

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Bosnia war prompts growing crisis for imperialist powers

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Unionists stage 'march for justice'

BY JOSÉ ALVARADO  
AND MARTIN DUNNE

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — Members and supporters of the United Auto Workers (UAW) on strike against Caterpillar, United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) members locked out by the A.E. Staley Co., and members of the United Rubber Workers (URW) on strike against Bridgestone/Firestone gathered at the Decatur, Illinois, civic center at 8:00 a.m. November 29 to begin a 43-mile march to the state capitol in Springfield. In all, 30 unionists and supporters made the entire march. Some 90 supporters were on hand for the send-off rally.

About a dozen members of UAW Local 974 from Peoria came down for the rally, some of whom joined the march.

Dan Lane, a locked-out Staley worker, Continued on Page 12

## Youth build Cuba brigade

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

"There are a lot of myths about Cuba in the media," said Nojan Emad, 18, a student at Central Technical School in Toronto, explaining why he is working hard to raise money to go on an international youth brigade to Cuba in January.

"I want to see for myself how young people and workers in Cuba are defending their revolution. It's the only socialist revolution in the world."

Emad will be traveling to Cuba as a reporter for *Now*, a weekly alternative newspaper in Toronto. "That paper has a lot of young readers. I plan on writing some articles on what I saw in Cuba so people can get a different view from what they usually read," he said in a phone interview.

Emad will be joining a group of students and young workers from several countries on the brigade, which is projected for January 6-20, according to Jack Willey, who is helping to work on the trip. "We are in contact with young people in the United States, Canada, Britain, Iceland, and Sweden who are interested in going," he said. "They will all be reporting for different media — campus newspapers, radio stations, community magazines, and union papers."

Ken Riley, another volunteer who is working on the trip, reported that brigade members "will spend a week in the countryside in Havana province. They'll meet Cuban youth from high schools, colleges, and factories who are working in the fields to increase food production in the country." This is a major part of the current efforts by Cuban working people to defend their revolution.

"They will also visit high schools and factories in the province," Riley said. "Then they'll spend five days in Havana, visiting an AIDS sanatorium, the new farmers markets, the Museum of the Revolution, and other places. They'll exchange experiences with members of the UJC [Union of Young Communists] and other youth. Throughout January the UJC is organizing all kinds of political activities around the 100th anniversary of the death of José Martí, Cuba's national hero."

"I've been raising money for the initial deposit on the brigade," Emad said. The total cost of the trip is \$1,000-\$1,200, and Continued on Page 4

# Castro: Cuba will never go back to capitalism

## World solidarity conference meets in Havana

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA, Cuba — "A tireless struggle against the root cause of poverty is necessary," said Cuban president Fidel Castro at the closing of the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba on November 25.

"An uncompromising struggle against capitalism, against neoliberalism, against imperialism is necessary," he emphasized, "until the day when we can no longer speak of billions of human beings who go hungry, who don't have schools, who don't have access to hospitals, who don't have jobs, who don't have a roof over their heads, who can't even count on the most elementary living necessities."

"The church talks about options for the poor, which seems like a fine idea to us," Castro said. "But in today's world we need something more than options. We need struggle, an unceasing and tenacious struggle that can change the conditions of life for the earth's poor."

Referring to recent U.S. military interventions in Yugoslavia, Haiti, and Somalia, the Cuban president denounced these "humanitarian missions" or "peace-keeping operations," terms used by Washington and other capitalist powers to justify their competing efforts to dominate



"An uncompromising struggle against capitalism, against neoliberalism, against imperialism is necessary," Fidel Castro told delegates at world solidarity meeting in Havana.

the world's resources.

"And what's the root of all these problems?" Castro asked. "Can anyone perhaps deny that the root of these problems is neocolonialism, imperialism? Can anyone

deny that the root of all these problems is capitalism? We must be very conscious of this reality," the Cuban leader said, "no

Continued on Page 8

## AN APPEAL TO OUR READERS

Help the 'Militant' provide eyewitness coverage from Cuba and South Africa!

Dear Reader,

From now until the beginning of January, *Militant* reporting teams will bring you unmatched eyewitness coverage of political developments in Cuba and South Africa.

Our first reports began in last week's issue, with a feature on the **World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba** held in Havana in opposition to Washington's economic embargo against Cuba. *New Internationalist* editor Mary-Alice Waters, *Militant* correspondent Damon Tinnon, and myself covered this important event. *Militant* correspondents are also staying on in Cuba for another week to report on other political developments.

Beginning next week, *Militant* reporter Laura Garza will travel to Cuba to cover a three-week tour of the island by Young Socialists from the United States. The Union of Young Communists will host Naomi Craine of New York and Brian Taylor of Chicago, who will speak at factories and campuses throughout Cuba.

From December 17 to 21 our correspondents will cover the **49th national conference of the African National Congress** in Bloemfontein, South Africa. It is the ANC's first national policy-making conference since the April 1994 elections. Steve Clark, editor of *Nelson Mandela Speaks*, United Steelworkers member Greg McCartan, and *Militant* staff writer Greg Rosenberg will provide eyewitness reports on the gathering and spend another week covering developments in the class struggle there.

The cost of these trips exceeds \$25,000. The *Militant* depends on the generous contributions of our readers — workers, students, and others — to make these trips possible. Please send your contribution today!

Sincerely,

Argiris Malapanis  
Managing Editor



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## Nicaraguan lawmakers back property rights

The Nicaraguan Parliament approved constitutional amendments November 22 that guarantee property rights and forbid asylum for anyone declared an international terrorist. Other proposed reforms to be voted on include cutting presidential and legislative terms from six years to five years, banning consecutive terms for presidents, and preventing relatives of a sitting president from seeking that office. The government of President Violeta Chamorro is currently issuing bonds to property owners whose real estate was expropriated by the former Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) government.

Among the more than 1,000 immigrants granted citizenship by the Sandinistas before handing over power to Chamorro in 1990 was Alessio Casimirri of Italy, who was sentenced in absentia to multiple life terms for his alleged role in the 1978 kidnap and murder of Italian politician Aldo Moro. Chamorro is seeking to strip Casimirri of his citizenship. The case is pending before the Supreme Court.

## U.S.-Latin air routes thrive

For the first time since World War II, air routes outside of Europe carried the highest number of passengers. The International Air Transport Association said U.S. airlines flew 15.8 million passengers to and from Latin America, knocking Europe — with 15.6 million passengers — from the top spot. The profitability of Latin American flights is prompting U.S. carriers to add routes in the region and increase the number of flights on existing ones.

## More banks fail in Brazil

Brazil's Central Bank liquidated the Bancorp of Rio de Janeiro in late November. This was the fourth small bank to fail in the country in less than a week and the seventh financial institution to close since the government introduced a new currency, the *real*, on July 1.



Brazilian soldiers frisk schoolchildren in Rio de Janeiro. Heavily armed troops occupied shantytowns beginning November 19 on the orders of President Itamar Franco. The government deployed the army in tanks and helicopters, allegedly to combat drug trafficking.

## Rally in Taiwan protests nukes

Some 15,000 people rallied in Taipei November 26 against construction of Taiwan's fourth nuclear power plant. A county referendum on approval of the \$4 billion project was scheduled for the next day. Government officials say the vote is not binding because it lacks parliamentary consent. Voters will also decide whether four ruling National Party officials should be forced to run in new elections since they reneged on campaign pledges to vote against the nuclear power plant.

## Beijing restricts hiring

The Chinese government recently announced temporary restrictions on the hiring of migrant laborers. More than 80 million peasants have traveled to urban areas looking for work. Most have ended up living and working under deplorable conditions. The State Council declared it illegal to hire new migrant workers after the Chinese New Year, which falls on January 31. Officials in Shenzhen conducted sweeps earlier this year and sent 230,000 workers

back to rural areas.

Beijing officials announced regulations that would require institutions hiring anyone from outside Beijing to pay registration fees starting at almost \$6,000. Opposition from business owners and some central government officials, however, has forced city authorities to back down from some of their plans.

## S. Korea rally demands justice

A demonstration of 12,000 in Daejeon November 26 demanded the indictment of former South Korean presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo for engineering a 1979 military coup. While still generals, Chun and Roh established a junta and ruled the country under martial law following the death of President Park Chung-hee. With the support of the U.S. government, the junta sent paratroopers and tanks to brutally crush a May 1980 student demonstration in Kwangju demanding an end to martial law and Chun's resignation. Angered at the government's savagery, hundreds of thousands joined protests, drove the army out of the city, and controlled Kwangju for five days. At least 500 people were killed and nearly 1,000 were reported missing as a result of the army's actions.

A year-long government investigation that concluded last month determined that the former presidents had engineered the military revolt, but should not be prosecuted because to do so would threaten "national unity."

## Manila approves investments

The Philippine government approved \$13.87 billion of investments from abroad in the first 10 months of this year — a more than five-fold jump from the previous year. The companies are entitled to tax-

free profits for four to six years and duty-free imports of equipment. U.S. businessmen dominated the list of foreign investors, with plans to pump \$599 million into the country.

## IBM loses in Germany

Members of the German trade union IG Metall won a court decision November 24 defending their 36-hour workweek. An industrial tribunal ruled that an IBM subsidiary could not unilaterally force IG Metall members in the company's 15,000-strong service sector to work an extra two hours a week with no extra pay. IBM tried to impose a contract it had signed with DAG, a white collar workers' union, on the service workers who belong to IG Metall.

## Paris suspends students

At least 45 students have been suspended from school in three cities in France for wearing head scarves. At the start of the school year, the French government banned what it called "ostentatious" religious symbols in classrooms. The government's anti-immigrant campaign targets the more than 5 million residents of France who come from countries where Islamic religions are practiced. School officials said 17 girls were suspended in Lille and 12 in Mantes-La-Jolie November 24-25. Sixteen students were suspended in Strasbourg the week before.

## Spanish airlines to lay off 5,000

Iberia, the national airline of Spain, announced November 23 that it would lay off 5,000 union workers, sell assets, and take further measures to cut costs. Airline unions rejected a company "viability plan" that included a 15 percent pay cut. The airline employs some 24,500 workers and layoffs are to begin immediately.

— PAT SMITH

## THE MILITANT

## No to intervention in Bosnia!

*The imperialist powers are supporting rival would-be capitalists in a grab for land and resources in the former Yugoslavia. Expanded military action by Washington, London, Paris, and Bonn will lead to more death and misery in the Balkans. Working people there need time to build a revolutionary leadership, which will fight in their interests.*

*The 'Militant' brings you the facts. Don't miss a single issue!*



Antiwar rally in Belgrade

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# PLO loses support over Gaza killings

BY MARTIN KOPPEL

The Islamic Resistance Movement, known as Hamas, held a rally of 20,000 in Gaza City November 26 in a show of opposition to the self-rule government led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It was one of the largest demonstrations in the Gaza Strip since the PLO signed an accord with the Israeli government in September 1993 establishing limited Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho.

Hamas has capitalized on the widespread outrage among Palestinians, including PLO supporters, over a deadly November 18 attack in which Palestine National Authority (PNA) police fired on demonstrators, many of whom were supporters of Hamas or the group Islamic Jihad. The shooting, which left 12 dead and 200 wounded, sparked a wave of rioting. The next day Hamas and the PNA publicly agreed to a truce.

PLO chairman Yasir Arafat has lost much of his popular support as a result of the shooting. "Arafat is a killer," cried Mohammed Kanan at the burial of his son Ata, 25, one of the 12 victims. "Instead of shooting at Israelis, he is shooting at our sons."

PLO officials have further lost credibility by denying responsibility for the shooting, claiming — without evidence — that PLO opponents provoked the incident by firing at the police.

"The Palestine Authority says that Hamas killed its own people," said a speaker at the November 26 rally, held in one of the city's most impoverished neighborhoods. "Did we do that?"

"No!" the crowd roared in response.

The rally also honored Imad Akel, a 24-year-old Hamas supporter shot to death a year ago by Israeli undercover cops.

Hamas has garnered support, particularly in Gaza, by posing as a more consistent champion of Palestinian national rights than the PLO, which it accuses of selling out to Tel Aviv. At the same time, it advocates a rightist program, including the expulsion of Jews from Palestine. Hamas also calls for second-class status for women and promotes anticommunist views.

While top PLO officials were based in exile in Tunis for many years, far from the daily battles of the Palestinian *intifada*, or uprising, Hamas built up a network of clinics, schools, day-care centers, mosques, and small factories, and set up a welfare system for widows, orphans, and handicapped veterans of the *intifada*.

## PLO pleads for infusion of aid

With the signing of the autonomy accord, Tel Aviv handed the PLO responsibility for the social crisis in Gaza, which was left with little infrastructure such as roads, sewers, and telephones. Of Gaza's 850,000 inhabitants, some 640,000 are refugees. More than half of them live in extreme poverty in camps built decades ago as temporary housing. Unemployment, at more than 50 percent, is aggravated every time Israeli authorities punitively close off the border, blocking thousands of Palestinian workers from reaching their jobs in Israel and depriving them of \$1 million a day in wages.

Meanwhile, little if any of the promised foreign economic aid and investment has come into Gaza and Jericho. In response to the latest conflicts with Hamas, the PLO leadership has increased its pleas for a rapid infusion of aid.

The U.S. capitalist media, concerned about the growing turmoil in Gaza and Jericho, has called on the Israeli govern-



Palestinians chant slogans against PLO chairman Yasir Arafat outside Shifa Hospital in Gaza after the Palestine National Authority police fired on demonstration November 18. At least 12 Palestinians were killed and more than 200 wounded.

ment to strengthen Arafat's hand so he can effectively keep Palestinians in line. "Arafat is the only one who can keep it together at this point," an unnamed "Western" diplomat told the *New York Times*.

"Israel and the West now have to think a bit about what to do if Hamas continues to gain ground on the PLO in the territories," a *Wall Street Journal* editorial counseled. "There is one answer: Hold elections." The *Times* lectured Arafat: "His police must become more aggressive against terrorism and less aggressive against political dissent."

Meanwhile, divisions are deepening in the PLO itself, including within Arafat's Fatah faction. Eight people were killed

November 25 in a day-long gun battle at the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon, near the southern port of Tyre.

Fighting reportedly broke out when 400 pro-Arafat guerrillas seized six military posts manned by 200 supporters of Lt. Col. Munir Maqdash, leader of a dissident Fatah grouping. Maqdash, former military head of Fatah, was dismissed last year after he called for Arafat's resignation as PLO chairman over the accord with Tel Aviv. Many refugees oppose the accord because it leaves their situation unresolved.

The Syrian government, which supports certain PLO factions based in Lebanon, has also criticized the PLO-Tel Aviv accord as a way to undercut Arafat and advance its own interests.

# Immigrant rights debated in South Africa

BY GREG ROSENBERG

When two *Militant* reporters caught a taxi in Johannesburg a couple of months ago, the discussion turned to the economic devastation affecting millions of working people in South Africa. After a few minutes of conversation the driver, who was Black, slammed on the brakes and turned around to exclaim, "It's the Ghanians! They are coming here to steal our jobs and wreck our economy!"

A comment like that might seem strange in a country living through a democratic revolution that just buried the apartheid regime. Millions are today engaged in a battle to bust apart apartheid's legacy, from carrying out a real land reform to eradicating racist practices on the job.

But South Africa's capitalist class, with rightist political forces like the Inkatha Freedom Party in the lead, is on a campaign to blame immigrant workers for the economic wasteland bequeathed by the former apartheid rulers.

"South Africa can no longer afford to tinker with the problem of illegal aliens," chided the September 9 *Financial Mail*, a big-business weekly. "Illegals now make up five percent to eight percent of our population...and their number is growing at a rate of one every 10 minutes."

Claiming that undocumented workers would ruin the Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) put forward by the African National Congress (ANC), the article stated, "This year alone it could cost more than R210 million [3.5R=US\$1] — a tenth of the entire amount budgeted for the RDP — just to house, educate, police, and give medical care to only one sector of the problem: the illegal Mozambicans." Blaming immigrant workers for violence, drug trafficking, car theft, and armed robbery, the influential newsmagazine calls for "a complete reevaluation of the law concerning illegals and refugees."

One wealthy farmer, cautioning those who would take the anti-immigrant campaign too far, complained to the *Financial Mail* that he would be forced out of business if he couldn't hire Zimbabweans to work in the fields. Those workers earn less than \$70 a month.

