

## Nicaragua election results are big blow to sovereignty



Rally in Managua December 1989 launched FSLN's election campaign. Incomplete returns from February 25 voting gave FSLN 41 percent of vote, the pro-Washington alliance UNO 55 percent. Workers, peasants, youth who support Sandinista Front are discussing the election results and what to do next.

Militant/Seth Galinsky

## After one year, Eastern strike stronger than ever

BY SUSAN LaMONT

"I don't think one year on strike is so long, considering what we are taking on. It's not only Lorenzo, but it's also the Bush administration. I feel they are in deep trouble." Eastern striker Jim Lewis, secretary-treasurer of striking Machinists Local 702 in Miami, and a leader of local's food bank.

"The Eastern strike has made me a new person. I don't do things just for me anymore. I'm a 'we' person now, not an 'I' person." Eddie Croft, member of IAM Local 1932's strike committee in Los Angeles.

This weekend, March 3 and 4, airports and union halls in dozens of U.S. cities and in Canada will be ringing with chants and speeches, as thousands of Eastern Airlines

they've accomplished, through their own efforts, over the past year.

### Explosion of activity

With the March 3-4 anniversary as a focus in many cities, strikers have organized a virtual explosion of activity in recent weeks. The response they're getting from other working people has confirmed that they are on the right track.

From California to Massachusetts, strikers have been out speaking to hundreds of union

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strikers, their families, and supporters from other unions and struggles salute the one-year anniversary of the walkout.

The strikers indeed have a lot to celebrate. In the past few months, the striking ramp workers, cleaners, stock clerks, and mechanics at Eastern have built up a head of steam in their fight to defeat one of the most ruthless union-busting drives in recent years. As the 365th day of the walkout has neared, the strike has gotten stronger, not weaker.

This new momentum is built on the strikers' knowledge that prospects for widening support for their fight are greater now than they've ever been and on the deep-rooted confidence that comes from all

## W. Virginia unionists run on socialist ticket

BY RONI McCANN

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Three union fighters, participants in the struggle to build broad solidarity with the Eastern Airlines strikers and miners resisting union-busting coal bosses, have announced their West Virginia-wide candidacy on the Socialist Workers Party ticket.

The candidates are Dick McBride, a union garment worker running for U.S. Senate; Maggie McCraw, a union metal worker for state treasurer; and Clay Dennison, a union coal miner for attorney general.

Supporters of the socialist candidates will launch a drive March 17 to place their names on the ballot for the November 6 election by collecting 13,000 signatures on petitions. The candidates, backed by scores of supporters, will be canvassing the Appalachian coalfields discussing with other fighting workers and unionists about labor struggles here and internationally.

## Reactions from FSLN, others

BY SUSAN APSTEIN  
AND LARRY SEIGLE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — As negotiations begin over the transfer of governmental power to the pro-U.S. alliance known as UNO, supporters of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) are trying to adjust to their party's unanticipated electoral defeat and the challenges that lie ahead.

Reactions range from shock and dismay to militant expressions of determination to fight against attempts to reverse conquests of the past decade.

In Washington, the imperialists have responded with euphoria. President George Bush declared, "Yesterday's election moves us one step closer to the day when every nation in this hemisphere is a democracy."

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole stated, "As I see it, it's two down. Panama and Nicaragua, and one to go — Cuba."

Chamorro's election victory, the editors of the *New York Times* crowed, "deepens the isolation of Fidel Castro in Cuba, and diminishes the threat from a Marxist insurgency in El Salvador."

In Toronto, Canada, the prominent capitalist daily, the *Globe and Mail* cheered, "the news from Nicaragua has been terrific."

Under the Nicaraguan constitution the new government, headed by Violeta Chamorro, will take office April 25. The decisive questions in the transition will revolve around the armed forces and the police, which for the moment remain under the command of forces loyal to the FSLN and in whose ranks support for the revolution has been strong.

The "international observers" who supervised the election have said they will remain in the country during the transition period to contribute to "governmental stability." These include former U.S. president James Carter, United Nations representative Elliot Richardson, and João Baena Soares, secretary-general of the Organization of American States.

Incomplete election returns give the UNO

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## U.S. threat to Cuba reinforced

The defeat of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the Nicaraguan elections is a blow to working people and other revolutionary- and democratic-minded fighters throughout the world. On April 25 a government subservient to Washington's interests will assume office in Nicaragua. This has been the U.S. government's goal since 1979.

## EDITORIAL

For more than 10 years, since the FSLN-led overthrow of the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship, Nicaragua has stood up to a massive military, economic, and political campaign mounted by Washington.

Washington's hatred for the FSLN-led government grew as Nicaragua's working people refused to buckle, continued to defend their sovereignty, and asserted their national dignity despite a murderous contra war that claimed more than 30,000 lives.

Following the victory of Violeta Chamorro's pro-U.S. National Opposition Union (UNO) over FSLN presidential candidate Daniel Ortega, the U.S. rulers immediately moved in to begin to take command.

Former U.S. president James Carter, former U.S. secretary of defense and United Nations representative Elliot Richardson; and the Organization of American States secretary-general all announced their intention to remain in Nicaragua until the April 25 inauguration to "contribute to governmental stability."

The three were among some 2,000 "observers" sent into Nicaragua from the United States and other countries to supervise and direct every aspect of the voting process. The scope and character of the observer force was an unprecedented demand placed on a sovereign country.

A similar proportion would amount to 140,000 if Mexico, or another government, made a similar demand to monitor a presi-

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their battle, means a victory is possible." The candidates and their backers will place winning support for the strike at the top of their priorities.

Pittston miners, after signing a contract with the coal barons February 19, are getting back to work, preparing for the day-to-day struggle in the mines as Pittston tries to implement its interpretation of the contract, she reported. The broader fight by miners in the coalfields as they resist coal company attacks will continue, as will the miners' support for other battles in West Virginia and throughout the coalfields. Participants in the meeting pointed to struggles of laundry workers, tree-trimmers, and fire fighters in West Virginia that were inspired by the miners' resistance of the past year.

Pittston miners are looking to add their weight to the Eastern strike, Zins said. Hundreds of UMWA members will be joining

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# Readers send in opinions, suggestions, renewals

BY RONI McCANN

"We value your comments and suggestions" is written above a blank space on the back side of the

from readers has been very inspiring. Even the reader who decided he didn't agree with socialism joined in the discussion by explaining his



## GETTING THE MILITANT AROUND

redesigned, attractive renewal letters we send to *Militant* subscribers.

In recent weeks several readers have taken the time to jot down ideas for the paper's coverage, opinions and questions about socialism, and appreciative comments.

The renewal letters have been part of the four-week effort to reach subscribers by mail, phone, visits, or just taking an extra few minutes on the job or on the picket line to ask how they like the paper and urge them to keep getting it.

Opening the mail here at the *Militant* and finding the clipped-off "comments" section of the letters

views and thanking us for the coverage of labor battles.

### 'Honest account of Strike'

A subscriber from Pennsylvania wrote, "I became aware of your paper as a result of the strike at Eastern. Your paper is the only truthful and honest account of the strike that I am able to read anywhere. I believe in your journalistic integrity. That's why I'm renewing." Enclosed was a one-year renewal.

A reader from a coal-mining family who purchased a subscription during the strike by union miners against Pittston wrote asking

whether the paper is communist. If so what does that mean? Does that mean the paper isn't legitimate?

A few weeks after I responded to the letter, explaining that the *Militant* is a communist newspaper — meaning it stands unconditionally on the side of workers in struggle against the employers — the same reader sent a note commenting briefly, "I enjoy the *Militant* very much. It has better coverage than any newspaper I have seen."

A United Mine Workers of America member from Virginia sent in his renewal letter and took advantage of the special offer to get \$1 off a copy of *New International* magazine.

Another UMWA miner, from Rangely, Colorado, decided not to renew and wrote, "I appreciate your concern for the working people of this country. I am a proud member of the UMWA and you do a good job keeping me informed of the goings on in Virginia with Pittston [Coal company] and Massey [Coal]."

"But I'm also a proud American," he continued, "and a believer in the capitalist system. I know it's not

perfect, but it beats the hell out of socialism or communism. And I don't appreciate the way you defend the drug dealing of [Panamanian Gen. Manuel] Noriega — the only time I agreed with George Bush you disagreed with him." (The *Militant* editorially opposed the U.S. invasion of Panama and the abduction of Noriega as a violation of Panama's sovereignty. It has never defended drug dealing.)

### International coverage

Several readers commented on the *Militant's* coverage of international battles.

A South African student living in Chicago renewed for six months and wrote, "Coming from a country with a tradition of alternative newspapers, the *Militant* makes me feel a little more at home in this 'strange land.'" The student also sent for a copy of the Pathfinder pamphlet *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*.

A *Militant* supporter in St. Louis dropped us a note saying the special issue immediately following the U.S. invasion of Panama was "a hot

item" among workers and activists. One came into the Pathfinder Bookstore and bought 25 copies to distribute.

"I appreciate your thoughtful coverage of recent developments in Eastern Europe," wrote a reader from Chicago who renewed for one year and bought *New International* No. 3. He also donated a dollar to the Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund. Readers returning the renewal letters the last few weeks have contributed \$21 to the fund.

Two readers renewed and had suggestions. One from Texas asked for "more emphasis placed on the exploitation in the Third World" and another from New York asked for "an occasional update on how the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement in Grenada is doing."

In the issue of the *Militant* that comes off the press March 8 we will report the results of the international renewal effort. Final renewals from the last days of the drive are coming in and put us at 422 renewals to the *Militant* and 80 renewals to *Perspectiva Mundial*.

## British ambulance crews to vote on new contract

BY BRIAN GROGAN

LONDON — Union negotiators representing the 22,500 ambulance workers in Britain have concluded a deal with National Health Service (NHS) management. This will now go to ballot, the result to be announced on March 16. The deal was welcomed by government health minister Kenneth Clarke.

Union leaders claim that the deal is worth 17.9 percent over two years. The complex package is weighted towards increasing differentials and includes provision for an additional 2 percent through local productivity deals. Rank-and-file ambulance crews had campaigned against such an approach during the six months of their campaign for higher wages, and local leaders have greeted the deal with much opposition.

The main bone of contention for many of the strikers is the failure to secure a pay formula for ambulance workers that would tie future wage increases to the rise in the cost of living. The current official inflation rate is 7.7 percent and interest on home loans is 16 percent.

Militant ambulance crews, notably in Liverpool, have decided to campaign for a "no vote" and escalate their action during the period of the ballot — for the first time taking indefinite strike action. Crews in London have decided to follow suit. And ambulance workers in Oxfordshire have voted to reject the package.

At the same time, the deal is a setback for the government's attempt to impose an unofficial incomes policy in the public sector, even though it has been able to claim that over two years the deal is within the 6.5 percent per year that it originally set.

Nonetheless, there is no doubt that ambulance workers could achieve more than what is offered. Two million workers took some

form of action in response to the unions' call for a 15-minute protest on January 30, showing that the 80 percent support recorded in opinion polls could be transformed into real solidarity action.

Nor has the real strength of the ambulance workers' unions been fully mobilized. No national strike action was called during the six months. The conflict has taken its sharpest

form where ambulance crews have been locked out by local management for working to rule.

Combining defense of the NHS with the need for a pay formula could be used to turn this around. Stressing the need to tie wage increases to the cost of living would strike a chord with other workers currently hit by rising inflation.

## Cuba Communist youth hail Mandela release

The following message to Nelson Mandela was sent by the Union of Communist Youth (UJC) of Cuba. It appeared in the February 13 issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, published daily in Havana by the UJC. *Juventud Rebelde* noted that similar messages were also sent by the Federation of University Students, Federation of High School Students, and the José Martí Pioneers Association. The translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.

Comrade Nelson Mandela:

The young people of Cuba heard with emotion and great joy the long-awaited news that you have been freed.

Your unshakeable position of principle throughout more than 27 years of unjust imprisonment not only made you a flame that

fueled the struggle of your people. You also became an international symbol of rebellion and of the strength of human dignity.

In the struggle for democracy and social justice, you and your example have given great encouragement and inspiration to the gigantic masses of those oppressed and deprived of the most elementary rights in their own land.

The freeing from prison of various leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle, the recent legalization of the African National Congress, and other measures adopted by the segregationist regime are the product of a sustained and growing struggle. It is this struggle by South African patriots and their vanguard, the ANC, that has brought apartheid to an irreversible crisis, forcing it to make concessions

and adopt measures aimed at masking its reactionary essence.

Along with the international community, Cuban youth have consistently and energetically condemned apartheid and its moral and material protector: U.S. imperialism.

On this occasion, as we express our fraternal greetings and solidarity we reaffirm that the young people of Cuba stand alongside the people of South Africa in the struggle to end the state of emergency, to free the political prisoners, and to erase from the face of the earth the shameful system of apartheid. On its ruins will be built the democratic South Africa of the future, the South Africa of the Freedom Charter, the South Africa that belongs to all who live there, Black and white, in which the only legitimate authority will be that based on the will of the entire people.

*'The Militant is a wonderful tool to convey the message of solidarity. I wish more people would buy it to get its information.'*

### Frank Planinac

president of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 1044, member of Eastern Airlines strike committee at Greater Pittsburgh International Airport.

### SPECIAL RENEWAL OFFER

A savings on the Marxist magazine *New International*. With your *Militant* renewal of six months or longer take a dollar off the cover price of a *New International*, or get all six issues of it for \$25. Issue No. 1 features "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today." No. 2 "The Working-Class Fight for Peace." No. 3 "Communism and the Fight for a Popular Revolutionary Government." No. 4 "The Crisis Facing Working Farmers." No. 5 "The Coming Revolution in South Africa." No. 6 "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop."



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## The Militant

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Editor: DOUG JENNESS

Circulation Director: RONI McCANN

Nicaragua Bureau Director: LARRY SEIGLE

Business Manager: JIM WHITE

Editorial Staff: Susan Apstein (Nicaragua), Seth Galinsky (Nicaragua), Yvonne Hayes, Arthur Hughes, Susan LaMont, Roni McCann, Greg McCartan, Selva Nebbia, Peter Thierjung.

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# Mandela appeals for unity and an end to violence in Natal

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Nelson Mandela in his third major speech since being released from prison made a powerful appeal for unity and an end to violence among Blacks in South Africa's Natal province on February 25.

"My message to those of you involved in this battle of brother against brother is this," Mandela told a crowd of more than 100,000 people assembled in Durban, Natal's largest city, "Take your guns, your knives, and your pangas [machetes] and throw them into the sea. Close down the death factories. End this war now!"

Almost 3,000 people over the last three years have been killed in Natal in fighting between supporters of the African National Congress and supporters of Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi, the chief minister of the KwaZulu "homeland." ANC leader Walter Sisulu, who toured parts of Natal in preparation for Mandela's trip there, said the situation produced by the violence was "10 times worse" than he imagined.

Mandela condemned "in the strongest terms the use of violence as a way of settling differences between our people."

The apartheid regime has used the conflict in its divide-and-rule attempts to fend off growing support for the ANC and United Democratic Front among the country's 7 million Zulus, a people based in Natal who Buthelezi claims to represent. The Inkatha Movement headed by Buthelezi has opposed international sanctions against the apartheid regime in South Africa and has supported the government's tribal homelands policy, which divides 13 percent of the country's most sterile land among the country's majority Black population. KwaZulu is one of 10 such homelands.

"Inkatha has been losing membership for some time," Peter Kerchhoff, a church activist who has monitored the violence, told a *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent. "Now that the ANC has been unbanned, they are going to feel the crunch even more."

## Forging unity

Mandela's speech came as many homeland officials and other Black leaders who have collaborated with the Pretoria government are breaking from it. This process is opening the door to greater unity in the fight to bring down the apartheid regime.

"Apartheid is not dead. Equality and democracy continue to elude us. We do not have access to political power," Mandela told the crowd. "We need to intensify our struggle. But we can not do this as long as the conflict among ourselves continues."

"The parties to the conflict in Natal have disagreed about a great deal," he said. "There are fundamental differences between us." But Mandela noted, Inkatha had demanded the ANC be legalized and that political prisoners be released.

"We extend the hand of peace to Inkatha and hope that it might one day be possible for us to share a platform with its leader, Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi," the ANC leader said. The factional fighting was "my greatest burden, my deepest suffering," during the final years of imprisonment, said Mandela. "We have reached the stage where none of the parties can be regarded as right or wrong. Each carries a painful legacy of the past few years," he added.

Mandela's approach and proposals to break through the obstacles to unity were not welcomed by everyone. According to news accounts some in the massive crowd responded with disapproving jeers.

Buthelezi reported that Mandela had phoned him February 17 to discuss press reports of an emerging conflict between them. A statement by Buthelezi the prior day accused Mandela of misrepresenting Inkatha's role in Natal's violence. Following the phone call the chief said he was "entirely at ease and satisfied that there still is love and respect between us which has always been there."

He said he would meet with Mandela as soon as possible to discuss the fighting and "the need for Black unity of purpose at this critical juncture of our history."

Mandela, in his first trip outside of South

Africa in nearly three decades, arrived in Lusaka, Zambia, the headquarters in exile of the ANC, on February 27. At Lusaka's airport he was given a hero's welcome by thousands of Zambians, including leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle, heads of state from across Africa, representatives of other liberation movements, and foreign diplomats. Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda declared the day a national holiday.

The ANC "is on the verge of a breakthrough in our struggle for freedom," he told the crowd. "I have often heard the expression that history is not made by kings and generals but by the masses of people. It is the masses of the people of South Africa of all population groups, it is the people of Zambia, it is the people of the Frontline States, it is the people of the world who are today making history, and that is why we feel that, in the course of our struggle, we are on the verge of a breakthrough."

Mandela will confer with the ANC's leadership and African heads of state while in Lusaka on how to continue the struggle to end apartheid.

In a February 22 statement South African President F.W. de Klerk welcomed the ANC's earlier decision to send a delegation to South Africa to discuss with him the release of all political prisoners, ending the state of emergency, the repeal of repressive legislation, the removal of troops from the Black townships,

## Join Mandela book promotion effort!

BY GREG McCARTAN

"You have the autobiography of Nelson Mandela? How much?" asked a chemical worker who saw a team of *Militant* salespeople holding a sign advertising *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life* at his plant gate.

He was one of several workers at the Newark, New Jersey-area plant who stopped, backed up their car, and asked about the collection of speeches by the leader of the African National Congress, which is published by Pathfinder Press.

*Militant* and Pathfinder supporters making this sale are among hundreds of trade unionists, students, members of the Young Socialist Alliance, and other political activists who are part of a campaign to distribute the 278-page book as widely as possible.

Newark supporters are leading the effort, selling 65 books in two weeks — 39 of them to fellow workers.

"Just one week of showing around *The Struggle Is My Life* and the Spanish-language book *Habla Nelson Mandela* has convinced me that everyone should be approached to get a copy," said Carla White, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. She has sold 11 to coworkers.

"One coworker who bought a book, when I asked him if he had read it yet, said, 'No! How can I? Everybody keeps grabbing it out of my hands.'"

Rich Ariza sold 16 books to postal workers at a post office distribution center. At literature tables set up in communities around Newark, 13 more were sold in one afternoon.

The promotion of *Habla Nelson Mandela* got a boost when the Spanish-language New York daily newspaper *El Diario-La Prensa* carried a half-page article and photo February 25. The article quotes Pathfinder editorial director Steve Clark explaining, "The dignified Nelson Mandela of today, who is being hailed by millions in South Africa, remains faithful to the young freedom fighter who 27 years ago confronted the racist judicial system without flinching."

A news brief in the *New York Times* "Book Notes" reports "part of the Mandela Story is available now in *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life*." The article takes note of the recent reprinting of the book by Pathfinder.

In Toronto *Militant* supporters are combining their efforts to win long-term subscribers to the newspaper and selling copies of the book.

Seven books have been sold to workers at



South African youth celebrate Mandela's release

and halting political trials.

De Klerk said that the South African government approached talks with the ANC with confidence that Pretoria was gaining international support because of the "archaic policies" espoused by Mandela and the ANC.

## Death squad revelations

New revelations of the existence of South African government death squads have embarrassed de Klerk's campaign to refurbish the apartheid regime's image. On February 26 Defense Minister Magnus Malan told parliament that he had ordered a covert unit, known as the Civil Cooperation Bureau, to suspend "all activities" in response to press and police investigators' charges.

South African newspapers have reported at least 75 deaths over the past 13 years as

possible death squad killings, and charges continue to mount daily. Malan has made no attempt to refute the allegations. He has instead attempted to shift the focus of the rising controversy by charging that Anton Lubowski, a leader of Namibia's South West Africa People's Organisation assassinated by the death squad, was an agent of the South African military.

The charge was rejected by anti-apartheid and SWAPO leaders as a "smear."

On the same day, 340 prisoners at the notorious Robben Island prison off Cape Town began a hunger strike. They demand to be released because the organizations they belong to are now legal. The South African government said it would not free prisoners convicted of violent crimes.

the Miami airport, and three to members of the Steelworkers union in the city. Miami supporters have been taking orders at work and filling them as coworkers bring in the money. Nine books were sold at two events in Ft. Lauderdale, plus 15 posters of the book cover.

"Hawking the book on the street in Miami we ran into a woman who told us that she 'just found out about Mandela, and how ignorant they've kept me,'" reports Dan Fein. "She then bought the book to learn more

about Mandela."

At the Rural Women's Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, women farm activists and unionists who support the farm struggle snapped up 12 copies.

As Mandela continues to participate in and lead the fight to end apartheid, give voice to the aspirations of millions worldwide, and begins to travel internationally, the demand for *The Struggle Is My Life* will grow. Join in the campaign to distribute the book. Order your bundle today!

Send me ☐ 5 ☐ 10 ☐ 15 ☐ 20 ☐ Other copies of:

☐ *The Struggle Is My Life* (\$10.95 each; \$7.25 each for 10 or more).

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## Funds needed for reporting teams

The *Militant* has expanded its coverage and is fielding two reporting teams — one to South Africa and another to El Salvador and Panama — in response to important political developments around the world.

Our larger than usual 20-page issue last week and a 24-page issue this week feature speeches by African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela and Cuban President Fidel Castro. Extensive news coverage of developments in South Africa, Cuba, and the class struggle in North America, such as the Eastern strike and mineworkers' struggles, is also included.

The costs of fielding two teams and the increased issue sizes are beyond our regular budget. We have taken these steps counting on *Militant* readers' financial contributions to this special effort to bring accurate, firsthand accounts from the front lines of these struggles.

In the coming weeks the *Militant* will feature news from a four-person reporting team traveling to Lusaka, Zambia, and then on to South Africa. News articles, photographs, and interviews with leaders of the national, democratic revolution to bring an end to the apartheid system will

document the giant steps forward being made in the struggle in South Africa. The team will include Greg McCartan, Sam Manuel, and Margrethe Siem as well as a correspondent from Britain.

*Militant* reporters Seth Galinsky and Selva Nebbia have arrived in El Salvador. Their first coverage appears in this week's issue. Next, the team will go to Panama where they will document the situation in that country in the wake of the U.S. invasion last December.

Without generous contributions from our readers such expanded coverage and reporting trips would not be possible. Send your contribution today!

Enclosed is a check or money order to fund the *Militant's* special coverage:

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# Protest Iowa prison officials' frame-up of Curtis!

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving a 25-year prison term in the state penitentiary at Anamosa on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international

The defense committee is asking that protests demanding prison authorities immediately reverse the penalties imposed on Curtis, rescind the frame-up charges, and clear his record be sent to Paul Grossheim, Director, Department of Corrections, Capitol Annex, 523 E. 12th,

make certain political literature available to inmates and has faced strong opposition from prison authorities. I hope you are not of the opinion that prisoners lose their First Amendment rights once they are behind bars.

I strongly urge you to overturn the dubious gambling conviction and restore all lost privileges to Mr. Curtis.

Ray Rogers  
Director,  
Corporate Campaign, Inc.  
New York, New York

I live across the street from Mark Curtis and have been well acquainted with him and his wife for some time.

I have never known Mark or Kate to gamble. Mark doesn't even like football. He has no need of money since the defense committee will see to his needs. What possible motive would Mark Curtis have for breaking a rule against gambling and jeopardize his chances for an early parole?

These continued attempts to victimize Mark are getting ridiculous. Mark will play by the rules. You may be sure of that. He wouldn't let down the thousands of supporters who are committed to seeing the truth come out about his case.

The truth will make him free!

Julia Terrell  
Treasurer,  
Mark Curtis Defense Committee  
Des Moines, Iowa

We demand that the new charges

against Curtis be dropped; that all penalties inflicted on him be reversed and that there be no reprisals for his legitimate political activities there at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory.

In your position there, Warden Thalacker, you could justly carry out the investigation, reverse the penalties against him, and clear your own name and the name of Anamosa of the injustices that have become a nationwide scandal.

Sister Carla Born, and  
43 additional signers  
Rochester, Minnesota

I strongly urge you to investigate personally the latest allegations against Mr. Curtis, and look carefully at both sides of the evidence objectively.

The recent disciplinary proceedings give the impression of a mild repeat of the negative police proceedings in his case, which have given the Iowa police a terrible reputation. . . . The eyes of the world are very much turned on this case.

Ruth Morris  
Executive Director  
John Howard Society of  
Metropolitan Toronto  
Canada

It would be unfortunate in the extreme if Mr. Curtis' continuing political activism were to be cause for him being unfairly victimized on the basis of disciplinary charges lodged not for any legitimate reason, but rather for purposes of harassment and intimidation.

I trust that you will strive to see that such does not occur.

In this particular instance, given the nature of the charge and of the "evidence," the best way to insure that it does not would be to see that the instant charge is promptly dismissed.

Mary Borecz Pike  
Attorney-at-law  
New York, New York

How to write Curtis — Readers of the *Militant* and many Curtis supporters have asked for information about how to correspond with Curtis.

According to a notice published by authorities at Iowa State Men's Reformatory, "Incoming letters are to be written in a legible manner on standard-type stationery. The sender's full name and address must appear in the upper left hand corner of the envelope and only correspondence from the noted sender is permitted. . . . Sign name in full at end of letter. Greeting cards (not to exceed 8 1/2" x 11") are permitted."

Correspondence should be addressed to: Mark S. Curtis #805338, Box B, Anamosa, Iowa 52205.

"Mark especially likes to get photographs of political events," said defense committee leader Sandra Nelson. "It's one way for prisoners to know what is happening beyond the prison's walls."

## DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

campaign to fight for justice for Curtis, and defend his rights in prison. For more information about the case or how you can help, write to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695.

If you have news or reports on activities in support of Mark Curtis from your city or country, please send them to the *Militant*.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is on an urgent campaign to muster the broadest possible protest campaign to force Iowa prison authorities to back off their frame-up of Curtis on gambling and disruptive conduct charges.

Assistant Warden John Sissel found Curtis guilty of these charges on February 15 and Curtis was immediately penalized. The frame-up rests on the word of a prison guard who claims to have seen Curtis drop a piece of paper with the words "Super Bowl" written on it.

Curtis appealed the ruling to the Iowa Department of Corrections.

Des Moines, Iowa 50315; and to John A. Thalacker, Warden, Iowa State Men's Reformatory, Anamosa, Iowa 52205. Please send a copy and any response from Iowa prison officials to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee at the address above.

