, South Carolina, January 17 demanding state government stop flying Confederate battle flag from atop capitol building.

search for allies, and to look for ways forward. And this is new.

The new confidence being born was evidenced graphically less than a month ago in Columbia, South Carolina. On the holiday honoring the birthday of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., workers, farmers, and youth from high schools and university campuses across the South gathered 50,000 strong in that city to demand that the battle flag of the old Southern slavocracy, which flies over the capitol building of that state, come down. That flag is the symbol of racist resistance to, and rightist reaction against, the advances won by Black people in the United States these last decades, and to the social weight of the Black struggle in initiating further progress.

It was the largest demonstration ever to take place in the U.S. South. The mood was jubilant and determined.

Barely a few days after this march, a battle occurred in the port of Charleston, also in the state of South Carolina. Hundreds of dockworkers, Black and white, among whom were many who had participated in the Columbia demonstration, mobilized on the wharfs to defend their union and prevent the bosses from using scab labor. When they were attacked by some 600 anti-riot police they defended themselves energetically.

As this new mood of struggle develops, a

emancipation and open the road forward for all the oppressed peoples of the world, for all humanity.

They need Che's deeply felt hatred for the coarseness and hypocrisy of the imperialist rulers, his revulsion against their brutal indifference to all human life, including the life of the most innocent child, if it serves their needs.

They need Che's discipline—and the satisfaction he gained from hard work and rigorous study; the responsibility he felt for his own actions and the consequences they had for his co-combatants, to whom Che was so loyal.

They need Che's cultural breadth, his historical perception as a citizen of the world, his selflessness as a citizen of time. They need the example of his lifelong effort to acquire this perspective.

They need Che's courage. His determination to fight in the front ranks of whatever struggle demanded his modest efforts.

They need Che's moral fearlessness, his understanding that morality is a class question, that the moral values of the working class are the negation of bourgeois domination, with all its obfuscating fetishes, hypocrisy, selfishness, and brutality. They need Che's conviction that communists must fight to take that terrain—the moral high ground—from the rulers as well.

Continued on Page 7

From Pathfinder

Che Guevara Talks to Young People

Now available in
English and
Spanish



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"We are attacked a great deal because of what we are. But we are attacked much, much more because we show to every nation of the Americas what it's possible to be. What's important for imperialism—much more than Cuba's nickel mines or sugar mills, or Venezuela's oil, or Mexico's cotton, or Chile's copper, of Argentina's cattle, or Paraguay's grasslands, or Brazil's coffee—is the totality of these raw materials upon which the monopolies feed."

—Che Guevara, July 28, 1960

Special offer \$11 with Pathfinder Readers Club membership (regular price \$14.95)

Cuba book fair event

Continued from front page

be especially valuable to readers who are new to Che and the Cuban revolution. The book was compiled and edited with the collaboration of Editora Abril.

The book fair, held February 9–15, was an important cultural event in Cuba. The record attendance—more than 130,000 people this year—was an indicator of the thirst for books, culture, and political debate today among working people, students, and other layers of the population in this country.

Meetings to launch a wide variety of books were held throughout the fair, from collections of writings by Cuban essayist and poet Cintio Vitier, to *Barbarroja*, a selection of interviews and speeches by Cuban revolutionary leader Manuel Piñeiro.

Pathfinder introduced three new titles at this year's international Havana fair: *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack

finder Press.

The director of Editora Abril opened the meeting by acknowledging the presence of prominent individuals in the audience who had contributed to the newly published collection of Guevara's speeches. They included Armando Hart, Cuba's longtime minister of culture who is today director of the Office of the José Martí Program; and Aleida March Guevara, director of Che's Personal Archive, who helped in the selection of speeches by Che and the photos, and contributed other valuable suggestions.

Also present were other members of the Guevara family, including daughter Aleida Guevara and numerous grandchildren, a broad delegation of the FEU leadership, and many young people eager to buy copies of the book, which went on sale at the end of the meeting.

'Produced with professionalism'

In his brief comments, Sánchez explained that the idea for *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* was born out of discussions between Pathfinder and Abril at the 1998 Havana Book Fair. In the past several months, he noted, both publishing houses found themselves devoting a substantial effort to produce the kind of book that was needed, from deciding which of Guevara's many relevant speeches to include, to the careful editing and copyediting that went into every aspect of the book.

"We have worked intensely and with the professionalism that is characteristic of Pathfinder," he said. This required detailed collaboration back and forth between Havana and New York by E-mail, he noted, pointing to the advances in technology that made it possible to overcome numerous obstacles and complete the book in time for the Havana Book Fair.

The upcoming April conference in Havana of the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (OCLAE) gave the book added importance,



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Participants at launching of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. From left to right, Armando Hart, Cuba's longtime minister of culture, who wrote introduction to book; Aleida March Guevara, director of Che's Personal Archive; and Guevara's daughter, Aleida Guevara.

Sánchez said. "With the encouragement of FEU and the UJC, we suggested to the *compañeros* of Pathfinder that this book could be an important document to make available to the delegates at that conference," who will be coming from across the Americas.

This book by Che Guevara "is necessary as we enter the 21st century," Sánchez concluded.

Guevara applied ideas of Marxism

The FEU leadership has been a central organizer of the many activities in Cuba over the last months demanding the return of six-year-old Elián González from the United States. Hassán Pérez began his remarks by saying that "it was a pleasure for me to take some time, during this week of very intense work, to reread some of the speeches that appear in this book, especially the way they were put together. It allows you to study the views of Commander Ernesto Che Guevara and see how, using Marxism, he was able to talk to young people about the fundamental perspectives of the revolutionary process, which was deepening their consciousness, changing their values, and educating them."

He added, "I was struck by many things in reading these speeches." One was how Che Guevara "drew on the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin as well as the ideas and traditions of struggle of Cuba and Latin America" over the past century of anti-imperialist battles. And he offered a revolutionary perspective "not only for Cuba but for all of Latin America."

In his speeches, Pérez said, "Che explained that capitalist society is in crisis, and that, in contrast with those who thought that imperialism was consolidating itself, he believed that young people—if not that generation, then a subsequent one—would have the privilege of witnessing the end of a system that represents the interests of a minority and not those of the peoples of the world." This understanding of the weakening of imperialism worldwide is central to building revolutionary organizations capable of leading millions to overturn capitalist rule.

The FEU leader noted that, in following the basic course that Guevara and Fidel Castro fought for, "we have maintained the participation of the people—workers, peas-

Continued on Page 10



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Aleida March Guevara signs copies of new book at Havana event. Many young people were eager to buy copies of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, which went on sale after the meeting.

Barnes; *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*; and *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. These titles attracted particular interest at the Pathfinder booth, which also carried a broad selection of Pathfinder's more than 300 titles, containing the lessons for today of 150 years of struggle by the modern working-class movement.

The book fair was held at the historic San Carlos de la Cabaña fortress, where Guevara established the headquarters of his Rebel Army column after the fall of the Batista military dictatorship in January 1959. The event to launch *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* took place in the building that served as Guevara's command post. It is now a museum that, with an abundance of historic photos, depicts his role in the Cuban revolutionary movement and the early years of the revolutionary government.