As a component of the apartheid organization of labor, large capitalist farms, mines, and factories drew in workers from throughout southern Africa to increase profits.

As a result of capitalist economic depression conditions throughout sub-Saharan Africa, large numbers moved to South Africa in the 1980s. This process accelerated as wars waged by apartheid's rulers against newly independent countries in the region, as well as open economic sabotage of their economies, brought massive numbers of immigrant laborers into South Africa.

## Apartheid organization of labor

Tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of workers from other countries are employed in South Africa's gold, platinum, and diamond mines today.

In the forestry plantations of the Eastern Transvaal province, there are as many as 20,000 workers from Mozambique alone. Members of the Paper, Printing Wood and Allied Workers' Union, which has a substantial membership in the industry, explain that conditions in some areas are so bad that talking during work amounts to an "offense," punishable by a pay cut, denial of rations, or an assault by the boss.

The employers' campaign is winning support from the middle class, including a growing component that is Black. With unemployment at 50 percent, 7 million people living in squatter camps, and widespread landlessness, some working people have also been won over.

In 1993, the National Party government expelled some 96,000 people from the country. Current minister for home affairs Mangosuthu Buthelezi, head of Inkatha, is calling for a crackdown on immigrant workers. Inkatha's publicity secretary stated, "There is no work in South Africa because of them and we call for employers who take on immigrants to be punished."

In September, Inkatha said it would "march against illegal immigrants, and physical actions [will] be applied if drastic steps are not taken."

Leaders of the ANC and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

have condemned the measures advanced by Buthelezi.

COSATU spokesperson Neil Coleman called Buthelezi's proposals "narrow chauvinism" and accused the minister of wanting to make South Africa "an island of prosperity in a sea of want."

ANC member of parliament Rob Davies told the *Weekly Mail & Guardian* that he was opposed to "xenophobia" and "populism" when it came to immigration. Davies said that while there was a need to detect and process immigrants, they were owed full protection under the constitution and any controls should meet what the *Weekly Mail* called "international norms." He said he was "bitterly opposed" to lethal power levels in electrified fences. Police officials have proposed extending these fences along the borders of Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Botswana.

According to a report in the November 11 *New Nation*, a pro-ANC newspaper, COSATU general secretary Sam Shilowa told a recent labor conference that while in his view tighter border controls were necessary, South Africa should not rely on this alone to keep out illegal immigrants. He called for regional economic development.

One resolution tabled at the conference called for a southern African economic union, which would allow the free movement of labor across national borders.

## National Party and Afrikaans

Meanwhile, another controversial issue is being advanced by the National Party, which claims there is growing discrimination against speakers of the Afrikaans language. It cites as proof a decision by South African television to narrow the number of hours it reserves for Afrikaans-language television and radio programming.

The ANC championed the fight to establish the 11 official languages now recognized in the South African constitution and has rejected any charge of language discrimination.

In a November 2 statement, South African president Nelson Mandela noted that the Afrikaans language was not the sole preserve of whites and Afrikaners. As a result of the colonization of South Africa

and subsequent apartheid rule, millions of Blacks as well as whites speak Afrikaans.

"Apartheid politics wanted to keep the language for itself, because it would not accept Afrikaans speakers of another color as social and political equals," Mandela said. "Afrikaans must rediscover itself in its totality...so that it does not have to show any fear in a situation of nonracialism and equal rights," Mandela said.

## 'Militant' available on Peacenet

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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# YS boosts travel fund

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 JACK WILLEY

NEW YORK — The Young Socialists International Travel Fund is beginning to get off the ground. More than \$1,400 was raised in the last week through forums, video showings, and parties. There is still a long way to go, however, to meet the challenge of completing the \$16,000 fund by the end of December.

Thanksgiving was a booming success for YS members in San Francisco, who held a dinner and raffle that raised \$1,200. Javier Aravena, who recently returned from a YS recruitment tour to Puerto Rico, gave a report on his trip. The International Travel Fund will help cover trips like those described in this week's column, along with other expenses of the Young Socialists internationally.

The Los Angeles chapter held a fundraising video showing on Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara and will be showing another Cuban movie and hosting a dance in the next two weeks.

YS members in Salt Lake City, Utah, held a Thanksgiving dinner and are making buttons to raise money toward their goal. On December 3, they will be raffling pictures taken by Calvin Jolley at a labor rally in Decatur, Illinois, October 15. Roger Calero, a YS member from Los Angeles, will be speaking in Salt Lake City December 10 on Proposition 187 and the demonstrations he took part in against the anti-immigrant measure.

The New York Young Socialists have already sold out of their "U.S. Hands Off Cuba" buttons and hosted a Thanksgiving dinner in Brooklyn. They are getting pledges from supporters of the YS to meet their goal. Now is the time to put our fundraising efforts into high gear and set up events to go over the top. All supporters of the Young Socialists can help by making

pledges to the fund, building campus meetings and public forums for YS members to speak, and joining in other fundraising activities.

## Socialist youth speaks in Minnesota on immigrant rights

BY LISA ROTTACH

MINNEAPOLIS — YS member Gloria del Cid recently concluded a speaking tour in Minnesota organized by Young Socialists here.

The 19-year-old socialist from Los Angeles spoke to more than 150 young people, students, and unionists about the anti-immigrant Proposition 187, adopted in the recent elections in California. The measure denies most social services to undocumented workers and their children.

Del Cid, a student at Santa Monica College and native of Guatemala who helped build protests in Los Angeles against Proposition 187, spoke at student meetings at the University of Minnesota, Macalester College, St. Olaf College, and North High School in Minneapolis.

She also talked with several members of the International Association of Machinists at Northwest Airlines at a breakfast organized by union members, and with United Transportation Union members at the St. Paul terminal of the Canadian Pacific-owned Soo Line railroad as a member of a *Militant* newspaper sales team.

Del Cid showed a powerful 15-minute video made by Los Angeles Young Socialists throughout the day at various high school walkouts. "Who makes the pillows? Who makes the clothes?" demands one Latino student shown in the video, referring to southern California's garment industry, which is shouldered almost entirely by immigrant workers. "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!" shouts another student in reference to California governor Pete Wilson's scapegoating platform.

Del Cid said that immigrant bashing is not restricted to the United States, but is "a worldwide aggression being employed in every capitalist country as the economy deteriorates on a global scale. We see it everywhere, from Mexico, where they blame Guatemalan workers, to France, where female Muslim students are not permitted to wear their head scarves."

One student at North High School, a young woman wearing a head scarf, immediately identified with this attack and leaned over to a friend to further explain this oppression of immigrant Arabs.

A number of youth saw Proposition 187 as a racist action taken to further the interests of the rich. "I don't know how to phrase this without offending anyone, but I believe this to be another example of the white man exploiting for profit," said a student from Adelante, the Latino student organization at Macalester College.

Del Cid agreed that capitalism is based on profit, but explained that "this eco-



YS member Gloria del Cid speaking to high school students during tour of Minnesota

omic system knows no races and knows no borders. There are ruling capitalists of every creed, sex, ethnicity. What they have in common is the drive for profit. This is a class issue. By using racist tactics, they divide the working class and weaken our collective strength.

"I urge you," del Cid told her audiences, "to join the fight to defend immigrant workers, and the battle to overthrow a decaying capitalist system that will continue to attack our rights. The fight of unionists and youth, in the streets, the plants, and the schools of Los Angeles shows the way forward."

## Youth in Puerto Rico express interest in brigade to Cuba

BY MARIANA REYES

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Javier Aravena, a member of the Young Socialists from San Francisco, recently made a trip here to help build the YS. On his first day he and five other members in Puerto Rico participated in a march of 80 people in solidarity with Cuba in the streets of Old San Juan. The Young Socialists set up a table with YS literature and books from Pathfinder.

Aravena met with two youth groups, the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students and the Union of Young Socialists, to discuss an upcoming youth brigade to Cuba. Members of both groups expressed interest in participating in the trip.

The Young Socialist also spoke at a meeting at the University of Puerto Rico on Proposition 187 and the fight to defend immigrant rights. About 20 students attended the meeting.

On the last day of Aravena's trip the YS set up a table at a cultural event called La Fiesta de la Nacionalidad where they met two people who decided to join the Young Socialists.

## Young Socialists recruit during Toronto youth tour

BY NOJAN EMAD

TORONTO — Jason Coughlin, a member of the Young Socialists from Boston, completed a tour of Canada at a Militant Labor Forum here on November 26. Coughlin explained to those attending the forum, "as capitalism sinks deeper into crisis we can expect increased resistance."

"This resistance will be uneven, often spontaneous, and unpredictable. Young Socialists jump into the struggles. The victories that come about through this resistance are important in themselves, but as the *Communist Manifesto* explained, 'the real fruit of the battle lies, not in the immediate results, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers.' Young Socialists around the world are building an organization to act as a catalyst in this process."

During the Ontario leg of Coughlin's tour, he spoke at meetings at York University in Toronto, McMaster University in Hamilton, and the University of Western Ontario in London. At York University, daily tables were organized leading up to the meeting. At the meeting there was a big discussion about how Cuba can continue to survive in a world where no ascending socialist revolutions are taking place. After the meeting, two people expressed interest in joining the Young Socialists.

Coughlin met with a student from El Salvador who joined the YS during the course of the tour. When asked why he decided to become a socialist, the student said, "it is the only way to be fully human."

He brought two friends who are originally from El Salvador and Ecuador to the Militant Labor Forum the following night. The Young Socialists here are also part of a coalition to organize a one-day protest against the government's cuts to education and social services.

## Young Socialists \$16,000 Travel Fund

The Young Socialists are 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
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Cleveland	\$400	
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Greensboro, NC	\$75	
Los Angeles	\$1,200	\$145
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Miami	\$200	
Morgantown, WV	\$150	
Newark, NJ	\$400	
New York	\$1,200	50
Philadelphia	\$800	
Pittsburgh	\$500	
Salt Lake City, UT	\$600	
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<b>AUSTRALIA</b>		
Sydney	\$505	\$270
<b>CANADA</b>		
Montreal	\$250	
Toronto	\$600	
<b>ICELAND</b>		
Reykjavik	\$350	\$180
<b>SWEDEN</b>		
Stockholm	\$250	\$120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,830</b>	<b>\$2,225</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>	<b>\$16,000</b>	

# Youth build international brigade to Cuba

Continued from front page

the first \$250 payment must be in New York by December 6.

"We're kind of behind in organizing for the brigade here, but we've been working real hard in the past week," added the high school student, a member of the Toronto chapter of the Young Socialists.

"There's a Young Socialists club at York University here that's building the brigade. We approached the campus newspaper, *Excalibur*, and the editorial board and staff were glad to hear about a brigade going to Cuba. They ran a free ad publicizing the brigade and said they'll consider sending one of their reporters on it."

"We've organized two fund-raisers so far. We plan a fund-raising dinner and are trying to organize a dance," he said.

"Last night we went to a forum on Latin America at a meeting place called the Harbor Front," Emad continued. "A professor from Nicaragua talked about the need for his country to approach the IMF [International Monetary Fund]. I spoke during the discussion and said we should look to Cuba, not the IMF, and then I presented the brigade. After the meeting, two people came up to me and said they were inter-

ested in joining the brigade, including a reporter for another university paper."

Now, he explained, "we're also starting to plan some speaking engagements on campuses after my return to get the truth out about the Cuban revolution."

Riley pointed out that supporters of the Cuban revolution who are not actually joining the brigade can be a big help to those youth who want to go but don't have enough saved up. "For example," he said, "the Young Socialists chapter in Los Angeles recently hosted a showing of a movie on Che Guevara, and one of the people who attended made a \$100 donation to help others go on the brigade."

Defenders of the Cuban revolution in Boston are making a broad effort to publicize the January youth brigade. The local July 26 Coalition decided to build the brigade and is sending out a mailing on it to its supporters.

In Newark, New Jersey, Victor Ramos, a student at Bergen County Community College, also plans to go on the brigade, which he heard about at a November 12 demonstration in Washington, D.C., against the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

"You hear a lot of negative things about

Cuba in the media, and I thought, why not go down there and get my own account?" Ramos related in an interview. In contrast with governments calling themselves socialist in Russia and Eastern Europe, which crumbled, "Cuba is the only place that's really standing up," he noted.

Now, the New Jersey student said, the challenge is to nail down all the particulars for the trip, such as getting his journalist assignment and obtaining a passport in time to apply for a Cuban visa. The visa alone may take more than two weeks.

Riley, who just returned from an international solidarity conference in Havana, described a speech given there by Cuban president Fidel Castro, who explained in strong terms that capitalism holds no hope for humanity and that Cuba will continue to maintain its socialist principles. "Fidel's speech made a big impression on me," he said. "That's the kind of perspective and the type of fighters that young people who go on the brigade will have a chance to encounter firsthand."

To learn more about the brigade, call (212) 677-4356 or write: Cuba Youth Brigade, P.O. Box 1801, New York, NY 10009.



# Bosnia war sparks crisis for imperialists

BY GREG ROSENBERG

Military advances by rightist Serb forces and allied groups in Bosnia have provoked a sharp crisis for U.S. foreign policy and a growing feud with the governments of France and Britain. The Clinton administration can no longer count on the appearance of unified military action or diplomatic initiatives to fight for Washington's interests in the region. Tens of thousands have been killed in fighting throughout the former Yugoslavia since the disintegration of the Stalinist regime in Belgrade. More than 600,000 Bosnians alone have been made refugees in the last two years.

Rightist Serb forces from Croatia, fighting under the command of Milan Martić, are working hand in hand with troops loyal to Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić. Martić's forces have been joined in assaulting the Bosnian region of Bihać by a group of Muslims who support businessman Fikret Abdic. Located in a northwestern pocket of Bosnia, Bihać had been declared a so-called safe area by the United Nations.

On November 29, UN officials threatened to withdraw their forces from Bosnia if an immediate cease-fire was not reached. The threat met with a contemptuous rebuff from Karadžić, who refused to even show up for a meeting with UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Karadžić's forces, allied with the regime in Belgrade, now control 70 percent of Bosnia. Under a plan pushed by the Contact Group — Washington, London, Paris, Bonn, and Moscow — they would be allowed to keep 51 percent of the territory, leaving 49 percent for the Bosnian government. Karadžić is not satisfied with the offer, nor does he want a cease-fire at the present time. And the Bosnian regime of Alija Izetbegović rejected Boutros-Ghali's demand for an open-ended truce, which would help cement Karadžić's territorial advantage.

## Dole calls for more air strikes

On a trip to London, Senate Republican leader Bob Dole called for expanding air strikes against Serb forces in Bosnia, lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian government, and withdrawing UN troops from Bosnia. Dole, whose position is diverging from recent statements by the Clinton administration, drew sharp rebukes from British and French officials, but won support from former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher. "I think we have a complete breakdown of NATO," Dole said November 27, adding that he held the

"British and French, and primarily the British," responsible.

British defense secretary Malcolm Rifkind said U.S. officials were "behaving disgracefully." He said, "When we have thousands of brave British soldiers" in Bosnia, "it ill becomes people in the countries that have not provided a single soldier on the ground to make that kind of criticism." Britain and France have some 10,000 troops in Bosnia.

On November 26, three U.S. Navy warships carrying 2,000 marines headed toward the Adriatic, a move the Pentagon termed "strictly precautionary," in response to expanded fighting around Bihać.

## Worries over NATO

Worried over continued instability in the former Soviet republics, and with no prospect of a reliable regime surfacing in Russia, the Clinton administration wants to keep some semblance of military unity through NATO, which relies overwhelmingly on the U.S. arsenal.

A *Financial Times* editorial, headlined "Save the alliance," warns that the row over Bosnia "threaten[s] a death blow to



Muslim soldiers led by businessman Fikret Abdic have joined rightist Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia in assault on Bihać and drive to grab piece of former Yugoslavia.

the ageing Atlantic Alliance," adding, "It is too late to save Bosnia."

"Give serious bombing a chance," wrote *New York Times* columnist William Safire November 28. Calling British UN commander Michael Rose "the reincarnation of Neville Chamberlain," and stating, "The UN is worthless," Safire argued against

"this middle of the night wandering around by a few NATO pilots, jerked in and out of action by a discredited UN commander. Let's see what sustained destruction of bridges and roads, ammunition dumps, oil supplies and barracks, political gatherings and small factories can do to send the Serbs a message."

