

THE MILITANT

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S. Africa: mass protests demand workers' rights

Hundreds of thousands march for new labor law



AP Photo/Sasa Kralj

Thousands of workers marched in Cape Town, South Africa, during COSATU-led national day of action on June 19.

BY GREG ROSENBERG

"You have to negotiate in good faith, which is lacking in the business community," said John Gomomo, president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), at a mass march June 19 in Cape Town, South Africa. "We are prepared as a union to build the economy but not at the expense of our people. We demand the Labour Relations Act be passed in parliament this session."

Hundreds of thousands of workers joined marches across South Africa June 19 to demand passage of the legislation, which will wipe out apartheid-era labor

law. COSATU estimated that nearly 500,000 workers joined marches in 27 cities and towns across the country, culminating a two-week mass action campaign. "This massive turnout of workers in support of labour's negotiating position...should make employers realise that the majority of workers will not be intimidated by their bellicose statements and threats," a COSATU statement said.

A South African Chamber of Business official said the impact on business of the half-day protest, for which many workers left their jobs, was "substantial." In a telephone interview from Johannesburg,

COSATU spokesperson Neil Coleman reported that some 70,000 marched in Pretoria, 70,000 in Port Elizabeth, and up to 60,000 in the Indian Ocean port city of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province.

Apartheid labor law codified the super-exploitation of African labor by capital, drastically limiting workers' rights. Through expanding working-class struggle in the past two decades, however, workers have carved out new space to organize politically, and much of this was recognized in the interim constitution adopted just prior to last year's first-ever

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Demonstrations, mass pickets mark year anniversary of Caterpillar strike

BY FRANK FORRESTAL
AND STEPHEN BLOODWORTH

PEORIA, Illinois — Caterpillar strikers are taking to the streets in a series of solidarity actions to mark the one-year anniversary of their walkout against the equipment manufacturing giant. A June 21 rally of more than 2,000 striking members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) and their supporters showed their determination to continue the fight.

The protest, which took place in front of Caterpillar's corporate headquarters here, was the largest show of support for the strike since a demonstration of 5,000 last October in Decatur, Illinois.

Most of the rally participants were Illinois Caterpillar strikers from UAW Local 974 in Peoria, Local 751 in Decatur, Local 2096 in Pontiac, and Local 145 in Aurora. In addition, contingents from other union locals in Illinois and surrounding states attended the rally. These included carloads of UAW members from Navistar in Chicago, from Blaw Knox in Mattoon, from Case in East Moline, and from Crenlo, a parts plant in Rochester, Minnesota. Telephone workers from the Communications Workers of America Local 4214 and a contingent of Kroger grocery workers organized by the United Food and

Commercial Workers Local 536 in Peoria turned out as well.

Despite scorching midday heat, the crowd assembled across from the Caterpillar offices to hear speeches from leaders

of the striking locals and officials of the labor movement.

Jim Clingan, a committeeman from Local 974, introduced the program of speak-

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**HELP THE
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REPORTS**

*from Cuba and
the Philippines*

Dear Reader,

This week we begin featuring eyewitness coverage on discussions and developments in Cuba by *Militant* correspondents Mary-Alice Waters and Luis Madrid from New York and Ernie Mailhot from Miami. A *Militant* reporting team of Marnie Kennedy from Sydney, Australia, and Aaron Ruby from Houston is also bringing our readers on-the-spot coverage from Manila, the Philippines, on the speaking tour of Alejandro Herrera, a leader of Cuba's Union of Young Communists.

Recently reporting teams traveled to Argentina, Brazil, Haiti, and Uruguay to cover events in those countries. These trips make possible

Cuba event discusses Engels, U.S. policy

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA, Cuba — "In 1995 Cuba is commemorating not only the 100th anniversary of the death of our national hero José Martí, but also the death of Frederick Engels," who together with Karl Marx laid the foundations of the modern working-class movement. With that timely reminder, Rubén Zardoya, dean of the School of Philosophy at the University of Havana, opened the Seventh Conference of North American and Cuban Philosophers and Social Scientists here June 13.

The conference is cosponsored in Cuba by the Philosophy Institute, and the Cuban Society of Philosophical Investigation. Sponsors of the North American delegation, which is coordinated by Cliff Durand of Morgan State University in Baltimore, include the Radical Philosophy Association and the Society for the Philosophical Study of Marxism.

In recent years the size of the gathering has been increasing, but this year's conference was substantially smaller than the last one due to increased travel restrictions imposed by the U.S. government in August 1994. Many who wanted to participate did not apply because of the difficulty of obtaining a special license from the Treasury Department authorizing travel for academic research. Among those who did apply, some half dozen graduate students who expected to participate were denied licenses by the U.S. Treasury Department. One journalist with the group was not allowed to board the plane in Miami despite the letters of assignment she had from editors of several publications.

The North American delegation of 33 included three from Canada and one from Puerto Rico.

Over four days, working commissions on topics such as the "Renewal of Marxism," "Democracy, Politics, and Social Justice," "Race, Class, Sex, and Gender," and "Economy and Global Capitalism," discussed more than 90 papers presented by the 200 conference participants. Among the highlights of the conference were the opening plenary session on Engels's contribution to Marxism and a roundtable on U.S.-Cuba relations that closed the working sessions of the gathering.

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the kind of unmatched coverage the *Militant* has been able to consistently provide on Cuba and working-class struggles throughout the Americas and beyond. The cost of these trips will exceed \$16,000, so your generous help is needed. The *Militant* depends on contributions from our readers to make these trips possible. Please send yours today!

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UK court bars miners' strike

The British Court of Appeals June 12 prohibited a series of one-day strikes planned by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) at RJB Mining. The court cited a law that requires a job action be taken within four weeks of a strike authorization ballot. Workers at RJB Mining, which owns most of the coal mines in the United Kingdom, are demanding a pay raise. The company argued that the planned strike was illegal because it would start the day after the four weeks had expired. Union officials say they are urging another strike ballot.

Europe: jobless at 50-year high

The jobless rate in Europe is at the highest level since World War II, according to the *New York Times*. Spain leads the pack with an unemployment rate of 23 percent, while joblessness in France and Italy is hovering around 12 percent. Some 3.3 million workers in France are registered as unemployed as big companies have trimmed the payrolls in their drive for higher productivity. The French automaker, Renault, eliminated 70,000 jobs in the last 10 years. Many politicians claim the joblessness is a result of workers in Europe having higher wages, longer vacations, and better health benefits than workers in the United States.

Workers in Russia demand pay

More than 2,000 workers from Vektor, an aerospace manufacturer, blocked the streets and paralyzed the city of Yekaterinburg, one of Russia's biggest industrial cities, June 13. The workers were protesting that they have not been paid since February. Moscow has failed to pay workers in many enterprises as a result of an austerity drive that it hopes can stabilize the ruble.

Fascists win seats in French vote

The fascist National Front won mayoral elections June 18 in the French towns of Orange, Marinagne, and Toulon. Jean-Marie Le Chevallier of the National Front won a tight three-way race with 37 percent of the vote in Toulon, a city of about 170,000 people. A former National Front candidate won the mayoral contest in Nice, a French Riviera city of 342,000

people.

Marie-France Stirbois, the National Front candidate for mayor of Dreux, lost that race with 39.3 percent of the vote to 60.7 percent for her conservative rival. Stirbois promised to make Dreux "a more French city," scapegoating immigrant workers. "One day the mayor of Dreux will be named Muhammed," she complained to the *New York Times*.

Paris nuke tests hit

Governments in the South Pacific protested Paris's June 13 decision to resume nuclear tests in the region. French president Jacques Chirac announced that his government would begin a series of eight tests to be completed before signing an international test ban treaty. The South Pacific Forum, made up of the small island states in the region, denounced the tests. Chirac showed "flagrant disregard for world and regional opinion," said the group's secretary-general, Jeremia Tabai, based in Fiji.

New Zealand prime minister Jim Bolger announced his government was suspending all defense links with Paris. Australian prime minister Paul Keating said he would freeze all military cooperation with France while the testing takes place. In 1973, the New Zealand government sent a warship to the French test zone in response to nuclear blasts.

Settlers seize land in West Bank

Hundreds of Israeli settlers seized 13 abandoned buildings June 13 in the occupied West Bank to protest the planned withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian towns. The settlers, who call themselves the true Zionists, said the action was the first shot in a new campaign to claim as much West Bank territory as possible while negotiations continue on extending Palestinian self-rule to other areas in the West Bank. What powers Palestinian officials will have — such as control of West Bank water supplies and land use — is unclear. There are about 130,000 Jewish settlers living in the West Bank.



Some 500 garment workers marched in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, June 18 demanding an end to sweatshop conditions and that wage laws be enforced. Many had signed cards to join the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

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Tokyo sets fund for ex-sex slaves

The Japanese government June 14 said it was establishing a fund to aid the estimated 80,000 to 200,000 women from Korea, China, the Philippines, and elsewhere whom the Japanese army forced to be "comfort women" or sex slaves during World War II. This attempt to quell complaints over Tokyo's abuses falls short of the victims' demands. The same day the fund was announced, the upper house of Japan's Parliament squashed a resolution stating remorse for wartime conduct.

Women like Kim Yong Sil, a Korean who at age 13 was picked up off the street and gang-raped by Japanese officers, were forced to have sex with 20 to 30 men a day. Some Japanese officers argued this was "humanitarian," because it supposedly reduced instances of rape. The fund is supposed to pay the former "comfort women" a modest sum and cover their

general medical expenses.

Honduran military to open files

Officials in the Honduran military announced June 14 that they would open the military's records for investigators to examine the fate of opponents who disappeared in the 1980s. Honduras was used as a platform by U.S.-backed forces trying to overthrow the revolutionary government of Nicaragua in that period.

The Honduran government issued a report in 1993 stating that the CIA trained members of Battalion 316, the counterinsurgency unit said to be responsible for the atrocities. The battalion was set up under the command of Gen. Luis Alonso Discua, currently head of the Honduran armed forces. Military spokesman Col. Napoleon Santos Aguilar said the army "will not permit any of its officers to be jailed because of pressure from local human rights organizations."

101,000 fewer jobs in May

Some 101,000 workers were dropped from the payrolls in May, according to a June 2 report from the U.S. Labor Department. It was the largest monthly decline since the end of the last recession in the spring of 1991. In manufacturing, 56,000 jobs were chopped off, affecting nearly all industries. A report from the Federal Reserve stated June 15 that the operating rate of U.S. mines, factories, and utilities fell for the fourth consecutive month, and is now below the May 1994 level.

N.Y. cop corruption charges rise

Corruption charges filed against New York City cops rose 28 percent in 1994, according to a report released June 16 by the police department's Internal Affairs Bureau. The report showed that while corruption arrests by the police department increased sharply in 1994, disciplinary actions, including suspensions imposed by the department, dropped substantially.

In 1994 with a department of 31,000 cops, 141 police officers were arrested on corruption charges, up 48 from 1993. Last year, 161 officers were suspended compared with 204 in 1993. The number of cops testing positive for drugs went up 31 percent over the same time period.

No rules on repetitive injuries

The Clinton administration has dropped plans to issue regulations to protect workers from repetitive strain injuries. Business groups like the National Federation of Independent Business and the National Association of Manufacturers, as well as Republican party politicians, had campaigned against the safety rules.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) says that 700,000 workers suffer from work-related repetitive stress injuries annually. U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay proposed to cut \$3.5 million from OSHA's budget, arguing that ergonomics regulations are too time-consuming and costly for business.

—MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

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S. Africa protests

Continued from front page
nonracial elections.

The working class is seeking to put its stamp on a new constitution — and the new labor law. Progress in doing so will mark a step forward in the formation of a South African nation and the forging of a working class unburdened with the divisions and restrictions imposed under white rule — including the eradication of giant disparities in wages and living conditions between blacks and whites.

COSATU president Gomomo pointed out at a recent forum in Johannesburg that “the recently published Human Development Index revealed that taken alone, the white population of South Africa ranks 19th in the world. The black population, however, ranks 119th, on par with some of the world’s poorest nations.”

A labor bill introduced by Minister of Labor Tito Mboweni of the African National Congress is currently under negotiation between the trade unions, business, and government. A reshaped bill is then to be introduced to parliament. But the employers have remained intransigent in the face of labor’s demands. These include the right to strike, and preventing the employers from having the right to lock out; centralized bargaining; barring the use of scabs; and protection of union rights.

ANC members in government, among others, addressed the marches.

A memorandum addressed to all ANC members of parliament was presented to Trade and Industry Minister Trevor Manuel at the Cape Town march. It stated in part, “As members of parliament and as alliance partners, the role that you play in the negotiations process will be crucial to the success of labor in securing a worker-friendly Labour Relations Act.”

“You know it is our intention to ensure legislation goes through before September 15,” Manuel told the marchers.

Employers complain about protests

South African deputy president F.W. de Klerk bitterly complained that ANC president Nelson Mandela’s appearance at an earlier mass march in Johannesburg June 6 had cast a “dark cloud” over the labor negotiations. “The president pitches up at a mass demonstration by COSATU and associates himself with their action,” he fumed. “With one TV appearance he apparently draws a line through what the Cabinet had decided, places a question mark on the facilitation role that the Government of National Unity [GNU] ought to play, and creates the impression that the GNU has chosen sides.”

The Inkatha Freedom Party opposed the COSATU actions. The liberal Democratic Party said the mass actions were “destroying the prospects of job creation for the millions of unemployed.”

Some employers threw down the gauntlet over the protests. “Mass action is treason — it can be neutralized,” declared Lawrence McCrystal, chairman of the Confederation of Employers of Southern Africa (COFESA). “The expression ‘I demand’ is outdated and a thing of the past,” ventured McCrystal, who postulated, “the damage and uncertainty caused by mass action is in direct conflict with the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Program,” the package of proposals

to rebuild South Africa put forward by the ANC and subsequently adopted by the Government of National Unity. COFESA said it was ready to mobilize scabs. “There are more than 6 million unemployed workers in South Africa who are more than willing to resume production,” the bosses’ association said.

Mapalo Tsatsimpe, coordinator of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in the Carletonville region, reported in a June 21 telephone interview that most miners did not participate in the June 19 marches since they were underground. “We had a buildup,” she said. “There were two actions the week before, and 12,000 miners here marched for the COSATU demands.”

Tsatsimpe had just learned that nearby Anglo-American Corp.-owned mines planned to retrench 5,000 miners over the next couple of months. The giant mining house may lay off up to 32,000 miners throughout the country. The South African economy is reeling from the impact of the world economic depression, which puts pressure on profit rates in the lucrative mining industry.

“The NUM and others, including the white miners’ union, are coming together against this,” Tsatsimpe reported. “We’re realizing that we have common interests to avoid retrenchments. We are now negotiating for a retrenchment package to include training and benefits” for those affected, she said.

“The bosses are saying they will be keeping ‘whoever is contributing to the economic viability of the company.’ What does that mean? They want to identify people they don’t like — people who make noise about affirmative action and so on.

“We say hell no, man. It’s not your right to get rid of whoever you want. Even if they use seniority, most of our guys will be out.” A seniority plan that includes affirmative action would be necessary, she indicated. “The new Labour Relations Act will reduce many of these problems,” Tsatsimpe continued. “It will require more full disclosure by management. A lot of retrenchments may be reduced. The struggle continues,” she concluded.

Gerry Adams visits S. Africa



Bettman/Juda Ngwenya

African National Congress president Nelson Mandela greets Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, at ANC’s Shell House headquarters in Johannesburg, June 19.

BY GREG ROSENBERG

At the invitation of the African National Congress, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams toured South Africa June 14-21. Sinn Fein is the leading organization in the fight to rid Northern Ireland of the British military occupation and unify north and south.

“I’ve come here to learn and listen and to take lessons from the struggle that has been an inspiration to humanity,” declared Adams upon arrival at Johannesburg International Airport. “We want to convert the lesson back into our country. We would be acutely interested to learn how the ANC as one of the main catalysts for change was able to prevent the peace process from being slowed down,” he said.

Adams held meetings with ANC and South African president Nelson Mandela, Freedom Front leader Constand Viljoen, and Patricia de Lille of the Pan-Africanist

Congress, among others.

Adams took London to task for its continued stalling on negotiations with Sinn Fein. “We will never pull out of the peace process but we reject any preconditions to talks,” said Adams at a news briefing after his meeting with Mandela. The ANC president noted that his party had refused demands by the former ruling National Party (NP) that it abandon the armed struggle against apartheid.

An NP member asked Adams how he could justify armed actions and violence by the Irish Republican Army. Adams said he found the question “provocative,” since loyalist paramilitary outfits in Northern Ireland “were armed with an arms shipment which came to our country from South Africa under the old apartheid regime. British military intelligence, through their agent...negotiated with Armscor...to equip loyalist death squads.”