Some 60 people crowded into the hall for the meeting, which was addressed by Sánchez; Hassán Pérez, president of the Federation of University Students (FEU); and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Path-

U.S. farmers meet with Cuban farmers group

BY JAMES HARRIS

HAVANA—"We are here because we have no choice but to learn how to fight, and we want to learn how to fight from those who know how to fight," Eddie Slaughter told an official of the small farmers organization here.

"You have been fighting the U.S. government for 40 years," the visiting Georgia farmer continued. "You have a lot of experience."

Slaughter was one of six farmers who landed at José Martí International Airport here February 12, wearing colorful T-shirts inscribed with the words "Farmer to Farmer: US Farmers Trip to Cuba."

At the initial orientation meeting for the

tour, Slaughter and the others had a chance to explain to Armando Ramas, the head of International Relations for Asociación Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños (ANAP) the reason that working farmers from the United States had come to Cuba. ANAP is the organization of small farmers here.

Ramas responded that "this is a historic visit. We have relations with other U.S. organizations but not with the deep points you have projected. Not with the same ideological point of view. This is the first time we have gotten U.S. farmers who have expressed a willingness to fight together with us for the land and social justice. This is a moment that is big in history."

The delegation is made up of six farmers from Georgia, Florida, and New Jersey as well as two activists in the Atlanta Network on Cuba, which played a major role in organizing the trip (see article on page 4).

Over the next two days the delegation visited several different types of farming cooperatives and spoke with the participants. The farmers were struck by the difference between what they have been told about Cuba and the reality that they have seen—especially the openness and friend-

liness of the Cuban people to visitors from the United States.

Anna Marie Codario, a teacher and small farmer, said, "This has been the greatest learning experience of my life. People kept telling me that the Cuban people would be hostile and that I would have trouble from the minute I got off the plane. This is not true. The Cuban people have been open and friendly, just as I thought they would be."

"I am mostly impressed with the solidarity with these farmers and their strong commitment to their system," said Karl Butts. "They are not isolated like we are with nobody to fall back on but ourselves. If we are sick the field doesn't get plowed, the crops don't get picked, sprayed, fertilized, or watered, and worst of all, when your income falls short of your bills, you are really by yourself. It's not like that here. You are never isolated and forced to go it alone."

Gladys Williams said, "I am impressed with the way of life in Cuba. There aren't people with guns standing around telling people what to do and where to go like some people said there would be. We have been misled and lied to for a long time but now I am here and can see Cuba for myself."

Speech on Che Guevara

Continued from Page 6

They need Che's political depth, his constant striving to place all the petty frustrations of daily life and struggle, as well as the deepest challenges of transforming the economic and social foundations of society, in the broadest world political context—to see the present as history. They need to "politicize the ministry," as Che told the UJC cadres in one of the talks in this collection, to politicize every aspect of their work, as the only way to become more deeply political themselves.

They need Che's profound—and profoundly Marxist—understanding of the transformation of human beings as they struggle and work together to transform the world.

And, not least of all, they need Che's sense of humor, his joy and spontaneity, his love of life and struggle.

All these qualities permeate the pages of

this magnificent book, in which Che speaks as an equal to the youth of Cuba and the world, challenging them to rise to the level of revolutionary activity and scientific thought necessary to enable working people to organize to confront and resolve the historic contradictions of capitalism threatening the future of all humanity.

That is why *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* will be so valuable for the young generation of politicizing young people in the United States who will be buying, reading, studying, and distributing it to others in both English and Spanish.

It will bring the actions and understanding of young people in both Cuba and the United States closer together. It is to them and their future victorious battles—imbued with the example of Che and the other men and women who have made, and are making, the Cuban revolution—that this book is dedicated.

BOOKS FOR CUBA FUND

The great bulk of the Pathfinder titles taken to the Havana Book Fair will, at the end of the fair, be donated to a variety of Cuban institutions. These range from neighborhood and factory libraries to university collections, where the books will remain permanently available.

This involves a substantial expense—more than \$6,000 including shipping—made possible by supporters of Pathfinder around the world. Your generous contribution is needed now.

Please send your check or money order to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, payable to the Militant and earmarked 'Books for Cuba Fund.'

NATO troops in Kosova kill one, arrest 46

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The U.S.-led NATO occupation force in Kosova (KFOR) deployed tanks, armored personnel carriers, and helicopters as soldiers went door-to-door in Mitrovica on February 14. Troops from Denmark, the United Kingdom, France, and Italy were involved. French forces killed one man of Albanian origin and arrested 46 people, 45 of them Albanians.

"The robust response of KFOR soldiers is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to our determination to protect our forces," said Lord Robertson, the secretary-general of NATO. "You may well see more arrests in the following days," said Mario Morcone, the United Nations administrator in this industrial city in the northwest of Kosova. United Nations officials have brought in

foreign judges to try those arrested.

The repression followed a fire-fight that involved Albanian, Serbian, and KFOR forces in the city.

The UN Security Council established the KFOR "peace-enforcement force," as it is officially dubbed, in June of last year. The move followed NATO's air war against the workers state of Yugoslavia, which targeted the regime of Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade. That assault lasted 78 days and wreaked massive damage on industry, infrastructure, and housing in Serbia and Kosova. During the war, Serb paramilitary forces, as well as special military forces of the Milosevic regime, brutally expelled more than half of Kosova's Albanian population. Thousands of Kosova Serbs who disagreed with Belgrade's "ethnic cleansing" campaign fled as well.

Through the offensive Washington reinforced its dominance over its imperialist rivals in Europe—especially Paris and Berlin. The KFOR occupation force now numbers some 42,500 troops, with another 7,500 based in Macedonia, Albania, and Greece.

After the bombing campaign, Mitrovica was partitioned by the occupying forces. KFOR troops now patrol barricades at the bridge over the Ibar River, which forms a divide between 9,000 Serbs to the north and around 90,000 Albanians to the south.



During February, several people died in clashes involving forces from the two nationalities. An Albanian community in the Serb area has been the scene of much of the fighting. The mineral resources in the region where the city is located raise the stakes for all would-be exploiters. For example, Washington is pushing for the swift privatization of the rich Trepca mine. Serbian people living in Mitrovica staged protests on September 26 last year after NATO forces confiscated their weapons.

"There is only one KFOR," said Klaus Rehardt, the German general who commands this force. Tensions in the occupation force around the Mitrovica events be-

lied his words. Some 150 British troops of the Royal Green Jackets were shifted from central Kosova on February 10 to replace French troops on the Mitrovica bridge.

"I think it is widely understood," said a spokesperson for the British forces, "that the British have experience of patrolling urban areas and in dealing with civil unrest.... Most of our men have been in Northern Ireland in the not-too-distant past." The French and British command reportedly argued about the numbers to be assigned, a "hint perhaps of injured French pride," as the *New York Times* put it delicately.

Officers in the UN police force also claimed that the French troops had "walked off and left us" when they were forced to retreat in clashes with Serb residents of Mitrovica. One representative of the Albanian community said on February 14, in contrast, that the French KFOR troops "are as bad as the Serb soldiers."