# Congress moves ahead on GATT accord

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) appears headed for ratification by the U.S. Congress after the House of Representatives approved the accord November 29 by a bipartisan 2-1 margin. The Senate is expected to follow suit.

A debate has unfolded in U.S. ruling circles in the last several weeks over whether Washington should jeopardize seven years of trade negotiations in favor of demanding more concessions from its capitalist rivals abroad.

But the swell of opposition to GATT ran aground November 23 when Senate Republican leader Bob Dole announced he would support ratification after obtaining some concessions from the Clinton administration. A majority of big business favors the accord, figuring they have more to lose if Washington does not ratify.

"GATT is about America's position in the world," crowed former Reagan administration official Jim Baker at a November 28 White House ceremony peddling the trade deal. "It is not a Republican agreement or a Democratic one," President Bill Clinton declared. "It is an American agreement."

GATT is a complex patchwork of trade deals that evolved out of the post-World War II domination of the world economy by the main imperialist powers. The agreement by 124 governments would lower many tariffs on imports, and open some hitherto protected markets. The most powerful capitalist governments would still have a boatload of protectionist devices at their disposal to support individual industries against competition.

## U.S. 'sovereignty'

International ratification of the Uruguay Round of GATT would establish a new World Trade Organization (WTO) to administer agreements. The proposed WTO has been vehemently attacked by a collection of forces, including right-wing politician Patrick Buchanan, a minority of manufacturers, AFL-CIO officials, Ross Perot, and Ralph Nader, founder of the liberal group Public Citizen. All argue that the WTO would undermine U.S. sovereignty and cost jobs in the United States.

Buchanan, the clearest exponent of this opposition to GATT, maintains that the U.S. government must exercise its military and economic might to wrest even more from its competitors and that regulations

negotiated in trade talks would tie the U.S. capitalists' hands in the brawl for markets and profits.

"In the World Trade Organization, established by GATT, America surrenders her national sovereignty, her freedom of action to defend her own economic vital interests from the job pillagers of Tokyo and Beijing," wrote Buchanan in an October syndicated column excoriating "the corporate elite" for backing the deal. "We give up our freedom — to faceless foreign bureaucrats who will assume authority over America's commerce."

In response to such criticism, Sen. Dole won an agreement from Clinton stipulating a "trigger mechanism" in the WTO. The U.S. Congress would be able to vote to withdraw from the agreement if it deemed U.S. businesses were subject to unfavorable rulings by a newly created court of international trade.

Prominent big-business voices backing ratification included Caterpillar Inc. and Boeing Co., which stand to make hefty profits from lower tariffs in countries they target for export. *Business Week* wrote, "Despite the turbulence, business believes there's too much at stake for GATT to fail," adding that a defeat "would humiliate the U.S. and send shock waves through world financial markets."

A minority of manufacturers who would face more international competition under the new rules, such as the owners of highly protected textile plants, opposed the accord.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in June, Nader, who portrays himself as a "consumer advocate," warned that decisions taken against U.S. manufacturers would "pull down our higher living standards in key areas." He stated the ratification of the Uruguay Round "would strengthen and formalize a world economic government dominated by giant corporations" and would mean "relinquishing U.S. sovereignty."

"Under the WTO, the U.S. can be outvoted by any two dictatorships," wrote Nader in the November 28 *Christian Science Monitor*. "The 45,000 people of St. Kitts and Nevis have the same vote that 260 million Americans do."

## International competition

While GATT goes under the banner of "liberalization of world trade," it does not lessen the red-hot competition between the U.S. ruling families and their rivals in Paris, Bonn, London, and Tokyo.

The worldwide effort by employers to downsize industries, cut costs, and increase productivity is much farther along in the United States than in other imperialist countries. U.S. manufacturers saw a \$530 billion increase in shipments between 1987 and 1992 — a leap of 21 percent. During the same five-year period employment by U.S. manufacturers fell by 696,000 jobs, while real wages continued to decline.

# UN sanctions on Iraq have brutal effect

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The effects of Washington's effort to starve the people of Iraq are prompting warnings of approaching famine and total economic collapse.

At a November 14 meeting, the United Nations Security Council, at the behest of the U.S. government, decided to maintain economic sanctions on Iraq. The sanctions, which were imposed in August 1990 at the opening of the Persian Gulf War, prevent Baghdad from selling oil to purchase food, medicine, and spare parts.

The Security Council brushed aside a diplomatic concession from the Iraqi government, which announced it was recognizing the sovereignty of Kuwait and the borders affirmed by the United Nations. The call for the government in Baghdad to recognize Kuwait was a key stipulation in public UN pronouncements on why the sanctions were to be maintained.

Divisions between Washington and London on one side, and Moscow and Paris on the other, marked the debate on whether to discontinue or ease the embargo. French capitalists stand to profit from renewed trading and investment in Iraq, where they have maintained a long relationship.

The Russian government wants repayment of an estimated \$4 billion in arms debts. As a result of the conflicting positions, the Security Council could not agree on a public statement of its reasons for maintaining the sanctions.

Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, argued that Iraqi troop movements in October were reason to maintain the squeeze. Feigning outrage, Albright displayed satellite photographs depicting sites where, she alleged, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein is building 30 palaces for himself and his coterie at a cost of \$500 million.

## Critical food shortage

That Iraq's capitalist rulers continue to live well is hardly a surprise. But the imperialist-imposed sanctions are having brutal repercussions on millions of working people in that country. The sanctions block petroleum earnings estimated at \$15 billion a year.

Food supplies are critically short. Iraq imported 70 percent of its food before 1990. In September, the government halved the basic rations of sugar, oil, rice, and flour that it has distributed to the population since 1990. The rations met only 70 percent of basic caloric needs before the cuts. This year's harvest is down by a third on last year's poor crop. The number of cases of malnutrition is soaring, as is the number of children appearing in Baghdad hospitals with bloated stomachs.

Inflation is skyrocketing. Five years ago, one Iraqi dinar was worth about \$3. Today, although \$1 will purchase anywhere from 500 to 600 dinars, wages haven't gone up. Two dozen eggs or one kilo of lamb costs about 1,000 dinars — the equivalent of

half a government employee's monthly pay.

Children are dying of diarrhea and pneumonia in hospitals for lack of medicines. The French newspaper *Le Monde* writes that hospitals "have become places where people are taken not to live but to die." The mortality rate has tripled since the imposition of the embargo four years ago. The rate of congenital malformations has also shot up due to malnutrition.

"If nothing is done, 600,000 children are going to swell the ranks of the extremely vulnerable cases," stated UNICEF official Thomas Ikvaal.

In Basra, the second-largest city in Iraq, there is a severe shortage of drinking water. The only access to potable water for many villages in the south is via tanker trucks, which regularly break down.

Some in U.S. ruling-class circles are beginning to question whether their four-year effort to starve Iraq into submission outweighs the political cost. "Three and a half years after the Persian Gulf war, it is time to acknowledge that Washington is not about to overthrow Saddam Hussein," said a November 28 *New York Times* editorial. "Besides, no better successor is in site."

The editors warned that if the Clinton administration does not shift its policy, "the U.S. may face even more awkward problems from Iraq down the road and a breakdown of the allied unity on which containment of Baghdad ultimately depends."



# Passage of California's Proposition 187 stirs political debate and controversy

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — The death of a 12-year-old boy whose parents delayed getting medical treatment because they feared deportation has sparked a new round of discussion and controversy about California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187.

Approved by 59 percent of the voters in the November 8 elections, Proposition 187 denies undocumented workers and their families all but acute emergency care and requires health workers to report "suspected" undocumented patients.

Julio Cano fell ill the day before a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order blocking implementation of most provisions of 187. His parents, undocumented immigrants from Mexico, were not aware of the court order. They held off getting care for several days so that the father could get his paycheck and have \$60 to see a private doctor.

The day after the visit, Julio died of heart failure. An autopsy disclosed that he had acute leukemia. A specialist said the disease could cause death in a matter of months, even weeks. But with medical care, there is a recovery rate of up to 70 percent.

Media coverage of the death evoked strong public concern. Recognizing this, the initiators of 187 tried to shift the burden of responsibility onto those who had opposed the proposition. They charged misinformation had been spread to incite fear among immigrants. At the same time, former U.S. immigration chief Alan Nelson, a co-author of the anti-immigrant legislation, bluntly declared: "187 will make it a lot tougher for illegals to stay here, and that's the intent."

## Wilson modifies some provisions

Meanwhile, Gov. Pete Wilson moved to placate concern that denial of medical care could create a public health crisis. In his successful bid for reelection, Wilson had made immigrant bashing a centerpiece of his campaign. With the passage of 187, he issued regulations for its implementation, including a proviso modifying the stringent curb on medical care. Obviously contradicting the content of 187, the governor's regulation stipulates that medical services deemed necessary to ensure public health shall continue to be available "independent of citizenship or immigrant status." This presumably would cover immunization programs and treatment of contagious diseases.

Since passage of 187, publicly funded clinics have reported a dramatic drop in the number of patient visits. Some also report increased visits since the court order was issued.

## Capitalist politicians divide

Passage of Proposition 187 has not ended the rift it created within the Republican Party. Former presidential cabinet members Jack Kemp and William Bennett, who had called for a "no" vote on 187, continue to blast Gov. Wilson on the issue. Both are conservative Republicans. They demand that Wilson tone down his anti-immigrant rhetoric, which they see as a threat to their party's future. Lambasting the governor, Bennett declared, "He's scapegoating, dammit, and he should stop doing it." The problem with 187, Bennett argued, is that "it's superficially attractive, but it doesn't solve anything."

Meanwhile, the courts have begun determining the constitutionality of 187. This process was kicked off with a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and other opponents of the measure. They won an initial temporary restraining order barring enforcement of all the provisions of 187 except for the one that stipulates stiffer penalties for those convicted of marketing or using false identity papers.

## Attempt to bar children from schools

Federal judge Mariana Pfaelzer is slated to decide December 14 if the temporary restraining order is to be replaced by a preliminary injunction. Unless overturned by a higher court, such an injunction would remain in effect until the constitutionality

of 187 is finally determined.

The most blatantly unconstitutional clause in 187 bars undocumented children from attending public schools. A 1975 Texas law banning undocumented children from public schools was struck down by the Supreme Court, which held that all

who undertake legal challenges to the measure. Glenn Spencer, a leading promoter of 187 now pushing the recall threat, declared, "We have people flooding across our borders with a very high fertility rate and a very low educational level." The day after 187 was approved, the Los Angeles



Militant/Harry Ring

Teacher at Los Angeles march October 16 protests proposition requiring educators and health workers to report anyone "suspected" of being undocumented immigrant.

children have a right to public education.

In considering 187, the courts will weigh the Wilson administration's plan to draft implementation regulations, which would, in effect, rewrite legally weak sections of the proposition.

## Threats to begin recall campaigns

Sponsors of 187 have threatened to initiate recall petitions against elected officials

City Council voted 10-3 to challenge its legality. With the recall threat, the council members folded like the proverbial accordion, voting 9-5 to seek "clarification" of the legislation, as opposed to trying to overturn it.

While many immigrant workers from Asia and the Pacific islands are equally endangered by 187, supporters of the proposition have primarily focused their propa-

ganda on the big Latino population in Los Angeles County and nearby areas.

Data derived from the 1990 census showed that 3.3 million Latinos live in Los Angeles County. They constitute 40 percent of the local population and a far larger percentage of its workforce. Nearly 1.8 million are immigrants. The census estimate is that less than 20 percent are undocumented. The largest number of Latino residents are from Mexico, with many also coming from El Salvador, and other Central American countries. Immigrant workers — with and without papers — constitute a powerful social force here. This was demonstrated by the protest actions that were organized during the pre-election fight against Proposition 187.

## 70,000 march for immigrant rights

There was the stunning turnout of 70,000 people, mainly Latino workers and students, for the October 16 "No on 187" march. It was the largest immigrant rights demonstration ever and undoubtedly the biggest social protest of any kind that the city has seen.

Building for the demonstration sparked massive walkouts by junior high and high school students in the weeks before the vote. On a single day, more than 10,000 high schoolers left their classrooms to march and rally against 187. Walkouts by garment workers and protests by truck drivers also occurred.

Since the election, there has been much discussion among students and workers about the passage of 187 and what can be done to continue the fight against it.

Immediately after the vote was in, several demonstrations took place. Students at the University of California in Los Angeles rallied at the campus medical center to demand that 187 not be enforced. A similar action occurred at Glendale City College.

A demonstration is now set for December 9 to demand no enforcement of 187. The action will be at 4:30 p.m. at the downtown federal building. It is being organized by the Pro-Immigrant Mobilization Coalition, a group that has organized a number of immigrant rights demonstrations during the past several years. It initiated the October 16 march, which was then embraced by the broader forces that brought out the huge turnout.

# Clinton to end Salvadoran refugee status

BY BRAD DOWNS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Clinton administration is preparing to end a program that offered a temporary refugee status to tens of thousands of Salvadorans who fled their homeland during the 1980s.

During a 10-year civil war, in which Washington spent millions propping up a dictatorship, at least half a million Salvadorans entered the United States. Although many were fleeing widespread human rights abuses by the Salvadoran army and U.S.-trained death squads, the vast majority of these refugees were denied political asylum. Several lawsuits revealed that the proceedings were biased because of U.S. policies that deliberately understated the terror of the Salvadoran military.

Some 200,000 Salvadorans were first granted "Temporary Protected Status" in 1990 under legislation that allowed them to remain in the United States and work legally but did not advance them toward permanent residency as immigrants. The Clinton administration now argues that Salvadorans no longer need protection in the United States because the political situation in their country has stabilized since a truce in 1992 ended the civil war.

A diplomatic cable sent by U.S. embassy officials in San Salvador last June noted that the \$840 million in remittances sent home by Salvadoran workers in the United States is essential income for the stability of the country, far surpassing the sales of El Salvador's largest export, coffee. The embassy officials argue that because most of the remittances go to regions devastated by the civil war, a significant reduction "would be economically disastrous for these areas. In fact, it would probably lead to increased illegal immigration

to the U.S."

An end to temporary status would have a wide impact on the estimated 1 million Salvadorans living in the United States. "The effects would be immediate and overwhelming if all these people are denied legal status," said Saul Solorzano, director of the Washington office of the Central American Refugee Center.

About 20,000 of the 100,000 Salva-

rans who live in the Washington, D.C., area would be affected by the Clinton administration moves. Many Salvadorans have lived in the United States for more than a decade and their families often include legal residents and U.S.-born children.

Brad Downs is a member of United Auto Workers Local 239 in Baltimore.

# Activists in Miami speak out in defense of immigrant rights

BY PHOENIX KENDRICK

MIAMI — "Let's make Proposition 187 our tool. We must join with others in a national demonstration against this law and to defend immigrant rights," urged Herman Martinez, a Salvadoran immigrant rights activist at a Militant Labor Forum here recently. The meeting drew 35 people.

The speakout brought together activists involved in the defense of immigrant rights and others to discuss the impact of the new California law and how to organize a response to this attack on undocumented workers.

"If they have it in California today, tomorrow they will try to have it in Florida, then everywhere," explained Luc Sanon, a Haitian refugee previously interned at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo in Cuba.

Many at the meeting were encouraged by the big turnout at protests against Proposition 187 in California and were among those that helped to organize an action in Florida to defend immigrant rights.

"The protest by thousands in Los Ange-

les October 16 and the protest here in South Florida on the same day show what we have to do," said Orlando Yanez of the Farmworker Association of Florida.

"Both the Democratic and Republican Party politicians seek to scapegoat immigrants for the crisis of capitalism, blaming them for 'stealing jobs' and undercutting wages. These ideas are aimed at dividing workers and driving down the wages of the working class as a whole," added Carlos Rosero of the Socialist Workers Party.

Other speakers also addressed the issue of blaming immigrants for the economic and social problems that working people face today. Elizardo Bascosy of the Antonio Maceo Brigade noted that the aim of the new law was to turn immigrant workers and their children into modern-day slaves by denying them access to education.

Yanez said, "It is a challenge for us to fight this law. They are trying to turn us into the scapegoats. We need to invite Haitians, Cubans, Mexicans, and others to join in the struggle."



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# 'Cuba will never return to capitalism'

Continued from front page

matter how many blows the progressive movement, the revolutionary movement, and the socialist movement have suffered."

Cuba "will never return to capitalism," Castro insisted.

"We'd rather perish than renounce our principles. We'd rather perish than renounce socialism!"