Conflict, Bosnia crisis mark G-7 meet

BY LAURA GARZA

While attempting to get through a few days of talks and official dinners looking in control, the chiefs of seven imperialist nations ended up surrounded by conflicts and crises they could not command that highlighted the growing divisions among them. The heads of state of France, Japan, Canada, Britain, Italy, Germany, and the United States, known as the Group of Seven or G-7, gathered in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for a summit June 15-17. The war in Bosnia, threatened U.S. government trade sanctions against Japan, the Russian invasion of Chechnya, and Paris’s declaration that it would resume nuclear blasts in the South Pacific all revealed the direction of the imperialist nations at the meeting toward further conflicts with each other, not cooperation.

The war in Bosnia imposed itself on the deliberations. Heads of state and foreign ministers were yanked away from their dinner, at the insistence of the French government, to put out a statement and give the okay for the United Nations Security Council to order 12,500 more troops into Bosnia. The plan was carefully hedged to avoid mentioning exactly how the beefed-up rapid reaction force of British, French, and Dutch soldiers would be paid for, though.

As the G-7 met, Bosnian government troops launched a new offensive against the rightist Serb forces led by Radovan Karadzic who have surrounded and shelled the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo, since April 1992. For a time, the United Nations brokered an agreement that brought a lull in the shelling and left heavy weapons deposited in sites guarded by UN

troops.

The accord fell apart in recent weeks, though. The tanks and weapons, including some belonging to the UN units themselves, have been confiscated by both sides in the battle, leaving the UN troops scurrying to get out of the way. The Serb forces have 80,000 troops spread out along 1,000 miles of front lines, and they are well armed with tanks and heavy artillery. The Bosnian government’s forces number 150,000 but are not as well supplied. They attacked at a number of points and took some territory in the first two days, before easing up on the offensive. Sarajevo has come under heavy shelling again.

Bosnia conflict widens

Faced with a widening conflict, the various imperialist governments began scrambling for what to do. Karadzic has been loathe to accede to any agreement that leaves him with less territory than he and his gang think they can take. Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic, and his sometimes-allies in the Croatian government are also pushing to shift the military situation in a way that would give them an advantage in any negotiations.

Unable to force a settlement, the imperialist governments are also reluctant to do anything that would substantially raise the stakes of their involvement, and they are casting about for some way to halt a deterioration in the situation. At the same time each is trying to look out for its own interests in the region.

The statement released by the G-7 meeting called for all sides to halt the fighting. Jacques Chirac, president of

France, warned earlier that an offensive by the Bosnian forces “would be a grave error.” Clinton explained the U.S. position was “to discourage all increases in violence, to try to keep the lid on the violence.”

The French and British governments, whose troops comprise a major portion of those currently on the ground in Bosnia, pushed to have a rapid reaction force of 12,500 more troops dispatched. The officials claim their presence would allow the UN to carry out its stated purpose — to prevent the shelling of “safe havens” like Sarajevo and guarantee the delivery of supplies and food — though no one quite knows how. The real problem confronted by those directing the force is that there is not much agreement on what to do, or whom to do it to.

The U.S. government pushed for air strikes against the Serbs, but then faced the embarrassment of having to mobilize its mighty military forces to pluck one scared pilot out of the woods after his F-16 was shot down. Washington did not retaliate; it would have risked a confrontation with London and Paris, whose troops were being held hostage. Washington also doesn’t want to send its own soldiers in, preferring to try to pressure others into carrying out its wishes.

The evident failure to achieve anything through UN intervention has opened divisions among the U.S. rulers on policy toward Bosnia. Sensing an easy target, critics of Clinton in Congress said they would not go along with Washington financing the additional troops. At the G-7 meeting, Clinton had to ask that the specifics of the

Continued on Page 14

The Coming Revolution in South Africa

In New International no. 5
Jack Barnes

Explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of social and economic inequality. Only among the most committed cadres of this ANC-led struggle, Barnes writes, can the working class begin forging a communist leadership. *New International* No. 5 also includes “Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola.” 3 speeches by Fidel Castro. \$9.00

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FROM BEHIND PRISON WALLS

Washington uses Bosnia 'hero' to push war aims

"From behind prison walls" is a regular column written by framed-up political and trade union activist Mark Curtis. To write to Curtis send letters to him at #805338, Iowa State Penitentiary, Box 316, Fort Madison, Iowa, 52627.



Mark
Curtis

America officially has a new hero, Capt. Scott O'Grady, U.S. Air Force. O'Grady is the fighter pilot rescued from the Bosnian bushes by a marine helicopter June 6. Celebrating the rescue operation, President Bill Clinton and his aides lit up victory cigars on the White House balcony. The media followed suit, praising

the military operation and reporting day after day all the details of O'Grady's life.

Before we join in the hoopla, however, we ought to ask what he was doing over there in the first place.

At the time he was shot down, O'Grady was enforcing a "no fly zone" Washington and other governments have imposed over Bosnia. There he was, thousands of miles from home, piloting an F-16 fighter jet, looking to use its rockets against any "unauthorized" plane.

You know, just minding his own business. Next thing he knows, he's hiding in a ditch, living on bugs, grass, and rainwater.

To get the unlucky captain out of his predicament, the U.S. government sent out 40 aircraft. One of them carried him back to the USS *Kearsarge*, an amphibious assault ship floating in the Adriatic Sea.

O'Grady had parachuted into the middle of a war. The country that used to be Yugoslavia, a badly deformed workers state, has been broken up and rival pro-

capitalist warlords are fighting to grab as much territory as they can. The governments of the United States, Britain, France, and other imperialist countries would like a piece of the action too. Problem is, the divided parts of the old Yugoslavia remain deformed workers states. None of the gangsters involved — who in large measure come from the bureaucratic castes that ruled the former Yugoslavia — look like they can be counted on to make the region stable enough for capitalist investment.

Until some such force emerges, the U.S. and European powers are haunted by crossing the "Mogadishu Line." By this they mean getting into a Somalia-type situation, pinned down by hostile troops, caught in the crossfire of warring factions, with no victory in sight. When O'Grady's jet was shot down, the White House must have had flashbacks of Somalia, where the people they claimed to be helping dragged a downed fighter pilot's body through the streets of Mogadishu.

The Somalia invasion quickly became unpopular in the United States, but still the Clinton administration is drawing closer and closer to the "Mogadishu Line" in Bosnia.

Working people have no interest in U.S. or United Nations "peacekeeping" in the ex-Yugoslavia. None of the rival gangs there that massacre, rape, and drive out whole cities of people should be helped out with "no fly zones" or map redrawing conferences. Our eyes have to be focused on our fellow workers there and trying to establish links with them, even under the difficult conditions they face. The best help we can give them is to demand an end to foreign meddling, especially by the U.S. military.

He might have had it rough for a few nights, but O'Grady is no hero. Neither are the politicians and generals now glorifying the incident. They only seek to draw the country behind their war mongering. For further reading, I recommend *The Truth About Yugoslavia*.

Rally against INS raids says, 'We're here to stay'

BY SALM KOLIS

ATLANTA — Chants of "INS, we won't go, and if we go, we'll be back," echoed off the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) building in downtown Atlanta June 13 as demonstrators protested a series of recent immigration raids in the Southeast. The protest ranged from 30 to 50 at any one time. It began at noon and continued with a brief rally at 10:30 p.m. Participants came and went during the day as their schedules permitted.

INS cops conducted military-style raids at various worksites in this area at the beginning of June. Between June 5 and June 9 alone they rounded up some 530 people.

The action was called by UNETE, a Hispanic community organization. Demonstrators carried homemade signs with slogans like, "Give us your tired, give us your poor, and we will deport them" and "INS, Dehumanizing, Degrading, Deporting." In a reference to the upcoming Olympics to be held in Atlanta, one sign read, "The world is coming to Atlanta, and Atlanta deports it."

A Georgia State University student said she and her friends were coming to the demonstration on the train and got into a

discussion with a worker who said he supported the raids because he was unable to get a high-paying construction job. Employers told him they could pay undocumented workers only \$5 an hour because their "lifestyle" was so different. The protesters countered by arguing that the employers could get away with this because of the workers "illegal" status, which makes it harder for them to fight for better wages.

One demonstrator carried a Mexican flag, which prompted a discussion on whether or not this was a good idea. In the end, the flag stayed up.

"We are tired of having our people degraded and our families divided by these raids," said protest organizer Rod Padilla. "Immigrants are being scapegoated for social problems."

"We're here to show they can't get rid of us that easily," said Maricela Coronado. "Hispanics need to unite. We've been taught to be quiet, but this isn't the time to be quiet."

The raids are part of a coordinated operation throughout the Southeast called Operation SouthPAW, so named because their supposed purpose is to "Protect America's Workers." INS officials said



Dozens of people protesting immigration raids marched in downtown Atlanta June 13

the raids took place because of hundreds of complaints they claim to have received protesting the use of immigrant workers at work sites in the Atlanta area.

According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, one construction worker, outraged because he was refused a job building a new federal center in Atlanta while undocu-

mented Mexican workers were hired, reportedly wrote a series of letters complaining to government officials. Twenty-one workers were detained during a raid at the Atlanta Federal Center site.

Raids were reported at job sites in Chamblee, Hapeville, Kennesaw, Lithonia, and Gainesville as well. "They used a massive show of force — 30-40 police cars and helicopters were used to go after 19 workers," community activist Vicente Bautista said of the raids in Gainesville. "They were trying to panic people."

A sewing machine operator at Wilen Manufacturing in Hapeville, Miesa Zárate, described the raid that took place there. "Cops surrounded the building, there were cops all over. They came through looking at us, while the company announced over the loudspeaker, 'We have guests in the plant. Please continue our work. Do not stop work. Do not huddle.'"

"They walked directly to the Spanish-speaking workers. Initially there was a lot of joking about the raids, but as the day wore on, a more serious attitude arose, human solidarity came to the fore. We wondered what was happening to our co-workers. One of my co-workers commented 'I wouldn't want to get picked up and shipped out of the country without even being able to make a phone call.'"

Some speculated that the Spanish-speaking workers were targeted by the INS with the collaboration of the company, because they were in the forefront of winning the fight to be represented by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. But one of the shop stewards thought the company wouldn't work with the INS because of the fines. She thought it was the government, like in California with Proposition 187, the anti-immigrant rights referendum passed last year.

Salm Kolis is a member of United Auto Workers Local 882 in Atlanta.

Immigrants at New Jersey detention center rebel against inhuman treatment

BY BARBARA GRAHAM

NEWARK, New Jersey — Drawing the line on the absolutely inhuman conditions under which they were forced to live, hundreds of immigrant men and women, originating from more than 40 countries, seized and held for almost six hours the Esmor detention center in Elizabeth, New Jersey, June 18. The 300 immigrants held there are awaiting hearings on deportation or political asylum claims. More than 200 cops were sent to smash the rebellion.

In the course of the uprising, metal chairs and tables were torn apart, sinks

and toilets smashed, and the sprinkler system ripped out. The prisoners built a nine foot barricade out of chairs, tables, and other furniture. According to Esmor officials, the damage totaled more than \$100,000.

Detainees and their lawyers said they had been beaten, medical care was poor, and people were denied access to telephones or attorneys.

"Esmor was a powder keg waiting to blow," said U.S. Rep. Robert Menéndez. "Complaints of abuse and intolerable conditions at the facility have repeatedly been

brought to my attention."

While there have been demands for a federal investigation for some time, it was only in the two weeks before the uprising that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began conducting an investigation. Warren Lewis, the INS director for New Jersey, commented during a tour of the devastated center, "I don't know what we could have done to prevent this. I feel we had a clean facility with good food. It looked like it would be delicious."

"I am surprised it didn't happen sooner," Deanna Deibler told the *Newark Star-Ledger*. She and her husband Galen Deibler had driven three hours from Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, to visit Romanian immigrants held at the center. The Deiblers, members of Citizens For Romanian Refugee Release, said they have been trying to get the Romanian immigrants released since last year.

Detention at Esmor meant a diet of bread, corn chips, potato chips, and minced meat macaroni — orange juice and Jell-O if you were sick — according to former inmates. Dormitories crawled with bugs, detainees were barred from practicing their religion, and money was stolen from them by the prison guards.

"In the seven months I was there, I was

Continued on Page 12

Meeting, rally will back Abu-Jamal

BY HATTIE McCUTCHEON
AND GLOVA SCOTT

PHILADELPHIA — Chanting "Sabo must go!" and demanding a new trial for framed-up political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal, demonstrators began the first of daily picket lines June 19 in front of city hall here. Abu-Jamal has been scheduled to be killed by the state on August 17.

Pam Africa, a leader of the campaign to prevent Abu-Jamal's execution, expressed outrage that Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the political activist's original trial, is slated to review his appeal.

Africa warned that there were less than two months until the date of execution. She announced that a demonstration will be held July 3 at the Liberty Bell in this city to demand a stay of execution and a new trial for Abu-Jamal, who was convicted in 1982 of killing a police officer.

The demonstration will be followed by a July 4 conference to help organize an international campaign in Abu-Jamal's defense. For more information, contact the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal at (215) 476-8812.

Protests mark one year of CAT strike

Continued from front page

ers by reminding the crowd of Caterpillar's record in the year-long strike. "Caterpillar has been cited 154 times for unfair labor practices, they have defied OSHA [the Occupational Safety and Health Administration], polluted our communities, attacked our union leadership, attacked our retirees, and attacked our women and pensioners," Clingan said.

'We could be next'

"We came to today's rally to struggle for our UAW brothers and sisters at Caterpillar," said UAW member Chuck Macon Jr. "Our contract at Navistar is up this year, and we could be next."

"I'm more hopeful after the election [at the recent UAW convention] that there might be a better chance to settle the strike," said one Caterpillar striker from Local 145 in Aurora, Illinois. "It's been a long strike and I want to be working again."

Earlier in the day more than 500 strikers and their supporters held a spirited rally in

front of the Aurora plant. A large banner reading, "One year on Strike is better than One Day as a Scab" summed up the sentiment at what was the largest rally in front of the plant since the beginning of the strike one year ago.

The night before, 350 strikers and supporters converged at the main entrance in use at the Caterpillar foundry in Mapleton, just outside Peoria. Workers at the Mapleton site were the first to go out on strike last year.

As scabs arrived for the shift change, Caterpillar strikers jeered and shouted and eventually joined hands to form a human wall, effectively closing the entrance. As a result, Caterpillar was forced to open an auxiliary entrance to allow the line-crossers in and out of the plant.

Following this, a contingent of strikers moved to the auxiliary gate to tie up the rerouted traffic. An over-the-road truck driver from Teamster Local 631 in Las Vegas, Nevada, expressed his solidarity by parking his tractor-trailer in the middle of the auxiliary gate. Caterpillar strikers



Militant/Jim Garrison

Caterpillar workers prepare for strike at solidarity rally in Peoria, Illinois, May 1994. June 21, 1995, marked the first anniversary of the hard-fought labor battle.

cheered and chanted "union, union, union" as the driver held up scab traffic into the plant for fifteen minutes.

Receiving pats on the back and handshakes from the strikers, the trucker, Steve Kostelac, said, "I have been a Teamster for fifteen years. Caterpillar is out to break this union and something has to be done."

In addition to the Aurora and Mapleton events, strikers were planning similar plant gate actions at Caterpillar's East Peoria and Mossville facilities June 22-23. The illegally terminated Caterpillar strikers will hold a picnic near Peoria June 24, and on June 25 Caterpillar strikers

Continued on Page 14

UAW convention attempts to lift Clinton's image

BY JOHN STAGGS

ANAHEIM, California — The newly elected leadership of the United Auto Workers (UAW) took up the task of shoring up the image of the Clinton administration as a "friend of labor" at the union's June 11-16 convention here. The centerpiece of this effort was a half-hour video address by President Bill Clinton to the convention, live from the White House by satellite.

The 1,600 delegates to the UAW's 31st Constitutional Convention elected a new president, Stephen Yokich, a top official of the union since 1977. Retiring president Owen Bieber held office for 12 years.

Clinton focused his address on the administration's threat, announced in May, to impose trade sanctions against the Japanese auto industry. The government threatens to slap \$6 billion in punitive tariffs on 13 Japanese-made luxury cars unless Tokyo agrees to open up its market wider to U.S.-made auto parts by June 28. "We must now act decisively to level the playing field and to protect American jobs," Clinton said.

The president also tipped his hat to the 12,000 UAW members on strike at Caterpillar. "My administration continues to walk the line with you," he declared to applause.

UAW officials and featured speakers at the convention aggressively supported Clinton's trade sanctions, highlighting this

in their talks. Bieber's opening address set the tone. "Let's give a cheer to President Bill Clinton for standing up to...the free trade hypocrites—not to mention the Japanese themselves," he said.

The issues raised in Clinton's video address were reinforced in the convention's closing speech, given by U.S. labor secretary Robert Reich. Praising the administration as a "friend of labor," Reich pointed especially to the recent presidential executive order banning companies with government contracts from permanently replacing striking workers.

In his address, Yokich bemoaned that "so many members voted against themselves by voting Republican" in last year's congressional ballot.

Yokich briefly expressed solidarity with the Caterpillar strikers in his speech to the delegates. No resolutions or organized discussion on the strike reached the floor of the convention, though. One delegate proposed considering a one-day support strike. Yokich spoke against it. "The only

way to resolve the Caterpillar struggle is at the bargaining table," he said.