Below is a sampling of the hundreds of protests that have already been sent to prison authorities. Some have been excerpted for publication.

I am a farmer and member of the American Agriculture Movement, and I was just informed of the frame-up of Mark Curtis on gambling charges. I demand that these false charges be reversed immediately and all the harassment of Mark be stopped.

Harold Dunkelberger  
Pilot Mound, Iowa

I am writing to protest the recent conviction of Mark Curtis on gambling charges. It is difficult for me not to believe that this, like the original charges against Mr. Curtis, is the result of political persecution.

I am aware that while in your facility Mr. Curtis has attempted to

## Curtis defense leader in Britain on first tour stop

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Forty people braved gale force winds February 26 to attend a Manchester meeting addressed by Kate Kaku, wife of jailed U.S. unionist and political activist Mark Curtis. Manchester, an industrial city in the North-West of England, is the first stop in a two-week tour of Britain by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee leader.

The tour includes meetings with miners, from Durham in the North-East of the country, to Lancashire in the North-West, to South Wales. A series of meetings will be held in Yorkshire, the biggest area of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM).

Britain is Kaku's first stop on a two-month tour of Europe that will also include Denmark, Sweden, France, and Iceland.

Kaku has been invited to address the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, an organization that defends victims of police repression in the predominantly Black housing project in north London. A large number of youths from Broadwater Farm were arrested

following a police riot there four years ago. Three frame-up victims are doing life imprisonment for the killing of a policeman, convicted on the sole basis of confessions — since retracted — that were beaten out of them in police custody.

The Irish Chaplaincy in London is hosting a meeting where Kaku will meet leaders of the campaigns in defense of the Irish frame-up victims, the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six.

### Meeting in House of Commons

Leading Labour Party Member of Parliament Majorie Mowlam is hosting a meeting in the House of Commons for Kaku to meet with members of Parliament.

The Manchester meeting was sponsored by the District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, branches of the National Union of Railwaymen and the General Municipal and Boilermakers union, and the Central America Solidarity Campaign. The local BBC radio station, Greater Manchester Radio, had broadcast news of the meeting and the Manchester magazine *City Life*, with a circulation of 15,000, devoted a third of a page to news of the meeting and Kaku's tour.

On the platform with Kaku were Arthur Devlin, a leader of the North-West Birmingham Six campaign; Haseena Rawat of the Association of South African students; and Marcella Fitzgerald, a local supporter of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

Messages of support were read from Steve Howells, a leader of the NUM at Agecroft colliery and chair of the North-West Justice for Mineworkers Campaign and Richard Outram, a local Labour councillor.

### Protest to warden

It was reported at the meeting that 40 workers at Schlumbergers, a local factory, had sent a letter to the warden at Anamosa prison where Curtis is being held, protesting his continued victimization by the authorities. The workers raised £18 (US\$30) towards the defense campaign.

Members of the International Communist Party, politically associated with the Workers League, an antilabor outfit in the United States, failed in their attempted disruption of the meeting. Commenting on the leaflets handed out by these supporters of the police and prosecution, Arthur Devlin said, "I have

read every word for and against, and so far I have seen only good reasons for supporting the Mark Curtis defense campaign." Devlin charged that it was no coincidence that Curtis' arrest followed protests, in which Curtis was involved, of the arrest of 17 immigrant workers at the Swift meat-packing factory where he worked.

Devlin referred to comparable attacks on Irish people in Britain. He described the acquittal of Irish activist and frame-up victim Maire O'Shea at Manchester Crown Court

as the first "ray of hope" for Irish people. It proved you could win by standing together, he said.

Haseena Rawat, recently arrived in Britain from Cape Town in South Africa, said, "Just as the international community helped secure the release of Nelson Mandela, as this campaign gathers momentum it will gain the support of the world's progressive forces."

Helen Arthur and Chris Morris from Manchester contributed to this article.

## West Virginia union delegation visits site of miners' strike against Massey

BY LINDA JOYCE

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A delegation of 30 unionists organized by the West Virginia Federation of Labor (AFL-CIO) from Charleston and nearby Huntington visited the scene of the ongoing battle between the United Mine Workers of America and Rum Creek Coal Sales, Inc., in Dehue, West Virginia, on February 10.

UMWA Local 2903 at the Rum Creek coal processing plant, which is owned by A.T. Massey Coal Co., has been on strike since August when Massey hired a nonunion contractor to run the plant. Massey had closed the plant the previous month, claiming that the strikes by 44,000 UMWA miners who walked off the job in support of miners striking Pittston Coal Group had forced the operation into bankruptcy. The miners at Rum Creek participated in that action.

The resulting strike by Local 2903 shut down Massey's preparation plant until late January when U.S. District Judge Dennis Knapp ordered federal marshals to enforce his antipicketing injunction.

Massey then hired heavily armored coal trucks and drivers that rammed their way across the picket lines and barricades into the preparation plant.

Union miners, supporters, and area residents continued to fight against the opening of the plant. On January 26 some 1,000 miners and others poured into Dehue and stopped Massey's coal runs for the day. Since then, however, the court injunction has been enforced, and Massey has begun operating the plant.

When the delegation of trade unionists arrived in Dehue, they witnessed the results

of the most recent company-inspired violence against the strikers. Scabs had shot up a picket shack full of miners on February 9. (The miners hit the floor and none were hurt.) Two other picket shacks have been destroyed in the last two weeks. They also saw fresh rut marks caused by tires in an area that strike supporters had been preparing for a garden.

Scabs provocatively began to videotape the union delegation. Members of the delegation responded by identifying their unions — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; International Association of Machinists; and Communications Workers; along with building trades unions, Boilermakers union, and members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union — and by singing labor solidarity songs.

Federal marshals in Dehue intend to keep the coal trucks rolling. They have arrested miners on the picket line and threatened to ride shotgun in the trucks if necessary. Any miner who the marshals deem is trying to "impede" the trucks can be charged with assault on a federal officer, a felony carrying sentences of three to 10 years.

The union has filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board of unfair labor practices by Massey's Rum Creek Coal Sales; Con-Serv, Inc., the contractor running the plant; and Mate Creek Trucking Inc.

Later the delegation watched videotapes of the strike activities at Logan County Camp Solidarity in nearby Logan, West Virginia. They presented the strikers with a truckload of food and discussed needed solidarity for various labor battles around the state.

### BRITAIN Defend Mark Curtis!

#### Cardiff

Hear Kate Kaku, leader of Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Curtis' wife; Will Carroll, secretary Amalgamated Engineering Union stewards committee at Renolds. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 9 Moira Terrace, Adamsdown. Donation: £1. Sponsor: Supporters of Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call 0222-484677.

#### London

Video showing of documentary by Nick Castle, *The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis*. Meet Kate Kaku. Fri., March 9, 7 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 01-928-7947.

#### Sheffield

Hear Kate Kaku; Bill Etherington, National Justice for Mineworkers Campaign; Graham Till, National Union of Railwaymen District Council; representative of Sheffield Labour Women's Council. Tue., March 13, 7:30 p.m. Reception rooms, Town Hall.



# Indian rights activist gets 18-year sentence for antiracist action

BY SHERRIE LOVE  
AND RICH STUART

RALEIGH, N.C. — Eddie Hatcher, a Native American activist, agreed to plead guilty to 14 counts of second-degree kidnapping February 14 in exchange for an 18-year state prison sentence. Hatcher has been locked up in Central Prison here awaiting trial on state kidnapping charges. He had faced a maximum sentence of 420 years in prison.

The charges against Hatcher stemmed from a February 1988 takeover by Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs, also a Native American, of a local newspaper office in Lumberton,

**'When they're out to get you, they'll break every law there is and do everything to get you.'**

which is in southeastern North Carolina. The two wanted to draw attention to the racism and corruption in the Robeson County sheriff's department and the district attorney's office. They especially wanted to expose drug trafficking in the sheriff's department.

A jury found Hatcher and Jacobs innocent of all charges of hostage-taking and illegal possession of firearms in a federal trial. Then prosecutors moved to indict both under state law for the same incident.

Jacobs pleaded guilty last summer to 14 charges of second-degree kidnapping and was given a six-year sentence as part of a plea bargain.

When asked about the workings of the legal system, Hatcher explained in an interview at the prison, "When they're out to get you, they will. They will break every law there is and do everything to get you."

Hatcher has been in the maximum security block since July 31, 1989, following an unsuccessful fight to block his extradition from California. He was able to prevent authorities from returning him to Robeson County's jails, where he feared his safety would be jeopardized.

About 20 "safe-keepers," including Hatcher, and more than 80 death row inmates are housed here. They are all segregated from the general prison population of 1,000. Seventy to 80 percent are Black, according to Hatcher.

A supporter of framed Iowa political activist and unionist Mark Curtis' fight for justice, Hatcher reported that Spanish-speaking prisoners at Central have the same problem as inmates at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory where Curtis is incarcerated. Curtis and his supporters have been campaigning to overturn prison regulations that restrict prisoners' access to correspondence and materials in languages other than English.

## Why they took action

Hatcher described some of the reasons he and Jacobs took the action at the Lumberton newspaper office. Robeson County is one of the poorest in North Carolina, with a population evenly divided between Blacks, Native Americans, and whites. "The people are extremely poor and have a low educational level, especially the minorities," he said.

"The educational system is divided to segregate the races and the money. Wages are low. Drugs are rampant. A white minority controls the county with intimidation, threats of legal action, or physical harm," Hatcher explained. To illustrate his point, he said that of the 84 people on death row in North Carolina, 34 were from rural, sparsely populated Robeson County. One of them is white; the rest are Black or Native American.

Hatcher said that since 1975 there have been more than 50 unsolved murders in the county, mostly Blacks or Native Americans. The deaths are often labeled suicides by officials, and several have occurred in Robeson County jails.

In 1987 the people of Robeson County joined together to demand justice in the murder of a young Native American, Jimmy Earl

Cummings, who was killed by a deputy sheriff. The deputy is also the sheriff's son. A coalition of Blacks, Native Americans, and whites held mass meetings throughout the county and organized a protest march of several thousand.

After almost a year of inaction in the matter by the judicial system, Hatcher and Jacobs took over the newspaper's offices.

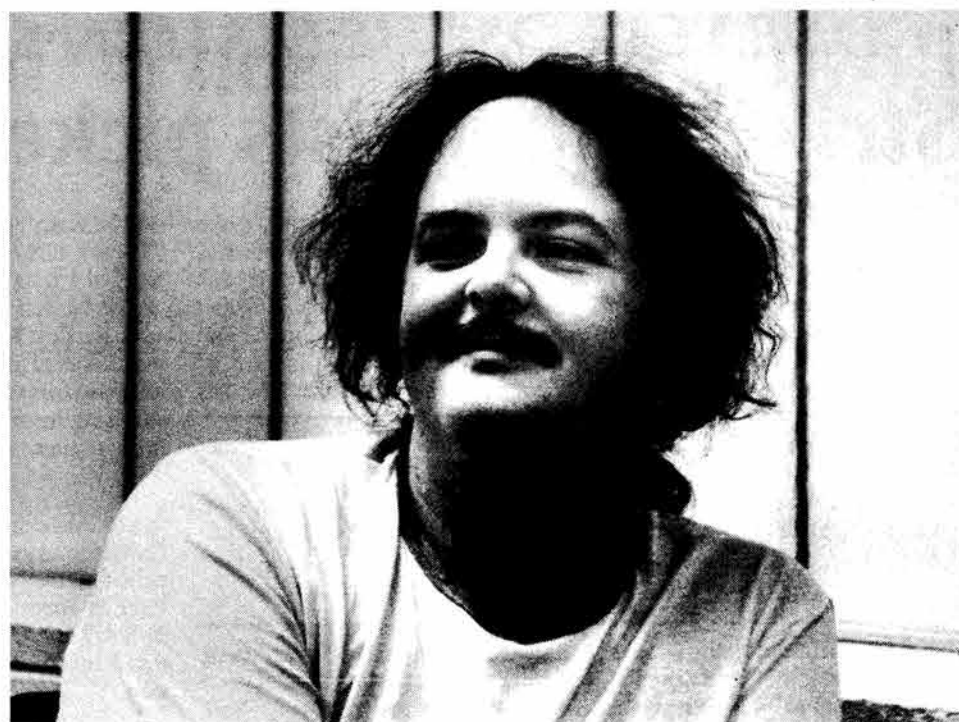
"There are no millionaires here," Hatcher said of Central Prison. "Upper-class whites commit some of the same crimes as people in here, but they're not here. And some of the people in here shouldn't be here!"

North Carolina Gov. James Martin recently asked for \$500 million to build more prisons. "Who are they building prisons for?" Hatcher asked. "Criminals, or people they really don't want on the streets?"

"The U.S. government," he added, "is trying to totally destroy the cultural heritage of the Indian and Black people."

## Malcolm X

Hatcher has no long-term association with other "safe-keepers," who only stay at the prison a few days before being moved. He spends his time reading and writing. Recently he finished reading *Malcolm X Speaks* and is now reading *The Autobiography of Mal-*



Militant/Rich Stuart

Eddie Hatcher, a Native American activist railroaded to prison, was interviewed at North Carolina's Central Prison.

colm X. He feels that Malcolm X had a "visionary perception of what's taking place in the world today."

The authorities are "determined to break my spirit," he said, but he is even more determined not to let that happen.

The Robeson Defense Committee is organizing support for Hatcher. They are urging people to write the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives judiciary committees protesting the indictment of Hatcher and Jacobs on state charges after their acquittal in a federal court and the state's undemocratic

maneuvers in the legal proceedings. The committee is also asking for a congressional investigation into Robeson County and the case.

For more information about Hatcher's fight for justice, or for speaking engagement requests for Thelma Clark, Hatcher's mother, write to the Robeson Defense Committee, Box 1389, Pembroke, N.C. 28372, or phone (919) 521-4209. Correspondence with Hatcher should be addressed c/o Raleigh Central Prison, 1300 Western Blvd., Raleigh, N.C. 27606.

# United Nations human rights commission documents increased violations worldwide

BY ANDY BUCHANAN  
AND MICHEL PRAIRIE

GENEVA, Switzerland — Contrary to the assertions of government representatives from the United States and its imperialist allies, including Britain and Canada, human rights violations around the world have increased in the last few years. A series of special reports to the 46th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights have documented this trend, especially in Latin America and Asia.

The UN commission is currently meeting and an international delegation organized by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee has launched a long-term effort to bring Curtis' fight for justice before this international body. Kate Kaku, a leader of the defense committee and Curtis' wife, headed the delegation.

"We have met several other fighters for justice and human rights defenders who are trying to do exactly the same thing as us, drawing international attention to their own cases," said Kaku. "In the two weeks we have been here, we have discovered that Mark's case is not unique or an isolated incident."

## The cases of the disappeared

Kaku met with Sonia Cuentas Anci at a February 14 special information meeting organized by delegates from nongovernmental organizations — NGOs, which have consultative status with the commission. She is the wife of Javier Antonio Alarcón Guzmán, a Peruvian trade union and political leader who was "disappeared" at the end of December while visiting a part of Peru under military rule. Disappeared people are those arrested or abducted by police, military, or paramilitary forces and are never seen again.

What happened to her husband, Cuentas explained in her testimony to the commission, is part of a more general pattern in Peru. In 1989 alone, "2,567 people were killed, many of whom were executed extrajudicially by the armed forces and the National Police," she said. "And 34,320 people have been detained in camps; there are 317 cases of disappearances."

The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances says that more than 19,000 disappearances have been reported worldwide. In 1989 the number doubled over the previous year.

The situation is particularly critical in El Salvador and Guatemala, two countries in Central America that were repeatedly referred to in commission reports. A large delegation of human and civil rights defenders

from Guatemala are present here.

According to a report by the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission, 461 extrajudicial executions, 100 disappearances, and 1,913 other cases of human rights violations, such as massacres and bombing of the population by the army, took place between October 1988 and September 1989. The Indian population, which constitutes two-thirds of the country's 9 million population, is especially targeted for abuse.

New violations of human rights have occurred and been reported even as the commission meets. On the weekend of February 10-11, the mutilated and bullet riddled bodies of Carlos Enrique and Tyron Francisco Sagastume were found in Guatemala. Both were members of the union at the Coca-Cola Co., "a very well known trade union because of its consistent fight for the rights of the labor movement," a press release from the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission said.

On February 16 Kaku and Eddie Carthan, another participant in the Curtis delegation, met with Camelia Cartagena, the director of the nongovernmental Human Rights Commission of El Salvador. Cartagena is scheduled to present a report on human rights violations in her country to the UN body. The previous three directors of her organization were murdered by death squads linked to the government.

"The human rights situation in my country is today extremely difficult," Cartagena explained. "Last fall, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front launched a major offensive in the capital and across the rest of the country. The government responded with huge and massive repression against the population."

"Today the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador and the human rights office of the Catholic church are the only two organizations in the capital, San Salvador, that can function publicly," she said. "The unions and other public organizations can't do that yet."

## Institutionalized repression

The scope of the repression in El Salvador will also be documented for the UN commission by Maria Gabriella Torinaga, a 33-year-old Italian teacher. She was arrested, detained, and tortured by the Salvadoran army at the outset of the FMLN offensive.

"What saved me," Torinaga said, "is the fact that I am Italian. The Salvadorans didn't have the same chance. My personal experience showed that disappearances, torture, and

human rights violations are institutionalized as a system in El Salvador.

"This should be known and clearly condemned by international public opinion," she said. "This is why I am here. I use every opportunity to describe what happened to me." Torinaga is presently involved in building a large demonstration in solidarity with the people of El Salvador to take place in Rome March 24.

The International Association Against Torture is one of the few NGOs that has pointed to human rights violations in the United States. "The situation of human, economic, political, cultural, and social rights has deteriorated during the last few years in the Third World," David Kolke of the IAAT explained. "But this is also true of the oppressed — like Blacks, Native people, and immigrants — in rich countries like the United States."

The IAAT is based in New York and has members and affiliate organizations in several countries of Central and Latin America, and in Geneva. The organization strongly condemned the U.S. invasion and continuing occupation of Panama at the UN commission's discussion on the right to self-determination.

## Panamanians speak out

Panama's right to self-determination was addressed February 16 by Egbert Wetherborne and Vincente Archibald Blake at a presentation organized by the World University Service, a delegate NGO to the UN commission. Both are Black Panamanians. Wetherborne is a professor of social sciences and law at the University of Panama. Blake is a lawyer associated with Service for Peace and Justice in Latin America.

They explained that 75 percent of the neighborhood of Chorillo, which was populated by 30,000 people, was destroyed in the bombing by U.S. invasion forces. Four common graves containing more than 1,600 corpses have been located. The bodies, they reported, were "buried without identification or registration."

There are 14,000 persons who lost their homes and belongings in Chorillo, representing between 2,700 and 2,750 families, they said. Currently 400,000 persons have lost their jobs as a consequence of the economic sanctions and military intervention, representing 50 percent of the economically active population. This leaves, they concluded, more than 1 million persons in poverty, out of a population of 2.3 million inhabitants.



# — ONE YEAR OF THE EASTERN STRIKE —

## Strikers, unionists picket Lorenzo's Newark visit

Some 8,500 International Association of Machinists (IAM) members struck Eastern Airlines March 4 in an effort to block the company's drive to break the union and impose massive concessions on workers.

Local 1445 and was the largest strike action in Newark in many months. Lorenzo was also in town to speak to Continental and Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) ground and flight crews. Newark is one of Continental's major hubs. SAS has

said he wasn't going to the meeting. "There's nothing that SOB has to say that I want to hear," he said.

The Newark strikers had made a special effort to leaflet Continental workers that day and got a good response from many. "You guys are still hanging tough," said one Continental pilot. "God bless you."

about Croft's visit in the *Deseret News* was headlined. "After year of Eastern strike, protester urges Utah teachers to be committed."

Croft spoke with steelworkers, bus drivers, and government employees during the last week of his stay in Utah. At a meeting with five rail unionists, the rail workers donated \$300 to the strike — two signed over the \$130 checks they'd received for union time off and the other three pitched in \$40. During the tour, more than \$2,000 was raised to aid the strike.

Textile Workers Union Pacific Northwest Joint Board at its February 24 meeting in Portland, Oregon. The joint board represents 12 ACTWU locals, mainly in Oregon.

Striker Skip Kerekes told the joint board that the Machinists went on strike last year because "there was no choice."

"Working people throughout the world need to stand up," added striker Bill Washington. The Machinists encouraged the ACTWU members to build the March 4 picket line at the Portland airport. Fifteen signed up to help with picketing, and five more added their names at a subsequent meeting of Spanish-speaking workers at a recently organized plant.

Several Eastern strikers from La Guardia and Kennedy airports in New York got an enthusiastic reception at IAM Local 1322 monthly meetings in February. Local 1322 organizes United Airlines and Butler Aviation workers at the two airports.

The local's executive board recommended a weekly collection for the strikers, to be held on paydays. "If each of us gives even a dollar a week, it can make a big difference," explained local Vice-president Ed Meehan. Local 1322 has 800 members. Twenty-five signed up to attend the March 4 rally at La Guardia. Strikers set up a table and sold \$200 of T-shirts and buttons.

David Hurst from Newark contributed to this column, along with Ellie Garcia from Salt Lake City, Markie Wilson from Portland, and Patti Iiyama from New York.



### SUPPORT EASTERN STRIKERS!

As of the *Militant's* closing news date, Wednesday, February 28, the strike was in its 362nd day.

The Machinists' walkout remains solid and has gained new momentum. Meanwhile, Texas Air Corp. chief Frank Lorenzo's plan to rebuild Eastern, a Texas Air subsidiary, as a nonunion carrier is faltering, hammered by blows from the strike and stepped-up competition in the airlines industry.

The Eastern workers' fight has won broad support from working people in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, Canada, Sweden, and elsewhere in the world. Readers — especially Eastern strikers — are encouraged to send news of strike solidarity activities to this column.

When Frank Lorenzo turned up at Newark International Airport February 21 to dedicate a new catering facility for Continental Airlines, more than 70 Eastern strikers and supporters were on hand to greet him. The special picket was organized on short notice by striking IAM

a stake in Texas Air and a marketing arrangement with Continental.

Eastern strikers from New York and Philadelphia joined the action, as did members and officials of half a dozen other unions from northern New Jersey. Two representatives of the African National Congress Youth Section who attend Rutgers University in Newark also came to back the strikers.

Because of the picket line, Lorenzo had to go into the reception through the back door, strikers report.

Outside the terminal picketers shouted, "Union yes, Lorenzo no!" and "One day longer, one day stronger!" Jeff, a high school student whose father is a striker and who is a regular on the picket lines, said, "We're not going back without a contract, no matter what."

After a while, picketers moved inside the building. "Don't take any pay cuts," they called out to Continental and SAS workers who were on their way to Lorenzo's meeting. Many smiled and waved to the strikers.

One Continental flight attendant

Los Angeles strike leader Eddie Croft recently visited Price, Utah, as part of his two-week tour of the state. Price is about 120 miles southeast of Salt Lake City, in the heart of a major union-organized coal mining area.

In Price, Croft — a member of IAM Local 1932's strike committee — met with several United Mine Workers of America District 22 officials. He also spoke with workers from Jennmar Corp., in nearby Helper. Workers at Jennmar make coal mine roof bolts and are waging a hard-fought drive to win recognition for the UMWA in their plant. Jennmar's bosses have frequently threatened the workers by saying they will end up in the streets like the Eastern strikers. Instead, the Utah workers have been inspired by the Eastern fighters.

Croft also met with an International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union local president and was interviewed by a local Price radio station — an interview that was widely discussed among working people in the area.

Back in Salt Lake City, Croft attended a Utah Teachers' Association rally of 5,000. The strike leader urged support for the teachers' fight for higher wages and better education throughout his tour. An article

"We the Eastern strikers are encouraged by the example and courage demonstrated by Nelson Mandela in the struggle to win his cause," said a message from IAM Local 1751 in Montréal, Quebec. It was sent to a meeting held there February 18 to celebrate the release of the African National Congress leader. "His perseverance is an example to all of us believing that right will win in the end."

"We have been on strike for almost one year and the struggle continues to defend our union," the message explained. "This has been a hard fight so far. But with the encouragement that we have had from other unions, organizations, and individuals, we will continue fighting to make sure that Eastern doesn't open as a nonunion airline." The message encouraged everyone to help picket at Dorval airport, especially on the strike's March 4 anniversary.

Two strikers from Seattle spoke to the Amalgamated Clothing and

## 'Doing our job on the picket line' in Puerto Rico



Militant/Ron Richards  
Eastern strikers in San Juan, Puerto Rico, have painted signs on expressways to let people there know the strike is still on. "Please don't fly Eastern," reads one. "The strike continues. Say yes to the workers." There are 230 IAM members on strike in San Juan.

BY RON RICHARDS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — More than 100 striking Eastern Machinists and supporters from other unions picketed Expo 90, a convention of travel agents held here in February in what used to be Eastern's Caribbean hub.

David Robles, chief shop steward of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 2201, described the strikers' impact on the gathering in a recent interview at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport.

The purpose of Expo 90 was for the airlines to meet travel agents from throughout Puerto Rico. The union picketed from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Robles said, and distributed more than 3,000 leaflets about the strike.

"We urged the travel agents not to sell Eastern tickets until the strike is over," Robles

explained.

Eastern's problems have become travel agents' problems, he said. Many travel agents in Puerto Rico are removing Eastern's computerized reservation system, System One, and replacing it with a competitor, usually Sabre, run by American Airlines, or United Airlines' Apollo system.

The picket line at the downtown convention center included members and officials of the Teamsters, Postal Workers, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers, Government Employees, United Food and Commercial Workers, Hotel Employees, and other unions. Unions belonging to both the AFL-CIO and Puerto Rico Federation of Labor participated.

The travel convention picket line got extensive coverage in the local press. Another

way the union is letting people know that the strike is still on is by painting murals along the expressway throughout San Juan.

When the strike started last March, 250 IAM members worked at Eastern in San Juan. Of these, three ramp workers and 16 mechanics crossed the picket line.

Eastern's daily flights to and from San Juan have dropped from 26 to five, all from Miami or Atlanta. The airline no longer has direct flights from New York and other cities in the northeastern United States where there are the largest Puerto Rican communities and where most tourists to Puerto Rico come from.

Strikers picket at the San Juan airport four days a week, four and a half hours each day. About 80 percent of the strikers still picket, and there's a 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. picket shift for those strikers who have full-time jobs during the day, Robles explained.

Strikers carry picket signs in both English and Spanish and use a bullhorn to remind passengers that the strike is still on.

One result of the strike is that the Ports Authority of Puerto Rico is stuck with a new \$35 million terminal that now sits abandoned. When the walkout started, it was just four months old and still bore a large banner that read, "Eastern y Puerto Rico: Inaugurando el Futuro" (Eastern and Puerto Rico: Inaugurating the Future).

The terminal was financed by bonds guaranteed by the Ports Authority. Today there is talk of selling the terminal to American Airlines, which recently concluded a \$471 million deal to buy Eastern's Latin American routes and other assets.

Since the strike began, American, USAir, and Pan American have all moved in on Eastern and increased their flights to Puerto Rico.

