

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Youth build brigade
to revolutionary Cuba

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 58/NO. 43 DECEMBER 5, 1994

3,000 at world meeting in solidarity with Cuba

Alarcón: 'We will never betray our principles'

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND DAMON TINNON

HAVANA, Cuba — In a show of solidarity with the Cuban revolution unprecedented since the 1960s, nearly 3,000 delegates from 110 countries have gathered here for the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba.

"Your presence here makes us stronger to defend our independence, our national identity, and our Cuban socialism," said Ricardo Alarcón, president of the National Assembly, the country's parliament, in an address to the first plenary session of the conference November 21.

"We draw on the dignity and the common will of all Cuban patriots to defend the revolution," Alarcón said. "But we also count on you. We count on your solidarity and the confidence it gives us that for millions of people across the face of this planet Cuba's battle is their own."

This was a common theme that ran through the presentations of other Cuban leaders who spoke at the gathering.

The outpouring of support registered in the size of the Havana meeting went beyond the expectations of the organizers, showing Cuba is far from alone in the world, said Sergio Corrieri in his welcome to the delegates. A few days before the event began, the location of the plenary sessions was moved to the Karl Marx theater, which has a larger capacity than the previously planned hall. Corrieri, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), opened the event on behalf of the 52 Cuban organizations that issued the call for the world gathering. Anyone opposed to the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba was invited.

Before the curtains of the Karl Marx the-



Cuban youth march in defense of revolution August 6 on Havana's waterfront. "Your presence here makes us stronger to defend our independence, national identity, and Cuban socialism," Cuban leader Ricardo Alarcón told delegates at world solidarity conference in Havana.

ater were raised for the opening ceremony, some 2,000 people had registered for the conference, including more than 1,000 members of Cuba solidarity organizations, 220 representatives of political parties, 125 union leaders, 120 members of parliament, and 55 government officials.

In his opening remarks, Corrieri announced participation had reached 2,700. By the next morning, attendance had surpassed 2,900. Delegates have come from all continents. Initial figures showed 1,900 from the Americas and the Caribbean, 750 from Europe, 150 from Asia and the Pacific, and 100 from Africa.

In their presentations, Alarcón and others spoke about the difficult economic conditions facing Cuba today.

The loss of aid and trade at preferential

prices with the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries beginning in 1989 triggered formidable economic difficulties, which are exacerbated by the U.S. embargo. To meet the crisis, the Cuban government adopted numerous measures, including legalizing the use of U.S. dollars, opening farmers markets for sale of food at unregulated prices, and establishing joint ventures to attract capitalist investments in tourism, oil and mineral exploration, and other areas.

"The Cuban revolution has had to adapt to a changing world, but we will never surrender to imperialism, we will never betray our principles," said Alarcón. "Our efforts are not just aimed at preventing the destruction of socialism in Cuba, at saving

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Bipartisan gov't push to right runs into limits

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Democratic and Republican politicians are now attempting to turn the rightward thrust of the recent election campaign into government policies. As they seek to carry out a bipartisan offensive against the social gains of working people, big-business politicians are also running into the limits on how far they can push right now. The

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result is a steady grind to the right in mainstream capitalist politics.

With Republicans giddy over their new control of both houses of Congress, one of the first issues raised by Republican leader Newt Gingrich, the upcoming Speaker of the House of Representatives, was a call for a constitutional amendment to bring prayer into public schools.

President Bill Clinton, at a news conference in Indonesia, where he was campaigning for U.S. trade advantages in the Pacific, immediately announced he would consider working with the Republicans on such an amendment. "I have always supported voluntary prayer in the schools," he stated.

But other capitalist politicians quickly

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Palestinian police shoot down dozens in Gaza attack

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Palestinian police opened fire on people in the streets of Gaza City on November 18. Fourteen were killed and more than 200 wounded.

"This was the first time this has ever happened," said Palestinian journalist Ziad Abbas in a telephone interview from Bethlehem. "People are very angry. The red line has been crossed."

Popular anger was immediately directed at Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman Yasir Arafat. Standing at the site of a clash between police and protesters, one Palestinian exclaimed, "Arafat is worse than [Nicolae] Ceausescu," referring to the Romanian leader who unleashed a massacre in the final days of his rule in 1989.

As thousands of people finished Friday prayers at a Gaza City mosque and assembled for a demonstration, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) police confronted marchers, many of whom were supporters of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and Islamic Jihad.

Police, saying the demonstration didn't have a permit, tried to seize a loudspeaker that was to be used for the march. Stones were thrown at the troops, who opened fire. PNA cops, of whom there are 9,000 under Arafat's command, reportedly fired on unarmed crowds on three occasions that day, and riots spread throughout the Gaza Strip. Youth with stones fought against

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Unions in Decatur, Illinois, call march to defend right to picket

BY ANGEL LARISCY

PEORIA, Illinois — Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW), United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), and the United Rubber Workers (URW) are organizing a "March for Justice" through central Illinois November 29-30 to win solidarity for their common fights against union busting. The unions, which represent workers on strike against Caterpillar, A.E. Staley, and Bridgestone/Firestone, will be demanding fair labor contracts and their constitutional rights, especially the right to maintain picket shelters around struck plants.

Union members and their supporters plan to gather at the Decatur Civic Center Tuesday at 8:00 a.m. to begin a 40-mile march to the state capitol in Springfield. They will camp out overnight and arrive at a rally scheduled for noon in Springfield

November 30. Unionists and other supporters from throughout the area plan to join the marchers at the rally.

The action was called to protest attacks on the right to strike by the city of Decatur. Recently city officials ordered the UPIU, whose members are locked out by A.E. Staley, to take down picket shacks. The city government says the issue can only be resolved on the state level.

Caterpillar strikers from UAW Local 974 in Peoria are also joining in the effort. Strike activists here have traveled to Decatur for organizing meetings and are building the march and rally in the Peoria area. They are also asking other workers from nearby unions to join the action. UAW locals on strike against Caterpillar in Pontiac and Aurora are also being encouraged to participate.

"The Humane Society will worry about

a dog not having shelter but the community leaders of Decatur are not concerned about people having shelter on the picket line," said Jim Peacock, a Local 974 member who is helping to build the march.

Peacock pointed out that the mayor of East Peoria, where Caterpillar has the majority of its operations, has threatened to take away strikers' picket shacks along with their burn barrels. "If they can do this in Decatur they can do it in Peoria," he said.

Tom Welsh, a member of URW Local 713 on strike against Bridgestone/Firestone, said that activists in Decatur are faxing a flyer for the action to unions in St. Louis, Chicago, and Des Moines, as well as to the surrounding towns in Illinois. They plan to work with state workers, teachers, and members of the United Mine

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Tel Aviv okays torture

The Israeli justice minister, David Libai, reported in mid-November that Tel Aviv, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, has decided to allow harsher interrogations of suspects. Israeli human rights groups say this gives cops free rein to torture detainees. Government policy codified in 1987 already sanctions the use of a "moderate degree of physical pressure" against people arrested by police.

A report from B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights group, gives an account of nine Palestinians who were tortured in Israeli prisons over the last six months. The report concludes that torture of Palestinians persists despite the negotiations between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Athens, Ankara in rift over oil

A conflict between the governments of Greece and Turkey is sharpening in a dispute over an offshore oil site west of the Greek island of Thasos. Ankara says any moves by Athens to extend its territorial waters in the Aegean Sea from six miles to 12 will be resisted by force.

Tensions flared when the Greek government declared that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea vindicates its long-standing 12-mile claim. The Turkish military is conducting maneuvers in international waters in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. About 100 miles to the south, the Greek navy is organizing an annual NATO naval exercise. In response to the dispute, Washington sent one of its Navy cruisers to patrol the Aegean.

Irish prime minister resigns

Abandoned by his Labor Party coalition partners, Albert Reynolds resigned as prime minister of Ireland in a crisis precipitated by a scandal involving a priest convicted of child molestation in northern Ireland. In an effort to keep his Fianna Fail party in power, Reynolds did not call for a dissolution of the Parliament, leaving the government in turmoil.

The Labor Party leadership withdrew its support over the appointment of Harry Whelehan as president of the High Court, criticizing the fact that as attorney general, Whelehan had refused to extradite the priest, Brendan Smyth, to face child abuse



Some 20,000 workers and students held an antigovernment protest November 13 at the University of Kynghee in Seoul, South Korea. The workers called for building a national labor organization that does not exclude dissident unions.

charges.

Sydney deports immigrants

The Australian government deported 57 Vietnamese refugees to an Indonesian refugee camp November 10. A lawyer for the refugees said no formal notice was given prior to the deportation.

The Vietnamese were deported after being ruled out as refugees under an international settlement plan in which Sydney accepted some 17,000 people.

Faulty doors on British ferries

Britain's Marine Safety Agency found that 35 of the 107 passenger ferries it inspected needed repairs for leaks and fractures. The inspection followed the September disaster involving the sinking of the *Estonia* and the resulting deaths of 900 people.

One ship, the *Winston Churchill*, was recently detained in port with a defective stern door. The Department of Transport has refused to publish the names of the other faulty ships, saying this would create "the wrong impression." In 1993, some 31 million passengers and 5 million automo-

biles were transported to Europe by ferry operators.

Japan's Sony loses billions

Sony announced November 17 it was taking a loss of \$3.2 billion on the value of two Hollywood movie studios, Columbia and TriStar Pictures, which it acquired five years ago. The quarterly loss was the largest ever by a Japanese company and prompted the Standard & Poors Corporation to consider lowering the rating on \$7 billion of bonds issued by Sony. The company's trade shares fell on the New York Stock Exchange by \$3.25. Sony's woes followed a disclosure that another Japanese corporation, Mitsubishi Estate, may be about to default on its mortgage on Rockefeller Center in New York.

Cuban refugees get U.S. visas

The U.S. government flew 39 Cubans from its Panama detention camps to Florida November 17 in response to pressure to allow elderly, sick, or orphaned Cubans into the United States. Another four Cubans were flown to Texas because U.S. government officials said they were too sick to be treated in Panama. Washington has previously maintained that the 32,000 Cuban refugees detained in camps in Panama and at the Guantánamo Naval Base in Cuba must return to Cuba to apply for legal immigration.

Students protest in Venezuela

Dozens of students were attacked by Venezuelan cops November 9 in Valencia, in the state of Carabobo, during a protest against an increase in transportation fares. The previous day students were assaulted by police in a raid at the University of Carabobo. Five students and five cops were injured and 75 students were arrested.

The president of the Federation of Student Unions at the university condemned

the police. The fare hike also prompted protests in Caracas and other cities last September.

Farmers told to cut back crops

Corn farmers who depend on government price-support programs were told to reduce 7.5 percent of their acreage next year in the wake of a record 10-billion-bushel harvest. Farmers are harvesting 58 percent more corn, partly because the government allowed them to plant all their eligible acreage this year after grain supplies were almost depleted from the 1993 flood-related crop disaster in the Midwest.

GM sues in truck safety dispute

General Motors filed suit demanding that U.S. transportation secretary Federico Peña be barred from investigating a claim that up to 6 million GM pickup trucks contained a potentially lethal defect. The suit by the auto manufacturer, whose profit margins have been sagging, says Peña "is causing immediate and unjustified harm to the business and reputation of General Motors."

The owners of the auto giant objected to a hearing scheduled for December 6, which will present testimony of relatives of victims burned to death in vehicle accidents.

Aldape Guerra conviction halted

A federal judge has set aside the conviction of Ricardo Aldape Guerra, who was sentenced to death and has served 12 years in a Texas prison for a murder many say he did not commit. Judge Kenneth Hoyt said the actions of the cops and prosecutors involved in the case were "scurrilous" and outrageous. He gave the state 30 days to retry or release Aldape.

Aldape, a worker originally from Mexico, was sentenced to death in the murder of a policeman in 1982. Protests in support of Aldape have been organized in Mexico and in the United States. Aldape's lawyers say he was denied a fair trial because witnesses were intimidated and prosecutors used false evidence and failed to disclose evidence that could have acquitted him.

—BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

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The Militant

Vol. 58/No. 43

Closing news date: November 23, 1994

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Editorial Staff: Naomi Craine, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Sara Lobman, Paul Mailhot, Greg Rosenberg, Pat Smith, Maurice Williams. Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311,2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant.

Internet email: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

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One million march in Rome against cuts

BY PAT SMITH

"Berlusconi cannot ignore this," Sergio Mangano, a metalworker from the Italian city of Brescia, said of the more than 1 million people marching through Rome November 12 to protest Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's plan to cut spending on pensions and health care. "After the floods, it's a human tide," Mangano said, referring to the devastating floods that hit northern Italy a week earlier.

The rally, organized by three union federations, was Italy's largest post-World War II demonstration. Some marchers carried signs reading "Dump Berlusconi, the New Duce," comparing the prime minister to fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Others carried garbage cans with the names of Berlusconi and his cohorts in the right-wing coalition government. The unions have called an eight-hour general strike for

December 2 to continue protests against the 1995 budget, which calls for unprecedented austerity measures.

"I scarcely believe that this government has dared to do what no one else has dared to do — structural cuts in pensions and health systems," gloated Stefano Micossi, research head at Confindustria, the Italian industrialists' association.

Attacks on social wage

To narrow the gap in productivity with its rivals the Italian government has launched deep attacks on workers' social wage. Berlusconi has proposed raising the retirement age from 56 to 60 for women and from 61 to 65 for men. The plan penalizes workers who have made the equivalent 35 years' contributions but retire before the set age. All pension requests will be blocked for four months and cost of living

adjustments will be frozen in 1995.

The budget pushes privatization of the national health-care system and increased use of private pension funds. It also calls for additional fees for medical services, including emergency care, medications, and tests. Some smaller hospitals will be closed.

"Our proposals on pension reform are the minimum we could do to convey a strong signal to the financial markets that we are serious about reducing the ratio of debt to gross domestic product," Berlusconi said.

The rightist coalition government, made up of Berlusconi's Forza Italia party, the fascist National Alliance, and the Northern League, has so far united in favor of the cuts. The Northern League's Umberto Bossi has retreated on his threat to break with the government over the depth of the

pension cuts.

Following a four-hour general strike by 2 million people on October 14, the government made some concessions on its pension proposal. The general strike was accompanied by more than 80 demonstrations, which organizers said attracted 3 million people. Workers have demonstrated and walked out in strikes since early September, including a September 13 work stoppage at Fiat's Turin plant.

Corruption scandals

The Italian government continues to be shaken by a two-and-a-half-year investigation exposing systemic corruption that toppled a 50-year political order dominated by the Christian Democrats. Thousands of businessmen and politicians face corruption charges.

Even Berlusconi, a millionaire media mogul, has not remained untouched by the scandals. An investigation of his company caused the Milan stock market to drop 21 percent since its high in May.

Carrying torches and banners reading, "Honest Italians are with you," some 10,000 people demonstrated in front of the Milan courthouse October 12 to support the continuation of the magistrates' investigation. A few months earlier, Berlusconi was forced to back down on limits he tried to impose on the judges.

Rightist forces have benefited the most from the scandal-mongering, feeding on the economic insecurity of wide layers of the population and the discrediting of mainstream capitalist politicians. They fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the Christian Democrats and the absence of a working-class leadership to address the social crisis. All the parties, including the Stalinists, who are influential in the labor movement, resort to nationalist arguments.

Gianfranco Fini, leader of the fascist National Alliance, has surpassed the standing of the prime minister in some opinion polls. "Nobody in my party has been arrested on corruption charges, so we are seen as completely honest," he argued.

The Italian government's budget slashing and drive to privatize major state-run industries occurs in the middle of an upturn in the business cycle. "Order books are swelling, utilisation of capacity is increasing, energy consumption is up and profits are returning. The big private industrial groups such as Fiat and Pirelli, which have gone through painful and costly restructuring programmes, are signaling that the worst is over," the *Financial Times* reported in October. At the same time, workers' wages have declined in real terms for the past two years, and unemployment in the south remains at almost 15 percent, double the levels in the north.

Strikers in France win solidarity

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PETIT-QUEVILLY, France — Ten thousand people demonstrated November 19 in Belfort, France, to support a strike at several GEC-Alsthom factories.

Several thousand strikers have occupied the sprawling GEC-Alsthom electromechanical complex in Belfort since November 2, and the gas turbine factory in Bourgne since October 24. A large number of demonstrators came from Peugeot auto plants in Sochaux and Mulhouse. Many storekeepers closed up shop in solidarity with the protest.

