

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Will union mergers  
mean more strength?

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## 'You give us strength to fight for socialism'

Eyewitness report from Cuba youth festival

BY LAURA GARZA

HAVANA — "For Cuba, it is important to have you here today, not only for the ties of friendship, not only because you will talk about the reality of what you have seen," said Alejandro García González, "but because you are extending your hands to us and saying, 'Keep going, you are on the right road.'" García González, president of the Federation of University Students, was welcoming people to the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival, which opened here August 1.

Close to 1,200 delegates had registered after the first day, with more arriving all the time. The largest delegation is from the United States, with some 250 participating so far. "This is a political triumph for the Cuban people," said Victoria Velásquez, president of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, one of several youth groups hosting the event.

The second largest delegation, about 125, comes from France. Nearly 100 have come from Spain and delegations of 30-45 people are here from Brazil, Italy, Canada, Mexico, Chile, and the United Kingdom.

About 60 countries are represented at the festival, with many youth from throughout Latin America. Delegations of 10-25 young people made the trip from Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Colombia, Paraguay and Ecuador. Six delegates from

Vietnam arrived for the festival, and as many as 15 more are on their way; 7 came from Poland; and 2 from China. A range of African countries have one or two delegates present, including one from the African National Congress Youth League in South Africa.

Delegates who had arrived by July 31 spent most of the day on visits to factories, hospitals, cultural and sports facilities throughout Havana and outlying areas. Cuban translators and guides joined the busloads of delegates who headed out to different areas to ask questions of workers

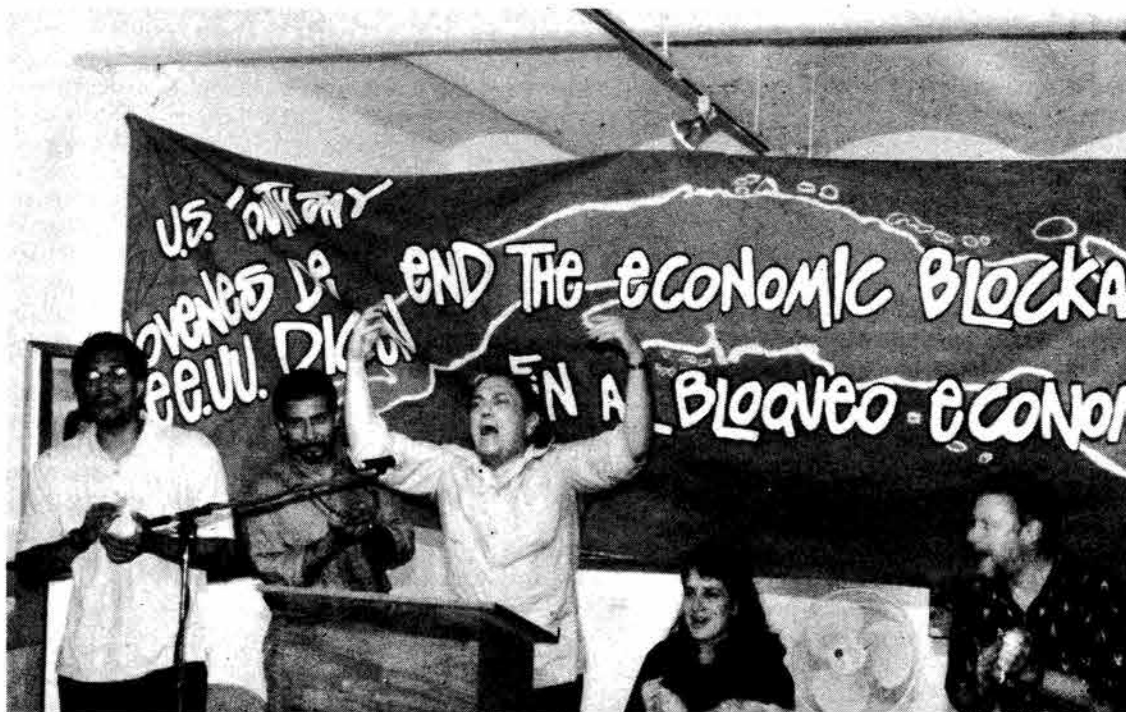
and youth here and exchange experiences from their countries.

Each bus headed to a different site: a ship repair yard, a sheet metal factory, a hospital, a dairy plant.

Some delegates visited a sports center, others a sanitarium for patients with AIDS. Workers at a flour mill, a sugar mill, and a glass factory hosted other delegates.

Delegates from the United States, Brazil, and Canada were part of a visit to the Juan Milián construction materials fac-

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Activists in New York City speak at July 28 send-off rally for the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival. The 250-strong U.S. delegation is a "political triumph for the Cuban people."

Militant/Ben Fiering

## Curtis is released from lockup

BY NORTON SANDLER

DES MOINES, Iowa — Mark Curtis was released from lockup at the Iowa State Penitentiary in Ft. Madison August 2, after spending 344 days in punitive segregation. "I got help from another prisoner in carrying my stuff over to my new cell house and about a half dozen guys I know stopped to talk," said Curtis during a telephone conversation shortly after his discharge from lockup.

"One of them asked me about Mumia Abu-Jamal, figuring that I might be familiar with that struggle. These new conditions will provide better opportunities for political discussions," he emphasized.

"The thing that struck me immediately about the cell house is how much cleaner it is than where I've been the past year."

A union and socialist activist, Curtis was framed up and convicted on rape and burglary charges in 1988. At the time of his arrest, he was involved in a struggle to protest a raid by the Immigration and Naturalization Service at the Monfort meat-packing plant in Des Moines that resulted in 17 of his Latino co-workers being hauled out of the plant in handcuffs.

Last August 23, while working as a janitor in the prison hospital, Curtis was

thrown into lockup, tried, and found guilty in an internal prison hearing on the phony charge of assaulting another inmate.

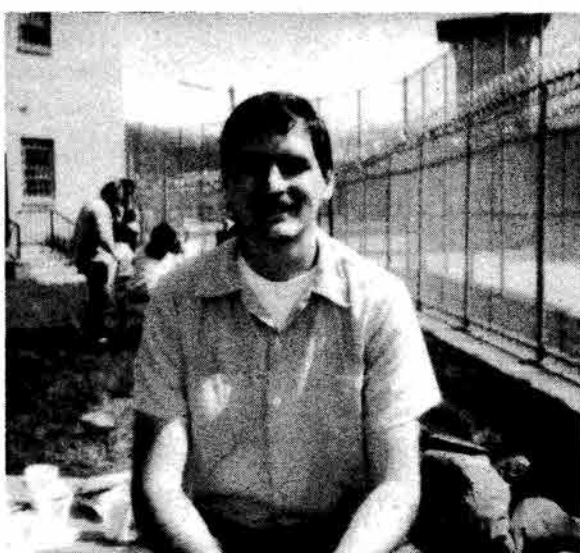
He spent 30 days in what is termed the "hole," and another 10 months in punitive segregation, locked up for 23 hours a day in a five by seven foot cell. Curtis was allowed three showers and shaves a week, two telephone calls a month, and an hour's exercise a day in a small area prisoners refer to as "dog pens."

In 1993, Curtis completed the sentence on the trumped up rape charge. He is being held in the maximum security prison now on the basis of the burglary charge tacked on by cops and prosecutors several weeks after his original arrest.

According to Iowa Board of Parole statistics, prisoners released in 1994 who were convicted of the same burglary charge as Curtis served an average of 76.2 months in prison. In September Curtis will have served 84 months.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is

urging those who support his release on parole to write a letter to the Iowa Board of Parole, Capitol Annex, 523 East 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319, with a copy to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311. A delegation will deliver the letters to the Parole Board in September.



Union and political activist Mark Curtis

## August 12 action says 'Justice for Abu-Jamal'

BY GLOVA SCOTT

PHILADELPHIA — Demanding "Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal," demonstrators will rally outside Common Pleas Court at City Hall here August 12. The emergency action comes just five days before Abu-Jamal is scheduled to be executed by lethal injection. The well-known Black activist has been on death row since his frame-up conviction six months after the fatal Dec. 9, 1981, shooting of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner.

In appeal hearings that began July 12, Abu-Jamal's attorneys — citing numerous violations of his rights — are urging Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the original trial, to order a new one. Sabo is a retired member of the Fraternal Order of Police. He has sent 31 people, all but two of whom are non-white, to death row — more than any other judge in the country.

The hearing on Abu-Jamal's appeal has done nothing to dispel defense committee charges that Sabo functions like a "prosecutor in robes."