"We at the picket line are doing our job," said Robles, who was a mechanic at Eastern for 24½ years. "Look at the stock market. Eastern's stock is going lower and lower. We know that Texas Air has been affected by the drainage of funds to support Eastern. We feel confident that either the company will be sold or Congress will solve our problems." Robles

was referring to the union's efforts to get the U.S. Congress to override President George Bush's veto of a "blue ribbon" panel to investigate the Eastern strike.

"It has been hard, but we are not sorry that we are on strike," added Camilo Guadalupe, a ramp worker with 18 years at Eastern. "We are very proud and very happy, but we will be glad when it is all over."

### Machinists mark strike's anniversary in dozens of cities

On the March 3-4 weekend, thousands of Eastern Airlines strikers and their supporters in cities across the United States and in Canada will be participating in rallies, mass picket lines, airport walk-throughs, benefit parties, and other activities to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the Machinists' strike.

As the *Militant* goes to press, we know of anniversary events in the following cities: Atlanta; Baltimore; Berkeley, California; Birmingham, Alabama; Boston; Buffalo, New York; Chicago; Cleveland; Detroit; Greensboro, North Carolina; Houston; Kansas City; Louisville, Kentucky; Los Angeles; Miami; Minneapolis/St. Paul; Montreal, Quebec; New York/Newark; Orlando, Florida; Philadelphia; Pittsburgh; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco; Salt Lake City, Utah; St. Louis; Syracuse, New York; Washington, D.C.

At its recent executive council meeting in Bal Harbour, Florida, the AFL-CIO passed a resolution reiterating the labor federation's support for the Machinists' strike. "During the past year," the resolution says, "these courageous workers have been on the front lines of labor's battle against corporate greed and intransigence. They have earned the admiration and respect of the entire labor movement." The AFL-CIO urges all affiliated unions and labor bodies, on all levels, to give the strikers "their fullest possible support."



# Florida Machinists have 'a good feeling' about their fight

**Militant reporter Selva Nebbia recently spent several days in Florida, visiting Eastern Airlines strikers in Tampa and Orlando. After Miami, these are the two main strike centers in the state.**

**BY SELVA NEBBIA**

**TAMPA** — Four Eastern Airlines strikers were on picket duty when I stopped by Tampa International Airport February 16. After nearly a year on strike, how did they feel about their struggle?

"We are standing for our rights," said Edwin Castro. "By standing for our rights, we are also helping workers at other companies. Because if Eastern succeeds, they will do the same to them. We are doing this for the workers, for all of us. It's quite a good feeling." Castro, a ramp worker, started at Eastern 21 years ago in his native Puerto Rico. Three years later, he moved to Tampa.

James Bloomfield was hired by Eastern 20 years ago in Detroit and moved to Tampa after a few years. There were about 100 Machinists at the Tampa airport when the strike started, he explained. "Maybe one or two crossed the line," he said. "But most have stayed out and participate in picketing every week."

Strikers keep the picket line up seven days a week, 10 hours a day. A union van ferries the Machinists to and from their nearby strike headquarters and comes by to bring them sandwiches and cold drinks for lunch.

Strikers here, as elsewhere, receive \$100 a week in strike benefits; many have to work other jobs to support their families. Some, however, haven't been able to find work.

"It's very hard for Eastern workers to get a decent job in this town," said Lewis, another striker. "We have been blackballed. In central Florida, most people make \$5 an hour. It's hard to live on those wages."

"But if you put that you worked for Eastern on your application, you won't get hired," Bloomfield added.

Strikers in Florida are denied unemployment benefits, said striker Bill Sterns bitterly. He has two children and is not working. "I feel real frustrated," he said. "I feel we are very isolated here. Knowing that we have maintained the strike for a year doesn't put food on my table."

"If we don't hold up the strike line now, then it's over," said Lewis. "Though the pilots and flight attendants went back, they didn't want to and they still support us," he said. He stressed the need for the strike to get more support from the labor movement. "Can you

imagine if today every unionist would contribute at least 50 cents a week? We could hold out for a long time in much better conditions."

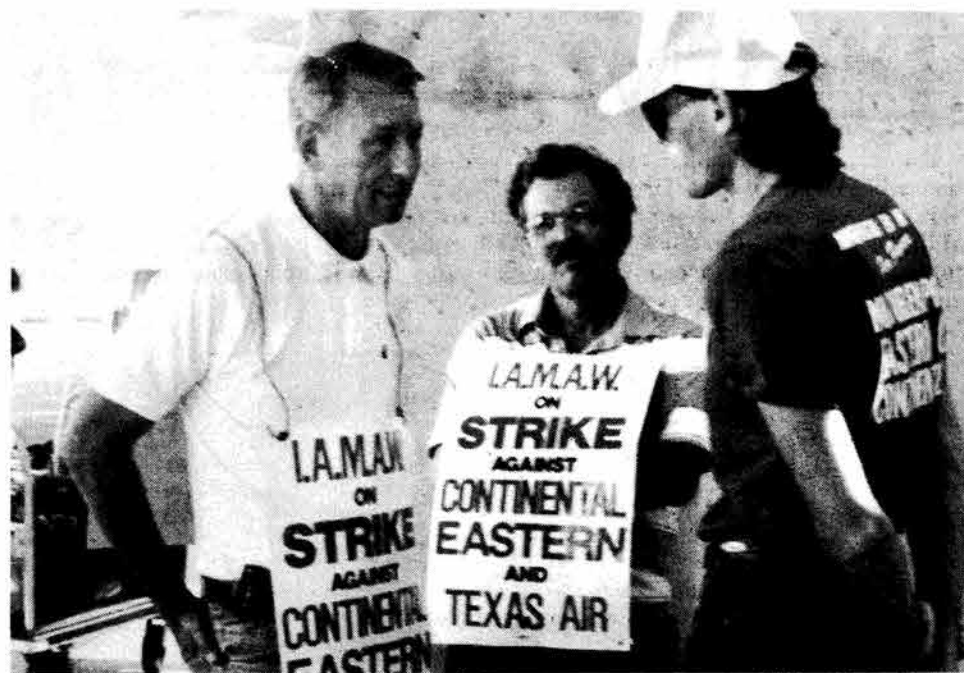
It is obvious to all the strikers that Eastern is hurting. "A year ago, almost 60 Eastern flights left this terminal every day," said Lewis. "Now it's down to less than half that number and most of them are half full."

"In my opinion, this is over," Castro said, referring to Eastern. "It's better for workers that Eastern go under, because if they succeed, other airlines will do exactly the same thing."

**ORLANDO, Fla.** — Some 135 IAM Local 2508 members went on strike here last March, explained local officer Hoyt Blackley, speaking at the union's headquarters. Since then, three have crossed the picket line. "Before the strike," he said, "Eastern had 60 flights a day coming to Orlando. Now it's down to about 20."

"At the beginning of the decade, Eastern was booming here," he said. The airline got a lot of business from travel to Disney World. "Eastern was the official airline of Walt Disney. They destroyed a growing concern in order to break labor."

Out at Orlando International Airport five Machinists were picketing outside Eastern's counters. Rick Walker, an Eastern striker from IAM Local 702 in Miami, was also there. The strikers discussed plans to celebrate the March 4 anniversary of the walkout.



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Eastern strikers George David (left) and Ernesto Martinez (center), on picket duty at the Orlando airport, talked recently with Miami striker Rick Walker about their year-long battle. "What they do here, they will do in other airlines," Martinez stressed.

"As I see it, the airline is in the worst shape ever," said striker George David, a mechanic. Eastern has sold most of its most valued assets, he said, "and what hasn't been sold has been funneled into Continental. Frank Lorenzo has been losing up to \$3 million a day."

"It's been a disappointment to see that the courts don't uphold any of the labor laws," he added. "Even the president has let Lorenzo circumvent labor laws."

"We are being used as the guinea pigs of the airline industry," said striker Ernesto Martinez. "What they do here, they will do in other airlines."

Anastasio Lopez removed the elastic bandage he had around his wrist and held up his arm, pointing to his heavily scarred hand and wrist. "When the strike broke out a year ago,"

he recalled, "I was in the hospital. My hand had been severed in a car accident and had just been reattached."

"The day after the strike began," he continued, "a nurse came to my bedside and told me that from now on, Eastern was not going to pay my hospital bill. I left the hospital that day." Because strikers lost their health insurance when they walked out, Lopez hasn't been able to continue rehabilitation.

"I spent 25 years paying into a health plan at Eastern," he said. "And now I have nothing."

During the year, unionists from the area have given money to the strike fund and joined in support activities, explained David. Many American Airlines workers have joined the picket line. "We are planning to hold some sort of celebration March 4," he added.

## Motorcade spotlights air safety crisis

**BY HARRY RING**

**NEW YORK** — Protesting residents, many from Colombia, organized a 1,000-car motorcade to Kennedy International Airport February 25. The dramatic procession highlighted charges that discrimination against Colombians was responsible for the Avianca plane crash in Cove Neck, Long Island, in January — a disaster that claimed 73 lives.

Protesters said the jet, which had run out of fuel, was denied the necessary landing priority because it was from Colombia.

A spokesperson for the protesters said there were at least two nearby airports where the plane could have landed, but that authorities want to restrict Colombian aircraft to airports that have drug-sniffing dogs.

Forty-eight minutes before the plane went down, the pilot notified regional air traffic controllers that he was running out of fuel and asked for landing priority. They told him to divert the flight to Boston. When he said the plane didn't have enough fuel to make it there, they held him in the air over Kennedy.

The regional controllers then turned the flight over to local controllers, without notifying them that it had asked for a landing priority.

Trying to shift responsibility onto the pilot, officials asserted he had failed to use the word "emergency." Ten minutes before the plane went down, the pilot had told the control tower that two of his four engines had lost power.

### 88-minute delay

The Avianca flight had been delayed a total of 88 minutes coming into the badly overtaxed airport. It was one of 248 planes that were delayed coming into Kennedy that day.

The weather was bad, but the heavy delays were not unique. In 1989 the number of delays at Kennedy jumped 52 percent over the previous year.

Congested airways, a shortage of experienced controllers, and periodic breakdowns of overburdened computers all contribute to the accident-breeding jam-ups.

Trying to determine why the Avianca jet ran out of fuel, federal probes speculated that its gauge may not have been functioning properly.

The speculation is not unreasonable. The plane was bought used by Avianca 13 years ago and was 23 years old. In the past four months it had been in the repair shop 37 times.

It's not only Avianca and other Third World airlines that squeeze extra mileage out of over-age planes, flying them longer than the aircraft's designers ever anticipated. With intensified competition and tighter profit margins, U.S. airlines are doing the same thing.

A decade ago, the average age of planes used by U.S. commercial lines was 10 years. Today, the average age is 13 years, with many past the 20-year mark.

Metal fatigue and corrosion are among the

results of keeping aircraft aloft beyond their proper life span. According to the National Transportation Safety Board, there have been 36 accidents in a five-year period involving corrosion and metal fatigue.

### A big 'if'

The airline industry argues that if they are properly maintained and repaired, the older planes can be flown safely.

Maybe so. But — along with wages and conditions — maintenance and repairs are among the main victims of the cost-cutting drive that now dominates the industry.

Slicing off big corners on maintenance and repairs is made even more dangerous by the present state of the federal safety inspection system.

A total of 2,500 federal inspectors are responsible for checking airports, airplanes, pilots, and mechanics. The government estimates, modestly, that another 500 inspectors are needed. The White House proposes to hire 300 — over the next two years.

The acute shortage of inspectors means incredible lapses in policing the industry. Government studies disclose that thousands of inspections which are supposed to be mandatory simply aren't done. One study of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Southwest Region found that 12.5 percent of minimum required inspections had not been done.

Last September, 10 people were killed and 11 injured when a sightseeing plane crashed at Grand Canyon National Park Airport. Investigators found that the airport had an inadequate communications system and insufficient medical supplies on rescue trucks. It lacked required firefighting equipment and had failed to conduct required fire drills and other emergency training. The FAA said that three years in a row these critical failures went unnoticed in federal inspections.

An FAA official speculated that it would take "several more years" to overcome the safety hazards created by the shortage of inspectors.

Meanwhile, the situation was summed up by Fernando Oliver, an attorney for relatives of some of the victims of the Avianca disaster. "These airports," he declared, "are not safe."

## Greyhound drivers set strike to resist union-busting pact

**BY SUSAN LaMONT**

**NEW YORK** — Some 8,500 bus drivers, mechanics, and clerks have voted to strike Greyhound Lines Inc. at midnight March 1. They are fighting to resist the company's union-busting concession demands. The workers, members of the Amalgamated Transit Union, voted February 9 by more than 90 percent to reject the company's only and final contract offer. The ATU members are pressing to win back at least some of the wages and benefits they have been forced to give up over the past eight years.

When Greyhound Lines, headed by Fred Currey, was bought from Greyhound Corp. in 1987 in a \$350 million leveraged buyout, drivers were forced to take pay cuts of 30 percent to 40 percent. While squeezing ATU members, the company managed in 1987 to come up with \$80 million to buy Trailways Lines Inc., the only other nationwide bus company. Greyhound went on to make record profits in 1988 and 1989, the ATU reports.

Greyhound's current proposal to the union includes no wage increase. It gives the company unrestricted rights to subcontract bus routes and maintenance work, eliminates seniority, and undermines the grievance proce-

dures. Greyhound also wants to reduce sick leave, vacations, holiday pay, and other benefits for ATU members.

Greyhound has placed ads in 36 major U.S. newspapers for scab bus drivers. The company is offering a \$100 bounty to anyone who applies and \$100 a day for training.

In New York, the ATU called for a rally March 1 at the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Manhattan. The action has the support of the New York Central Labor Council. In several cities, the ATU has already contacted striking Eastern Airlines Machinists for help in picketing scab hiring sessions. ATU members will also be participating in the March 3-4 strike anniversary actions planned by Eastern strikers.

Greyhound drivers waged a militant seven-week strike in 1983 that won widespread support from other unionists. Rallies of hundreds and sometimes thousands were held around the country. Cops attacked ATU pickets in a number of cities and arrested hundreds. One striker in Zanesville, Ohio, was killed by a scab-driven Greyhound bus. The strikers returned to work after reluctantly accepting a contract with 15 percent cuts in wages and benefits.



# The Machinists union's battle at Eastern Airlines: a chronology



Strikers on the picket line at New York's La Guardia Airport, March 6, 1989. When 8,500 ramp workers, cleaners, mechanics, and other IAM members walked out March 4, 1989, flight attendants and pilots honored their picket lines, and Eastern's operations were virtually paralyzed.

Militant/Ernie Mailhot

**1976.** After claiming it was bankrupt in 1975, Eastern Airlines wins seven years of concessions from Machinists, flight attendants, and pilots. Frank Borman is president of Eastern.

**End of 1983.** Eastern unions agree to pay cuts for following year; Machinists and flight attendants take 18 percent cut. Pilots' association takes 22 percent. Pay cut of 18 percent forced on noncontract workers. Together unions, pilots' association, and noncontract workers give up \$360 million.

**1986.** Borman demands and gets another 20 percent pay cut from pilots and flight attendants. International Association of Machinists (IAM) refuses cuts, despite Borman's threat to sell airline. Eastern is sold to Texas Air Corp., headed by Frank Lorenzo. In 1983 Lorenzo spearheaded union-busting drive at Continental Airlines, also owned by Texas Air.

Stepped-up harassment and victimization of workers, firings, forced overtime, speed-up, draconian attendance policy begin,

known as "reign of terror."

**Oct. 19, 1987.** Contract talks start between Eastern and IAM, covered by Railway Labor Act. Company demands \$150 million in concessions from union. Some 7,000 union and nonunion workers laid off over next 16 months.

**December 1987.** IAM's contract expires.

**Jan. 26, 1988.** National Mediation Board steps in at request of both parties.

**October 1988.** Donald Trump agrees to buy Eastern's New York-Boston-Washington shuttle for \$365 million.

**Feb. 2, 1989.** National Mediation Board announces talks are at an impasse; 30-day "cooling off" period begins.

**February 7.** Some 1,700 IAM members at Eastern's Miami maintenance base walk off the job to protest company's disciplining of three workers. Hundreds are given 10-day suspension notices.

**February 15.** IAM members at Eastern Airlines have voted by 97 percent to strike when cooling-off period ends at midnight March 3, the union announces. Some 77 percent of 8,500 eligible members vote.

**February 21.** AFL-CIO urges President George Bush to appoint an emergency board to head off strike for at least 60 days.

**February 24.** National Mediation Board also recommends Bush appoint emergency board. Transport Workers Union (TWU) announces flight attendants' executive board has voted unanimously to back strike by Machinists.

**March 1.** Lorenzo offers pilots a five-year contract, seeking \$64 million in wage and benefit concessions.

**March 3.** Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) votes to back Machinists' strike. Workers in Miami, Atlanta, and other sites are locked out by Lorenzo. Thousands of workers gather at union halls for rallies, counting down to midnight.

**12:01 a.m. March 4.** IAM members — ramp service workers, mechanics, aircraft cleaners, stock clerks, and facility cleaners — strike Eastern. Some 5,900 flight attendants in TWU Local 553 and 3,400 pilots honor picket line. Eastern's operations come to a virtual standstill.

**March 5.** Injunctions issued to prevent Machinists from setting up secondary picket lines at commuter railroads in New York, northern New Jersey, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, set to go up March 6. Union announces it will abide by injunctions.

**March 6-7.** Eastern lays off 9,500 reser-

vation clerks, ticket agents, office workers, and other noncontract employees.

**March 9.** Eastern files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in federal bankruptcy court in New York. Proceedings are overseen by Judge Burton Lifland.

**March 10.** Court grants Eastern permission to pay management and scabs. Eastern begins offering \$12 fares on Northeast shuttle to drum up business.

**March 10-14.** Unionists mobilize at airports to back strikers: 2,000 in Chicago; 4,000 in Atlanta; 2,000 in Cleveland; 500 in Newark; hundreds in New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. Some 3,000 attend strike support rally in Boston. Passenger load on shuttle begins to drop after several days.

**March 18-19.** Mass rallies and picket lines again back strike, including 1,500 in Detroit, 800 in San Francisco, 500 in Denver, 800 in New York, 1,500 in Kansas City. Eastern starts hiring scab pilots.

**March 20.** Members of Union of Flight Attendants at Continental Airlines begin four-day walkout to draw attention to harsh working conditions.

**March 22-24.** Lifland orders strike pickets not to "harass" passengers at New York's La Guardia Airport and Boston's Logan Airport, denies unions' request to pay strikers wages owed them for last week of work.

**April.** Around country, strikers begin picketing Eastern's scab hiring sessions for flight attendants, mechanics.

**April 6.** Group of investors headed by Peter Ueberroth agrees to buy Eastern for \$464 million. Union officials agree to five-year contracts and \$210 million in concessions to make sale possible. San Juan, Puerto Rico, rally for strikers draws 300.

**April 9.** Contingents of Eastern strikers from Miami, New York, and other cities march in massive abortion rights demonstration in Washington, D.C.

**April 11.** Sale to Ueberroth collapses after Lorenzo refuses to agree to appointment of court-named trustee to run airline until sale is finalized.

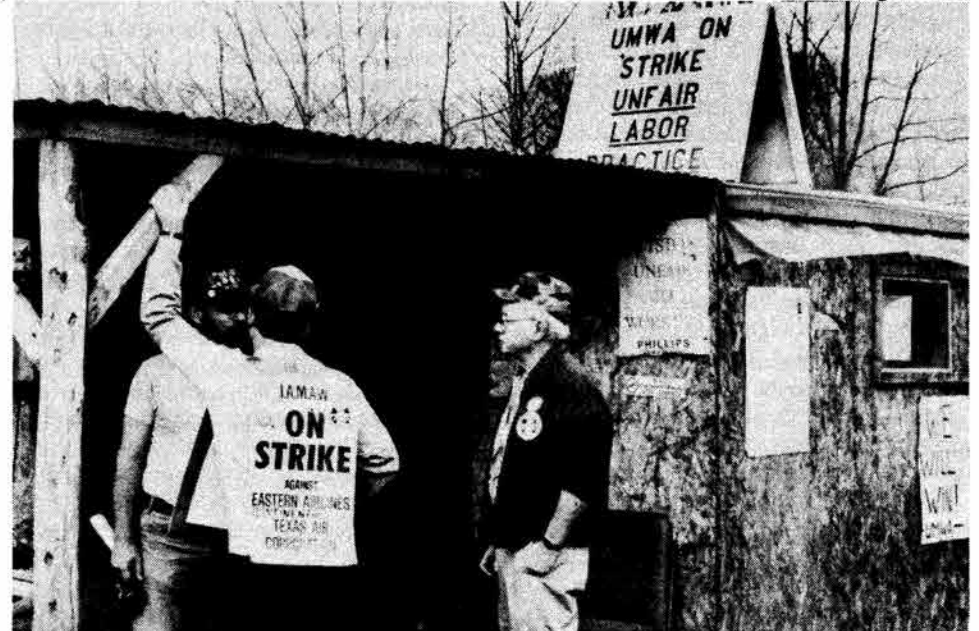


Striking Pittston miners joined an August protest at Newark International Airport. Miners have backed Eastern strike activities in many cities.

Militant/Jane Harris



Militant/Roger Annis



Militant/Rich Stuart

Eastern Machinists are on strike in Toronto and at Montréal's Dorval airport (top). Greensboro, North Carolina, IAM members recently traveled to Virginia (bottom) to visit striking Pittston coal miners. Eastern strikers from all over have made the trip to show support for the miners' fight.





Militant/Selva Nebbia

Last Labor Day, strikers in Philadelphia, above, and other cities led the demonstrations. They showed the strike remained strong despite the defection of hundreds of pilots in August and September. Right, Los Angeles strike leader Richard James and other Machinists joined striking La Mode garment workers to picket a golf tournament in January. La Mode makes golf clothes.



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

**April 24.** Eastern President Phillip Bakes announces plan to break strike by "reorganizing" airline as a smaller, nonunion carrier, selling off \$1.8 billion in assets.

**May 13.** Chicago commodities speculator Joseph Ritchie submits bid to buy Eastern.

**May 25.** Bankruptcy court approves sale of shuttle to Trump after bid by America West Airlines for shuttle is withdrawn.

**June 2.** IAM, ALPA, and TWU officials announce willingness to give up to \$400 million in one year in concessions to make Ritchie buyout possible. AFL-CIO offers \$50 million.

**June 5.** Bankruptcy court concludes Ritchie bid is not viable.

**June 7.** Trump takes over shuttle. IAM, ALPA, and TWU officials agree to return to work at shuttle, and picket lines there come down. Flight attendants and pilots to work under extension of old Eastern contract; Machinists report for work without contract.

**June 11.** Hundreds of Eastern strikers attend Charleston, West Virginia, rally to back striking Pittston coal miners. Machinists, miners step up joint activities.

**June 29.** Machinists at Trump vote by substantial margin to accept six-month union-weakening contract.

**July 2.** Rallies and expanded picket lines in many cities protest Eastern's increase of daily flights to 226, up from 80. Eastern slashes fares to lure passengers.

**July 8.** Scab worker killed at Atlanta airport while riding a tug pulling baggage.

**July 14.** Eastern announces losses of \$81.6 million in April, \$82.4 million in May, and \$61.8 million in June. Hundreds of strikers, supporters march to New York's La Guardia Airport.

**July 28–August 4.** Rallies and marches again held to protest increase of flights to 350 a day.

**Early August.** ALPA President Henry Duffy urges Eastern pilots to try to resolve strike. More than 200 pilots cross picket line, along with hundreds of flight attendants. Eastern pilots vote to continue backing strike.

**August 15.** Flights increase to 390 a day. Eastern says July flights were 75 percent full.

**August 21.** Machinists at New York's La Guardia Airport begin picketing Hudson General, one of several IAM-organized subcontracting companies hired to do ramp and other work for Eastern.

**August 24.** Texas Air announces it may sell some or all of Continental. A few days later, Eastern announces \$400 million shortfall in reorganization plan.

**September 4.** Eastern strikers lead Labor Day demonstrations in New York and other cities.

**September 6.** Some 1,000 strikers, supporters rally in Washington, D.C., at end of 3,000-mile Journey for Justice strike caravan.

**September 7.** Daily flights increase to 600. Strikers hold protests in many cities.

**September 12.** Bankruptcy court approves sale of nine of Eastern's 13 gates in Philadelphia, and other assets, to Chicago-based Midway Airlines, a largely nonunion carrier.

**October.** A majority of IAM-organized Ogden Allied fuelers at Washington, D.C.'s

National Airport sign petition urging IAM International officials to allow them not to fuel Eastern planes. Eastern increases daily flights to 700; IAM reports flight schedule is being met by using 28 Continental planes, crews. Strikers participate in national "Housing Now!" march in D.C.

**October 23.** More than 1,500 strikers and supporters in Miami form a "human billboard" across Rickenbacker Causeway during travel agents' convention.

**Late October–early November.** Rallies and airport walk-throughs take place in Louisville, Kentucky; Philadelphia; St. Louis; Pittsburgh — where 100 striking coal miners join in — and in Washington, D.C.

**November 1.** Appeal to students not to fly Eastern or Continental over holidays is launched in Boston.

**November 10.** U.S. bankruptcy court enters injunction against IAM, aimed at restricting picketing and other strike activity at airports and other sites. IAM is appealing order.

**November 19.** Florida-wide strike support march in Miami draws 1,000. Pittston miners come down to join strikers' "Miami Camp Solidarity."

**November 21.** President Bush vetoes legislation to establish congressional "blue ribbon" panel to investigate and recommend solutions to Eastern conflict.

**November 22.** ALPA Master Executive Council ends pilots' sympathy strike at Eastern. TWU leadership does so next day. Lorenzo says there are no jobs for pilots, flight attendants. IAM leadership announces Machinists' strike remains solid.

**November 27–28.** Nordic Transport Workers Federation, representing transport workers unions in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, issues strong statement in support of strike.

**December 8.** Machinists organize "Stand Up to Lorenzo Day" activities in New York, other cities.

**December 9.** Federal grand jury in Brooklyn announces it is weighing filing criminal charges against Eastern for safety violations at New York's Kennedy International Airport.

**December 19.** American Airlines announces it is buying Eastern's Latin American routes, and other assets, for \$471 million. IAM reports Eastern's passenger load is 48 percent.

**December 22.** Eastern announces reduction in daily flights from 830 to 803.

**December 28.** Layoff of 600 Eastern employees announced, along with wage cuts for half the remaining work force.

**Jan. 11, 1990.** New York *Daily News* reports the federal grand jury investigation of Eastern's safety violations has widened to include New York's La Guardia Airport.

**January 15.** Strikers in Atlanta, Miami, New York, and other cities join activities commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. IAM International President George Kourpias visits strikers' picket lines in many cities.

**January 19.** Eight-month boycott of Eastern led by Bermuda International Union forces Eastern to cancel its daily flight to Bermuda. Eastern soon announces cancellation of flights to nine other Caribbean destinations.

**January 22–24.** IAM legislative conference in Washington, D.C., maps effort to get a congressional override of Bush's "blue ribbon" panel veto.

**January 24.** Texas Air stock drops by 16 percent in one day, closing at \$7.37½.

**January 25.** Lorenzo presents third reorganization plan to unsecured creditors' committee, saying he will pay them 10 percent of Eastern's \$1.1 billion debt upon emerging from bankruptcy, 70 percent over next 10 years — without interest — and remaining debt in company stock.