A few hours after the demonstration, government-appointed mediator Paul Julien called on management to increase its wage offer and on strikers to return to work. By declaring his mission "over," he implied that the government would send riot police to put an end to the plant occupation if strikers rejected his proposal. A vote was reportedly scheduled for November 22.

Unionists from Quebec also came to Belfort bringing solidarity from workers at the Alsthom plant there, who have been on strike since October 10.

The actions in Belfort and Bourgne have given workers at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant in Petit-Quevilly confidence to continue their strike, which began on November 10. More than 80 percent of the 220 production workers here have joined the strike, demanding a monthly wage increase of \$283 (US\$1 = FF5). They have set up a picket line at the plant gate to prevent trucks from leaving or entering.

Workers hold two meetings daily where they discuss the latest developments and decide on activities. Most workers here, like most throughout the country, do not belong to a union.

At a meeting November 18, workers de-



Four thousand strikers rallied November 7 outside GEC-Alsthom plant in Belfort, France.

cided to organize the occupation of the factory throughout the weekend, participate in a union demonstration in nearby Rouen the next day, and leaflet the nearby Rhone Poulenc chemical factory and Renault auto plant to explain their fight and build solidarity.

The walkout here began after the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the largest union in the plant, called for a one-hour work stoppage on the morning of November 10. But "workers went far beyond what the union had expected," according to Pascal, who has been very active in organizing the strike. "That proves people have been getting fed up for years." In the afternoon workers decided to call a strike, the first here since 1975.

Another worker said, "All the GEC-Alsthom factories should go on strike, even in Britain," where the Franco-British multinational employs 18,000 people. "I

think it's time to strike a big blow, even with workers from other companies, maybe with the students. We're fed up."

Workers here were encouraged by the failure of Alsthom management thus far to get any kind of back-to-work movement started in Belfort and Bourgne. Management had confidently and with great fanfare organized a November 16 vote on ending the strike. But this blew up on them when only 2,867 employees — 38 percent of the entire workforce, including engineers and executives — voted to go back to work.

The next day a court ordered strikers to evacuate the plants within 48 hours. Some 200 workers immediately marched to see the prefect, the local representative of the national government, who decides when to use the riot cops. He claimed the court order would not be implemented as long as mediation was under way.

Management has refused a general pay increase, proposing only \$37-\$57 raises for those earning less than \$1,415 a month.

In Belfort and Bourgne, the company has made a partial concession to a union demand to hire as permanent workers some 500 employees currently working under a temporary and limited contract. The company has agreed to hire 173 of these primarily young workers.

At a November 19 Militant Labor Forum in Paris, Ann Fiander, a member of the Communist League in Britain who works at a GEC-Alsthom plant in Manchester, England, reported that workers from Petit-Quevilly had been eager to talk with her at the demonstration held that day in Rouen. "They inevitably asked whether workers in Britain knew about their fight and if we were on strike," she said. "The bosses and the news media have kept the existence of the strike here a secret, but workers from Britain on contract in France have been spreading the news."

Derek Jeffers is a member of the CGT at the GEC-Alsthom transformer plant in Saint Ouen.

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The *Militant* is now available via computer. All articles, columns, and editorials can be picked up on the socialist paper's new Peacenet conference by midday each Friday. Readers will need an account with Peacenet, which is part of the Institute for Global Communications and has affiliates in many countries. In the United States it can be reached at (415) 442-0220. The *Militant's* conference name is: militant.news.

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Socialists strengthen work in coal region

BY STEVE CRAINE

MORGANTOWN, West Virginia — Socialist workers from western Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia met here November 5-6 to discuss steps to strengthen all aspects of their political work, including with fighters of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in this important coal-mining region. Members of the Socialist Workers Party's Pittsburgh and Morgantown branches voted to establish a district of the party to coordinate the efforts of communists throughout the region.

A central aspect of this discussion was on the defense of the Cuban revolution. Joel Britton, national SWP trade union work director, explained how defending Cuba is part of standing up against the capitalist rulers' drive toward fascism and war. Drawing workers who are in struggle into the defense of Cuba helps them as they confront the same enemy as Cuban working people.

The other major report of the convention dealt with organizing the new district. Estelle DeBates of Morgantown noted that many workers here know the history of the miners' fight in the 1960s and 1970s to gain democratic control of their union. "Their history shows that the unions can be changed," she stated. The UMWA's ability to resist the bosses' drive for concessions through the 1980s, in contrast to every other major union in the country, was due to the gains won by the ranks.

John Cox from Pittsburgh noted that southwest Pennsylvania was one of the centers of that fight to eliminate the corrupt and entrenched bureaucracy that had been strangling the union for years.

Cox, who works on the railroad, recalled many conversations with coworkers on the "sorry state of our union." He pointed out that "the example of the UMWA is one thing that can change these discussions from unproductive gripe sessions to serious discussions of what the union needs to fight in the interests of working people."

Steelworkers in Washington, Pennsylvania, also look to the miners when they discuss how to fight, reported Selva Nebbia, who works at the Allegheny Ludlum mill in that city.

The UMWA's tradition of solidarity is reflected by its support for other workers on strike. A delegate at the district convention reported that UMWA District 31 in this area recently raised about \$7,000 for Caterpillar workers on strike in York, Pennsylvania.

Rail and steel workers linked to mines

DeBates explained that the experience of working in industries like rail and steel that connect directly with the mines had helped put the party in a position to reestablish its priority of bringing all its campaigns to the miners and their union, despite the fact that all the socialist miners in this area have been laid off.

DeBates explained how coal companies like Consolidation Coal (Consol) use the myth that the coal industry is dying to blackmail workers into accepting speedup and other attacks on union gains.

Consol is now threatening to shut down the three mines closest to Morgantown. They employ about 1,500 miners, while another 6,500 jobs are reported to be indirectly dependent on these mines. At the same time, some previously closed mines are being reopened, and several in the region have called back all or nearly all of the laid-off miners eligible for recall rights.

UMWA president Richard Trumka spoke here in October on the need to work with Consol management to find a way to keep the mines running. He cited Peabody's Tygart River Mine as an example of how the union and the companies can agree on measures to boost productivity and keep mines operating.

"Productivity has to be the miner's ally, not his or her enemy," he stated. "Every time we've approached a mine, a situation like this where the employer, government, and us have come together and everybody's operating in good faith, we've always been successful," Trumka said.



Coal miners support glass workers at solidarity rally in Weston, West Virginia, in March 1993.

A team of *Militant* salespeople had just visited the Tygart River Mine. They reported one miner's complaint that new work schedules designed to increase productivity mean "We don't know if we're coming or going. We have men working 3-, 4-, and 6-day weeks and 8-, 10-, and 12-hour shifts."

Further proof that the bosses see plenty of future profits in the areas coal is the expansion of Consol's two big nonunion mines, Enlow Fork and Bailey, located just about halfway between Pittsburgh and Morgantown. They are now the largest and second-largest producers among underground mines in the United States.

Shortly after they opened about 10 years ago, the UMWA unsuccessfully attempted to organize them. The company now pays these miners a little more to keep the union out. Many in the UMWA consider miners

at Bailey and Enlow Fork to be "scabs."

Socialist rail workers reported that Conrail management gives these nonunion mines preferential treatment over organized mines. Conrail worker Dennis Richter, who works on the line that services many of the region's mines, noted this collaboration between Conrail and Consol to weaken the UMWA.

He also reported that he had worked several days at the Enlow Fork/Bailey loadout. "Every day the discussion among miners there was about the conditions they face as nonunion miners," he said. "There were always a wide variety of opinions expressed, but these are discussions communist workers can get right into with workers who are looking for real answers."

Two weeks before the district convention, a team of socialists campaigned for Socialist Workers candidates and sold the

Militant at the Enlow Fork/Bailey gate. Twelve workers bought the paper and others gave them a friendly response and pro-UMWA comments.

Members of this team also noted that the issues of the *Militant* sold at this sale, and at seven other portal sales during a week of intensive campaigning in southwestern Pennsylvania, featured front-page headlines on Cuba. "This was clearly as much a part of the appeal of the paper as the coverage of the Caterpillar strike and other U.S. labor battles," said DeBates.

The convention voted to prepare for any possible hiring in union mines and mine construction, follow developments at the Enlow Fork and Bailey mines, and reaffirm the importance of holding jobs on railroads that service the mines.

Britton's report on Cuba reviewed the full calendar of solidarity activities in coming months. "These events will involve various political forces," he noted, "but we will be among the few who bring a perspective of solidarity from the U.S. working class — from fighters to fighters."

"Cuba solidarity work on the job and through the unions will get a big head start," he said, "if we have coworkers who have been reading the *Militant* or Pathfinder books like *To Speak the Truth*." He also noted that doing effective Cuba support work can also strengthen solidarity with workers' struggles like the strike against Caterpillar.

As part of the convention, a public meeting was held on the West Virginia University campus to raise funds for Pathfinder Press. Some 35 people heard a talk on "Cuba Today: an Eyewitness Report," by Martin Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, where \$1,200 was raised.

—YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD— Youth in Canada fight budget cuts

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS or to join write: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2396, New York, NY 10009, or call (212) 475-6482.

BY GUY TREMBLAY

MONTREAL — Jason Coughlin, a member of the Young Socialists and of the United Transportation Union, has kicked off a tour of Canada here. Coughlin, who had participated in the November 12 march in Washington, D.C., against the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba arrived in time to participate in a November 16 demonstration of 10,000 students against proposed cuts in education.

The protest, which took place in Ottawa, was against proposals by Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy to double college tuition. The demonstration was the first in many years involving students from both Quebec, which is predominantly French speaking, and other provinces in Canada. Chants in English of "education is a right," and "tax the rich, don't tax the poor," and in French of, "it's just the beginning, continue the struggle" could be heard as students marched from Ottawa University to the Canadian Parliament Building. A rally took place in front of the Parliament Building featuring speeches by opposition members of Parliament, leaders of the student federations, and the organizers of the march.

The march represented the first action involving Young Socialists from both Toronto and Montreal. A table set up by YS members at the rally became a pole of attraction for young fighters. Many of those present were interested in learning more about the battle against anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California and about the Cuban revolution. More than 30 people signed up for more information on activities of the Young Socialists at the

demonstration.

Near the end of the rally, Axworthy himself spoke. Amid jeers from the crowd, he asserted that university students were a "privileged elite" and that they would have to share more of the burden of the cost of education. At the same time the minister stated that the Canadian government would be adding \$10 billion to the education budget, but in the form of student loans.

The same day, another YS member attended a rally of 250 supporting workers striking the Ogilvie flour mill in Montreal.

Over the next three days, Coughlin spoke at campus meetings sponsored by the Young Socialists, at a Militant Labor Forum, and was interviewed by a campus radio station. Coughlin spoke about attacks students and workers face today, the resistance these attacks trigger, and the importance of joining these struggles and building a movement to draw fighters together.

"The Young Socialists place defense of the Cuban revolution at the center of our work precisely because Cuba represents a powerful example that proves that workers and farmers can transform society, and by doing this, can transform themselves," explained Coughlin.

"The aim of the Young Socialists is to provide young people with an avenue to get involved in struggles as they happen. This, combined with regular and serious study of the lessons the working class has learned throughout history, makes it possible to forge the kind of human beings that can build a society free from the horrors of capitalism."

"Why do politicians continue to attack our rights despite opposition and protest?" "Where will leaders who will not betray the will of the masses of people come from?" and "What can youth in Montreal become involved in?" were among the questions discussed at the meetings. A student from Maisonneuve College bought a subscription to the *Militant* newspaper and invited Young Socialists to participate in a meeting on Nicaragua.

Young Socialists \$16,000 Travel Fund

The Young Socialists are embarking on an international campaign to defend the Cuban revolution, sending a representative to an African National Congress conference in South Africa, and sending YS representatives around the globe.

To carry this out the YS has launched a \$16,000 international travel fund. Send your contributions to the Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2396, New York, NY, 10009.

AREA	GOALS	COLLECTED
UNITED STATES		
Alton/		
Bloomington, IL	\$100	
Atlanta	\$100	
Birmingham, AL	\$500	
Boston	\$400	
Chicago	\$550	
Cincinnati		50
Cleveland	\$400	
Detroit	\$200	
Evansville, IN	\$50	
Edinboro, PA	\$50	
Greensboro, NC	\$75	
Los Angeles	\$1,200	
Maryland	\$50	
Miami	\$200	
Morgantown, WV	\$150	
Newark, NJ	\$400	
New York	\$1,200	50
Philadelphia	\$800	
Pittsburgh	\$500	
Salt Lake City, UT	\$600	
San Francisco	\$1,000	
Seattle	\$700	
Tampa Bay, FL	\$50	
Twin Cities, MN	\$1,000	
Washington, D.C.	\$500	
Yellow Springs, OH	\$100	
AUSTRALIA		
Sydney		\$350
CANADA		
Montreal	\$250	
Toronto	\$600	
ICELAND	\$350	\$180
TOTAL	\$12,057	\$630
SHOULD BE	\$16,000	

Sales campaign is big success

BY SARA LOBMAN

Congratulations to the hard-working distributors of the *Militant*! There are now 3,305 new readers of the *Militant* and 734 new readers of the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*. In addition, during the 11 weeks of the just-completed campaign to increase circulation, supporters of the socialist press sold 1,083 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

A team of *Militant* supporters from Australia, Britain, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States is now in Havana attending the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba. Nearly 3,000 people from around the world are attending the gathering. In the first two days, conference participants purchased 10 subscriptions to the *Militant* and 5 to *Perspectiva Mundial*. Twenty-five bought copies of *New International*.

The real turning point in the international circulation campaign came several weeks ago as supporters in Canada and the United States threw themselves into building the November 12 march on Washington in opposition to the U.S. government's aggression against Cuba, as well as other activities in defense of the Cuban revolution. More than 40 subscriptions to the *Militant* were sold at the November 12 demonstration, as well as 22 to *Perspectiva Mundial* and 9 copies of *New International*.

Help build Cuba activities

Militant supporters — including new readers — can now take advantage of the encouraging success of this subscription campaign, using the valuable political gains to build the upcoming international youth brigade to Cuba and other Cuba defense activities. They will find hundreds more working-class and young fighters, whether on picket lines or at meetings to hear Cuban representatives, who will be hungry for the facts and socialist

ideas presented in every issue of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, as well as the in-depth analysis in *New International*.

"We had a great time during the last week of the drive," Annette

leader Rogelio Polanco," Toni Jackson said. Supporters in Newark sold 37 *Militant* subscriptions in the last week of the drive. "And two people joined the Young Socialists in the course of the campaign," Jackson said. "One young man we met during a sale at the train station downtown and another we met on the buses to the November 12 demonstration."

Sales to miners

Supporters in St. Louis also had a good week. "We sold at three mine portals, including two we had not been to in a while," Candace Wagner reports. Two members of the United Mine Workers union got subscriptions to the *Militant* during the week. Six members of the United Steelworkers of America also bought subscriptions to the paper. "We also participated in a benefit concert for workers in Decatur, Illinois, who are locked out by A.E. Staley. One coal

miner came to the event after getting a flyer at his portal from our sales team," Wagner noted. "And a subscriber who attends a nearby college came with two friends."

While we did not make the goal to sell over 1,250 copies of *New International*, more than 400 copies of the magazine were sold in the final week of the campaign.

A special fund-raising project in Greensboro, North Carolina, made it possible for Musa Kamara, a staff worker at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University and a native of Sierra Leone, to purchase a set of all nine issues of *New International* for use by students in that West African country.

At the recent Pathfinder Fund meeting in Greensboro, Kamara explained that the government had recently closed down the University of Sierra Leone, supposedly for renovations. The closure, however, comes at a time of increased student protest. "The best tool students could have would be a set of *New Internationals*," Kamara told the meeting.

Kouri reports from Montreal. Supporters in that city sold 27 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 5 to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 12 copies of *New International* in the final days of the campaign.

Sales at Canada demonstration

A high point in the week was the demonstration of 10,000 high school and college students in Ottawa on November 16 to protest education cuts. "Discussions on the reasons behind the cutbacks, the Cuban revolution, and socialism never stopped," Kouri said. "At least 30 people signed up for more information on the Young Socialists and the international brigade to Cuba they are helping to organize, and we sold 5 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 43 single copies of the paper, and 2 *New Internationals*."

"The team I participated in to Rutgers University in Newark made sure we had enough people both to set up a table and go visit student organizations and professors about the brigade to Cuba and the upcoming tour of Cuban youth



Militant/Greg Rosenberg

Militant sales picked up through the building of march in Washington against embargo of Cuba.