On August 1 former Philadelphia police officer Gary Wakshul took the stand. Wakshul stood watch over Abu-Jamal from the time he was driven to Jefferson Hospital from the crime scene until he was relieved from duty. (Abu-Jamal was badly wounded by Faulkner during the events

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## Serb forces expand war in Bosnia

BY PAUL MAILHOT

The murderous conflict gripping the former Yugoslavia has intensified in the past few weeks. Orchestrated primarily by the forces backed by the Serbian regime in Belgrade, the war is widening daily. And imperialist powers from Washington to Bonn to Paris are jockeying for position to intervene.

In July, heavily armed forces under Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and military commander Gen. Ratko Mladic overran two Bosnian towns — Srebrenica on July 11 and Zepa on July 25 — that had been designated by the United Nations as "safe areas."

There were numerous reports from Dutch soldiers in the UN force and from the thousands of refugees who fled Srebrenica that the Bosnian Serbs who captured the town executed unarmed civilians, raped women, and carried out other atrocities. In an interview after the fall of Zepa, Mladic dismissed these accusations, saying his troops would not rape Muslim peasant women because "we are too picky."

In all, Serbian forces expelled more than 30,000 people from Srebrenica. According to the Bosnian government, thousands of its troops remain in the hills surrounding Zepa and are said to be continuing to fight Serb forces there.

With the fall of Zepa, however, Gorazde remains the only area in eastern

Continued on Page 4





## Paris deports more workers

Stepping up its campaign of scapegoating immigrant workers for the country's economic woes, the government of France deported 43 people to Zaire July 19. France interior minister Jean-Luis Debré announced that three plane-loads of workers have been deported in the past month, and that the government is planning weekly charter flights to expel people. Two are already set for Zaire and Algeria.

Human rights groups in France denounced the government's actions. An estimated 4 million immigrants, many from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, live there.

## French bank gets bailout

The European Union July 26 approved a whopping \$9.3 billion bailout plan for the French bank Credit Lyonnais. It is the biggest bailout in EU history. The rescue package is based on the condition that state-owned Credit Lyonnais, Europe's largest bank, sell at least 35 percent of its non-French assets by 1998.

European Union officials sought to reduce state subsidies for the bank without pushing it into bankruptcy. Credit Lyonnais lost more than \$2 billion in 1994.

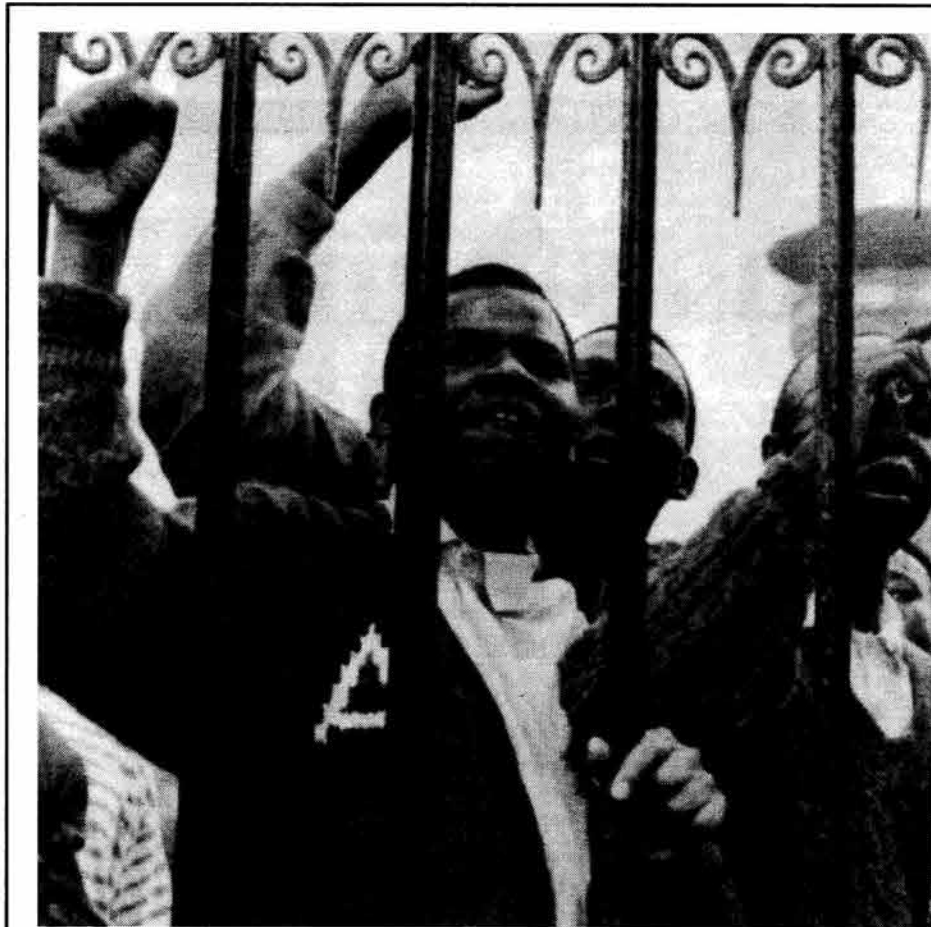
## U.S. Gulf fleet to police Iran

The White House announced in mid-July the formation of a permanent naval fleet to patrol the Persian Gulf, less than 24 hours after Iranian president Hashemi Rafsanjani made a goodwill gesture to Washington in an effort to ease hostilities. The Fifth Fleet will include 2 nuclear-powered submarines, 15 ships, an aircraft-carrier with 70 warplanes, and 10,000 troops. The military show of force bolsters the Clinton administration's recently imposed economic embargo on Iran.

Meanwhile, the Iranian military concluded an eight-day exercise in the northern Gulf at the beginning of July involving 58,000 troops to mark the seventh anniversary of the downing of an Iranian passenger plane by the *USS Vincennes*.

## Chinese WWII victims press case against Tokyo

Chinese victims of Japanese atrocities in World War II are planning a delegation to Tokyo Aug. 6-15 to press for compensation.



University students demonstrate in front of Kenya parliament July 25, protesting cut in loans and grants for school fees. Several were injured by cops.

sation. The delegation may file suit on behalf of more than 800,000 people victimized by the Japanese military.

The delegation includes two women forced into sexual slavery for Japanese troops, as well as victims of Tokyo's biological experiments. Beijing states that 35 million Chinese were killed or wounded during the eight-year war against the Japanese occupation of China that broke out in 1937.

## Seoul praises U.S. imperialists

South Korean president Kim Young Sam praised Washington's role in the Korean War during an address to the U.S. Congress July 26. The speech was given on the eve of the 42nd anniversary of the

end of the imperialist slaughter, in which hundreds of thousands of Koreans were killed along with some 54,000 U.S. soldiers.

Kim called for maintaining the U.S. military presence in South Korea, which still numbers some 40,000 troops, "to maintain stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

## Peasants occupy Honduras farm

Some 300 peasants occupied the banana complex owned by the Tela Railroad Co. in Tacamache, Honduras, recently. The peasants vowed "to be prepared to die" if evicted and have been joined by the agricultural workers union. The peasants were part of a group of 3,000 workers fired by Tela last year in retaliation for a strike demanding higher wages.

Meanwhile, more than 2,500 Indians began a hunger strike for better living conditions July 21 in front of the presidential palace in Tegucigalpa.

## Teachers strike in Costa Rica

Some 50,000 teachers in Costa Rica went on strike July 17, closing about 4,000 public schools, as well as four state universities. The teachers are demanding a presidential veto of a recently approved pension law.

Another 10,000 state workers joined the teachers' strike July 19, protesting government plans to reduce the workforce. Meanwhile, the central labor union in Costa Rica has issued a call to prepare for

a general strike.

## Unfair conviction overturned

Earl Berryman walked out of the New Jersey State Prison July 21, three weeks after a federal judge ordered that he be released and given a new trial for a 1983 rape charge. Noting that the only evidence against Berryman was his identification by the victim, Judge Dickinson Debevoise ruled that Berryman's attorney made "egregious errors" that were "fatal to a fair trial."

"This should have never happened to me," said Berryman, who had served 10 years of a 50-year rape sentence and maintains his innocence. Berryman left the prison accompanied by an investigator for Centurion Ministries, a national organization that works for inmates who were wrongly convicted.

## INS arrests 27 at poultry plant

Immigration officials arrested 27 undocumented Latino workers July 18 at the Showell Farms poultry processing plant in Maryland. According to the *Washington Post*, INS agents set up road blocks outside the plant entrance and stopped every "foreign-looking" worker who entered by car or bus.

Company officials claiming that they did not know of any undocumented workers declared, "We don't want anyone here illegally." Showell Farms, a 400-employee facility, was bought by the Perdue company several months ago.