**January 27.** Labor solidarity rally for Buffalo strikers draws 500; Los Angeles strikers hold expanded picket line.

**January 30.** Committee representing Eastern's preferred stockholders tells federal bankruptcy court it has lost faith in Eastern's management, calls for drastic steps to salvage any of airline's remaining value.

**February 3.** Machinists at La Guardia Airport hold first of regular biweekly solidarity picket lines, following example of Los Angeles strikers.

**February 6.** Eastern Airlines announces 1989 losses of \$852.3 million — a record for the airline industry. Texas Air as a whole lost \$885.6 million.

**February 8.** Safety investigation has been widened to include Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport and top Eastern officers Joseph Leonard and Edward Upton.

**February 19.** Striking Pittston miners vote to accept new contract and end 11-month walkout, many vowing continued solidarity with Eastern strikers.

**February 20.** Lorenzo fails to meet deadline for reaching agreement with creditors on a reorganization plan acceptable to them. Concerns over Eastern's ability to meet its pension liabilities are being raised by federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. and U.S. Department of Labor.

**February 21.** Texas Air sells 50 percent stake in computer reservation system, System One, to a General Motors subsidiary for \$250 million.

**February 22.** Eastern and unsecured creditors reach agreement on reorganization plan in which part of Eastern's debts will be backed by Continental assets, drawing Texas Air directly into Eastern's bankruptcy.

**March 3–4.** Thousands of strikers and supporters, backed by AFL-CIO, hold rallies, mass pickets, airport walk-throughs, benefits, and other activities in United States and Canada to mark anniversary of battle at Eastern.



Militant



Militant/Janet Post



Militant/Nancy Brown

Left, food bank in IAM Local 702's hall in Miami, where there are 3,000 strikers. Center, unionists picket an Eastern scab hiring session for mechanics in Portland. All over the country, strikers have turned away many would-be applicants by talking to them about the issues in the strike. Right, strikers participated in the big "Housing Now!" march in Washington, D.C., last October.



# Eastern strikers: stronger than ever after one year of fighting

Continued from front page

locals, labor bodies, community and student groups, anti-apartheid rallies, and other events and organizations.

Strikers have mobilized to send out mailings and distribute thousands of new leaflets. "Students: Do the right thing! Just say no to union-busting!" says a new flier put out by IAM Local 796 in Washington, D.C., urging students not to fly Eastern or Continental over the spring holidays.

More strikers are out on the picket lines as compared to a few months ago, and some who had drifted away for a while are getting active again. Strikers who have other jobs are still picketing and going to strike offices, as well as winning support for the fight from their new coworkers.

Strike headquarters are humming with volunteers, including from other unions. Food banks have been revived and become organizing centers as well. In the course of this outreach activity, thousands of dollars in new contributions have been donated to the strikers' fund.

In some cities where activity had ebbed, strikers have gotten reorganized, called actions for March 3-4, and are now looking to strengthen their participation in the fight.

Unionists in areas where there are no Eastern strikers, such as Utah, are inviting Machinists to tour, broadening the impact of the strike to even more areas and unions.

Machinists in Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, and other cities are organizing regular biweekly solidarity picket lines to maximize their impact at the airports and involve other unionists. In Boston unions are taking responsibility for "a day on the picket line" to back the strikers.

To reach the maximum number of passengers and other airline workers, IAM members in some cities are expanding activities inside airport terminals, from staffing strike information tables to walking through terminals wearing new strike T-shirts.

Strikers are also making a point of talking to Eastern scabs, who more and more realize they're on a sinking ship. Some even approach the strikers on their own.

Workers at Trans World, United, and other airlines — who face concession demands and union-weakening pressures from their own bosses — have stepped up support for the Eastern Machinists by joining picket lines and contributing money. Strikers also report getting more words of encouragement from Continental workers and from workers at subcontracting companies such as Hudson General.

The AFL-CIO has also stressed its support for the strike in several recent statements.

"We urge all national and international unions, state federations, and local central bodies to continue their fullest possible support, to solicit funds from their members, and to call upon their locals, districts, and regions to adopt and support individual striking IAM lodges," the AFL-CIO's Executive Council said in February.

In New York; Pittsburgh; Philadelphia; Chicago; Greensboro, North Carolina; and many other cities, camouflage-shirted coal miners will be among the unionists at the March 3-4 activities. Following the settle-

## Keeping up picket lines, winning labor solidarity have strengthened strike.

ment of the Pittston coal strike, many United Mine Workers of America members remain committed to fighting alongside the Eastern strikers — as they have for the past year — for as long as it takes to win the struggle against Lorenzo.

### What strike has accomplished

By the time the 8,500 Machinists at Eastern walked off the job at 12:01 a.m. last March 4, they had come to the conclusion that their only alternative was to fight. "We had no choice," Seattle striker Skip Kerekes explained recently to a group of Portland, Oregon, textile workers.

By last March the Machinists at Eastern, like millions of other workers, had been through years of setbacks and concessions. Pressures on the union had intensified after Lorenzo acquired the airline in 1986. Workers were pounded by a "reign of terror," facing hundreds of firings, arbitrary disciplinary actions, ferocious speed-up, and daily harassment and humiliations.

Lorenzo refused to budge on a series of union-busting demands, including \$150 million in concessions, put forward under the guise of contract negotiations. Finally he provoked the strike, assuming he could smash the union as he had at Continental Airlines in 1983.

Many strikers point out that "the reign of terror" and what they went through earlier continues to reinforce their resolve to keep fighting and to overcome the obstacles they've faced over the past year.

The obstacles have not been small. Strikers have faced hostile courts and federal government; injunctions aimed at crippling the picket lines; systematic efforts by Lorenzo to break the strike by hiring scabs to restart the

airline; betrayal by the officialdom of the pilots' association and Transport Workers Union (which organizes the flight attendants); and personal and financial hardships.

Over the months, the strikers have overcome these challenges by continuing to fight along the same lines as when they walked out: maintaining the airport picket lines and reaching out to the labor movement for solidarity.

By organizing themselves and their supporters, the combat-tested strikers have reached the 365th day of their walkout stronger and more confident than ever.

### Strikers have changed

Many Eastern strikers will be the first to tell you that they are different people now than when they walked out a year ago.

By pushing their fight forward and linking up with other workers in struggle, they have come to view their battle as part of something much bigger. "We are standing for our rights," said Edwin Castro, a Tampa striker, a couple of weeks ago. "By standing for our rights, we are also helping others in other companies. Because if Eastern succeeds, they will do the same to them. We are doing this for the workers, for all of us. It's quite a good feeling."

The response the Eastern strike has gotten among broad layers of other workers registers a further shift away from the long period of setbacks and retreat suffered by the labor movement during much of the 1980s.

In the past year, combative and confident Eastern Machinists have joined forces with telephone strikers, garment workers, hospital workers, farm workers, and — above all — with striking coal miners. As fighters have gotten to know each others' problems and situations, gains and setbacks, understanding and solidarity have deepened. More workers see themselves not just as supporters of other battles, but as cofighters.

The leadership of the Machinists strike has broadened considerably, as workers have continued to step forward and shoulder responsibility of all kinds, in major strike centers and in cities with only a few strikers. This development is one of the strike's most important accomplishments — one that will help provide leadership for future fights as well.

### After March 4

The unprecedented outpouring of solidarity and activity around the anniversary puts Eastern strikers in a strong position to keep up the momentum after March 4, strengthening the picket lines and mobilizing labor support.

Now that the Pittston strike has been settled, Eastern strikers will continue to be called on to aid the many fights in the coalfields, including among western miners.

Other labor battles are also looming. Greyhound bus drivers have a midnight March 1 strike deadline and have already begun to contact Eastern Machinists. Unions at the New York *Daily News* face a possible walk-out at the end of March. Aerospace workers at Lockheed, teachers in Utah, garment workers in New York and Los Angeles, and other fighters are already turning to the battle-tested Eastern strikers for support.

Just as the Pittston miners' Camp Solidarity drew thousands of unionists from every corner of the country and beyond, the Eastern strikers' picket lines have increasingly become a pole for solidarity from other unionists and activists.

There are also growing opportunities to broaden support for the strike internationally, especially in Canada and Puerto Rico where Eastern Machinists are on the picket lines.

### A victory over Lorenzoism

The February 22 agreement between Lorenzo and Eastern's unsecured creditors, in which \$95 million in Continental assets are being put up to back Eastern's debts, is yet another indication of the "new" Eastern's unviability. Even more important, the agreement draws Texas Air and Continental directly into the conflict at Eastern — something Lorenzo has long tried to avoid.

Although the deal puts Texas Air — itself



Militant/Don Gurewitz  
Boston strikers rallied at Logan International Airport in October.

\$2 billion in debt — further at risk, Lorenzo was forced to make the agreement to try to avoid moves toward liquidation of Eastern.

Despite Lorenzo's rosy predictions, Eastern losses hit record levels in 1989. Support for the strike and concern over Eastern's safety problems have affected passenger levels. Travel agents too, worried about clients getting stuck with worthless tickets, are steering passengers elsewhere.

Meanwhile, other pressures on Lorenzo are mounting, including government scrutiny of Eastern's \$1 billion pension liabilities and of prestrike transactions between Eastern and Texas Air that the union charges stripped Eastern of valued assets.

Most important, Texas Air's shakier-than-ever future and the continued attraction of the Eastern fight will tend to draw workers at Continental back toward the strike and the labor movement — a development Eastern strikers should seize with both hands.

The victory the Eastern strikers can now take is a victory over Lorenzoism, whether or not he retains control of the company, whether or not strikers ever get their jobs back. Such a victory against union-busting would give a big boost to labor struggles in this country and strengthen the labor movement worldwide.

## Int'l protests needed to free South Korean political prisoner

The Save the Soh Brothers Society based in Kyoto, Japan, has issued an urgent international appeal for protests calling on the South Korean government to immediately release Soh Sung, a political prisoner for 19 years.

Soh Sung and his brother Soh Joon-Shik were arrested by South Korean authorities in 1971 for alleged spying for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north and were convicted under the repressive National Security Law. Their real crime was organizing student protests against the U.S.-backed regime of Park Chung Hee. During interrogation Soh Sung suffered severe burns over 45 percent of his body, badly disfiguring his face and condemning him to deteriorating health. In May 1988 Soh Joon-Shik was released from prison.

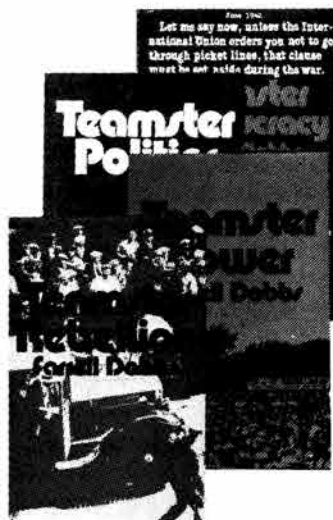
According to reports in the South Korean press, the government decided January 17 to release a number of political prisoners on March 1. Soh Sung's name was mentioned among those who might be amnestied. The Society has asked that messages demanding his release be sent to: President Roh Tae Woo, Blue House, 1 Sejong-no, Chongro-gu, Seoul, South Korea; Minister of Justice Huh Hyong Koo, 1 Chungang-dong, Kwachon-myon, Shihung-gun, Kyunggi-do, South Korea.

Copies of protests and requests for further information should be sent to: Save the Soh Brothers Society, c/o Makoto Nishimura, 645 Sarashiya-cho, Shimogyo-ku, Kyoto 600 Japan.

## For Eastern strikers, union coal miners, and other fighters on the frontlines of today's labor battles, the 'Teamster' series is a must. . . .

Workers fighting to mobilize labor solidarity and defend their unions against employer attacks will find a lot in common with the men and women who built the Teamsters union in Minnesota in the 1930s. Their story is told in the four-volume Teamster series by Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of the organizing drives and a leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1983.

The Teamster strikes won a tremendous victory for the labor movement, inspired workers around the country, and helped pave the way for the formation of CIO. The series includes *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*.



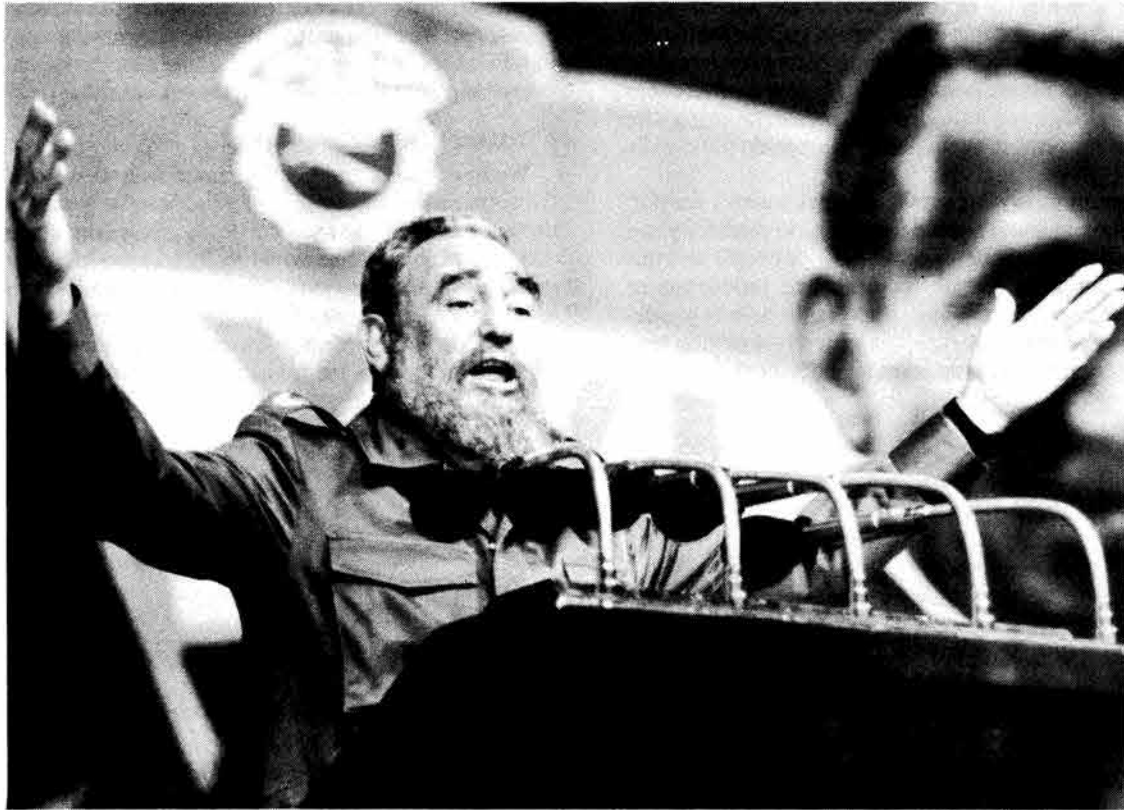
Teamster Rebellion, \$8.95. Other volumes, \$9.95 each. Available at Pathfinder Bookstores listed on page 20 or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. (Please include \$1 for shipping and handling.)



# International Socialist Review

Supplement to the Militant

March 1990



Militant/Cindy Jaquith

## 'Cuba — ready to defend our ideas, honor, and future' Fidel Castro speaks to trade unionists

The following speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro was given at the closing session of the 16th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), held in Havana on January 28.

The translation from Spanish is from the February 11 issue of the English-language edition of *Granma Weekly Review*, published by the Cuban Communist Party. Footnotes and subheadings are by the *Militant*.

Distinguished guests;

Comrade delegates to the 16th congress:

Some may be wondering if I have come to the rostrum very excited, but such is not the case, because it is impossible to experience more excitement than what we have felt in the last few days.

We can say that the entire congress was very moving. And it culminated yesterday with a torchlight parade of workers, students, and the entire people from the steps of the university to the statue of José Martí,<sup>1</sup> whose birthday — as we all know — is today. I prefer to reflect in a calm and thoughtful manner.

I have attended all the workers' congresses since the victory of the revolution. So I am in a position to judge the changes, and on this occasion I was fully aware that this was a workers' congress in keeping with the most decisive stage of the revolution's history.

The other congresses were held under normal conditions, but this was held under exceptional conditions.

Something which seemed evident to me right from the start was the extraordinary militancy of the delegates, the prevailing spirit. I think it was an excellent idea for you to come dressed in militia uniforms.

It was also clear that we have a new generation of trade union cadres, representing a much better trained and educated working class, much more politically aware and conscious, and as revolutionary as any group of delegates in any era of our history.

As I was saying yesterday, the congress has been held amid universal confusion, and you can't imagine how important it is to have a clear head, a clear mind, and clear ideas at a time of universal confusion.

### Confusion in the progressive camp

I don't know if it was absolutely correct to talk of universal confusion, because the confusion is mainly taking place in the progressive camp, in the camp of truly democratic ideas, in the camp of socialist and revolutionary ideas; because the imperialists aren't confused, the capitalists aren't confused. They know very well what they are doing. They know very well what is at stake in this stage of human history.

I was thinking about all these things yesterday when the guests weren't here, and once when they were. And I wondered: Will they understand the congress? Will they understand what is going on here? Will they think we have gathered together a group of dummies, people without ideas

of their own who can't think for themselves, a group of cowards who can't give their views or opinions or demand certain rights and prerogatives? Will they think our congress is or isn't democratic?

There were even those who were amazed and others who expressed admiration at seeing members of the Political Bureau at this congress. They wondered if this would inhibit freedom of expression on the part of the delegates, if it would inhibit their expression of views. Because, of course, this is very unusual. This doesn't happen elsewhere, much less in the capitalist world, from which many of the guests come.

And keep in mind that when I speak of the capitalist world, I mean two capitalist worlds: the developed capitalist world of consumer societies — which got rich plundering the world for centuries, in addition to plundering their own working class — and the underdeveloped capitalist world of former colonies, that were plundered for centuries and for which development is now virtually impossible.

In those countries the ministers don't meet with the workers. The government doesn't give an accounting to the

“  
**We have a new generation of trade union cadres, representing a more conscious working class . . .**  
”

representatives of the workers, to answer every question of every delegate. You don't and will never see such a thing in the capitalist countries.

And what's worse, it wasn't always seen in all the socialist countries, those with governments divorced from the masses. You don't see the leadership of a ruling party at a congress of workers to give an account, explain, and answer any question of the delegates.

That's why it was unusual and people took notice — some with satisfaction, others with suspicion, and a few with extreme suspicion, in line with the extreme suspicion prevailing in the world.

### Not a congress of capitalist owners

There were other unusual things, such as watching the working class and its representatives concerned, first of all, with every detail of production, for one simple reason: this isn't a congress of capitalist owners.

In a meeting of enterprises of the bourgeois republic, the representatives would have discussed every detail and all the problems of production, including technology — what to do to save raw materials, energy and resources, to recycle parts — so that everything will function with capitalist discipline and efficiency in production and services.

In a meeting of owners of a socialist republic, they will have to act like the meeting of capitalist owners, because here are the owners of wealth of the country, the owners of the country.

Nobody spoke here on behalf of the United Fruit Company, the companies which owned the nickel mines, the electric or telephone companies or railroads. Nobody spoke on behalf of the dozens and dozens of companies which

owned sugar mills, or the few thousand who were major owners of our lands and mines and factories. Not one was heard here.

The owners don't speak at a workers' congress in capitalist countries either. The speakers are the workers, the exploited, those who give a high ratio of surplus value in every hour of work. Those who speak are the marginalized, enslaved, and oppressed. Because only after a socialist revolution do worker and owner, worker and controller of the wealth of the country, become one and the same. Not in the sense of owning a firm or a factory as a collective — as some have tried to smuggle into socialist ideas — but as owners of all the factories and wealth in the country, which is the only genuine sense that socialist property could ever have, for it can't just be ownership of certain means of production by a group of workers.

### No other concept of socialism

I have always understood and will always understand that there can be no other concept of socialism than the people being the owners of the means of production. That is the only way to have a congress like this, the only way! Because otherwise what we would have are struggles and conflicts of interests, for instance, between owners of the means of transportation and owners of factories. We wouldn't have things like the famous ports-transportation-internal economy chain, but rather a war between the ports, transportation and the internal economy.

In our opinion, group private property is not and will never be socialism. It will simply be group capitalism. That's how we see it, although we respect — needless to say — those who have a different interpretation of socialism.

Our guests have seen how this congress has developed and how every delegate has sought to promote the interests of the people and of society as a whole, although they express or may express the specific features or problems of a certain sector. Like the field of transportation, which was covered here at such length — the way to organize transportation so it will benefit the economy and the people as a whole. Or the problems of construction, agriculture, science, or technology. There is really no need to repeat here all the issues we discussed at the congress.

And where else in the world, if not amid a profound socialist revolution, could we hear the phrase so often repeated here: “We haven't come to ask for anything!” In what strange place, on what planet, in what corner of the world could such a phrase be heard at a congress of workers? “We haven't come to ask for anything, we have come to contribute!”

So it's logical that some of the guests should have gotten the impression that, rather than coming here on a plane, they had traveled on a spaceship to another planet.

### Congress exuded internationalism, revolutionary spirit

Such has been our congress. But it was much more than that, because it was a congress which exuded from every pore internationalism, revolutionary spirit, patriotism, determination, and the will to struggle. It was a congress that exuded the unity of our people in every way.

Continued on next page

1. José Martí (1853-95) was a leader of the 19th century struggle for Cuban independence from Spain, organized the Cuban forces in the second war for independence, and was killed in battle.



Continued from previous page

Unity, unity, unity! What a strange thing. For many in the world it must have seemed like something from another planet.

Anybody who reads the newspapers can see the political processes which are taking place in societies that are fragmented or in the process of fragmentation, that are going down the beaten path of Western and capitalist philosophy.

This must be evident for anyone who sees 10 parties, 15 parties, 25 parties, 35 parties, 40 parties in an election! So many parties, in fact, that society is thrown into turmoil.

How wonderful for U.S. imperialism, which has only one party. Although one is represented I think by a mule and the other by an elephant, etc. — the experts must know about that. But there is actually only one party, the party of capitalism, the party of imperialism, the party of the monopolies, the party of the transnationals.

## Single party of imperialism

And there is virtually no difference between the policies of one and the other, because both alleged parties in unison support the great crimes. The invasion of Grenada was applauded by both parties. The criminal war against Panama was applauded by both alleged parties. The cold war and the arms race and all the crimes that the imperialists have committed for so long have always received the backing of the single party of capitalism and imperialism.

How wonderful for them that our societies are fragmented into a thousand pieces! How wonderful to keep us backward, oppressed, exploited, and dominated!

What wouldn't the imperialists give to divide our people into two, three, or 100 fragments! How easy it would then be for them to land here and then trample underfoot the hearts of our people! How wonderful it would be for imperialism if this small country, which has opposed it in such a resolute, courageous, and determined manner for so many years, could be easily defeated and occupied!

That is why we attach such importance to unity. And that's why recently, when talking to a group of European legislators discussing this subject, I said, "Our NATO and our Warsaw Pact is the unity of our people!"

With that unity, this small country defends itself, has defended itself, and will continue to defend itself against the mighty reactionary and aggressive empire which faces us. And we will never tolerate anything that undermines the unity of our people, that divides our people! There can be no doubt about this.

## Unity around revolutionary ideas

And this unity around revolutionary ideas, around the most just social concept ever known to humanity, that of socialism and communism, will be upheld and defended at any price. We must say it loud and clear, loud and clear! In these times — when it seems like a crime to talk about socialism, and even more of a crime to talk about communism.

A few minutes ago, when [CTC General Secretary Pedro] Ross said that not all the delegates were communists, I was thinking in slightly different terms. Not all the delegates are members of the Communist Party or the communist youth organization. But all the delegates I have seen in action here are communists — as our people are — although only a certain number are members of the party and the Young Communist League.

What would a Communist Party do without a communist working class? What would a Communist Party do without a communist people?

We have discussed problems here. We have been here not just to witness an unprecedented event. We have been here during all these days of the congress to know what our workers are thinking, to know what they feel, what they want, and how they think problems should be solved. We have been here to draw up our work program, our agenda in coming years, in the coming months, in coming days, derived from this report, from these resolutions and debates.

That's why the party leadership has been here — although of course not all of it. That's why the entire national government has been present. Not a single minister or vice-president of the Executive Committee is missing. That way there was no need to call them at their office when an issue came up or they had to provide a response.

What could be more important for us in this country, where there are so many important things and important mass organizations, than this workers' congress?

## 'We live in uncertain times'

We have discussed the problems and the measures which should be taken to solve them as if we were living in normal times. Of course, we must work for normal times. We must work every day at all hours and draw up our programs and plans. But this doesn't mean these are normal times. We all realized that these times aren't and can't be normal. We are very much aware, and must be increasingly more so, that we live in uncertain times.

We talked here about what to do with batteries, how to save fuel, how to save everything, how to implement plans. But we don't know if all these savings will be sufficient. No one knows what we will have to face in the economic

or military field because of the present international situation.

We have no doubt that we are making the greatest possible efforts to do things right. We have no doubt that we are rectifying many things, and in the way we had to do it. Not in a hasty or reckless way, not in an unthinking way, not in an improvised way, but actually taking solid steps in each of the key aspects of the country's life and development. We don't doubt that the effort is greater than ever, just as we have no doubt that if coming years were to unfold under the same international conditions in which entire five-year periods have unfolded in the past, working like we are working now, it would be possible to do practically anything.

I don't mean to say the previous years weren't fruitful. When we look at some simple data, like on electricity, we see it is available to about 90 percent of our people and this year it will be more than 90 percent. Our production of cement — the savings of which we were discussing yesterday — has gone from 700,000 tons to nearly 4 million tons a year used for the economic and social development of the country.



Trabajadores/Jorge Paez

Crowd of more than 100,000 welcomed 11 crew members of Cuban merchant ship *Hermann* in front of U.S. Interests Section February 1 in Havana. *Hermann* was fired on by U.S. Coast Guard in international waters the day before, one of a series of U.S. provocations against the Cuban people.

In the same way we could talk about many other sectors and what has been done there. In the merchant marine, we have gone from a few rickety ships to a fleet which still isn't enough to meet our needs. Or the construction of roads and highways, more than 30,000 kilometers in these years of the revolution — these are conservative figures. Or the dams and reservoirs we have built — our capacity to dam water has increased more than a hundredfold, and now we are building more dams, canals, and irrigation systems than ever in an integrated effort.

## Progress in many fields

It's not that they were lost years by any means, as we can see by the fact that now virtually every youth who starts work at a major industrial or service institution has at least a 12th grade education, in a country where there were a million illiterates; or the fact that we have nearly 300,000 teachers and professors in a country where half the school-age population had neither classrooms nor teachers; or the public health indices our people now have. There are entire provinces with an infant mortality rate of less than 10 per 1,000 live births, or cases like that of Güines, where there are family doctors and infant mortality was only five per 1,000 live births.

We have made tremendous progress in many fields, in spite of shortcomings, errors, and negative tendencies. But now that we are overcoming this, these shortcomings and errors, now that we are doing things with more common sense, and especially now that we are thinking for ourselves, interpreting revolutionary ideas for ourselves and the perspectives are now opening up for a much more solid and promising revolutionary effort — this can't be likened to any other period in the history of the revolution.