WHERE WE STAND end of week eleven

SOLD 100%

SHOULD BE 100%

	Militant		Perspectiva Mundial		New International	
	sold	goal	sold	goal	sold	goal
Puerto Rico*	3	2	150%	9	10	6
France	5	4	125%	2	5	12
Australia	38	35	109%	5	8	18
Iceland	14	13	108%	0	1	5
Canada						
Montreal	88	80	110%	25	25	45
Vancouver	82	75	109%	11	10	20
Toronto	90	90	100%	10	17	45
Canada total	260	245	106%	46	52	110
Sweden*	46	45	102%	20	20	21
New Zealand						
Wellington*	13	10	130%	0	0	2
Auckland	76	75	101%	5	5	10
Christchurch	32	35	91%	1	1	6
NZ total	121	120	101%	6	6	18
United States						
Albany, NY	22	10	220%	2	1	3
Portland, OR	4	2	200%	0	1	0
Cincinnati, OH*	20	13	154%	2	2	0
Denver, CO	6	5	120%	6	3	0
New Haven, CT	11	10	110%	2	2	3
Washington, D.C.	93	85	109%	31	30	35
Salt Lake City, UT*	129	120	108%	24	16	38
Des Moines, IA	91	85	107%	36	36	35
Detroit, MI	107	100	107%	11	11	28
Cleveland	101	95	106%	17	16	20
Houston*	79	75	105%	14	12	18
San Francisco	158	150	105%	43	42	71
Los Angeles	240	230	104%	121	101	107
Miami	125	120	104%	58	55	71
Pittsburgh	109	105	104%	14	12	28
Twin Cities, MN*	140	135	104%	17	17	12
Brooklyn	113	110	103%	36	36	67
Boston	118	115	103%	36	36	54
Philadelphia	118	115	103%	32	30	47
Chicago	148	145	102%	23	32	21
Greensboro, NC	66	65	102%	5	4	17
Seattle*	92	90	102%	15	15	24
Birmingham, AL	76	75	101%	4	5	14
Hartford, CT	5	5	100%	0	1	0
St. Louis	80	80	100%	6	6	17
New York	129	145	89%	27	40	30
Newark, NJ	118	140	84%	29	35	32
Atlanta	86	105	82%	17	15	19
Morgantown, WV	31	40	78%	0	1	2
Peoria, IL	23	30	77%	0	2	2
Albuquerque, NM	5	7	71%	0	2	1
Edinboro, PA	4	6	67%	0	1	1
U.S. total	2647	2613	101%	628	618	815
Belgium	2	2	100%	5	2	2
Greece	11	11	100%	1	1	7
Britain						
Manchester	51	50	102%	3	3	25
London	67	70	96%	5	3	10
Sheffield	31	40	78%	2	1	9
Britain total	149	160	93%	10	7	44
Other	10			5		26
TOTAL	3306	3250	100%	736	730	1084
SHOULD BE	3300	3300	100%	700	700	1,250
IN THE UNIONS						
CANADA						
CAW	22	12	183%	1	0	4
CEP	9	5	180%	0	1	0
USWA	9	12	75%	0	2	0
IAM	13	18	72%	3	1	1
ACTWU	1	2	50%	0	3	0
Canada total	54	49	110%	3	7	5
UNITED STATES						
UFCW	25	15	167%	25	17	4
UTU	115	85	135%	6	10	24
IAM	91	80	114%	11	3	10
ACTWU	28	25	112%	18	11	14
UAW	137	135	101%	9	15	30
OCAW	65	65	100%	4	5	8
USWA	49	87	56%	2	3	1
ILGWU	10	20	50%	19	20	2
UMWA	12					
U.S. Total	532	512	104%	94	84	93
SWEDEN						
Food workers	2	3	67%	0	0	2
Metal workers	1	2	50%	0	0	3
Sweden Total	3	5	60%	0	0	4
AUSTRALIA						
FPU	2	3	67%	0	1	2
AWU	1	3	33%	0	0	1
Australia Total	3	6	50%	0	1	3
BRITAIN						
TGWU	8	7	114%	0	0	0
RMT	10	22	45%	0	0	0
NUM	0	2	0%	0	0	0
AEEU	0	6	0%	0	0	0
Britain Total	18	37	49%	0	0	0
NEW ZEALAND						
UFBGWU	3	5	60%	0	0	1
MWU	2	4	50%	0	0	1
EU	2	6	33%	0	1	1
N.Z. Total	7	15	47%	0	1	3
*raised goal						

ACTWU-Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; AEEU-Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AFMEU-Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union; CAW-Canadian Auto Workers; EU-Engineers Union; FPU-Food Preservers' Union; IAM-International Association of Machinists; ILGWU-International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; MWU-Meat Workers Union; NUM-National Union of Mineworkers; NUW-Union of Workers; OCAW-Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT-National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU-Transport and General Workers Union; UAW-United Auto Workers; UFBGWU-United Food, Beverage and General Workers Union; UFCW-United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA-United Mine Workers of America; USWA-United Steelworkers of America; UTU-United Transportation Union.

Young Socialists build international brigade to revolutionary Cuba

BY JACK WILLEY

NEW YORK — The work to build the January 6-20 International Cuba Youth Brigade is gaining momentum as those who have already signed up reach out to groups and individuals on campuses and at their workplaces. People have been writing the brigade office daily for more information. In the past week, letters have come in from Texas; Las Vegas; Hartford, Connecticut; and a few cities in Belgium asking for more information on how to join the brigade.

A desire to learn the truth about Cuba and why the U.S. government refuses to back down from its aggressive measures toward the revolutionary government there is drawing more people into the brigade.

Participants will spend two weeks in Cuba reporting for news-

papers, radio stations, and other media about the situation the Cuban people face and what working-class fighters are doing to defend their socialist revolution. Brigade members will spend a week in the countryside reporting on the voluntary labor mobilizations, led by members of Cuba's Union of Young Communists, to increase food production.

The second half of the trip will include visits to factories, farm co-operatives, schools, and historical sites like the Museum of the Revolution in Havana.

Participants will have the opportunity to meet and interview Cuban workers and learn first-hand about Cuba's socialist course.

Committees have been formed in many cities to get others involved and raise funds for the brigade members. In Minneapolis,

brigade organizers attended a Chicano conference at the University of Minnesota, where they announced the brigade to the audience of 150 people. That evening, brigade participants threw a party, raising \$170 for the trip.

At the State University of New York at Purchase, 20 people have requested more information. A planning meeting is taking place to organize a public event about Cuba and raise funds for those interested in going on the brigade.

Brigade participants in Canada signed up a number of people wanting more information at a November 16 national demonstration in Ottawa against government budget cuts.

For more information, contact: Cuba Youth Brigade, P.O. Box 1801, New York, NY 10009, or call (212) 677-4356.

Bipartisan push to right runs into limits

Continued from front page

attacked Gingrich's position, as well as Clinton's momentary pandering to it. Altering the constitutional provision separating church and state opens a bigger public debate on civil liberties and democratic rights than the ruling class is presently interested in. Even conservative politicians and commentators began to attack the idea.

"Libertarian conservatives like me recoil at the intrusiveness in Newt's call for a 'voluntary' school prayer amendment," wrote syndicated columnist William Safire. He was joined by others expressing their dismay that this may be the wrong fight at the wrong time.

"We have a huge problem on our hands here," said Beverly LaHaye, president of Concerned Women for America, which backs the agenda of various right-wing political groups that portray themselves as religious. "If prayer is going to be the big battleground, maybe we should sit back and take a long look at it."

In Denver, where the Council of Jewish Federations was holding its annual conference, Rabbi David Saperstein said the topic dominated discussions. Scores of civil liberties groups, as well as some religious organizations, pledged to campaign against attempts to impose prayer in the schools.

Almost immediately, Clinton backed down from open identification with Gingrich's proposal, saying he only favored a moment of silence at the beginning of the school day.

During the election campaign, Republican politicians drafted their "Contract with America." This program calls for a 50 percent cut in the capital gains tax for the wealthy, combined with spending cuts, particularly in welfare programs, that will impact deeply on the most destitute sections of the working class. These budget cuts would include a two-year limit on welfare assistance; an end all benefits, even food stamps, to immigrants holding legal residence; and an appeal to states to deny welfare entirely to any woman under 18 who has a child.

Democrats, including Clinton, have also been pushing for attacks on welfare. By attacking what they regard as the easiest targets, the most vulnerable layers of the working class, big-business politicians have sought to justify deeper attacks on workers' entitlements. Their scapegoating arguments are designed to weaken and foster bigger divisions among working people.

At the same time, the most extreme welfare-gutting proposals have faced obstacles in capitalist circles. The first post-election meeting of Republican governors held in Williamsburg, Virginia, November 20 brushed aside the two centerpiece issues being pushed by Gingrich: his proposals to gut the welfare system — including his call to replace it partly with orphanages — and for a constitutional amendment to allow prayer in the schools. The Republican governors, who now number 30 and include the governors of nine of the most populous states, are especially concerned that plans to cut federal government programs will lead to bigger crises in state budgets and more explosive social conditions.

"If we don't deal with the economic issues, we'll need more than prayer to solve our problems," said Governor John Engler of Michigan.

The reality is that welfare programs are a relatively small part of the budget. Even

massive cuts would have almost no effect on the capitalists' economic problems. And since 9 million of the 14.3 million people who get public assistance under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program are children, the image of hungry children carries a political cost that worries even the most cold-hearted capitalist politician.

Going after Social Security

Big-business interests are concerned that the focus on school prayer and welfare are avoiding the real challenge — to cut deeply into major entitlements such as Social Security, Medicare, and unemployment benefits. The social wage that working people fought for and have come to expect throughout their lifetimes cuts deeply into the ability of U.S. capitalists to compete against their imperialist rivals at a time when their profit rates continue to decline.

In seeking to cut entitlements in the name of balancing the budget, the Clinton White House and congressmen of both parties speak for the interests of the billionaire bondholders. The big capitalists in this country and abroad who hold U.S. government bonds are paid some \$200 billion a year out of the federal budget — more than all government spending on education, transportation, food stamps, housing, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children combined. The wealthy families are demanding deeper budget cuts to guarantee these interest payments.

"Mr. Gingrich says that this can be done if the party displays 'nerve and firmness,'" writes the British *Economist* in a review of the U.S. elections. "But so far his party has shown precious little of either when it comes to the runaway cost of huge middle-class entitlements such as Medicare and social security, which everyone knows (but no one admits) must be dealt with if the budget is ever to be balanced."

Business Week also scolded the Republicans, instructing them to get down to business and whack away at Social Security and other entitlements. "The hypocrisy of spending must stop," it declared in a November 21 editorial. "The growth in Medicare and Social Security spending must be curbed. Yet both parties lie to the voters about it. The Administration is poised to shift to the right on this.... This is the most important opportunity of the decade to tame the deficit — if the two parties take it."

Although Social Security and other entitlements, which were gains made in struggle by the working class, are among the capitalists' central targets to get onto the chopping block, it is not easy for them. Tens of millions of working people, and many in the middle classes, consider them universal social rights today. This reality limits how far and how fast the rulers can go without major confrontations with the working class.

Rightist forces, such as senatorial candidate Oliver North, suffered electoral defeats for this reason. In the absence of worker's struggles that begin to threaten the capitalists' profits and the stability of their rule, the superrich families are not yet prepared to let such right-wing forces take the initiative and prematurely accelerate the political polarization in the country.

At the same time, as mainstream capitalist politics moves to the right in a period of depression, the reactionary policies and demagogic arguments used by Democrats and Republicans alike fuel the politics of resentment among the middle class and layers of the working class. Over time, this reinforces ultrarightist currents.

Foreign policy

Although the 1994 election campaigns focused on "domestic issues" and were marked by demagogic calls for a war on crime, welfare, and undocumented immigrants, the biggest challenge in front of the U.S. rulers remains how to effectively use military power abroad to protect and extend their own capitalist interests against their international rivals. President Clinton warned his Republican challengers after the elections that debate was acceptable on domestic questions, but disagreements



U.S. Blackhawk helicopters during invasion of Haiti, which Washington used to assert its right to use military force worldwide. Sen. Jesse Helms, lower left, has gotten into trouble for questioning Clinton's capacity as Commander in Chief.

over foreign policy should "continue to stop at the water's edge."

Much to the dismay of the U.S. rulers, however, the president's warning somehow missed the soon-to-be-named head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, conservative Republican Jesse Helms.

Even before a television interview with Helms was broadcast November 19, an uproar greeted his statement that Clinton was not fit to lead the U.S. military. Appearing on the CNN program "Evans and Novak," Helms was asked if he thought Clinton was "up to the job" of Commander in Chief. The senator responded: "You ask an honest question; I'll give you an honest answer. No, I do not. And neither do the people in the armed forces."

While Clinton himself made no comment on Helms's remarks, the *New York Times* was quick to respond with a front-page article and an editorial. "That's a mistake," the *Times* quoted Patrick Glynn, a former Reagan administration official as saying. "You may dislike Clinton, you may hate Clinton. But he is the Commander in Chief and there is a real limit as to how far you want to go to weaken a President. He still has to conduct foreign policy. He still may have to order troops into battle."

Gen. John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, took the highly unusual step of calling a number of journalists personally to express his support for the president. "I was taken aback by the implication that [Helms] left that somehow the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I shared his view on President Clinton," he said.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," said Shalikashvili. "I think it's important to me that this view not be represented as that of the military leadership or for that matter the view of the military as a whole."

Helms made the same mistake that sunk North's campaign in Virginia. When asked by reporters if he supported Clinton's preparation for military action against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq, North replied, "He's not my Commander in Chief." The rightist politician was roundly denounced for comments that undermined U.S. imperialism's capacity to wage war abroad.

Even Robert Dole, the Republican Party standard bearer in the Senate, was forced to take his distance from Helms. Clinton "is doing a better job all the time" as Commander in Chief, Dole stated. He said that the U.S. invasion of Haiti, harshly criticized by Helms, was particularly positive.

Helms deepened his predicament when he defended his remarks, saying President Clinton is so unpopular on military bases in North Carolina that he "better have a bodyguard" if he visits the state.

Also unnerving for big sections of the U.S. capitalist class is the possibility that Helms, who now holds a key position in Congress, could help scuttle passage of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Helms has already asked that the

vote on GATT, a mammoth trade agreement involving 124 nations, be delayed until the new Congress is seated next year.

The White House is going on the offensive for immediate passage of the GATT agreement, arguing that U.S. economic power must remain number one in the world and warning that defeat of GATT could have "a very negative effect on the financial markets of this country."

In spite of current wrangling and horse trading among capitalist politicians from both major parties, most Republican leaders are joining with Clinton on the trade agreement, which has been in the works through the Reagan and Bush administrations.

The 1994 elections marked the one-sided class war taking place in the United States. The rightist themes struck by politicians of both the Democratic and Republican parties were never met by any major working-class voice. While current labor battles such as the strikes against Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone, the struggle by locked-out A.E. Staley workers, and numerous smaller strikes are an important example of resistance, they are not of the scope to present a working class alternative to the politics that was put forward by both capitalist parties in the 1994 elections.

The only effective answer to the anti-working class election campaigns in bourgeois politics this year were the demonstrations protesting the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California. These marches, involving tens of thousands of workers and youth, represented a class response to the campaign of rightist forces in California to scapegoat a large section of the working class.

The sea of demonstrating workers and students waving Mexican flags in the streets of downtown Los Angeles caused capitalist politicians to shudder. It also antagonized many in the middle class and working class who had been taken in by the demagogic arguments against undocumented workers.

But the demonstrations also produced a different effect among hundreds of thousands of workers. These actions, led primarily by immigrant workers, showed that working people could stand up and fight for their rights, uniting across nationalities. The actions made many workers begin to question some of the demagoguery and think more in social terms.

The battle in California is also far from settled. California governor Pete Wilson issued a proclamation the day after the elections instructing health officials to stop providing post-natal care to undocumented workers and their children. The \$84 million in savings, the government hypocritically proclaimed, would allow 1,000 more legally resident women to be treated every month.

Meanwhile, Proposition 187 is tied up in the courts, as some capitalist politicians worry that the measure is unenforceable and will provoke further protests.



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Behind the hike in U.S. interest rates

"If this is what the peak of the [U.S. business] cycle looks like, God help the workers in the next downturn."

"From a stock market viewpoint, the productivity revolution might seem unambiguously good news. So it is, subject to two provisos. First, the social divisions created by the revolution must be containable. Second, even those workers who keep their jobs must agree to work increasingly long hours for the same money or less."