## Grain reserves at 20-year low

The amount of U.S. wheat and corn in reserve before next year's harvest is projected to be at the lowest since 1975. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Washington has been draining grain stocks for several years and is paying farmers to idle 36 million acres of farmland for the next 10 years.

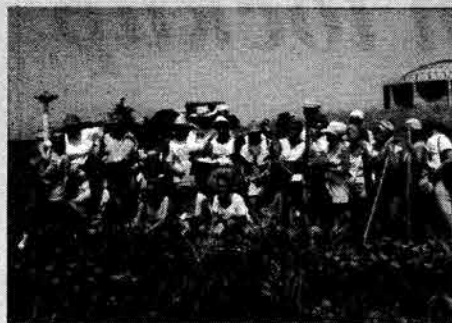
Trying to boost low prices for capitalist farmers, which resulted from a 1994 record corn harvest, the Agriculture Department required corn farmers enrolled in its price-support program to idle 7.5 percent of their eligible land. Grain analysts expect corn production to drop 23 percent from 1994 and prices to shoot up.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

## THE MILITANT

## Defend the Cuban revolution

Cuban youth organizations called on young people around the world to participate in the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival. The *'Militant'* is bringing you first-hand coverage of this historic event. Don't miss a single issue!



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# NY rally sends youth delegation to Cuba

BY ELIZABETH LARISCY

NEW YORK — One hundred and fifty people came together here at the Westbeth Gallery July 28 to send off the New York/New Jersey component of the U.S. delegation to the Cuba Lives Festival. The delegation was organized by the Cuba Information Project and other organizations active in defense of Cuba.

Following a dinner, the evening culminated in a lively rally with a broad speakers platform chaired by Joya Lonsdale and Brock Satter, two of the young people who were leaving for Cuba in 36 hours. Leslie Cagan, director of the Cuba Information Project, described the encouraging response to the festival. Cagan explained how, inspired by the role young people were beginning to play, she herself decided to join the delegation.

"The festival will be a great experience to counter the lies," added Luis Miranda of Casa de las Americas. A huge banner demanding "End the economic blockade against Cuba" hanging behind the speakers' platform was painted at the Casa offices. It will be carried by the U.S. contingent at the front of a march at the end of the Cuba Lives festival.

Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New Internationalist* magazine and *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, said that at the heart of this trip is the history of Cuba's fight for independence and against U.S. domination. "Cuba teaches that revolution is possible," she said. This is as true today as it was in the early 1960s when the

people of Cuba marched onto the stage of history to take their destiny in their own hands, Waters added.

Lorena Gabor, one of the young people going on the trip, was "glad to be part of the new generation of fighters" and thanked all who had helped support and fund the trip. Like many other young people, she explained, her interest in Cuba was first sparked because of the unrelenting hostility of the U.S. government toward the people of that country.

A number of the young people who will be part of the delegation participated in the event. They were introduced to a big round of applause during the meeting.

Steve Macauley, a 28-year-old photographer, said he wants to photograph what the U.S. government doesn't want him to see about Cuba. Mariposa Galler, who works in a bookstore, wants to see for herself what Cuba is like. Galler, 24, said she isn't interested in the media's bashing of the revolution or liberal romanticizing.

Christine Chaubet, a 21-year-old student from Paris who was at the meeting, first learned about the youth festival from a flyer on a wall at her campus. She helped organize 16 others who will be leaving from France to attend the event.

A number of campus newspapers as well as publications of various organizations, such as the National Lawyers Guild and the National Organization for Women, have asked the young people to write articles about their experiences in Cuba. Many of the youth pointed to this as



Militant/Sukul Baul

**Camp of young people at International Youth Brigade to Cuba in January 1995. "The festival will be a great experience to counter the lies," said one rally speaker.**

an important part of making their participation in the festival a success.

Bob Guild, of the New Jersey Network on Cuba, explained to the audience that young people from the United States have a long history of going to Cuba to do volunteer work and express solidarity with the revolution. He noted that a group of 40 youth had just returned from a trip to Cuba organized by the Freedom to Travel Campaign. The U.S. government doesn't want young people to go, he said, because they know "the Union of Young Communists didn't invite you down to check out investment opportunities."

A representative of the Venceremos Brigade also spoke at the meeting. The

Brigade is planning to have some 80 people in Cuba before the festival who will also be taking part in its final days.

José Cabezas from Hospital and Health Care Workers Local 1199, who is part of a committee working in solidarity with a hospital in Cuba, also spoke. He led the audience in chants and urged all to actively fight against the blockade.

Throughout the evening speakers pointed to the importance of building demonstrations called in October against the embargo of Cuba and other activities to counter Washington's hostile policy toward the Cuban revolution. The event raised some \$1,000 to help cover the costs of the trip.

## Eyewitness report from Cuba Lives Youth Festival

Continued from front page

tory. U.S. delegates described the strike in their country by auto workers against the Caterpillar company's union-busting drive, and the involvement of youth in California in the fight to oppose anti-immigrant measures.

A member of the Brazilian delegation spoke about the recent round of strikes in Brazil, where workers face growing unemployment, speed-up, and deteriorating living and working conditions.

"Your presence here gives us strength to continue our fight for socialism," said José Ramírez, a machine operator. "We have to know if other workers are standing up to the oppression of capitalism."

At the Cardio Arguilles factory, which once produced buses, José Rodríguez explained that production has shifted to bicycles. This conversion was necessary as part of the measures Cubans have taken since 1989, when preferential trade terms that Cuba had with the Soviet Union and other Eastern European governments were disrupted. Severe shortages of oil and basic necessities became the norm as Cuba was thrust abruptly into the world capitalist market, forced to buy at high prices while getting little for the products it sells.

The severe fuel shortages wiped out much of the public transportation and bicycles became an alternative for tens of thousands of people. While Cuba at first imported most bicycles from China, it eventually began producing them here.

Youth festival participants saw some of the new bikes Cubans have designed for transporting several people, carrying packages, and hauling military supplies.

Some delegates went to the port of Havana and spoke with members of the maritime union as they were taken around by boat. Last summer the port was the scene of several attempted hijackings by people wanting to leave the island for the United States.

### Many to join work brigades

Sara Debulpaep, 21, from Flanders, Belgium, is one of several Belgians planning to join a work brigade for several weeks after the festival. She came to Cuba to "learn about the health-care system," she said. "I am against the embargo because it restricts trade and exchange of medical technology."

Marie Arasa is a member of the Young Communists in France, which has a delegation of more than 70 at the festival. "We are opposed to the blockade. We oppose capitalism. We brought with us material aid for study — notebooks, pencils, and other items," she explained.

Frederic Charles said about 20 others came to the festival from France, organized by a group that promotes solidarity with Cuba. "Cuba is the most important struggle," he said. All the French youth will also participate in work brigades after the festival.

Gwenneth Van Laven, 14, of Washing-

ton, D.C., visited a flour mill that had been closed for two years at a time when Cuba was forced to import all its bread. She remarked, "I came to learn about Cuba and see for myself the effects of the blockade, and spread the word when I get home." The *Washington Post* published an article on Van Laven's trip just before she left.

After two days in Havana, all the delegates have chosen one of eight workshops and they will spread out to different provinces to live with a Cuban family and participate in discussions on young women, participation and democracy, education, health, childhood, employment, development and the environment, and culture and national identity. Van Laven is going to Sancti Spiritus province to discuss the topic of childhood. "I want to see what kids here are like," she said.

Gabriel Siert, 14, is a Native American from Sioux City, Iowa, who came to the festival with his mother, Rachel Gould, a Native American rights activist. He visited a sports training facility, and said he was impressed by "the dedication of the trainers working under conditions that are not that good. They are working-class trainers, though. There is no air conditioning. Maybe some of them could go to the United States but they are dedicated to what they were doing."

### 200 delegates represent Cuba

Cuba is represented by 200 delegates, but the whole country is getting daily reports on the festival's activities by televi-

sion, radio, and newspapers. Some 2,500 families volunteered to host delegates at their homes in several provinces.

Rusbert Drake Fernández, 23, volunteered to be a translator for the week. He was one of about 150 chosen from teachers and students at language schools.

Tens of thousands of Cubans are expected to join the festival's activities on August 5 at one of the highlights of the week. That day, a mass demonstration against the embargo led by festival participants will march along the Malecón, Havana's seaside boulevard.

The marchers will rally at the same spot that disturbances broke out on August 5 last year when groups of people who had gathered in hopes of a boat hijacking began marauding through the area throwing stones and breaking windows. Thousands of workers and youth in the city responded that day by massing at the Malecón in defense of the revolution. The Union of Young Communists sponsored a massive pro-revolution march a few days later.