But it so happens that this moment coincides with one of the most uncertain and difficult moments internationally that we have ever experienced in these years of revolution.

For decades, our plans and yearly and five-year programs were based on the existence of a socialist camp, on

the existence of numerous socialist countries in Eastern Europe, with which we worked out agreements and had close economic ties, in addition to the Soviet Union.

We had reliable markets for our products and supply sources for important equipment and merchandise. We made efforts in these fields, an effort to implement and complement our economy.

And now in political terms that socialist camp no longer exists. Are we going to fool ourselves? Are we going to tell our Pioneers that there is still a socialist camp and that everything is just wonderful in those countries?

## Existence of a 'socialist camp'

We have to refer to them in some way. If we call them the countries of the socialist camp, it's so we won't have to use another word and say countries of the former socialist camp. A socialist camp would really be a group of countries with certain common political positions, development programs, and perspectives for long-term cooperation.

The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance [CMEA] exists — God spare me from saying it doesn't exist, seeing Carlos Rafael Rodríguez seated there.<sup>2</sup> Yes, it still exists.

Formally it still exists.

We are even striving to uphold that institution. We are struggling and our country is making an effort to preserve the institution, at least as a group of countries that can undertake economic coordination based on common interests which develop over a number of years and based on common economic needs which can exist among those countries.

It is possible to create an association of this kind or maintain it, and we must try to maintain it. It is our duty to make an effort to save it as an economic organization.

But you can just imagine what sort of changes there have been in the organization when people used to call each other comrades, and now that word has been ruled out by some who now call each other Mister, Misses, Miss — if there are any there. The vocabulary is changing.

The declared purpose of some of these countries is to build capitalist societies, and some of them are already doing so. In most of these countries there are strong pro-capitalist currents. There is much talk of private property and market economy. If you join private property with a market economy, you get capitalism or a process of building capitalism. In some of them, this has been openly declared and there are U.S. advisers promoting the construction of capitalism.

There are growing anticommunist feelings in several of those countries — we could say in nearly all except for the Soviet Union — strong and growing anticommunist feelings. In nearly all they demand, first of all, elimination of the constitutional article on the leading role of the Communist Party.

2. CMEA is the economic union of Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Vietnam. It coordinates trade policies among the members and has provided a vital market for the products of the less developed countries in the union.

Cuban Vice-president Carlos Rafael Rodríguez has been Cuba's permanent representative to CMEA since 1972.



Whether or not the leading role of a party is in the constitution isn't essential. Does that mean I'm making a concession to neoliberal and bourgeois currents? No, because at the start we didn't have that in the constitution, and yet we had a movement and then a party which made the revolution and headed the state for many years and will continue to do so for many more years.

It could have been included in the constitution or not, because what gave it that leading role was history, struggle, not the Constitution of the Republic — the Constitution of the Republic is not the mother of history or the mother of the revolution.

Our socialist constitution is the daughter of history and of the revolution. You can give it one name or another, and dress it up any way you like, but the constitution is still the daughter, and the revolution and history are still what gave it birth.

In our country the socialist constitution did not create a party. But instead in our country a Communist Party created a socialist constitution. In the same way socialism does not exist in Cuba because there's a socialist constitution. There exists a socialist constitution because there was first socialism in Cuba. That is the constitutional question, but merely a tactical question. We now have it included, and we certainly won't remove it.

I repeat, it could be included or not. But now that it is written down — and at a time when the first thing de-

**“This was a congress that exuded internationalism, revolutionary spirit, the will to struggle . . .”**

manded by the United States, the imperialists, and the reactionaries is that we suppress it; when they demand this as a weapon, as an instrument of struggle against socialism — we certainly won't do it. That's for sure.

Maybe later after imperialism has disappeared — or what have you, after many years have gone by and the future legislators decide to make our constitution more refined, they might introduce some of these changes, which would be mostly formal in nature. But we won't. That's for certain. Because the way we see the future, we actually see the party ruling indefinitely.

Neither Karl Marx, nor Lenin, nor Engels ever said when the party was to disappear. They never said that. They said that one day the state, more important than the party, would disappear.

But as far as we can see, the moment when the state will disappear is still far away. So we will have to go on struggling with this apparatus. What else can we do? It is yet to be decided theoretically — and, above all, in actual practice — the day and the kind of world in which the state will disappear. Then, in all truthfulness, it will no longer be like having someone board a rocket ship to go to another planet. But instead we will have succeeded in changing this planet of ours.

#### Humanity still living in prehistory

Karl Marx said that when that day comes, humanity will have emerged from prehistory. I believe, I have always believed, and I will go on believing that the day when the exploitation of man by man disappears, the day when the whole of humanity is governed by socialist principles — or, even better, by communist principles — our prehistory will have ended.

Because, actually, what humanity has been living in so far is prehistory, and what it sees every day is prehistory. It sees imperialism, capitalism, and the monstrous crimes committed over centuries, including the extermination of whole communities.

The Yankees exterminated the Indian population in the United States. They're now claiming that they defend all nationalities, and yet they began by exterminating the Indians. They placed them on reservations, like animals are placed in zoos. That was where they placed the native population, which they virtually exterminated.

The capitalists, the colonialists, the imperialists exterminated whole nations or whole human communities which weren't yet even nations. They enslaved hundreds of millions.

No one knows all the crimes they have committed or all the crimes we see committed every day. What they did in Panama a few weeks ago — those are not things of a civilized society, of a civilized world really. Those are things of prehistory.

That's why I say that life hasn't yet shown us when we can accomplish some of the marvelous aspirations of the founders of scientific socialism and of the great revolutionaries of our times. Therefore, such instruments are indispensable and will remain so for who knows how long.

They are demanding that certain articles be dropped from the constitution and immediately begin to demand that the Communist parties be dissolved. In some places they are forcibly appropriating the party offices. In other places these premises are being confiscated or ordered to be dissolved. Some of them have been dissolved. Others are on the way to being dissolved. Others have solemnly pledged that they would dissolve or at least have been fragmented.

And lurking behind all this is a ferocious anticommunism. How can anyone talk of socialism while raising the banners of anticommunism? Anticommunism is by definition antisocialism. Because no one can say to me that we can talk of socialism — although this is a very handy term — in the kingdom of private property. One can't talk of socialism under the rule of capitalism and private control over the means of production. No theoretician of socialism has ever said that! And there's so much confusion that talk of socialism goes on even in countries of the world where only the most ferocious and demanding capitalism exists.

It's a disguise, a fig leaf.

How can people talk now of socialism in some Eastern European countries that are raising the banners of anti-communism, and at a time when communism has become the target of reactionary hatred for wanting to abolish the private property system? Who are they trying to confuse with all these tales?

And the anticommunist tendency keeps growing and is becoming increasingly clearer. Anticommunism was always the banner of fascism.

And so, well, we can struggle to keep the CMEA alive. It'll be a mixed association. It'll no longer be what its bylaws say it is — a union of socialist countries with socialist goals.

If that mixed association is maintained, if the bylaws are changed and it has any usefulness, we will remain in that institution. If it has any usefulness! I repeat, if it makes any sense. And it may, because there are strong interests among these countries' economies.

#### Common economic interests

For the moment, we know that there are many big oil and gas pipelines from the Soviet Union to those countries, major railroad lines, major power lines. When peak demand hours end in one country, they start in another, and these countries even transfer electrical power to each other by means of communicating networks.

I do not doubt that many of these countries, now bent on building capitalism or headed toward it, have a tremendous need for those gas and oil pipelines, lines of communication, power lines, raw materials — which perhaps may not be obtained elsewhere. And, therefore, there exists a certain economic basis to keep alive certain links among those who one day were a part of the socialist community, or the so-called European socialist community.

But we cannot fool ourselves. We do not have big pipelines for oil or gas, or power lines, or railroad lines. We export some raw materials; we export some food. I don't think these are unimportant in any sense, of course, but they don't have the same weight as energy does. They don't have the same weight as fuel, oil, gas, electricity, etc.

We don't even know what government will be ruling over those countries. We don't know who will be there in 1990.

#### Existing trade agreements

We hope that in 1990 some of the existing trade agreements will still be honored, signed by virtue of earlier plans. But we don't have any certainty that this will be so, nor can we have any. Some of these countries have witnessed so many disorders, strikes, commotions, and paralysis of production that we don't even know whether those products, which historically and traditionally have arrived here, will

continue to arrive.

This is as far as 1990 is concerned. What about 1991? Can you imagine the 1991–1995 five-year plan? On what bases, with whom are we going to sign those plans? What products can be guaranteed; what markets will there be for our products?

What price will they pay for our sugar? Will they try to buy our sugar at the price prevailing on the world garbage heap, the so-called world market price? The overwhelming majority of the world's sugar is sold at prices set through agreements.

The sugar that the United States buys from its few

**“What they did in Panama — those are not things of a civilized society, a civilized world . . .”**

remaining suppliers — because it has switched over to self-sufficiency in sugar — has prices other than the world market price. All the sugar that the European Economic Community buys from the Third World countries somehow associated with it commands a price which is sometimes two or three times that of the world market price.

#### World market price of sugar

The world market price has become the sugar garbage-heap price, the sugar surplus price.

So then, are we going to sell our sugar at the garbage-heap price so we can buy trinkets? For it is also true that not all the merchandise which we buy is quality merchandise.

The thing is that we have become champions in putting to good use machines and equipment that occasionally had not a few flaws. That's why we have become inventors. That's how we have become rationalizers. Because at times such and such a nut doesn't fit, so we use another. The equipment has been useful, but it's not always sophisticated equipment, or equipment of the highest quality, not always. Yet we have purchased it and know how to use it.

Other times we have bought some chemical products — useful, valuable. I'm not saying they aren't. We buy everything. I understand that this type of exchange has been beneficial.

But from one year to another we haven't any assurance of how trade will be in 1990. A large part of the products we consume comes from that area, and concerning that we have no assurances for 1990 and total uncertainty for 1991 through 1995.

I set apart the economic relations with the Soviet Union. Our economic relations with the Soviet Union have not been very affected by these processes, up to now. On the contrary, I must say it in all honesty, the Soviets have expressed, throughout all this time, and continue to express their greatest willingness to maintain economic relations with us and continue the trade between our two countries under the same or similar principles. And the Soviet Union plays a fundamental role.

The problems we are beginning to have are those deriving from the difficulties the Soviet Union is now having. They derive, I repeat, fundamentally from all that.

It may also happen that problems may occur for the Soviet Union from the situation currently prevailing in the countries that were part of the socialist community, the other Eastern European countries.

#### Stability of the Soviet Union

And, naturally, any difficulty that the Soviet Union may have, any serious difficulty, must inevitably affect the supplies earmarked for our country. And so we must be aware

that the stability of the Soviet Union is a question of utmost importance for our country.

When news of destabilization in the Soviet Union reaches us, logically, we are profoundly concerned. When news of threats in one form or another against the integrity of the Soviet Union reaches us, logically, we are profoundly concerned. When news of internal conflicts in the Soviet Union reaches us, logically, we are profoundly concerned. When news reaches us that portions of the Soviet Union want to separate from it, logically, we are profoundly concerned.

We see how tremendously important the integrity of the Soviet Union is for us and also for the world, for we clearly see the danger that nationalist movements of every type could be unleashed, which could pose a great risk for the integrity of the Soviet Union. We all read the papers, and we all read the news from there.

There's another phenomenon. Currents are now developing inside the Soviet Union that are opposed to the type of economic relations currently existing between the Soviet Union and Cuba. This can be seen in some of the

Continued on next page

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Militant/Cindy Jaquith

Delegates to congress of Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC) at closing session January 28

## Continued from previous page

media — some unjust, profoundly unjust, articles that are undertaking an opinion campaign against the economic relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

I say here in all frankness and all honesty that the economic relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba have been very important for us, that the policy of the Soviet Union throughout these years of the revolution was most generous to Cuba.

## 'Cuba is not a country of beggars'

But we're not a country of beggars; we're not a country that takes gifts. Yes, we have indeed been granted credits, just like all the Third World countries, including the richest of them, the big oil exporters. Venezuela, for instance, is the biggest oil exporter in Latin America, and it received credits for over \$30 billion.

What country in the world, however large its income, deriving from the privilege of having certain products, hasn't been granted credits? We have received credits from the USSR, like all the Third World countries have received credits from different countries.

Even some developed countries have received credits. One of the countries that has received the most credits is the United States, to give an example, and one of the most indebted countries in the world is the United States.

So, if the developed countries have received credits, what's so strange about Cuba having received credits from a country that was its friend, its ally?

It was and is our friend. I first said "was" to better explain the idea, the sense that this involved friendly and closely related countries.

Now, how much does it cost to produce a ton of sugar in the USSR? And we export millions of tons of sugar to the Soviet Union at a price which is not above what it costs them to produce sugar.

How much does it cost to produce nickel and cobalt in the Soviet Union? And we export tens of thousands of tons of nickel and cobalt to the Soviet Union and the other countries in Eastern Europe through trade that is mutually beneficial.

We grow food products like citrus fruit, in addition to sugar. And we have started over the past few years to export other products. This year, 1990, we will export to the Soviet Union over 200 million rubles worth of pharmaceutical and biotechnology products, medical equipment, and furniture. Other important items are beginning to emerge in our country for export to the Soviet Union.

## Unequal terms of trade

We're not given gifts. We purchase things and pay for them. And while our sugar has commanded a price higher than the sugar garbage-heap world price, it has been a just price, because it put an end to the phenomenon of unequal terms of trade.

During the early years the Soviet Union paid us more or less the world market price, until the Soviet Union itself realized that, while the price of the industrial products it exported to Cuba kept rising steadily, the price of the products that Cuba exported kept dropping on the so-called world market, as generally occurs with all Third World products. And that was tantamount to robbery, plundering.

We have often referred to the type of just economic

relations that were established between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

But now there are people inside the Soviet Union — not in the government, not in the party, but in the media and the parliament — who favor suppressing this type of economic relations that exists between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

So, we see two dangers: the danger deriving from the difficulties of the Soviet Union itself that may prevent it from fulfilling its commitments — even if it wants to, even if it tries, as it is doing, to honor as much as possible those commitments — and the danger posed by the currents unquestionably associated with reaction and imperialism, openly advocating an end to this type of relations.

This is why I say that we're now living through times of uncertainty.

We also see manifestations of widespread demagoguery in certain sectors becoming increasingly stronger in the Soviet Union. Were these events to evolve in a negative way, it would logically have great negative repercussions concerning the supplies our country receives and the economy of our country.

## U.S. triumphalism and euphoria

The U.S. government knows this, particularly at this moment of triumphal drunkenness and euphoria. And they are relying on the difficulties we're going to have, that we certainly are going to have due to what has happened in the socialist community, and the even greater difficulties which we may have because of what may happen.

They have great hopes that the Soviet Union may not be able to overcome its difficulties, or that the difficulties will be such that they will directly affect the economic relations between the USSR and Cuba.

And the United States says so, and says it openly. They have it in their plans, independent of their old aggressive plans, independent of their bullying, their arrogance, their euphoria which led them to commit monstrosities such as the Panama invasion — a monstrous crime against international law, but also a political monstrosity that revealed utter contempt for international public opinion and, particularly, for the Latin American countries.

These are things we must be aware of and bear very much in mind, with a great sense of reality.

Reactionaries and imperialists the world over believe many other things, too. They believe, for instance, that we won't be able to overcome the difficulties that may arise. That is their hope.

They confuse this indigenous revolution, born of the very core of our people, with other revolutions or political processes that were extraordinarily influenced by special international circumstances.

They confuse many things. Perhaps they're also thinking that one would have to travel to another planet to find a people willing to resist all these problems.

They euphorically say that we'll be isolated, that we'll be left alone, that we're going to have big problems. And they're certain that we won't be able to resist.

## Many friends who are worried

It's not just our enemies. We have many friends in the world who are worried — sincerely worried — about this situation, about the problems that may arise for Cuba stemming from this situation. And they're wondering,

"How can they withstand it?" Those who sincerely want us to be able to hold out are asking themselves this.

There are even some who are almost giving us their condolences, who are already mourning as if we were dead, and some who believe that the revolution may collapse here, like other political processes that have collapsed in recent months.

Our enemies, of course, dream about this night and day. I think that every day that goes by when they see the Cuban revolution still alive is like a terrible nightmare for them, a nightmare in broad daylight.

There are others who, as I said, are sincerely worried about these problems. They're worried about Cuba's situation.

But this isn't just a matter of solidarity. There are even many who haven't been traditional friends of ours, many who have nothing to do with socialism and communism. I'm referring to democratic, progressive people and some others who aren't even very democratic or progressive.

But, of course, all the democratic, progressive people in the world are concerned for Cuba and so are others — many others — who, because of other factors, for other reasons, are concerned about how these events will affect the Third World.

On December 7 I said that, if certain very negative tendencies continued to develop, the world would move from bipolarity toward unipolarity under U.S. control. I know that what I said then is now cause for deep concern for the leaders of the other Third World countries. They are seriously concerned about the danger of a world in which the United States is master.

I mentioned some brazen acts of intervention and even pointed out the case of the Philippines where, even though the problem there is a domestic one, U.S. planes took off to intervene in that problem; the case of El Salvador, where the United States landed special units during the offensive launched by the Salvadoran patriots; and its threats against Panama.

## U.S. aggression against Panama

Barely two weeks after I made those comments, the monstrous aggression against Panama was unleashed — the genocidal attacks on the Panamanian people — which irrefutably confirmed the theses I was up holding.

A few days later, the United States ordered its battleships and aircraft carriers to blockade Colombia under the pretext of fighting the drug traffic.

Latin Americans are very worried, very worried indeed, and their concern for Cuba is sincere. Objectively speaking,

“There can be no other conception of socialism than the people as owners of the means of production . . .”

Cuba is a line of defense for Latin America's independence. Cuba is the first line of defense for Latin America's independence.

Cuba has held firm for over 30 years, against everything you can imagine. Cuba has helped Latin America in many ways.

At first it was profitable to join the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba, because the Cuban sugar quota, amounting to several million tons of sugar, was shared out. Later, the United States took it away from them. But the party had gone on for a long time while they enjoyed the fruits of the aggression against Cuba.

Thanks to Cuba, people in the United States remembered that Latin America existed, and one of its presidents invented the Alliance for Progress, which consisted of donations and loans amounting to many billions of dollars.

Thanks to Cuba, the imperialists began to take a little more interest in how they should treat Latin America, and they opened the doors to credit and introduced preferential treatment, fearing that revolutions like Cuba's would break out in the rest of Latin America.

That is, Latin America benefited a great deal from our revolution. Among other things, it got more respect, a little more respect.

## Cuban revolution made Latin America freer

That's why, as I've said, the Cuban revolution made the Latin American peoples freer and more independent, and they began to act differently in the international arena — with more freedom and dignity.

This was seen in recent years in the battles concerning human rights that the imperialists imposed at Geneva, bringing enormous pressure to bear. It was seen most recently when Cuba was nominated to serve as a temporary member of the [United Nations] Security Council for two years, and Latin America showed its unity and independence.

The Latin American governments know that if the United States were to achieve its dream of crushing the Cuban revolution, it would be a terrible blow to the inde-



pendence of the other Latin American peoples. Because those other countries lack our unity and our defense capacity—all of our people are united and ready to defend themselves.

The Latin American peoples and politicians don't necessarily have to be prosocialist or even progressive to understand that if the Cuban revolution were wiped out, the United States would become an unstoppable power in this hemisphere, imperialist control would be multiplied, and the United States' euphoria and arrogance would be boundless. They know this. And they also know that our country is the first line of defense.

This has been known since Martí's time—not just now. It's been known for almost a century, when the United States was much less powerful, when it wasn't the powerful empire it is today.

On the eve of his death, Martí wrote that everything he had done and would do was to win Cuba's independence

“  
**The Cuban revolution is like a terrible nightmare to our enemies, a nightmare in broad daylight . . .**  
”

in time to keep the United States from falling on Latin America with greater force.

Martí saw this nearly a century ago. What extraordinary vision!

Now that is a greater truth than ever, because Cuba not only stopped being a U.S. possession but also became a bulwark of resistance against U.S. imperialist control and expansion. What was true almost a century ago is 10, 20, 30 times as true now, and the Latin American peoples understand this. The governments understand this.

## Reality in Western Hemisphere

For a long time, the United States tricked them and fooled them with fear of communism. Now it is saying that communism is disappearing and that communism will disappear from the face of the earth.

Now it can't raise that specter any more, and what exists in our hemisphere is another reality. For, if imperialism were to wipe out or crush the Cuban revolution, it would treat the presidents of the other nations like mere mayors—or perhaps worse than mayors, like mayors with less autonomy than U.S. mayors. It would treat the sovereign nations of Latin America like cities and would try to give them orders by telephone.

This doesn't mean that the peoples are resigned to that fate, because no people will ever resign itself to such a fate. But look how the invasion of Panama didn't spark the resistance it should have. There was aversion, but no energetic, resolute denunciation, because the Latin American nations are extremely dependent economically on the United States.

If Cuba were to fall, good-bye—who knows for how long—to the high degree of political independence and freedom that those countries have achieved internationally since they would be easy victims of any U.S. aggression. This is why they are so deeply concerned about Cuba's fate.

I think these subjects are worth meditating on.

For years our people have been preparing for certain dangers. For the last 10 years we have been strengthening our defenses, applying the concept of a war of all the people, and getting ready. How lucky that we've been doing this for 10 years!

## Plans to cover all eventualities

We've made plans to cover all eventualities, starting with a total military blockade of the country in which not even any bullets could be brought in. We've known about this possibility since long before these current problems, because of the empire's superiority in conventional weapons in this part of the world, its air and naval superiority, which would make it impossible for any bullets to be brought into the country.

The United States could impose a total blockade. We have our plans for withstanding a blockade with military harassment, or a blockade with a war of attrition against our country, or finally a blockade with an invasion of our country.

We have made our plans and prepared ourselves for all these possibilities, convinced that—no matter what variant it chooses and no matter how high a cost that variant may exact—sooner or later it would be defeated, even if it were the worst variant of all: the invasion and occupation of our country.

We have organized the country in defense zones. Men, women, and children—young and old—are organized. The whole country is organized to make the price of aggression too high for the aggressors to pay, to do them so much damage and cause them so many casualties that they will be forced to withdraw.

We have worked seriously, preparing for all eventualities.

What vision our party has, and how well we have spent our energy in these years, working on the basis of all the

people's participation in the struggle.

However, there could be other variants, for which we must prepare. We call that period of total blockade a special period in time of war, but now we must prepare for all these problems and even make plans for a special period in peacetime.

## 'Special period' in peacetime

What does a special period in peacetime mean? It means that, because of our relations with the Eastern European countries or because of certain processes or factors in the Soviet Union, we would have such grave economic problems that we would be faced with an extremely serious lack of supplies.

Keep in mind that all our fuel comes from the Soviet Union. And it might be reduced by a third or a half because of problems in the USSR. Or it could even be cut completely, which would be equivalent to the situation we call a special period in time of war.

Of course, it wouldn't be quite as serious in peacetime, because there would still be certain possibilities for exports and imports. We must foresee the worst possible situation that could confront the country in a special period in peacetime and plan what to do. We are working hard on this.

We didn't foresee any of the catastrophic problems that hit the socialist camp recently—the things that have happened in those countries, with which we have established solid economic ties, which helped us to defend ourselves against the imperialist blockade, and which served as the basis for our country's development.

There may be intermediate situations which, though serious, aren't quite that serious. We don't even know what problems may confront us in 1990. We're trying to anticipate them, but some things are beyond our control, out of our hands.

Looking a little farther ahead, nobody knows what problems may develop after 1990, yet we must be resolutely determined to confront whatever they may be.

I don't mean just dealing with them to survive. We must not only deal with them but also develop.

## Continued development

We know what the strategic points are on which we must keep working. The food programs mustn't be halted; they are strategic. We're also working to promote water conservation, find new sources of water, dig canals, and create irrigation systems. And this shouldn't be halted, no matter what.

If we have 3 million or 5 million tons of oil, we must continue these programs in one way or another. It would be better to halt anything else rather than these programs.

The programs for developing the pharmaceutical industry and biotechnology and other programs in this sector have a great future, and we mustn't halt them. Programs that will bring in large amounts of hard currency, such as the ones related to tourism, mustn't be halted.

This means that, no matter what restrictions we may be forced to undertake in a special period in peacetime or in a very difficult peacetime situation stemming from those problems, in none of those situations should we halt these programs, which are of strategic importance for our diet or our country's development. It would take longer, and we would be subjected to a very difficult test, but we would have to uphold the principle of ensuring not only survival but development too.

I think our people can do this. I'm absolutely convinced. You, the people, the working people who you represent.

The imperialists and reactionaries must realize that the revolution cannot be defeated, and our friends all over the world must know that our people will stand firm, no matter what the circumstances. They must know that neither the revolution nor socialism will collapse in Cuba.

I remember that, during our war of liberation when Batista's army surrounded the Sierra Maestra and bombed it every day and nothing could get in—no salt, lard, clothes, or medicine—thousands of farmers stayed there with us. They neither left the Sierra Maestra nor surrendered.

That situation lasted for a long time, and nobody knew how long it would go on. Those were very difficult circumstances, which are nothing new for us.

Some people were in the midst of that situation, and others experienced it to a lesser degree, but we were all part of the same nation. I'm sure the people would have reacted

“  
**We build statues of Marx, Engels, Lenin with our revolutionary conduct, our heroism, our honor . . .**  
”

the same way wherever it might have happened.

Now we have a tremendous responsibility—I explained this to the young people yesterday in Central Park. This is a period of uncertainty and great threats. The threats are greater than ever and are both economic and military.

The military threats are great. As you see, the United States is determined to continue its hostility against us and forcibly impose a television channel on our airwaves. They're ours, and nobody else has the right to use them. Those are acts of provocation. Who knows what the United States is planning.

The other day U.S. soldiers opened fire. It was a miracle they didn't kill any of our guards near the Guantánamo base. U.S. battleships and aircraft carriers keep hovering around our country.<sup>3</sup>

## Challenging tests for our people

The U.S. rulers are arrogant and have gone mad; emboldened and euphoric, they think that socialism no longer exists—which makes them more aggressive, more dangerous. This is the beginning of a new era, a new stage. These may be times of very challenging tests for our people.

I was thinking about this yesterday, when I was talking to the young people. I recalled our history and the Ten Years War. There is no similar feat anywhere else—nothing comparable to what our people did for ten years, struggling not only against the powerful Spanish army, but also against a large number of people who had been born here but supported the Spanish.

For 10 years they fought—barefoot, nearly naked, without food and ammunition. Our country lived through that

Continued on next page

3. The U.S. government-sponsored "TV Martí" is scheduled to go on the air in March. Its broadcasts from Florida will be directed at Cuba.

On Dec. 7, 1989, shots were fired from the U.S. Navy's Guantánamo Bay base at two Cuban sentry posts. The battleship *Wisconsin* was dispatched to the base, which is in eastern Cuba, in January.

## by FIDEL CASTRO from Pathfinder



## IN DEFENSE OF SOCIALISM

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As part of campaign of rectification, voluntary labor has been reintroduced in Cuba. Above left, members of La Güinera microbrigade. Old housing (center) is being replaced by microbrigade's construction efforts (right). Militant photos by Cindy Jaquith

Continued from previous page  
period; it was admirable.