— *Financial Times*, November 14

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Rarely does a major capitalist voice speak so forthrightly. But the fears of the wealthy owners of the factories, mines, and mills over their prospects in the months and years ahead are certain to lead to further attacks on the living standards of the working class.

Responding to the anxiety among rich bondholders about possible inflation, the Federal Reserve Board raised interest rates November 15 by three-quarters of a percentage point, the largest rate increase since 1981 and the sixth increase this year. When inflation rises, those holding loans in the form of bonds can expect to get taken to the cleaners as the value of their fixed-rate investments erodes.

In response to the Fed's decision, banks immediately raised the prime interest rate from 7.75 to 8.5 percent. Working people will be paying higher rates on everything from mortgages to car loans, and farmers and small business owners will find it more difficult to borrow money.

The interest rate increase didn't appease Wall Street. Stock and bond prices whipsawed wildly following the announcement, ending the day in basically the same place they started. "This market needs some Prozac," remarked Thomas Gallagher, head of the Oppenheimer brokerage firm after the tension-filled day on the financial markets.

A small demonstration to protest the interest-rate hike, in which the AFL-CIO participated, took place in Washington, D.C., while the Federal Reserve Board was meeting November 15. The labor federation joined with the National Association of Manufacturers in denouncing the Fed's action.

There is no inflation

"The word from Wall Street is that the economy is still too strong and that the central bank will have to raise rates again by early next year to control inflation," said a front-page article in the November 16 *New York Times*.

However, there is virtually no inflation today.

The Consumer Price Index stands at 2.6 percent and the Producer Price Index is at 1 percent. Throughout western Europe and Japan inflation is also low.

Many newspaper columnists and Wall Street analysts are presenting the prospect of inflation about to run wild. A typical economic analysis piece, entitled "Thinking as the Fed Thinks," by Sylvia Nasar, appeared in the November 17 *New York Times*. It cited the fact that official unemployment is below six percent and that factory capacity utilization is nearing 85 percent as the "omens" of inflation.

According to Nasar, "The economy is operating at full employment or maybe even past that point. Full employment does not mean everybody who wants a job necessarily finds one in a reasonable period of time. It simply means a rate below which inflationary pressures start to build."

Workers who are without a job, including the millions not even counted in official statistics, will not find that statement very reassuring.

The *Times* writer also goes on to argue, "At 85 percent, capacity use is a point or two beyond the 82 or 83 percent typically associated with rising inflation." This argument, however, is full of holes.

Capacity utilization in 1966 topped 91 percent. It neared 88 percent in 1973 and hit 85 percent in 1979. Moreover, the capitalists are plagued by too much capacity. Factories can still output more than can be sold at a high enough profit for them to justify expanding their plants and equipment. That is why U.S. owners of industry are continuing to downsize, shedding plants, machinery, and workers. Eastman Kodak, for example, just announced plans to eliminate 800 workers at its manufacturing com-



Workers at General Motors plant in Wentzville, Missouri, just before it shut down in July 1993. With declining profit rates, capitalists continue to downsize.

plex in Rochester, New York, as part of its overall effort to slash 10,000 jobs worldwide.

Despite the upturn and the assumption among many so-called economic experts that growth will continue, millions of working people sense that trouble is lurking around the corner.

Deflationary trend

Depression conditions have set off a deflationary trend in the economy as capitalists respond to increased price competition worldwide. For workers this means continuing assaults on our real wages and the value of our labor power. Instead of investing in new plants and increased capacity, which won't generate high enough profits, the wealthy families who control capital are pumping it into the financial markets where they can get a higher return.

But these paper values have no fixed worth — they are only as valuable as the people willing to buy them think they are. When ruling-class confidence plummets, so do the stock and bond markets.

A towering pile of paper values and debt has built up, a bubble which threatens the entire economy when it bursts. Workers' pensions, health plans, and more are packed inside the bubble. Its collapse threatens massive unemployment, skyrocketing inflation, and the kind of conditions not seen since the depression era of the 1930's.

Since the mid-1980s real estate prices in the United States, Japan, Britain, and elsewhere have nose-dived. There have been pricing wars for almost all commodities. Even Philip Morris and rival cigarette makers have forced large temporary drops in prices over the past year and a half.

These economic realities have put downward pressure on real wages, which have continued to drop for two decades at the same time as the average number of hours in the workday increases.

Even big profits hide the reality of declining profit rates. Tucked away in the announcements of large corporate profits in the third quarter of 1994 is the fact that many were the result of one-time "write-offs."

In October, the value of General Motors Corp. stock fell by \$4.3 billion. Several weeks later, the Big Three auto companies, in an unprecedented move, demanded the Clinton administration prevent a recall of unsafe GM pickup trucks. Such a move "threatens the entire automotive industry," said a joint statement by the chief executives of Ford, GM, and Chrysler.

"The unusual feature of the 1990s," said a November 5 *Financial Times* column, "is that it could be the deflationary forces acting on prices that take the icing off the cake, rather than the more familiar upwards pressure on costs."

No way out of the bubble

The self-styled wizards of Wall Street and the ruling families have no way out of the crisis that is building up.

One of their hopes is that the opening to capital of Russia and the former Soviet republics, combined with increased opportu-

nities to invest in China, will fuel a massive economic expansion.

But the U.S. imperialists would have to open up a war with the workers of those countries and decisively defeat them before investment there could turn around world capitalism's falling rate of profit. The working class would have to be beaten



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Maggie Pucci

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary fighters whose struggles against capitalism, racism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression point the way forward for humanity. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

Promotional efforts for Pathfinder's newest title, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, are continuing as sales gain momentum. Bookstores, libraries, and mail order customers have ordered well over 2,000 copies of the book since it became available in mid-October.

Sales of the book got a big boost at the November 12 March on Washington demanding an end to the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba. Forty demonstrators purchased copies of the book.

Pathfinder will reissue several titles in November and December. Hot off the press is a new printing of the Russian-language edition of *History of the Russian Revolution* by Leon Trotsky.

This title, published in a facsimile edition by Pathfinder in the 1970s, has been reprinted in three volumes with a new cover. Among those who will be happy to see it are many readers in Cuba who want to study the book in the language in which it was originally written. Sales to libraries are also anticipated.

Pathfinder carries several other titles by Trotsky in Russian as well, including *The Revolution Betrayed*, the four-volume set of *Bulletin of the Left Opposition and Communist Opposition in the USSR: 1923-27*, *Portraits of Revolutionaries*, and the two-volume *Stalin*.

A new edition of *The Second Declaration of Havana* is planned for December. This pamphlet contains the speech given by Cuban president Fidel Castro on Feb. 4, 1962, to a mass rally of 1 million people in Havana. A ringing indictment of imperialist rule, it retains today its full force as a manifesto of revolutionary struggle for working people everywhere. The new edition contains expanded explanatory notes, a preface, and a new cover.

and starved into submission before accepting entirely new, capitalist social relations. And they have already gotten a taste of what the crisis of capitalism means in the past several years as their standard of living has declined precipitously.

Similarly, while investment expands in China, the beginnings of resistance among the working class and peasantry doesn't bode well for easy profits.

Capital continues to flow out of the United States in search of higher profit margins. In the first six months of the year, U.S. pension funds bought \$17 billion in overseas stock markets, while mutual funds plowed \$23 billion into similar ventures. The growing percentage of capital invested in so-called emerging markets heightens the vulnerability of U.S. capitalists to political explosions and surprises.

In Mexico, for example, shares of Telmex, one of the most traded stocks in Latin America, dropped ten percent in a two-day period in November, throwing the entire Mexican stock market into disarray. And on news of the passage of Proposition 187 in California, protesters trashed a McDonald's restaurant in Mexico City.

In Latin America, said a November 14 *Financial Times* article, "the feel good factor has yet to assert itself."

The lack of confidence gripping the owners of capital was exemplified in a November 21 *Barron's* article. "History surely suggests trouble ahead," it said, warning the interest rate increase "could be just the beginning in a long journey — downward."

American Railroads: The Case for Nationalization by Dick Roberts, which has been out of stock for several years, will be reprinted in early December.

Rosa Luxemburg Speaks is being reissued with a new cover and will also be out in early December.

With one month left of the sale on the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin, orders for the many titles on special have picked up steam. The Pathfinder bookstores in both Brooklyn, New York, and Los Angeles placed orders for dozens of titles in Spanish.

The Brooklyn bookstore also took an order for the collected works of Lenin from a customer who is originally from Haiti. The Toronto Pathfinder bookstore placed an order for 17 of the sale titles, totaling more than 50 books.

The education department at a women's prison in Arizona ordered several titles on women's rights, including *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen and Evelyn Reed and *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Engels.

"I am a young revolutionist incarcerated in Ionia max prison," begins a letter from a prisoner in Michigan writing for more information on Pathfinder books. Pathfinder offers books to prisoners at 50 percent off the cover price, plus a flat \$2.50 shipping and handling fee.

A prisoner from New Jersey ordered several pamphlets, including *Surrogate Motherhood, Women's Rights, and the Working Class* by Cindy Jaquith and *The Housing Question* by Frederick Engels. He wrote, "As a result of your suggestion, I presented the institutional library directors with a request for books from Pathfinder. Unfortunately, they declined."

"However, I am presenting the catalog to fellow prisoners personally so that they may also purchase from Pathfinder." Pathfinder receives requests for catalogs from hundreds of inmates every year. To help make Pathfinder books and pamphlets available to prisoners for half off, make checks payable to Pathfinder, earmarked "Prisoner Fund."

Che Guevara and the battle for culture

Account by a veteran of the 1966-67 guerrilla campaign in Bolivia

Printed below are major excerpts of an interview with Harry Villegas, one of the three surviving Cuban veterans of the 1966-1967 guerrilla campaign organized in Bolivia by Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban revolution.

The interview is from the November-December 1971 issue of the Cuban magazine *OCLAE*, then published by the Latin American Continental Organization of Students.

A smaller excerpt of this interview appears in the new edition of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, published by Pathfinder Press. The book documents Guevara's efforts to forge a fighting movement of workers and peasants that could win the battle for land and national sovereignty and open the socialist revolution on the South American continent.

Villegas, known as Pombo, was part of the group of about 40 revolutionaries, including fighters from Bolivia, Cuba, and other countries, who joined the Bolivian campaign. In 1957, as a young peasant in Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains, he had joined the Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro. Villegas served in Guevara's column.

On Jan. 1, 1959, the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista collapsed under the pressure of Rebel victories and a general strike that swept the island. Villegas headed Guevara's personal escort, which he had joined before the revolution's triumph. After working for a time in the Ministry of Industry, he returned to active military duty as a battalion commander and then head of personnel for Cuba's Western Army.

He served in the Congo with Guevara in 1965, where Cuban volunteers aided the anti-imperialist movement founded by Patrice Lumumba. Pombo arrived in Bolivia in July 1966 to assist in preparations for the guerrilla movement.

Pombo was assigned by Guevara as a member of the general staff and made head of services of the guerrilla unit. He was one of the only survivors of the ambush at the Yuro Ravine, during which Guevara was captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-directed operation. Guevara was murdered in captivity the following day at La Higuera. Pombo, along with combatants Benigno and Urbano, reached Cuba in early 1968.

Pombo later served three tours of duty in Angola, where Cuban internationalists fought alongside the Angolan army to repel invasions by the South African apartheid regime. Today he is a brigadier general in the Cuban army.

All subheadings are by the *Militant*.

OCLAE: When and how did you meet Che? Tell us about his most outstanding traits?

Pombo: We entered the Sierra Maestra through the Pozón region, more or less through Canabacoa. We were a group of relatively young people who were heading toward La Miel, and we ran into Che. We were all about 16 or 17 years old. He ques-



Guevara carrying out voluntary labor with workers in Cuba. Pombo describes Che's efforts to deepen the political consciousness, cultural level, and discipline of fellow fighters both in Cuba and among the guerrilla group he led in Bolivia.

tioned us about what we were doing there, what we thought, and asked us to go with him. I began to go with him as a supply hauler, helping him carry his knapsack. I became part of his escort and stayed there until the school at Minas del Frío was organized, where I began to study military topics. Some time later I left with him on the

“ Among youth, Che constantly instilled an inclination toward study and ongoing education...”

first squads that were being formed. I was with him during the campaign against [dictator Fulgencio] Batista's offensive, and the first actions I saw there were mostly within his column.

An educator

My first impression of Che was the kind of impression caused by any rebel. Besides, I was already a rifleman in the Rebel Army, and he decided to select me to accompany him as a member of his escort. Now under his direct command I took part in the battles of Las Mercedes, Las Vegas, San Lorenzo. In the course of this contact, of daily life at Che's side, I began to become aware of his many qualities as a revolutionary.

The one quality that stands out most is Che as an educator, as a builder. Che was always a person with a great constructive

spirit. Among the very young, he constantly instilled an inclination toward study, toward ongoing education. At his side I began to read novels, generally of a social character. Later he would read aloud to us, and then would try to see whether we had understood what we had read. He wanted to educate us, forge us. He wanted to give us a defined structure which he believed a revolutionary must have. His norm was to educate on the basis of sacrifice and effort, which sometimes bordered on severity. Che was hard, but alongside this toughness he displayed a great humanity, a certain fatherliness toward us.

It was in Minas del Frío where I saw him apply this education most rigorously on the basis of laws, on how people confronted reality on the basis of work and people's attitude toward work. In Minas del Frío he undertook construction efforts. He had a project of building a large hospital and they had already built the structures to house the classrooms, three or four large structures. These were a perfect target for the air force, which was very interested in attacking them.

This moreover was a way of testing the future soldiers, the future guerrillas who would be coming out of this school. There were days when we would wake up to the cry of "Avión" [airplane]. This led to reactions in which comrades, whenever they heard a rooster crow or heard someone shout the name of a comrade named Carrión, would associate it with airplanes. The result, among youth who were not steeled in struggle, was that every day some people would ask to leave the school, not to desert the struggle, since they remained in the Sierra, but to leave school, where, in addition to study, they had to work, to build, and there was not enough food; people went hungry. This was also one of the tests he used.

Che's response to these reactions was always to firmly reproach people, calling on them to fulfill their duty; telling them that a revolutionary was not forged by turning one's back on sacrifice and responsibilities. When offenses were committed, he also imposed severe punishment.

Che never took any kind of liberty when it came to distribution of goods. He had the necessary moral authority to impose harsh punishment for any problem of this type, since never, under any circumstance during the time I was with him, did I see Che accept the smallest item that was not distributed to the entire troop. This is one of the most striking things that had an impact on me concerning Che's personal qualities. In addition, there was his courage and his concept of duty, which also was making a great impression on us.

As for me, Che punished me on a number of occasions. Once, for shooting at a bush, he gave me three days without food. The second day of the punishment, he brought me to a meeting to which he had been invited by the peasants in the Escambray [mountains]. After the meeting, we sat down at the table and I asked the peasants to intervene on my behalf to get the punishment lifted. A peasant then asked Che why I wasn't eating, since I was seated at the table. Che answered that I had a mouth like anybody else. He added: "I'm not preventing him from eating. He can eat; he knows he's being punished, and I leave it to his judgment, to his conscience, as to what his duty is." I could not eat on that occasion.

During the invasion he had given the order that the comrades accompanying him in the command center would be the last to get horses. Everyone had a horse but me. So I asked San Luis if I could go on the back of his horse. The horse tripped, I was thrown over San Luis, and in falling I knocked a San Cristóbal rifle that I had, and it fired a shot. No one was hurt, but I was afraid Che might have heard it.

When he arrived I stopped him and told him a shot of mine had been fired. He told me, "Oh, so you fired a shot. Well, that's an act of indiscipline, and you'll have to go to the punishment squad." He sent me to the punishment squad, but the next day he learned what had happened and suspended my punishment. That was proof of his sense of justice.

I could relate many incidents from the Sierra that demonstrate the example Che always set for us on a number of occasions as an educator, teaching us by his example, by his attitude toward life. He always tried to leave something productive, something that could be of use for the guerrilla unit at that time. Wherever he went, the first thing he did was to build an oven, a shoemaking shop. He was always creating an incipient industry that could resolve at least some of the supply problems.

Che took the approach that the fight against idleness is decisive, both in society and in a guerrilla unit in particular. He felt that man, when idle, is prone to commit errors, to become delinquent. In his Bolivian Diary there is a moment when he says, "I am conducting a mental test." He had devoted himself to fighting what he termed "the bull," fighting idleness, slovenliness. He said these were the worst evils a guerrilla unit could suffer from.