The strike was a major topic of informal discussion among delegates and guests at the convention. After a year on the picket line, only one of the five major locals representing Caterpillar strikers was allowed to have convention delegates, as the others were behind in their dues. Those locals no longer in good standing were seated as special guests, without voice.

Three women from the Peoria, Illinois, strike support group Families in Solidarity circulated among delegates selling raffle tickets for a quilt made of strike-support T-shirts. Unable to afford plane tickets, but wanting to talk to other union members about their fight, they rented a car and drove 2,000 miles to the convention.

Yokich said that the UAW will launch an effort to organize suppliers of auto parts. Since 1979 the UAW's membership has declined by half, from 1.5 million to about 800,000. Included in this loss are 400,000 auto parts jobs that are now

nonunion.

Yokich and the other top officials elected at the convention were chosen without opposition.

Media coverage leading up to the convention attempted to paint Yokich as a combative leader compared to Bieber, pointing to his authorization of strikes against General Motors in 1991. The June 11 *Los Angeles Times*, for instance, described him as a "fiery street fighter."

Headlines aside, media coverage also pointed out Yokich's close working relationships with auto executives in negotiating union contracts. A June 12 *USA Today* story quotes Ford executive vice president Peter Pestillo commenting, "He's as much a businessman as any trade unionist I have ever seen."

John Staggs is a member of UAW Local 1695 in Lansdale, Pennsylvania. Bob Miller, a member of UAW Local 980 in Edison, New Jersey, contributed to this article.

Top AFL-CIO official Kirkland to retire

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The shakeup in the top levels of the AFL-CIO officialdom took a new turn June 12, when Lane Kirkland, president of the labor federation for the past 16 years, announced his decision to retire in August. Thomas Donahue, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, announced he would stand for the post against a slate headed by John Sweeney, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The election will take place at the organization's October convention in New York.

Over the past several months, a growing layer of the officials who sit astride the 84 unions in the federation began to talk of replacing Kirkland. The effort to put on a new face is part of the attempt to protect the eroded dues base of member unions from which these officials derive their privileges and social position. It also stems from their near-total lack of influence in the two capitalist parties.

A *New York Times* editorial stated that "Mr. Sweeney, like his rival, is a member in good standing of labor's largely white and male old guard." Altering this appearance too is a factor in the high-level machinations, since growing numbers of the union ranks are comprised of women and oppressed nationalities.

SEIU president Sweeney's slate will be filled out by Richard Trumka, president of the United Mine Workers of America, who will stand for secretary-treasurer, and Linda Chavez-Thompson, an international vice president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, running for executive vice president of the federation, a post to be created soon. Part of the gloss given his candidacy is

that his union has grown during a period when others have declined in size.

The Sweeney slate has garnered support from officials of the United Steelworkers of America, United Auto Workers, Teamsters, International Association of Machinists, and other large unions.

Donahue, a Kirkland stalwart for a decade and a half, is also presenting himself as the candidate of "renewal." At press time, Donahue was scheduled to announce that Barbara Easterling, secretary-

treasurer of the Communications Workers of America, would be his running mate. Donahue's supporters said June 19 that he would draw support from some union office-bearers previously reported to be backing Sweeney, such as the transit workers, utility workers, and aluminum, brick, and glass workers.

Of his contest with Sweeney, Donahue remarked, "It is more a question of spirit and style than fundamental differences on issues."

Warm reception to Militant

ANAHEIM, California — Supporters of the *Militant* who were attending the United Auto Workers convention here set up a literature table, where many delegates and guests stopped before sessions and during breaks. Convention participants bought 4 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 2 copies of *New Internationalist*, and 85 single copies of the *Militant*.

An article describing Nelson Mandela attending a mass rally of 70,000 in Johannesburg, South Africa, caught many delegates' attention. Special guests of the UAW from the labor movements of Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand bought a big selection of books, including Leon Trotsky's *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* and *The Revolution Betrayed*, as well as *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs and the *Communist Manifesto*. A total of \$180 worth of literature was sold from the table.

One of the younger delegates was very interested in the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival and arranged to meet with activists building it after the convention to find out more. — J.S.



Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

by Leon Trotsky

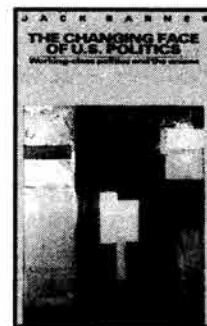
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Pathfinder displays at booksellers' event

BY MAGGIE PERRIER

CHICAGO—The Pathfinder booth at this year's American Booksellers Association (ABA) convention was a big success judging by the steady stream of people who stopped by to talk and to take a catalog or brochure.

At the three-day annual event, bookstore owners, wholesalers, librarians, publishers, authors, and agents gathered to preview new book releases and promote their titles in the \$20-billion-a-year U.S. book industry.

This year more than 42,000 people attended the June 3-5 convention and there were some 1,800 exhibits, making the ABA one of the largest book industry trade shows in the world.

A wide range of international publishers also participated. There were exhibitors from Cuba, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Ireland, and Poland, among others. Many come to invite those at the convention to book fairs in their respective countries.

"For Pathfinder, the ABA is the most important event in terms of exposure to the trade," said Maggie Pucci, who staffed the booth and works in Pathfinder's business office. "The show provides us with an avenue to hold business meetings with existing accounts. At the same time we meet hundreds of potential new buyers."

The ABA is an association of independent bookstore owners, but large chain stores and wholesalers also attend, and hundreds of publishers set up exhibits.

"Pathfinder is an integral part of the industry, and its books are seen as valuable and necessary by many bookstores and wholesalers because they offer a unique, working-class viewpoint. This is our sixth consecutive year at the ABA convention," said Michael Baumann, a Pathfinder editor who also staffed the booth.

Colorful wall displays highlighted Pathfinder titles such as *Lenin's Final Fight*, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes, and *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X. In addition,

the booth had most of Pathfinder's backlist of titles on display. Keeping its older titles in print is a practice that sets Pathfinder apart from many other publishers.

Volunteers from Peoria, Illinois; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Des Moines, Iowa; and Chicago helped staff the booth. "What was striking to me were the large numbers of people who were already familiar with Pathfinder," said Charlene Adamson, a sales representative from Peoria.

Volunteers handed out a promotional brochure on "Fifty years since World War II" that highlights related Pathfinder titles such as *Fighting Racism in World War II*, *In Defense of Marxism*, and *Out Now! A Participant's Account of the Movement in the United States Against the Vietnam War*.

"These books are important, and I think they have a place among the other books on World War II," said one bookseller whose store specializes in this topic. Two visiting filmmakers from Japan asked for a copy of the brochure, noting that the 50th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was approaching as well.

Volunteers also distributed hundreds of brochures featuring Spanish-language titles that Pathfinder publishes and distributes, such as *Habla Malcolm X*, *El Diario del Che en Bolivia*, *El Manifiesto Comunista* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, and the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*.

Political debate made its way into the gathering in other ways as well. Some 200 people gathered outside the convention center June 5 protesting an appearance by Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, at an ABA "power lunch."

Gingrich was in town to promote his new book, *Renewing American Civilization*. Many protesters carried signs opposing the Contract with America. The fact that some of the protesters came inside and heckled Gingrich received media attention.



Pathfinder editor Michael Baumann, left, talks with participant in American Booksellers convention in Chicago. A steady stream made their way to Pathfinder booth.

Socialists launch drive to get on ballot in Philadelphia race

BY HELEN MEYERS

PHILADELPHIA — Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party candidates in the upcoming city elections are petitioning June 24-July 30 to get the socialists on the ballot. Campaigners project collecting well over the 3,007 signatures required by law to ensure the candidates' names appear in the voting booths. "We want to turn this undemocratic requirement imposed on candidates who are not of the Democratic and Republican parties into an opportunity to present the working-class alternative," said Deborah Liatos, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Philadelphia.

Liatos works at USAir and is a member of International Association of Machinists union (IAM) Local 1776. "Our campaign joins with workers, youth, and others who are standing up to the attacks on our rights

and living standards by the bosses and their government," she said. "We need unity among workers to break down the divisions between employed and unemployed, Black and white, immigrant and U.S. born, men and women. We need to pose our own solutions to the economic crisis and attacks on our democratic rights."

Hattie McCutcheon, Socialist Workers candidate for city council at-large, explained, "Our campaign stands 100 percent in defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal and in opposition to the death penalty. The demand to stop the execution of Abu-Jamal is a central issue in the campaign."

McCutcheon is a member of United Auto Workers union (UAW) Local 1069, recently laid-off from Boeing. She is also an activist in the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Abu-Jamal, a political activist who is Black, was framed up for the murder of a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge signed the death warrant for Abu-Jamal and three others June 1. He is scheduled to be executed August 17.

John Staggs, an auto worker, is also standing for city council at-large. Staggs works at Ford Electronics and is a member of UAW Local 1695.

The campaign joined others from Philadelphia at the April 9 Rally for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. The candidates and their supporters have attended meetings and other activities in solidarity with the struggle for a united Ireland and against British occupation of Northern Ireland. The socialists are also addressing pressing concerns by working people here about layoffs announced at Conrail, Sun Oil, and Ford Electronics.

The campaign is actively involved in the discussion and debates by workers at USAir on the drive by the company to slash wages and change work rules to save the bosses money. "What is happening today is a direct result of the ceaseless drive of big business to increase their profits at the expense of working people. We are confident that working people can organize to replace this society based on the interests of a rich minority with a system based on the human needs of the majority," Liatos remarked.

The socialist candidates point to Cuba as an example of a society where workers are in control in confronting the economic crisis, the same crisis workers the world over are facing today. The candidates and their supporters encourage unionists, students, and others to learn more about Cuba. Those interested in helping to petition to get the Socialist Workers Candidates on the ballot in Philadelphia can call (215) 546-8218, fax: (215) 546-8196 or come by the campaign office at 1906 South St. Help is needed throughout the drive. July 15 and 22 are main target dates.

Helen Meyers is a member of UAW Local 1695 at Ford Electronics.

Below we reprint a review of *Genocide Against the Indians — Its Role in the Rise of U.S. Capitalism*, by George Novack. The review appeared in the June 8 issue of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, which reflects the views of Ireland's Sinn Féin. The pamphlet costs \$4 and is published by Pathfinder.

An Phoblacht

REPUBLICAN NEWS

Dierckx, & McElwain
Thursday, 8 June 1995

Native American holocaust

ONE of the greatest tragedies of the past centuries was the genocide inflicted upon the Native American populations of North and South America by White 'Christian' settlers.

In the eighth reprint (the first edition was in 1970) of this excellent pamphlet, American Marxist George Novack writes a fine introduction to his three essays from the 1940s on the horrors suffered by the Indians.

The introduction deals mainly with the rise of the 'Red Power' Movement, inspired partly by the national liberation struggle being waged at the time in Vietnam, and the Afro-American struggle for self-determination.

In the first essay, 'The Conquest of the Indians', the author challenges first the myth that capitalist America did not evolve from military conquest and then the popular perception that

PAMPHLET REVIEW
Genocide Against the Indians — Its Role in the Rise of US Capitalism
By George Novack
Published by
Pathfinder Press

all 'good' societies must be based on private property.

'The Destruction of Indian Communal Democracy' shows how the bearers of capitalism introduced to American soil "the cleavages and conflicts between master and slave, exploiters and exploited, idlers and toilers, rich and poor, which have flourished ever since". There is an interesting account of Indian communal life before the contamination of so-called 'civilisation', and how the Indians could not understand many of the traits found in Whites: The lust for material



● Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce, one of the many Indian tribes forced to submit to the 'better' White ways

possessions, intolerance of other ways of life, disregard for treaties and the inhumanity displayed towards each other.

The pamphlet is an excellent introduction to the genocide suffered by the Indians.

BY CIARAN HEAPHEY

Haitians face legacy of military regime

Below are some of the observations of a team of *Militant* reporters who visited Haiti at the end of May. Correspondents Ernie Mailhot, Jean-Luc Duval, and Simone Berg attended the congress of the National Popular Assembly, an organization opposed to the U.S. occupation of Haiti, and the International Conference Against the IMF and Neo-Liberalism, held at the Ecole Normale Supérieure campus in Port-au-Prince.

BY ERNIE MAILHOT
AND JEAN-LUC DUVAL

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Among the many passengers and workers at the airport here were various police and security people. Most of these are the same police that functioned under the military regime that carried out a 1991 coup against Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the current Haitian president reinstalled after the

As we drove into Cite Soleil we saw what seemed like an endless line of women carrying large containers of water on their heads. They were going and coming from the single source for running water in this part of Cite Soleil.

An extremely poor and rundown section of Port-au-Prince, Cite Soleil has a population of 180,000. Long known for its opposition to the military and support for Aristide, the residents suffered many attacks during the three years the military coup leaders were in power.

At one point during the coup years the military drove people out of their homes and burned down a whole section of Cite Soleil. "All criminals to justice" was a slogan we saw on one of the walls in the area where the homes had been burned. Several short streets have been paved in this area where the government is planning to rebuild homes.

On one of the main streets in Cite Soleil eight women and a man were sweeping the street. They explained that they had gotten their jobs since the Aristide government had returned.

They receive 240 gourdes every two weeks — a little more than \$15. Six of the eight women have children and for some this is the only income in the family.

Also in Cite Soleil we visited L'école La Sainte Famille, an elementary school with seven teachers and three small rooms where 80 students attend classes each day.

Many schools in Haiti function on two shifts. Some students attend class in the



Militant/Ernie Mailhot

U.S.-backed dictatorship left legacy of slum conditions shown above in Cite Soleil

morning and others in the afternoon because of the lack of facilities, materials, and teachers. La Sainte Famille has only one shift a day due to lack of money. It is private, as are most schools in Haiti. The teachers told us that they function on donations.

Next to the Domaine Ideal Hotel, a former tourist resort where the National Popular Assembly congress was held, is the Dispensaire Barque de Pierre, a medical clinic set up two years ago by Richard Arsenault from Quebec, Canada.

The clinic handles basic medical needs and has a small pharmacy. A couple of weeks ago it added education in hygiene to its work when Jerome Latreille, a student volunteer also from Quebec, joined the small staff of three Canadians and sev-

eral Haitians who work there. In two years the clinic has served 38,000 patients.

The clinic administrator, Arsenault, was forced to flee the infirmary for a time during the military regime of Raoul Cedras because it became known that he had helped victims of the military both by giving them medical care and a place to hide.

Some of the students from the Ecole Normale Supérieure who were at the anti-IMF conference invited us to their school to set up a Pathfinder literature display the next day. After the overthrow of Jean Claude Duvalier in 1986, the students took over the building. Since then it has been a stronghold in the struggle for university autonomy and recently it was the site of several meetings in support of the national teacher's strike. We set up the Pathfinder literature table for two hours. Books by Karl Marx, V.I. Lenin, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Malcolm X, Thomas Sankara, and others went briskly.

Quite a few people asked about the new pamphlet on the table about the case of framed-up trade unionist and political activist Mark Curtis. Some had read about the case a few years ago in the newspaper *Haiti Progrès* and were shocked to hear that Curtis was still in jail. The students were impressed that Curtis writes a regular column for the *Militant*.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

September 1994 U.S. invasion. Two had hats and T-shirts designating them as part of the transitional police force.

The most imposing and authoritative of the security cops was wearing a blue beret identifying him as part of the United Nations forces. His camouflage pants were stuffed inside his shined, laced up combat boots. His camouflage shirt had a tag over the pocket saying, "U.S. Army" and on his arm was a U.S. flag patch.

FBI targets poultry worker in arson case

BY ALYSON KENNEDY
AND KAY SEDAM

ASHLAND, Alabama — Christopher Johnson, a 25-year-old Black worker, was indicted June 1 on a federal charge of arson and possession of "a paper sack containing dirt and match books and saturated with a flammable liquid" in connection with the Aug. 6, 1994, fire that destroyed Randolph County High School in Wedowee, Alabama. FBI agents arrested Johnson at 6:30 a.m. as he arrived for work at the Tyson chicken plant here with his wife, who also works at the factory. The federal charge of arson carries a sentence of up to 20 years in prison and a fine as high as \$250,000.

Johnson is the son of Rev. Emmett Johnson, who helped organize protests in Wedowee last year calling for the removal of Hulond Humphries, the principal of Randolph High School, after he made racist comments.

Charlotte Clark-Frieson, the only Black member of the Randolph County school board and president of the local NAACP chapter, said, "I do not believe he [Johnson] did it. I do not trust the FBI." On June 7, she helped organize a group of 50 Randolph County residents to travel to Montgomery by bus and cars to show support for Johnson at his bond hearing. Supporters said his release was a victory. She stated that "this is no time to abandon Rev. Johnson and his family."

Chris Johnson was released from jail on a \$100,000 bond and put under "house arrest." He is forced to wear a monitor on his ankle and can only go to and from work and church. The only witness at the bond hearing, FBI special agent Kelvin King, testified that an investigation of Johnson began last September and the FBI worked with informants who wore wire-taps to meetings with Johnson.