## Not everyone agrees

Castro's sharp condemnation of capitalism brought several standing ovations and repeated applause from most of the 3,500 people present. More than a few in the audience were not pleased with his speech, however. Some walked out in the middle of the presentation.

One Cuban participant, who was clearly not happy with Castro's remarks, told the *Militant* after the event that the Cuban leader "did not seem to grasp the kind of audience he was addressing."

While everyone who spoke at the meeting opposed the U.S. economic and trade embargo against Cuba, some of the participants did not agree with the Cuban president's unambiguous defense of socialism. Instead, they favored lifting the embargo as a way to rapidly open up the Cuban economy to the capitalist market.

Castro's speech concluded the five-day international event that began November 21. By the last evening of the gathering, 3,072 delegates from 109 countries on six continents had registered.

The conference was a show of solidarity with the Cuban revolution, unprecedented since the late 1960s. More than half of the delegates were members of local or national Cuba solidarity organizations. Participants also included several hundred trade unionists and representatives of political parties, nearly 150 members of parliament, and a few dozen other government officials.

Cuban leaders Ricardo Alarcón, president of the country's National Assembly; Carlos Lage, executive director of the Council of Ministers; and Roberto Robaina, Cuba's foreign minister, addressed the plenary sessions in the first two days and took part in the discussion. Castro, along with most other members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba, were part of the presiding committee and participated in the plenary sessions.

Sergio Corrieri, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), opened the meeting on behalf of the 52 Cuban organizations that called the conference.

Some 100 delegates took the floor during the plenary and spoke about politics and Cuba solidarity activities in their countries, among other topics. Dozens more addressed proposals for coordinated international actions in defense of Cuba during three workshops, which took place the third and fourth days of the meeting.

Delegates met with neighborhood Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, with leaders of the Federation of Cuban Women, and with Cuban journalists, writ-

ers, and artists. They also visited a construction site, a farm, recreational installations, the University of Havana, and other places, where they had a chance to exchange experiences with Cubans.

"The [U.S.] blockade became the central point of discussion at the conference," Castro said in his closing speech. "But, in essence, what is the blockade? It is not just Washington's prohibition of any kind of trade between the United States and our country, be it commerce for technology,

ther embargo nor blockade. It is war! An economic war that is not waged with such tenacity against any other country in the world," he said.

"The blockade, however, is not the totality of the U.S. economic, commercial, and financial activities" against Cuba, Castro noted. He pointed to Washington's illegal occupation of the naval station at Guantánamo Bay as a dagger aimed at the heart of the revolution. "The powerful empire is not just near us, it is inside us," he said.



Delegates from many countries at Havana conference in solidarity with Cuba snapped up books on Pathfinder table. Titles by Che Guevara were in great demand.

machinery, food, or medicines."

The U.S. economic embargo means Washington wields its economic and military power to exert pressure and make it extremely difficult for other governments and companies to sell anything to Cuba. It also results in the virtual cutoff of any commercial or financial credits for Cuba, Castro said, forcing Havana to pay cash in hard currency for any imports.

"They euphemistically call it an embargo, we call it a blockade. But it is nei-

"We haven't just had to bear the effects of the blockade since the revolution triumphed," Castro said. He detailed U.S.-organized assassination attempts against Cuban leaders, mercenary attacks and sabotage on Cuban soil, and the introduction of chemical and biological viruses that have destroyed crops and affected the health of thousands of Cubans.

"There isn't a single weapon, a single resource that the U.S. government has not used against our country to destroy our

revolution," he stressed.

These policies of aggression by Washington "are accompanied by an incessant campaign of lies and slanders against our country to justify their crimes," Castro said, "carried out mainly under the banner of human rights."

The Cuban president took the offensive, rejecting Washington's definition of human rights and answering the lies about Cuba.

Castro castigated the racist use of the death penalty in the United States, which is imposed mainly on workers who are Black or Latino. He pointed to the recent passage of the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California as a violation of human rights, "denying health care and education to the children and families of undocumented workers in what once used to be Mexican lands."

"And what has been the foreign policy record of Washington, of this so-called champion of freedom and human rights?" Castro asked. He then took nearly half an hour to detail the history of U.S. military interventions in the last half century and Washington's innumerable alliances with "the most repressive and bloodthirsty regimes that have ever existed on the face of the earth."

## Can't ignore Washington's crimes

"How can we forget the propping up of a puppet regime in south Vietnam and Washington's genocidal war against the people of Vietnam?" Castro asked. "How can we ignore Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the totally unnecessary use of nuclear bombs?... How can we forget the decades-long alliance by the U.S. government with the apartheid regime in South Africa?"

The Cuban president explained how the White House orchestrated the overthrow of the government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954 and the regime headed by Salvador Allende in Chile nearly 20 years later. He laid bare the training and financing of the former military regime in Argentina that was responsible for the disappearance of at least 15,000 political prisoners in the late 1970s.

Castro explained the U.S. role in organizing the contra war against the Nicaraguan revolution in the 1980s and Washington's support to the death squads of the dictatorship in El Salvador during the same period, which took the lives of tens of

## Pathfinder sales exceed expectations

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

HAVANA, Cuba — "I must have this," said Petrus, a mine worker from South Africa, picking up a copy of the book *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs. The book was just about to be packed into boxes by the team of volunteers from Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom who had been staffing a book table during the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba,

held here November 21-25. "You can be sure this book will get around mine workers where I live," Petrus added, "as will the other books I've bought this week. I've bought at least one every day."

In addition to Pathfinder books and pamphlets, volunteers sold copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* and subscriptions to the *Militant* and its sister publication in Spanish, *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Petrus was part of the 29-member delegation from South Africa. "We have started to organize actions in defense of Cuba," said Khalima, another miner, "and we've taken the opportunity of being at this conference to arrange to visit miners in Cuba." Many in the South African delegation visited the table, buying a variety of books.

### Mural draws attention

A large number of conference participants had never before seen any of the displayed literature. A focus of much discussion was a mounted poster of the Pathfinder Mural, a giant outdoor painting on the side of the Pathfinder building in New York that depicts revolutionary leaders throughout history and around the world, as well as the efforts to get their ideas into the hands of fighting workers and youth. All five copies of the Pathfinder Mural poster taken to the event were sold the first morning.

"Sales were beyond our expectations," said Jonathan Silberman, a volunteer from Manchester, England, who is a member of the Engineers Union. "We sold over 130 books at a value of \$1,675." Delegates purchased another 25 books for pesos the last

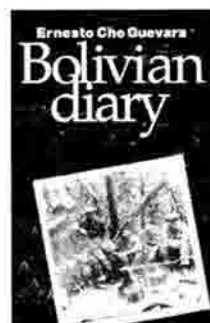
day.

In greatest demand were books by Che Guevara. Participants bought 20 copies of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara* and 13 copies of the English and Spanish editions of the issue of *New International* entitled "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism."

Many conference participants spent time at the table discussing Guevara's ideas. Silberman was invited to give a brief presentation, in English and Spanish, on the recently published *Bolivian Diary* and other editorial works of Pathfinder. The presentation was organized during the lunch break on the final day in the area that held the dozens of stands. After Silberman spoke, participants snapped up the five copies of the *Bolivian Diary* that remained on the book table.

There was also considerable interest in books by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. Sales included a copy of Pathfinder's newly published Russian-language edition of Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*. "I must have that book," said a Cuba solidarity activist from Bulgaria who visited the table many times. He had first come across Pathfinder books at the European Conference in Solidarity with Cuba held in Havana a year ago. "Last year I bought Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* and books by Che Guevara. This year I'm having the *History of the Russian Revolution* and Trotsky's *Art and Revolution* too," he said.

Seven people at the gathering bought subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and 12 to the *Militant*. The new subscriptions will be going to countries in five continents, including six to Brazil alone.



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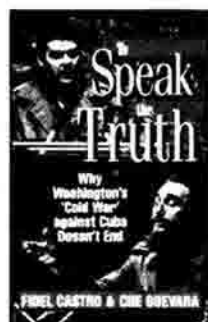
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thousands of workers and peasants.

Members of the audience shouted out the names of more and more countries. "And what happened in Uruguay?" Castro asked. "And what happened in Brazil? Who supported the military regimes that tortured, assassinated, or 'disappeared' people? Who intervened in the Dominican Republic during the Caamaño rebellion in the 1960s? Who invaded Grenada? Who invaded Panama? The 'champions' of freedom, the 'champions' of human rights."

In contrast, Cuba never tortured, "disappeared," or assassinated a single political prisoner, Castro said.

The convincing indictment of U.S. imperialist aggression the world over drew repeated applause from the audience.

#### Difficulties of 'special period'

Beginning in 1989, the abrupt end of aid and trade at preferential prices with the disintegrating Soviet bloc regimes triggered a serious economic crisis in Cuba that has included plummeting industrial and agricultural production and extreme shortages of food, fuel, and other basic necessities — a time span Cuban revolutionaries refer to as the "special period." At the same time, Washington has intensified its efforts to starve the Cuban revolution into submission.

"We now have to face a different world from when the revolution triumphed in 1959," Castro stated. "We have had to adapt to this world and adopt a series of measures we consider indispensable to confront this crisis."

Over the last 18 months the Cuban government has legalized the possession and use of U.S. dollars; introduced or raised rates on electricity, water, sewage, and other services; opened up markets for sale of agricultural goods and some industrial products at unregulated prices; and signed a multitude of joint ventures to attract capitalist investment in tourism, oil and mining, and other areas.

These measures, aimed at combating inflation and increasing production, have led to growing social inequalities. During the special period, phenomena like prostitution and begging by children, which the revolution had virtually eliminated, have begun to reappear, Castro said.

"Yes, unfortunately you can see some cases, or rather some tendencies, develop because of the economic difficulties and the opening of the country to greater contact with the capitalist world; you can see some prostitutes reappear. We don't deny this," Castro said. "But we struggle against this, we don't tolerate or legalize prostitution."

In today's conditions there is no way to increase agricultural and industrial production without such economic measures, the Cuban president said. "We can't have any development without capital, technology, and markets," Castro emphasized.

"Our goal is to save our independence, our revolution — because the revolution is the source of everything — and the conquests of socialism," Castro said, "in order to move forward in building socialism when the conditions in the world permit it once again."

#### 'We will never capitulate'

"Some people tell us that the blockade could be lifted if we capitulate, if we renounce our political principles, if we renounce socialism and the democratic forms we chose," Castro noted.

"When we helped the revolutionaries in Central America," he continued, "the North American masters told us they would lift the blockade if we stopped that aid, but the idea never even crossed our mind. On other occasions, they floated the trial balloon that they would consider lifting the blockade if we stopped our aid to Angola and other African countries, but it never even crossed our mind to negotiate our relations with other countries."

"While we make changes today, we will never renounce our independence and sovereignty," Castro insisted.

"We make changes without renouncing the true principle of a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, which is translated in revolutionary language to a government of the workers, for the workers, and by the workers — not a



# SOLIDARIDAD

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Some 3,000 people from more than 100 countries took part in the world solidarity conference in Havana, which called for international coordinated activities in defense of Cuba in 1995.

government of the bourgeoisie, for the bourgeoisie, and by the bourgeoisie; not a government of the capitalists, for the capitalists, and by the capitalists," the Cuban president said to prolonged applause.

The working class around the world would suffer an immeasurable blow if imperialism succeeded in destroying the Cuban revolution, Castro said in concluding his speech.

Addressing himself to the delegates present, Castro reiterated, "For that reason we expect a lot from the struggle you have decided to join us in waging to defeat the blockade, to defeat the hostility against our country, to defend hope for humanity."

#### Solidarity activities

Before Castro's speech the delegates adopted by acclamation a program of nine points outlining international activities in defense of Cuba. Corrieri, president of ICAP, presented the general accord to the delegates on behalf of the presiding committee, as a synthesis of the proposals that came from the three conference workshops.

The conference proclaimed 1995 an international year of struggle against the em-

bargo as well as a commemoration of José Martí, Cuba's national hero, who was killed in battle against the Spanish colonialists on May 19, 1895.

Delegates called for international coordinated protest actions in defense of Cuba on October 10, which coincides with the anniversary of the initiation of the struggle for Cuban independence from Spain in 1868.

The conference proclaimed October 10 as an international day in solidarity with Cuba. At that time, the United Nations General Assembly, which has passed resolutions condemning economic sanctions against Cuba for the last three years, will again be discussing the question of the U.S. economic embargo. Two of the workshops made proposals for a march at the United Nations in New York on October 10, with major international contingents organized by solidarity organizations from around the world.

In addition, the U.S. delegation of nearly 300 people presented a written proposal that was discussed at all three workshops. It called for international participation in the next Friendship caravan of material aid to Cuba, scheduled for July 1995,

and for a week of coordinated actions in defense of Cuba April 1-8.

"In as many different cities and locations as possible, a range of educational activities would be organized: forums, teachings, public speeches, film showings, distribution of educational materials, etc.," said the proposal distributed to all the delegates. The week is to culminate with protest actions organized in several cities, calling for an end to the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

Major elements of the U.S. proposal were incorporated in the final program of actions and U.S. delegates met following its adoption to discuss its implementation.

"In the next few days, Cuba, which is blockaded and slandered, will be excluded by the government of the United States from the Miami summit," said the final declaration the delegates adopted. The meeting of government representatives from the Americas is being organized by Washington in Miami December 9-11.

"But this conference," the declaration underlined, "where only a tiny portion of the immense wealth of humanity is represented, demonstrates that Cuba is not alone."

## Cuban-American opponents of revolution meet in Miami over opposition to embargo

BY FRANCISCO PICADO

MIAMI — Under the theme "For Cuba, for change, and for national reconciliation," more than 1,000 people took part in a conference on Cuba here November 19-20. The event was organized by Cuban-Americans who, although opponents of the socialist revolution in Cuba, are also against the current U.S. policy towards the country.

These forces believe Washington's campaign against Cuba will not bring about "democratic" changes peacefully, and that it causes hardship for Cubans on both sides of the Florida Straits.

Among the most prominent backers of the gathering were Cuban Change (Cambio Cubano), an organization that favors a peaceful transition to capitalism in Cuba; Francisco Gonzalez Aruca, owner of the travel agency Marazul Tours; Marcelino Miyares, a television producer from New York; Angel Fernández Varela, a Miami based banker; Nicolás Ríos, editor of *Contrapunto* magazine; and Rafael Huguet, a businessman also based in Miami.

Practically every major figure associated with organizing the event has taken part in activities in opposition to the Cuban revolution. Many served time in Cuban jails and some, like Marcelino Miyares, are publicly known to have been on the CIA's payroll.

Sponsoring organizations included the Support Group for the Reconstruction of Cuba, the Association of Cuban Professionals and Entrepreneurs, Pro-Man Foun-

dation, the National Commission of Independent Unions of Cuba, Human Rights in Cuba, Civic and Popular Alliance, the Ecologist Movement, and others.

One of the keynote speakers was Congressman Charles Rangel, who recently sponsored a bill in opposition to the current U.S. embargo against Cuba. Without giving details, Rangel said he had been threatened before coming to the event and was forced to request the special assistance of the U.S. Secret Service to assure his safety. "Why is it that people who have been speaking out in Miami, people who have been fighting the dictatorship in Cuba, have to become heroes," Rangel said. In response to those that support the embargo, he said that an "easier way to get democracy is to talk with trade, capitalism and trade."

#### Want right to do business in Cuba

Many speakers, especially those from the professional layers in the Cuban community in Miami, as well as some capitalists, used the platform to demand respect for their democratic right to have different opinions about the future of Cuba. They want to have the right to do business in Cuba and are opposed to the right-wing forces that for many years have used violence to control politics in Miami.

Xiomara Almanger-Levy, representing the Cuban American Defense League, said it was important to protect first amendment rights. She made reference to a November 16 report from America's Watch that reit-

erated their previous findings about the difficulties in having a diverging point of view in Miami. "This is the only city that has been investigated in the United States," she said. "We must work towards making Miami part of the rest of the United States instead of the banana republic that it is today."

"What is the alternative faced by us Cubans?" asked Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo, president of Cuban Change. "Either the necessary changes are made or we run the risk of watching the last great hope to construct the new republic. The necessity to advance a peaceful revolution on the island imposes itself."

Gutierrez Menoyo, once a supporter of the Cuban revolution, served time in jail in Cuba after invading the island as part of an armed counterrevolutionary group.