In those terrible conditions — when many people came to the conclusion that they couldn't continue the struggle — even then, reflecting our people's iron will and heroism, Antonio Maceo spoke out against the Zanjón Pact and, at Baraguá, announced his determination to continue the struggle.<sup>4</sup>

When, in very difficult conditions, there was a Zanjón Pact, there was also a protest of Baraguá. And that part of our history by virtue of which our country became independent — in spite of the Spanish army first and the U.S. army later on — was Baraguá, and not Zanjón.

That is the supreme lesson which we were privileged to inherit.

#### Tradition of militancy

That was how the soul of the people and their tradition of militancy in even the most difficult circumstances developed.

On March 10, 1952 — just remember those subsequent days and months when we held torchlight processions to honor Martí — we didn't have any rifles or bullets, but that didn't prevent the struggle.

Later, after the setbacks following the landing of the *Granma*, we had only a few rifles and a handful of men, but the struggle continued.

The determination expressed at Baraguá, the spirit of never surrendering and never weakening in the struggle, was what made success possible. It made the revolution, socialism, and our victory at the Bay of Pigs possible. It enabled our people to meet the October crisis with courage. And it enables us to stand firm now with the same determination, even though nuclear weapons are aimed at us ready to fire.<sup>5</sup>

We didn't yield an inch, and if it had been up to us the missiles would still be here — no doubt about it.

What made it possible to hold out against the blockade, develop solid international relations, carry out internationalist missions, and achieve the Cuban and African victory in Angola? Tenacity, firmness, and determination to struggle — the spirit of Baraguá — was what triumphed there. This was the spirit, the great legacy our people received.

I think that our young people and students, our young workers — the entire people — are a privileged generation. Because I think it is a privilege to be living at this moment in history.

It is a privilege and a unique destiny to see that many people all over the world — many revolutionaries, more

and more revolutionaries — have their eyes on Cuba for the reasons I explained. As confusions subside, things will become clearer, and Cuba's role will be evident. Cuba has become a front line of defense, not only for Latin America but for the entire Third World — a fortress defending correct, progressive, revolutionary ideas all over the world.

#### Raising banner of Marxism-Leninism

Here, we aren't ashamed to speak about and praise Lenin. At a time when others are going around removing Lenin's name from streets and parks and destroying statues of Lenin, Marx and Engels, we continue to build them here — not of marble, bronze, nor steel, but with our revolutionary conduct, our heroism, our honorable position, and our profound convictions — raising the banners of Marxism-Leninism, socialism, and communism higher than ever.

More than ever, we hold high the examples set by Martí, Maceo, Céspedes, Agramonte, and all the other heroes of our independence.<sup>6</sup>

How happy it makes us to see our patriots — especially Martí — looked up to as models now in the work that the young people are doing in their newspaper, with their slogan "Mine is the sling of David" and their search through the wealth of revolutionary ideas contained in José Martí's thinking, a wealth that is genuinely ours.

The wealth of other extraordinary men born in other parts of the world should be ours, too. What a wealth of revolutionary ideas, and how timely those ideas are! What banners they are, and what a lesson for all — even for those who thought that the time for their greatest relevance had already passed.

Some fools have boasted that the time for heroic deeds has passed. What impoverished souls, as Palmero<sup>7</sup> would say, to repeat such rubbish. There are fools like those and others who dream that the revolution can be destroyed.

When the going gets a little hard, fools and defeatists start in: "Well, we have to be careful; just in case, we should think about some reforms."

#### 'Revolution is the biggest reform'

Reforms?! A revolution is the biggest, most tremendous reform in history, because it changes absolutely everything.

Capitalist reforms? Bourgeois reforms? Neoliberal reforms? Never! Everybody must know that the revolution won't back up even one millimeter.

As I explained to you yesterday, see what a lesson that is. Some people tried to save socialism by making concessions. How little they know the voracious, monstrous mentality of imperialism and the reaction.

If you give them the nail on your little finger, they want a joint of that finger; if you give them a joint, they ask for your whole finger; if you give them your finger, they ask for your hand; if you give them your hand, they ask for your arm up to the elbow; if you give them that, they ask for your whole arm; and, when you give them your whole arm, they take your head off.

What way of defending socialism is that, when you start by losing an arm and a leg? Losing your arms, your strength, and other things — your heart and your spirit, for instance — what way of defending socialism and revolutionary ideas is that? This is why the Cuban revolution won't back up even an inch.

We thank all those who, living abroad, are really worried and advise us to do something, to make some changes. Yes, we're going to do some revolutionary things and make

some revolutionary changes. We're going to become ever more revolutionary, because we aren't revolutionary enough yet.

There are fools — not many, but some — who harbor illusions and think that fifth columns at the service of imperialism or its goals can be organized here.

Keep a close watch on those people — watch them — and you'll see that many of them aren't raising the flag of reaction and imperialism openly. Instead, they say they want to "improve" the revolution — just as the United States want to "improve" it, just as it has wanted to "improve" it over there by unleashing an enormous counter-

“Those who try to play along with imperialism at this decisive moment in history had better discard their illusions . . .”

revolutionary wave, which started out under the guise of changes, of reforms to "improve" socialism.

We have them here. They'll have to go to another planet to see any such thing happen. I'm not saying this in the literal sense, implying that they'll be dead when they make that trip. For we don't know if there's a heaven, earth, or hell on some other planet or beyond the planets. What we do know is that what they dream of won't happen here in our homeland.

#### Collision with the masses

Those who think they can organize a fifth column in Cuba, who think they can repeat here the story of what has happened in other countries, and who want to play at counterrevolution here are headed for a collision with the masses, a collision with the people. They'll have the masses, all right — diametrically opposed to them.

Those who try to play along with imperialism at this decisive moment in history, at this moment when everything is at stake, had better discard their illusions, because it has been well thought out and is a reality that, in Cuba, revolution, socialism, and national independence are indissolubly linked.

If imperialism were to make its dreams of crushing the Cuban revolution a reality, we would be less independent than Puerto Rico, less independent than Panama today. It would never let go of our country — never! And we know that, in such circumstances, we would disappear as a nation.

No one can play at that here. We will never allow anyone to play at that here — never. We won't be the ones who will crush them, though; you can't kill cockroaches with cannon. They'll be crushed by the people — the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, the workers in our factories, all the workers, the students in our schools, the young people, grandparents, and even Pioneers.

Let them harbor no illusions, for our people are ready to exact a high price for their lives, ready to fight to the death for the values they cherish. You can't play around with these people, who bear Cuba's responsibility of being the first line of defense for the interests of Latin America and the Third World and the world's revolutionary and moral values.

We didn't seek this, but fate has given us this great responsibility: that of serving as a fortress to halt the reaction, imperialism, and the exploiters — all those who plundered the world for centuries and want to go on plundering it. Whenever a people has that responsibility, you can't play around with it. And that's what our people have.

Continued on next page

4. The Ten Years War, 1868–78, was Cuba's first war for independence from Spain. With the signing of the Treaty of Zanjón, in February 1878, the majority of the Cuban generals laid down their arms. Independence fighter Antonio Maceo, leader of the revolutionary forces in Oriente Province, issued the Baraguá Protest condemning the terms of the pact, which did not grant Cuba its independence or abolish slavery on the island.

5. On March 10, 1952, Fulgencio Batista seized power in Cuba in a coup. In December 1956 the boat *Granma* — carrying 82 combatants with Castro among them — landed on Cuban soil, marking the opening of the guerrilla war to end the Batista dictatorship. The revolution triumphed in January 1959.

In April 1961 some 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries organized by the U.S. government invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. They were beaten back by militia and regular troops and surrendered after 72 hours.

In October 1962 Washington initiated the "Cuban missile crisis" — the October crisis — by ordering a total blockade of Cuba, threatening an immediate attack on the island, and placing U.S. forces worldwide on nuclear alert. The crisis abated following an agreement between the U.S. and Soviet governments. The USSR withdrew missiles Cuba had acquired from the Soviet Union to defend itself against U.S. aggression.

6. Carlos Manuel de Céspedes and Ignacio Agramonte were leaders of Cuba's 1868–78 independence war.

7. Cándido Palmero heads the Blas Roca contingent, one of the voluntary labor contingents taking on special construction projects as part of Cuba's rectification process.



# A comment on Castro's speech

BY CINDY JAQUITH

This month's *International Socialist Review* features the January 28 speech by Cuban President Fidel Castro to the delegates of the 16th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC).

The Cuban leader stresses that the workers are meeting at "one of the most uncertain and difficult moments internationally that we have ever experienced in these years of revolution." He assesses the impact on Cuba of both the escalating U.S. military aggression in the wake of Washington's successful invasion of Panama and the collapse of Communist parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union under the weight of massive upsurges in those countries.

Opponents of the Cuban government throughout the world have seized on these events to proclaim the imminent demise of the Cuban revolution and its communist leadership.

The U.S. imperialists "euphorically say that we'll be isolated, that we'll be left alone, that we're going to have big problems. And they're certain we won't be able to resist," Castro notes.

Even among Cuba's friends, he continues, there are "some who are almost giving us their condolences, who are already mourning as if we were dead, and some who believe the revolution may collapse here, like other political processes have collapsed in recent months."

At the same time, Castro points out, "many revolutionaries, more and more revolutionaries, have their eyes on Cuba" because they recognize it as "a fortress defending correct, progressive, revolutionary ideas all over the world."

## An unusual trade union congress

What gives Cuba its strength is its refusal to back down from building socialism, from advancing the working class as the leading force in Cuban society.

There were many international guests at the CTC congress — trade unionists from Latin America and Africa; from the United States, Canada, and Western Europe; and from Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China. Castro notes that these guests may have found the gathering unusual compared to union conventions in their own countries.

No capitalist bosses attended the CTC congress because there are none in Cuba. The owners of all wealth in Cuba are those who work to produce that wealth.

"Only after a socialist revolution do worker and owner, worker and controller of the wealth of the country, become one and the same," Castro points out, "not in the sense of owning a firm or a factory as a collective — as some have tried to smuggle into socialist ideas — but as owners of all the factories and wealth in the country, which is the only

## 'We will defend our ideas, honor, and future,' Castro tells Cuban trade unionists

Continued from previous page

On leaving here, we will go back to our tasks, which we understand better and better. We will work harder than ever, take greater pains in defense and work, in carrying out our duties and our obligations, in working for the future — as we've always worked — always ready to defend that future we seek, our accomplishments, our ideas, our honor, our independence, our freedom, and our homeland.

We will dedicate ourselves to defense and work, to tackling our problems and solving them — our current problems and those that may arise tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or whenever.

And, if no problems arise, we'll go on working with the same dedication. If there's peace, we will enjoy peace and make the most out of every day, every hour, every minute, and every second.

That's the spirit in which we should leave this history-making congress — a very history-making one, held at a decisive moment, perhaps on the eve of critical tests.

If those tests come, we can tell Martí that now, more than ever, we need his thoughts, his ideas, and his virtues. To Martí, Maceo, and all the others like them, we also say that now, more than ever, we are proud of being their followers, of being their faithful, unconditional disciples.

And we reaffirm two immortal slogans which link Marx, Lenin, and Engels with Martí, Maceo, Céspedes, and all the other heroes of our independence and freedom:

Socialism or death!

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death!]

Venceremos! [We will win!]

genuine sense that socialist property could ever have."

All of Cuba's government ministers and many of the Communist Party leaders attended the congress, he explains, and were available to answer the workers' questions and respond to their complaints.

"You will never see such a thing in the capitalist countries," he points out. "And what's worse, it wasn't always seen in all the socialist countries, those with governments divorced from the masses."

The government ministers and Communist Party leaders "have been here to draw up our work program, our agenda in coming years, in the coming months, in the coming days. . . . What could be more important for us in this country . . . than this workers' congress?" he asks.

Castro also presents a powerful explanation of what the Cuban revolution has meant for Latin America, changing the relationship of forces between U.S. imperialism and

## What gives Cuba its strength is its refusal to back down from advancing the working class as the leading force in Cuban society.

those fighting for self-determination and national liberation on the continent.

"Cuba is the first line of defense for Latin America's independence," he points out. "Thanks to Cuba, the imperialists began to take a little more interest in how they should treat Latin America."

"The Cuban revolution made the Latin American peoples freer and more independent, and they began to act differently in the international arena — with more freedom and dignity."

"The Latin American peoples and politicians don't necessarily have to be pro-socialist or even progressive to understand that if the Cuban revolution were wiped out, the United States would become an unstoppable power in the hemisphere, imperialist control would be multiplied, and the United States' euphoria and arrogance would be boundless," he concludes.

The overthrow of the Cuban revolution would also be a profound blow in Africa, where Cuba's role has been decisive in defeating South African forces in Angola, which opened the way to independence in Namibia and the victories being won today in the battle to bring down apartheid in South Africa.

In addition to the allies Cuba has won in Latin America and in southern Africa, a new contingent of allies is emerging today in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These are the workers, peasants, and oppressed nationalities who have begun tearing down the walls of totalitarian rule that kept them isolated for decades from politics and the world revolutionary movement.

## 'Ferocious anticommunism'?

In his speech Castro expresses the view that the democracy protests in Eastern Europe represent a "ferocious anticommunism" that threatens world progress and endangers Cuba and the aid it has received from these countries.

The aid Cuba receives from Eastern Europe and the USSR is in jeopardy, due to the severe economic crisis these countries face because of bureaucratic mismanagement and the political crisis they are going through. Cuba will suffer further hardships if the Eastern European governments follow through on plans to trade in hard currency.

But it is not the case that the fight for democratic rights in Eastern Europe hurts Cuba; just the opposite.

For the first time in their lives, the toilers of Eastern Europe are able to throw off the shackles of the secret police, informers, and petty bureaucrats. They are fighting for fundamental democratic rights, emerging from an era of darkness in which they enjoyed far fewer rights than working people in the most powerful imperialist countries.

The mass upheavals in these countries are creating conditions that can open the door to the politicization and mobilization of workers and peasants who were driven out of politics by privileged petty-bourgeois castes.

Many of the demonstrators seek to destroy anything associated with "communism," but in large measure this reflects how much the Communist parties of these countries have become identified with mass terror and corruption.

It is not socialism that is being dealt a blow by this upsurge, but Stalinism, which has kept a counterrevolutionary grip on the working classes of these countries for decades. And by dealing a blow to Stalinism, the workers are dealing a giant blow to world imperialism, which has relied on the stability of Stalinist rule in Eastern Europe to maintain the status quo for 40 years.

The workers of these countries are not inherently back-

ward. They have been kept politically backward by a bureaucracy that shut out all knowledge of Marxism and all concepts of internationalism. That bureaucracy never had and does not now have anything to do with socialism, which can only be built by mobilizing a politically conscious working class.

And it is only by forging that consciousness that the workers will understand and reject the reactionary, pro-imperialist, and anti-Cuba political currents that have also emerged in the political crisis shaking these societies.

By shattering the old authoritarian system, the workers are opening up elbowroom to read, discuss, meet, organize, and engage in political activity. They are taking their first step toward politics. And as millions of workers in Eastern Europe confront the devastating consequences to their living standards and working conditions resulting from the introduction of capitalist methods, they will resist. And they will reach out for revolutionary ideas that have been denied them for decades and for direct contact with other fighters in South Africa, Central America, and around the world — contact that was previously mediated by the bureaucratic castes. That can only help Cuba and the world revolution.

## National question in USSR

The winning of self-determination for the oppressed nationalities in the Soviet Union would especially be a step forward for the world revolutionary movement.

Castro looks at the national question in the Soviet Union from the standpoint that "any difficulty that the Soviet Union may have . . . must inevitably affect the supplies earmarked for our country. And so we must be aware that the stability of the Soviet Union is a question of utmost importance for our country."

"We see how tremendously important the integrity of the Soviet Union is for us and also for the world, for we clearly see the danger that nationalist movements of every type could be unleashed, which would pose a great risk for the integrity of the Soviet Union."

The week before Castro spoke, 29,000 Soviet troops invaded Baku to crush an uprising by Azerbaijanis demanding an end to national oppression and the right to an independent Azerbaijan. Hundreds, if not thousands, were slaughtered by the Soviet troops.

The chauvinist, antiworking class policy of the Gorbachev regime toward the Azerbaijani struggle is the opposite of the course followed by Lenin and the Communist International of his time. The workers and peasants of Russia were able to take power in October 1917 and to hold it in a civil war backed by imperialist troops because their leadership, the Bolsheviks, fought for unconditional support to the right of oppressed peoples and nations to self-determination, including the right to separation. They forged unity with tens of millions of toilers by promising self-determination and upholding their promise with deeds.

After the Bolsheviks took power in 1917, they appealed to the oppressed nationalities of the old tsarist empire, including the Azerbaijanis, to voluntarily join in a federation of Soviet republics. The Azerbaijanis did so, as did many other Muslim groups. The 1924 constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics guaranteed the new republics the "right to freely withdraw from the Union."

But this communist policy toward oppressed nationalities was reversed by the privileged, bureaucratic caste that arose under Joseph Stalin's leadership. The Soviet Union returned to being a prisonhouse of nations, as it had been under the tsar, dominated by Great Russian chauvinism.

In the 1930s Azerbaijani peasants were among the victims of Stalin's forced collectivization, stripped not only of their land, but their language, religious, and cultural rights. Protests they launched in those years were severely repressed.

Thus the explosion of protest in Azerbaijan today marks a political awakening — a new beginning in the struggle for self-determination and sovereignty. Its advance can inspire revolutionary struggles of other oppressed peoples in Asia and is in the interests of the world revolution regardless of what happens to the borders of the Soviet Union.

For three decades Cuba has received much needed aid from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the name of the workers of those countries. But those same workers were denied the right to learn about the Cuban revolution and the communist example it was setting.

Today, for the first time since the triumph of the Cuban revolution, the toilers of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union can begin to learn why they should fight for aid to Cuba and for solidarity with its struggle against imperialism.

They can begin to reach for the lessons of the world revolutionary movement, from Cuban leaders like Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, to revolutionary leaders in Africa such as Nelson Mandela and Thomas Sankara, and to Malcolm X.



# FSLN supporters' reactions to defeat in February 25 vote

Continued from front page

bloc 55 percent of the presidential vote. The FSLN, which has governed since the victory of the revolution in 1979, is credited with 41 percent.

The parties allied with UNO will divide among themselves 52 parliamentary seats, while the FSLN will hold 38. In addition, the Social Christian Party will send one deputy, elected from the North Atlantic region.

In a speech 12 hours after the polls closed, President Daniel Ortega conceded defeat and pledged "to respect and heed the people's mandate." By "guaranteeing an honest and pure election," the Sandinista Front is contributing to "the consolidation of democracy," he said.

As the FSLN candidate, Ortega continued, "I worked with the confidence that we would win. But, as leader of the FSLN and as president of Nicaraguans, I was also convinced that more important than the interest of a political force contending in the electoral arena for the right to continue leading this people, was defending the strengthening of the revolutionary process as a whole — that is, defending political pluralism, the mixed economy, and Nicaragua's right to independence and self-determination."

## Praise from 'La Prensa'

Ortega's statement was hailed by the daily *La Prensa*, which supports Violeta Chamorro. "It is to be hoped," the paper said, "that Ortega's moral courage will be shared by his entire party."

The following day *La Prensa* appeared with a front-page photo of Chamorro and Ortega embracing. The headline read, "First step toward reconciliation."

The daily reported that Ortega and other government officials had met with Chamorro and top UNO figures. Also present were Elliot Richardson, James Carter, and João Baena Soares.

"We had no idea we could lose," said Monica Baltodano, a longtime leader of the Sandinista Front. "We were completely unprepared."

The ballots cast for UNO, she added, were "the result of the economic situation. It is not an ideological vote in favor of UNO. People voted with their stomachs."

The FSLN's task now, Baltodano said, is "to strengthen the mass organizations" among women, youth, and in the neighbor-

hoods. "This will be the principal guarantee of an understanding with UNO that can prevent bloodshed and avoid the danger of an invasion by the United States."

Some incidents of harassment and violence against FSLN activists have taken place. In a number of neighborhoods, Sandinista Front supporters have reported threats and stone-throwing by right-wing forces.

On the evening of February 26, several hundred UNO supporters gathered outside their campaign offices in Managua for a victory celebration. After dark, some of them moved around the corner to the headquarters of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) and began hurling rocks at the building.

Learning of the attack, a group of Sandinista Youth organized a march to the union hall. As the FSLN backers, perhaps several hundred strong, neared the CST offices, they were confronted by the UNO forces. The marchers retreated.

Police in riot gear arrived and succeeded in dispersing the stone-throwers. They also assisted the Sandinista Youth in leaving the area. Some tear gas canisters were fired, but no one was seriously injured.

"We lost the election, but we're not going to tolerate this kind of provocation," said one neighborhood resident watching nearby. "If the police don't act, there's going to be anarchy."

FSLN activists have expressed varied reactions to the electoral defeat. Most have accepted the outcome and are discussing the reasons for it, as well as what will happen when the new government takes over.

Some, however, insist the vote could only have been obtained by fraud. One woman, whose son is in the army, delivered a statement to the FSLN radio station telling Ortega that he had not been defeated.

"We need you as our president," she said. UNO gave "dollars to beggars and vagrants" to vote for Chamorro.

Some voices are being raised urging the FSLN not to surrender control of the government, and in particular, of the armed forces.

## 'UNO will try to settle score'

"They're going to try to settle the score with us," predicted Victor Porras, one of the volunteers who stayed at the FSLN campaign headquarters during the day after the election.

"They're going to fire us from our jobs," he said, echoing a concern widely held. "We have to prepare ourselves, although we don't yet know how. We're waiting for directions from our leadership. We are a disciplined party."

Porras expressed bitterness about those working people, including government employees, who "betrayed" Nicaragua by voting for UNO "because of low wages and the economic crisis we are living through."

"They don't understand that this crisis isn't the fault of the government. It is the result of the imperialist blockade and the contra aggression, as well as the drought and the hurricane."

Porras thinks actions by some secondary FSLN leaders cost the party support. "Some of us are democratic, but others are more radical," he said.

"Instead of convincing people, they give orders. People resent it. You can do that with cadres, but not with the people."

On February 27 the nine-member FSLN National Directorate convened a meeting of more than 1,000 party leaders and cadres to discuss the new situation. As the meeting went on, thousands of party supporters gathered outside.

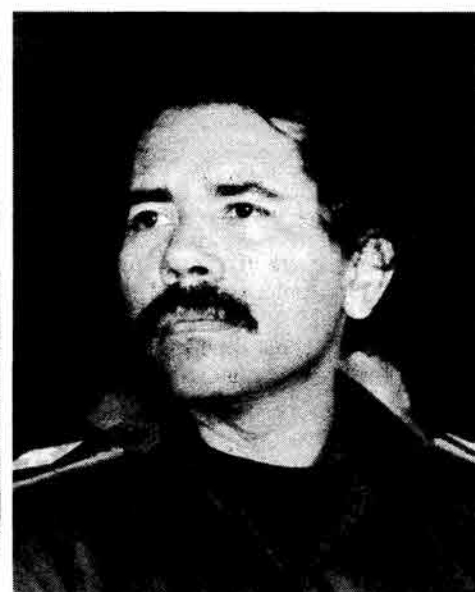
When the assembly adjourned, Daniel Ortega went outdoors to read the text of a declaration issued in the name of the National Directorate (see box). Ortega was interrupted throughout by prolonged chanting of revolutionary slogans.

The FSLN, he said, is accustomed to having to fight "from below," as it did in the struggle against the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship. After 10 years of power, he said, the fight "from below" will take place under better conditions than under Somoza.

"The day will come," Ortega continued,



Winner Violeta Chamorro, the candidate of the National Opposition Union, and FSLN candidate Daniel Ortega.



Militant photos by Seth Galinsky

"when we will govern from above again, because we will continue to govern from below, defending democracy so that the people can exercise their rights as an opposition."

Ortega concluded by leading the crowd in chanting, "Let us govern — from below!" The crowd then marched to the Plaza of the Revolution, where thousands more joined them to express support for the Sandinista Front.

In an interview published February 27 in the FSLN daily *Barricada*, Carlos Carrión, the party's candidate for mayor of Managua, said that it would be "an error" for UNO to seek to govern "without taking the FSLN into account."

The Sandinista Front, he said, is the only force that can "guarantee political stability even as an opposition because it is the only one that has sufficient cohesiveness, credibility, and leadership."

## Workers expect bosses' offensive

Workers at La Toña brewery are expecting an offensive against the workers under the new government.

When the privately owned brewery reopened two days after the election, people gathered in small groups to discuss what will happen in the plant after the UNO administration takes office.

"I'm sure management is going to run us out of here," said one woman, "and that means everybody who is with the Sandinista Front. They'll be the ones giving the orders, and they're going to do whatever they want in this plant."

A group of young workers, including several army veterans, speculated that the former landowners will try to take land away from the peasants who have benefited from the agrarian reform.

The peasants "won't be able to do anything because the cooperatives don't have arms," said one. "They only have weapons in the war zones, where the contras are still active."

During 1989 militias on farm cooperatives and collective farms throughout much of the countryside were disbanded by the FSLN government. However, an exception was made

for farms in areas where the contras were still fighting.

The manager at La Toña looks forward to the new government. "I can tell you one thing, with the UNO victory the workers are going to have to watch themselves around here. They'll have to work harder and more efficiently."

The FSLN defeat, he added, "means that the bourgeoisie, and I mean the genuine article, is returning, and with the backing of the United States."

## Rights of farm workers

The Association of Rural Workers will fight to protect democratic rights that have been won for the toilers, according to union president Edgardo García. "To organize an opposition the unions need freedom of expression and organization," he stressed.

Defending those rights will be key to the union's ability to fight to protect the jobs of its members and to oppose UNO's plans to return state farms to private hands, García added.

"If they try to fire us, to ignore the union, to get rid of union leaders, then the stability that has been achieved in the countryside is going to disappear."

Even under the FSLN government, capitalist farmers have fired union activists, he added, but the union has had the right to protest these firings, and get some reversed.

"We've had rights. If they take away those rights, that's another thing altogether. Then you'll see anarchy."

The union leader sees the electoral rebuff to the FSLN as a result of weariness with the draft and the contra attacks and desperation about the economic situation.

The result, he continued, "was not so much a vote against the Sandinista Front as a vote in favor of an urgent solution to the aggression. In this sense it is a vote of exhaustion on the part of an important part of the Nicaraguan people."

"On the other hand, the vote for the Sandinista Front was a solid vote in defense of the revolution."

## Statement of Sandinista Front

The following is a statement by the National Directorate of the FSLN, as read by Daniel Ortega to a February 27 rally of Sandinista Front supporters. The translation is by the Militant.

1. Since the victory of the revolution, the Sandinista National Liberation Front has placed in the people's hands, for the first time in its history, the opportunity to choose freely and democratically. The elections were free and honest, a conquest of the revolution.

2. As the party of the revolution and the biggest, most solid, and best-organized party in the country, the FSLN has in its hands today the responsibility to safeguard and guarantee the continuity of the revolutionary process, and all of its gains and transformations in the political as well as the social and economic spheres. The change in government will not, in any way, signify the end of the revolution.