He would leave a lantern to see who would pick it up. Days would go by and no one picked it up. He would then explain to us that it was necessary to fight slovenliness, the habit of throwing things anywhere without worrying about the whole group.

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He said that any one of us, in our own house, had we seen the lantern there, would have picked it up. But this happened because we were in a place that none of us treated as our own home; it was a collective environment and no one had been assigned to pick it up. Not only was this a question of habits among guerrillas; he told me these habits would have a subsequent impact on our entire education.

OCLAE: In his diary, Che reiterates the need for study. What did the guerrillas study?

Pombo: From the time of our arrival in Bolivia, one of the first tasks that Che laid out was aimed at preventing a repetition of what he considered to be a weakness of the Cuban revolution. This was that the members of the Rebel Army, its leading cadres, had not acquired a sufficient educational grounding and political level to be able to hold the type of leadership responsibilities required. He said that the cadres had to have a cultural and intellectual level that would allow them to carry out their tasks without committing barbarities.

“He spoke of the experiences of the Cuban revolution, both the good things and the errors...”

He later explained, “That must not happen to us. We have to forge in this army what will become the backbone of our future government. Because it is from here, this nucleus, that the cadres will arise who will lead the National Liberation Army of this continent.”

Study of languages

For this reason he established compulsory study of a whole series of subjects, including political economy; history specifically that of Bolivia; higher mathematics; and languages. He felt it was indispensable for us to be able to speak the same language as the inhabitants there, and for that reason we studied Quechua or Aymará, in addition to French for those who wanted it. He drove us to systematic study because he felt it was a necessity.

Moreover, he himself continuously studied the classics. He greatly admired [Karl] Marx, in particular. In Bolivia the notes from his studies of Marx and mathematics must have filled up 15 or 20 notebooks. Che systematically studied higher mathematics and enjoyed teaching it to everyone. He explained that it was the basis for mastering any science.

With regard to classes, he established a system whereby he taught some subjects and utilized instructors for others. He taught history, French, and mathematics, with Suárez Gayol and San Luis as instructors. Aniceto and Pedro (both Bolivians) taught Quechua.

He also instituted discussions on what we read, rotating books among all the comrades. In this way we read a very interesting novel with historic and social themes, dealing with an uprising of women in Cochabamba during the colonial period.

There also existed among us a great movement with regard to reading. Che was the leader in this, reading *The Young Hegel* and *Capital*. He always carried one or two volumes of *Capital* in his knapsack.

We came to have a good library in Bolivia, composed of 300-400 books. A system was established whereby each comrade carried one or two books in his knapsack, read them, and then passed them on to others.

The objective Che was pursuing was to raise our cultural level. At the same time, he always made us see clearly that even though war presented difficult circumstances, in which one had to live under constant tension, nevertheless we could not let ourselves take an easygoing and conformist attitude that would have us put off study until later. We had to study right there in the guerrilla camp, he said, with an enthusiasm and determination equal to the

way we confronted the vicissitudes and difficulties we faced. And one of the biggest such difficulties to overcome was precisely the one he sought to instill: the habit of study.

OCLAE: What did Che mean by conscious discipline?

Pombo: For Che discipline was an indispensable element in life, not only for a guerrilla, but for every human being. Che saw discipline as a manifestation of all norms that govern society, and he believed conscious discipline was key from a guerrilla standpoint, from a military standpoint, and from a revolutionary standpoint.

What did he mean, from the explanations he gave us, by conscious discipline? To become aware of the need to be disciplined. And his starting point was precisely the adverse conditions in which the guerrilla lives. Owing to the guerrilla's form of living, to the environment in which he operates, Che saw the guerrilla unit as the ideal place to forge revolutionaries, but he believed this meant following a series of norms of conduct.

The norm he most tried to instill in us was the fight against taking what is not one's own. It should be recalled that in the Diary there is a moment when some cans of milk are lost, and it's not known how they were lost. And in the “salvo” that he relates, he states that socialism is incompatible with theft, and that under those conditions, for anyone who took something belonging to the whole group, the minimal punishment needed was to be shot. And he told us that all of us there could all be convinced that whoever was caught in an act of this kind would be shot.

We see here an example of the relationship between the norms of discipline that he conceived of and the moral ethics that a guerrilla must have. Che was an acute observer of this. Among the norms he had ordered had to be followed without exception was not abandoning one's rifle. Leaving behind one's weapon was cause for punishment. And we can read also in the Diary that there is a moment when he forgot his rifle on the river bank, and he imposed several days punishment on himself: doing kitchen duty, which was the punishment imposed on everyone, washing pots or hauling water, or several hours of guard duty.

Discipline is not spontaneous

He was completely convinced that people do not always reach awareness of disciplinary norms in a spontaneous way, but that a series of mechanisms was also required, including laws on occasion. In the case of guerrillas, this was based on the authority of the leader who announces the punishment of someone who, despite knowing the moral norms that govern the group, violates them. Che started from the idea that discipline is established in order to guarantee the rights of an entire group in a certain situation, and that in a guerrilla unit, those rights are determined by the all-round security of the guerrilla group and the norms required in combat: not abandoning a comrade, fulfilling guard duty, not eating the food of others, not violating a series of established norms.

We had a disciplinary problem in the course of the Bolivian guerrilla war that he emphasized a lot. Or at least he emphasized it quite a bit during the period of the exploratory journey. This was the first period when we left the Nacahuazú, and it lasted about 55 days, making a complete round trip before returning to camp. On our return we had been discovered, and that was when guerrilla actions began. Che devoted this period of the journey mainly to making us conscious of the need for discipline. He always stressed the concept that the guerrilla is a social reformer who at the beginning fulfills his role based on sacrifice. This discipline would require above all a great spirit of sacrifice, because he was subjected to nighttime and daytime marches, to hunger and thirst.

Che required us to be highly disciplined and to respect the rights of each and every one. He always reminded us that rights imply duties, and that everyone must fulfill



Above: October 1987 meeting in Havana to mark publication of new Spanish-language edition of Guevara's Bolivian diary. Left to right: researcher Adys Cupull; Hugo Chinea, director of Cuban publisher Editora Política; Matilde Lara, widow of Bolivian fighter Inti Peredo; and three Cuban veterans of Bolivian campaign: Gen. Harry Villegas (Pombo), Daríel Alarcón (Benigno), Col. Leonardo Tamayo (Urbano). Below: Che reading during revolutionary war in Cuba.

one's duties toward the guerrilla unit, which is another way of saying toward society, because in the end that is nothing more than a representation of society, of the masses.

[Pombo then describes some of the discussions among the guerrillas.]

We informed ourselves about the political questions relating to current news, both

“Che was convinced that people do not acquire disciplinary norms in a spontaneous way...”

those broadcast by the enemy as well as what we received by way of Radio Havana in Cuba. We commented on the situation, political developments, and we analyzed economic and social topics.... all sorts of questions that are of interest to and determine the life of a revolutionary: the creation of the new man, the world as he conceived it, his view of the government structures of the future republics of America.

Lessons of Cuban revolution

Che always spoke of the experiences that had been derived from the Cuban revolution up to that moment, all the good things and also conclusions from the things in which we had made some type of error, since the greatest source of lessons for the construction of Latin American society was the experiences, both positive and negative, of the Cuban people. He considered that we Cubans had gone to teach, but also

to learn, and that the conditions of war in a continent are different in a whole series of ways; that the concept of distance in a continent is very different from that on an island like Cuba, which is long and narrow. That we had to keep learning these things in the heat of the revolutionary struggle, in contact with the people of this continent.

He admired the new things that had been seen in the tactics of the Vietnamese. He used to say that we had much to learn from them. That it was necessary to maintain a principle that he called “economy of life,” through correct planning of guerrilla actions.

He said the enemy should not be underestimated, and one must be aggressive but always take all measures demanded by guerrilla tactics. All this was becoming necessary because, as a result of the clear successes we had won in all ambushes, we were not concerning ourselves much in looking for maneuvers to carry out the ambushes, to organize them well, we would simply confront them, and with 7 or 8 men we would deal them a blow and retreat.

If there was a specific book we were reading, we discussed what was in it. We were usually reading about certain questions on different topics. We would ask him about economic questions, and he was always willing to discuss them.

Che was an extremely jovial person, of an exceptional character and with a broad sense of irony. He was open to conversation, to joking, to kidding around. He maintained his optimistic, jovial character up to the final moment, without any type of ill humor; he never became embittered.

Continued on Page 14

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Decatur unions call march to defend the right to picket

Continued from front page

Workers, Teamsters and plumbers unions. "People keep complaining that the Republicans are in office now and labor is dead. But I think that now that the Republicans are in office labor will keep fighting. And this action will help to push our fight forward," Welsh said.

Antiunion injunctions

Unionists in both Decatur and Peoria continue to face attacks by the courts and city governments. A court ruling was recently issued stating that a 1992 injunction Caterpillar won against the UAW in Peoria limiting pickets to no more than 10 is still in force. The courts will rule in December on whether this pro-company ruling also applies to actions in front of Caterpillar's general headquarters. Families in Solidarity has organized rallies at the general offices, with 300 to 500 union supporters

participating, every week since the strike began in June.

Four UPIU members in Decatur were sentenced to 50 hours community service and 6 months supervision on November 17 after being found guilty of residential picketing. The charges stem from a company complaint that a picnic held by union members this summer in a public park near the house of A.E. Staley official Pat Mohan violated the law.

Frankie Travis, one of the UPIU members found guilty said, "The prosecutor told the judge, 'we have to make an example of these people.'"

Unionists build action

Because of the blatant attacks against union members in the area recently, many supporters of the labor movement are working for a big turnout for the November 29 and 30 action.



Militant/Linda Joyce

UAW members and supporters demonstrate outside Caterpillar headquarters in Peoria in July as part of protests against company. Courts recently limited pickets at plant gates to 10 and will rule soon if limits apply to rallies at headquarters.

"We have to keep extending the connections to more unions," Bill Haenny, a member of UAW Local 751 remarked after returning from a speaking tour to union locals in the Seattle, Washington area. The

march and rally on November 29 and 30 aims to accomplish that goal.

Angel Lariscy is a member of United Auto Workers Local 270 in Clive, Iowa.

Fighters from three embattled unions tour Utah

BY ILONA GERSH

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Hundreds of unionists in Utah recently learned firsthand of the national strikes against Caterpillar and Bridgestone/Firestone and the lockout at A.E. Staley in Decatur, Illinois. A trio of representatives of the United Auto Workers (UAW), the United Rubber Workers (URW), and the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) from Decatur, where nearly 10 percent of the city's workforce is on strike, spent 10 days speaking before union meetings, doing plant-gate collections, and speaking at college classes. "We've learned something coming here on tour," said H.P. Jackson, retired president of UAW Local 751. "What Caterpillar has tried to do to us is being done by companies all over this country. We're putting up a fight. That's what makes us important."

Jackson was accompanied on tour by Charlie Walker, a retired member of URW Local 731, and Barrie Williams, a locked-out member of UPIU Local 7837, who heads their adopt-a-family program.

The three workers spoke to members of 17 union locals of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW); the United Steelworkers of America; the International Association of Machinists; the Communications Workers of America; the American Federation of Government Employees; the Teamsters; laborers, carpenters, and asbestos workers unions, and to students on two college campuses. Collections and contributions during the tour totaled nearly \$7,000, including \$900 from plant-gate collections at the Chevron and Phillips refineries.

The main meeting was a citywide Solidarity Night, held at the Utah AFL-CIO headquarters. After a beer and chili reception, AFL-CIO state president Ed Mayne greeted the three union fighters. Julie Holzer, OCAW International Representative, chaired the rally.

The unionists told their stories to the crowd of 80. "We have a coalition in De-

catuur," said Williams. "Alone we are small, but together we can win. This is a lesson the whole labor movement can learn." Walker led participants in an enthusiastic union chant. A video of a police attack on supporters of the locked-out Staley workers was shown. Representatives of several unions gave solidarity greetings and financial contributions.

Many workers who had heard the strikers at their union meetings the week before attended the rally. Five University of Utah students came and took notes, getting class credit for attending.

Members of OCAW Local 2-931 at the Chevron refinery were particularly in-

involved. Leading up to the tour, several reports on the strikes were given to local union meetings. A new display of flyers and news clippings on the fights was put up every week on the union bulletin board. After the strikers spoke at the union meeting, they did a collection at the plant-gate, aided by the union president and vice president. The following week, the local president took them through the refinery on a tour during which they met the operators and maintenance crew on shift.

The tour sparked discussions on what strategy is needed to defend the labor movement against the attacks by both the government and employers. Workers de-

bated issues such as management-employee "involvement" programs, what kind of leadership is needed in the labor movement, and how to defend unions against cop and company violence-baiting.

"This is a good start," said Williams of the tour. "Decatur is a war zone for labor. We hope that this is just the beginning of solidarity activities for our struggles." About 120 people signed up on a mailing list to keep informed about these union struggles and what they can do to help.

Ilona Gersh is a member of OCAW Local 2-931 at the Chevron refinery in Salt Lake City.

URW strikers jam up Bridgestone

BY BARBARA BOWMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa — A sea of headlights and blaring horns greeted us as we approached the Bridgestone/Firestone plant here at rush hour November 18. Hundreds of striking United Rubber Workers (URW) Local 310 members and their families created a gigantic traffic jam around the plant with their cars. Other area unionists also joined the action. Word of the impending union response had spread through area plants during the day.

Because of the circling traffic, strike-breakers were prevented from exiting the plant for an hour and a half.

Strikers on well-staffed picket lines waved signs and returned salutes of solidarity from supporters caught in the traffic jam. By the light of the barrel fires set up by the strikers, Vance security thugs could be seen behind each gate.

Police cruisers raced from one blocked intersection to another trying in vain to clear the traffic. It took more than 45 minutes to circle the plant. Traffic was backed up for a mile on the four-lane main street in front of the factory spilling over onto busy Interstate 80 and the streets on the sides and back of the plant.

Cars and pickup trucks passing each other in opposite directions often stopped, with the drivers leaning out the windows to shake hands or flash victory signs and clenched fists demonstrating support for the strike.

When traffic came to a standstill unionists got out of their cars momentarily and shouted at the scabs trying to leave the plant, as well as the cops and the company thugs behind the factory gates.

The traffic jam demonstrated union power on behalf of the 1,300 striking rubber workers here. Some 2,700 additional URW members have been on strike at Bridgestone/Firestone plants in Illinois, Oklahoma, Ohio, and Indiana since July 12. The strike is a response to the company's outrageous "final offer," which included 12-hour shifts with no overtime

premium, seven-day-a-week production schedules, a 30 percent pay cut for new hires, a \$5 an hour pay cut for some job categories, and steeply increased payments for medical coverage.

The November 18 action was organized after the company stepped up its efforts to get union members to cross the picket lines and to hire new strikebreakers.

Bridgestone/Firestone placed two 15-minute paid announcements on area television November 13 implying that strikers were greedy and that the company's take-back demands were reasonable. As part of the company's propaganda barrage, the television ad was preceded by days of paid radio announcements encouraging union members and their families to watch the program.

'We're standing up'

After weeks of strikers standing by while vehicles rushed in and out of the plant, this evening clearly belonged to the union members.

Michael Johnson, a 22-year-old United Auto Workers member at Fawn Engineer-

ing whose father has worked at Firestone for 29 years, said, "I'm here because if the unions fail here they may fail everywhere. I'm helping these guys out today because someday we're going to need their help. We're standing up to defend what these people have earned." His mother, Irene, herself with 15 years on the job at Firestone, added, "This company has tried in the last five months to take away what it took us 50 years to earn."

The family of striker Todd Moen was also participating in the action. Moen said he was determined to see the strike through to the end, even though it meant his five-year-old son would have to go without medical insurance. Todd Jr. was the youngest picket on duty at the north gate that night.

We were joined by one of the half dozen Laotian pickets, who identified herself as a "union woman" who was "fighting because we're not going to work for nothing."

Later, a man with 24 years on the job wanted us to know, "Many of us don't think the problem is the Japanese owners. Our problem is American management."

CORRECTION

An article in the November 28 issue on the frame-up trial of Canadian gold miner Roger Warren erroneously quoted unionist Al Shearing as saying, "The morning before the blast, C.I.L. [the company that makes the explosives] delivered hundreds of pounds of Amex [explosives] to the same level as where the blast occurred."

The quote should have read: "The morning of the explosion, C.I.L. [the company that makes the explosives] delivered hundreds of pounds of Amex [explosives] to the same level as where the blast occurred."