Although the Cuban government has taken some important steps, stated Menoyo, "as a legitimate opposition we aspire, ask for, and demand more." He proposed an all-inclusive dialogue that "recognizes the right to property" in a process that "could end up at its proper moment in a broad institutional and democratizing transition."

Menoyo referred to the so-called Cuban Democracy Act as a "coward law" that aims to encourage an uprising and treats Cuba as a colony. He also called the U.S. economic embargo "immoral" and "unjustifiable." However, he echoed calls to turn the embargo into a "bargaining chip" to bring about changes in Cuba.



# Mark Curtis files new legal challenge to frame-up trial

BY JOHN STUDER

DES MOINES, Iowa — On November 7 union and political activist Mark Curtis filed legal papers with the U.S. Federal Court of Appeals in St. Louis challenging his 1988 conviction on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

"Petitioner Mark Curtis has been actively involved with the Socialist Workers Party, Young Socialist Alliance, and labor union movements," the appeal begins. It was filed by prominent Des Moines attorneys William Kutmus and Jeanne Johnson.

In addition to the defense campaign waged by union members and political activists worldwide, Curtis has, from the beginning, challenged his legal conviction. This has included filing papers for a new trial and two state appeals, and petitioning for relief on habeas corpus before a federal district court judge. Each of these challenges has been rejected. The current appeal argues that the most recent federal court setback should be thrown out and a hearing ordered to debate the violations of Curtis's constitutional rights and overturn his conviction.

In addition to Curtis's political and legal fight to win his freedom, the issues raised in his federal appeal address fundamental political rights — the right to due process, the right to confront one's accusers, and the right to defend oneself without undue restraint by the courts — that are of broad importance.

The appeal reviews the facts. Curtis was arrested and brutally beaten by the Des Moines police after he participated in a meeting on the night of March 4, 1988, to protest the arrest of 17 of his coworkers at the Monfort meatpacking plant. Curtis spoke out "in Spanish to urge the union to take the lead in defending those arrested," Curtis's lawyers state in the appeal.

The appeal argues that Curtis's conviction violated his constitutional rights because the judge presiding over the case refused to instruct the jury that they could find him not guilty because he had an alibi. Witnesses at the trial showed, without being challenged by the prosecution, that Curtis was in a local bar and restaurant with them discussing the fight against the arrest of their coworkers at the time the attack allegedly occurred.

This is especially important, the brief states, because the prosecutors presented a weak case against Curtis. There was no physical evidence to connect him to any assault. The alleged victim's "initial description of the height of her assailant (5'6") did not match the Petitioner, who is over six-feet tall. She testified that during the assault the Petitioner unbuckled his belt, and at the time of his arrest the Petitioner was not wearing a belt nor was a belt found at the scene.

"The clothing she described the attacker was wearing was different than the clothing worn by Petitioner. She testified that the floor of the porch where the assault occurred was dirty with leaves and dog hair, and that she and her assailant wrestled around on the floor. Traces of dirt, debris and dog hair were found on [her] clothing, but no such debris or dog hair was found on Petitioner's clothing." The young woman "also testified that her assailant had smoker's breath, and Petitioner was not a smoker."

The jury deliberated for three days. An affidavit presented after the trial showed that four jurors were not convinced Curtis was proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. One juror stated in the affidavit that "she did not believe that petitioner was

guilty of the crimes, and that she did not know that a mistrial would have resulted if she had persisted in her belief that the State had not proven its case.

"An alibi instruction could have provided those jurors with the legal basis for maintaining their belief that Petitioner was not guilty," Curtis's lawyers explain.

The appeal notes that Curtis's conviction violated his constitutional rights because he was prevented from presenting evidence that he was targeted by the cops for his union and political activity.

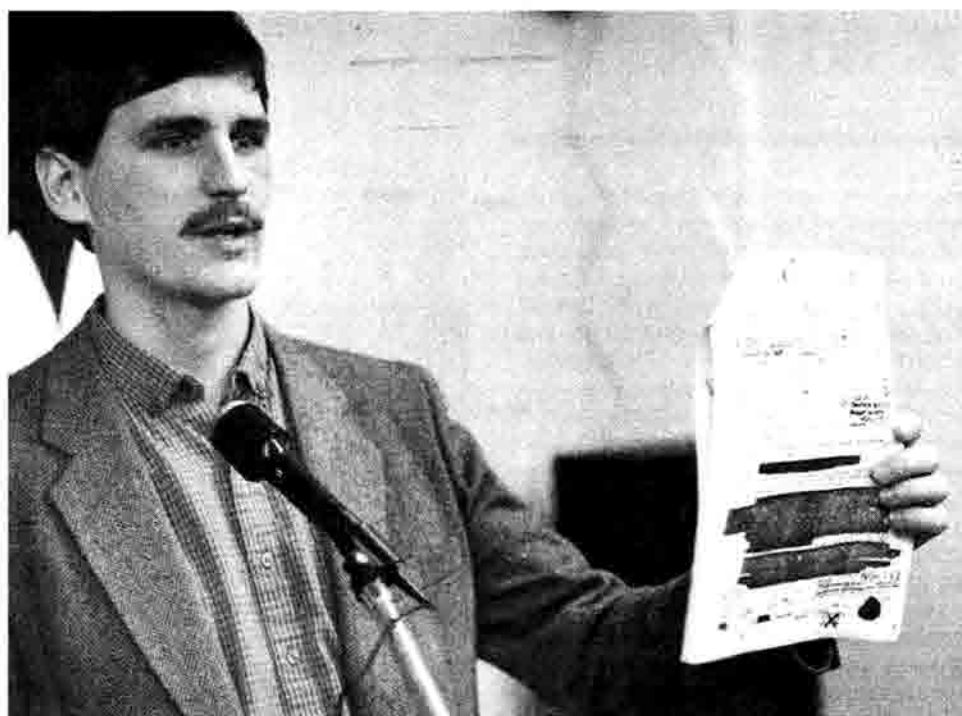
Curtis was barred from introducing the following evidence:

"1. The Petitioner was beaten and suffered serious injuries at the hands of Des Moines Police Officers Wolf and Dusenberry at the Des Moines City Jail after Petitioner's arrest, and that Officers Wolf and Dusenberry called Petitioner a 'Mexican lover, just like you love those coloreds' at the time of the beating, indicating official knowledge of Petitioner's activist work;

"2. The Petitioner and several political and activist organizations of which Petitioner was a member, had been subjected to surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

"3. The alleged victim's father, Keith Morris, had attacked and caused significant property damages to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee headquarters at the Pathfinder Bookstore, and that the Polk County Attorney declined to prosecute Mr. Morris."

The appeal points out that Curtis "sub-



Militant/Stu Singer

Mark Curtis in 1988, exhibiting FBI files on his political activity. During trial later that year, the judge ruled that FBI spying could not be admitted as evidence in Curtis's defense. New legal appeal challenges this violation of his democratic rights.

sequently prevailed in a federal civil rights action, which held that the police officers were liable for injuries Petitioner suffered in the beating."

As for Morris's attack on the bookstore and defense committee office, police records show that Morris "told police officers that he was going to the bookstore to 'kick ass' and the officers took no action," state Curtis's attorneys.

The appeal charges that Curtis's basic rights were violated in the trial because he was prevented from cross-examining the central state witness against him, arresting officer Joseph Gonzalez, about the fact that Gonzalez had been disciplined for lying and manufacturing evidence in a previous case.

In a closed session with the judge and

the attorneys, "Officer Gonzalez admitted that he had been suspended for lying in the course of a police matter," the appeal says. "The jury should have been allowed to hear that evidence and use it to weigh the credibility of this witness."

Pointing to these violations of Curtis's rights, and others that occurred during the trial, his lawyers argue that "said errors denied Petitioner's constitutional rights to a fair trial." They ask that the appeals court reverse the ruling of Judge Charles Wolle and order a hearing to be held on Curtis's challenge to his conviction.

For more information on the campaign to win Curtis's freedom, contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311, or call (515) 246-1695.

## USAir steps up concession demands

BY EDWIN FRUIT AND DAVE WELTERS

PITTSBURGH— USAir, the nation's sixth largest airline, is demanding \$500 million a year in concessions from its union workers. The company says this means "permanently reducing employee pay and benefits to levels more consistent with the competition."

USAir is threatening to take the company into bankruptcy if it doesn't get its way. The airline has lost \$2.4 billion since 1988 and projects a 1994 deficit of more than \$350 million. Although USAir has significantly higher costs than its competitors, workers' wages are comparable to those at Delta, United, and American. Even so, the company is insisting on steep wage cuts.

In an effort to convince workers to tighten their belts, USAir president Frank Salzonni told a meeting of employees last summer, "Even if we sell every seat from now until December 31 we won't be able to make a profit."

USAir says the only way it can survive is to save \$1 billion a year for the next several years — \$500 million in givebacks from the unions and \$500 million in restructuring and other cost-saving measures. Following the USAir crash outside Pittsburgh September 8 that killed 132 people, management demanded the unions quicken the pace for negotiating concession packages.

The severity of the Pittsburgh crash, which followed closely another USAir accident in Charlotte, North Carolina, last July, has focused media attention on the company's safety record. A number of capitalist papers have published articles spotlighting blatant safety violations at the airline and questioning whether the safety problems at USAir are linked to cost-cutting measures. There is also concern among travelers that the company is short-circuiting safety for the sake of profits.

USAir has launched a multimillion dollar advertising campaign to assure travelers that it runs a safe airline.

For the most part, top officials who head the various unions at USAir that represent mechanics, flight attendants, cleaners, ramp workers, and food service workers and the pilots association are going along with the company's concession demands.

At one point the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) proposed that all the unions take a 20 percent wage cut in exchange for a 25 percent stake in the company and seats on the board of directors.

### USAir not in giving mood

USAir is not interested in an employee stock ownership plan and turned the pilots down. The company has also largely succeeded in turning the Association of Flight Attendants (AFA), Transport Workers Union (TWU), and International Association of Machinists (IAM) officials against the pilots, instead of against the concessions. Carol Austin, president of AFA at USAir, told the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* October 8, "We say they [the pilots] have an ability to pay and we are not going to follow their formula."

Workers at USAir are debating back and forth what to do in response to the company's takeback demands. A mechanic at the Pittsburgh terminal here with more than 25 years at the company said, "We can't really do anything. There'd be no public support for us if we decided to strike. The company would just use replacement workers." A younger mechanic thought differently, "I'm not giving them anything. All they'll do is come back for more," he said. In discussions on the job many mechanics, who are among the higher-paid workers at USAir and are covered by a "no-layoff" clause that supposedly makes their jobs secure, have expressed more willingness to make concessions.

Because of concessions accepted by the unions in previous contracts cleaners hired since 1993 start at \$3.40 an hour less than previous new hires. Any reduction in pay and benefits puts them at half the salary of coworkers doing the same job. "I can't afford a 20 percent pay cut when I'm barely making \$8 an hour," one said. "What guarantee do we have that the company won't declare bankruptcy anyway and then I'll have to go up even more."

Fleet service workers, baggage handlers, and caterers recently voted to join the IAM, increasing the membership from 8,000 to nearly 16,000 at USAir. But the company has yet to sign a contract that covers these workers and they have suffered some of the hardest blows in the past three years. Full-time positions were elimi-

nated for workers hired in these classifications after 1986 and part-timers were forced to pay their own family medical coverage.

Fleet service workers get no paid holidays and a new sick leave and vacation policy was implemented restricting days that could be used. On Thanksgiving Day in Pittsburgh a chalk outline of a body was drawn on the floor of a baggage area with "holiday pay" written across it.

"I voted union to get back what I lost," a baggage handler said in response to the company's demands. "We can't give up any more." Others see the situation as hopeless. "We're damned if we do and damned if we don't," said another baggage handler. "If we take concessions they can still go under. And if we say no, then we're out of a job."

### Company gets help from friends

The company's drive to make the workers bail out USAir is getting plenty of help from the big-business press. After the third-quarter losses of \$180 million were announced, the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* editorialized against union workers. As USAir's losses mount the need for employee concessions becomes clearer, the paper said. "For either side to remain intransigent in the face of this latest deficit statement would be recklessly irresponsible."

Union officials at USAir are telling members that concessions are necessary to keep the airline from going under.

Earlier in the fall, USAir got the agreement of British Air and Warren Buffet, two of its primary investors, to accept delayed payment for preferred stock. This was with the understanding that USAir could wring substantial concessions from its workers.

Speaking at a District 141 airline conference this past October, IAM international president George Kourpias said, "We don't want to be in the business of owning companies. But we'll do whatever is necessary to save jobs."

The IAM has called special membership meetings for early December to discuss proposed changes in the union contract.

Edwin Fruit and Dave Welters are members of IAM Local 1976 at USAir in Pittsburgh.

### SUPPORT MARK CURTIS!

Mark Curtis is a framed-up union and political activist imprisoned in the Iowa State Penitentiary. He is currently in lockup in the prison's segregation unit for one year, victimized while organizing a campaign to fight for his release on parole.

FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO:  
MARK CURTIS DEFENSE COMMITTEE,  
BOX 1048, DES MOINES, IA 50311,  
TEL: (515) 246-1695; FAX: (515) 243-9869.



# Kmart workers walk out in N. Carolina

BY ROBERT DEES  
AND M.J. RAHN

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — "No contract, no peace!" roared several hundred members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Local 2603 at a mass picket outside the Kmart distribution center here November 22. Third shift workers walked out of the plant together chanting, with most joining the picket line.

"My boyfriend and I sat up all night discussing what to do today. I said I can't afford to miss work. He asked me could I afford to keep working for these wages? I didn't know until I got here what I was going to do," remarked one new employee as she signed a union card and joined the picket line.

The union is maintaining picket lines 24 hours a day. Before the strike 50-60 truckloads of merchandise were shipped out every day. The first two days of the strike, several dozen trucks were seen coming and going. In reality, however, many of these trucks were empty, as production was effectively crippled by the strike. Workers who crossed the picket line at first, but then joined the strike, report that only one truck was loaded during second shift the first day of the walkout and none on the second day.

"Workers are being fired unjustly; workers are being harassed," said striker Governor Spencer on the picket line. "They single out certain employees and just get on them and get on them," said Mike Hassell. "They have even been monitoring certain



Members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union on strike at Kmart in Greensboro, North Carolina, have turned away truckers at the picket line.

people with cameras."

"One guy was fired for 'lack of job performance' but it was really because he was a union man," said Larry Lawson, a member of the union's Justice Committee, which organizes the local's activities. "They want to deal with you on a one-to-one basis," added a woman who works in

merchandising. "They don't want to deal with you as the union."

Bad working conditions, low pay, and a severe attendance policy resulted in such a high turnover that the company had to hire 1,400 workers to keep 450 jobs filled in the first two years after the facility opened in March 1992. Originally, workers could

not miss more than eight hours for virtually any reason. Now, even after making probation no employee can miss more than 40 hours in a year. Hundreds have been fired under this policy.

Kmart floated rumors threatening to shut the center and arbitrarily fired several union supporters when the organizing drive began. These tactics failed to intimidate the workers. Supervisors then intimidated that a \$2-an-hour wage increase would be in the offing if workers voted against the union. Nevertheless, the union carried the vote by a two-to-one margin in September 1993.

"The company and the union have been at the bargaining table for over a year and have reached no agreement on contract language or economic benefits. Instead, the company has chosen a campaign of harassment," said Ernest Bennett, ACTWU's assistant regional director.

Leading up to the strike, a number of in-plant activities were organized. "On Wednesday we had a 'prayer meeting'" in the break room, said Joe Craddock, who works in maintenance. "Several shifts came in at the same time and we just stayed there. It was a right long prayer, too." In the final weeks before the strike a majority of the first and second shifts in the shipping department was won to the union.

"A lot of the temps stayed out," said striker Billy Key. "They stopped, we talked to them, and they stayed out. And a lot of the temps who went in sympathize with us. They don't like the conditions in there either."

One way Kmart tries to divide the workforce is by hiring large numbers of temporary workers. Union members estimate that 80 percent of the workforce respected the picket line the first day of the strike. Some of the workers who crossed the picket line reported to strikers that the mood inside is glum. Hourly wages at the facility range from \$6.75 to \$8.50, considerably lower than the \$10 to \$13.65 an hour Kmart pays at distribution centers in Georgia and Kansas. The union is pressing for a substantial raise. After some 15 months of negotiations, the company made an outrageous wage offer — a 5-cent raise. Only workers with more than two years on the job would be eligible.