Former Randolph County sheriff Larry Colley said he believes more people will be arrested. "It's going to snowball," he said. An editorial in the *Birmingham News* June 2 stated, "Young Johnson, like anyone else, is presumed innocent until a court decides his fate. But so, too, should the FBI be presumed as acting only in the best interest of justice, unless someone can prove otherwise."

At the Tyson chicken plant, which is organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union, co-workers expressed

support for Johnson. One Black woman told the *Militant*, "He didn't do it, because Black people would not burn down a school. The KKK did it."

Mary Walden, a white co-worker of Johnson's, said she did not agree with the statements made by Humphries. The shop steward of the plant agreed with Walden.

They expressed disbelief that Johnson was involved with the fire.

A young Black worker said he knew Johnson and did not think he had anything to do with the burning. He went on to describe a month-long strike at the plant last year that won a pay raise from minimum wage to \$6.50 an hour.

—YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD— Twin Cities YS campaigns for Mark Curtis

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 MEGAN ARNEY

TWIN CITIES, Minnesota — Young Socialists here have reaffirmed their support of Mark Curtis's fight for freedom. "I first became really interested in Mark Curtis in Washington, D.C., at a protest against the U.S. embargo on Cuba," said Ingrid Ostenaar, who has been in the Twin Cities YS since it began last fall.

New members of the Twin Cities YS have sparked renewed interest in the case, drawing on their long-time involvement with other political activities. Travis Wilkerson, a filmmaker, recently made a film about the Chilean folk singer and political activist Victor Jara, whose hands were cut off after the brutal military coup in 1973 to serve as an example to those who fight for justice. Wilkerson is interested in making another film on Curtis's case.

In May, the Twin Cities YS made Mark Curtis defense one of its major campaigns for this summer, as well as building for the Cuba Lives Youth Festival in August. During the *Militant* sales drive, they set a goal for selling the recent pamphlet *Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison*, as well as the *Militant* newspaper.

On June 17, the Militant Labor Forum was held on the Mark Curtis case, as well as other political prisoners.

YS member Lisa Rottach chaired the forum and read a letter of support for

Mark Curtis written by Doug Nelson and Dave Warshawsky for the Twin Cities YS.

Earlier that week, the YS had organized a showing of the documentary film, *The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis* at Minneapolis Community College. Additionally, at their weekly meeting, the regular educational was a discussion on *Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison?*

Members are writing to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee to help arrange for members of the local YS to visit Curtis in Iowa. A broad film series on political prisoners including Mark Curtis, death row in-

mate Mumia Abu-Jamal, Irish activist Jimmy Smyth, Victor Jara, and others is being organized for the near future.

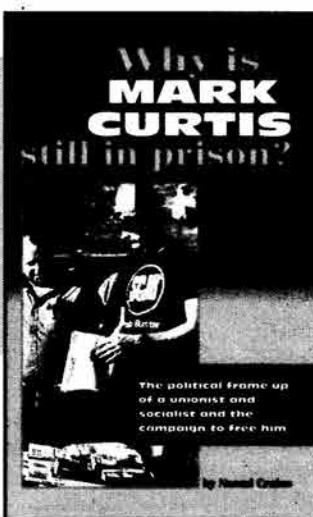
"There are going to be more people like Mumia, Mark, and Native American activist Leonard Peltier and it will be necessary to identify elements of political frame-ups," stated YS member Ryan Kelly. "For young people who are becoming political we must have knowledge about the police and the ruling class."

Megan Arney is a member of the Twin Cities YS.

Why Is Mark Curtis Still in Prison?

The Political Frame-Up of a Unionist and Socialist and the Campaign to Free Him

by Naomi Craine



Mark Curtis is a union activist and socialist who was framed up by police on false charges of rape and burglary in March 1968. At the time he was involved in a struggle to defend 17 Mexican and Salvadoran co-workers arrested in an immigration raid at the packinghouse where he worked in Des Moines, Iowa. This new pamphlet explains what happened to Curtis, and the stakes for workers, farmers, youth, and other democratic-minded people in demanding his release.

Pamphlet, \$6

Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax (212) 727-0150. Or contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, P.O. Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311. Tel: (515) 246-1695.

Engels, U.S. policy discussed in Cuba

Continued from front page
ing.

The conference schedule also allowed time for visits to the José Angel Varela farm cooperative in San José, Havana province, and the biotechnology center.

The North American delegation considered one of the best events of the week to be the opportunity to talk with those working at the agricultural cooperative — one of more than 2,700 Basic Units of Cooperative Production, or UBPCs, established through a reorganization of state farms since early 1994.

In Defense of Marxism

Isabel Monal, chair of Marxist Studies at the Philosophy Institute, initiated the conference debate by joining the issue with the various political tendencies that throughout the 20th century have tried to separate Engels from Marx and, under cover of attacking Engels only, have abandoned Marxism.

Referring to Marx, Engels, and V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the October revolution in Russia, Monal said that among the three greatest figures in the history of the communist movement, none is more frequently attacked, from more different directions, than Engels. "He is accused of not understanding Marx, of distorting his work, of vulgarizing their ideas and giving a simplistic presentation of their work." The goal, she said, is always to divide him from Marx.

The publication of virtually all the correspondence between Marx and Engels has made such a position "completely untenable," she noted, although no objective reading of previously available works by Marx and Engels ever supported it. But that does not mean the argument will disappear, because "behind the anti-Engels tendency within Marxism there has always been a hidden alternative to Marxism," she explained, an attempt to substitute a different political perspective for the scientific world outlook of communism.

Monal noted that anti-Engels tendencies have had influence in Cuba as elsewhere. She pointed to those who attempt to turn Marxism into an ethical doctrine, a "love-sick true socialism of the kind Marx and Engels rejected" at the very beginning of their political lives, as well as those who in the guise of defending scientific socialism turned it into dogma devoid of science. "We must reread Marx and Engels," Monal insisted.

The closing roundtable on U.S.-Cuba relations was one of the liveliest sessions, with several hours of discussion following the initial presentations. Much of the debate centered around the legislation being

presented in the U.S. Congress by Sen. Jesse Helms and Rep. Daniel Burton that aims to once again tighten the economic embargo that has been imposed on Cuba by successive Democratic and Republican administrations for 35 years.

There was general agreement that the legislation tightening the embargo would be adopted in some form and signed into law by President Bill Clinton. But divergent points of view were expressed on the motivations for U.S. government policies. "Clinton will not veto the legislation," argued panelist Dan Hellinger, of Webster University in St. Louis, "because he has no backbone" and is guided by electoral expediency.

Esteban Morales, director of the Center for Study of the United States at the University of Havana, who was another of the panelists, offered a different assessment. "Whatever Washington decides is determined by what happens in Cuba and not what happens in the United States," he noted. Morales rejected the idea that right-wing elements in the Cuban community in the United States dictate government policy.

Washington hopes to make Cuba "face a large enough number of challenges that are complex enough not to make things difficult for Cuba," Morales said, "but to be able to drive the last nail" into the coffin of the revolution. That is why what is done in Cuba is decisive, he stated. "Any U.S. administration will have to judge the price they must pay" to achieve their goals.

In the closing session of the conference, the North American delegation read a



Militant/Cindy Jaquith
Havana demonstration in 1990 protests U.S. Coast Guard attack on Cuban boat, the *Hermann*. "Whatever Washington decides is determined by what happens in Cuba and not what happens in the U.S." said Esteban Morales at Havana conference.

statement that said, in part, "We express our solidarity with the socialist revolution, the anti-imperialist struggle, and the self-determination of the Cuban people, particularly during the present difficulties of the Special Period....In the face of intensive U.S. aggression, the Cuban people have exhibited remarkable courage, unity, ingenuity, and determination to defend their

national sovereignty." The resolution also noted the "long record of internationalism" of the Cuban people that continues today despite the economic pressures.

Many of the North American participants in the conference will be spending another week in Cuba taking part in similar gatherings in the provinces of Cienfuegos, Camaguey, Holguín, and Matanzas.

'Imperialism can offer no real peace'

HAVANA, Cuba — Following are excerpts from the opening of the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters at the Seventh Conference of North American and Cuban Philosophers and Social Scientists held at Havana University, June 13-16, 1995. The talk was one of several papers presented during the sessions of the commission on "Democracy, Politics, and Social Justice." She will be making the same presentation at the Second International Scientific Workshop on the Life and Work of Che in Matanzas University, June 19-22. Waters is editor of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. This excerpt is reprinted by permission of *New Internationalist*.

"Twenty-one years have elapsed since

the end of the last world conflagration, and various publications in every language are celebrating this event, symbolized by the defeat of Japan. A climate of optimism is apparent in many sectors of the different camps into which the world is divided." Yet, "it is appropriate to ask whether this peace is real."

These were the words with which Ernesto Che Guevara opened his 1966 Message to the Tricontinental, "Create two, three ... many Vietnams: That is the watchword."

Almost 30 years have elapsed and the same anniversary approaches once again. Che's words remind us how well he understood the world in which, at the side of Fidel and others, he helped lead the working people of Cuba to establish the first free territory of the Americas and open a new chapter in the history of the modern working-class movement.

Rereading, in 1995, the Message to the Tricontinental helps focus our attention on the fact that the world relationship of class forces — with ups and downs, advances and setbacks — has shifted in favor of the oppressed and exploited over the last 30 years.

Today the imperialist victors of World War II, in an increasingly quarrelsome mood, are preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the "defeat of Japan." They are arguing among themselves over what name they can give their moment of self-congratulation that won't exacerbate growing conflicts with the sometimes-rival, sometimes-ally — always both — capitalist class in Japan.

As spokespeople for the U.S. rulers, from President Clinton on down, outdo each other offering justifications for one of the most heinous crimes in the history of humanity, the people of Japan are preparing to commemorate the more than 300,000 victims incinerated immediately or killed more slowly by the atomic bombs "Made in the USA" that in early August 1945 were dropped on the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The post-World War II economic and social order that was announced by those wanton and gratuitous deeds is still with us.

Meanwhile, the people of Korea and

other Asian lands are exploding in angry demonstrations at Tokyo's arrogant denial of the full truth about its brutal history of imperialist rule throughout the 20th century.

And in the United States radical-minded workers and young people are preparing their own commemoration of the concentration camps in which tens of thousands of U.S. citizens of Japanese origin, stripped of their property and rights, were held prisoner by the Roosevelt administration throughout the war.

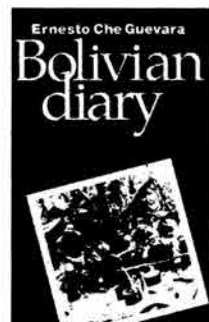
The "climate of optimism" Che pointed to in 1966 is no more. Today's climate is rather one of foreboding among the imperialist masters, marked by lengthening periods of gloom; heightened anxiety among the middle classes of all countries who count on the propertied rulers for protection and stability; social polarization marked by aggressive probes by rightist and incipient fascist currents; and, most important of all, signs of rising resistance and defensive struggles among those from whose labor capital tries to extract the surplus value necessary to reverse its long-term crisis.

Those who dominated the other two "sectors of the different camps into which the world is divided" — to whom Che referred almost 30 years ago, and who then shared the "climate of optimism" — also find the weather sharply changed. The bureaucratic castes that dominated much of what was termed the socialist camp today find themselves in disarray as they run after a declining capitalist system.

And the bourgeoisies of the Third World are discovering the awful truth that the miracle of emerging market economies doesn't culminate in the miracle of emerged industrially advanced capitalist countries, but instead the reality of explosive instability and continued domination by imperial capital. Both these formerly optimistic ruling elites face working classes increasingly impatient with the long wait for the promised coming of capitalist prosperity for all.

No, the dawn of the 21st century brings with it not a new international order but growing capitalist disarray. Che was right: the peace was not real....

for further reading from Pathfinder...

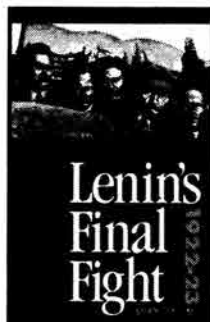


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The record of Lenin's last battle to maintain the communist course with which the Bolshevik Party had led the workers and peasants to power over the landlords and capitalists of the former tsarist empire. Includes several items appearing in English for the first time. \$19.95



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Philippine activists hear Cuban youth

BY MARNIE KENNEDY
AND AARON RUBY

MANILA, Philippines — Cuban youth leader Alejandro Herrera Agete addressed dozens of workers and students here during a seven-day tour. Three Philippine groups — SANLAKAS, the League of Filipino Students (LFS), and Amistad, a solidarity group with the Cuban revolution — invited the Union of Young Communists (UJC) of Cuba leader.

Herrera spoke to 50 students and teachers at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Manila at a public meeting during the first leg of his tour hosted by Kamalayan, a youth group associated with SANLAKAS. "I don't think that capitalism has been reestablished in the former Soviet Union," Herrera stated in response to a professor's question. "There is not a defined bourgeois layer in power, which is symptomatic of capitalist society."

The youth leader answered questions on the U.S. embargo against Cuba, why thousands of Cubans left the island last summer, and how it is possible that Cuba survives after the collapse of the Soviet Union. "I think to challenge the West and build a socialist system is not to be on the defensive," Herrera said. He also spoke to students at the University of the Philippines.

Herrera met with labor and women's rights activists and addressed a meeting of leaders of organizations of the urban poor. A number of meetings and discussions were trilingual, in English, Spanish, and Tagalog, the main language of the Philippines.

The young Cuban visited Tambakan — a trash dump in Pasig City, Manila, where 193 families, illegally squatting, make a living sorting trash for P25 a day (25 Philippine pesos = US\$1). Gregorio "Boyer" Corre, the elected leader of the

camp, said they occupied the land starting in 1975. Almost all had been farmers who had their land stolen or foreclosed for debts and were forced to move to Manila to make a living. Many came from other islands in the Philippines. "We are fighting to legalize our status here," Corre said. The owner wants them to buy the land for P4,000 per square meter. They are fighting threats of demolition by the government. "If we can reach our objective by legal struggle and protest we will. If not we are open to other methods, like a revolution like they made in Nicaragua," stated Mario Ulbata, also a leader at the camp.

There were a number of questions about the 35,000 people who left Cuba in August 1994. "It would be an error to think all those who left are enemies of the revolution," Herrera said. "The main thing that weighs on them is the economic situation. When a country is confronted by such a sharp crisis, for some people this creates a situation they can't stand."

U.S. gov't threatens youth on Cuba trip

BY LAURA GARZA

While young people from around the world are making plans to head to the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival August 1-7, the U.S. Treasury Department is threatening fines and jail terms for a group of 35 youth going to Cuba in June. They planned to go ahead anyway with the June 23-30 trip, which is being organized by the Freedom to Travel Campaign, and are encouraging protests of the U.S. policy prohibiting travel to Cuba.

"We don't want to go to jail or be fined, but we have to stand up for our principles, just like people stood up against Jim Crow laws in the South," read a June 18 letter to President Bill Clinton signed by the youth. At a packed press conference in Washington, D.C., June 21, Jody Avirgan, 14, and Sarah Park, 16, both students at the Sidwell Friends School who planned to participate in the trip, explained that they wanted to see Cuba for themselves.

The trip was the subject of an article in the June 3 *Washington Post*, and a June 7 opinion column in the same paper supporting the efforts of the youth to challenge U.S. government policy toward Cuba. The Treasury Department letter was sent to the Freedom to Travel Campaign June 16 and it states, "It has recently been reported in the media that The Freedom to Travel Campaign is organizing a trip to Cuba later this month for a group of high school age students from various locales in the United States....OFAC [Office of

Foreign Assets Control] has not authorized the Campaign to provide travel related services to Cuba, nor have we issued any specific licenses..." It further states, "Criminal penalties for violation of the Regulations range up to 10 years in prison, and \$1 million in corporate and \$250,000 in individual fines. OFAC may impose civil penalties of up to \$50,000 per violation."

Teresa Walsh, a spokesperson for the Freedom to Travel Campaign in San Francisco, is encouraging protests to the U.S. Treasury Department and urging those in the Houston area to meet the youth when they return through there on June 30. While the government has confiscated the passports of some Freedom To Travel participants in the past, Washington has so far chosen not to prosecute any of the individuals. For more information call Freedom to Travel Campaign at (415)-255-7296.

The latest threats by the U. S. government provides an opportunity to get out the facts about Washington's policy against the Cuban people. The Cuba Lives festival in August will draw together those around the world who want to take a stand against the U.S. government's embargo. A sizable delegation from the United States will be an important aid in the campaign to defend Cuba.

In Paris, a group of about a dozen youth are meeting weekly to coordinate their plans to attend the Cuba Lives festival, raise funds, and reach out to other groups

and build their delegation. The Iceland-Cuba Friendship Society is also organizing participation in the event.