In addition, the dateline of the article should have been Vancouver.

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Gaza shooting

Continued from front page
armed police.

"Those killed were Gazans, all of them young," said journalist Marwan al-Ghoul in a telephone interview from Gaza City. "They were not all Hamas. Nine were members of Fatah," the PLO faction led by Arafat. Al-Ghoul emphasized that due to Tel Aviv's month-long ban on travel between Gaza and Israel, "thousands of Palestinian workers can't get work and students can't get out. It's like a big prison." This contributed to the mounting tensions in Gaza, he said.

The fighting touched off widespread debate over the direction of the Palestinian struggle in the wake of last September's agreement with Tel Aviv, as well as re-criminations over who was responsible for the bloodshed. Some police said they would refuse orders to fire on crowds. There was even an outbreak of stone throwing between cops at the Saraya Complex, where PNA ministries are housed.

PLO blames outside agitators

PLO officials blamed unnamed "foreign hands" for instigating the violence and claimed most of those killed died as a result of wounds from dum-dum bullets, which are not issued to PNA police. PLO spokespeople produced no evidence to back up this statement. The PNA said it was establishing a committee "of wise and patriotic people" to investigate.

Hamas officials called Arafat a collaborator with Tel Aviv, while asserting they were opposed to fighting between Palestinians. The PNA and Hamas arranged a temporary truce on November 19.

Abbas said that in his view the shootings severely discredited the PLO. "Hamas is trying to play with this as a tactic. They didn't use guns at the demonstration — and they are succeeding in winning support," he added.

"Many people hold Arafat responsible," said al-Ghoul. "Some blame Hamas. The Israeli right is very happy. I heard one of them say the Israeli police have a lot to learn from the Palestinian Authority."

Saeb Erekat, head of the Palestinian elections committee and an official in the PNA, said in an interview from the West Bank city of Jericho, "The PNA should not be blamed. I would not exclude the possibility of third parties."

"We say it's not our fault," Erekat added. "We insist that it's Israeli delays of Palestinian elections, their refusal to solve the settlements issue, and other policies which are a major factor" in the Gaza events. "We've inherited Gaza and Jericho with promises of \$347 million [aid] in the first six months, but received only 10 percent of that."

Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin said he would "leave it to the Palestinians to deal with internal matters." Rabin's environment minister, Yossi Sarid, asked whether Arafat was losing control of Gaza, replied, "I very much hope he doesn't. I assume that Arafat...has reached the conclusion that it's either him or them."

'Dangerous precedent'

The Gaza shootings mark "a dangerous precedent," said Hanan Ashrawi, head of the Commission for Citizens Rights. "Palestinians have used weapons against each other. Palestinians should not wage an internal conflict. This should not be allowed to deteriorate into a civil war.... I appeal to everyone to put an end to the violence, to practice self-control and put an end to what's going on through rational discussion."

Despite the truce, threats mounted between PLO and Hamas supporters. At a Fatah-organized rally on November 21, Arafat stated he would maintain authority in Gaza. In the past six weeks, Palestinian police have made 400 arrests of alleged Hamas and Islamic Jihad supporters.

Some 10,000 Fatah supporters attended the rally. Some held rifles aloft and shouted, "Whoever wrongs Fatah, Fatah will open his head." Hamas responded with threats to take revenge against PNA officials for the November 18 shootings.

Quiet funerals were held for those killed. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza honored a general strike in memory of the victims.

"This is a victory for Israel," said Khaled Faisal, watching the clashes unfold. "They have been waiting a long time for this."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA Los Angeles

Race and IQ — the Fraud of Charles Murray's Bell Curve. Speaker: Rodney Holt, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation \$4. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

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PENNSYLVANIA Philadelphia

The Fight for Immigrant Rights Today. Showing of Young Socialists video of Los Angeles high school walkout. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. (corner of 19th and South).

Donation \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

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Report from Havana: The World Solidarity with Cuba Conference. Speaker: Damon Tinnon, member national steering committee Young Socialists. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. Donation \$4. Tel (612) 644-6325.

NATO planes bomb Croatia airfield

BY GREG ROSENBERG

In the largest air raid in Europe since the end of World War II, 39 NATO warplanes bombed an airfield held by right-wing Serb forces in Croatia November 21. Two thirds of the raiding aircraft were U.S. Air Force planes, joined by British, French, and Dutch jets.

The raid, ordered by the United Nations Security Council, temporarily covered over sharp differences that exist between Washington, Paris, London, Bonn, and Moscow over the war in the former Yugoslavia.

The decision to launch an air assault was taken as rightist Serb forces led by Milan Martić advanced on the Croatian city of Bihac, a so-called safe haven near the border with Bosnia. Some 1,000 Bangladeshi troops under UN auspices are in the area and short of food supplies. There are 40,000 troops under the UN flag in the former Yugoslavia. Bosnian government troops, who had seized 75 square miles of land east of Bihac starting a month ago, have lost nearly all of it in a counterattack

by Martić's forces.

NATO members argued over how hard to hit the Serb forces. The attack was not directed at Serb squads inside Bosnia, where the fiercest fighting is taking place. The commander of UN forces there, Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose of Britain, has consistently opposed the use of air power against the Serbs.

Lieut. Gen. Bertrand de Lapresle of France, commander of UN forces in the former Yugoslavia, demanded strikes be limited to runways and artillery installations and avoid hitting any Serb planes. Washington also aimed to avoid provoking a bellicose response from Moscow, a partisan of Belgrade and the forces allied to it fighting throughout the former Yugoslavia. Martić's forces in Croatia work hand-in-hand with Radovan Karadzic's Serbian Democratic Party forces in Bosnia.

Complaining that divisions among NATO powers hindered Washington's free hand, a senior Clinton administration official said, "If we had our druthers we would have taken out the Serb planes." Clinton

applauded the bombing as "the right thing to do."

The bombing raid followed an open rift between the imperialist powers over the Clinton administration order to cease enforcing an arms embargo against the Bosnian government. Washington announced the U.S. navy will not divert ships carrying arms to Bosnia or Croatia and will stop sharing intelligence reports with governments in western Europe.

The announcement brought sharp protests from London, Paris, and Moscow. French defense minister François Léotard said his government would withdraw its troops from Bosnia if there was "one more step" in the wrong direction.

Financial Times columnist Ian Davidson wrote, "This is the first time that the U.S. has deliberately engaged in a strategic conflict with the European allies in the European theatre." Davidson said London's special relationship with Washington was doomed. A Wall Street Journal editorial warned, "If strains become more serious, Europe has more to lose than the U.S."

Cuba solidarity meeting

Continued from front page

the revolution; our goal is to assure, with the heroism and creative capacities of our people, socialism's forward march.

Carlos Lage, executive secretary of Cuba's Council of Ministers, and foreign minister Roberto Robaina also addressed the plenary during the first two days of the conference.

"To those who advise us to make more and more concessions to please the United States, we say, 'If you give your finger they'll take your life,'" Robaina said.

Cuban president Fidel Castro and most members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba are part of the presiding committee of the conference and will attend all plenary sessions.

They include Salvador Valdez, second secretary of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers; Vilma Espin, head of the Federation of Cuban Women, Abel Prieto, president of the National Union of Cuban

Writers and Artists, and Victoria Velázquez, national secretary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC).

Among the many messages to the conference read during the first few hours of discussion, John Gomomo, president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, read a message of solidarity from South African president Nelson Mandela.

"We will never forget those who stood by us at difficult times," Mandela's message said. "We now stand with the Cuban people in a difficult period."

During the third day of the event, delegates broke up into workshops to discuss coordinated international actions against the U.S. embargo and other activities to defend Cuba. They are also scheduled to visit construction sites, a farm, and neighborhood Committees in Defense of the Revolution, as well as meet with leaders of the UJC and other mass organizations before the conference concludes November 25.

CALENDAR

CANADA

Montreal

Che Guevara: Cuba and Revolution in the Americas. Celebrate the new edition of *The Bolivian Diary* of Ernesto Che Guevara. Speakers: Vicky Mercier, member of Young Socialists; Carlos Zavala, member of Canadian Auto Workers; Michel Prairie, editor of the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*. Sat., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. Pathfinder bookstore, 4581 St. Denis (metro Mont-Royal) Tel: (514) 284-7369.

GREECE

Athens

Che Guevara, Cuba, and Prospects for Socialism Today. Speaker: Dave Donaldson, member of the Transport & General Workers Union and of the Communist League in Britain, recently participated in a brigade to Cuba. Sponsored by supporters of the *Militant* newspaper. Sat., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. Pan African Association Hall, 171 Alkamenos (Platia Attikis).

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The scales of justice — A federal study found that those convicted of burglary get longer sentences than those guilty of fleeing



Harry Ring

huge sums from savings and loans institutions. In 1988, the average burglary sentence was 55.6 months, while those convicted of ripping off thrifts, on average,

drew 36.4 months.

It figures — That study of thrift swindlers also found that of the \$8 billion stolen in the 1988 cases, fines and restitution orders came to less than a nickel on the dollar and only a fraction of this was collected.

Hard to hold onto help — With the snow-clad Jackson, Wyoming, area increasingly popular among the rich, soaring real estate prices have precluded working people from living there. One motel operator said she puts up some of her employees in trailers and small cabins, while others make an

80-mile commute over a treacherous mountain pass. She says she's lost three workers in car deaths.

But not to hurry — Tenants were ordered to evacuate a Los Angeles office building with a modern steel frame structure. Engineering studies found the building had been dangerously weakened by last January's Northridge earthquake. Fretted the director of the state seismic safety commission: "It's just so worrisome. Here we are a year later and still finding buildings" that are badly damaged.

Pass the Band-Aid — California's earthquake safety commis-

sion also reported that much of the damage in the Northridge quake was due to shoddy design, construction, and inspection. It favors added training for architects, engineers, inspectors, etc. It apparently doesn't have utopian notions about retraining builders and landlords.

Quick learners — With a growing shortage of burial space and a free-market approach to costs, traditional funerals are now out of reach for most Russians. Even minimal services are padded with extras. Like, at one Moscow-area cemetery a normal burial includes putting a rough coffin in the ground. Covering the coffin with dirt is extra.

Value judgment — The *Los Angeles Times* ran a report on a new medication that offers the promise of increasing the success rate in organ transplants. It was assigned to the business section.

Capitalist crisis definitely deepening — Years back, we'd devote an entire preholiday column to the ridiculously priced items in the Neiman Marcus department store X-mas catalog. But we stopped giving them the free publicity when they started charging for the catalog. So there's a bit of perverse satisfaction in seeing the full-page ad from NM's Beverly Hills store offering discounts up to 50 percent.

Farm families build auto parts at home for GM

BY ANGEL LARISCY

GUTHRIE CENTER, Iowa — The strike by the United Auto Workers union at the General Motors Buick City facility in Flint, Michigan, in late September highlighted some of the cost-cutting measures GM has implemented to increase production while cutting costs. One of these is outsourcing — assembling some car and truck components by contracting with outside suppliers, often nonunion, who pay lower wages.

Illinois Tool Works (ITW) has supplied GM with parts since 1986 when it became the first North American company to recruit farm families to build automobile parts in their own homes. The company set up its groundbreaking "homework" operation in this town, 50 miles northwest of Des Moines, Iowa, after the state government agreed to pay \$100,000 to build a 7,200-square-foot warehouse and then lease it to ITW.

ITW is a large company that employs 19,000 people in 33 countries. In 1993 it posted \$3.1 billion in revenues. Homework is traditionally associated with industries such as garment, but today it is used in the manufacture of automobiles, computers, and a range of other products.

1980s farm crisis

By 1986 working farmers had already faced several years of deep economic crisis, which forced many off their land. Today, despite the upturn in the business cycle, the situation for working farm families in Iowa remains grim. Last year brought devastating floods. This year's bumper crop has led to lower prices for soybeans and corn as well as a 20-year low for hog prices. This means less income for small farmers.

Barry Monaghan, executive vice president of Guthrie County State Bank, said that a local farm family is "doing well" to make \$15,000 a year from all sources.

In Guthrie Center, Beverly Stringer is one of 61 women farmers in the area who rely on the income they receive from "homework" to pay the bills and get by. For the past seven years Stringer has worked producing end-link assemblies for General Motors in her home. She and her husband Jack farm 500 acres of corn

and soybeans and have a 130-sow operation, raising 400-500 feeder pigs for sale at a time.

"I went for the interview," Stringer said during a recent conversation, "and I was told that I would be replacing a person making \$45 an hour in wages and benefits." But Stringer notes that she hasn't had a raise in seven years and the most she has ever made is \$7 an hour. The assembly work brings in an additional \$8,000 a year.

On average, families that contract with ITW earn \$5.40 per hour. The company was audited by the U.S. Labor Department in 1989 and 1990 to ensure it was paying workers at least the minimum wage.

Stringer reports she took the job for the convenience of being home on the farm. Previously she worked at a video store in town. "There aren't other jobs around here that pay more than minimum wage, unless you drive into Des Moines," she said.

No benefits

As an "independent contractor," the Stringers and other farm families receive no benefits or unemployment insurance and aren't covered by workers compensation. Workers must deduct Social Security and taxes from the checks they receive.

Every week the Stringers and other families drive 11 miles to the warehouse in town to pick up their 3,000-pound kit that consists of approximately 60 boxes of the necessary parts for each job.

Written instructions are included that note the number of parts and price paid per part, as well as the total sum paid for the kit. Each sheet notes in bold print, "Remember!! By law no minor is to perform assembly work." Some question whether this law is abided by.

All work must be turned in by the following week. It is inspected and if one end link is incorrect, the entire order must be taken home to be redone, without pay.

While the Stringers are not happy about the relatively low pay and the job conditions, they need the additional income. Last year, the ITW operation in Guthrie Center was bought out by Guthrie Center Assembly, a limited liability company in which local farmers are shareholders. The job arrangement hasn't changed but many farmers here think the new setup will allow



Militant/Ruth Nebbia

Farmers near Des Moines, Iowa, finishing up their corn harvest in October. This year's bumper crop has led to lower prices for family farmers.

them to share a little of the profits.

The Guthrie Center operation has become an extremely reliable producer for General Motors. "We made the mistake of telling them we're a 'red star' plant that is dependable," Beverly Stringer said, referring to the company's pressure on them to produce more and faster. "They need

overnight parts and we provide them."

"In Guthrie Center, we make assemblies for over 2,000 cars every week," Jack Stringer noted. "If we stopped producing them, then GM would have to shut down."

Angel Lariscy is a member of United Auto Workers Local 270 in Clive, Iowa.

- 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO -

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People
December 5, 1969 Price 10¢

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Some 20,000 persons staged a militant demonstration here November 15 as part of the international fall action against the war in Vietnam, NATO, and the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty. The relative size of the demonstration can be judged in light of the fact that Denmark's population is only four and a half million.

The demonstration, which was sponsored by the Danish Vietnam Committee, began at the U.S. military mission, proceeded to the U.S. embassy building, and then to the parliament.

The marchers carried colorful flags and banners supporting the Vietnamese revolution and demanding that the U.S. get out of Vietnam and that Denmark get out of NATO.

Right-wing groups, including a motorcycle gang called the "Wild Angels," threatened to attack the November 15 demonstration.

The numbers involved, along with a well-prepared defense guard, apparently discouraged the fascist-minded elements, however, and they did not show up. The police, too, refrained from engaging in a confrontation with the demonstrators although they have attacked them in the past. Consequently the march and three rallies were peaceful.

THE MILITANT

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

December 2, 1944

In one of the most militant and dramatic strike actions since Pearl Harbor, thousands of women switchboard operators and other employees of the gigantic anti-labor American Telegraph and Telephone trust last week threw picket lines around telephone exchange buildings throughout Ohio, in Detroit, and the very government war center, Washington, D.C.

Until it was suddenly halted last Friday on orders of union officials, the strike threatened to sweep like wildfire to key communications centers in all parts of the nation. Starting in Dayton, O[hio], Nov. 17, when some 600 women operators struck in protest against intolerable wages and working conditions, the strike quickly spread to 28 other leading Ohio communities, including Cleveland, Toledo, Columbus, and Akron, and was joined by sympathetic strikes in Detroit and Washington. Everywhere their picket-lines were respected by union maintenance men. Union workers in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York were also threatening to join the strike when it was called off.

With their display of direct action, the telephone employees threw a national spotlight not only on the terrible wages and working conditions of over 150,000 women workers in their own industry, but on the plight of millions of low-pay white collar workers subsisting under conditions of fixed low wages and soaring wartime living costs.