According to ACTWU officials, the Teamsters union has pledged to honor the picket line here. A delegation from Teamsters Local 391, which organizes UPS and other drivers in this area, joined the picket line for several hours the first day of the walkout. "People are keeping a close eye" on the strike, said Hassell. "If we can break Kmart, a major corporation, it will open a lot of eyes and ears. This will be a stepping-stone, a breakthrough."

*Robert Dees is a member of ACTWU in a textile mill in North Carolina. M.J. Rahn is a member of ACTWU Local 2603 on strike against Kmart.*

## Some GEC-Alsthom strikes settled in France

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS — Workers lifted their month-long occupations of GEC-Alsthom plants in Bourgne and Belfort November 24-25 after a controversial vote organized by union officials. The two plants employ 7,400 workers.

Meanwhile, the strike for higher wages by 200 workers at the Franco-British company's transformer plant in Petit-Quevilly, near Rouen, entered its third week. Strike actions over demands for higher pay are also taking place in several other Alsthom factories throughout France.

A government-appointed mediator submitted a "final" proposal to management and the unions November 19. Earlier in the day 10,000 unionists and their supporters held a spirited demonstration in support of the strike in Belfort. The workers were demanding a \$280 (US\$1=5.35FF) monthly raise for all workers, no wages under \$1,400 a month, and that all temporary contract workers be hired as permanent employees. Alsthom bosses proposed raising the wages of only the 650 lowest-paid workers by \$40-\$60 per month, a one-time bonus of \$95-\$280, and hiring one-third of the temporary workers. They then broke off negotiations.

The mediator proposed a \$95 monthly wage increase for the 150 workers earning less than \$1,300; \$75 for the 500 earning less than \$1,400; \$40 for the 2,500 workers receiving under \$1,600 a month; and \$20 for the 1,000 workers with monthly wages under \$1,775. This covers a large majority of production workers. Other employees would receive no wage increase. All workers would receive a one-time bonus of \$280-\$375. A profit-sharing plan would be negotiated for future years.

GEC-Alsthom accepted the proposal "despite its unreasonable character." The three unions representing production workers — the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), and Workers Force (FO) — organized a vote on the contract by the entire workforce, including engineers and executives, on November 23. The proposal was approved by 54 percent of those voting. However, a large majority of the production workers, who had carried the strike, voted against it.

In this confusing situation the strike pickets refused to leave the gates for two days. One young picket explained on national television, "The vote was clear. A majority wants to continue the strike. You can't count the votes of executives, who earn between \$3,000 and \$30,000 a month, on whether to end a strike over wages."

But the fact that the ballot, as it was organized by the union officials, produced a vote for a return to work, broke the momentum of the strike. The numbers of workers in favor of continuing the fight quickly dwindled. The strikers decided to end the occupation of the factories November 24. The following day, although many were embittered by the outcome of their

struggle, workers marched into the Bourgne gas turbine plant in a disciplined fashion with heads high, right where the conflict began October 24. Work is to resume at the Belfort factories November 28.

Meanwhile, workers in other GEC-Alsthom plants in France are continuing their struggles. At Petit-Quevilly workers are blocking access to the plant by all trucks, night and day. They have collected nearly \$10,000 from workers in nearby factories to aid their fight.

The 600 workers at the GEC-Alsthom plant in Creusot occupied their plant November 22 to demand a monthly wage increase of \$140. At Tarbes, in the Pyrenees mountains, workers at an Alsthom plant of 1,100 began turning away all trucks November 24. According to news reports, both these strikes were lifted November 25 when management agreed to negotiate. However, a walkout at the Macon plant in Burgundy was growing. Actions are also being taken by workers at GEC-Alsthom plants in La Courneuve, Le Havre, Saint Ouen, and Aytze.

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

## Cops face off against rubber workers' rally

BY RUTH NEBBIA

DES MOINES, Iowa — Members of the Iron Workers Union, International Association of Machinists, Communication Workers of America, United Auto Workers (UAW), and others joined striking members of United Rubber Workers Local 310 at a rally here November 23.

The protest began as a drive-by demonstration organized to coincide with the time that replacement workers leave the plant. A similar event had brought traffic around the factory to a near standstill the previous Friday. This time police and sheriff's deputies from Des Moines and bordering towns blocked access to the road in front of the plant, allowing replacement workers to drive out.

About 45 strikers and their families lined the north gate, shouting at replacement workers as they exited the plant. Others stood on both sides of the street and the road median at the main gate down the street. "There's a lot of kids who aren't going to have Christmas because of you," a few shouted. Some replacement workers drove out waving their paychecks.

Police in riot gear faced off against the strikers and their supporters for about 40 minutes, forcing them into the parking lot of a convenience store across from the plant. "Union, Union" and "Scabs out, Union in!" the more than 200 people gathered there chanted.

Paula Gomez said that her father worked at the plant for 27 years and got cancer "from working with the stuff in there." Her brother has 21 years at the plant and her husband had been working 50-70 hours a week there before the strike. "I want my

husband to go back [to work] but not 12 hours a day, 6 days a week," she said.

A worker who is a member of UAW Local 450 at the John Deere plant outside of town said that recent tire shipments from Firestone have been of poor quality and that Deere had recently rejected 87 tires worth \$600 each.

Harry, who has worked at Firestone for 27 years, noted that this was a bad time of year to be out of work. "People are getting angry and frustrated," he added.

A former Firestone worker who left after 18 years was at the convenience store as the police moved in. "The cops are agitating people into a confrontation," he said.

As she watched the cops surround the store parking lot, Norm Thilo, who has five years at Firestone and is from Thailand, added, "I've never seen anything like this."

Some strikers tried to talk to the police in an effort to appeal to them as unionists.

Area unions have organized collections for the strikers, including at the John Deere plant where \$3,200 was collected, at Maytag where \$1,000 was collected, and at Fawn Engineering. All three plants are organized by the UAW.

*Ruth Nebbia is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431 in Des Moines.*

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# Unionists stage march

Continued from front page

explained that the event aimed "to demonstrate the continued determination and willingness to fight for justice" in the face of the bosses' and Decatur city government's attempts to bust the unions. The union members used the march to bring attention to their demands for the right to maintain picket shelters at struck plants.

Bill Casstevens, UAW Secretary-Treasurer, greeted the marchers as they reached Illiopolis, Illinois, the midway point from Decatur to Springfield. In Peoria the day before, Casstevens announced that a judge had recently ruled against Caterpillar on the first four of 107 unfair labor practice complaints issued by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

The judge ruled that the company had violated the law in 25 of his 31 findings, and ordered Caterpillar to "cease and desist from discharging, suspending, or otherwise discriminating against employees because they engage in union activity." He also ordered the company to pay back wages to 23 workers who were illegally suspended in York, Pennsylvania, and to reinstate Denny Rohrbaugh with back pay. Rohrbaugh was fired for distributing union literature at the York plant.

After further proceedings a three-person panel will vote on the judge's findings. The NLRB must go to the United States Court of Appeals to have its decision enforced. Caterpillar is appealing the ruling.

## Unionists discuss strategy

In Illiopolis, marchers and supporters set up a campsite to discuss plans for the next stage of the fight.

Local residents donated fuel for heating and lighting the area. The heated parish hall was also made available to marchers.

UAW member Gary Shewhart, who marched the entire 43 miles, said he joined the protest because, "Union and nonunion workers deserve a decent living."

"The longer we sit stagnant, the more people get depressed," Rodger James Walker, a striking rubber worker from Decatur, said. "The more we stay active and fight, the stronger we are. Even if we do something wrong, we have to do something. Marching to Springfield shows we are still determined people who are not willing to roll over."

Marchers were met by two busloads of auto workers and supporters from Peoria who joined the last stages of the event with a banner that said, "Union busting doesn't play in Peoria." In addition, Peoria unionists loaded into 20 cars and vans to make the trip to Springfield.

Strikers were also joined by members of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, many on their lunch break; members of the Service Employees International Union; Teamsters on strike against Overland; members of the United Mine Workers of America; as well as students and other activists. The now more than 500 demonstrators went right into the Capitol rotunda.

Art Dhermy, a member of the bargaining committee for the Staley workers, opened the rally. "We are here for justice, for fair and equal treatment," he said. "Picketers get arrested for lawful action, while companies commit murder and get a slap on the hand... That's a crime. We're here today to fight crime." Dhermy was continually interrupted by boisterous chants of "Solidarity!" and "No justice, no peace!"

To loud chants of "Injury to one, injury to all. Victory to one, victory to all!" those that had marched the 43 miles were asked to come to the front. In addition to union speakers, Jesse Jackson addressed the rally. State representative Monique Davis also spoke at the event.

Following the speeches, participants — chanting "Workers united will never be defeated!" — marched to the second floor to demand to see Gov. Jim Edgar. They were refused entry to his office. They then held an impromptu rally outside. Some workers then went to the third floor Senate and House chambers. Sitting in the balcony, they continued to chant "We want Edgar" and "We are the people, we are the leaders." More than 50 workers camped out at the capitol overnight, demanding to see the governor in the morning. Some of them were arrested but are now out on bail.

# MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

## FLORIDA Miami

**Cuba: The Fight to Defend the Socialist Revolution.** Speakers: Ernie Mailhot, participant at World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba, member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, and member of the International Association of Machinists; others. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54 St. Donation \$3. Translation into French and Spanish. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

**The 1994 Elections and the Deepening Anti-Working-Class Policies of the Democrats and Republicans.** Panel discussion, including representative of the Socialist Workers Campaign. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54 St. Donation \$3. Translation into French and Spanish. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

## IOWA

### Des Moines

**A Working Class Response to 'The Bell Curve.'** Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Avenue. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

**Labor's Stake in the Fight to Defend Immigrant Workers.** Speaker: Ruth Nebbia, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431. Sat., Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Avenue. Donation \$3. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Report Back from World Meeting in Solidar-**

**ity with Cuba.** Speakers: Participants at November 21-25 conference in Havana. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

## MINNESOTA

### St. Paul

**'The Bell Curve' Controversy: A Working-Class Answer to the Myth of Racially Determined Intelligence.** Speaker: Doug Jenness, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Avenue (east side of Route 280, on 16A bus line). Donation \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Philadelphia

**Defending the Cuban Revolution: Report Back from the World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba.** Speaker: Wendy Lyons, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South Street (at the corner of 19th and South streets). Donation \$3. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

### Pittsburgh

**Race, I.Q., and Politics: An Answer to 'The Bell Curve.'** Speakers: Mark Ginsberg, professor of education at the University of Pittsburgh; Leroy Hodge, civil rights attorney; and Sandi Sherman, political activist. Sun., Dec. 11, 7 p.m. William Pitt Student Union, Dining Room A, University of Pittsburgh. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

## Forum discusses: Myth of race, a response to the 'Bell Curve'



Forty-five people participated in a discussion of Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein's book *The Bell Curve* at a Militant Labor Forum in Atlanta November 20. The forum attracted students from Atlanta University, Emory University, and Georgia State University; workers from the Ford assembly plant here; and others who saw publicity for the event.

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## AUSTRALIA

### Sydney

**Report from Havana World Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba.** Speaker: Bob Aiken, Communist League candidate in NSW 1995 election, member, AWU-FIME. Tue., Dec. 13, 6 p.m. NCOSS (Old Children's Court) 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation \$4. Tel: 02-281-3297.

## CANADA

### Toronto

**Frame up of Roger Warren.** Speaker: Susan Berman, *Militant* correspondent covering Warren trial and member of CAW Local 1285. Sun. Dec. 11, 4 p.m. 827 Bloor Street West. Donation \$4. Tel: (416) 533-4324

### Vancouver

**Yellowknife Frame-up Trial. The Fight Against Union Busting from Yellowknife to Port Alberni.** Speaker: Ned Dmytryshyn, member IAM Lodge 692, just returned from Yellowknife where he covered the trial of Roger Warren for the *Militant*. Sat., Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main Street (at 23rd Ave.) Donation \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

## NEW ZEALAND

### Auckland

**The Cuban Revolution and World Politics.** Report back from international conference in solidarity with the Cuban revolution held in Havana November 21-25. Speaker: Eugen Lepou, Communist League. Sat., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

**Anarchism and Socialism — Lessons from Revolutionary Struggles.** Speaker: James Robb, Communist League. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

### Christchurch

**Health Care is a Right!** Speakers: Koa Saxby, Coalition For Public Health; Jo Walmsley, Nurses Association; Ruth Gray, Communist League. Sat., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

**Perspectives for the Fight for Maori Rights.** Speaker: Annalucia Vermunt, Communist League and Young Socialists. Sat., Dec. 17, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

# CALENDAR

## 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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Good he reminded us — "We're not operating the Ritz Carlton," declared a Texas prison board member, commenting on the board's decision to ban smoking in state prisons. That apparently in-



Harry Ring

cludes a last smoke for death row inmates.

**The mayor's from New York?** — In a letter to an English-language Athens paper, a U.S. im-

migrant to Greece complained to the local mayor about the city dumping garbage in a neighborhood park. The mayor told him not to fret, that in America they build parks on top of garbage dumps. Also, the mayor suggested, if he wanted the park cleaned, he should do it himself.

**Try this one on your local dealer** — Looking for a piece of the action in developing a Chinese market for "people's cars," a Ford company spokesman declared: "From the beginning Ford has adhered to the vision of serving working people."

**Could well be** — The feds are looking into M&M's advertising

claim that its Kudos Granola bar is "lower in fat than ever," neglecting to mention that it has been shrunk in size and has more fat than other leading bars. A company spokesman responded, "I think we are exactly following the guidelines."

**His very first?** — Fighting a corruption indictment which could put him behind bars, ex-Congress member Dan Rostenkowski says he's exhausted a \$1 million campaign fund, and still owes lawyers half a million. In fact, after serving 18 terms in the House, the Chicago Democrat asserts that he's looking for a job.

**How about one for officials?** — In northern California's Contra

Costa County, officials are proposing that welfare applicants take mental tests.

Those who flunk, they assert, would not be disqualified, but would be offered psychological help. Those who decline to submit to the test would be denied welfare for up to six months

**And these are the good times** — "Business is booming all across the major industrial centers of the Midwest...companies are running at top speed, hiring temporary workers, demanding overtime of employees and straining to meet deliveries." — News item.

**Life in the ivory tower** — Last year, the chiefs at the University of

Pennsylvania, Boston University, and Amber University drew the top wage among college presidents, "earning" a combined total of \$2 million.

**Small can be beautiful** — In case you wondered, Amber University occupies a two-story building in Dallas, Texas. It offers business and counseling courses, week nights and Saturdays. An official said the prexy's fat paycheck is in lieu of a pension.

**And hire your own teachers?** — Three campuses in the University of California system said they will require freshmen to provide their own computers. This will add up to \$1,500 to bone-crunching tuition fees.

## Black conference discusses 'state of the race'

BY SAM MANUEL AND KEN MORGAN

BALTIMORE — A "Town Meeting" attended by some 500 people opened the National State of the Race Conference held here November 17-20.

Conference organizer Ron Daniels explained that the gathering was called by many of the participants in the African American Leadership Summits held in Baltimore over the summer. The meetings, attended by prominent Black political figures, were initiated by former NAACP executive director Benjamin Chavis.

Several Democratic Party politicians, including Jesse Jackson, California congresswoman Maxine Waters, and Congressional Black Caucus head Kweisi Mfume, who were scheduled to speak at the conference, did not attend. Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan also did not attend, supposedly on the advice of his "security aides."

The conference plenary and workshops consisted mostly of panel presentations. Throughout the conference, participants complained that little time was left for discussion. Many presentations focused on crime and youth violence, and the need to develop Black businesses for economic development.

### Republican victories

Several of the panelists made reference to the recent Republican election victories. "Some say that nothing has changed with the Republican victory," Daniels said in his opening address to the conference. "But our people know that there is a crisis."

"The election results were a wake-up call," exclaimed Maryland state legislator Salima Siler Marriott.

Several speakers felt compelled to take a stance in support of forming an independent Black political party, but no proposals were made for a step in that direction.

Chavis was introduced to rousing applause. "Disunity" is the main impediment to Black liberation, he said. "We let outsiders dictate who our leaders are," he added, in a reference to his ouster as head of the NAACP. Chavis announced that the African American Leadership Summit would reconvene in Chicago, Illinois, December 9-11.