Among those planning to go from the United States, is Gregory Bautista, a 21-year-old college student from the University of the South in Tennessee. Home for a visit in Gainesville, Georgia, recently he witnessed first hand the harassment of undocumented workers by the Immigration and Naturalization Service during a campaign called Operation South PAW (Protect America's Workers). "I plan to go to Cuba reporting for a few local newspapers, as well as informing those coming to the festival about the attacks we are facing here," he said.

At a meeting in New York June 20 about half a dozen people filled out applications to go to the festival, and planned a fund-raising party. They also discussed working to obtain editorial assignments from local newspapers or other media to travel as journalists.

Many of the groups helping to publicize the festival are also beginning to build four regional demonstrations planned for October 14 to protest the U.S. government's hostile policies against Cuba. Rallies are planned in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and San Francisco. The National Network on Cuba, which groups more than 70 organizations, has produced flyers, T-shirts, and buttons to publicize these events. For more information on the October 14 demonstrations call the National Network on Cuba in your region: East (212) 227-3422, South (305) 757-3113, Midwest (312) 663-0527, and West (415) 267-0606.

Contributing to this article were Chester Wilson in Washington, D.C.; Joe Swanson in San Francisco; and Arlene Rubenstein and Miguel Zárate in Atlanta.



Militant/Sam Manuel

Some 500 people joined a march and rally in Washington, D.C., June 17 to oppose the U.S. government embargo of Cuba. The march coincided with the arrival in the city of the fifth U.S.-Cuba Friendshipship Caravan of humanitarian aid bound for Cuba. The rally also expressed opposition to the Helms/Burton bill and Contract with America legislation.

Cuba Lives International Youth Festival

August 1-7, 1995

City of Havana and
Cuban provinces

For more information contact:

Cuba Information Project

198 Broadway, Suite 800

Tel: 212-227-3422

Fax: 212-227-4859

E-mail: infocuba@igc.apc.org
or your local Cuba coalition

Cost \$550 from Cancun, or Nassau
July 15 deadline for application

Guevara studies begin at Havana university

BY LUIS MADRID

HAVANA, Cuba — "Che believed the duty of the socialist producer was to produce an adequate supply of goods, with the utmost quality, and at the lowest cost," said Orlando Borrego at a June 14 meeting here.

Borrego was speaking at an event commemorating the birthday of Ernesto Che Guevara. Che would have been 67.

The meeting was the first activity organized by the newly established Che Guevara Studies Department at the University of Havana. The department, part of the Latin American Department of Social Sciences (FLACSO), was launched March 2 to develop "the research, study, and the dissemination of the thought, revolutionary activity, and life of Che."

Argentine-born, Guevara was one of the central leaders of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army that led Cuban workers and peasants to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship on Jan. 1, 1959. In the mid-60s he departed from Cuba to help advance the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle developing in the Southern Cone of Latin America. Guevara was captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-organized operation Oct. 8, 1967,

and murdered the following day.

Delia Luisa López, chair of the new department, presided at the event. Tirso Sáenz and Salvador Vilaseca gave presentations. "Che and I exchanged courses," said Vilaseca, who taught math to Che in the early '60s while the Cuban leader was helping to guide the socialist transformation of banking and industry. "I taught him mathematics; he taught me revolution." Also a former president of the University of Havana, Vilaseca is the honorary chair of the new department.

Borrego and Sáenz were among those who worked closely with Che in the early years of the revolution in areas relating to the development of industry, technology, and the economy. Sáenz spoke of the difficulties at the beginning of the process. In the wake of the revolution, said Sáenz, "70 percent of Cuba's engineers left the country; and we had not yet established relations with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. "Being able to keep production going with the engineers who stayed was in and of itself a triumph," Sáenz added.

In addition to Che's insistence on promoting disciplined habits of work, and his interest in developing a system of incentives, both material and moral, all three

speakers underlined Che's emphasis on the development of revolutionary consciousness. They pointed to the relevance of Che's perspectives for Cuba today.

Borrego is a former minister of the sugar industry who also fought in Che's column in the revolutionary army. Borrego recalled that "Che used to draw two curves and say: 'I prefer a curve of development of productivity that is less pronounced, as long as the curve of the development of consciousness follows it very closely so that they eventually meet.'" Borrego pointed to this as a guide for the further development of both the productive forces and consciousness today.

The Che Guevara studies department will initiate a course in the academic year that begins in September. It is the first in a series of projections for the next two years. These include a number of conferences and an essay competition on Che's life and thought. The department also plans to organize the publication of documents by Che not yet in print. As a token of that pledge, a pamphlet containing three little-known speeches by Guevara to university students was distributed to those attending the June 14 launching of the department.

The whole world says: End the U.S. Economic Blockade of Cuba!

Oct. 14 National Mobilization

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Lift the Travel Ban on Cuba

The National Network on Cuba invites everyone to join in regional activities on October 14 & 15 95 to call for the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba. The NNC is a coalition of 70 local and national groups who work in opposition to U.S. policy toward Cuba.

For more information call:
East Coast 212-227-3422 * South 305-757-3113 * Midwest 312-663-0527 * West Coast 415-267-0606
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New flyer for regional actions against U.S. policy toward Cuba.

'There is no straitjacket on creativity'

Head of Cuban writers and artists union discusses culture and socialist revolution

Abel Prieto, president of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba, was interviewed in 1993 by Nicolás Ríos of *Contrapunto*, a Spanish-language magazine published in Miami. The interview was republished in pamphlet form in 1994 by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. Major excerpts are printed below. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

Nicolás Ríos: At a certain moment, the expression by Fidel Castro, "Within the revolution, everything; outside the revolution, nothing," was used as a guideline to orient intellectual activity in Cuba. Does it remain in effect today, or have there been changes in its interpretation? How is it interpreted?

Abel Prieto: In the first part of your question, Nicolás, there is a small detail that should be corrected, and it's an interesting one. You quote: "Within the revolution, everything; outside the revolution, nothing." The actual phrase was: "Within the revolution, everything; *against* the revolution, nothing." There is a difference of prepositions. The phrase includes things that might be outside the revolution, but not against the revolution. This is a key distinction. What happens is that it gets repeated that way, and it has gone down in many texts that way. But you can go back to the early editions of *Words to the Intellectuals*, and you will find this prepositional detail.

I believe this phrase holds good today. Owing to the prevailing conditions in which we chart Cuban cultural policy, we cannot at present permit art to be utilized as a pretext to attack the revolution. Telling you anything different would be demagoguery; it would be painting a picture that is not real.

Nevertheless, this framework has no precedent in the history of socialism or in the history of revolutions. It is a framework of extreme broadness, which puts forth no formal restrictions, no official style, no straitjacket on creative activity.

In terms of cultural policy, it is meant for a country that has undertaken a life-and-death historical process and it does, in fact, entail limitations on counterrevolutionary expression.

Dismal half decade of Cuban culture

But what has happened is that at certain moments there was a dogmatic interpretation of it. Since no manual exists, nowhere is it set down what the limits are, and these limits have sometimes been linked to specific conjunctures. We had the famous stage during the 1970s of the "dismal half decade," as Ambrosio Fornet termed it. During that period there was clearly a dogmatic interpretation of that phrase, and people invoking it resorted to restricting

¹ These were Fidel Castro's closing remarks on June 30, 1961, to a series of meetings attended by leading Cuban writers and artists. It is viewed as the revolution's main statement on cultural policy.



Cuban leader Abel Prieto speaking at São Paulo Forum in Uruguay. Cuba "is a country where the ideas of internationalism have pervaded society," Prieto said.

the expression of things that were absolutely within the revolution, or perhaps at the margins of the revolution, but were never against the revolution. That is the key thing.

During that period it even reached the point where there were homosexuals who had to leave the cultural sector simply for being homosexuals. How does that have anything to do with being "within," "outside," "beside," or "at the margins of"?

Is there freedom in Cuba?

Q: What were the years of the "dismal half decade"?

A: They are given as from 1971 to when the Ministry of Culture was created, in 1976. There were other difficult conjunctures, but undoubtedly the creation of the Ministry of Culture marked a stage opening up a climate of trust. I believe this must be recognized. It was the beginning of the end, at least, of a very turbulent climate of distrust, which involved errors of policy in the theater, in the visual arts, and so on.

Q: Keeping those events in mind, can one speak of freedom of intellectual, artistic, and cultural creation in Cuba?

A: I believe there is enormous freedom of creation. To convince oneself of this, Nicolás, one must see the works themselves. I can speak to you, for example, of the critical role of art in Cuban revolutionary culture: from *Presiones y diamantes* by Virgilio Piñera to the latest in children's narratives; these works have a thoughtful, critical, nonconformist, unorthodox role. There is an element of heresy in Cuban revolutionary art.

Q: Heresy? Is that true?

A: Yes it is. Moral heresy; a heresy toward customs, a disputing of dogmas.

With regard to heresy, capitalism has a very intelligent way of assimilating and mutilating it. This is done in very subtle ways. Capitalism has ways to protect itself from all heresy. These are indeed sacred. It has specific channels of dissemination, circuits of dissemination, which are protected from all heresy. And it handles your heresy with the mechanism of the marketplace, with mechanisms of blackmail, and sometimes with mechanisms of repression.

In other words, it uses every type of mechanism. The famous protest songs of the early 1960s — which helped spawn the Cuban New Song Movement and the things Silvio Rodríguez did later on — were mutilated through the marketplace, through pressure. In order to make their way into certain circuits, they had to leave behind the most aggressive part of their poetic message.

What tends to happen now is that people stop with this one phrase and don't read the body of the speech in which Fidel Castro issued a call, including to people who were not even revolutionaries. To those who were not revolutionaries yet wanted to work for an educational revolution and for culture; a call to all generations. It is a beautiful appeal for unity of all levels, all generations, all tendencies. He speaks of Catholics, of people holding philosophical and even political views that did not directly connect with those of the revolution. It was a great appeal. But sometimes this phrase gets torn out of context, and becomes transformed into a symbol for an entire speech.

Time of Playa Giron

It seems to me that it would be interesting to reread it now, because it has great relevancy today. One has to consider the context in which it was given. It was given not long after Giron,² at a meeting of intellectuals in the National Library. Out of it arose the idea of the First National Congress of Writers and Artists, and of creating the Union of Writers and Artists. There were insurgents in the Escambray at the time.³ Do you realize that? It was a moment of enormous hostility, in which the country was in an unstable position; it was a moment of danger, of pressures. And it was at such a moment that the speech was given. I see enormous historical value and relevancy in this. Because the moment of danger has not passed. We have been going from one such moment to another, and it has always been latent, in

² On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The action, organized by Washington, was defeated within 72 hours. On April 19 the last invaders surrendered at Playa Giron, which is the name used in Cuba to designate the battle.

³ During the early 1960s the U.S. government helped organize armed counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba.

one way or another.

Q: In the capitalist world there is a very sophisticated and effective way of dealing with heresy. How does Cuba handle it?

A: I believe we still do not have a policy with regard to heresy. Clearly one would have to begin by defining what we mean by heresy in culture. In the political or moral sense, heresy can be viewed as anything that departs from points of view presented more or less widely by a country's leaders.

What occurred under socialism elsewhere? Under the socialism that disappeared? An absolute lack of flexibility in dealing with heresy, in incorporating it, in addressing it. In other words, with regard to all the mechanisms of dissemination for stimulating a tendency, for bringing out its nuances, socialism demonstrated it was not prepared for heresy.

And then unimportant things become transformed into important ones. They become exaggerated. You see the damage done by the well-known dissidents in the former Soviet Union, the Solzhenitsyn case. Clearly they were writers of importance. In Cuba we had our Padilla, and so on. One cannot compare the two contexts, but I do believe that one of the lessons we could draw — in terms of propaganda, of image, and mechanisms of stimulation, compulsion, and assimilation — is that sometimes capitalism uses unorthodoxy to limit its scope or to nullify it, sometimes totally unethically. We on the other hand cannot create a method of assimilation that lacks ethics.

I believe there is a problem in Cuba, Nicolás: we frequently lose a sense of proportion. That is, we have been living in such a polarized situation for so many years that, in general, a cultural incident rapidly evolves into a crisis, into a debate that goes beyond the incident itself.

The Padilla case

Q: Would the Padilla case be treated differently today?

A: I am sure it would be. I am convinced that the Padilla case was an error. Of course, it's easy today, in 1993, to stop and criticize errors. I even believe that his book *Fuera de juego* [Out of play] might have simply faded away. But we made it into something with the famous imprisonment of Heberto Padilla for several hours — I don't know how long, but it was very short.

Later Padilla's famous self-criticism became a ridiculous trap that the comrades involved fell into. Very valuable people, revolutionaries, intellectuals, believed that piece of theater, that self-criticism.

A short while ago I saw the film made by Santiago Alvarez, and it would be very good for the young people to see it. We saw it together. But it is very sad, because it is a type of caricature of the Moscow trials.

There are moments of genuine humor in it. In one of these Padilla states he is impressed by those very brilliant leading cadres in State Security, and he asks them: "Where do you dig up such cadres?" Then he relates how the official told him, "Stay here with me." And Padilla looks out a window and sees some Pioneers leaving. And he exclaims, "Now I see how much I was mistaken, how worthless I have been!"

At the time *Casa de las Américas* published a very complete transcript of the famous self-criticism. Really, to believe the thing was truthful, that such a piece of buffoonery could have been sincere, makes one realize the extent of the prevailing climate of collective myopia, or collective delirium. Because as the film ends you see people hugging Padilla. Revolutionary people, good people, hugging Padilla. "You have come back to us!" It was pathetic, truly sad. You leave the film extremely depressed. Didn't that happen to you? You leave depressed because there you have good people, valuable people, caught in the trap of this charlatan. Because while Padilla is a good poet, he is an

⁴ Heberto Padilla was a writer whose arrest in 1971 on unspecified charges sparked protests by many supporters of the revolution around the world. The author issued a public "self-criticism," written in the style of the Moscow trial "confessions" of the 1930s.

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Musicians at cultural center in Santiago de Cuba. "We cannot at present permit art to be utilized as a pretext to attack the revolution," said Cuban leader.

absolute charlatan. His political game was only too obvious.

What about when U.S. hostility stops?

Q: In the United States they raise the following argument: Today Cuba permits, or talks about certain possibilities when U.S. pressure ends; but if that pressure were to stop someday, the regime would feel strong enough to reduce freedom of expression even more in all areas, including in the field of culture. If tomorrow the United States were to end the blockade and stop its hostility, Cuba would then begin to enjoy a security it has never had before in almost 35 years of revolution. What would happen then? Would that strengthen a tendency against democratization of the process, or would it favor it?

A: With regard to culture in specific, Nicolás, there has always been great freedom throughout all these years. With the exception of that period called the "dismal half decade" and one or two other conjunctures, people here have written, directed, and painted whatever they pleased. To deny this would be to deny the truth. We have gone through specific periods, but the Cuban cultural climate has never been repressive, with the exception of that stage when very mediocre people with very dogmatic ideas held positions of leadership in the cultural field.

Of course, in an atmosphere of less hostility, I believe the limits would be much broader; it would be easier to integrate heresy. It would be easier to apply all these mechanisms in a society without pressure, without an enemy that wants to decapitate it, without a group of fascists howling at you from over there. It would be very easy. I will go further: in terms of freedom, I believe it would be easier to chart a more consistent cultural policy without the presence of that enemy pressure, of that hostility.

In any case, to say that the Yankee presence or the blockade has limited freedom of expression of Cuban artists is, I believe, taking things too far. Because in reality the works of art speak for themselves. I have just returned from Holguín, where I attended a concert by a young worker who follows the line of Carlos Varela.⁵ He made a series of statements and reflections that were very profound and very serious. What those young people are doing is as far removed from conformism in art as can be, and in general that is what is being done in Cuba, including at this moment. In other words, the most beautiful thing about this period, from the point of view of cultural creation, is that despite the shortages there has been no change of policy....

Economic emigration

Q: Many of those arriving in Miami say that they left because here they were repressed often for ridiculous reasons. For example, Maggie Carlés says they didn't let her sing "Ave María."

A: "Ave María" is heard here almost to the point of tedium, on television. Then there is the case of Arturo Cuenca, who says that after his disagreement with Car-

los Aldana⁶ he was persecuted. All that has been proven to be a total lie.

We are preparing to publish in *La Gaceta de Cuba* an anthology called "The Price," a play on words of the famous theatrical work. In it we are going to present what is being said in the press in Miami by people like that, followed by what can be read by anyone, exposing the lie. We are going to present it without commentary. We will not do anything that might seem manipulated. It is an anthology, a mini-anthology. There are even some truly humorous things, since they sometimes lack even imagination.

For example, Jesús González de Armas, a very good painter of Indo-Cuban themes who asked for asylum in Paris, had his works shown here extensively. Even the other day there was a wall with a painting of his on the corner of 60th and 31st. Yet what it occurred to him to say, taking advantage of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas, was that his paintings are repressed because they ran counter to the government's line on the 500th anniversary. There is another painter who said the Communist Youth sent someone to be his girlfriend, to spy on him. All these things, worthy of George Orwell, are truly ridiculous, because in reality these people are part of an economic emigration.