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FARMERS FACE THE CRISIS OF THE 1990s



DOUG JENNESS

Workers aren't moving to right

Commentary on the elections in the big-business media would have us believe that the great bulk of working people have swung to the right. But less than two weeks after the Republican "tidal wave" at the polls, it is apparent that the working class is not in lockstep with the bipartisan rightward march of capitalist politics.

Workers and farmers bear the brunt of the capitalist economic depression. In the absence of any large-scale working-class struggles that could expose the bourgeois candidates' demagoguery and point to a class alternative to the crisis, many decided to vote to replace incumbent officials with someone different this time around or, in most cases, not to vote at all. The elections, however, didn't register a mandate for the sweeping attacks on entitlements and social gains that the Republican and Democratic politicians have in mind.

"The growth in Medicare and Social Security spending must be curbed. Yet both parties lie to the voters about it," *Business Week* lectured its readers. "This is the most important opportunity of the decade to tame the deficit — if the two parties take it."

But the majority of working people have a very different outlook on this question. They justifiably regard entitlements like Social Security as historic rights to live their entire lives with some sort of economic and social security. Attempts to curtail those rights will be met by resistance, which is why capitalist politicians are trying to start with seemingly easier targets like welfare.

What is invisible in all the media coverage of politics is the fact that space for communists and other working-class fighters to exchange ideas and fight together with others has never been greater than today. As working people stare at a capitalist future that offers only more hardship and incessant turmoil, increasing numbers are interested in discussing ideas that get to the root of the social problems we

face. The socialist view that capitalists are scapegoating workers — in the prisons, or on welfare, or those from other countries — in order to hide the responsibility of their profit system gets a serious hearing among many thinking workers, especially those engaged in struggle.

For this reason Socialist Workers candidates across the United States enjoyed a favorable hearing during their campaigns. Socialist candidates ran in 20 states, offering a working-class voice and a communist perspective in the elections. In some cases they won considerable media coverage.

One revealing development was the actions in California by tens of thousands of workers and youth who demonstrated against the anti-immigrant Proposition 187. These demonstrations struck a responsive chord among hundreds of thousands of other workers. It made them think a bit more socially and question some of the demagogic appeals that may have swayed them earlier.

Likewise, the demonstration against U.S. policy toward Cuba on November 12 showed that thousands of young people and many workers are repelled by the inhuman policies of the U.S. government and are willing to mobilize in actions against it.

The reactionary march of both capitalist parties does not stop the important working-class struggles taking place today. "People keep complaining that the Republicans are in office now and labor is dead," said Tom Welsh, a United Rubber Workers member on strike against Bridgestone/Firestone. "But I think that now that the Republicans are in office labor will keep fighting." His attitude echoes that of a significant number of workers who are gaining confidence and a broader political vision through their own struggles. It is these fighters who are decisive for the future class battles that the employers themselves will provoke.

Imperialists divide over Bosnia

The November 21 NATO bombing raid on an airfield held by rightist Serb forces allied with Belgrade marks a significant escalation by the imperialist powers of their direct involvement in the Yugoslav war. Despite the apparent show of unity, however, the joint bombing run does not change the fact that tensions and divergences of interests in the region continue to grow between Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, and Moscow, who back different gangs of would-be capitalists in the former Yugoslavia. Threats of further military action are already pregnant with the seeds of conflicts between the so-called allies.

The bombardment served Washington's purpose of showing it will use its arsenal abroad anytime the U.S. ruling class determines its interests are at stake. U.S. admiral Leighton Smith, NATO commander in southern Europe, was quick to point out that the limited nature of the assault didn't show what Washington is capable of inflicting. "If I wanted to put that airfield out of commission, and to make sure nothing ever took off from it again, we would have taken out all the aircraft," he declared. "We could have done that."

The Clinton administration's earlier order to cease enforcing the arms embargo on Bosnia and Croatia brought the sharp differences between the imperialist powers to the surface. London was furious, especially since the decision to withhold intelligence on suspected arms shipments broke a decades-long collaboration between the two, further weakening the already tattered "special relationship" between the U.S. and British governments.

The U.S. government also risks a growing public blowout with the government of Russian prime minister Boris Yeltsin over their separate interests in the Balkans. Moscow backs Belgrade in the grab for more property and resources, Washington supports the Bosnian regime, and Bonn defends the Croatian government.

While these rival interests have always been present, the advent of a worldwide economic depression and sharpening competition for markets and resources has brought the imperialist powers into open trade wars and other disputes. That's why there is more open questioning of the feasibility of maintaining the U.S.-dominated NATO as a military alliance.

The various regimes in the former Yugoslavia and their armed proxies are run by ex-Stalinists who, having dropped their pretense of being communists after the collapse of the Stalinist regime in Belgrade, are now all aspiring capitalists engaged in a shootout for turf and loot. There is no voice among them that speaks for workers and farmers in that war-scarred land.

Working people around the world have no interest in expansion of imperialist intervention in the Balkans. Despite their "peacekeeping" claims, the imperialists will only perpetuate the slaughter and oppression of the peoples of that region. In the 1940s, workers and farmers throughout Yugoslavia, irrespective of nationality, united to make a revolution that overthrew capitalist and landlord rule. Today, they need the time and political elbow-room to again fight their way into politics in their own interests.

Canada students show the way

The November 16 demonstration by 10,000 students in Ottawa against the Canadian government's proposed cuts of \$3 billion in post-secondary education sets an example for the kind of mass action that is needed to oppose the growing attacks by the billionaire families on social services and democratic rights, both in Canada and internationally.

The action represented the first significant protest action against the proposals by the government, headed by the Liberal Party's Jean Chrétien, to slash funds for education, health care, unemployment benefits, and retirement pensions. Attracting French- and English-speaking youth from several parts of the country, the demonstration was also an eloquent rebuttal to the argument by big-business commentators that Quebecois and English-speaking working people do not have common interests. The truth is that workers of different nationalities have much more in common with each other than they do with their own bosses.

Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy asserts that university students are a "privileged elite" who should no longer continue to be subsidized by taxpayers. They should "pay their way," he argues, with tuition projected to

rise as high as \$8,000 a year.

This self-serving argument seeks to pit one section of working people against another, with the aim of imposing huge cutbacks in social gains without provoking a united front of resistance. It is the same reactionary argument the real elite — the billionaire coupon-clippers — use to justify cuts in unemployment, claiming that workers, fishermen, youth, and others who are denied a long-term job in Canada are "abusing the system."

Working people are not responsible for the economic crisis wracking the capitalist system today. Education, unemployment compensation, pensions, and other basic social services were not given away by the generous rich. They were conquered in mass labor struggles over the years. It will take further battles of this kind to defend these vital gains as rights for all, not as privileges for the few.

The Canadian Federation of Students has called for a national day of action on January 25 to broaden the opposition to the government's austerity moves. All student, labor, and farmers' organizations should build and join this important initiative, which will strengthen the hand of all working people engaged in struggle.

Che Guevara

Continued from Page 9

OCLAE: What events do you remember that demonstrated Che's willpower?

Pombo: Che, as a revolutionary and as a man, was in large part a product of his great willpower and self-discipline, which he must have been acquiring through the struggle with his illness. This created in him an unbreakable iron will. Not only in Bolivia, but in a range of situations, I saw Che in difficult situations, in which his asthma attacks made it practically impossible for him to move.

Asthma attacks

During the last days in Bolivia, the asthma attacks were very strong; nevertheless one could see Che's willpower and sense of sacrifice, of duty, in that he never sent anyone out to look for medicines, although we insisted on it for almost two months. And he did not decide to do so until the conditions became extremely difficult, when he was unable to take another step, and it seemed his physical condition was eventually going to have an impact on the combat morale of the entire troop; since the men were used to seeing Che as the man with the ability to move, to decide.

In spite of his asthma attacks he usually walked through the hills, and although he would occasionally make stops, he maintained the pace of the column. Now, in the last days, despite his resistance, he could barely move and this also forced him to ride on horseback. This, together with the case of El Médico (who was ill), led to our not reaching the house of Honorato a day or two earlier. We could have arrived before Joaquín did, and when the ambush occurred, it could have been possible to prevent them from passing to the other side of the river, since he was on the same side as we were.

Even in the state he was in, he refused to send any comrade to look for medicine, because of the risk of falling into an ambush. And it was under the pressure of El Médico, of Inti, and other comrades that he gave in partially. But after giving in he remained mortified about the fate of the comrades, of the risk they would be running, because he felt that he was the only one who should pay the consequences, because he had not foreseen that he would cause so much of it. He had estimated a supply of pills for a little more than a year, but with the increase in his attacks, he consumed them in six months. And although there were supplies of pills in the caves, where combat actions had already taken place, he did not want to send anyone to get them.

Nevertheless, he was overcoming the attacks on the basis of willpower. It is not easy to describe with words how he showed this; it was complete stoicism; seeing how he was unable to walk, that he walked with a stick, pushing himself forward. And he made us walk, because when we saw how he moved in the conditions he was in, we could not remain behind.

In the days prior to La Higuera, his asthma practically disappeared, he felt in perfect shape. In the Diary one can read in the monthly summaries his faith in victory, in the success of the war. Not even his physical condition had been able to dampen his enthusiasm and his confidence in success. This, I believe, is the result of his great capacity, his great willpower.

OCLAE: What impression did the death of the Heroic Guerrilla cause among the survivors?

Pombo: We learned of Che's death on October 10. Our last memory of him was at the San Antonio ravine, which is one of the three that form the Yuro ravine. It was the image of a person ready for combat in case we were discovered there, where we had established our positions. An aggressive image, an image of struggle. We were waiting to confront the army if it advanced.

You can imagine the negative impact it had on us when we learned of Che's death. I had been with him since I was 17, and it can be said that at his side I became a man. At least what I was able to learn of life, Che taught me. Knowing that he had been killed was a hard blow for us. We had been together with him for many years.

His death affected us as if we had lost our own father. It was a blow that was very emotional for us. From the revolutionary point of view, Che's death meant that the prospects of that struggle, as he had conceived it, had become drastically limited. Of course at that moment we never thought of renouncing our attitude of struggle. By no means.

The first reaction of the group of survivors, after letting our feelings out, was to discuss the stance we would assume in the future. Each one of the comrades expressed what his feeling was in that situation, and his ideas about what we should do given the new difficulties that we faced, the line of conduct we should follow. We all spoke and there was a position of absolute revolutionary firmness.

The last to speak was Inti, who called on us to remain faithful to the example Che had given us, to continue the combative spirit we had learned from him, and his honesty and revolutionary example.

We then proceeded to make a formal pledge among revolutionaries to continue the struggle as long as one of us lived, and that no one would give himself up or separate from the group. Inti, Nato, and Darío, the three Bolivian survivors, were, to the end, faithful to this revolutionary pledge made after Che's death, offering their lives for the revolution in their country.

CP-Soo Line rail workers vote on contract

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or

you get in trouble you can call on the other guy," Kruse said, "but with this, you get in trouble and there's no one to call."

"I was opposed to cutting the crew from three to two," said Bill Kingbiel, a switchperson with 23 years seniority. "There have been more derailments, accidents, cornering cars since then. What happens with only one-man crews? I knew when Clinton got involved, the railroad would get what it

"We as a union are now faced with dealing with people appointed by the president of the United States. I do not feel this is a fair way to treat the workforce in any industry. This has to stop. If all this doesn't come to an end, I believe unions will continue to lose their strength and ability to exist."

Massachusetts teachers strike for wage increase

Some 500 teachers and teachers' aides have maintained picket lines in Salem, Massachusetts, since members of Federation of Teachers Local 1258 voted unanimously to strike on October 31. The union is demanding wage increases of 11.5 percent over the three years of the contract. Wages in Salem are among the lowest in the region. The union is also demanding that the school committee drop a proposal that wages of union members be tied to standardized test scores.

At a November 10 picket line of 200 teachers and supporters in front of city hall, Umberto Latessa, a union spokesperson, explained, "The mayor says, 'the community wants raises tied to performance.' However such requirements are not imposed on school administrators, who were awarded wage increases of 10 to 23 percent. As an alternative to tying wages to test scores our union has put forward a nine-point program for improving education." Latessa said that although the amount of money allocated for education in Massachusetts was increased last year, the school budget has actually decreased, since the money earmarked for schools is also used for other purposes.

A superior court judge ordered the union members to return to work November 7. However, the strike has continued despite threatened fines of \$20,000 a day. At a solidarity rally held in front of city hall two days after the injunction, Julie Ochoa Lopez, a spokesperson for the union, said, "We're still willing to do what it takes to get a fair contract."

The mayor of Salem and the school committee have tentatively agreed to the union's wage demands but continue to threaten striking teachers with disciplinary



IAM Local 2061 members at the Kennedy Space Center in Cocoa Beach, Florida, won contract after 112-day strike.

action. "Instead of being in a settlement mode, he is in a punishment mode," emphasized Latessa. The effort to defend union members from retaliation has become one of the main objectives of the strike. Local 1258 is actively reaching out to other unions for support. A November 3 rally organized on one day's notice drew 2,400 teachers union members and supporters. Another rally was held November 15.

Train dispatchers walk off job in Colorado

Train dispatchers in Denver struck the Southern Pacific railroad November 14. Union officials said engineers, trainmen, and clerical workers were honoring the picket lines. "It looks like the yard's shut down," David Volz, a union official from the north yard said. The strike began after the rail bosses transferred jurisdiction for handling traffic on a 25-mile stretch of track west of Houston to another union.

Company spokesperson Mike Furtney said Southern Pacific was assembling crews of management employees to operate the trains. He called the strike an "illegal walkout" over a "small jurisdictional issue that should have been pursued through the grievance process." According to Furtney, the clerical workers union local in Houston has traditionally handled the dispatch function on that stretch of tracks.

The strike occurred two days before the San Francisco-based Southern Pacific formally opened a new transportation service center in Denver. In consolidating its dispatch operations, the company moved some 200 workers to Denver from Texas and California, and eliminated some jobs, while increasing the workload on others.

Kennedy Center workers win 112-day strike

After a 112-day strike, workers at the Kennedy Space Center in Cocoa Beach, Florida, won improvements in wages and pensions and defeated employer demands to gut insurance and seniority and institute wholesale job reclassifications. The 750 ground support technicians, members of the International Association of Machinists Local 2061, ratified a three-year agreement on October 25. Instead of the \$74 per month hike in payments for health insurance payments the company had demanded, workers will pay an additional \$13.

Kennedy Space Center commander and former astronaut Robert Crippen complained that the strike was "giving NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] a black eye" and urged them to seek a settlement.

Jon Hillson and Chris Nisan, members of UTU Local 1882 at the CP-Soo Line in St. Paul, Minnesota, contributed to this column.

ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Eleven hundred members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) in 11 midwestern states started voting on a tentative agreement reached by UTU officials and the Canadian Pacific-owned Soo Line railroad November 16. Balloting continues until December 2.

The contract was based on recommendations made by Presidential Emergency Board 225, which was appointed by President Bill Clinton last August.

The proposed agreement has provoked considerable discussion among rail workers in Minnesota. Some 200 workers at the Twin Cities, Minnesota, terminal have attended informational meetings on the contract proposal.

"The company's got to love this, it's got nothing in it for labor," Bill Kruse, a switchperson with 21 years on the railroad, said of the tentative agreement. The proposal would give the company the unconditional right to run all jobs with a conductor-only crew and an engineer, eliminating the remaining brakeperson from road jobs and a switchperson from yard jobs.

A maximum of \$5,857 in lump sum retroactive pay for nearly seven years without a wage increase would be available to senior workers, provided they did not miss any scheduled work between 1991 and 1993. An \$80,000 termination buyout may also be offered to some of these workers.

"Even with two workers, when

wanted."

"I've got 21 years to go [to retirement], working alone," Kruse said, noting the physical toll of such work. "The money in the contract doesn't mean much. I can't buy a new back."

Senior conductors, in front of whom buyouts are dangled, face the prospect of doubled work if the deal is ratified. One conductor, with 37 years seniority, learned his daily pay for working alone on 12-hour road trips would increase by \$1 a trip.

The contract proposal expands the current two-tier system, calling for a \$5,000 signing bonus for workers hired before 1993, but only \$1,000 for the nearly 150 workers hired more recently. The majority of these newer railroad workers retain recall rights for only a year after a layoff. Any incoming new employees will be forced to become conductors within a year, paid at 75 percent of scale in a five-year progression to the normal wage, and are excluded from the \$17 a day extra currently guaranteed for working on a conductor-only crew. These concessions have sparked widespread anger among the union's newest members, some of whom are circulating a petition to urge the UTU to file a grievance against the CP-Soo Line for its claim that they were hired for "temporary work." Some workers are campaigning for a "no" vote on the contract.