The Green Jackets were shifted from the Multinational Brigade Center commanded by officers from London's armed forces. Other areas of the occupation are commanded by Italian, German, French, and U.S. officers. The events in Mitrovica show that these imperialist forces will clash more directly with working people in the region the longer the occupation—and partition—of Kosova lasts.

Farm meeting backs Rally for Rural America

BY RAY PARSONS

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oklahoma—At its 20th annual convention held here February 10–13, the American Agriculture Movement (AAM) voted to back a major farm protest March 21 in Washington, D.C. The Rally for Rural America is sponsored by the National Farmers Union and is being supported by the AFL-CIO.

The AAM convention brought together farmers from Texas, Oklahoma, and other Midwest and western states, and was also billed as a reunion of participants of the 1978 tractorcade protest in Washington, D.C. AAM leader David Senter stressed the importance of the upcoming action, saying "When you have unity of labor, environmentalists, and farmers you have power. We need to use this power. We need to make sure we get our message out, not some whitewash by the Department of Agriculture [USDA]."

Rudell Lee, a member of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) from Oklahoma, was invited to speak before the AAM convention. Lee explained that the fight of Black farmers against foreclosures and racist and sexist discrimination by the USDA continues in spite of a settlement being put into effect by the Clinton administration.

He invited AAM members to participate in a BFAA-sponsored protest February 28 at a hearing on the settlement in Washington, D.C. The event will be held at the Federal Court Building at Third Street and Constitution at 9:30 a.m. Lee received a warm response from the AAM activists, exchanging phone numbers to keep in closer contact.

Ray Parsons is a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Des Moines, Iowa.

CALENDAR

CONNECTICUT

Groton

Massive Rally—Peace for Vieques. In front of the Navy base in Groton. Car caravans will depart from New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and other states. Sat., March 4, 12:00 noon. For more information, call (860) 342-0512 or visit the web site: www.viequeslibre.org

FLORIDA

Tallahassee

Mass Demonstration in Support of Affirmative Action. Tues., March 7, 11:00 a.m. Assemble at the Capitol. Bus transportation available through Elite Bus Tours. Call (305) 757-9700 for reservations. \$30 per person. Airline transportation, group rates available through Great Adventure Travel (305) 858-4347.

OHIO

Mansfield

Join Locked-Out USWA Local 169 Members at a Noon Rally. Sat., March 25. Town Square. For more information, call Local 169, (419) 522-9375.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Rally for Rural America. Tues., March 21. Sponsored by the National Farmers Union.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

IOWA

Des Moines

Malcolm X, an American Revolutionary in the Worldwide Fight against Racism. Fri., Feb. 25.

The Radical Reconstruction Period and Farmers' Fight for Land and Justice Today. Fri., March 3.

All events to be held at 4582 NE 2nd Ave. Program: 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 573-3355.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

The Fight against Fascism Today—How to Answer Austria's Haider and the U.S.'s Buchanan. Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. Codman Square, 683 Washington St., Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2783.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Northern Ireland: Protest British Reimposition of Direct Rule. Speaker: John Sarge, mem-

ber of the United Auto Workers and Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 7414 Woodward (one block north of Grand Blvd.). Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Crisis in Public Schools: How Can Working People Win Quality, Equal Education? Panel with Nadine Vassallo, student, Masterman High School; Rebecca Arenson, Young Socialists. Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:00 p.m. 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks below South and 5th streets.) Tel: (215) 627-1237.

TEXAS

Houston

The Continuing Struggle for Hispanic Rights: Lessons from the La Raza Unida Party and Today's Struggles. Speaker: Tom Leonard. Also video show of excerpts from PBS "Chicano" series. Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Free-

way no. 380. Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 847-0704.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Legacy of Malcolm X: The Relevance of His Ideas for Youth and Fighting Workers Today. Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. 3541 14th St., N.W. (Eight blocks north of Columbia Heights metro stop). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 722-6221.

CANADA

Toronto

The Irish Freedom Struggle Today: No to London's Direct Rule of Northern Ireland! Fri., Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m. 851 Bloor St. West. Donation: \$5. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Workers' Resistance: The Only Answer to the Rightist Politics of Jörg Haider. Sat., Feb. 25, 7:00 p.m. 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$5. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

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MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 1569 Sherburne Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: TC6446325@cs.com

MISSOURI: St. Louis: Box 19166, 2910 Meramec Street. Zip 63118. Tel: (314) 924-

2500. Compuserve: MilPath167@cs.com

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

E-mail: 104216.2703@compuserve.com

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. E-mail: 102064.2642@compuserve.com;

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AUSTRALIA

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

E-mail: 106450.2216@compuserve.com

BRITAIN

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

E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. E-mail: 106462.327@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: 104614.2606@compuserve.com

Toronto: 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. E-mail: 103474.13@compuserve.com

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

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SWEDEN

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How filthy can they get?—After denying it for more than 50 years, the government is now in the process of admitting that countless workers have died, or are dying, of radiation exposure at its 14 nuclear weapons plants. Public hearings have been held at



Harry Ring

six of these, the most recent at the Hanford plant in Richland, Washington. Over the years, the nuke plant has been the town's major employer.

Defies comment—“My uncle worked at the T-plant. He died of cancer. My foreman died of cancer. My mother, who worked at Hanford, died at the age of 42 of cancer. My father died of emphysema, which I believe was because of his exposure to radiation. I've worked in areas where the people—I can't find one of them alive today—they're all dead of cancer.”—Charles Moore, who worked at the Hanford plant until his lungs were too damaged. He was fired for “lack of production.”

Sanitary Sam—In January, U.S. medical supply companies held their first Havana medical trade show since the trade embargo Washington imposed in the

early '60s. In granting the license, the Clinton administration, of course, imposed a few no-no's. Like, no medical supplies for non-Cubans who might pay in dollars. This, no doubt was to avoid contamination.

Sort of rhymes with 'moral'—A select group of lawyers specialize in “high end” divorce cases involving millions of dollars. (The lawyers' tabs alone run as high as \$500 an hour.) Observed one divorcee: “The fact that I spend \$50,000 a month on just nothing—some people would love to be earning that in a year. We kind of lose our perspective as to what is normal.”

Those 'few bad apples'—The Los Angeles police chief advised the city council to be prepared to shell out \$125 million in out-of-court settlements in more than 120 pending lawsuits by people framed up by Ramparts Division cops. He didn't speculate on what will happen when the revelations spread to the other division.

Cynical. Stupid, or both?—Last September, the *New York Times* reported “the gap between rich and poor has grown into an economic chasm so wide that this year the richest 2.7 million Americans, the top 1 percent, will have as many after-tax dollars to spend as the bottom 100 million. In January two economists wrote a joint

response. Most of it was largely literary flattery. But a snappy sentence summed up their reply: “So what?”

So what?—“Health gap widens for children of the poor”—*The Times*, London.

'Jobs for all'—The New York City welfare department has moved toward a meaningful employment program. The agency is recruiting welfare recipients to work at home as telephone psychics. One trainee insisted she's been a lifelong clairvoyant, but added a troubled note: “If I could get the lottery number, would I be working as a telephone psychic?”