For many of the young Cubans, last year's mobilizations were the first time they felt they had lived up to the responsibility of defending the revolution at a moment when it counted most. They have chosen to end the march at that site to remind themselves and others — including enemies of the Cuban revolution — that working people and youth in Cuba stood up, and will continue to stand up, in defense of their dignity, sovereignty, and socialist revolution.

## Farm workers protest in Minnesota

BY JOE CALLAHAN

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — One hundred migrant farm workers and their families held a demonstration at the Minnesota state capitol in St. Paul July 26. The workers called on Minnesota Gov. Arne Carlson to include aid for them in a state request for federal disaster assistance in response to the heavy rainfall that has prevented them from working.

About 1,000 families work each year in the sugar beet fields near Moorhead. This year they have only been able to work one or two days a week because of heavy rains. Octavio Medrano said they had to wait a month before beginning work.

Spokesperson Jorge Galvan explained that workers have been up to their knees in mud with weeds five and six feet high. As a result, a family of four or five can only clear one acre in a day. The workers are

usually paid \$22 an acre. This year some farmers have sought to pay only \$14 an acre, citing rain damage to the crops.

The workers denounced discrimination and other problems they face obtaining housing. Landlords routinely demand a six-month lease, although the workers are only there for a couple of months. Other rent-gouging is also common. Some landlords flatly refuse to rent to immigrants.

Some of the demonstrators also explained that local authorities deny them assistance if they have a newer model vehicle. Many farm workers travel thousands of miles as they follow the crops. Many of the workers at the rally were from Juanajueto, Mexico, and the Rio Grande Valley in Texas.

Joe Callahan is a member of United Auto Workers Local 879 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

### CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF HOWARD MAYHEW

1908-1995

Howard Mayhew, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party, was active in working-class struggles from CIO union strikes in the 1930s to opposing U.S. imperialism in the Gulf War in 1991.

**Sunday, August 20**

**3 p.m.**

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**JOEL BRITTON AND ELIZABETH STONE**, who worked with Mayhew in the early 1960s in Chicago. They will speak on his contribution to maintaining communist continuity and helping with a transition of party leadership to a new generation of youth.

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# Index project makes 60 years of Marxist writings accessible

BY PETE SEIDMAN

Delegates and guests cheered the announcement that six years of work preparing a comprehensive index of the theoretical magazines of the Socialist Workers Party and its predecessors was completed during the July 8-11 convention of the party in Oberlin, Ohio.

The magazines record sixty years of communist writings that workers and youth from around the world can use to enrich and defend Marxist theory as a necessary part of becoming more effective participants in the struggles of their day.

Communists fighting to unify the working class on an international scale in struggles to organize militant industrial unions, against fascism, and for clarity in how to oppose the bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union began publishing *New International* in July 1934. After March 1940, a minority faction that abandoned communist politics under the pressure of World War II stole the magazine's title. The party launched *Fourth International* in May 1940 to continue its fight.

The *International Socialist Review* carried on this tradition beginning in 1957 (and, as a magazine supplement to the *Militant* since 1975, has continued through today). Then in 1983 the SWP, in collaboration with co-thinkers around the world, renewed publication of *New International*. Two years later the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale* began publishing, to be followed by the Spanish *Nueva Internacional* in 1991 and the Swedish *Ny International* in 1993.

A display set up under a big sign reading "Magazine/Bulletin Indexing Project: Mining our Communist Continuity" was a constant center of attention during convention breaks. The always-crowded tables featured bound volumes of the magazines as well as an initial edition of the printed index, which allows the magazines' more than 3,500 articles to be searched by author and subject.

The actual indexing of the publications was carried out over six years by a team of

21 volunteers who painstakingly entered information about each article and categorized them by more than 600 subjects into a computer data base (this work was part of a larger project to index the entire collection of the SWP's documents).

The computerized version of the index allows the magazines to be searched in many useful ways. For example, all the articles by a particular writer can be found for particular years. Or you can list everything that an author wrote on a given subject. Index project volunteers demonstrated how the computerized searches are carried out.

These computer searches, along with collages of reprints on various topics from the magazines, revealed how useful the index will be for today's working-class fighters. Here are some examples of the "gems" mined by volunteers:

"Japan Faces The Abyss," by SWP leader Frank Graves, writing under the pen name of Li Fu-Jen. This is a three-part series written at the height of World War II explaining the origins of capitalism in Japan and why workers there are not enemies of U.S. workers but potential allies in a common front against the imperialist system that pits us against each other in lethal combat.

"The Problem of Smashing McCarthyism." Writing in 1954, Murry Weiss notes, "The emergence of an independent fascist movement, headed by a powerful political machine in Congress, with a platform based on the theme of 'national betrayal' should be a 'warning signal to the American working class.' His insights are quite useful in considering the fascist militia groups of today.

In Germany, Weiss wrote, "With the default of working class leadership, the middle class, frustrated in its hopes for a solution to its problems under the leadership of the working class, became easy prey for fascist demagoguery and was attracted to the anti-capitalist facade of the fascist program. Thus they became raw material for an anti-labor militia. In the name of anti-



Militant/Bill Estrada

Scanning and indexing project on display at SWP convention in Oberlin, Ohio. An index of communist writings are available for workers and youth around the world.

capitalism the fascists mobilized to do the work of monopoly capitalist reaction."

"The Political Meaning of the CIO-AFL Merger." Tom Kerry discusses how the last thing on the minds of the officials is the unification of labor's forces for a real battle to defend the unions. Although the AFL-CIO merger took place in December 1955, Kerry's analysis seems timely.

"The Struggle for Ireland." This 1939 article set off a discussion in the pages of *New International* on the road forward for that liberation struggle.

The editors of *New International* have announced that they plan to publish a printed version of the index in a forthcoming special issue.

Demand for back copies of the party's magazines is expected to grow as the new index comes into use among today's fighters. This poses a real challenge, as the bound volumes, often in frail condition, are few and far between.

Party supporters plan to rectify this problem using new computer technology that makes it possible to scan the magazines. This will make it possible to produce a publicly available CD-ROM that will contain the index as well as all the articles themselves from 1934 through the present.

After finding articles that look useful in the index, it will be possible to call them up onto the computer screen or print them out. The index also indicates when a particular article has been reprinted in a book or pamphlet, for those who don't have access to a CD-ROM reader or prefer to study in that format.

The magazines are also available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106; Tel (800) 521-3044. Many libraries, once informed that a computerized index will soon be available, will be interested in purchasing a set of these.

## Bosnia war widens as Serb forces grab territory

Continued from front page

Bosnia under the government's control. War is raging over the northwestern Bosnian town of Bihac. And Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, is now under constant shelling from guns overlooking the city. During a three-day period at the end of July at least 20 people were killed and 75 injured.

The leaders of the Bosnian Serb forces have made it increasingly clear that they intend to capture all of the main towns under the control of the Bosnian government, including Sarajevo. "Sarajevo was a Serbian city," Karadzic recently told an interviewer. "We are not besieging it, we are defending our territory. Sarajevo is our second city after Belgrade." Mladic told the Belgrade weekly *Svet*, "By autumn we'll take Gorazde, Bihac, and in the end Sarajevo, and we'll finish the war in Bosnia."

The effects of the war have been devastating. In Sarajevo alone at least 10,000 people have died from shelling and sniper fire and 50,000 more have been wounded in the past three years. More than half of the prewar population of 450,000 has fled. Of the 280,000 who remain in Sarajevo, an estimated 100,000 came as refugees.

"We never, until the war, thought of ourselves as Muslims," said Mikica Babic, a 32-year-old history teacher from Sarajevo. "We were Yugoslavs. But when we began to be murdered because we were Muslims, things changed. The definition of who we are today has been determined by our killers."

The workers and farmers of Yugoslavia mobilized to carry out an anti-capitalist revolution in the 1940s and establish a workers' state. People of every nationality united to make the revolution, and began to narrow the extreme regional disparities

in living standards that existed in the country.

Over time, the Stalinist misleaders of Yugoslavia eroded those gains. With the shattering of the Stalinist apparatus beginning in 1990, those who sat atop the bureaucratic regime began to battle over territory and resources and exacerbate the divisions among working people in Yugoslavia.

Since then, Serbian forces have pursued the war, violating the right of Bosnia to national sovereignty and independence. Despite enormous military pressure and political isolation, workers, peasants, and others in Bosnia have resisted the onslaught, including many who are Serb and Croat but who identify their country as Bosnia.

Bosnia is economically and militarily weaker than Serbia. That country has a more developed industrial base, larger geographic area, and was the traditional center of the Yugoslav armed forces. This gives the Serbian forces a tremendous advantage.