Q: And the person who left and says, "I left because I really could not stand the conditions, the sacrifice..."

A: He seems to me a much more authentic type. I respect him more. I gave you the example of the guy with the bicycle. He deserted, and said that what sickened him most was the idea of getting on a bicycle. He is more legitimate than the others.

We are going to publish in *La Gaceta de Cuba* a piece about Jesús Díaz, who was a repressor here, a repressor of Ediciones El Puente. He hunted down homosexuals. For Jesús Díaz there was no "dismal half decade," because during those years he was in the Cuban Film Institute, traveling halfway around the world and making films. Now it turns out he was a victim of "political persecution," that he was ostracized and silenced. He doesn't even have imagination.

The anthology has its dose of humor. There is a musician, a bongo drummer, who states that the union would not sell him a color TV. He seems an honest type. What they did to him was a dirty trick, not selling him a color TV. At least he says what he feels....

The Bible should be in school libraries

At an advanced secondary school in San Antonio, I was approached by a young woman who asked me about the Bible: "Why isn't the Bible in school libraries?" I told her I thought it should be. I explained to her that I thought the Bible could be read as a believer, as a poet, or simply to get to know a book that has a richness that is not only religious, but also historical, literary, and poetic.

I realized there was a group of young

people who were very interested in my response to that question. I told them of the book containing Fidel's conversation with Frei Betto, of *Cantar de los Cantares*, and of the fable of Job. We talked about this for awhile, because I realized that these young people felt a concern about this, that they were evidently believers, or at least they were interested in the Bible in this sense, and they simply wanted to know what the person who was running for deputy in that district thought about that book.

I even told them that the Bible had been the best-selling title at the last book fair, where it broke all sales records.

Of course, we should keep in mind that there are people attracted to religion, because in moments of crisis, religious beliefs grow. That is true. But there is also an element of its being taboo, that is, people who are attracted to religion out of curiosity. If the father of those recalcitrants was an atheist, for example, this might be a prohibited topic.

It was an extremely interesting process, with the people very freely questioning things, and with interchanges that really left a mark. Because an important percentage voted for me; they placed trust in me and in all those who were elected.

Not the slightest political crisis

The interesting thing about all this, what the elections demonstrated, is that in this country there is not a political problem, because there is not the slightest political crisis. Our problem is economic.

The revolution has a level of support, including by those living under extremely difficult conditions, those being hit by the problems of daily life, those lacking soap, those having nothing to wash dishes with, new mothers with nothing to clean diapers with.

But people stop—I don't know whether consciously or unconsciously—at a type of sacred line, a sacred zone, to use a title by Carlos Fuentes, between being irritated and placing oneself in opposition to the revolution. There is a sacred, magic space that the overwhelming majority of Cubans do not wish to cross under any circumstance.

That explains everything. That explains May Day, the enormous vote, the enormous consensus behind the revolutionary leadership, behind Fidel.

First of all, people know what the revolution did. Secondly, even the youngest ones sense that the country's structural and economic problems will not be solved by capitalism.

I am asked how the young people know this. First, because of the extremely high level of political education; second, through an elementary reading of what has occurred. I know many people who at first, when *perestroika* began, were enamored with that idea. Here, in intellectual circles, Gorbachev had a lot of sympathy.

But now, in the face of what has hap-

⁷ Abel Prieto was a candidate for Cuba's National Assembly in the first popular election for National Assembly held Feb. 24, 1993. This vote was widely viewed as a referendum on the revolution, as opponents called for submitting blank or spoiled ballots. Nationwide, 88 percent of the ballots cast were valid and included votes for the full slate of candidates.

pened, you will find no one who thinks this is the way. You can find people who have lost faith in our road, who believe it is a beautiful effort yet impossible, unrealizable. You can find such people who have distanced themselves and are thinking of their personal fate, of saving themselves, and who have forgotten the nation. But people who have a capitalist program for this country? No.

All they have to do is look at what happened in Nicaragua, what happened in Panama, and in those countries that are reconstructing capitalism. And they are reconstructing it not like we would if at some point we thought of doing so. They are reconstructing it with many more resources, with an industrial base. Where have those processes led to? Things are seen much more clearly now.

From the economic point of view, the elections [in Cuba] were conducted at the worst moment; but from the political and ideological point of view, they were conducted when things were already clear.

Importance of internationalism

There is another element, however. The young people in this country, on an unprecedented scale, know about the Third World. More than half a million Cubans have gone to Africa, Angola, Ethiopia, to Nicaragua, as soldiers. To places where children die like flies, where the level of malnutrition is frightful. They know what capitalism is in its special period, in its most crude phase, its most ferocious and cruel phase. There have been soldiers, teachers, doctors who experienced it in real life. This is a country where the ideas of internationalism have thoroughly pervaded society. This must be kept in mind.

Of course, we had precedents. Cuba was the country that sent the most people per capita to fight for republican Spain. Martí went to war not only for Cuba, but for Puerto Rico, for the continent, and for the equilibrium of the world. Martí's ideas were not provincial or insular.

We held a formal ceremony for the burial of the internationalists. If the Soviets had done that for those killed in Afghanistan, it would have turned into a mass demonstration against the government. Here it became a mass demonstration in support of the revolution.

They died over there, far away, in Angola, yet it was as if they had died at Girón. Because internationalism is pervasive. It has been a contribution of the Cuban revolution to the collective ideas, to the collective psychology.

You even see how people greet the solidarity groups. It is extremely important for people in Cuba to feel that their resistance here is important, that it has meaning for others. In another country, people think about how to solve their own problems; the individual is a fragment. Here the people have pride in the nation. It is true that there are areas that have deteriorated morally. Scarcity creates moral deterioration in some areas. You see it around the hotels, the people who rob, the growing problem of the black market.

Our challenge is to reach the point where the spirit of February 24 is achieved at work every day. That joy of being Cuban, of resisting. A type of deep pride, deeply imbedded by the revolution that so many generations have built.

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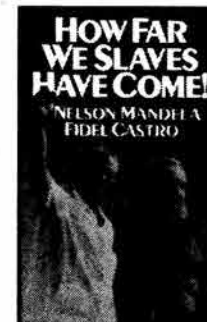
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⁵ Carlos Varela is a young Cuban musician and composer.

⁶ Carlos Aldana was a central leader of the Communist Party of Cuba, dismissed from his post in September 1992.

1934 textile strike on PBS

BY PETER THIERJUNG

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — "The Uprising of '34," a documentary about the largest single strike in the history of the United States — the general textile strike of 1934 — will air June 27 on Public Broadcasting Stations across the country at 10 p.m. Eastern Time. It will be shown in North Carolina on July 1. The film will prove interesting for readers of the *Militant*.

More than 400,000 textile workers, mostly in the South, participated in the strike, writing a heroic chapter in the history of the working-class movement in the United States. Misled and betrayed by union officials, the three-week strike ended in a horrible defeat that set back organized labor in the South and the struggle to overthrow Jim Crow racial segregation.

The film features interviews with workers, unionists, employers, and other participants who tell the story in their own words. Archival film footage brings the strike alive for viewers.

The documentary has been shown in North and South Carolina, stirring up some controversy. Matt Redinger, a local academic, charged that officials of the Greensboro Historical Museum rejected showing the film because some of the institution's most generous patrons are textile mill owners.

George Stoney, a producer and director of the documentary, charges that a teacher was fired by Spartanburg Technical College in South Carolina for planning a non-credit course that would have included a discussion about unions and a showing of "The Uprising of '34." College president Jack Powers defended the firing "in the interest of providing a neutral, academic setting," according to the January 24 *Greenville News*.

Immigrants in prison rebel

Continued from Page 4

never outside, not once," said Suzanne Kideni, a 24-year-old Sudanese refugee. "I was taken to a dorm," she said, describing her arrival at the immigration detention center to the *New York Times*. "It had 28 people. The toilets were near the dining tables. There was no privacy." Kideni said her own garments were confiscated and she was given other clothing — including soiled underwear.

There are reports of sexual and other physical abuse. Shirley Griffin, a former security guard employed at Esmor, said she watched male guards spy on naked female detainees as they showered in an uncurtained area. Griffin said she was fired for refusing to go along with the abuse.

The immigration detention center at Elizabeth is one of 10 detention centers run by the Esmor Correctional Services Inc., of Melville, New York, a privately owned business that does sub-contract work for the INS. Records show that it generated \$24 million in revenue and \$1 million in profits last year.

Abusive conditions existed right from the start at the Elizabeth facility, which opened in August 1994. Prisoners staged a hunger strike in November.

INS spokesperson Michael Manuel said the day after the uprising that the agency plans to continue to operate the Esmor facility after it is repaired. "I don't know where people get the idea it's the Black Hole of Calcutta," he said.

—CALENDAR—

UTAH

Salt Lake City

Cuba Today. The fight for Dignity and National Sovereignty. Speaker: Andrés Gómez, a national coordinator of the National Network on Cuba, and editor of the magazine *Areito*. Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m. Little Theatre, Olpin Student Union, University of Utah. Sponsored by the Department of Sociology and Alpha Kappa Delta.

Reception for Andrés Gómez. Sat., July 1, 6:30 p.m. Centro Cívico, 155 South 600 West. For more information on both events, call: (801) 583-9650.

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Report Back from March and Rally in Decatur, Illinois, in Support of Auto Workers on Strike Against Caterpillar. Speaker: Maceo Dixon, Socialist Workers Party, member, International Association of Machinists Local 1726. Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Protest Meeting: Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sat., July 1, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Av. (east side of Hwy. 280, on 16A bus line). Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Stop the Death Penalty. Stop Police Brutality. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Speakers: Pam Africa, International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Representative, Pennsylvania Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty; Sundiata Ajamu Adisa, Alkebu Lan Nation Inc.; Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Protest Political Frame-ups and FBI Harassment. Speakers: Ron Lessard, director of the Leonard Peltier Freedom Campaign in Wash-

ington, D.C.; Jane Henderson, co-director, Quixote Center; Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party, member United Transportation Union Local 454 Fri., June 30, 7:30 p.m. 1802 Belmont Rd. NW. Donation: \$4 donation. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

No to Sanctions Against Iran! Speaker: Eugen Lepou, recently returned from a trip to Iran. Sat., July 1, 7 p.m. 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281-3297.

BRITAIN

Manchester

Stop Police Harassment: A Working-Class Answer. Panel discussion. Fri., June 30, 7 p.m. 1st Floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: (0161) 839 1766.

Moscow pressed to halt Chechnya war

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"I declare in front of the press that all military actions in Chechnya will be halted," Russian prime minister Victor Chernomyrdin told Chechen leader Shamil Basayev June 18 in a televised phone conversation. The Russian government was compelled to order a cease-fire after two botched attempts to storm a hospital in Budennovsk, Russia, where Chechen commandos held as many as 2,000 hostages. Chernomyrdin guaranteed safe passage for the Chechens as Russian officials flew to Grozny, the Chechen capital, to start broader peace talks with Chechen rebel leaders that began June 19.

Chechen fighters attacked Budennovsk, a southern Russian city of 100,000 people, June 14. According to the Itar-Tass news agency, the Chechen fighters had threatened to kill all the hostages "unless the Russian military immediately stops hostilities in Chechnya." More than 140 people, including Russian soldiers and police, were killed in the failed attempts to take the hospital.

Moscow's problems in Chechnya reflect the political crisis wracking the Russian government. Russian troops have occupied the Caucasian republic since they launched a bloody war December 11 to crush the Chechens' three-year struggle for independence from Moscow.

Many Russian workers blame Russian president Boris Yeltsin for the conflict. Two hundred people demonstrated June 16 outside a local police station demanding an end to the war in Chechnya.

"I blame the government, from President Yeltsin to the local administration,"

said Nikolai Melnichenko, whose wife spoke at the protest and whose son was held hostage. "They are all so corrupt. They do nothing and would sell anything for money," he added.

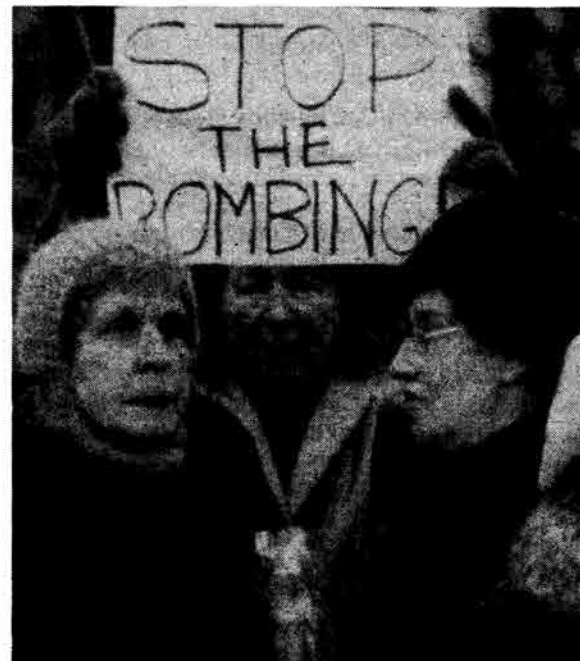
"Let the Chechens live as they want and fight as they want," said Zina Arzimanova, who works at a local health clinic. "It would be better if our troops came back from Chechnya to protect us here, on our own land."

In another development, Maj. Gen. Valery Yevnevich, who was sent to head Russia's 14th Army in the Trans-Dniester region of Moldova, was forced out June 17 by vehement protests from Moldovan women. Yevnevich was to replace Gen. Aleksandr Lebed, who resigned earlier in June. Lebed had supported autonomy for Trans-Dniester.

"Yevnevich go home! Lebed is the only guarantor of peace in the region!" read the signs of the women picketing the garrison hostel where Yevnevich was staying.

Yeltsin returned to Moscow June 18 from a meeting of the Group of Seven (G-7) imperialist countries in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he sought to maintain support for Moscow's assault on the Chechen people. Yeltsin told reporters at the summit, "My friend Bill" supports Moscow's slaughter in Chechnya.

Clinton, who continues to back the



A soldiers' mothers group at a rally in Moscow protesting the war in Chechnya.

regime in Moscow, tried to put Yeltsin at arms length on this one. According to the *New York Times*, the U.S. president "took pains to say he differed with Mr. Yeltsin's characterization of his position on the Chechnya conflict."

Early in the G-7 meeting, the government officials there issued a statement saying the "situation in Chechnya should not be resolved by military means." The summit's concluding statement, however, which Moscow joined, made no mention of Chechnya.

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Law 'n order — Enforcing a zero-tolerance ban on weapons, school officials in Providence, Rhode Island, suspended a kindergarten for 10 days. He had



Harry Ring

brought a table knife to school to cut cookies.

McMicro — McDonald's is moving toward preparing its food in central locations and reheating

it in restaurants. They say this will boost profits and improve safety. Folks with big vocabularies would call that an oxymoron.

Think you've seen everything? — A Panamanian company is marketing a new beer in Britain — "Che Fruta." The company hopes to cash in on the name of the Cuban revolutionary leader, plus a hint of natural fruit flavor. Because the fruit flavor is imported from Cuba, it runs into the U.S. embargo. So the label proclaims: "NOT FOR THE U.S.: Fruit lager."

How about a Che pamphlet with each six-pack? — "The problem with fruity beers is that

they have an awful image. We think that combining the fruitiness with a revolutionary figure like Che gives the beer a seriousness." — The European sales director for "Che Fruta."

Sure, give 'em a promotion — In Cincinnati, 250 cops marched on city hall protesting the five-day suspension of two officers who were filmed beating and kicking a teenager and spraying him with Mace.

Hey man, it's a free market — Washington agreed to buy \$12 billion worth of weapons-grade uranium from Russia and resell it as nuclear reactor fuel. Now the U.S. government is trying to chop the agreed-on price. Viktor

Mikhailov, Russia's atomic energy minister, threatened to ice the deal. He said, "I tell them, 'Excuse me, this is robbery in broad daylight.'"

Greatest thing since Chernobyl — Meanwhile, U.S. and Russian representatives met in Los Alamos, New Mexico, to discuss the future of plutonium. Declared a Russian rep: "We consider plutonium the top achievement of mankind. On the one hand it's a great danger. On the other, it's a great asset."

Sweet — The prices are reported daily in the *Wall Street Journal*, but the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority paid the Wall St.

firm Lazard Freres \$7.5 million over the market price for government securities. In one deal, MTA paid Lazard \$2.6 million extra for a packet and then sold them back for \$1.6 million less than the going price. At the time, Lazard was financial adviser to the MTA.

Still on her toes — Leona Helmsley, the New York hotel operator who was jailed for tax fraud, was ordered to do community service, which she delegated to the servants at her Arizona home.

They wrapped hundreds of small boxes for a local hospital fund pitch. One worker said Helmsley asked how long it took to wrap each box.

U.S. rulers step up use of death penalty weapon

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Varnall Weeks, who prosecution and defense experts alike agreed was mentally ill, was executed May 12, 1995, in Alabama. Weeks was the ninth Black inmate among the 12 people put to death by the state of Alabama since it reinstated capital punishment in 1983.