Fascism — a weapon to maintain capitalist rule

The excerpt below is taken from the discussion period following “The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's ‘Culture War,’” a talk given at a New York City Militant Labor Forum on Nov. 7, 1992, four days after the U.S. presidential elections. The entire talk appears in the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY JACK BARNES

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

BARNES: The communist movement has written a great deal about “fascism, what it is and how to fight it,” to use the name of a very valuable pamphlet by Leon Trotsky that

from the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder*

is published by Pathfinder. But the person from whom I learned the most about fascism concretely was Farrell Dobbs. Farrell was the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party from 1953 until 1972, and in the 1930s was a central leader of the strikes and over-the-road organizing campaigns that built the Teamsters in the upper Midwest into a fighting industrial union movement. I learned from Farrell both directly, in the course of our work together for nearly a quarter century until his death in 1983, and from his four-volume series on the Teamsters struggles published by Pathfinder.

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

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

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

A tool to maintain capitalist rule

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

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

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

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

1. The March 28, 1992, talk by Jack Barnes, entitled “Buchananism: What It Is and How to Fight It,” was reported on in an article by Steve Clark in the *International Socialist Review* supplement to the April 10, 1992, issue of the *Militant*. Reprints of the supplement, including biographies of the SWP's 1992 presidential and vice-presidential candidates, were widely distributed over the next several months by supporters of the SWP campaign.
2. *Teamster Politics* (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), pp. 139-48.



Demonstration in Austria against the government formed there February 4 by traditional conservative Peoples Party and the Freedom Party of ultrarightist Jörg Haider.

ing for war, radical diatribes against capital went into rapid decline.

SWP leader Joseph Hansen wrote quite a bit about the experience of the working class with fascist movements in this century. He pointed out that when a fascist movement conquers, its character rapidly changes. The new government demobilizes many of the most radical sectors on which the movement rose to power, bloodily suppressing some of its own cadres if need be, and begins functioning basically as a military-police dictatorship. In mid-1934, a year after he was appointed chancellor, for example, Hitler disbanded the Storm Troopers—the “Brownshirts”—that he had mobilized for

more than a decade as the party's radical, street-fighting squads against the workers movement. He summarily executed their chief, Ernst Röhm, and murdered dozens of other leaders of the Nazis' longtime cadre.

The regimes that come to power on the back of fascist movements are capitalist governments. It is misleading to talk about “a fascist regime” for that reason. It is not something historically different in class terms from a capitalist regime.

The second part of this section, addressing how fascism is born out of the capitalist crisis, and how the labor movement can combat fascism, will be published next week.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 28, 1975

SAN FRANCISCO—Budget cuts by the school board have generated angry resistance among students, teachers, and parents here. Offers of charitable donations that have been made by local individuals will hardly be able to make up for an estimated \$4-million to cutbacks this year, and an estimated \$16-million budget deficit next year. “To assume these programs can continue on charity is idiotic...as well as irresponsible,” said one 15-year-old student, Katherine Cisinski.

About 75 students held a spirited picket line outside of the board of education meeting Feb. 11, chanting, “Education is our right!” and “Stop the cutbacks now!” Eric Harvison, one of the leaders of the action, told the board meeting, “We're not a charity. Education is a constitutional guarantee.” Leslee Clement from Lowell High added, “The school district is not a charitable organization. It is the responsibility of the government to take care of our needs.”

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

February 27, 1950

With magnificent endurance and courage, the 370,000 soft coal miners are holding out against two Taft-Hartley injunctions invoked by the Truman administration. They have defied the back-to-work injunction issued by Federal Judge Keech. At this writing, the United Mine Workers stands cited for civil and criminal “contempt,” facing the threat of ruinous fines and even imprisonment of its leaders. The workers are keeping the pits closed in the coldest part of the year. The operators are anxiously watching the winter days trickle past, and with them their best chances for profits.

And so Truman is being forced to consider more drastic and harsher measures. Shall he send troops? Bayonets can't dig coal. And the political cost of sending troops against American workers comes high.

His only other course, if hunger and injunctions fail to beat the miners down, is to seize the mines as was done three times in 1943 and again in 1946.

Back truckers and SPEEA

Protests by independent truck drivers against conditions that are pushing them into financial ruin deserve the support of the entire labor movement. Acts of solidarity by Teamsters and longshore unions to support their fight can be emulated wherever the action spreads.

Demonstrating their economic power by shutting down crucial operations in Florida ports, the drivers are forging organizations and looking for allies in the labor movement. While "independent trucker" might sound like a condition that separates them from the working class, the graphic descriptions by the truckers of the reality of their proletarian condition argues otherwise. Capitalism is stripping millions of all property in a relentless drive to squeeze the utmost out of the labor of human beings.

As with working farmers, the independent truckers face monopolies that, like vultures, peck away to get every last morsel they can. The truck drivers highlight the outrageous price gouging by an ever-smaller number of oil companies. This affects workers across the country as well, both at the gas pump and in the skyrocketing cost of heating oil this winter.

The big shipping and transportation companies are pressing to minimize labor costs, from crews on ships, to

dockworkers, to drivers and railroad workers who deliver and haul goods to and from the ports. The bosses benefit by keeping workers at each stage of this vital transportation process separate and divided. But this becomes harder once workers decide to fight.

Members of the Teamsters union, railroad workers, and Machinists are also setting an example of solidarity with the engineers and technicians at Boeing. Winning broader support among the industrial workers and their union, the International Association of Machinists (IAM), is key to pressing forward with this solid walkout by members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA). The bosses at Boeing count on being able to crank out planes and other goods despite the strike. Bringing the potential power of the IAM to bear will strengthen the struggle of both unions.

"We're starting to look like a union," said one technical worker on the picket line. For the Machinists members that is good news, and expanding the numbers of IAM members on the picket lines and at rallies is a first step to show the company they have to contend with a united workforce.

Defend affirmative action!

Students, unionists, and other working people in Florida are setting the pace in what is shaping up to be one of the largest demonstrations to defend affirmative action in years on March 7 in Tallahassee.

Rollande Girard, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami-Dade county, said at a roundtable discussion at a local community college that "affirmative action was won through the fights and mobilizations of working people and mobilizations are needed to defend and extend it." That fighting spirit and confidence in the power of the exploited and oppressed is gripping thousands across the state, who see a chance to strike a blow against the assault on affirmative action and democratic rights in general.

It should give inspiration to many to see the real face of the majority of the population in Florida stepping forward. Often portrayed as a right-wing haven, the fact is that millions of working people, African-Americans, Latinos, and other oppressed nationalities labor in mills, factories, and fields across the state. The fact that they can be actors in history, and not just acted upon, was lost on Governor Bush when he sought to "defend" them through his "One Florida" initiative against a drive to extend California's anti-affirmative action legislation to that state.

Much of the propaganda used to justify the elimination of affirmative action, as well as busing to desegregate schools, is that the United States has advanced so far that such measures are no longer needed in what is becoming a color-blind society.