### Croatian government acts

The offensive by Serbian forces across Bosnia has prompted the Croatian government to give its military greater rein in the conflict in order to protect its interests and attempt to grab land and resources. Croatian president Franjo Tudjman recently sent heavy artillery to join in the fighting against Bosnian Serb forces in Bihac.

The Croatian government claims to have some 100,000 troops ready for war. A major military conflict is now brewing between Serb forces and Zagreb over the Krajina region of Croatia, which sits astride vital oil, rail, and road networks.

Washington is taking advantage of Croatia's widening role in the war to up-

grade its ties with the Tudjman government. Fifteen U.S. military instructors are now stationed at the Defense Ministry in Zagreb training Croatian officers in the arts of war.

"The United States seems to be setting the markers for a new sphere of influence where the currency is pegged to the German mark and the sense of protection to Washington," wrote Alan Cowell for the *New York Times*. Last year, Washington and Zagreb signed a military cooperation agreement that provides for increased contacts between the U.S. and Croatian armed forces.

### NATO forces threaten air strikes

After the recent Serb advances, imperialist powers are once again threatening air strikes against military forces involved in attacks on so-called UN safe areas. Under an agreement announced August 1, UN military commanders can now call in air attacks by NATO forces without getting approval from civilian authorities in New York or Zagreb.

The NATO commanders did not publicly spell out what would constitute an "attack."

NATO secretary general Willy Claes warned Bosnian government forces not to take advantage of these threatened strikes to advance their position. He urged "all parties to exercise restraint and to desist from military action."

Conflicting imperialist interests continue to make it difficult for the major capitalist powers to intervene militarily in the Bosnian conflict. It is a reflection of their weakness that no single imperialist power can take advantage of the situation yet to decisively advance its position in that region of the world.

At the same time the aggression of Serb

forces trampling on the rights of the Bosnian people and the mobilization of more Croatian military forces for Zagreb's own economic and political reasons are widening the war and continuing to pull the imperialist powers into the conflict.

## Bob DesVerney, SWP member and Black rights activist, dies

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Bob DesVerney, a long-time member and supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died of cancer July 28, at age 65.

DesVerney joined the Socialist Workers Party in the late 1940s at the beginning of the McCarthy witchhunt period. He was drafted for the Korean War while he was a member of the party. DesVerney served on the party's National Committee from 1963 until 1971.

DesVerney wrote for the *Militant* over the years and is the author of *The Black Ghetto* and other pamphlets on the Black struggle in the 1960s and 1970s. DesVerney's contributions to the discussions for the Socialist Workers Party's 1963 convention helped shape the party's resolution, "Freedom Now: The New Stage in the Struggle for Negro Emancipation and the Tasks of the SWP."

DesVerney's contributions helped rearm the SWP's understanding of the fight for Black rights and its participation in that struggle. At the time of his death he was a supporter of the party in the San Francisco Bay Area.

A more extensive article on DesVerney's life will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Militant*.



# Engels: 'proletariat is a fighting class'

Reprinted below is an excerpted article by V.I. Lenin on the life of Frederick Engels. This year marks the 100th anniversary of his death. The full text can be found in Lenin's *Collected Works* (Progress Publishers) vol. 2, pp. 15-27. Subheads are by the *Militant*.

BY V. I. LENIN

On August 5, 1895, Frederick Engels died in London. After his friend Karl Marx (who died in 1883), Engels was the finest scholar and teacher of the modern proletariat in the whole civilized world. From the time that fate brought Karl Marx and Frederick Engels together, the two friends devoted their life's work to a common cause. And so to understand what Frederick Engels has done for the proletariat, one must have a clear idea of the significance of Marx's teaching and work for the development of the contemporary working-class movement.

Marx and Engels were the first to show that the working class and its demands are a necessary outcome of the present economic system, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organizes the proletariat. They showed that it is not the well-meaning efforts of noble-minded individuals, but the class struggle of the organized proletariat that will deliver humanity from the evils which now oppress it.

In their scientific works, Marx and Engels were the first to explain that socialism is not the invention of dreamers, but the final aim and necessary result of the development of the productive forces in modern society. All recorded history hitherto has been a history of class struggle, of the succession of the rule and victory of certain social classes over others. And this will continue until the foundations of class struggle and of class domination — private property and anarchic social production — disappear. The interests of the proletariat demand the destruction of these foundations, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organized workers must be directed against them. And every class struggle is a political struggle....

## Working-class consciousness

The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself and be conscious of itself, and they substituted science for dreams.

That is why the name and life of Engels should be known to every worker....

Engels was born in 1820 in Barmen, in the Rhine Province of the kingdom of Prussia. His father was a manufacturer. In 1838 Engels, without having completed his high-school studies, was forced by family circumstances to enter a commercial house in Bremen as a clerk. Commercial affairs did not prevent Engels from pursuing his scientific and political educa-

tion. He had come to hate autocracy and the tyranny of bureaucrats while still at high school. The study of philosophy led him further....

Engels got to know the proletariat in England, in the center of English industry, Manchester, where he settled in 1842, entering the service of a commercial firm of which his father was a shareholder. Here Engels not only sat in the factory office but wandered about the slums in which the workers were cooped up, and saw their poverty and misery with his own eyes. But he did not confine himself to personal observations. He read all that had been revealed before him about the condition of the British working class and carefully studied all the official documents he could lay his hands on. The fruit of these studies and observations was the book which appeared in 1845: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*....

## Fighting class

Engels was the first to say that the proletariat is not only a suffering class; that it is, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat that drives it irresistibly forward and compels it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat will help itself. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead workers to realize that their only salvation lies in socialism....

From 1845 to 1847 Engels lived in Brussels and Paris, combining scientific work with practical activities among the German workers in Brussels and Paris. Here Marx and Engels established contact with the secret German Communist League, which commissioned them to expound the main principles of the socialism they had worked out. Thus arose the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* of Marx and Engels, published in 1848. This little booklet is worth whole volumes: to this day its spirit inspires and guides the entire organized and fighting proletariat of the civilized world.

The revolution of 1848, which broke out first in France and then spread to other West-European countries, brought Marx and Engels back to their native country. Here, in Rhenish Prussia, they took charge of the democratic *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* published in Cologne. The two friends were the heart and soul of all revolutionary-democratic aspirations in Rhenish Prussia. They fought to the last ditch in defense of freedom and of the interests of the people against the forces of reaction. The latter, as we know, gained the upper hand. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was suppressed. Marx, who during his exile had lost his Prussian citizenship, was deported; Engels took part in the armed popular uprising, fought for liberty in three battles, and after the defeat of the rebels fled, via Switzerland, to London....

Marx died before he could put the final touches to his vast work on capital. The



Marx and Engels (at right) with dock workers in London port. Engels sought to cultivate workers' class consciousness and the principles of proletarian internationalism.

draft, however, was already finished, and after the death of his friend, Engels undertook the onerous task of preparing and publishing the second and the third volumes of *Capital*. He published Volume II in 1885 and Volume III in 1894 (his death prevented the preparation of Volume IV)....

## International working-class movement

After the movement of 1848-49, Marx and Engels in exile did not confine themselves to scientific research. In 1864 Marx founded the International Working Men's Association, and led this society for a whole decade. Engels also took an active part in its affairs. The work of the International Association, which, in accordance with Marx's idea, united proletarians of all countries, was of tremendous significance in the development of the working-class movement....

"The emancipation of the workers must be the act of the working class itself," Marx and Engels constantly taught. But in order to fight for its economic emancipation, the proletariat must win itself certain political rights. Moreover, Marx and Engels clearly saw that a political revolution

in Russia would be of tremendous significance to the West-European working class movement as well.

Autocratic Russia had always been a bulwark of European reaction in general. The extraordinarily favorable international position enjoyed by Russia as a result of the war of 1870, which for a long time sowed discord between Germany and France, of course only enhanced the importance of autocratic Russia as a reactionary force. Only a free Russia, a Russia that had no need either to oppress the Poles, Finns, Germans, Armenians or any other small nations, or constantly to set France and Germany at loggerheads, would enable modern Europe, rid of the burden of war, to breathe freely, would weaken all the reactionary elements in Europe and strengthen the European working class. That was why Engels ardently desired the establishment of political freedom in Russia for the sake of the progress of the working-class movement in the West as well. In him the Russian revolutionaries have lost their best friend.

Let us always honor the memory of Frederick Engels, a great fighter and teacher of the proletariat!



## PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Sara Lobman

Pathfinder supporters around the world might want to take a tip from Jill Fein, from Salt Lake City, who recently reported on sales trips to two new bookstores. "One store had a huge World War II section," she reported. "They were interested in *The Truth about Yugoslavia* and *The Balkan Wars (1912-13)* more than anything else. The other store also had a section on World War II. In addition to the Yugoslavia book, they were interested in several of the Spanish-language titles."