The capitalist rulers have begun cranking up their legalized murder machine. There are more than 3,000 inmates on death row across the country. Since the reinstatement of capital punishment in 1976, 284 people have been executed. There have been 27 executions carried out in the United States so far this year, an average of one a week. New York became the 38th state to legalize capital punishment March 7 of this year.

In a report issued Jan. 14, 1995, Amnesty International accused the U.S. government of executing innocent and mentally ill people. It stated that more than 50 mentally ill or impaired prisoners have been executed in the United States since 1982.

Horace Grant, a 28-year-old Black man, was still alive nine minutes after the first throw of the switch to the electric chair he was strapped to in Atmore, Alabama, July 14, 1989. After 19 minutes and a second jolt of current he was pronounced dead. Grant became the first person executed in the United States after the Supreme Court upheld the death penalty for mentally retarded prisoners earlier that year.

Girvies Davis, who was given three lethal chemical injections on May 17, was convicted on confessions the cops claim he offered to make in a written note to his jailers. The prosecutor admitted the note was written by someone else.

Davis suffered brain damage in childhood and had been considered mentally retarded. He was illiterate at the time of his arrest — a fact not made known to jurors — and was taken on a late night ride by the police to an isolated spot where they removed his handcuffs. The cops made him an offer: try running away, or sign the papers presented to him.

The Supreme Court struck down all existing death penalty statutes in 1972, on the heels of the titanic struggles of Blacks for civil rights and in the midst of the mass movement against the Vietnam War. Almost immediately state governments began passing death penalty laws to get around the Court's reinterpretation of the Eighth Amendment, which bars "cruel and unusual punishment." While campaigning for the reinstitution of the death penalty in 1972, then California governor Ronald Reagan cynically stated, "I think there is cruelty when you execute a chicken to have a Sunday dinner."

On July 2, 1976, the Supreme Court declared that the death penalty does not violate the Constitution after all.

Gary Gilmore, convicted of murder in Utah, was the first person to be executed in more than a decade — by a firing squad — Jan. 17, 1977. The killing of Gilmore set a precedent and dealt a setback to the long struggle to do away with this barbaric form of punishment.

Racist character of death penalty

According to the National Data Book from the U.S. Department of Commerce, from 1930 to 1991 there were 4,016 people executed. Of the executed inmates,

2,129 were Black — 53 percent. More than 40 percent of inmates on death row are Black, more than three times the Black percentage of the population. Almost 40 percent of the 284 people killed since 1976 were Blacks.

Rep. Don Edwards of California issued a report entitled "Racial Disparities in Federal Death Penalty Prosecutions." The report states, "Since 1988, 33 of the 37 federal death penalty prosecutions — including all of those approved by Attorney General Janet Reno" — involved oppressed nationalities. Nearly 90 percent of the men executed in the states for the crime of rape since 1930 have been Black.

A humane way to kill?

Proponents of the death penalty attempt to burnish some of its barbarity with the introduction of lethal injection. "It's the tamest violence you can imagine, because there's no bruising, there's no force, there's no physical restriction of the airways," asserted Robert Johnson, chairman of Justice, Law and Society at American University. Twenty-six states now inject, up from four in 1980. Doctors are included on execution teams, supposedly to ensure efficiency.

An Arkansas medical team needed 45 minutes to put away Ricky Rector, a mentally disabled man, in 1992. Soon-to-be U.S. president Bill Clinton flew home from campaigning in New Hampshire to be present for the execution.

Willie Turner, who was executed by lethal injection in May of this year, was scheduled to die six times in his 15 years on death row in Virginia. He argued that the repeated trips to the "death house" violated the Constitution's prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.

"Two times the guards have gone out of their way to show me the electric chair," Turner wrote in his unpublished autobiography, *My Times in the Death House*. "As your date gets closer, the execution squad practices more and more. They test the electric chair. Because it is in the room right next door, I could hear it crack and hum." Turner described the "sickening odor of burnt flesh and disinfectant" as inmates were being electrocuted.

Weapon against fighting workers

In 1934, mass strikes that involved 700,000 workers paved the way for the organization of the industrial unions and the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

The single year record of 199 executions was set in 1935, during the Great Depression. In that decade 1,667 people were put away — accounting for 41 percent of all executions from 1930 to 1991. Franklin Roosevelt, who took office in 1933, was president for the rest of the 1930s and led the United States into the slaughter of World War II.

As if anticipating similar class battles ahead, the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan anti-crime bill February 8 that deepens the assault on workers' rights. One of the measures in the bill restricts the rights of inmates to file habeas corpus appeals. If signed into law the bill would give inmates six months to file in the federal court and limit them to a single petition. Clinton's 1994 crime bill expands the death penalty to about 60 federal offenses, while Congress seeks to



Militant/Maggie Perrier

Chicago protest against execution of Girvies Davis, who was killed May 17, 1995.

make it easier for jurors to impose the death penalty.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Senate passed the Comprehensive Terrorism Prevention Act of 1995 on June 7. The bill would give most death row inmates one year from

their conviction to appeal their sentences in Federal court and limit them to one appeal. "This bill goes far beyond terrorism and far beyond federal prisoners," said Sen. Edward Kennedy, a Democrat who voted for the bill.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



AUSTIN — A U.S. district court in Dallas ruled June 17 that the Texas abortion laws are unconstitutional because "the fundamental right of single women and married persons to choose whether to have children is protected by the Ninth Amendment through the Fourteenth Amendment." The court also ruled that the Texas abortion laws are "unconstitutionally overbroad."

While abortion laws in other states have been declared unconstitutional for various causes, the Texas ruling is the first to assert that women have a basic right to control their own childbearing functions.

Women's liberation activists across the state had supported the case, through petitioning, informational fact sheets and picketing in support of the case at the Dallas courthouse. Members of women's liberation groups were generally pleased at the ruling, but disappointed that an injunction against the enforcement of the unconstitutional law was denied.



June 30, 1945

The recent death of eight Mexican track workers who were crushed beneath the

wheels of an express train on the New York Central Railroad at Amsterdam, N.Y. brings to light the brutal methods employed by U.S. capitalism in the exploitation of foreign labor.

None of the eight workers could understand English. They were put to work on a two-track system which they did not understand. There was no foreman present and no watchers had been posted to warn of oncoming trains. No interpreter had been assigned to the gang. An investigation followed the "accident." A charge of criminal negligence was considered, but the coroner, John W. Morris, issued a statement saying that the evidence found was "carelessness!"

These eight workers were part of a contingent of 60,000 track workers and 40,000 farmhands sent to work in the U.S. as the result of a deal between the U.S. Department of Labor and the Mexican government. Another 35,000 men will be sent in "batches," according to a report issued by officials in Mexico City who added, "This total of 150,000 Mexican workers will be returned to their homes as soon as the labor shortage in the United States is relieved by returning soldiers."

These Mexican workers, recruited by promises of high wages and good living and working conditions, are forced to do the most difficult and dangerous work without protection of either union organization or State and Federal laws covering the conditions of labor.

Truly capitalism squeezes every ounce of "value" out of these exploited workers from South of the Border. What a glorious day of reckoning will come when the workers and poor farmers of Mexico and the United States join in solidarity for united struggle against capitalism!

Keep supporting CAT strikers

Caterpillar strikers, along with many supporters, marked the one-year anniversary of their walkout with a demonstration of 2,000 June 21 in front of the company's headquarters in Peoria, Illinois. The night before, 350 Caterpillar strikers staged a mass picket at the Mapleton plant. These actions and others being planned are a fitting reminder to the company and to many others in the employing class that despite the obstacles thousands of United Auto Workers (UAW) members continue to be determined fighters.

In spite of the constant harping by spokespersons of big business on the demise of the labor movement and the Caterpillar walkout, and the blow that was struck with the defeat of the United Rubber Workers in their strike against Bridgestone/Firestone, the Caterpillar strike is not a settled matter. The recent actions of UAW strikers shows there is still a lot of fight left.

The battle of Caterpillar workers against union busting has been at the center of labor's resistance to the bosses' attacks on the working class for some time. A lot remains at stake in the outcome. "This struggle goes beyond getting a contract at Caterpillar," one UAW member explained to the *Militant* as the strike began last year. The employers "are trying to lower the living standards of all working people and they're trying to destroy unions to do it."

The world's largest maker of earth-moving equipment wants to break a major industrial union. This has been the company's overriding goal for the past four years. The latest strike followed a widespread campaign of harassment and provocations against union militants.

Ever since Caterpillar workers set up picket lines in November 1991, the *Militant* has given prominent coverage to this important battle and called on the labor movement, youth, farmers, and all working people to rally in defense of the UAW members on strike. We have explained that this strike is part of the broader struggle of working people around the world against the employers' attempts to protect their profits and make us pay for the crisis of the capitalist system.

Solidarity with the strikers at Caterpillar should remain at the top of the agenda for fight-minded workers and rebellious youth. Traveling to Illinois to join strikers at rallies and picket lines and spreading the word about their battle can help push back Caterpillar's anti-union campaign and make it possible to get UAW members back in the plants with their union intact. That would be a gain for the labor movement in this hard-fought battle.

As the *Militant* said as the walkout began a year ago, "The Caterpillar workers have proudly taken their place in the front lines of the battle against the employers' offensive." Their fight deserves ongoing support.

Equal rights for immigrants!

"We're here to show they can't get rid of us that easily," said a protester against "Operation SouthPAW," a coordinated raiding operation by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in the Southeast. The immigration cops have dubbed their raids "Protect America's Workers" to sucker native-born working people into supporting them. But that ruse is part of the bosses' attacks on workers as a whole.

Resistance to attacks on immigrants' rights is growing too. Thousands marched against the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California last year. On May 29, 40 people picketed outside the INS offices in Chicago after the 11th raid in the Chicago area since February. Hundreds of immigrants jailed at the privately-run Esmor detention center in New Jersey rebelled June 18 against the inhuman conditions imposed on them by the INS and prison officials.

Immigrant workers in growing numbers will refuse to accept subhuman treatment and rightless status. This is a blow to the aims of the employing class. They view working people as animals, beasts of burden, who deserve no rights, especially those of us born abroad. By branding a section of the working class "illegal aliens," the employers and government seek to dehumanize millions of people and convince the working class that it is acceptable to treat fellow workers worse than dogs.

The boss class exploits divisions among working people to drive down the value of our labor power as a whole. They and their political servants have absolutely no intention of deporting all "illegals."

As economic and social conditions deteriorate worldwide, big-business politicians from Europe to North America scapegoat immigrant workers as the source of society's ills.

In France, where unemployment rates top 12 percent, 3.3 million workers are registered as unemployed, with 2.2 million driven off the payrolls of large companies striving for higher productivity. In the context of this social crisis, politicians of the fascist National Front party won several mayoral seats June 18. These rightists ran campaigns blaming immigrants for crime and joblessness.

Anti-immigrant demagoguery will remain a central political question for the labor movement. As capitalism's world disorder grows, millions more will be driven from their homes, as refugees of poverty, persecution, and war. The working class is an international class — and will become more so.

Defense of equal rights for immigrants must become the watchword of the labor movement. Our class is stronger today because of its growing international composition in every country.

The labor movement should stand behind the protests against immigration raids and defend those who rebel against intolerable conditions. Solidarity and internationalism are the way forward for the working class. Ultimately workers and farmers will have to replace this dog-eat-dog system with a socialist society.

For a world without borders!
Equal rights for immigrants!

Reject the bosses' trade wars

Tensions, crises, and disagreements marked the recent meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, of the seven imperialist powers that make up the Group of Seven. The gathering highlighted that to defend the profits of their respective ruling classes these capitalist governments are driven to more intense competition, not cooperation.

From the point of view of the capitalists there is overproduction in the world. They also face downward pressure on prices and are in a race to steal market share.

The representatives of capital use whatever means are at hand in this conflict. Washington is providing a perfect example with its trade sanctions to force Tokyo to accommodate U.S. business interests. "Buy my cars or else," was the title of one article in the *Economist* summing up the situation.

Imposing trade sanctions is one form of the U.S. government stepping up its use of political and military clout to force its desired economic ends. The Japanese government could retaliate, and it has threatened to do so. But Washington is banking on the bottom line calculation that in any trade war it has more weight to throw around, including militarily.

While the bosses fight it out among each other they are also trying to enlist the working class on their side. It's a fight for American jobs, says Washington, while Tokyo claims it's guarding employment in Japan. Top officials of the United Auto Workers union echo the bosses on these matters and are cheering on Washington. Meanwhile, as Japanese and U.S. capitalists claw at one

another, they are also going after the wages and job conditions of workers in their own countries. From Japan to Europe capitalists are downsizing, cutting wages, and speeding up production to catch up with the similar measures U.S. bosses have been carrying out for more than a decade.

"Sacrifice," workers are being told, to save the company. But many U.S. workers have learned that concessions to the bosses gain nothing, and demands for more sacrifice are sure to follow. The only effective way to defend ourselves is to insist that we have a right to a job and decent pay, and fight to demand that society's resources are used to guarantee that.

The Halifax conference accentuated the weakness of the imperialist powers, not their strength. Working people can put up effective resistance and hold back the attacks on our rights if we stick together and keep our fire on the bosses.

Throughout Latin America government plans to privatize companies, with accompanying wage cuts and layoffs, are being slowed by growing protests. In many parts of Europe workers are putting up a fight for jobs and higher pay. The fight against union busting by workers on strike against Caterpillar is another example of the working class's capacity to put up resistance.

The employers and their governments spend a lot of time and money trying to convince us we can't do much of anything against them, but more and more the evidence is we can.

Caterpillar strike

Continued from Page 5

from throughout the region will participate in a solidarity rally in Decatur. That action is sponsored by UAW Local 751 and two other Decatur unions that have been involved in labor struggles — United Paperworkers International Union Local 7837, locked out by A.E. Staley Mfg. Co., and United Rubber Workers Local 713, which recently ended its 10-month strike against Bridgestone/Firestone.

At the Peoria rally, Clingan expressed outrage over a violent outburst by Jerry Brust, one of Caterpillar's top labor negotiators. On June 16 Mary Snyder, the wife of a striking UAW local 974 member, and her 11-year old son, Jesse Snyder, were picketing outside Caterpillar's headquarters. When Brust, accompanied by two Vance Security guards, exited the building, Jesse attempted to take a souvenir snapshot of him.

In response, Brust turned around and struck the youth across the face with a clipboard he was carrying, knocking a UAW hat from the boy's head, pushing the camera into his face, and scratching his glasses.

During the program, leaders from Illinois UAW Caterpillar locals spoke. They included Roger Brown of UAW Local 145 in Aurora; John Deodtman, vice president of UAW Local 751 in Decatur; and John Hammill, vice president of UAW Local 2096 in Pontiac.

Dave Durbin, vice president of UAW Local 974, read messages from elected officials, including U.S. vice president Al Gore. In addition, he read excerpts from a speech by President Bill Clinton that was shown via satellite to the UAW convention.

As the workers rallied, UAW officials, including the presidents of striking UAW locals in Illinois, were in Detroit attending meetings at the national union headquarters. Stephen Yokich, newly elected president of the UAW, said settlement of the Caterpillar strike is a "top priority."

"It's a shame on Caterpillar and, quite frankly, it's a shame on us that we haven't reached a settlement," said Yokich. "And maybe both of us have to look in the mirror and take a step back and go to the bargaining table."

Bob Dunn, a terminated Caterpillar worker from Peoria, ended the rally by introducing the illegally terminated workers to the crowd. "Our solidarity will prevail over theirs," he said. The strikers yelled back, "One day longer."

Frank Forrestal is a member of UAW Local 551 in Chicago. Steven Bloodworth is a member of the Graphic Communications International Union in Peoria.

Conflict marks G-7

Continued from Page 3

financing be set aside. Subsequently he announced that the U.S. government would raise funds among other nations to help pay for the force.

The trade dispute between Tokyo and Washington also came up at the summit. Several representatives from the states gathered said that enacting the impending trade sanctions against Japan by the Clinton administration would give them problems. Clinton brushed off the discussion but made it clear he had no intention of backing off.

Aiming to keep the heat on Japan, the White House announced June 19 plans to bar Japanese airlines from some of their cargo routes unless Tokyo agreed to allow Federal Express access to several more routes for its cargo flights. U.S. companies get a sizable chunk of such business in Japan and are pushing for more, citing terms of a treaty signed while Japan was occupied by the U.S. Army after World War II.

In a signal of what they believe is in store for many Third World nations, the thing all the governments present did agree to was a package that would supposedly prevent another financial crisis on the scale of Mexico's devaluation of the peso. The International Monetary Fund will require countries to disclose the state of their finances, a way of pressuring governments to shift policies by denying them access to international financing if the figures don't meet the approval of international bankers and businessmen. The proposal also included doubling the funds available to quickly shore up a currency if a downhill ball gets rolling somewhere that could threaten wider instability in the world market. The U.S. government, in particular, pushed to double the \$28 billion General Arrangements to Borrow Fund. "The U.S. is not able to be a lender of last resort in other crises of this kind," Clinton said, referring to billions of dollars Washington put up to stabilize the Mexican peso and thereby protect the U.S. dollar.