It is true that massive battles of the civil rights movement and subsequent struggles against racist and sexist discrimination have pushed back the ability of the government and the corporations to openly carry out racist and sexist practices in hiring, promotion, educational opportunities, housing, and other aspects of daily life.

These victories tremendously strengthened the labor movement, making it harder for the bosses to pit worker against worker on the basis of the color of one's skin, sex, country of origin, or sexual preference.

But the reality of the workings of the capitalist system and the need of the multibillionaire rulers of the United States to perpetuate racism and sexism shows the lie to the proclamations of Democratic and Republican party politicians or pundits in the big business media. National oppression and the second-class status of women are fundamental to this class-divided society. They have been a pillar upon which the ruling families of America have built their power and wealth from the start.

Oppression reinforces exploitation and the social relations upon which it rests. Both directly in lower wages and indirectly in worse social conditions the capitalist class financially profits from race and sex discrimination. They also maintain their power and outmoded social system through their ideological rationalizations that, in the end, keep working people divided.

From President William Clinton on down the pious "helpmates of the downtrodden" offer their visions of one America. The reality is that every state institution, every corporation, every aspect of social and political life in capitalist society offered by them is infused with discrimination and daily affronts people of color and women especially.

The need for affirmative action does not start with a particular nationality, sex, or age group. It starts with the results of the workings of capitalist society. In every social indicator—wealth, income, hunger, average years in school, housing conditions, unemployment, access to health care—it is oppressed nationalities and women who come out on the bottom. This remains true despite the economic upturn. When a recession hits, the rule of "last hired, first fired" will come home with a vengeance.

Uniting the working class and preventing the capitalists and their institutions from tearing apart those who work and labor for a living is the aim of affirmative action. Building and joining the March 7 protest is one important way to push back the offensive to end affirmative action as well as the ideological underpinnings of this anti-working class drive.

Support Books for Cuba Fund

Coverage from this month's Havana Book Fair and the celebration of the publication of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* in Spanish and English gives all *Militant* readers more reason to help support the Books for Cuba Fund.

The fund makes possible the donations of books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder to libraries, institutions, unions and farmer organizations, factory bookshelves, and universities across Cuba. The latest donation was to the Foreign Language School of the Teachers Training Institute in Havana.

It is impossible for these libraries and institutions to get these invaluable works without the Books for Cuba Fund.

This is because of the financial constraints in Cuba flowing from the U.S. government's embargo, and the economic problems persisting from the sharp reduction in trade on favorable terms with the former Soviet Union—on top of the conditions resulting from hundreds of years of colonial and semicolonial domination by Spain and then the United States.

As Martín Koppel and Claudio Burgos report from Havana, the attendance at the book fair is "an indicator of the thirst for books, culture, and political debate today among working people, students, and other layers of the population in this country."

Pathfinder titles in English, Spanish, and Russian are

welcomed in Cuba by revolutionary fighters because they help expand access to the basic works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin, as well as Rosa Luxemburg, Leon Trotsky, and others. Pathfinder titles provide both current and historical information on a communist approach to developments in the United States and the world class struggle, and lessons for building a proletarian party.

Noting the political importance of the new Pathfinder title of Che's works, youth leaders in Cuba are planning to make the book available to delegates at the Latin American and Caribbean Students Congress in Havana this April. It is a good example of how Pathfinder makes a contribution toward the political education of a communist vanguard around the world.

Making a generous contribution to the Books for Cuba Fund can help this exchange and collaboration to continue, as working people and youth across our Americas deepen our common resistance to the economic crises, wars, and brutalities against humanity perpetuated by Washington and the declining imperialist system it heads. Out of those struggles will come a communist leadership capable of leading hundreds of millions in revolutionary struggle for a new society.

Please send your check or money order to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, payable to the Militant and earmarked 'Books for Cuba' fund.

Havana event launches Che book

Continued from Page 7

ants, intellectuals—in our revolution" and avoided "the road of bureaucratization."

Touching on a point made in the introduction by Waters, Pérez pointed out that "Che rejected the idea of a great, lone hero, an image associated with the ideas of capitalism" as opposed to the fact that revolutionary change "is the result of an entire people capable of analyzing things as they take part in a revolution."

Revolution is needed

The student leader cited one of his favorite speeches by Guevara, given to medical students and health workers in August 1960, which appears under the title, "To be a revolutionary doctor you must first make a revolution." Guevara explained how, from his own personal experiences, he had come to recognize the futility of a doctor, however noble his intentions, making an individual effort to change health conditions in countries subjected to imperialist domination. For the efforts of individuals to bear fruit, Guevara argued, "a social cure, that is, a revolution," was necessary, Pérez said.

Similarly, in a December 1959 speech at the Central University of Las Villas, Guevara insisted that as society was transformed by a deep-going revolution in Cuba, "the university could not remain on the sidelines of this social transformation" and that it must change so that its composition "is in its majority workers and peasants," not an elite preserve, Pérez noted. "Che said the university must color itself black and mulatto, worker and peasant, and called on youth to do this."

The FEU president expressed his appreciation of the photos in the book that bring to life Guevara's speeches. He pointed to a photo illustrating the revolutionary leader's May 1964 talk at a seminar organized by UJC members working at the Ministry of Industry, where Guevara challenged them to "politicize the ministry" by striving to bring the broadest world and class perspectives into even the most routine of tasks and become more political themselves. The photos accompanying the speech show Guevara sitting on the speakers' platform table as he addressed the meeting. Pérez remarked, "Che was able to establish communication with young people," cutting through ceremony and addressing others as political equals.

"This book offers youth in Latin America and North America access to ideas by Che that are important today," Pérez concluded, reiterating that FEU and the UJC plan to make it available at the OCLAE conference.

A book for working-class fighters

In her remarks, Waters added to points made by Sánchez and Pérez in explaining why *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* is needed by revolutionary-minded youth and working people engaged in struggle in the United States and other countries outside Cuba (see page 6). As a new mood of struggle develops among workers and farmers in the United States, she said, "they need Che's scientific precision to help them learn to analyze the tendencies and laws of motion of capital underlying the complex and fast-moving political events that mark the unfolding class struggle in this changing world.

"They need Che's Marxism," Waters added, "the Marxism that is not a set of preconceived ideas or formulas set down in manuals, but the generalization of the line of march of a class fighting to achieve its emancipation and open the road forward for all the oppressed peoples of the world, for all humanity."

When the program concluded, members of the audience rushed to the table where the new book was put on sale. Almost 50 copies were sold on the spot, and dozens more throughout the rest of the book fair. It was one of the most popular titles at the Pathfinder booth.

Claudio Burgos is a member of the Young Socialists in Stockholm, Sweden.

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

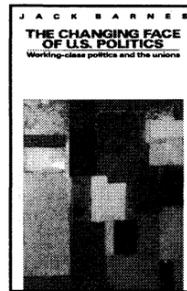
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250 rally in Dayton to back Overnite strike

BY PATTI THOMPSON

DAYTON, Ohio—An enthusiastic march and rally here to boost support for the Overnite strike drew more than 250 unionists and supporters from around the region. Participants chanted, "What do we want? Contract!" and "Turn up the heat!" at the gate of the company's trucking terminal.