Fein also recently led a Pathfinder sales trip to Denver and reported, "The buyer at one of the largest bookstores there asked for posters and book reviews so she could make a display. She also requested an author come out for a book signing."

More bookstores are setting up sections of Spanish-language titles. "One buyer told me she likes Pathfinder's Spanish titles because 'they're so different from the romance novels you usually get,'" Fein noted. One result of the Denver trip is that a Pathfinder supporter from that city has volunteered to be a sales representative.

Craig Honts from Los Angeles reports that sales of Pathfinder books increased dramatically in April, May, and June. For the three preceding months sales totaled \$2,507. For April-June, however, they were \$5,648, an increase of 125 percent. "We sold 91 copies of *New International*, grossing over \$1,000," Honts said. "But as a result of that effort, we sold a lot of other titles as well, since we got out to more politi-

cal meetings and campuses."

Mary Lipman, a Pathfinder representative who recently moved to Santa Cruz, California, has lost no time in promoting Pathfinder. Lipman visited four bookstores in July. Titles sold include: *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes, *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks*, *Lenin's Final Fight, To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* by Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara, and *New International* no. 9, which includes the article "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution."

"You can see by the selection of books how important it is to visit the stores," Lipman said.

Pathfinder supporters in Seattle recently participated in an Indigenous Environmental Network conference in Alaska. Conference participants bought copies of thirteen different titles, including *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*; *FBI on Trial*; *New International* no. 6, with the articles "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop" and "Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation"; and *New International* no. 10, with the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." Six copies each were sold of *Why Is Mark Curtis Still in Prison? The Political Frame-up of a Unionist and Socialist and the Campaign to Free Him and Genocide against the Indians*.

## Hundreds die in Chicago heat wave

BY SANDRA NELSON AND KRISTIN MERIAM

CHICAGO — "This is a disaster like we've never seen in the city of Chicago," Cook County medical examiner Edmund Donoghue said of the heat wave that wreaked havoc on this lakeside city beginning July 12. Some 500 people died from the heat.

With record temperatures peaking at 106 degrees Fahrenheit, weather conditions combined to bring Chicago's heat index to 119. A steady procession of ambulances and police cruisers brought heat victims to the county morgue, filling it to capacity. Seven refrigerated semitrailers were brought in — but only to accommodate the dead. The elderly bore the brunt of the disaster.

"I went out to buy some fans and they had hiked the prices up way beyond our reach," commented Ethel Washington, a local resident.

Giant utility monopoly Commonwealth Edison, unprepared to supply adequate electricity as temperatures soared, left 41,000 North Side residents and thousands in the suburbs without power for up

to three days. As they scrambled to maintain power in other areas, Edison managers resorted to "rolling blackouts."

Jim Flanagan, 77, a Wrigleyville neighborhood resident, expressed his frustration with the power allocation. "The restaurants in the area got lights. Wrigley Field [baseball stadium] has lights. It doesn't make sense people living there don't have lights," he said.

As the death toll mounted, people demanded to know why the city government hadn't followed its own emergency heat plan. Mayor Richard Daley suggested that the medical examiner may have exaggerated the number of heat-related deaths. "Every day people die of natural causes," he said. "You can't put everything as heat-related."

Cook County examiner Donoghue, in announcing the latest death toll July 19, contended, "All these people would have survived if not for the heat."

Department of Human Services commissioner Daniel Alvarez blamed the deaths squarely on the victims. "We are talking about people that die because they neglected themselves."



# Will union mergers mean more strength?

BY JOHN STAGGS

PHILADELPHIA — With fanfare, the top officials of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the United Auto Workers (UAW), and the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) recently announced they would merge to create a single 2 million-member union. It was the top story in the news July 28.

This merger will not strengthen the labor movement and workers should oppose

## AS I SEE IT

it. What lies behind the deal is a retreat from the type of working-class struggle that is needed to defend our rights and living standards.

The plan to join forces was discussed behind closed doors and signed by the executive boards of the three unions, after which the three presidents held a press conference to announce the merger. The rank and file memberships of the these unions had no say.

The announcement follows the recent merger of the United Rubber Workers with the USWA and the coupling of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. In fact, there have been 21 union mergers in the past four years.

The July 27 *Wall Street Journal* quotes a "senior UAW official" as saying, "It's how you survive in the 90's."

UAW president Stephen Yokich summed up his reason for the merger in the word, "strength." George Kourpias, president of the IAM, said the merger will give workers "the numbers to fight." At the press conference announcing the plan, Steelworkers president George Becker said he was "so excited about this it almost brings tears to my eyes."

What seems to be making these labor officials so happy is not the expansion of union power, but the expanded dues base to maintain the high living they have grown so accustomed to atop the labor movement.

The union officials project that the new union will be formed by the year 2,000, after all three presidents are scheduled to retire.

As part of the agreement the unions will begin combining certain efforts right away, primarily to boost their influence inside the Democratic Party. They are hoping the projected merger will win them back some political clout among the capitalist politicians they so faithfully serve.

But the Democratic Party has less and less need of these officials now. Little of the union leadership's "legislative agenda" was given consideration while the Democrats controlled both the Congress and the White House.

Government programs that labor lead-

ers are accustomed to help administer are being slashed. Their waning influence is also behind the push to refurbish the image of the top leadership of the AFL-CIO, by getting rid of federation president Lane Kirkland.

Both Democratic and Republican parties are responding to increasing economic instability and deepening crisis by moving to the right. Their debate is over *how* to deepen the assaults on our wages and benefits, including Social Security and Medicare. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and President Bill Clinton both want to cut. It's only a question of how deep and how fast.

What will strengthen the unions today is building support for the struggles of workers' and others fighting for their rights. Thousands of UAW members are right now battling Caterpillar, the biggest earth-moving equipment manufacturer in the world.

What has helped strengthen that year-long strike, and given union members the resolve to keep fighting, has been the support of thousands of other working people. Recent expanded picket lines in the Peoria

area and other centers of the strike, and the solidarity rally of 3,000 unionists in Decatur, Illinois, on June 25, showed the company that the workers still have some fight in them. At the same time their fight needs more backing from the whole labor movement in order to win.

The labor movement needs to champion affirmative action and join with students and others who have been protesting the attacks on this important gain that helps to unify working people.

Our unions should campaign around a real program to guarantee jobs for all by shortening the workweek with no cut in pay and launching a massive public works program.

We can respond to the step-up of raids taking place in many factories that victimize workers from other countries, and fight for equal rights for immigrants.

Fighting along these lines will unite working people and help to push back the capitalists' bipartisan offensive on our rights, and living and working conditions.

The July 28 *New York Times* quotes Steelworkers president George Becker as saying, "Workers want somebody to pro-

tect them, to stand up and fight for them."

But the working class is a fighting class. Workers, together with farmers and other allies, have the strength and capacity to change the world. The road forward for working people can be seen in the powerful example of Cuba, where the working class has established its own government, and reorganized society to benefit workers, not capitalists.

Right now hundreds of young people including unionists from the Machinists, UAW, and other unions, are participating in the Cuba Lives Festival. When they return from Cuba, report-back meetings will bring the example of the Cuban revolution and the power of the working class to life for working people in the United States.

Fighting for the Caterpillar workers, joining union picket lines, getting behind the fight to defend affirmative action and immigrant workers. This is the direction that will lead to a stronger labor movement today. The projected merger of the UAW, USWA, and IAM will not.

John Staggs is a member of UAW Local 1695.

## Detroit news strikers win solidarity

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — "This is a union town; if they break us here, they'll go after us everywhere," declared Bob Wiland, one of the 2,500 members of six unions that struck this city's two daily papers, the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News*, on July 13.

Solidarity with the strike is quickly showing itself. Reports from worksites across southeast Michigan indicate wide backing for the strikers, as workers refuse to read the scab paper and campaign to keep it out of their plants.

In front of the Sterling Heights printing plant, passing motorists keep up a constant wail of car and truck horns. Drivers stop to drop off food and drinks for the pickets.

The unions, organized into the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, include two Teamsters locals, the Newspaper Guild of Detroit, the Graphic Communications International Union, and typographical workers organized into the Communication Workers of America (CWA). They had been working under day-to-day extensions of a contract that expired April 1. But Detroit Newspapers, which runs the combined business operation for the two dailies, refused to extend the contract beyond July 2.

The main issue in the strike was described as "job security" by Dennis Conroy, a newspaper truck driver and member of Teamsters Local 372, as he picketed the newspapers' Sterling Heights plant. They are "not talking about money, just about getting rid of us."