Corrections

The article "Workers in Argentina fight for jobs and pay" in *Militant* issue no. 25 dated June 26, 1995, omitted the full name and identification of José Pihén. He is the general secretary of the Union of Public Employees in Córdoba, Argentina.

In the same issue on page three, the article "YS building festival to defend Cuban revolution" incorrectly stated the dates of the convention of the Socialist Workers Party. The convention will be in Oberlin, Ohio, July 8-12.

Kmart workers rally for contract, equal rights

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important

the distribution center in Greensboro. Right?" he asked, holding the phone out to the crowd as the workers shouted their approval.

ACTWU officials in Greensboro have reported that workers at the Sparks, Nevada, Kmart distribution center have contacted ACTWU to inquire about joining the union.

ON THE PICKET LINE

struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Workers at the Kmart distribution center in Greensboro, North Carolina, continued their actions against the company's unequal treatment of workers here with a plant-gate rally of about 100 people at the afternoon shift change May 24. The majority of workers are members of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Local 2603 who are fighting for a union contract at the warehouse. Negotiations have been dragging on for more than one and a half years. The main point of the rally was to protest the worse vacation benefits, overtime pay, and attendance policy that prevails in Greensboro compared to almost all other Kmart warehouses. The rally was preceded by a two-day petition drive.

Mike Thompson, a day-shift worker, carried a sign in Spanish to appeal to Mexican workers, who are relatively new hires. "We had a nice rally. I think we ought to do this sort of thing more often, like every other day, to get their attention," he said.

Three area newspapers and two television stations covered the event. Some second-shift workers who took part in the rally marched into work together chanting union slogans. One of the highlights of the demonstration occurred when Wil Bethea, an activist in shipping, called corporate headquarters in Troy, Michigan, holding a cellular phone in one hand and a bullhorn in the other. With television cameras rolling and the unionists gathered around, Bethea told a secretary of one of Kmart's top executives, "We want to know why we're being discriminated against and treated unfairly here at

Washington strikers demand union, dignity

Some 145 predominantly Hispanic workers struck Valley Manufacturing Housing, the largest employer in Sunnyside, Washington, May 19. The carpenters, electricians, welders, and general laborers are seeking union representation with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners (UBC).

The strike was sparked when four workers asked for pay raises. The company summarily fired them, then held an assembly where it told all employees that anyone seeking a wage hike or union representation should quit. Thirty-four workers walked out to protest the firing and the ultimatum and threw up a picket line. The next day they were joined by the rest of the workforce.

The workers have been fighting for better wages and conditions. In January they began seeking UBC representation.

"They treat us like dogs and donkeys," said one worker who left the job after suffering a serious back injury. Another worker was recently shot in the head by a nail gun, which — like all the others in the factory — fires automatically and has no safety mechanism. The bosses refused to call an ambulance and told a secretary to drive him to the hospital.

Workers report that starting pay is \$5 an hour and it takes three years to reach the top of the pay scale for most people in the plant — \$6.25 an hour.

The strikers are using the nearby United Farm Workers headquarters to help organize their fight. Pickets have faced police harassment, including macing.

The company has hired 80 strikebreakers. Workers have offered to return to the factory unconditionally, but the company is



Kmart workers rally outside Greensboro, North Carolina, warehouse May 24. The unionists demand contract and equal benefits with workers in other Kmart distribution centers around the United States.

refusing, and strikers are staying united. The strikers are asking that contributions be sent to: Strike Fund, 712 N. Seventh Ave., Yakima, WA, 98901.

Alitalia grounded by pilots strike in Rome

In the latest of a series of intermittent strikes by workers at Alitalia, the Italian airline, pilots held a work stoppage June 15. Police were called into Leonardo da Vinci Airport in Rome to restore order among some of the 3,000 disgruntled passengers. Most flights were grounded — 130 were canceled outright and long delays were reported on those that did depart. Pilots, flight attendants, and other workers have been resisting the state-owned carrier's attempt to slash labor costs, including the leasing of carriers and crews from outside Italy.

Dock workers strike and win pay raise in Brazil

Latin America's largest port was paralyzed by a strike June 12-13, when 6,400 dock workers in Santos, Brazil, walked off the job for higher pay. Workers voted to end their strike after accepting an offer from the state for a 33 percent cost-of-living raise and an

additional 7 percent hike for productivity and other benefits. The strike had left 26 ships unattended and 27 more waiting for a berth at the port, which usually handles 65,000 tons of cargo a day.

On the second day of the Santos strike, dock workers in Rio de Janeiro and four other ports in Rio de Janeiro state joined the strike. The 6,000 additional workers, who walked out after failing to win their demands for a cost-of-living raise and productivity increase in negotiations, continued their work stoppage after the settlement was reached in Santos.

The average monthly wage of dock workers in Brazil is \$230.

Decatur unionists win support in Pittsburgh

Two unionists from Decatur, Illinois, concluded a successful one-week tour of the Pittsburgh area June 15. Brian McDuffy, a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 751 on strike against Caterpillar Inc., and Royal Plankenhorn of United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 7837, which has been locked out by A.E. Staley Manufacturing, made the trip. United Steelworkers of America (USWA) District 10 sponsored the tour.

The two workers addressed the Butler County Labor Council and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 10, just north of the city. They visited UAW Local 544 at Fisher Body and raised \$800 in union T-shirt sales.

They also spoke before USWA locals at the USX Clairton Works and Allegheny Ludlum plant in Leechburg, Pennsylvania, where a successful strike against concessions occurred last year. Both locals agreed to do plant-gate collections later in the month.

In addition, the Decatur workers spoke before two membership meetings of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local Lodge 1976 representing USAir workers. The local donated \$2,000 and bought \$1,500 in shirts to be raffled off at the union picnic later in the summer.

McDuffy urged people to attend the June 25 labor rally in Decatur and encouraged the unions to pool resources to get a bus to the action.

The following people contributed to this week's column: M.J. Rahn, member of ACTWU Local 2603 in Greensboro; Scott Breen, member of IAM Local 289 in Seattle; and Edwin Fruit, member of IAM Local 1976 in Pittsburgh.

LETTERS

Machinists aid Irish

On June 3, about 25 people took part in a Walkathon for Irish Freedom sponsored by Irish Northern Aid and Saoirse. This annual event focused this year on raising money for a campaign to release Irish political prisoners held in British and U.S. prisons. The majority of participants were students from local campuses such as Loyola and Northern Illinois University who were able to discuss how to build new and existing Saoirse groups among students.

There was general agreement that the cease-fire had made it possible for more people to discuss and participate in Irish solidarity.

Quite a few of the marchers had an opportunity to hear Gerry Adams when he was in Chicago and thought he'd given a clear presentation of the struggle going on over there.

An example of the growing openness to the struggle in Ireland since the cease-fire happened was at O'Hare Airport, when 18 members of International Association of Machinists Local 1487 in the

Northwest Airline terminal raised \$63 to sponsor me on the walk. They didn't know that despite giving permission for Gerry Adams to tour the United States, the Clinton administration was targeting Irish activists for deportation and held others in prison. Many saw the Irish struggle as a religious one thanks to British disinformation.

One worker wondered why Ireland wanted to separate from the United Kingdom. "How could such small communities survive?" Being forced to stand together at gunpoint is not the same as deciding for yourself whether unity is a good or bad thing to do.

Thus workers responded to the call for freeing Irish political prisoners and Irish self-determination, once the truth is out.

Dave Lee
Chicago, Illinois

Invaluable contribution

I receive my weekly edition of the paper on audiotape because I have a low-vision impairment. I want to take this opportunity to recognize the contribution made



by an active supporter of the Socialist Workers Party in Seattle, Jim Miller. Jim, in consultation with the Militant staff, records the Militant every Friday, and mails it out in special postage-free containers for the blind to those Militant readers whose eye problems prevent them from reading the print edition.

Having listened to many cas-

settes and talking books, I can attest to the high quality of Jim's reading: It is faultless, professional and lively. Jim is a full-time industrial worker, and devotes at least four to six hours per week to this project. Without his special contribution of time and effort, myself and others would be completely in the dark about world events from the vantage point of

workers, farmers, and youth who are in motion on behalf of our class. Jim also includes pamphlets, such as the recent pamphlet, *Why Is Mark Curtis Still In Prison?* It is always a special treat to receive an "extra" pamphlet tape in my weekly container.

Warmest thanks to Jim Miller and the Militant.
Toba Singer
San Francisco, California

Notes from our readers

More on N.E. Africa.
A reader
Washington, D.C.

Thanks for great Cuba coverage!
A reader
Omaha, Nebraska

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 protesters defend hospitals

'Government might not have money, but you don't cut health care!'

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — Working people have organized widespread protests almost every day throughout Quebec since the May 11 Parti Quebecois (PQ) government decision to close nine hospitals in Montreal, eliminating 15 percent of all hospital beds in the region. Close to 10,000 workers would be directly hit by this measure, including several thousand who would lose their jobs. The government's explicit goal is to drastically cut the health-care budget; it has no plan to transfer services to other facilities.

The biggest action took place June 7 in Loretteville, near Quebec City, where more than 15,000 people protested. On June 12, close to 2,500 hospital workers and supporters demonstrated in Montreal during government hearings on the proposed cuts.

"They might be short of money, but you don't cut the quality of health care," said Jacqueline St-Urbain, who is 65. "People are concerned. How can they pretend they will maintain the quality of services with fewer hospitals, when emergency rooms are already overcrowded?"

The government's decision is bringing French- and English-speaking hospital workers together against divisions imposed by the 150-year-old system in Quebec of two separate health systems based on language, with the English system offering traditionally much better services than its French counterpart. Eighty percent of the population in Quebec speaks French and constitutes an oppressed nationality.

Placards and slogans at the Montreal demonstration were in French and English. Arthur Sandborn, president of the Montreal Labor Council of the Confedera-



June 12 protest. "I am for Quebec independence, but with bread and butter," said a protester.

tion of National Trade Unions (CSN), said, "in order to win we will have to overcome our divisions between those who speak French and those who speak English." He gave his speech in both languages.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, hospital workers waged big struggles to improve their working and living conditions, organize unions, and push back the arbitrariness of private hospital owners. They overcame the enormous wage gap between men and women, forced the government to nationalize and secularize the

health system, and won the establishment of a public health insurance service.

"It is not the doctors, nor the hospital administrators, nor the Quebec government but the working class who made these gains in the 1960s," said Michel Chartrand, a labor leader during that time, who was the main speaker at the demonstration.

"We can't wage this fight locally," wrote Alain Hébert from the St-Charles-Boromée hospital in a union leaflet building the demonstration. "This can only be done nationally through gaining massive

support in the population. Otherwise we'll end up with two health systems: one private, for the rich; the other public and in ruins, for the poor."

The Coalition for the Defense of Social and Health Services in Montreal—which includes union federations and other organizations—has called another demonstration for June 21.

The fact that a government pretending to defend the rights of the Quebecois is currently leading the attacks on gains made in the fight against national oppression has opened a discussion in the labor movement and among those who oppose hospital closings on the coming referendum on a "sovereign" Quebec that the PQ government is preparing for the fall.

On May 19, the Federation of Social Affairs (FAS), CSN's biggest federation, "decided to take public its position against the sovereigntist project of the Parti Quebecois as long as its current social policies...are not changed." On June 8, in reaction to this decision, the CSN Confederal Council—the federation's highest body between conventions—voted to reaffirm its support for Quebec's sovereignty.

"I am for Quebec independence, but with bread and butter," said Gérard Pierre, who was born in Haiti, reflecting a popular view.

Not all participants in the mobilization share this idea. Many, especially among those who speak English, are opposed to any idea of Quebec "sovereignty." "I don't think the Liberals would do any better," said a nurse at the Reddy Memorial hospital. "But I totally disagree with union federations using our money to promote Quebec independence."

Saoirse calls for swift release of Irish prisoners

BY PAMELA HOLMES

DUBLIN, Ireland — Speaking to the first national conference of Saoirse, Sinn Féin vice president Pat Doherty called for protests to greet the anticipated announcement of the release of Pvt. Lee Clegg. Saoirse was set up after the August 1994 cease-fire in Northern Ireland to campaign for the release of all Irish political prisoners.

A member of the British Parachute Regiment, Clegg was sentenced to life imprisonment for the 1990 killing of Karen Reilly at a roadblock in west Belfast. He is the only paratrooper to be convicted for murder in Northern Ireland in 25 years of occupation. Clegg has served less than three years of the sentence in a prison in England, but the Northern Ireland Life Sentence Review Board considered the possibility of releasing him on license when it met on June 6.

Speaking on radio June 5, Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin said, "I have no problem with the release of all the prisoners in prison as a result of this conflict. But I do have a problem with the British government extracting this soldier out from all the rest."

On June 9, Irish prime minister John Bruton warned British prime minister John Major, "London must take account of the detrimental impact on public opinion of an early release for Pvt. Lee Clegg without an early release for Republicans." Later he added, "It would create a sense of one law for members of the security forces and one for everyone else."

The Saoirse group in London charged the British government with applying a double standard to Irish prisoners. Saoirse organized a 30-strong protest outside the Home Office June 6 demanding "the im-

mediate transfer of all Irish political prisoners in England to jails in Ireland, with a view to a program for their swift release." They pointed out that while Clegg is being considered for release after two years, 11 republicans have now served 20 years in English jails.

Saoirse national conference

Saoirse campaigns for "the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners as a step towards building a lasting peace in Ireland," said Bernie Farrell, national chairperson of Saoirse, addressing some 100 people attending the campaign's national conference here June 3. Initially set up by relatives of republican prisoners, ex-prisoners, and supporters, Saoirse now has groups throughout Ireland, as well as in England, Scotland, the United States, and Australia.

Farrell went on to explain, "Republican prisoners alone number some 554 women and men." Of these, 40 are held in the Republic of Ireland; 40 in England, 9 in the United States, 4 in Germany, and 461 in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, Farrell reported.

Bernie Malone, Labour Party Member of the European Parliament (MEP) in the Republic of Ireland; Patricia McKenna, Green Party MEP in the Republic; and Doherty spoke in the morning session of the Saoirse conference. Invitations to Fianna Fáil, a major capitalist party in the South, and to the Social Democratic and Labour Party in Northern Ireland got no response.

Nine months after the Irish Republican Army announced the cease-fire, only 21 prisoners who were being held in the Irish Republic have been freed. The British government has made no move towards

release and there has been serious deterioration in conditions for prisoners held in English jails. Doherty gave the example of seven prisoners, three of whom are republicans, held in the Control Unit at Full Sutton prison in England. Contained inside this "prison within a prison," the seven men are watched by 38 guards.

"Where are the peace dividends for my family and others?" asked Mairead Ni hAmaill in the second session of the conference. Ni hAmaill described how her father had been imprisoned in the 1940s, her brother in the 1970s, and now her husband is entering his 17th month in prison.

Local campaigning

Diarmaid Fox and Phil McCullough from Belfast described how Saoirse is organizing to build support. The campaign divides Belfast into 12 areas, each with a local committee. Successful public meetings were held to mobilize support and the campaign is now reaching out to bodies ranging from the Gaelic Athletics Association to the Roman Catholic Church.

Fox and McCullough described street actions aimed at winning support from people not already involved. Initially they used "white line pickets," standing on the white lines in the middle of the road with placards about the prisoners. The activists organized actions in areas of the city that had been "out of bounds" prior to the cease-fire because of the extreme segregation of republican and loyalist areas in Belfast.

Campaigners in Cork, in the south of Ireland, reported a "good response in the street." James McBarron told the *Militant* that 70 people have joined the Saoirse group, including a local Fine Gael member of Parliament. The group holds weekly

meetings and leaflets and petitions on the streets every Saturday. They also hold "white line pickets." McBarron described the Saoirse actions as the most sustained street-protest activity since campaigns to oppose Dublin's moves to extradite republicans to the United Kingdom five years ago.

Prisoner involvement

The Saoirse activists spoke of the participation of the prisoners themselves in the campaign in Belfast and Fermanagh. Prisoners are writing to politicians in the Republic of Ireland, in Britain, and throughout Europe, as well as in the United States and Australia. The prisoners also provide statements of their cases for use at public events and make various craft items to assist in fund-raising.

Raymond McCartney, a national leader of Saoirse, said the group has no intention of retreating from what he called "the politics of the street." Since the formation of Saoirse, two major demonstrations have been held in Northern Ireland of 5,000 people in Crossmaglen and Pomeroy. A former prisoner and participant in the prison protests of the early 1980s, McCartney was released just before the cease-fire.

Doherty explained Sinn Féin's approach to plans to mark the August 31 anniversary of the cease-fire. "The core element is national self-determination, ending British jurisdiction," he said. "The release of the prisoners is a major element in this."

Pamela Holmes is a member of the Transport & General Workers' Union, 11688 branch in London. Pete Clifford contributed to this article.