3. The FSLN will fight mercilessly so that there is no reversal of the agrarian reform or of granting plots of land to urban dwellers and so that the social gains made by the revolution are not dismantled, especially protection for the mothers of heroes

and martyrs and those orphaned or wounded as a result of the war.

4. The FSLN demands the immediate dismantling and disarming of the contras and the release of those who have been kidnapped so that there can be a peaceful and orderly governmental transition.

5. Within the framework established by the constitution, the FSLN will defend the integrity and professionalism of the Sandinista People's Army and the Ministry of the Interior.

6. The FSLN will likewise defend the irreversibility of the fundamental conquests of the revolution, such as nationalization of the banks and foreign trade, the natural resources, and the state farms. The FSLN will remain on the alert and vigilant so that none of the guarantees established by our constitution are lessened — such as, among others, the right to organize unions, the right to strike and to demonstrate, and freedom of the press. We will defend the right — which is established in the constitution at the initiative of the political parties themselves — that workers in the public sector not be removed from their positions.

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# W. Virginia socialists launch ticket

Continued from front page

airline strikers March 3 and 4 in cities across the country.

"Rank-and-file airport workers and miners came together from two different experiences," said Zins. Eastern strikers had given concession after concession to the airline's bosses for a decade; miners had given up much less.

When union miners struck Pittston on April 5, 1989, she explained, and the news about the battle spread, thousands of working people in mining areas flocked to the centers of the fight to back up the miners and learn the facts.

UMWA miners at Pittston walked out one month and one day after Eastern Airlines workers shut down Frank Lorenzo's union-

busting operation nationwide, and fighters from both strikes linked up and mobilized to reach out to hundreds of thousands of workers.

In the course of the struggle, miners and other workers ran into many obstacles, including such enemies as state and federal police, the courts, and government representatives bankrolled by the very corporations

they were fighting against.

"There's a discussion among some workers about who our allies are," said Zins. "Do we run miners in the Democratic Party — the same party that messed us over — or do we run ourselves? Do we advance a program to satisfy big business and win the election, or put forward a program to fight for workers?"

Zins pointed to the significant layer of *Militant* readers in the coalfields and described the increased warm response from miners and other workers to the paper.

"It's in this political atmosphere that we're launching this working-class campaign of labor fighters," Zins said. "We will be able to do more and get more of a hearing for our perspectives today because of the fights we've been part of."

## Socialist Workers Party candidates

### Clay Dennison

Clay Dennison, Socialist Workers Party candidate for attorney general of West Virginia, is a coal miner with eight years at Martinka mine near Fairmont and is an active member of the United Mine Workers of America Local 1949.

Most recently, Dennison has been actively involved in the fight to build solidarity for striking Eastern Airlines workers and Pittston Coal miners. He joined other members in his local on a bus to Charleston for the 10,000-strong June 11 solidarity rally for Eastern and Pittston strikers. Dennison participated in the six-week sympathy strike by 44,000 miners in support of the UMWA members' fight against Pittston. Like thousands of workers, Dennison visited the miners' Camp Solidarity in Virginia, going there twice. He also traveled with coworkers to Logan County Camp Solidarity in West Virginia, joining the picket lines of the Pittston strikers and the Rum Creek miners in their battle against A.T. Massey Coal. In October Dennison joined other miners and workers at an airport walk-through in Pittsburgh backing Eastern strikers. He will return to the airport with a caravan to the strike anniversary event March 4.

Dennison has also helped win support for unionists in the Morgantown, West Virginia, area, including the fighting textile workers and fire fighters.

Last year Dennison joined other UMWA members at the 100-year Anniversary Gala for the National Union of Mineworkers in Britain.

Born in Iowa City, Iowa, Dennison, 34, met members of the SWP in 1978 at a steel mill in Seattle where he worked. He joined the party shortly after. He has lived in Morgantown for the last 10 years.

### Maggie McCraw

Maggie McCraw, Socialist Workers Party candidate for treasurer of West Virginia, is a furnace tapper at Elkem Metals in the town of Alloy and is active in Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 3-89.

McCraw is active in the West Virginia Labor Solidarity Committee that organized a tour of striking Eastern Airlines workers and miners on strike against the Pittston and New Beckley coal companies. The tour culminated in the June 11 rally of 10,000 at the state capitol in Charleston.

In September McCraw visited Camp Solidarity in Virginia and joined the thousands at the occupation of Pittston's Moss No. 3 coal processing plant. She has also walked the picket line at Rum Creek in Logan County.

McCraw is a member of the Coal Employment Project, which fights to get women hired in the coal mining industry and to defend them from discrimination. She attended the 1989 National Conference of Woman Miners in Springfield, Illinois, and is also a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

McCraw is active in Safe and Fair Employment (SAFE), a coalition of unionists and environmentalists established to protest safety and environmental hazards and the use of nonunion contractors at a large chemical plant near Charleston.

In 1986 McCraw helped organize solidarity with striking meat-packers in United Food and Commercial Workers Local P-9 at Hormel in Austin, Minnesota. She also helped win union support for family farmers protesting farm foreclosures.

While working at U.S. Steel's South Works in South Chicago from 1979 to 1982, McCraw was active in the United Steelworkers and the union's Women's Caucus, which helped women get and keep jobs in the steel

mills. During this time she participated in the AFL-CIO Labor for the Equal Rights Amendment campaign in Illinois.

In 1981 McCraw was on staff for the Labor Committee for Safe Energy and Full Employment, which organized a march in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, of miners, unionists, and community residents following the nuclear disaster at Three Mile Island.

McCraw, 42, was born in Long Beach, California, and joined the SWP in 1972. She has lived in Charleston for three years.

### Dick McBride

Dick McBride, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from West Virginia, is a folder at Morgan Shirt in Morgantown and a member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 347.

McBride ran for Morgantown City Council in the spring of 1989. In his campaign he pointed out that the city government wasn't run in the interests of working people, that economic and social conditions were worsening for workers, and in response working people were beginning to wage fights and stand up for themselves.

He called on all working people to back

the Eastern and Pittston strikes, as well as local struggles for union rights like the Morgantown fire fighters. McBride received 20 percent of the vote. In October McBride participated in the Eastern Airlines strikers' walk-through at the Pittsburgh airport.

As a member of the United Steelworkers of America at Inland Steel in Chicago in 1977, McBride was active in Steelworkers Fight Back, a movement to widen union democracy in the Steelworkers union that centered around the campaign of Ed Sadowski for United Steelworkers president. He also took part in the union locals' environmental committee protesting the construction of the Bailey nuclear facility in Indiana, which was halted.

When workers at the huge Tenneco shipyard went on strike in January 1979 for union rights in Newport News, Virginia, McBride was active in the Chicago steel local's strike support committee. He also helped build solidarity for the 1977-78 national strike of the United Mine Workers of America.

In 1984 McBride traveled to Britain in support of the nationwide miners' strike of 1984-85.

McBride, 47, was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and joined the SWP in 1960. He has lived in Morgantown for four years.



Socialist Workers Party candidates in West Virginia are from left: Dick McBride, union garment worker for U.S. Senate; Maggie McCraw, union metal worker for treasurer; and Clay Dennison, union coal miner for attorney general. Building support for Eastern strike, miners' fight are top priority.

## Virginia 'truck' miners still out for contract

BY LISA HICKLER

RICHLANDS, Va. — Union coal miners from five locals in the Jewell Ridge area of Virginia who work at leased mines owned by Pittston Coal Group remain without a contract. They participated in the 11-month strike against the Pittston coal bosses that ended February 19.

On that day 1,900 members of the United Mine Workers of America approved a contract with Pittston, but the owners of many small "truck" mines refuse to sign the agreement in an attempt to bust the union.

Truck mines are owned by Pittston and leased to other companies who hire workers, mine coal, and then sell the coal back to Pittston. Most are small, employing 20 to 50 miners.

Covered under the last Pittston agreement, 150 members of UMWA locals 7327, 6167, 2206, 1852, and 1760 walked off the job last April when Pittston miners began a strike against the coal bosses' operations in Virginia and West Virginia. The miners went out to save their union and win a decent pact. While the new Pittston contract can strengthen the union at mines contracted out in the future, it did not settle the fight for a union agreement

at currently leased mines.

Ken Shaw, president of UMWA Local 7327, said discussions are under way about what the union could do to win a contract at the truck mines.

His local of 300 includes 250 retirees and working truck miners who weren't eligible to vote for the Pittston contract. Only those truck miners who had been previously laid off at Pittston could vote. Those miners rejected the contract 10 to 8.

One truck miner who worked at the nearby Middlecreek Energy mine explained that, of the four truck mines in that area, an estimated 50-75 miners participated in the Pittston strike. Fifty others refused to honor the picket lines.

He said the union faced harassment by Virginia state police and numerous court injunctions against picketing. Scabs operated the mines during the strike.

The striker described his arrest at Pittston's Moss No. 3 coal processing plant in September when thousands of strike supporters gathered outside the plant while miners shut down production for 80 hours. He also said he turned down jobs at nonunion mines so he could stick it out and stay part of the fight.

The Middlecreek miner said the union should fight to see that every striking miner goes back to work with a union contract.

There is a lot of frustration over the situation at the truck mines. Another miner said some ideas being raised by the union include getting Pittston to drop the leases and mine the coal themselves. Few of the truck miners would be able to get jobs, however, because laid-off Pittston miners would need to be hired first.

Another idea is utilizing the 150 or so truck miners to do the 10,000 hours of community service offered by union officials to a Virginia judge in lieu of paying \$64 million in court-levied fines.

Meanwhile strikers in the area continue to keep the picket shacks staffed and union halls open. Strike activist Geraldine Earls, member of UMWA Local 1760, said she would keep fighting for a contract for the truck miners. Earls, with 11 years in the mines, just received a layoff notice from Pittston.

Contributions for the food bank for unemployed and striking Jewell Ridge miners can be made by sending checks to the Jewell Ridge Strike Fund, Box 242, Richlands, Va. 24641.



## CALIFORNIA Oakland

**Art and Film and Cuba.** Speakers: Miguel Pendás, filmmaker, attended 11th Annual International Festival of New Latin American Cinema, Havana; Lalada Dalglish, Ph.D. candidate specializing in African influence on Brazilian culture. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave., Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

## Richmond

**Celebrate the Release of Nelson Mandela.** Speakers: Lindwe Mabuza, African National Congress of South Africa representative to the U.S.; Rep. Ronald Dellums; Angela Davis; Leo Robinson, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union; others. Sun., March 11, 4-11 p.m. Richmond Memorial Auditorium, 27th and McDonald. Donation: \$5-\$15. Sponsor: Bay Area Anti-Apartheid Network. For more information call (415) 655-6606.

## GEORGIA Atlanta

**Celebrate International Women's Day.** Panel discussion. Sat., March 10, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

**Nicaragua After the Elections.** Speakers to be announced. Sat., March 17, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

## ILLINOIS Chicago

**Grand Opening of New Pathfinder Bookstore.** Sat., March 10. Open house, 10:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 545 W Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$5. For more information call (312) 829-6815 or 829-7018.

## IOWA Des Moines

**Defend a Woman's Right to Choose Abortion.** Speakers: Shelly Bain, National Organization for Women; representatives of Politically Active Feminist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party. Sun., March 11, 3 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-8249.

## MINNESOTA Albert Lea and Rochester

**The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis.** Showing of documentary video by director Nick Castle, with presentation by Hazel Zimmerman, secretary of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. In Albert Lea: Sun., March 11, 1:30 p.m. St. Theodore's Church, Parish Center Room 11. In Rochester: Mon., March 12. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 1001 14th St. NW. For more information call (507) 433-3461. Sponsor: Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

## MISSOURI St. Louis

**Nicaragua After the Elections: Defend the Workers and Farmers.** Sat., March 10, 7:30 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

## NEW YORK Brooklyn

**Protest Cop Killings of Black and Latino Youth.** Speak-out with Roger Wareham, mem-

ber December 12th Coalition; Ed Warren, Socialist Workers Party; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 464 Bergen. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (718) 398-6983.

## Manhattan

**Cuba's Role in Southern Africa.** Panel discussion. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (212) 675-6740.

## New York City

**Beyond the News.** Radio program hosted by Don Rojas, former press secretary to slain Grenadian prime minister Maurice Bishop. Every Wed., 7-7:30 p.m. WBAI 99.5 FM.

## OREGON Portland

**Fidel Castro's In Defense of Socialism.** A panel discussion on book of Cuban president's speeches. Speakers: Katalina Montero, National Committee Venceremos Brigade; Bill Gaboury, professor of history, Southern Oregon State College; Howard Glazer, architect who has worked in Cuba. Sat., March 10, 7:30 p.m. 2730 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Pittsburgh

**New Stage in the South African Revolution.** Speakers: Dennis Brutus, Black Studies Dept., Univ. of Pittsburgh; Sello Miygo Thole, South African student from Soweto. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

## TEXAS Houston

**The Struggle at Pittston Coal: A Lesson in Union Solidarity.** Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

**The Meaning of the Nicaragua Elections.** Speakers: Scott Stambush, Veterans for Peace; Chuck Guerra, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., March 10, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

**The Reunification of Germany: What Does It Mean for Working People?** Sat., March 17, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

## UTAH Salt Lake City

**Prospects for Working People in the 1990s.** Speaker: Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress, 2nd C.D. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

## WEST VIRGINIA Charleston

**Victory in the Fight Against Antilabor Disruption: The Case of the Workers League.** Speaker: Jim Altenberg, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 3, 7 p.m. 116 McFarland St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 345-3040.

## BRITAIN Cardiff

**The Crisis of the Tory Government and the**

**Economy.** Speaker: Brian Grogan, national secretary Communist League. Fri., March 9, 7:30 p.m. 9 Moira Terrace, Adamsdown. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 0222-484677.

**Malcolm X Speaks.** Video showing and discussion. Fri., March 16, 7:30 p.m. 9 Moira Terrace, Adamsdown. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 0222-484677.

## London

**Nicaragua: The Meaning of the Elections.** Speaker: Pete Clifford, Central Committee Communist League, recently returned from Nicaragua. Sat., March 10, 3 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 01-928 7993.

**From a Free Mandela to a Free South Africa.** Speaker: Doreen Weppeler, Communist League. Fri., March 16, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 01-928 7947.

## Manchester

**Rosie the Riveter.** Video showing to mark International Women's Day. Wed., March 7, 7:30 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 061-839 1766.

## Sheffield

**Nicaragua: The Meaning of the Elections.** Speaker: Pete Clifford, Central Committee Communist League, recently visited Nicaragua. Wed., March 7, 7:30 p.m. 2A Waverley House, 10 Joiner St. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forums. For more information call 0742-729469.

## CANADA Montréal

**U.S. Hands Off Cuba!** Speakers: Michel Dugré, *Lutte ouvrière* reporter, just returned from Cuba; Christianne Malet, member of International Solidarity Committee of Québec teachers' federation. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 6566, boul. St-Laurent. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte Ouvrière. For more information call (514) 273-2503.

**What's Behind the Defeat of the Sandinista Government?** Speaker: John Steele, Central Committee Communist League. Sat., March 10, 7:30 p.m. 6566, boul. St-Laurent. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte Ouvrière. For more information call (514) 273-2503.

## Che Guevara's Socialism and Man in Cuba



Pathfinder Press has reissued Ernesto Che Guevara's well-known article on the first years of the Cuban revolution. This 48-page pamphlet available in English, Spanish, French, and Farsi also includes Cuban President Fidel Castro's 1987 speech marking the 20th anniversary of Che's death.

Available in English and Spanish for \$1.95 from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Write for information on editions in other languages. Please include 75¢ for postage and handling.

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**London:** 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 01-401 2293.

## Toronto

**The Legacy of Malcolm X: Forging a Revolutionary Leadership Today.** Speaker: Steve Penner, executive secretary Communist League. Sat., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W., Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

**Hands Off Cuba! U.S. Escalates Attacks Against Cuba.** Speakers: Michel Dugré, *Lutte ouvrière* reporter, just returned from Cuba; Christianne Malet, member of International Solidarity Committee of Québec teachers' federation. Sat., March 10, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W., Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

## Vancouver

**Protest Escalating Provocations Against Cuba.** Speakers: Roberto Aviles, Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front Support Group; Joan Campana, Communist League. Sun., March 4, 1:30 p.m. 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (604) 872-8343.

**The Pathfinder Mural: Artistic Freedom Under Attack.** Speakers: Todd Davis, artist, curator; Julius Fisher, member Musicians Union Local 145; Karen Knights, Coalition for the Right to View; Terence Long, *The Gleaner*; Mark Severs, former coordinator, Pathfinder Mural Project; Jeff Wall, artist and teacher, Fine Arts Dept. of Univ. of British Columbia. Sun., March 11, 2 p.m. Pitt Gallery, 36 Powell St., Gastown. Sponsors: Pathfinder Mural Project and Pitt Gallery.

**After the Elections: Defend Nicaraguan Sovereignty and Independence.** Speaker: member Central Committee Communist League. Sat., March 17, 7:30 p.m. 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (604) 872-8343.

## SWEDEN

### Stockholm

**One Day Longer Than Lorenzo.** Speaker: Carl-Eric Isacson. Sat., March 10, 2 p.m. Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (08) 31 69 33.

**Welcome Nelson Mandela.** Meet Mandela at Arlanda airport. Mon., March 12. Public meeting to be announced. Sponsor: Nelson Mandela Welcome Committee. For more information call (08) 21 63 43.



**More bang for the buck —** "Shock treatment for East Europe — Capitalism off with a bang in



**Harry Ring**

Poland: Prices soar, wages plummet, layoffs loom" — *Washington Post* headline.

**Communist internationalism?**

"A unified Germany will mean a crushed France. How are we going to give our economy the necessary dynamism to recover our place as a great economic power in Europe? If we do not, the French will suffer dire consequences." — French Communist Party chief Georges Marchais.

**Pure as the profit** — "Although Perrier and other mineral waters sell on their image of purity, a Consumers' Association study last year found most contain so many bacteria they would fail EC [European Community] standards for tap water. Perrier has the highest nitrate

level of any bottled brand." — British *Guardian*.

**50-50** — A British government study found that the top 25 percent of taxpayers pocketed 50 percent of the country's income. A decade ago, they were limping along with 45 percent.

**Amen** — "We all need a little rest." — An aide to Ivana Trump.

**They thought they were honest?** — The media professed astonishment that before going bust, the top dogs at Drexel Burnham, the junk bond folk, awarded themselves bonuses totaling some \$350 million.

**You don't have to walk it** — Pampered Paws of Toronto is offering a 55-pound Lucite sculpture of a poodle. \$5,700.

**Owner friendly** — Some 10 million U.S. workers are subjected to computer surveillance — counting key strokes, etc. — usually without their knowledge. That's the finding of 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women.

**Due process** — In the town of Halhoul, Israeli troops raided the home of Saleh Hneihen and ordered him to pay \$175 because Palestinian slogans had been written on the

walls of his home. The soldiers confiscated a TV, a radio, and an iron, which, they said, would be returned when he paid the fine.

**Thought for the week** — "Dozens of soldiers have already been imprisoned for refusing to serve in the territories. . . . Thousands of others have evaded military service through various pretexts. When the time comes those who continue to fulfill their military obligations . . . will have to answer the question, 'Daddy, how many children did you kill in the intifada?'" — Martin Van Karfeld, Israeli professor of military history.

## Workers' protests, strikes shake Swedish gov't

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — A majority in the Swedish parliament voted February 26 to accept a new Social Democratic Party government headed by Ingvar Carlsson as prime minister again. Carlsson's previous government had resigned February 15. The vote came after the Social Democratic leader held talks with other party leaders on a new economic proposal.

Left Party of Communists leader Lars Werner and Center Party leader Olof Johansson said they were satisfied with the talks and would vote in favor of forming the new government.

Thousands of public workers, a big majority women, had marched to the government building here February 12 to protest against a government economic proposal that was to end wage increases, ban strikes for the next two years, and increase the fine against individual workers for illegal striking from 200 kronor (US\$65) to 5,000 kronor (\$750).

The new government will soon put forward an economic proposal similar to the old one. The wage freeze and strike ban will be replaced with arbitration by an official ap-

pointed by the government to keep wages down.

The government will also propose to obtain "guest workers" from the Baltic republics of the Soviet Union — Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia — to increase the labor supply in Sweden. These workers will be compelled to return home after one or two years. (Late last year the government had put a stop to all immigration except of those who are political refugees according to United Nations definition. The ban came after several thousand Turks from Bulgaria had applied for asylum in Sweden.)

The Swedish Employers' Association complained in recent talks with the government that there is a shortage of labor due to too many sick days and pensioners and excessively long holidays and maternity leaves. They also said wages are too high and called for contracts only at the local level in each company. The employers demanded an end to hikes in local taxes (which pay for most social services), for the employers to take over responsibility for payments during sick leaves (now organized by a state insurance agency), and the radical increase in fines for

illegal strikes. Much of this was incorporated in the government's original proposal.

The Social Democrats' plan was tied to a price and rent freeze that was to go into effect the same day as the wage and strike restrictions. The measures were rejected by parliament on February 15 when all other parties voted against them. The Social Democratic government then resigned.

### Workers' response

Workers had responded to the government proposal with protest meetings, resolutions, demonstrations, and strikes.

Workers in the Swedish Municipal Employees Union and other unions organizing public employees held protests outside parliament for a whole week. Their contracts had expired and their unions had called for a strike beginning February 14, one day before the planned strike ban was supposed to be implemented.

Public workers suffered deteriorating wages and working conditions during the 1980s because of general attacks on public service through changes in the tax system and government subsidies and through privatization of state-owned enterprises.

Six hundred workers in a hospital in Malmö had struck for a week in January. More than 60 were fired, but the workers refused to go back to work until all were promised their jobs back. They won that demand. The strike led to a series of protests among hospital workers around the country.

Bus drivers and train engineers in Stockholm and other cities also struck against the strike ban. Some 100,000 commuters in Stockholm had difficulty getting to work on February 12. In spite of this, most workers were sympathetic to the protest strike.

The leaders of all national unions in the National Organization of Trade Unions, except the Municipal Workers Union, at first supported the government proposal. After the wave of protests among the workers, several of them withdrew their backing.

In an article in the February 13 *Dagens Nyheter*, the executive director of Volvo, Pehr Gyllenhammar, urged support for the government plan to maintain stability and avoid a political crisis and new elections.

In an article in same paper February 19, before the formation of the new government, Prime Minister Carlsson argued against new elections. "The risk is big that new elections now would not create a parliamentary situation that will facilitate forming a government," he said.

Other politicians in the Moderate Party (a conservative, bourgeois party) are raising the idea of a new electoral system, more like the two-party system in Britain or the United States, to facilitate a more stable situation. Some political commentators suggest allowing higher unemployment to keep wages down and lower inflation.

## Wyoming miners vow to rebuild union

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

SHERIDAN, Wyo. — Three hundred coal miners and other unionists traveled from six surrounding states to rally here February 11 in support of two mine union locals fighting to reestablish the United Mine Workers of America at the Decker and Big Horn mines.

UMWA locals 1972 and 2055 struck Peter Kiewit Sons, Inc. and Nerco Coal Co., owners of Decker and Big Horn, in October 1987, protesting company attacks on health care and wages. In June 1988 the miners offered to return to work but the coal bosses rehired only a portion of the strikers and continued to run mines with scabs.

The mine union is now waiting for a decision by an administrative law judge on reinstatement of 200 miners who filed unfair labor practice charges against the bosses of the two coal companies.

The UMWA "intends to turn this struggle into the Pittston of the West," said Richard Kirkpatrick, incoming UMWA western region director. Some 1,900 miners at the Pittston Coal Group, who waged an 11-month strike to save their union and win a decent contract, approved a new pact February 19.

Present at the rally were UMWA miners from Zap, North Dakota; Libby, Montana; and Oak Creek, Colorado. Other unionists came from throughout the region, including members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way, United Food and Commercial Workers, United Transportation Union, and Communications Workers of America.

Featured on a platform of speakers were representatives from the AFL-CIO in three states, UMWA Vice-president Cecil Roberts, and Bruce Boyens, outgoing UMWA western region director. Larry Deeds, president of UMWA Local 1972 in Sheridan, chaired the event.

Participants responded enthusiastically to a video shown on the Pittston strike, which won widespread solidarity throughout the coalfields. "Now that we have a contract at Pittston," said Roberts, "we can turn our attention to the robber barons here in Sheridan."

Roberts explained the "long and bitter

struggle" against Pittston and how union miners had to take "on the cops, courts, and government to win."

Fines of \$64 million remain against the mine union and 13 miners were fired by Pittston for "strike-related violence," along with some 30 suspended with pay.

"We are here today," he concluded, "to say that we will drive the scabs from Sheridan, take back our jobs, restore democracy to the workplace, and win a contract at Peter Kiewit."

Boyens announced that the union plans a public disclosure of a UMWA investigation into Kiewit's current coal contracts with Commonwealth Edison in Chicago and Detroit Edison.

"We want to make the people of Chicago and consumers of Commonwealth Edison aware that they're subsidizing a labor strug-

gle a thousand miles away," said Boyens.

Miners from Sheridan will be traveling to Chicago, where, among other activities, they plan to attend the Eastern Airlines strikers' March 4 anniversary celebration.

## —10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

March 7, 1980

President Carter is pushing to reinstitute draft registration and extend it to women. Carter says that his move to include women comes from concern for women's equality.

Drafting women and men would in no way mark a gain for women's rights. It would be a defeat for all working people.

The reactionary character of Carter's proposal is recognized by thousands of youth who have taken to the streets recently to oppose drafting anyone. Many women have participated in these demonstrations.

Women's fight for equality is a struggle against discrimination, for an end to the second-class status so long imposed on women because of their sex. It is a fight for equal rights in education, jobs, and every aspect of society.

Being conscripted to fight and die for Exxon is not a "right." That's why thousands chant at marches and rallies: "ERA [Equal Rights Amendment], yes! Draft, no!"

**THE MILITANT**  
Published in the interests of the Working People  
March 8, 1965 Price 10c

From an interview with James Shabazz, Malcolm X's secretary, conducted by Militant staff member Harry Ring.

Shabazz. Brother Malcolm died teaching a concept of a unity of oppressed people. Oppressed people cannot achieve unity by

fighting against one another while the real culprit, who pits them one against the other, stands back and smiles. Brother Malcolm's assassination must be viewed in terms of the forces that ordered it rather than in terms of the tools that perpetrated the act.

It was not simply coincidental that he was assassinated after having been refused admittance to France and after an attempt had been made to prevent him from reentering England, two countries which — like the United States — are world powers that have tremendous populations of peoples of African origin and Muslims, all of whom are oppressed — truly a thorn in the side of a power structure determined to go to war in Asia against other nonwhite peoples.

From an article by Joel Britton on a visit to Selma, Alabama.

Going to the SNCC-SCLC [Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee-Southern Christian Leadership Conference] office I found on the door a sign that announced: "This office is in mourning for Malcolm X."

I asked Silas Norman, project director for SNCC, about Malcolm's visit to Selma three weeks earlier. "He was very well received, warmly received," was the answer. "The problem is that many more people agreed with him than will admit it. It wasn't fashionable due to the image people had of Malcolm as a bad thing, a fiery renegade, fanatic. The press was responsible for this false image. It is tragic that most people didn't understand the effect he was having on international relations, the unifying effect he was having on Black people all over the world."