Wiland, the chief steward in the press



Militant/John Sarge

Some 1,500 strikers and supporters joined a solidarity rally in front of the *Detroit News* July 17. The company "has been hammering us for six years," one striker said.

room, explained, "The companies refuse to negotiate, even though they made \$640 million in 1994." In Detroit alone, Gannett Co. and Knight-Ridder, the publishers of the dailies, cleared \$55 million.

The companies have announced plans to cut mailers' jobs, to reclassify newspaper carriers (now union members) as management, and institute a \$100-per-month co-payment on medical coverage. The *Detroit News* unilaterally enacted "merit" pay for reporters just before the strike.

Local cops moved quickly to side with the employers. Within an hour of the start of the strike, three pickets were arrested outside the *Detroit News* building. In Sterling Heights, local cops in full riot gear attacked the picket lines to move scab trucks, arresting strikers.

The employers quickly deployed 1,200 paramilitary goons supplied by Vance International, Nation Wide Security, and Huffmaster Associates to try to intimidate workers and break the strike.

Three hundred strikers attended the July 18 Sterling Heights City Council meeting to protest the action of the cops and the use of company goon squads. Strikers at the meeting related several instances of physical harassment and threats by the private thugs.

The company is printing a joint edition of the papers with scabs brought in from across the country, but it is not being widely circulated. A number of small businesses refuse to sell the scab paper, companies have pulled ads, and many workers have tried to cancel subscriptions.

Tim Kelleher, a Detroit Newspapers vice-president, claims 1,300 of the 3,000 local carriers are still working. But workers report otherwise; in their neighbor-

hoods they've seen two-car teams — one with a new carrier, followed by one with thugs — throwing papers onto every lawn. Furthermore, the company has not been charging distributors for newspapers.

Strikers expect a long fight, but their morale is high. As one Newspaper Guild member, a *Free Press* photographer, put it, "We're ready for them. They have been hammering us for six years, now it is our turn."

On July 17, more than 1,500 people turned out for a solidarity rally in front of the *Detroit News*. The action, made up of unionists from across the region, was addressed by local union officials, the president of the Detroit City Council, and United Mine Workers of America president Richard Trumka.

One hundred fifty people, including many local union officials, met July 27 to organize a Religious/Labor/Community Coalition to Support the Newspaper Strikers. The coalition has called for stepped up boycott activity.

The strikers are urging others to join their picket lines and cancel their subscriptions.

Union members walking the line at the *Free Press* report that CWA members who work for the local phone company come by to show their support during their lunch hour and that teachers, many of whom have contracts expiring this summer, are regulars on the picket lines.

"We're trying to get everyone to come out here," Conroy explained.

John Sarge is a member of United Auto Workers Local 900. Steve Marshall, a member of United Transportation Union Local 683, contributed to this article.

## Celebrate the Life and Political Contributions of Rob Cahalane

Rob Cahalane, who first became active in the struggle against the Vietnam war and joined the communist movement in 1969 as a high school student, died recently at the age of 42. As a member of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party, he participated in the fight to defend desegregation of Boston's schools in the mid-1970s and was a leading party-builder in the city. Cahalane later took responsibility on the secretarial staff in the party's national office in New York, along with organizing the library in the Pathfinder building and the party's political archives.

Sunday, August 13, 5:00 p.m.  
New York City

For location and more information call: (212) 388-9475



# 'Unity of workers and farmers makes everything possible'

## Life of veteran communist celebrated

BY JON HILLSON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Although he died just a few miles from the farm where he was born in Sacred Heart, and never moved far from that spot in west central Minnesota where his immigrant Norwegian grandparents homesteaded nearly 130 years ago, John Enestvedt lived the life of an internationalist fighter, whose solidarity with the struggles of workers and farmers knew no borders.

Enestvedt's contributions to these battles, spanning nearly seven decades of political activity, were described in rich detail by friends, co-fighters, and comrades at a celebration at the Pathfinder Bookstore here sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party. More than 40 people attended the July 23 event. Enestvedt, who died a month earlier, was 89 years old.

Enestvedt was, he once explained, "a socialist ever since I was 20 or so." But even prior to that, John joined his uncle in organizing trips for the Non-Partisan League, which rose from Midwest farm struggles in 1915. His experiences with this group helped John develop a deep hatred for the capitalist system.

Enestvedt voted for Socialist Party presidential candidate Norman Thomas in 1928, and later joined the SP.

The Great Depression that followed the 1929 stock market crash eventually spurred both farm protests against foreclosures, and a new wave of labor militancy. The Minneapolis Teamster battles of 1934 spearheaded working-class resistance and advances in the Midwest.

Among the central leaders of the Teamster strikes, which made Minneapolis a union town, were members of the Communist League of America. The CLA later became the Socialist Workers Party.

### Teamsters' fight finds firm ally

When the Teamster leaders reached out to working farmers, they found fighters like John Enestvedt, SWP member Doug Jenness told the St. Paul meeting.

In a message from the SWP Political Committee, National Secretary Jack Barnes noted, "Like another young Minnesota man in his twenties, [Minneapolis Teamster strike leader] Farrell Dobbs, who was just one year younger than John, he identified the revolutionary workers movement with the political character and combat courage of Carl Skoglund and the Dunne brothers [CLA and Minneapolis Teamster leaders], and he never altered his opinion on this."

Driven out of farming by the Depression, Enestvedt became an adult education teacher for the government program that eventually became the Works Progress Administration.

The victorious Minneapolis Teamsters, the vanguard of a deep-going labor insurgency, launched organizing drives to reach such workers, and established the Federal Workers Section (FWS) of Teamster Local 574.

After having tasted what he recalled was "real unionism" in the Minneapolis labor battle, John signed up, and was elected shop steward in Renville County's FWS local.

This brought him into deeper contact with revolutionary militants he'd met earlier in the CLA, who were now constituted in the Workers Party, and would shortly merge with the Socialist Party.

This wing of the organization was more than the pro-capitalist SP leadership could stomach. Enestvedt, who identified with the left wing, was expelled with it in late 1937.

In early 1938, he was the Olivia, Minnesota, delegate to the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

John remained "a member of the Socialist Workers Party until his health prevented it, and a supporter of the party until the day he died," Jenness told the St. Paul celebration. The Renville County farmer "participated in virtually every major farm

movement in North America this century."

He did so from a belief, captured in a letter written in 1982 that, "The good things that have happened to farmers have been the result of workers and farmers. But I have learned that until the workers move, the movement of farmers fizzles out. No one has aided, nor will they come to the aid of the farmer except the workers. Without this unity, my experience tells me that there can be no victory for workers and farmers — and no further progress for mankind on planet earth. Through the united effort of workers and farmers, everything is possible. Without it, nothing is possible."

This political stance, developed in work in the Non-Partisan League in the 1920s, the Farmers' Holiday Association in the 1930s, the National Farmers' Organization and its militant strikes in the 1960s, and the mobilization of working farmers against foreclosures again in the 1980s, earned a hearing among fighters in the countryside.

In a message to the celebration describing the meetings leading up to what would be a protest of 20,000 farmers at the Minnesota state capitol in 1985, Delores Swoboda, a longtime leader of Groundswell, which emerged from that rising of working farmers, stated that she "noticed that one elderly farmer was approached time and again for input, leadership, comments, and personal feelings. My husband Gene and I wondered who this man was. Later we learned it was John Enestvedt."

She and Gene would spend "numerous hours sitting at his house, asking for explanations, asking for help to understand an issue, and we learned, we grew."

Enestvedt, at the age of 78, was elected to Groundswell's board of directors in 1985.

Joe Johnson, who served as the Minneapolis SWP organizer in the 1960s, sent a message explaining, "I saw him in action in the early '60s with the National Farmers' Organization and its history-making Midwestern strike."

"In this huge farmers strike of 23 states, John's deep experience and extensive practical skills combined with his energy and devotion to make him a leader," Johnson stated.

### Inspired by the Cuban revolution

Enestvedt's "political confidence in the capacities of the working class were reinforced," stated SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in his letter to the meeting, "by the triumph of the Cuban socialist revolution at the opening of the 1960s, and he closely followed its course over the next 35 years."

"A number of us knew him first as a champion of and educator on the Cuban revolution," Barnes noted, "even before we knew him as a revolutionary farm activist."

In a 1982 letter, John emphasized, "The strong internationalism of Cuba, next door to the world's most powerful imperialist power... is a true contest between what socialism really is offering its working people, as against imperialism's program of mass deprivations and periodic wars, leading to a nuclear burnout of all life."

John embraced the Nicaraguan revolution, whose leaders initially looked to Cuba as their example. In 1985, he visited Nicaragua with a delegation of 11 farmers and four trade unionists from the United States and Canada.