A central theme presented at the conference was the importance of business in the "economic development" of the Black community. "In these times of economic crisis we must provide for our survival. We must be able to build homes, produce food, and provide health care," said Joan Watson of the Detroit NAACP. When asked by a young woman what Blacks in the United States could do for South Africa, Watson answered, "Claim it and own it!" She gave the example of a Black businessman who had invested several million dollars in a South African cable company.

"We need real, corporate economic development," said Bill Merritt of the Black United Fund. The fund has successfully challenged the often exclusive access of United Way to employee check-off contributions at large corporations. Merritt encouraged those attending to ask their employer to check off a donation from their paycheck to the Black United Fund.

"We have a solution to the crime bill and the other problems we face — strong Black entrepreneurship!" a woman from the audience said.

### Crime and youth violence

Some 200 young people, mostly from Black college campuses around the country, attended the conference. For many it was their first national political meeting. While many expressed criticisms of the conference, most thought it was important to have attended.

"There wasn't enough discussion on the issues and there was no clear plan for follow up," one young woman from New Jersey said. "I thought the conference was positive but there should have been more interaction between the youth and adults," said another. "I didn't expect liberation in a weekend," a young man from Detroit said.

Though a workshop on youth was scheduled, many young people organized and participated in a youth caucus, which met concurrently with the conference.

Most of the presentations on youth focused on crime, youth violence, weakening of the family, and the declining educational opportunities for Black youth.

A workshop called "From gang banging to Black liberation" was presented by young gang members who reported on their efforts to reduce gang violence.

"We have got to get our youth to return to our traditional values," said Rev. Calvin Butts of Harlem's Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York. Butts recently led a campaign to ban what he called "jack-legged" rap singers from the radio waves.

### Shift to the right

Several speakers talked about the importance of the older generation of political activists. "We can't make a meaningful contribution to the liberation of our people without the elders who went before us," said the reporter for the youth workshop. On several occasions young people asked permission of the older activists in the room before beginning their remarks.

Presentations and comments by many at the conference reflected the growing hearing that rightist demagogues get among middle-class Blacks. Members of a rightist group headed by Lyndon LaRouche staffed a prominent literature display throughout the conference.

"We should not let the right-wingers

take our issues," said one presenter in the workshop on independent political action. "We are for family values and against killing babies," he added.

Parroting the growing scapegoating campaign against immigrants, Black United Fund leader Conrad Worrill complained, "There is a crisis when you have 800 Arab-owned stores, and Korean and Chinese stores abound in our community."

A sharp discussion ensued on the fight for equality for Black women. While many defended the view that the Black liberation movement must champion equality for Black women, others argued that the "feminist" movement divides women and men and that equality for the race must come first.

Brief reports were made from the 17 conference workshops. They advocated opposition to the death penalty and the crime bill; challenged the dumping of toxic waste in Black communities; called for protests against International Monetary Fund and World Bank exploitation of African and Third World countries; defended affirmative action and expanded health care; and called for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Haiti. No time was allotted for discussion and action on the workshop proposals.



Former NAACP executive director Benjamin Chavis addressed Baltimore meeting, which focused on crime and developing Black businesses.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People  
December 12, 1969 Price 10¢

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Despite heavy rains and a government-created atmosphere of repression, some 40,000 *independentistas* participated in the first national antidraft march held in Puerto Rico. The march, held Nov. 23, was sponsored by all pro-independence groups.

Puerto Rico, a U.S. colony since 1898, has suffered compulsory military service in the Yankee armed forces since 1917, when U.S. citizenship was imposed on all Puerto Ricans, one month before the U.S. entered World War I. Puerto Rican opposition to the draft started during World War II, continued during the Korean conflict, but really gained momentum with the Vietnam War. Hundreds of Puerto Rican youths have been indicted; and one has been sentenced to a one-year prison term and his case is being appealed.

The Nov. 23 march is viewed by *independentista* leaders as a major step forward in Puerto Rico's antidraft movement; it is the first time that all seven *independentista* organizations have battled jointly against a specific form of imperialist oppression.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS  
December 9, 1944  
The streets of Athens ran with workers'

blood as Allied troops sought to consolidate the counterrevolution in Greece.

A hail of machine-gun bullets was the Allied reply to protests of the Greek people against disarming of the resistance forces who had fought Nazi occupation and paved the way for the landing of Allied troops. Incipient civil war was provoked by the Papandreou puppet government backed by the armed might of the British armies of occupation.

Defying a ban of Premier Papandreou, the workers of Athens staged a mass demonstration against the counterrevolutionary policies being foisted upon them. Eye-witnesses give a graphic description of what happened on Dec. 3:

Several thousand persons marched into Constitution Square. "The crowd, carrying flags, was peaceful and was absolutely unarmed. Many carried babies in their arms. Women and children were numerous." As this procession marched into the trap, there were shouts, "Long live Roosevelt," according to the press.

Then as if at a signal, "Greek government police opened fire with machine guns and tommy guns....Crouching behind low walls, lodged on flat roofs and on second floor balconies, police poured thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition into the massed demonstrators...."

"As a second body of EAM [National Liberation Front] demonstrators came down the street, police increased the intensity and range of their fire, using heavier weapons, probably mortars and light anti-tank guns...."

When the police ceased their "wild and savage" firing, 23 dead lay in the streets. More than 150 were wounded. Most of the victims were boys and girls under 18.

### Racism, Revolution, Reaction, 1861-1877

THE RISE AND FALL OF RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION

by Peter Camejo

Describes the challenges facing the Radical Reconstruction state governments that arose throughout the South following the Civil War — ranging from literacy drives to land reform — and the counterrevolution that overthrew them. \$17.95



Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail, add \$3 for postage and handling.



## Defense of Cuba is our fight

Fidel Castro spoke the truth when at a Havana conference he stated, "The root of all these problems is capitalism."

In his November 25 speech to an international meeting in solidarity with Cuba, Castro described a world where billions today go hungry and lack jobs, schools, hospitals, and even a roof over their heads; a world where Washington and other imperialist powers intervene militarily around the globe to protect the profits of the rich. To change this, he said, "an uncompromising struggle against capitalism, against neoliberalism, against imperialism is necessary." As for Cuba, he stressed, "We'd rather perish than renounce socialism!"

This realistic internationalist perspective of struggle is what makes the Cuban revolution attractive to fighting workers, farmers, and young people. And it's why the ruling billionaires in the United States and elsewhere remain irreconcilably hostile toward the Cuban government led by Castro.

"Some people tell us that the blockade could be lifted if we capitulate," the Cuban president remarked, "if we renounce socialism and the democratic forms we chose." That's the nub of the issue. If Cuba began to make the kinds of political and economic concessions being made by the Stalinist regimes in China and Vietnam, Washington might be willing to lift its embargo and open trade with Cuba.

But Wall Street knows the Cuban government is not about to embark on such a road; the revolutionary leader-

ship remains committed to its course of defending the interests of working people.

The U.S. capitalist rulers, far from following an irrational or misguided policy, maintain the embargo because it is in their class interests to try to crush the Cuban revolution. They know that the revolution itself, far and above social advances like free health care and education, is a powerful example of working people transforming themselves and developing a communist political consciousness based on class solidarity and internationalism.

For workers and farmers in the United States and other countries, defense of the Cuban revolution is *our* fight. In defending their socialist conquests, Cuban workers and farmers are fighting for the future of humanity. "For that reason we expect a lot from the struggle you have decided to join us in waging to defeat the blockade, to defeat the hostility against our country, to defend hope for humanity," Castro told the 3,000 delegates at the world solidarity conference.

This gives special importance to every opportunity to organize broad actions against U.S. policy toward Cuba. U.S. delegates at the Havana conference, for example, proposed a week of coordinated protest and educational activities April 1-8.

Another important activity deserving support right now is a January youth brigade to Cuba. Such political activities are crucial in answering the billionaires' lies about Cuba and winning more workers and students to the understanding that the Cuban revolution is their own.

## Working class gets stronger

From California to Washington, D.C., from South Africa to Greece, capitalist forces are scapegoating immigrants for the economic and social problems generated by capitalist depression conditions. Rightist demagogues are seizing on this campaign to promote chauvinist laws like Proposition 187 and other measures against workers born in other countries. This immigrant bashing by the bosses, with its divide-and-conquer strategy, should be strenuously opposed by working-class fighters.

The growing internationalization of the working class within all the industrialized countries is unprecedented in modern history. More immigrants have come into the United States over the past decade than ever before, more even than during the decade prior to World War I. There has also been massive growth of immigrant populations throughout Western Europe in recent decades. These are historic changes propelled by economic necessities.

Capitalism itself is driving the wave of immigration and the resulting changes in the composition of the working class. The "miracle" of the market is forcing the dispossession of rural toilers throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East. It is being accelerated by the worsening economic and social conditions for the majority of peasants and workers in these regions of the world.

Rightists can talk all they want about building trenches and beefing up border posts, about mass roundups and deportations, even about gunning down unarmed workers trying to cross frontiers. But immigration is not going to stop. Democratic and Republican politicians can promote laws to curb and control the immigration flow — but nothing will stop the swelling numbers of workers who will continue to enter the United States and other imperialist countries.

## GATT: a dispute among bosses

Like most trade agreements, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) is a deal worked out among capitalists. Governments negotiated for their own interests and workers had no say in the debate. GATT reflects the relative economic, military, and political weight of the various capitalist classes in the world. It will benefit the strongest capitalists and the dominant industrial powers.

Supporters and opponents of Congressional ratification argued that GATT would either create or destroy jobs in the United States. But the agreement itself will do neither. The owners of the Big Three auto companies, oil barons, mine owners, grain monopolies, and other bosses are the ones who hire and fire workers. Even during the current upturn in the economy, industry is being restructured to squeeze the most from workers' blood and bone.

GATT has the support of a majority of the U.S. employing class because it is to their competitive benefit, pure and simple. Some proponents of the trade deal, like the *New York Times*, made the absurd claim that the agreement "will raise living standards in the U.S. by \$1,000 or more per family." But the families that will profit directly from the trade deal have names like Rockefeller and Kennedy. They will make a bit more than the *Times* predicts.

President Bill Clinton promoted the deal as a great

"liberalization" of world trade. But like all trade agreements it contains a multitude of protectionist measures and contains the seeds of future trade wars between Washington and its competitors in Europe and Asia.

Rightist politician Patrick Buchanan was the clearest voice of the anti-GATT forces, directing his appeal to bosses and workers alike. U.S. capitalists, Buchanan argued, should use their muscle to force even more concessions from competitors in Europe and Asia.

Buchanan also directed a demagogic appeal to workers and the middle class. "Where did all those jobs go that once made America's men of brawn — the boilermakers, packers, steelers, etc. — the envy of working people the world over?" he asks in an October 15 *New York Post* column that feigns concern for the poor. Buchanan points his finger at "free trade ideology" as the culprit, because it opened the door to Japanese and European companies.

Liberal opposition to GATT was draped in the same nationalist cloth. Ralph Nader echoed the right-wing cry to defend the United States — the world's strongest imperialist power — against a supposed threat to its sovereignty. Pro- and anti-GATT voices claimed they wanted to protect so-called American jobs. But the only solution to fighting for jobs is for workers in the United States to join with fellow workers from Europe to Latin America, Asia, and Africa in a common struggle.

## Behind the debate over 'Islamic fundamentalism'

Max Monclair is right on the mark in his letter, printed on the opposite page, replying to reader I.H.Y. on the controversy over the French government's expulsion of students who wear Islamic head scarves. A few other points are worth adding.

I.H.Y., whose letter was printed in the November 28 issue, mistakenly equates high school students who hold

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Muslim religious beliefs with a range of political groupings that are labeled "Islamic fundamentalist," which in turn are all equated with neo-Nazis.

As Monclair correctly indicates, the French government has no right to tell students what to wear or not to wear to school — whether a head scarf, cross, yarmulke, button, T-shirt, or anything else that doesn't threaten the rights of others.

Is the Islamic head scarf a symbol of the second-class status of women? Yes. But the government ban doesn't advance women's rights. It only punishes women for their beliefs, feeds the reactionary campaign to blame immigrants for all social problems — from unemployment to violence — and emboldens right-wing forces, like the neo-Nazis, that assault and terrorize immigrants.

### No world 'Islamic fundamentalist' movement

Moreover, there is no such thing as a worldwide "Islamic fundamentalist" movement. There are a variety of political currents and individuals who identify their beliefs with the Islamic faith.

In many countries there are thousands of individual workers and farmers who are Muslim — or Christian, Hindu, or Jewish — and who, despite their religious views, are engaged in struggles against imperialist oppression and for national liberation. Some, in fact, can and will be won to communism.

There are also a multitude of bourgeois political parties, some holding governmental power, that use Islamic verbiage to justify their pro-capitalist course. They are not much different from other capitalist parties — like the ruling parties in France — that use "secular" arguments to divert workers from a class-struggle course and to justify their anti-working-class policies. In addition, there are some organizations that, using religious demagoguery, carry out physical assaults and assassinations to advance their reactionary political aims.

The approach to all these parties and currents must be determined on the basis of their political actions and course. Calling all reactionary groups "fascist" only prevents clarity. For example, working people should oppose government bans on Nazi groups — because the employers can use those measures to go after working-class fighters. We don't, of course, go out of our way to defend those thug outfits.

However, it is in the interests of the labor movement to defend other victims of government repression, including Islamic groups and others that hold ideas with which socialists disagree. Supporters of the Palestinian struggle, for example, have rightly campaigned to win the release of all Palestinian political prisoners from Israeli jails, including members of the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Hamas. At the same time, Hamas, which advances a pro-capitalist program but nonetheless attracts the sympathy of many Palestinian fighters looking for leadership, must be combated politically by presenting a working-class and internationalist perspective.

### What Washington hates about Iran

All the talk in the bourgeois media and liberal public opinion about the danger of "Islamic fundamentalism" is hypocritical and selective. The U.S. government is a close ally of the monarchy in Saudi Arabia, which uses Islam to justify its reactionary rule. In contrast, Washington raises a hue and cry about the "Islamic regime" of Iran, accusing it of sundry sins. Iran has a capitalist government that is not much different from many others in its attacks on democratic rights and other policies. What the U.S. rulers hate about Iran, however, is that workers and peasants there, despite their pro-capitalist leadership, dealt a powerful blow to imperialism by overthrowing the hated Shah. Imperialism will never forgive the Iranian people for their 1979 revolution, which raised the political self-confidence and expectations of millions of the exploited throughout the Middle East.

Today, the U.S. rulers continue to face a big headache regarding Iran. On one hand, the Iranian capitalists, who came out stronger in the Persian Gulf War, are rivals of U.S. corporate profiteers in their bid for resources and markets in the region. On the other hand, Washington must rely on the bourgeois regime in Tehran to try to suppress — using all its Islamic rhetoric — the struggles of working people there for land, democratic rights, and better living standards. These struggles are growing today in Iran, and deserve close attention and support from workers around the world.

— MARTÍN KOPPEL



# Montreal flour strikers build solidarity

BY ROGER ANNIS  
AND VICKY MERCIER

MONTREAL — Striking workers at the Ogilvie flour mill here report that they are reaching out to unionists in the United States to wage a common struggle.

A delegation of two strikers and one union representative traveled to Decatur, Illinois, November 19 to meet with workers there who are locked out or on strike at the Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone, and A.E. Staley companies. At a November 22 press conference in Decatur, attended by the presidents of all four union locals, the unions announced they would hold further joint actions.

The five Ogilvie flour mills in Canada were purchased by Archer-Daniels-Midland Corporation (ADM) in 1992. ADM is based in Decatur and is part owner of the Staley corn-processing mill. Staley workers were locked out in June 1993 and replaced by scab workers. They accuse ADM, a huge multinational with 13,500 employees worldwide, of being a key player in the conflict.

David Watts, president of United Paperworkers International Union Local 7837 at Staley, told the press conference, "Our Canadian brothers and sisters are here today to expose the myth of ADM as a labor-friendly corporation."

"For the past two years," he said, "ADM has tried to paint itself as neutral in the Staley dispute. But over the past few days, we have learned once again that ADM is no friend of labor and we are preparing to join our Canadian brothers and sisters in the struggle."