Militant/Kathy Mickells  
**UMWA Vice-president Cecil Roberts spoke at the recent miners' rally in Sheridan, Wyoming, held to step up efforts to rebuild the union in two mines where the union suffered a setback in 1988.**



# Blow to Nicaragua sovereignty

Continued from front page

dential election in the United States — something the U.S. government would never submit to.

Many of these observers are now staying on with Carter and Richardson. In addition, Washington announced it will beef up its embassy staff in Managua, according to a report in the February 28 *New York Times*, "with people who can advise Mrs. Chamorro on how to deal with Nicaragua's many political and economic problems." This, one administration official said, is needed to insure "a complete transition," to the Chamorro government.

Meanwhile, Washington holds out the promise of dropping the trade embargo and considering loans if the transition to Chamorro takes place in an orderly way. In addition to the threat of withholding economic aid if things don't go as Washington likes, there is the threat of U.S. military force to back the elected government of Chamorro.

Many working people in Nicaragua fear that UNO's victory will also embolden Nicaraguan capitalists' to demand concessions in wages and working conditions, reversal of the land reform, erosion of union rights, and the unwinding of other gains made by working people since 1979.

The FSLN's electoral defeat will embolden Washington in its campaign of threats and provocations against revolutionary Cuba, and in its drive to crush the liberation struggle in El Salvador led by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front.

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole summed up Washington's goal: "As I see it it's two down, Panama and Nicaragua, and one to go — Cuba."

Many supporters of the Nicaraguan revolution wonder what happened to the FSLN. It had led workers and peasants in overturning the hated Somoza dictatorship and capitalist political rule and in defeating the contras. How could it be voted out of office by a coalition funded and backed by the U.S. government?

The popular revolutionary struggle that toppled the Somoza dictatorship on July 19, 1979, involved masses of Nicaragua's workers and peasants in the countryside and cities across the country.

The new government they placed in power began implementing far-reaching democratic reforms, took some initial steps toward overturning entrenched discrimination against women, undertook a land reform, and began to search for the road forward to uprooting discrimination against the indigenous peoples and Black people on Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast.

The FSLN-led government forged strong links with the revolutionaries of Cuba, Grenada, El Salvador, South Africa, and Burkina Faso.

A new army, police, and militia were formed. The government responded to, and helped to lead, workers' and peasants' mobilizations, land takeovers, and factory occupations.

Through this workers' and farmers' government, Nicaraguan toilers had a weapon to advance their fight to replace the capitalist foundations of the economy and embark on the construction of socialism.

In response, Washington began a campaign during the Carter administration to reverse the revolution, politically isolate the new government internationally, cut off its aid, and pressure it to retreat. The FSLN refused.

In 1981 Washington organized, funded, trained, and

directed the contra army. These mercenaries inflicted extensive damage throughout the country. Tens of thousands were killed, wounded, or displaced by the war.

The Nicaragua government devoted enormous resources to defeating the contras. Workers and peasants gave their lives defending the country's sovereignty and their hard-won gains.

By 1987 the contras were defeated. The momentum of this victory offered an opportunity to lead the workers and farmers in overturning the capitalist property relations that remained intact in Nicaragua.

Thousands of battle-tested youth were ready to be part of the deepening organization and mobilization of working people such a fight would take.

Instead, the FSLN-led government charted a political and economic course that was increasingly based on long-term reliance on the workings of the capitalist market. Social inequalities increased. Class consciousness, confidence, and organization among workers and peasants declined.

The young fighters who defeated the contras were demobilized. The fighting capacity and power of the unions diminished. Poor peasants had less and less of a voice in the FSLN-led farmers' organization. As a result, young fighters, workers, peasants, and other militants became politically disoriented and depoliticized.

Confiscation and distribution of large landowners' holdings to landless peasants was discontinued. The government moved away from policies that sought to provide certain basic commodities at subsidized prices to every Nicaraguan.

The FSLN increasingly organized itself as an electoral party, not a mass organization of politically conscious and active working people fighting to lead all toilers in the country. Building a communist party along such lines was rejected.

FSLN leaders more and more sought a "national consensus" between the poor peasants and workers on one hand and the capitalist class and big landowners on the other. Demands by working people for land, higher wages, unionization, abortion rights, and relief from a host of ills caused by capitalism were discouraged in order to achieve "national unity" in face of the economic crisis. And to attempt to achieve stability in the region, the FSLN government signed an accord with other Central American governments in December to support the Alfredo Cristiani regime in El Salvador and urge the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front to demobilize its forces.

\* \* \*

Working people internationally and all democratically-minded people should step up their efforts to speak out and join protests against the U.S. rulers' moves to reverse the gains of the Nicaraguan revolution, attack the Cuban revolution, and push back the liberation struggle in El Salvador.

The protests being organized in Washington, D.C., and other cities March 24 calling for an end to U.S. aggression in El Salvador and throughout Central America and the Caribbean provides an important focus for ongoing mobilizations against the U.S. government's policy in the region.

# Back West Virginia socialists!

The *Militant* is backing the Socialist Workers Party ticket of Dick McBride, union garment worker for U.S. Senate, Maggie McCraw, union metal worker for state treasurer, and Clay Dennison, union coal miner for attorney general in the November West Virginia elections.

We urge all *Militant* readers in West Virginia and around the country to be the backbone of this campaign. Some have already volunteered and, along with the candidates, will begin canvassing the cities, towns, and hollows of the state discussing the socialist campaign with workers and helping make the ambitious petition effort for ballot status a success. Supporters of the McBride-McCraw-Dennison ticket have set a goal of collecting 13,000 signatures between March 17 and April 5 to win a place on the state ballot. Petitioners, funds, office volunteers, and other help is needed.

The *Militant* has many new readers in the Appalachian coalfields as a result of the growing resistance by miners and other workers to employer attacks. Workers have found the *Militant* and met supporters of the paper at union miners' picket shacks, labor solidarity events, Eastern strikers' airport walk-throughs, environmental protests, teachers' rallies, and mine portals.

Hundreds of unionists and other workers have subscribed, read the paper, told cofighters about it, and renewed. Published in the interests of working people, the *Militant* has given voice to and told the truth about these struggles.

McBride, McCraw, and Dennison are fighters and

union activists, not wealthy factory and mine owners or landlords. They have been involved in building solidarity with the Machinists battle against Frank Lorenzo's Eastern Airlines, struggles against the coal bosses led by members of the United Mine Workers of America, and local battles of union laundry workers, metal workers, tree-trimmers, teachers, fire fighters, and city workers.

Their campaign is promoting solidarity with these struggles and leading the fight for the democratic right to run for office and be on the ballot.

The socialist candidates tell the unvarnished truth about the deepening economic crisis the employers worldwide face — a crisis bearing down hardest against working people. They have proposals about what is needed for workers to defend themselves against the bosses' continuing attacks. They explain perspectives highlighted in the pamphlet *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, which centers on the need for workers to mount a unified fight against the employers as their crisis worsens and conditions for working people deteriorate.

One of the first activities McBride, McCraw, and Dennison will be participating in is the March 4 one-year anniversary celebration of the Eastern strike at the Pittsburgh airport, one of many actions slated around the country that day. They will join Eastern strikers, miners, and others adding their voices and helping to make the Machinists action loud and visible. Join them and join the socialist campaign!

# Do we need a green-socialist party?

BY DOUG JENNESS

In a letter on the facing page, reader Amy Nicholson urges that the struggle against environmental destruction and the fight for socialism be combined. To get across her point she suggests that what is needed is an "Environmental Socialist Workers Party."

The basis for proposing this joint effort, Nicholson says, is that "it will matter little who is running the show if there is no clean air, water, or food" — implying that environmental destruction is not only a problem in capitalist societies but will be one for socialist governments too.

Nicholson's approach is based on the accurate view that for working people to replace capitalist rule with our own government is not enough to end the degradation of our

# LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

natural resources. Technology and industry, especially in the modern world, involves the large-scale transformation of nature, which, if not carefully controlled, will lead to massive destruction of resources even in a society where capitalist exploitation has been eliminated.

But why should this require an Environmental Socialist Party? A similar argument could be made for the formation of a Feminist Socialist Party or an Antiracist Socialist Party. The overturn of capitalist political rule, the expropriation of the capitalist class, and the nationalization of basic productive property will not guarantee the end of oppression and prejudice based on sex or race any more than it will end spoliation of the environment. It is a necessary, but not a sufficient step, to ending these evils.

But let's first look at capitalist society. The exploiters who make massive profits off the wealth produced by wage laborers and working farmers have little or no concern about preventing the ruination of our air, water, soil, forests, and other natural resources. They release chemical and radioactive wastes into our environment without regard to the hazards to human health or to ecological stability. They cut down forests throughout the world with no plan, or inadequate ones at best, for replacing trees. They wantonly use up and waste unreplenishable resources with no long-range perspectives for conserving them or developing alternatives.

The businessmen and bankers who own the factories, mines, mills, and transportation lines that produce the lion's share of pollutants are driven by only one aim: squeezing more profits out of working people.

Only by waging a fight against the exploiting class — a fight in which workers gain greater confidence and organized strength — can the polluters be forced to implement safeguards against hazardous conditions both on the job and in the environment. Every coal miner knows that union mines are safer than nonunion mines.

But as long as the private profit system remains, these limits imposed on the employers can only be temporary and uncertain. The key is for a revolutionary workers' movement to overturn capitalist rule, establish a government of working people, and end private ownership of basic production. It will be this that opens the way for working people to make big advances in eliminating all forms of prejudice and oppression, as well as cleaning up the vast garbage heap capitalism has left and taking steps to protect the environment.

But this will not happen automatically. It will require a political leadership that inspires, mobilizes, and organizes the working class to administer the economy and take command of the government at all levels. It's a leadership that will recognize the creative capacities of human beings and their capability of working for the interest of society as a whole and not purely out of self-interest.

In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where capitalist property relations have been overturned, this kind of leadership doesn't exist. Instead, privileged bureaucratic officials dominate those countries and are a reactionary obstacle to utilizing the advance nationalized property represents to move toward socialism. Defending their privileged status is their number one goal, not advancing the interests of humanity, including safeguarding the environment. Widespread pollution in those countries testifies to this.

That's why I don't agree with Nicholson's judgment that "it will matter little who is running the show." There's a big difference between money-grubbing capitalists or self-interested parasitic layers, who in no way care about or act in the interests of humanity, and politically conscious working people leading a movement toward socialism. The latter are going to be more inclined to pursue policies that will protect our natural environment.

The struggle to overturn capitalist rule, and on the basis of that conquest, move toward socialism, requires a socialist or communist leadership. Tacking "environmental," "green," or "ecology" onto the name of this organization assumes that some other kind of leadership, a nonsocialist leadership, is needed too. But what can that be, except a leadership that sets itself apart from the working-class struggle for socialism.



# Inmates welcome South African leader's release

BY MARK CURTIS

ANAMOSA, Iowa — Nelson Mandela's release from prison February 11 was welcomed by inmates here at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory. Many had heard about his pending release the night before on television.

Several men without TV sets in their cells asked for permission to turn on the cellhouse TV early Sunday morning to see Mandela leave prison for the first time in 27 years.

## BEHIND PRISON WALLS

The guards, however, wouldn't let the set be turned on for some time. Even so, about 20 of us were able to gather around the TV set later in the day to see Mandela's first speech as a free man given at Cape Town City Hall.

The biggest reaction was awe and respect for this man who millions see as the living example of the struggle for freedom. "I'm glad to see him get out," said one inmate, "— 27 years just for nothing, just doing what's right."

While Mandela was speaking, several men stopped by

to ask what was on. "What did he do anyway?" one asked. "He's a revolutionary," someone responded. Another expressed concern that Mandela had thanked the South African Communist Party for its work against apartheid.

Most everyone wanted to know more about Mandela's views and about the African National Congress of which Mandela described himself as a loyal member. The book *Nelson Mandela: The Struggle Is My Life* has continuously been checked out from the general library and is asked for a lot.

Why Mandela was released at this time was also discussed. "He got out because of the sanctions," an inmate explained. "They just couldn't handle all the pressure anymore." "They're not doing it out of the kindness of their heart," another noted.

I agree. It was the work of millions of people in South Africa fighting apartheid, the economic sanctions by other countries, and people all over the world who put pressure on the racist government in hundreds of different ways that brought Mandela out of prison.

I discussed the defeat of South Africa's military forces

by Angolan and Cuban troops in 1988. South Africa's loss of the war in Angola led directly to them pulling out of Namibia, South Africa's former colony. Namibia has since held its first free elections in which Blacks and whites voted, and a new constitution has been written for the soon-to-be independent country.

Not everyone here was aware of Mandela's release. When I asked if they had heard the news, more than one inmate responded, "You mean Tyson getting knocked out?" referring to the heavyweight boxer.

While walking out in the yard that afternoon, I ran into three of my friends, two Cubans and a Salvadoran. We talked about South Africa, about the celebrations happening there, and we decided to have one ourselves. We went down to the prison commissary, bought two pizzas, a jar of jalapeño peppers, soda, some sweets, and then had a picnic. "Viva Mandela!" was our Coca-Cola toast.

Mark Curtis, a unionist and political activist, is serving a 25-year jail term on a frame-up conviction of rape and burglary.

## LETTERS

### Lacking on environment

I very much agree with your views. The one thing I find lacking, although occasionally mentioned, is the great importance in connecting labor, civil, and human rights with environmental concerns. It will matter little who is running the show if there is no clean air, water, or food, and the planet becomes totally uninhabitable.

Many environmentally minded people agree with socialist theory but only see the Stalinist, industrialist result of massive environmental degradation. I think there is a great opportunity for a combined approach, maybe an Environmental Socialist Workers Party.

Amy Nicholson  
Sellersburg, Indiana

### Protests U.S. wrongs

On January 30 we closed our restaurant to protest the invasion of Panama by U.S. troops. We have received lots of support since we closed. Many people have called and thanked us for reminding people that what the United States did was wrong, wrong, wrong.

We are speaking up for those people who were suddenly murdered and cannot speak for themselves.

Jerry McLain  
Bellevue, Idaho

### Clarence Lee Brandley

On January 17 the Texas Supreme Court ruled that Clarence Lee Brandley should get a retrial. Brandley, who is Black, has been on death row for nine years. He is out on bail now as the result of a three-year fight by a multiracial coalition of working people, religious leaders, and community activists.

Brandley was falsely convicted of the rape and murder of a young white woman, Cheryl Ferguson, in Conroe, a small town near Houston.

No physical evidence linked Brandley to the crime. Physical evidence that could have cleared him was "lost" by county officials.

Two witnesses, white janitors who worked with Brandley, originally pointed the finger at another white man, but were coerced by law enforcement officials to change their story.

Brandley was tried before an all-

white jury.

Brandley is now active in the coalition that was formed to support his fight and to oppose the use of the death penalty. His case, like that of Mark Curtis, simply shows that workers everywhere are under attack constantly by the so-called justice system under capitalism.

Abolish the death penalty!  
Free Clarence Brandley!  
Free Mark Curtis!

Bruce Little  
Houston, Texas

### Federal cutbacks

Readers of the *Militant* may be interested to know that a University of Utah program, the American Indian Social Work Career Training Program, is in danger of being discontinued due to federal cutbacks.

This program has graduated one-fourth of the nation's Indian social workers, including the first American Indian woman to earn a doctorate in the field. There are only about 350 Indians with masters of social work degrees and each one would have to serve at least 5,000 people to reach the Indian population.

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported February 11 that the National Institute of Mental Health is withdrawing the funding it provided for 19 years, currently a meager \$90,000 per year. The paper says the cutbacks come at a time when this money is more needed than ever.

Students from reservations seldom have funds from family and employment to fall back on and depend entirely on programs to help pay living expenses and provide scholarships.

Isn't it amazing that when the government decides to make cutbacks, it's always the people who need assistance most who suffer? Capital gains tax breaks for the wealthy are considered reasonable; a program for American Indian social workers is considered absurd.

John-Michael Eggertsen  
Salt Lake City, Utah

### Cuba volleyball team

An ad hoc committee to welcome the Cuban volleyball team was formed in response to an advertising campaign for St. Louisans to come and root for their country against the Cubans. The committee supports a policy of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Cuba. It wanted to insure a welcome for the Cuban team in wake of the recent attack by the U.S. Coast Guard on a Cuban cargo ship in international waters.

Before the match with the U.S. Olympic team, the committee distributed 500 informational leaflets on the gains Cuba has made despite a 30-year U.S. economic blockade and attempts to sabotage Cuba's economy and assassinate its leaders. The committee also cheered the Cubans to a victory with signs reading, "Cuba, sí!" "Solidarity with Cuba,"



and "End the blockade." Cuba won in three straight games, making it unnecessary to play the full five games of the match.

Following the victory, the committee received personal greetings from the Cuban team.

Angy Folkes  
St. Louis, Missouri

### Arbitrary policy

I read in a recent *Militant* about the "arbitrary prison rules" at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa — where Mark Curtis is incarcerated — which "attempt to dehumanize prisoners and cut them off from the outside world."

I'm presently teaching a telecourse at an Iowa community college. The main classroom is hooked up to several extension centers through sound and picture. One of the extension classrooms is at the reformatory in Anamosa.

But the reformatory classroom is treated differently: neither I nor the rest of the students are allowed to see the reformatory students, only to hear them. There seems to be no reasonable purpose for this prison policy; it merely serves to stigmatize those students and to further punish them.

Paul Dougan  
Iowa City, Iowa

### 'War on drugs'

I've just finished reading a copy of your paper and am very much impressed by it. The answer to the world's problems is socialism. This capitalist garbage pail we live in must be overcome if we are to grow as human beings.

One of the reasons I am in prison is people like Donald Trump who told his buddy Edward Koch to get the Muslim merchants off the streets of New York, that this would make it look like a city. But there are no jobs, so people do what they have

to do.

Then there is the New York Police Department that confiscates drugs and sells them themselves. There is no war on drugs. It is a plot to wipe out people of color in the inner cities so the yuppies can buy their houses cheaply.

I wish our brother Mark Curtis all the blessings from Allah to win an appeal in his case. Hang in there, brother.

A prisoner  
Dannemora, New York

### Cuba celebration

In celebration of the 31st anniversary of the Cuban revolution, more than 100 people attended a program in Cardiff, Wales, featuring a slide-show, workshops, a social, and a panel discussion. The panel included Jorge Valdez, cultural attaché to the Cuban embassy in London.

After describing some of the achievements of the Cuban revolution, Valdez warned about the increasing aggressiveness of the U.S. administration. He pointed to the invasion of Panama and deployment of U.S. forces off the coast of Colombia.

Carlos Zepeda, a representative of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador, described the impact of the Cuban revolution on his country. Rhodri Morgan, a Labour Party member of Parliament, said Cuba's survival in the face of the economic blockade by the United States shows it is possible to rebel against oppression.

Anne Howie of the Britain-Cuba Resource Centre, which organized the event, spoke about the attempts to smear Cuba with drug-trafficking charges and announced the BCRC's campaign against TV Martí, the U.S.-sponsored broadcasts aimed at Cuba.

A Pathfinder Press book table attracted a lot of interest, especially

the recently published volume of speeches of Fidel Castro, *In Defense of Socialism*.

Martin Hill  
Cardiff, Wales

### Police harassment

The FBI completed an investigation into racial harassment by Florissant, Missouri, police on February 9. Florissant is a suburb of St. Louis.

The investigation was requested by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People after a Florissant policeman, Michael Lasater, testified that the mayor and police chief had ordered cops to stop Black motorists in the town to discourage Blacks from entering the community. Two other officers have come forward with similar allegations — including talk on the police force of going to an apartment complex to "put a little strong arm" on the majority Black residents.

Several Black youths report incidents of harassment. Some have been stopped routinely — as many as 20 times in the past year — for no reason.

Kim Kleinman  
St. Louis, Missouri

The *Militant* special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to: *Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

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.

## Correction

In the March 2 *Militant* article on the recent United Nations Commission of Human Rights resolution condemning the U.S. invasion of Panama, we reported the resolution was originally submitted by the delegations of Cuba, Nicaragua, and Syria. Libya, not Syria, was among the initial sponsors.



## Union conference in El Salvador calls March 24 protest actions...

BY SETH GALINSKY  
AND SELVA NEBBIA

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — The National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS) celebrated its fourth anniversary at a downtown hotel here on February 22. This was the group's first public meeting since November when the government declared a state of siege, suspending democratic rights in the course of a military offensive by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Permission to hold the conference was granted by the army.

Union leader Francisco Martínez told the 450 delegates, including many from other parts of the country, that the event was an important step in "breaking the chains of the state of siege." UNTS spokesperson Humberto Centeno announced plans for public demonstrations for March 24, the anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, and for May Day. These activities will take place "with or without the state of siege," Centeno said to enthusiastic applause.

The UNTS is a coalition of union federations, peasant organizations, and community groups opposed both to the previous Christian Democrat-led government and to the current government of ARENA, a right-wing party. When the state of emergency was imposed on November 11, many union leaders and opponents of the government were forced into hiding. The army occupied and ransacked the offices of many union and opposition groups.

Marco Tulio Lima, a leader of the peasant organization COACES, presented the main report to the gathering for the executive committee of the UNTS. "Increased levels of armed confrontation will deepen the economic crisis," he said. "All sectors of the nation must put forward a political solution ahead of any military project."

Referring to the military conflict that began at the beginning of the 1980s, Lima stated, "The experience of 10 years tells us that, to the extent that weapons speak, the possibilities of enjoying freedom of organization, mobilization, thought, and travel are closed." In addition, he stated, "the conditions become ripe for the violation of human rights without those responsible being tried and punished."

### Call for negotiations

The conflict in El Salvador is the product of "social injustice, inequality, and the concentration of wealth," the UNTS leader added. Lima called for "serious" negotiations between the government and the FMLN, with the participation of representatives of union, professional, and business organizations, to reach a peaceful solution. ARENA, the FMLN, and all parties to the conflict must be more flexible, he stated.

UNTS leader Centeno elaborated on the main report. "Internationally the fascist project of ARENA has been unmasked," he said. "We must do the same inside the country."

Union, professional, and community organizations must organize and fight for an independent supreme court made up of "honorable" judges, for an election council that is "autonomous," and for "negotiations over the future role of the armed forces," Centeno declared. "The army cannot defeat the FMLN," he added. "And its November offensive proved that the FMLN is not negotiating from a position of weakness."

Martínez gave the final report for the UNTS executive committee. "We have to advance in the reopening and maintenance of political space," he stated. "Every organization should elaborate its demands and define its strategy."

The conference encouraged union, peasant, community, church, and student organizations to hold press conferences and public



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Platform at the fourth anniversary conference of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers. Rosario Acosta (center), a leader of the union, addresses the delegates.

meetings, and to publish advertisements in local papers both to challenge the economic austerity measures of the government and to protest attacks on democratic rights.

An older farm worker, Alejandro de la Cruz Peña, traveled 50 miles from Santa Ana to attend the conference. "I really liked this meeting," he commented. "It shows that the

repression won't make us give up." Peña added, "We need a change so that we can get land to work."

Leonor Mendoza, representing a consumer cooperative, said, "This event shows us we can go forward in spite of the fact that the government is trying to hold back the people."

Representatives of several political parties, including the Popular Social Christian Movement, Democratic National Union, National Revolutionary Movement, and Christian Democratic Party, also addressed the gathering.

The conference was covered extensively on television news and in some daily papers.

## ... and rallies in five U.S. cities target Washington's aid to regime

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Nationally coordinated actions to protest the U.S. war in El Salvador and stepped up military provocation in Central America and the Caribbean will take place in Washington, D.C.; Austin, Texas; Los Angeles; San Francisco; and Seattle on March 24 and 25.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front's defeat in the Nicaraguan elections on February 25 will mean that the U.S. government "will take a harder line on El Salvador," Jon Haines, a New York organizer for the protests said. Washington's "triumphalist" stance, he added, will bring about an "intensification of the U.S. war there."

The March 24-25 protests "are needed now more than ever to stop the U.S. war in El Salvador," said Diane Greene, a coordinator of the Washington, D.C.-based national coalition. The coalition, which is organizing and coordinating March 24 activities, is made up of Central America solidarity groups and has participation from religious groups. Other organizations involved include Mobilization for Survival, the National Rainbow Coalition, SANE/Freeze, United States Student Association, Young Koreans United, and the American Indian Movement.

The actions come as continued U.S. funding for El Salvador's military forces faces debate in the U.S. Congress. Last November a Salvadoran army death squad assassinated six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter. This occurred at the same time that casualties escalated into the thousands as the Salvadoran government bombed the civilian population. These atrocities, carried out by a government increasingly dominated by U.S.-financed military forces and right-wing death squads, have stirred renewed public opposition in the United States.

An important aspect of the March 24 protests will be commemorating the 10th anniversary of the assassination of El Salvador's Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero, who voiced his opposition to U.S. intervention in his country and to the fierce repression by the Salvadoran government. He was gunned down in church by a death squad on March 24, 1980.

East of the Mississippi, activists are mobilizing to participate in a march and rally in Washington, D.C. Activists and coalitions in 67 cities and on 95 campuses are organizing contingents to go to the capital, Greene said. Assembly for the march begins at 10:00 a.m. at the Capitol building. A rally is planned at the White House.

A newly formed Washington, D.C., coalition has been building activities to publicize the march. Leaflets were distributed at a demonstration at the offices of the *Washington Post* February 22 and at a February 20 event called "Self-determination from D.C. to El Salvador." A student coalition has formed to build campus participation at several local universities.

The New York coalition has reserved buses to leave from several parts of the city and plans to organize participation from the city's large Dominican, Panamanian, and Caribbean communities. Students from Columbia, Fordham, New York, and St. John's universities, City College, and the New School are planning to send buses to D.C.

A San Francisco march will lead off at Jefferson Square Park, at the corner of Gough and Turk streets. From there the march will head for the Civic Center Plaza for a rally that will feature singers Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt. Buses are being organized for the event from throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and Northern California. Patti Far-

rar, an area coordinator, reported that the Santa Clara and San Bonita labor councils have endorsed the action, as have locals 6 and 34 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, California Federation of Teachers, and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2.

Activities will begin at 2:00 p.m. at the Seattle Center Flag Plaza. After a march, antiwar activist Philip Berrigan and leader of Co-Madres, Gloria Galan, will address a rally at the same site. Students from other areas in Washington State and Oregon are planning buses, and the local coalition is planning outreach to unionists, especially farm workers.

A march is being organized in Austin, Texas, by a coalition of peace, religious, and solidarity activists. More than 50 organizations statewide have endorsed the action. The assembly point will be at the Federal Building at 2:00 p.m., with a rally at the conclusion of the march at the Pan American Recreation Center. Houston activists are organizing buses for the event.

The Los Angeles demonstration has been called for March 25. It will be kicked off at Olympic and Broadway at 11:00 a.m. and march to city hall for a 1:00 p.m. rally. Local activist Cristina Perez reports that 30 organizations are involved in the city's coalition and that building efforts come after 11 successful weekly protests against U.S. intervention in El Salvador held at the Federal Building.

For more information on the March 24 protests call the national coalition for the Archbishop Romero Commemoration and March to End the U.S. War in Central America. They are located in Washington, D.C., and can be reached at (202) 483-3911.