Workers locked out at the local newspaper and at AK Steel in Ohio joined in, as well as top officials of the AFL-CIO.

"We're standing strong," said David Jones about the striking Teamsters local in Indianapolis, Indiana, that also attended the rally. Workers have been on strike for 16 weeks to win union recognition and a decent contract.

Some 2,000 drivers, dockworkers, and maintenance workers across the United States struck Overnite at the end of October. The company is the sixth largest U.S. trucking company and the largest one that is unorganized. It is owned by the Union Pacific Railroad.

Is this strike having an effect on the company? "Their stock was in the \$60s at the start of this," Ted Carter said. Now, as the strikers vocally reminded the company vice-president for operations as he was driving out the gate, it has dropped to \$38. With the help of Teamsters from other trucking companies in the area, they have kept picket lines up around the clock and "ambulatory pickets" Monday through Friday.

"We follow the [Overnite] trucks and a company car with a camera follows behind us," as they make deliveries and pick-ups in the area, a striker said describing the ambulatory pickets.

Dwight from the striking Dayton local told the rally, "You may get a little discouraged because this is taking a little bit longer, but thanks to all the support out there we can keep up the fight."

Pointing to important recent contributions of money and solidarity from the labor movement, union officials pledged their support at the rally, including AFL-CIO president John Sweeney, Teamsters International Secretary Treasurer Tom Keegel, Ohio AFL-CIO president William Burga, and International Union of Electrical Workers president Ed Fire.

Teamsters members from the *Dayton Daily News* received special attention at the rally. They have been locked out by the newspaper for eight months after a one-day walkout protesting stalled contract negotiations.

Steelworkers locked out by Armco/AK Steel for five months also traveled from Mansfield, Ohio, to spread the word about their fight. They showed enlarged photographs of armed security guards in riot gear who are used to protect scabs at the plant. Steelworkers passed out hundreds of leaflets advertising a March 25 support rally in Mansfield.

The Dayton rally took place while negotiators from the Teamsters and Overnite were meeting in Chicago. The company demanded the union accept a benefits package already implemented at their nonunion facilities. The union responded that they "have no interest in piecemeal bargaining. All negotiations should be part of an overall contract."

The union put out a newsletter outlining the intensification of the Teamsters' Overnite campaign, which the Indianapolis local made copies of and handed out to those crossing the picket lines. A striker said that one worker who took a flyer later drove out of the terminal saying, "Those people are crazy in there. I quit!"

Patti Thompson is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Betsey Stone, also a member of the IAM, contributed to this article.



Rally for Overnite strikers on February 10 in Dayton, Ohio. Some 2,000 workers struck this trucking company 16 weeks ago. At rallies like this they "turn up the heat."

Chicago steelworkers return to work

BY BETH SINGER

CHICAGO—"I don't regret anything. It was a real learning experience: getting to meet people from all over and visiting other picket lines," said Theodore Wynn, a member of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 15271. He and other striking unionists recently returned to work after a 14-month strike against Tool and Engineering Co. here. Wynn spoke at a January 29 Militant Labor Forum on "Challenges Facing Today's Labor Struggles."

The USWA struck Tool and Engineering in November 1998, refusing the company's demands for more than \$2 million in concessions, including pay cuts of at least \$3 an hour for most workers. William Farley, the owner of Tool and Engineering, claimed he needed the concessions to stay competitive in the auto industry. Tool and Engineering makes prototype parts for major automobile manufactur-

ers. Farley is a prominent Chicago businessman who was also CEO of Fruit of the Loom until the company went bankrupt.

The bosses hired scabs early in the strike and succeeded in pressuring some strikers to break ranks and cross the picket line. They also hired security cops who worked with the police to harass strikers and arrest pickets. Last year strikers organized rallies of 100 or more workers and supporters in front of the company. On several occasions, Tool and Engineering strikers joined picket lines of United Auto Workers on strike at Tazewell Machine Works in central Illinois; Lenc-Smith workers in Cicero, Illinois; Boilermakers on strike at Goose Island in Chicago; and Teamsters on strike at Overnite.

Strikers joined other protests around the city of Chicago, including a May farm workers support rally and a meeting of Jesse Jackson's Operation PUSH.

In October, strikers voted down a contract offer that was virtually identical to the bosses' initial proposals. However, a month later, by a vote of 23-22 they voted to make an offer to the bosses that modified somewhat most of the company's original demands.

Workers began returning to their jobs at the beginning of January. Some union members say they do not like the loss in pay and benefits. About one-quarter of the strikers did not go back to work at the company.

Farley and Tool and Engineering have been weakened economically by the strike. Fruit of the Loom shareholders are suing Farley for repayment of loans made to him during the strike. Workers feel that they played a part in bringing Farley down. Wynn said, "At least we showed him we could fight."

Beth Singer is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1011.

Ormet workers, others rebuild torched shack, strengthen contract fight

BY CHRIS REMPLE

HANNIBAL, Ohio—United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Local 5724's picket shack at Ormet Aluminum here is back up and built to last. The shack burned down January 20 in a fire that many workers at the sprawling plant attribute to the company.

Nearly 100 steelworkers from Ormet and from Century Aluminum in Ravenswood, West Virginia; United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members from a power plant in New Haven, Ohio; and other supporters came together February 3 in a strong show of solidarity with the union struggle for a contract and to rebuild the shack.

The 1,800 members of the USWA locals 5724 and 5760 at Ormet have been fighting for a contract since the last one expired in May. Unresolved demands include restoring the cost-of-living allowance, keeping the profit- and gain-sharing plans for both the reduction facility and the rolling mill, and rehiring nine workers unjustly fired by the company in the course of this fight.

Shortly after lunch, local officials reported that Ormet was seeking an injunction in state court to stop the rebuilding effort. Ormet claimed that the shack represented a danger to its employees, citing five accidents at the entrance to the reduction facility.

The injunction was granted that afternoon but it was largely reversed the following day when union attorneys challenged it. With an injunction possible everyone worked quickly to get the shack completed.

Matt Rieser, a furnace operator in the cast house and a member of the safety and grievance committees said, "This injunction is a last ditch effort. We're closer [to a settlement] than we think," he said, citing pressure from major customers like Ford Motor Company to settle, and a general rise in aluminum prices.

Describing the work force now, Rieser said, "The cast house has really stuck to-

gether. In grievance meetings I would see 12 or 15 guys standing outside the door and looking in the windows. We had our own little army. To this day we march in and out" of the plant together.

He described the marches beginning in one department and picking up others as the workers headed out, gaining numbers department by department until they had the vast majority heading for the exit. Looking ahead to the end of this fight, Rieser said, "When this is all done and over, I'll just walk into those grievance meetings and tell them, 'Just sign the papers.' They're never going to beat us again."

LETTERS

Unionist blackmail

That the award of a Nobel Peace Prize to First Minister David Trimble was premature should be obvious to anyone who does not want to see the Irish struggle for freedom from turning again to the gun and the bomb. Trimble's insistence upon the unilateral disarmament of the Provisional Irish Republican Army is one more strategic device designed by this leader of Orange sectarian bigotry to destroy what voters in all of Ireland want to work.

Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams, and the Irish Republican Army have shown that they are willing to give the new political arrangements a chance to work. It is obvious that the sectarian zealots led by Trimble are hell-bent on destroying those arrangements with one pretext or another.

Short of an announced timetable for a [British troop] withdrawal from Irish soil, which would be the ideal solution, a suggestion

by Father Des Wilson makes perfect sense. He argued that the British government should inform all and sundry that "there will be a devolved government in Ireland's northeast, and it will consist of those who agree to join it...."

Then and only then would Trimble's Unionist blackmail be brought to an end.

*Robert Nordlander
Menasha, Wisconsin*

Struggle at Camp Justice

I thought that *Militant* readers should know about the events that have taken place on Pine Ridge Indian Reservation recently. On June 8, 1999, two young Lakota men were found dead in the small border town of White Clay, Nebraska, just two miles from Pine Ridge. There was little or no investigation into these deaths and they go unsolved.

White Clay has a population of

only 22 but has four liquor establishments and sells more than \$4 million dollars worth of alcohol every year—most of it to the people of Pine Ridge. One of the two slain men had been threatened by a liquor proprietor over an unpaid "tab." The proprietor told the victim that if he was not paid the "boys" would take care of him.

Seeing the apathy of the county cops, the people of Pine Ridge organized a rally and march to demand justice. According to many accounts, after the march had almost finished, people who were not participating in the march—mostly people who lived in the town and were drunk—vandalized a market. The organizers of the march did not plan or condone what happened.

The following week, on July 3, 1999, another march took place, but this time it was greeted by cops in riot gear on the border of White Clay. The cops physically pushed back the protesters and arrested

many. The protesters set up a camp, naming it Camp Justice, between Pine Ridge and White Clay, stating that they will stay there until justice is served. These two young men are the latest in a long list of murders of Native Americans that are not investigated or go unsolved.

*Lou Newton
Kent, Ohio*

New web page is great

I just wanted to compliment you on your new web page, which I think makes it possible to get the important information and analysis your paper provides a few days earlier. Also, thanks for defending the Cuban and Chinese governments from the slanders and aggressions of the imperialist American government. By the way, will the Socialist Workers Party be announcing a candidate for president soon? For some reason, it seems that a lot of progressives and radicals think that William Bradley is worthy of their

support, so we need a real working-class alternative.

*Ben Dover
Durham, North Carolina*

Class struggle in Iran

I have read recent coverage in the capitalist media of the frictions in Iran between those they term the "mullahs" and the "reformers." I would appreciate an article explaining the significance of this in class terms, in the context of the class struggle in Iran today.

*Robert Dees
Palo Alto, California*

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.

Strike at Boeing solid, wins labor support

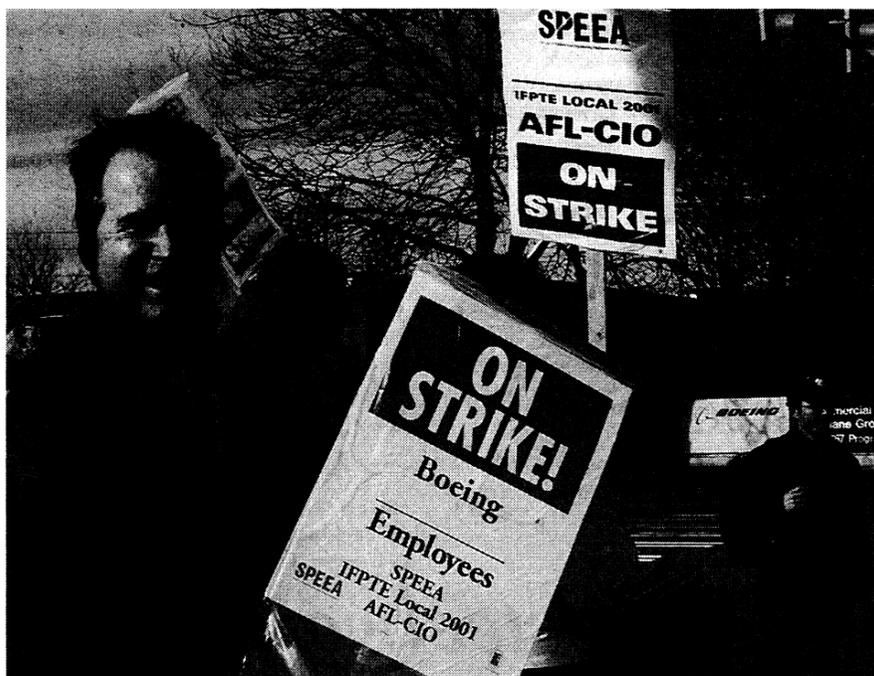
BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE—Hundreds of striking engineers and technicians held a rally and mass picket line in front of Boeing's Corporate offices in Everett February 13. Cars were parked on both sides of Seaway Boulevard for a mile, as strikers, family, and friends turned the area into a pro-union solidarity event. The strikers, members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), have caught one of the world's largest commercial airplane manufacturers and producers of war material off guard with a solid walkout that is winning support from the labor movement. Boeing is also the largest exporter in the United States.

SPEEA is an AFL-CIO union that represents about 22,000 employees in the Puget Sound region. Its members walked out February 9 after rejecting the company's second contract offer by a 51 percent majority of engineers and 61 percent of technical workers. The union says nearly 19,000 members walked off the job last week. Even Boeing admits that 17,000 walked out in the Seattle area. According to SPEEA, 100 percent of its members walked out in the Joint Strike Fighters, Airborne Laser, Avionics, and F-22 programs.

As the *Wall Street Journal* noted, "Support of the walkout appeared especially broad in light of the fact that only about 12,000 workers are dues-paying union members." The press is already referring to this labor action as the largest walkout of "white collar" workers in U.S. history. While the strike is centered in the Seattle area, SPEEA members in Spokane, Washington; Oregon; Utah; Kansas; Texas; and Florida are also on strike.

The strength of the strike has surprised Boeing, which along with the news media and Wall Street analysts predicted there would be no strike, and then when it began, that the strike would be ineffective and short. Peter Jacobs, aerospace analyst for the Ragen MacKenzie Group Inc., said, "I would be surprised if the engineers had the resolve to stay out of work for a long duration." But Mike Messenger, an assembler and International Association of Machinists (IAM) member in Everett where the 747,



Militant/Scott Breen

SPEEA members picket outside Boeing's Renton plant on February 11. They demand improvements in pay and conditions, while the company is on a cost-cutting drive.

767, and 777 planes are assembled, who joined the February 13 rally, thought it "was a strong show of support for the strike."

The main disagreements with Boeing that SPEEA members have are "compensation, bonuses, and wages," said Roger Daninger, a technician at Boeing's Everett plant. "All we want is the same thing they gave the IAM." SPEEA members want pay raises guaranteed for all workers, instead of leaving them largely up to supervisors' discretion as Boeing insists. They also demanded cost-of-living adjustments, COLA, like those the Machinists have, a proposal Boeing turned down. Many SPEEA members also say Boeing's life insurance package involved a cut compared to their previous contract's benefits.