## Ogilvie workers take strike action

ADM forced a strike at the Montreal Ogilvie mill in June over many of the same issues that workers at Staley are confronting — elimination of seniority and job security provisions, job reductions through greater use of contracted-out labor, attacks on the right of union representation in the workplace, and other issues. Both companies also imposed grueling 12-hour shifts and a seven-day-a-week operation.

The 116 Ogilvie workers here, members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), have been replaced by scabs. The company has used injunctions and aggressive police and security guard patrols to restrict union picketing.

"We went down to Decatur just to check things out," explained Yvon Gauthier, a striking worker at Ogilvie and a member of the delegation to Decatur. "We were overwhelmed by what we learned. The trip exceeded our wildest expectations."

"In negotiations with ADM, they always tell us, 'This is how things are done in the United States and so this is how we will do it here.' We had no way of knowing the

true story," Gauthier said.

Ogilvie strikers are sending a larger delegation to Decatur to continue to pressure the company to negotiate.

"The only way forward for us is to reach out internationally," Gauthier said. "All of us involved in this struggle, here or in Decatur, are part of the same fight. Only through active solidarity will we be able to win."

Ogilvie workers are also keeping up the pressure locally. Delegations are traveling to regions in Quebec to build solidarity and win support for their fight. The strikers also held a demonstration in front of the struck mill November 16. They were joined by hundreds of delegates to a convention of the Montreal council of CSN unions.

Strikers at the demonstration explained that six replacement workers were recently fired from the mill for demanding better conditions. The workers are forced to put in eight-hour shifts with only a single half-hour break and are paid only \$10 an hour,

compared to the \$15 an hour union members were paid.

As one striker explained, "They want to be treated like human beings. Even though they are scabs they should be treated fairly."

Another worker with 30 years of seniority said the morale of strikers remains strong. He cited the fact that a recent settlement offer from the company was turned down by a higher margin than a previous vote.

Roger Annis is a member of the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union in Montreal; Vicky Mercier is a member of the Young Socialists in Montreal.



Striking Ogilvie workers walk picket lines last August. Militant/Monica Jones

## 'Everything they gave us, they want back'

BY JON HILLSON

WINNIPEG, Manitoba — Barry Domino, local chairman of the United Transportation Union (UTU) here, says that the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CP Rail) has a simple bargaining strategy for its 10,000 UTU-organized employees from Vancouver to Montreal. "Everything they gave us, they want back," the road-freight conductor says.

This is a reference to perks, buyouts, and "protections" the giant Montreal-based carrier offered workers in 1991 in exchange for slashing road crews from an engineer, conductor, and brakeman, to an engineer and conductor only. "Even with all that, the vote was very close," Domino said of the 1991 referendum. "Fifty-two percent to 48 percent. The Winnipeg local voted it down."

That contract expired Jan. 1, 1994. Unionists here knew about the 46-day strike this summer on the Soo Line, the ninth-largest U.S. railroad, which is owned by the Canadian Pacific. They also knew UTU workers on the CP-Soo had a sub-standard contract compared to other U.S. rail workers, noted Stephen Denning, a conductor/engineer who is the UTU's road local chairman.

"We felt the Soo was the weak link in the union," he said. "But we were completely uninformed about the issues of the strike." Domino and Denning took the initiative to learn more about the struggle by attending a picnic and rally in northern Minnesota supporting the Soo Line work-

ers in August. They later joined three carloads of unionists and their spouses, including UTU Local 751 president John Colburn, at a benefit in Minneapolis.

Unionists getting to and leaving work at the Winnipeg terminal here were hungry for information about the status of the Soo Line fight. Many offered solidarity to their U.S. coworkers. "You're up against one mean corporation," a switchperson said. "They may talk nice, but they're not stupid."

The CP sought concessions from the Soo Line workers, including reduction to conductor-only crews in all jobs, increased pay divisions between different generations of workers, and exemptions of work rules for "special customers."

Recently, Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) 225, appointed by President Bill Clinton when the strike ended, issued recommendations for a new contract favoring rail bosses. UTU members are now voting on a tentative agreement reached by union officials and Canadian Pacific.

## Impose concessions in Canada

"What CP Rail wants to do in Canada is impose Soo Line wages and working conditions on us. The Soo Line strike was a testing ground. They wanted to see what they could get down there and bring it up here," Domino said.

"They want to take off all the restrictions on conductor-only jobs in the last contract," said Denning.

"And they want to go conductor-only in

the yard," Domino added.

The CP Rail wage and benefit package, including paid guarantees for furloughed workers and terms for early retirement, are all relatively better than the current national U.S. rail contract and the PEB 225 recommendations.

One element of the last contract that the employers want to extend "is the use of what amounts to seasonal workers, people who aren't protected, who get laid off when the busy season ends, and then get called back a few months later," Domino said.

This concessions campaign against the UTU is not driven by a poor showing by CP Rail, Domino explained. "This last quarter was the best in their history. They always want more."

The Canadian UTU members stressed the need for greater contact between CP workers on both sides of the border. The CP bosses play on the lack of information among its Canadian and U.S. workers on the situations they face, Denning said. "The thing they [CP] fear most is education. We're all in this thing together, we're in the same basket. But they play us against each other if we're ignorant. We have to be informed about what we're doing. We have to do things together, or else when that basket falls apart, we all pay for it."

Jon Hillson is a member of UTU Local 1882 at the CP-Soo Line in St. Paul, Minnesota.

## LETTERS

### Islamic head scarves

I would like to respond to the letter by *Militant* reader I.H.Y. in the Nov. 28, 1994, issue ("Islamic Fundamentalism"). I think it is wrong to assume that because the *Militant* correctly opposes the French government's ban on Islamic head scarves in schools that it is "falling into the line of defending...Islamic fundamentalism."

These are two different issues.

The heart of the French government's overall "anti-Islamic" campaign is an effort to scapegoat immigrants, particularly those from predominantly Islamic countries, for the current social and economic crisis there.

This is a feature of every imperialist nation's attempts to grapple with the decaying systems they govern. In France, the government has targeted Muslims especially because of the specter of "Islamic fundamentalist terrorism."

Wearing head scarves poses no threat to anyone, and not every Muslim woman or girl who wears one is necessarily a fundamentalist. If a group or current wishes to express a point of view, that, in and of itself, is not a threat, whether they are Islamic fundamentalists,

neo-Nazis, or the Christian Coalition. Anti-working-class ideas need to be answered in debate, not by shouting them down or banning them. When those movements begin to take action against the working class, then sanctions against those actions become appropriate.

I.H.Y. is correct in pointing out that governments that embrace Islamic rule, like those in Afghanistan and Iran, are thoroughly capitalist, and even pro-imperialist.

This is not a function of Islam, though. Groups like the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan and the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria use religious demagoguery to mask a reactionary agenda in order to convince working people and the middle class to go along with their plan. They are fighting a cultural war there, as are rightist forces in the United States.

The task of working people and their organizations is to expose and answer the right-wing agenda hiding behind the religious facade, and to confront those actions which these currents carry out against the working class. This, not



banning head scarves or reactionary organizations, is the only way to defend the working class.

Max Monclair  
Omaha, Nebraska

### National anti-187 actions

On November 15, following an open discussion panel on Califor-

nia Proposition 187, approximately 35 concerned Swarthmore students gathered to discuss their options for action against the proposition and other concerns over "the tide of xenophobia" in the United States. Kevin Keenan, president of the Swarthmore Civil Liberties Society, initiated the dis-

cussion by reporting that he had been in contact with students from Georgetown University and the Claremont Colleges, who were also beginning to organize. He suggested the potential for a national student movement against 187, including simultaneous protest rallies in Sacramento and other major student centers on December 10.

The newly formed Coalition Against Xenophobia arrived at a platform statement. They declared their opposition to Proposition 187 on the grounds that it is inhumane and counter-productive. They denounced "all forms of racism, scapegoating, and xenophobia" and identified themselves as a "multi-ethnic, international, and non-exclusionary" group of students. Coalition Against Xenophobia Swarthmore College Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

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.



## Quebec gov't halts hydro project

BY ROGER ANNIS

MONTREAL — Many of the Cree and Inuit Indian people who live in northern Quebec are celebrating a provincial government decision to postpone indefinitely a hydroelectric project along the Great Whale and Little Great Whale rivers.

"The project is on ice for quite a long time," said Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau, leader of the Parti Québécois (PQ) government, at a news conference November 19.

"It's certainly a great victory for the environment, for common sense, and for the Crees," said Bill Namagoose, executive director of the Grand Council of the Crees. "Now that the threat to the land has been alleviated, it's time for the Crees' right to self-determination." Some 12,000 Cree and 6,000 Inuits live in the region.

Parizeau said the previous government had overestimated the demand for electricity in coming years. Hydro-Quebec, the government-owned utility that was to undertake the \$13 billion project, does not have a market for the 3,000 additional megawatts of electricity that it would produce.

The decision to indefinitely postpone the project is a political defeat for capitalists in Quebec, although most big-business spokespeople favored the decision.

A pillar of their economic strategy has been the development of huge electricity projects to give energy-hungry industries — like aluminum and manganese smelting — low costs and a competitive advantage. The power plants have also been able to reap big profits through selling electricity surpluses to markets in the United States.

### Market slows for electric power

However, as a result of the depression in the capitalist economy and the growing availability of cheaper sources of energy, markets for electricity are not expanding. In 1992, the New York Power Authority canceled a multi-year \$13 billion contract with Hydro-Quebec for these reasons.

At the same time, the strategy of providing below-cost electricity to capitalists in certain industries has taken some blows. In 1992, manganese producers in the United States successfully sued for stiff import duties against one manganese producer in Quebec, Norwegian-owned Norsk Hydro. The Cree exposed a secret sweetheart contract for cheap electricity between that



Children at 1991 protest opposing Quebec government's plans to build hydroelectric facility along the Great Whale and Little Great Whale rivers in northern Quebec.

company and Hydro-Quebec.

The Cree used the experience of an earlier hydroelectric project in their territory along the La Grande River during the 1970s and 1980s as a powerful argument against the new project. The La Grande, or James Bay 1, project left a legacy of unemployment and deep social problems in the area.

The new project would involve the construction of a series of dams along the Great Whale and Little Whale rivers, which flow into James Bay. The dams would flood close to 1,500 square miles of land.

As happened at La Grande, the flooding would destroy the habitat and migratory patterns of bird, animal, and fish species and would poison the waters with mercury by leaching ethyl mercury into the floodwaters — a natural process whenever rock formations such as those in northern Quebec are permanently flooded. The Cree and Inuit earn their livelihood from hunting, fishing, trapping for furs, and tourism.

Robert Mainville, a lawyer who worked with the Cree throughout the Great Whale battle, told the *Montreal Gazette* he was "absolutely taken aback" by the depth of opposition among ordinary Cree to the

Great Whale project when it was first announced. A lot of Cree leaders and businessmen wanted to go along with it, he recalls. "But it was the people who said no." They didn't want a repeat of the La Grande experience.

### Cree appeal for support

The Cree decided not to focus opposition to the project in the courts. Instead, they appealed to people in Quebec and the United States, where the electricity would be sold, to help them stop it. They spearheaded an international fight that won support from environmental groups, human rights organizations, and from many working people.

Even groups that did not support the campaign were influenced to question the project. Officials of the Quebec Federation of Labour, for example, who supported the Great Whale project from its inception in 1989, failed in their attempt to have a resolution in favor of the project adopted at the organization's convention in 1992. Delegates pointed to the environmental impact and the huge cost.

The Confederation of National Trade Unions, the second-largest union federation in Quebec, welcomed the postponement

of the project for the same reasons.

Many of the environmental consequences of Great Whale are too complex for scientists to accurately predict. Two days before the postponement was announced, a government panel set up to review Hydro-Quebec's assessment of the environmental impact of the project concluded that the utility's studies were inadequate in almost all areas. Hydro-Quebec has already spent more than \$250 million on the project.

### Racist campaign

The Parti Québécois government also found it politically useful to postpone the project. It sought to cut short growing difficulties it faced in its quest for a "sovereign" Quebec. The PQ wants a new, pro-capitalist constitutional arrangement with the rest of Canada that would give greater powers to the Quebec government. The Cree campaign became a political embarrassment because it pointed to the hypocrisy of pro-sovereignty forces who refuse the right of self-determination to Native people.

To help recoup his government's political losses, Parizeau kicked off a new round of attacks on the Cree at his news conference. Commenting on a speech by Cree leader Matthew Coon Come at an academic conference in Washington, D.C., the previous day, Parizeau said, "I deeply deplore the fact that Mr. Coon Come has chosen to insult me and all of Quebec.... This campaign of systematic denigration of Quebec, most times unjust, and sometimes frankly harmful, must stop."

Parizeau was responding to a speech where Coon Come condemned the policy of successive Quebec governments for using "racist double standards" in its treatment of Natives. "The notion of extinguishment of aboriginal rights now stands condemned as an outdated colonial and racist practice," Coon Come said.

The premier's cue was picked up by capitalist figures across Quebec, who have intensified race-baiting attacks on the Cree and on Native people in general. Bernard Landry, deputy prime minister of Quebec, called on the Canadian government to conduct an inquiry against Coon Come and possibly lay criminal charges.

Responding to the attack, Coon Come said, "Insinuating that I consider him, and by extension all Quebecois people, as racist, Mr. Parizeau is sidestepping the real issue, which is the policy of discrimination against us. He is trying to pit the people of Quebec against Native people."

In recent years, some Native leaders have undermined the self-determination struggle of Native people by opposing the right of the Quebecois to freely decide their own future, including sovereignty, and siding more and more openly with the Canadian government in its drive against such rights. Cree leaders have often been in the forefront of this reactionary stance.

### Fight will continue

Cree and Inuit opponents of Great Whale will continue their fight in the coming months because the environmental review process, which is a legal precondition for any hydroelectric project, has not been canceled. Parizeau did not rule out the possibility of restarting the project in coming years.

Louis Egeren of the Grand Council of the Crees said, "In the past, Hydro-Quebec has used the environmental review studies to get around potential opposition to their projects by conducting them many years in advance of actual construction. That way they can receive permission to build before real opposition has a chance to develop."

"The Great Whale project will only be dead when the environmental review process is ended."

Roger Annis is a member of Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 841 in Montreal.

## Workers take strike action in Greece; union tops push anti-immigrant views

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Several strikes hit Greece recently as the government of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu prepared to announce the 1995 austerity budget and plans to restructure some state industries. These skirmishes take place as labor actions in Greece are at their lowest level in recent years.

More than 600 Olympic Airways workers occupied the runway of the Athens airport for several hours November 22. Olympic's management, the government, and the European Commission are on the verge of implementing a restructuring plan to make the airline profitable at the expense of the workers. The program calls for wage freezes and cuts in the workforce. Inflation in Greece is more than 11 percent a year.

The civil service union organized a 24-hour strike two days later, demanding a 17 percent wage increase. Several hundred union members rallied in Constitution Square in central Athens to publicize their demands. Some 2,000 state technical college professors have also taken strike ac-

tion to press for a 35 percent wage increase over the next three years.

Construction workers called a 24-hour strike November 24. Some 500 construction workers marched to the Parliament building behind a banner that said, "European contractors want to import Asian labor and impose Taiwan conditions in Greece." The union is demanding lower real estate taxes, subsidies for mortgages, and a clampdown on foreign undocumented workers. Immigrant workers now constitute a large portion of the workforce in the industry. The president of the Construction Workers Union of Athens gave a speech at the demonstration attacking immigrant workers.

### Debate takes place on immigrants

In discussions during the rally many of the workers echoed the anti-immigrant arguments of the union officials who organized the action. "Look, I'm not a racist," said one worker. "But we want to prevent foreign Asians from taking our jobs."

"Why just pick on the Asians? You got Poles, Turks, and Albanians," added an

older worker. "Throw them all out!"

A small crowd began to gather around the discussion. "You can't just go in and beat them up," one construction worker said. "We should call the police to remove whoever is illegal."

"You guys are just doing the boss's bidding," interjected a younger worker. "These people are not to blame. The bosses are just trying to divide workers."

"The Albanians and the others are being treated here just like Greeks were treated in Germany in the past. So we should understand the situation and not allow this to happen to them," added another construction worker.

Others also joined in the discussion. "What if we demanded that all workers be legalized and given equal rights?" asked a member of the Refugee Solidarity Movement, who was participating in the discussion.

"Then these workers could not be as easily super-exploited and used as cheap labor. Wouldn't that make it harder for the bosses to use immigrants to drive down wages for everyone?"