The contract proposal "is one of many examples of how the railroads are trying to destroy the United Transportation Union," noted Kevin Donnelly, a switchperson with 25 years seniority.

LETTERS

The 'Bell Curve' boys

Ch[arles] Murray and (the late) R[ichard] Herrnstein, the *Bell Curve* Boys, are proud authors of the meritocracy "theory" holding that "intelligence," or "cognitive ability," infallibly quantified by IQ scores, is concentrated in the upper strata of society (and rightly so), and sparse and scarce among blue-collar white workers, and generally among all Blacks and Hispanics.

This trend is continuously reinforced by marriage among the high-IQ (and high-income) "cognitive elite," and any smart strays from the lower strata are promptly co-opted into said elite.

In this static-equilibrium model of society, the worst possible catastrophe would be upheaval or social revolution, with the cognitive elite overthrown, scattered, and marginalized by us dummies who do all the work. Note that if the "theory" is valid, a disaster like social revolution not only *shouldn't* happen, it *can't* happen, it is flat-out impossible.

What puzzles me, perplexes me, and baffles me no end, is this: if the ruling classes are all so god-damned smart — and getting genetically smarter and smarter all the time — how come they don't stay in power forever? In fairness

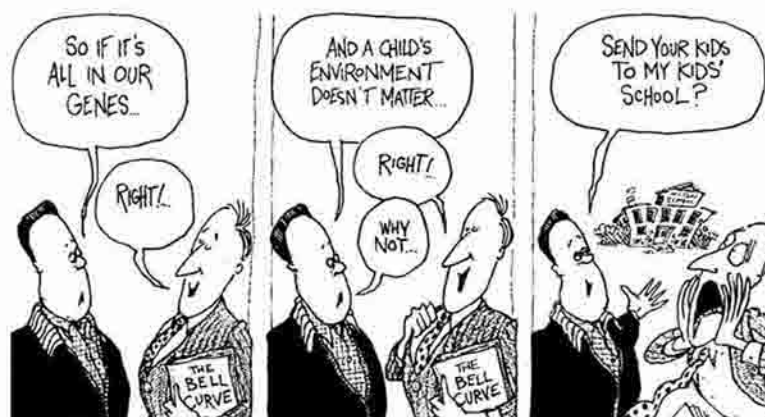
to Murray and Herrnstein, I should point out that they view the current U.S. ruling class as the first and only true meritocracy in all of human history. This might seem to be pushing American exceptionalism close to the absurd, but let us generously grant their argument.

We then confront the vexing problem that the Cuban workers and peasants, in their vast majority of African and Hispanic origin, the very ethnic groups so woefully deficient in gray matter and clustered toward the low end of the IQ bell curve, have made and maintained a successful social revolution for 35 years against enormous odds, not only against the former Cuban ruling class, but against the powerful and cerebral masters of the latter, Murray's and Herrnstein's darling American ruling class, which is still frothing at the mouth and afraid to let its citizens come into contact with our presumably benighted Cuban neighbors.

Robert Des Verney
Oakland, California

Questions on Haiti

In discussing with Haitians in the United States the real purpose of the Clinton administration's intentions in Haiti today, some of the same comments and questions keep surfacing. I think it would be



useful for the *Militant* to take some of these up.

Is it true that the Clinton administration was forced to return Haiti's legitimate government due to the pressure of the continued struggle of the Haitian people and their leadership, including president Jean-Bertrand Aristide?

Both Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro are looking to negotiate with — and get investments from — the United States and others. What is the difference between Aristide's current pursuit of U.S. aid and Mandela's?

The developments in South Africa and Haiti are very similar. When Nelson Mandela became president his government did not call for or organize trials for justice against the whites in South

Africa who murdered Blacks in the period right up to the elections. What is different about President Aristide calling for reconciliation among all and against violence?

Finally, Haiti is a small and underdeveloped country — the poorest in this hemisphere. It depends economically on the United States. Cuba was able to survive due to the aid from what used to be the Soviet Union. But that doesn't exist anymore. What is Haiti to do?

Rosa Garmendia
Brooklyn, New York

East Timor protests

Police arrested seven demonstrators in San Francisco and Washington, D.C., as they attempted to discuss East Timor pol-

icy with officials at Indonesian diplomatic sites in the two cities.

The arrests included five people, including several clergy, who were arrested at Indonesia's San Francisco consulate after raising questions about the demands and safety of the East Timorese who were camped at the U.S. embassy in Jakarta. The protest was organized by the East Timorese for self-determination and freedom for political prisoners.

Two others — encouraged by 15 supporters — were arrested as they knelt in front of the Embassy of Indonesia in Washington. The protesters were calling for an end to Indonesia's occupation of East Timor.

The Washington, D.C., protest was organized by the East Timor Action Network. At least 40 others were arrested in Jakarta and hundreds more seized in protests in East Timor itself.

East Timor Action Network
Brooklyn, New York

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.

Canada students protest cutbacks

BY HEIDI ROSE

OTTAWA, Ontario — Ten thousand angry college and high school students, as well as many others from across eastern Canada, marched on Parliament Hill here November 16 to protest government cutbacks in education funding.

They confronted Human Resources minister Lloyd Axworthy, whose proposed reforms to post-secondary school education will mean big increases in tuition fees.

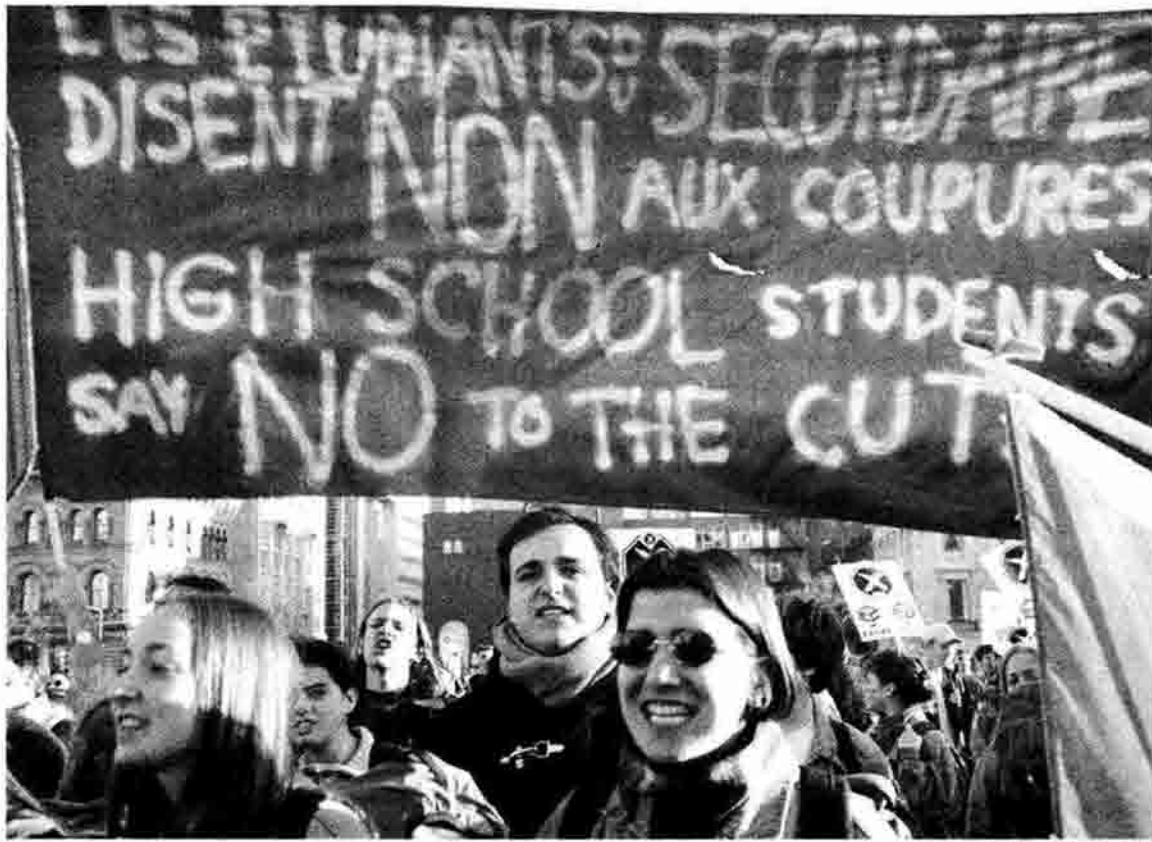
The call for the demonstration, initiated by the Students Federation of the University of Ottawa, got a rapid response from dozens of university student associations across the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick, which organized busloads of students to attend. It was the largest student demonstration in Canada's capital in many years.

The demonstration marks the biggest answer so far to the Liberal Party government's attacks on social services. The Liberal Party was elected to power last year. Like the previous Conservative Party government, the Liberals are pushing for cuts in unemployment insurance, welfare, and education under the banner of reducing the budget deficit.

The Axworthy proposal calls for replacing funds the federal government now spends on post-secondary education with loans, which students would have to repay after graduation.

Cuts will have big impact

Gareth Spanglett, president of the Students Administrative Council at the University of Toronto, said in an interview:



Thousands of college and high school students marched on November 16 in Ottawa to protest the government's attacks on social services. Students have called for a national day of action January 25.

"The cuts are going to have a very direct impact — it's going to double the cost of tuition. It's going to limit people's ability to attend university."

The same day as the Ottawa march, there were also student actions in Vancouver, British Columbia, where some 200 protesters forced their way into a parliamentary committee hearing on the "redesign" of social services.

In the past week, Axworthy was met by opposition from students at every stop on

his tour of Nova Scotia. He and other government leaders have conducted a public campaign to paint students as an "elite" who are subsidized by taxpayers.

When Axworthy came out to address the students after several hours, the rally erupted in angry boos. He was repeatedly interrupted by chants of "liar" and showered with macaroni. Throwing macaroni has become a symbol of the low food budget students will have if the cuts go through.

The government minister lost his temper and shouted at the students, "You don't know what you're talking about. You should listen." Axworthy upbraided the students for protesting and demanded they "put in suggestions — work with us to find solutions and alternatives."

Marlene Cormier and Ryan Fournier from the University of Ottawa, volunteer marshals at the protest, had a different view. "Education should be accessible to everybody," said Cormier.

"Eight thousand dollars [a year] to be able to study is too much. Perhaps some increases are unavoidable, but not what they propose. Let them cut their own \$100,000 salaries and their own pension funds."

'I think tuition should be free'

Stacy, a University of Toronto student, said, "I'm ideologically opposed to the cuts. I think tuition should be free."

Her friend Gillian said, "If they know thousands will freak out, they'll reconsider — if we're strong enough."

Many signs at the demonstration were in both French and English,

such as one hand-lettered placard: "No hikes — c'est tout clair [it's clear]." Chants in French were taken up by English-speaking students and vice versa. Speeches were given in both languages.

Richard McCullough, a student from McGill University in Montreal, said, "What I really like about today's demonstration is the participation of students from both Ontario and Quebec. It's very important because it contradicts how the capitalists are trying to divide French-speaking people in Quebec from English-speaking people."

A group of students from two Ottawa high schools came with a banner in French and English protesting the cuts. Selim Levy, who goes to De LaSalle High School, explained, "Some teachers deliberately scheduled critical exams and there were threats of suspensions."

January protest called

Mathieu Dubois, from Louis Riel High School, said that some 150 of the school's 600 students walked out and came to the demonstration, even though teachers stood in the hallways and discouraged them from leaving.

Demonstrators vowed to continue the fight. The Canadian Federation of Students has called for a national day of action on January 25.

Young Socialists joined the demonstration from Montreal and Toronto. Nojan Emad, a student at Central Technical School and chairperson of the Toronto chapter of the Young Socialists, commented, "Axworthy told students today that if we don't like his plan we should propose alternative budget cuts. That is, he's telling students we must take responsibility for the government's budget deficit. But the deficit was not created by students or working people. It's a product of the crisis of the capitalist economy."

"Axworthy claims that students are a privileged elite subsidized by taxpayers. He says exactly the same thing about laid-off workers who are 'repeat users' of unemployment insurance, and about old people who are trying to survive on pensions. These are all lies aimed at dividing working people," the YS member said.

"The only privileged elite in Canada is the capitalist class, which is trying to increase its profits at the expense of social benefits won by working people."

Heidi Rose is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1295 in Toronto.

More holes in frame-up of Canada miner

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police are not interested in finding out who did it. They just want to nail somebody. If that somebody is a CASAW member, so much the better," said Kathy Hrynczuk, referring to the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers. Hrynczuk is a member of the Union of Northern Workers in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. She has been attending the frame-up trial of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 2304 member Roger Warren. Until May 1994, the local was in CASAW.

Warren is charged with nine counts of murder for the deaths of nine replacement workers after a September 1992 explosion rocked Royal Oak Mines during a bitter 18-month strike against the company's attempt to bust the union. Warren has pleaded not guilty. During the strike, Royal Oak hired replacement workers and Pinkerton goons, and used the cops and courts to try to bust the union. Many miners in Yellowknife believe the trial is a continuation of company attempts to break the union. As the trial goes on, its frame-up nature has become more evident.

RCMP, media campaign

Since the explosion, the owners of Royal Oak, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the big-business media have been on a campaign to blame the striking unionists for the blast without a shred of concrete evidence. Miners, on the other hand, argue that it was company criminal negligence in handling of explosives and violating safety rules that led to the explosion.

During the strike, replacement workers at Royal Oak had gone to CASAW to report that the company was transporting men and explosives on the same cars. In

spite of the fact that this was a clear violation of mining regulations, the authorities did nothing to curb the practice.

The prosecution has been playing audiotapes and videotapes in court which it claims amount to a confession by Warren. Defense attorney Glen Orris has stated in court that the confession is "false and untrue." The prosecution claims that Warren climbed into the mine and set the blast. Workers who know Warren say that because of his ill health he was incapable of doing this.

"I think this so-called confession is a joke," said Hrynczuk. "All it shows is that after a year of interrogation, the RCMP pressured Warren into saying what they wanted," she stated.

"On Oct. 15, 1993, after the sixth hour of the 12th interrogation session of Warren, when the confession was obtained, the RCMP took him down into the mine to do a reenactment. This reenactment started after 1:00 a.m. and lasted until about 4:00 a.m.," Hrynczuk said.

Warren's ill health did not allow the RCMP to complete the entire route as planned. Over a period of one year the RCMP interrogated over 400 CASAW members, their families and other union supporters from Newfoundland to British Columbia.

During the fourth week of the trial the prosecution started playing the video tapes of Warren's supposed confession. "These video tapes are so black they're useless," Hrynczuk said. "The figures are so dark that you can't even recognize the faces. When the police took Roger down into the mine they had to point him in the direction of the blast. He didn't know where it was. For someone that was supposed to have done this before this was a bit fishy to me."

"I also find that what the RCMP claim Roger says in the confession and the actual

facts don't add up," Hrynczuk said. "According to the confession, Roger is supposed to have used a lokey (manicar with a motor) with the gears at the back. The RCMP claim the lokey that was used that night had the gear shift in the front. In the confession Roger is supposed to have used 5000 magnafract explosives. According to the police only 4000 magnafract explosives were found on the mine site."

Inconsistencies in prosecution case

CAW member Al Shearing said in an interview, "I would like to know why the RCMP are not pursuing the scab who, after the blast on September 18, told the media publicly that it was a homemade bomb at the side of the tracks that killed the miners. He's left town and never been seen since." Shearing, along with CAW member Tim Bettger, face trumped-up charges on incidents unrelated to the mine blast.

"I find it strange that after four weeks of the trial they haven't called up any bomb experts as witnesses," noted CAW member and Royal Oak miner Jim Fournier.

Miners in Yellowknife have been discussing that the blast, because of its intensity, had to be caused by much more powder than the amount the cops claim was used. The blast was so powerful that 500 feet down the tunnel and 40 to 50 feet off the main tunnel, heavy steel doors were destroyed. No power source or detonator remnants have been found to prove that it was a bomb that caused the deaths.

Solidarity messages and contributions for the defense can be sent to Warren Fund: c/o CAW Local 2304, P.O. Box 1628, Yellowknife, NWT, X1A 2P2 Canada. Tel. (403) 873-4528.

Ned Dmytryshyn is a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 692 in Vancouver.