Boeing countered that it has "been preparing for any eventuality and will do our best to maintain operations for our customers and to protect the rights of workers who

choose to stay on the job." Senior executive James Dagnon told reporters that the engineers' "expectations got out of line with reality," and that they have to understand that "the rules have changed."

Stiffening competition

Boeing, locked in a fierce competition with Airbus, its European rival, has lowered its prices to win orders. This has cut substantially into profits, which is unacceptable to Boeing's wealthy owners. In a severe cost-cutting drive, the bosses have eliminated tens of thousands of jobs, and instituted work speedup in order to shore up profits. At the same time, they are expanding production of military aircraft and missiles and related space and communications work.

Laurie Farmer, a Renton senior specialist engineer said: "I never thought I'd go on strike," but he was "disgusted" by the company's treatment of the engineers. More

than one striker has pointed to the bosses' decision to acquire Hughes' satellite division for \$3.5 billion cash as an example of Boeing's deep pockets.

Rick Smolen, a design technician in Everett, explained he voted no on the contract. "When it came down to it, Boeing wanted to take as much from us as it could. Because it knew the only way it could get the IAM to pay medical on their next contract was to get SPEEA to pay medical first."

Many strikers are clearly proud about their actions. "It's about time we did this," said Jon Sergeant, a SPEEA technical worker on the picket line at Renton. "In the past, we haven't looked like much of a union. But today, we're starting to look like a union. We're sticking together," he said.

Solidarity

Support for the strike is growing from industrial workers and their unions. For example, two carpenters and their wives, on strike against Valley Manufactured Housing came from Sunnyside, Washington, to show their support. Cipriano, one of the strikers, addressed the rally in Spanish. "We came here to support you today. We're on strike for the same reasons you are." When he told the crowd, "We've been getting lots of support, but that's what's needed to win," the strikers cheered in appreciation. A representative of the Washington state AFL-CIO also spoke in support of the strike at the rally.

Teamster members at UPS have honored picket lines, as have union crews for the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad. When Boeing tried to open a separate warehouse for deliveries in Southcenter near the Renton plant, SPEEA started picketing there, successfully turning away UPS trucks. SPEEA officials also announced that electrical contractors walked off the job in South Boeing field, and that B-1B contractors left Plant II in Seattle.

Meanwhile, the strike is having an impact on the 35,000 members of the IAM who continue to work every day assembling the planes. Many IAM members are sympathetic to the strike, and are putting up signs on their tool boxes and bulletin boards put out by the IAM that say, "IAM Machinists: We Support SPEEA."

At the same time IAM officials have made it clear that workers must abide by a no strike clause in the contract. "The Machinists are bound by a contract that requires them to report to work regardless of the actions of other represented employees," said IAM 751 spokesman Tim Flynn the day the strike began.

The company has created, deepened, and played upon the divisions between the assembly workers and the engineers and technicians for years, resulting in some IAM members not yet supporting the SPEEA strike. Early in the strike, some SPEEA members carried signs that said "No Brains, No Planes," that rankled some IAM members and officials, since it implied that production workers didn't have brains.

The press has picked up on these divisions, and has tried to accentuate it. For example, the *Seattle Times* ran an entire article entitled "Machinists doubt strikers' resolve." But that is breaking down as the strikers prove their seriousness, and win respect. For example, a mechanic passing through the picket line at Renton on his way home asked a SPEEA picket, "Why should I support you? You did our work when we struck in '95." The picket responded, "We shouldn't have. We weren't a real union then. Now we are."

Don Tarkalson, a preflight mechanic in Kent said, SPEEA members "have legitimate complaints. It's good to see them finally sticking together." Other IAM members take a more active role in supporting the strike. Muriel Truax, an Auburn inspector in the IAM, joined the picket line with her husband, a SPEEA member, saying: "I'm so proud of those people."

Scott Breen is a member of the IAM and works at Boeing.

March in Puerto Rico to oppose pact

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Thousands of people are expected to march February 21 to demand that the U.S. Navy immediately close its bombing range on the island of Vieques. In a partial victory for the anti-Navy forces, the battle group lead by the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. George Washington* will train in Florida instead of Vieques.

Major religious groups and officials here, including Archbishop of San Juan Roberto González, President of the Bible Society Wilfredo Estrada, and Methodist bishop Juan Vera initiated the action, which has gained broad support from the labor movement. All Puerto Rico With Vieques, the group that organized the march of 50,000 last July 4, quickly endorsed the march.

The demonstration was called after Puerto Rican governor Pedro Rosselló of the New Progressive Party (PNP) announced a pact with U.S. president William Clinton to re-

sume the use of the island as a naval training ground. The deal allows the Navy to continue its activities and for a referendum to be held seeking additional years, along with a promise to spend up to \$90 million in improvements for residents of the island.

The move by Rosselló has shattered the idea that all Puerto Ricans have the same national interests. The vast majority of Puerto Ricans support the departure of the U.S. Navy from Vieques. This has pushed the church and normally pro-imperialist politicians to follow suit. The Catholic Church in Vieques is part of the archdiocese of Caguas, which has now opened its own civil disobedience camp in the restricted land of the bombing range, where anti-U.S. Navy forces have carried out an occupation for the past 11 months. More than 300 people applied to the church and about 100 were accepted to be rotated in and out of the camp.

The opposition Popular Democratic Party (PPD) is walking a tightrope, trying to get the votes of people who want the Navy out of Vieques, but not supporting the protest camps. Under the growing pressure of public opinion, however, Sila Calderón, the mayor of San Juan and the PPD candidate for governor, supports the march.

"For me, all the Puerto Ricans should go," said Calderón, "and I am insisting that the members of the PPD should go as Puerto Ricans. It is not a political march, it is Puerto Rican, in favor of Vieques and not against anything. There will be no political emblems. All Puerto Ricans that love Puerto Rico should be present."

The character of the February 21 march has been the subject of a debate on the front page of the newspapers here for a week.

Declaring the church leaders "separatists," Carlos Romero Barceló, the Puerto Rican nonvoting delegate in the U.S. House of Representatives, said the march "responds to political interests."

Rosselló called on church members to practice "religious disobedience" and defy church leaders by staying away from the march in solidarity with Vieques.

"Ecclesiastic leaders," said Rosselló, "have gone outside their fields, their authority, and are assuming roles in our democratic societies that are designated by vote. None of them has been elected by a vote of the people, and therefore none of the faithful have to follow their directions in matters such as this."

The Labor Federation of Puerto Rico, the AFL-CIO affiliate here, has endorsed the march. The federation faxed leaflets about the march to all of its affiliates including locals of the American Federation of Government Employees whose members work for the federal government. A 17-member delegation from the Japanese Committee in Solidarity with Asia, Africa and Latin America recently toured Puerto Rico. They spoke with the family of David Sanes whose killing by an errant U.S. bomb in April 1999 touched off the current round of protests and longtime activists in Vieques like Robert Rabin. The New Puerto Rican Independence Movement had invited them to Puerto Rico. Okinawa, Japan, is another island the U.S. Navy uses for live-fire practice.

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