Prior to and after his trip to Nicaragua, whenever he could, he made it to Twin Cities demonstrations to protest U.S. war moves "against the revolution, in defense of the revolution in Grenada, in support of the struggle in El Salvador," said Maggie Perrier at the meeting, who worked with John in the 1980s as a member of the Young Socialist Alliance, and is now a member of the Chicago SWP.

Perrier also remembered Enestvedt's



Militant/Peggy Winter

John Enestvedt (in plaid jacket) at 1985 farm protest in Glenwood, Minnesota.

warm sense of humor. "We would have serious discussions, about the Minneapolis strikes, the Farmers' Holiday movement, about farm struggles, but John would have us on the floor, with his Ole and Lena jokes," she told the meeting.

### Friends tended to stick with him

"A big, rangy guy," was how Charlie Scheer, a founding member of the SWP, and lifelong comrade described his friend John. "As a farmer, he believed in protecting the environment," Scheer said.

"He avoided pesticides, he defended the wetlands, he fought the environmentally destructive power lines, and he always sought to find what was best for the soil. And if he rented you land, you had to abide by that, too," Scheer said.

John's friends tended to stick with him, Scheer said. Among those in attendance at the celebration was Al Eiden, who served in Minnesota's Sandstone prison as a conscientious objector, with 14 SWP and Teamster leaders convicted on sedition charges in 1943 for their revolutionary opposition to the second imperialist war.

David Warshawsky, a member of the Twin Cities Young Socialists, recounted a story of John's protest against a grade school teacher who forbade immigrant Norwegian farm youth from speaking their native tongue.

"The students laid in a circle with their heads together, speaking Norwegian to each other," Warshawsky said, "while they kept their eyes in every direction. They forced the teacher to back down."

"That's the spirit of a rebel, a fighter, who got organized, and played a role in making history," the young socialist said.

Argiris Malapanis, a member of the SWP Political Committee, described his experiences as member of the Young Socialist Alliance in the mid-1980s when he worked with John.

"John was inspired by the spirit and determination of the [United Food and Com-

mercial Workers Local] P-9 strikers against the Hormel bosses," he explained. "He was able to apply what he learned in the 1930s workers and farmers battles for a new generation, and he helped bring these politics to young farmers," Malapanis said.

Describing that moment in 1986, John wrote, "My hearing is bad, of course, but I have been around long enough to scent when there is fresh air in the political atmosphere," Enestvedt wrote in 1986. "It is like old times for me."

"Scent," Jenness said, "was the right word" as he described one of John's favorite quotes, which he used in another letter, written in 1984.

"I liked what [Nicaraguan revolutionary leader Tomás] Borge said in May 1983: 'From the beginning, we had a nose for power, and we went on developing that instinct and transmitted it to our cadres even when we recruited them through struggles around immediate demands.' I think I have been in his camp all my adult life."

"Borge abandoned those revolutionary perspectives," Malapanis said, "but John never did. He never left that camp, the fight for a workers and farmers government, for placing power in the hands of the mass of working people to solve the crisis of exploitation and war, once and for all."

### Broad view of the world

John's level of solidarity, and his stated goal of a socialist world, meant "He lifted himself past any rural and national limitations, and even beyond the limitations of the times he lived and died in," wrote Mark Curtis, the framed-up union and political activist.

Although Enestvedt was a farmer, meeting chair Doug Jenness explained, that was only the beginning of defining him. "John was, we know, a craftsman."

"When our movement moved into what

Continued on Page 14

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# Hiroshima 1945: behind the U.S. atom bomb atrocity

On Aug. 6, 1945, and again on August 9, the U.S. government dropped the first and second atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Tens of thousands of people died instantly, with thousands more dying later. This year marks the 50th anniversary of that atrocity.

The following article appeared in the Jan. 25, 1965, issue of the *Militant* under the headline "What the Record Shows: U.S. Guilt at Hiroshima." The author, Fred Halstead, was a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party.

As the SWP's candidate for president in 1968, Halstead took a trip around the world, visiting Japan, South Vietnam, India, Egypt, West Germany, France, and Britain. In Japan he attended several peace conferences, addressing a session of the Japan Conference Against A- and H-Bombs on August 6 in Hiroshima.

## BY FRED HALSTEAD

That Japan was "truly making sincere requests for peace," before and at the time of the Hiroshima A-bomb, is an undisputed fact of history. It is so well established that even popular history books and standard reference works recently published in this country cannot ignore it.

The obvious implications of the fact are so damning to the moral position of the American capitalist power structure and so unpleasant to the American people generally, however, that the fact is not often squarely faced in this country, even by many pacifist critics of the government's nuclear warfare policies. In the popular histories and reference works, it is generally glossed over with the briefest, most off-hand mention — after the style of West German textbook references to Nazi crimes — as if the unpleasant fact could somehow be buried and forgotten if it is given the low-key treatment.

And indeed the general impression still exists in this country (but not abroad) that somehow the dropping of the A-bombs on Japan caused the end of the war and eliminated a bloody invasion of the Japanese home islands, thus saving more lives than the A-bombs themselves snuffed out. This is a lie manufactured and spread in the first place by President Truman and British prime ministers Churchill and Attlee, who took responsibility for the decision to drop the bombs. It is nothing but the official trumped-up alibi for one of the most shocking and unjustified war crimes in all human history.

What are the facts? This is what the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1959 edition) has to say: "After the fall of Okinawa [on June 21, 1945], [Japanese Prime Minister] Suzuki's main objective was to get Japan out of the war on the best possible terms,

though that could not be announced to the general public.... Unofficial peace feelers were transmitted through Switzerland and Sweden.... Later the Japanese made a formal request to Russia to aid in bringing hostilities to an end."

The *Britannica* then completes its coverage by saying that Russia rebuffed the Japanese overtures because it didn't want the war to end before it was scheduled to invade the northern areas occupied by Japan. What the *Britannica* fails to mention is that these Japanese overtures were known to Washington because the dispatches between Foreign Minister Togo in Tokyo and Japanese Ambassador Sato in Moscow were intercepted by the United States.

The entire affair is documented in the Hoover Library volume *Japan's Decision to Surrender*, by Robert J.C. Butlow (Stanford University, 1954). Butlow quotes the dispatch that was received and decoded in Washington on July 13, 1945: "Togo to Sato...Convey His Majesty's strong desire to secure a termination of the war...Unconditional surrender is the only obstacle to peace." These requests continued through July.

Butlow documents that Washington knew the one "condition" insisted upon by the Japanese government was the continuation of the emperor on his throne and the symbolic recognition this implied of the Japanese home islands as a political entity. As it turned out this was exactly the "condition" that was granted when the peace was finally signed after the A-bombings August 6 and 9.

If the U.S. government knew as early as July 13 that the leading circles in Japan were seeking peace on those terms, why didn't it pursue this possibility for peace instead of ignoring it and proceeding with the A-bombings? There is simply no satisfactory answer to this question from the point of view of the military demands of ending the war — even on U.S. imperialist terms — and saving soldiers' lives.

## Twice guilty

As Hanson W. Baldwin, the *New York Times* military analyst, said in his book *Great Mistakes of the War* (1949):

"Our only warning to a Japan already militarily defeated, and in a hopeless situation, was the Potsdam demand for unconditional surrender issued on July 26, when we knew the Japanese surrender attempt had started. Yet when the Japanese surrender was negotiated about two weeks later, after the bomb was dropped, our unconditional surrender demand was made conditional and we agreed, as [Secretary of War] Stimson had originally proposed we should do, to continuation of the Emperor upon his imperial throne.

"We were, therefore, twice guilty. We



Fred Halstead speaking at Japan Conference Against A- and H-bombs in Hiroshima Aug. 6, 1968. The A-bomb was dropped to demonstrate its effects on live targets.

dropped the bomb at a time when Japan already was negotiating for an end of the war, but before these negotiations could come to fruition. We demanded unconditional surrender, then dropped the bomb and accepted conditional surrender, a sequence which indicates pretty clearly that the Japanese would have surrendered, even if the bomb had not been dropped, had the Potsdam Declaration included our promise to permit the Emperor to remain on his imperial throne."

Why, then, did the United States drop the bombs? One of the few writers who claims to believe the official alibi is Robert C. Batchelder, author of the well-documented *The Irreversible Decision* (1962). Even Batchelder admits: "It seems clear that had the [U.S.] attempt to end the war by political and diplomatic means been undertaken sooner, more seriously, and with more skill, the decision to use the atomic bomb might well have been rendered unnecessary."

Batchelder explains the affair away by attributing it to U.S. diplomatic inefficiency and a tendency in U.S. leaders to deal with the war in purely military terms and neglect political aspects. But the evidence indicates the final A-bomb decision was made precisely for political reasons.

Indeed, some top U.S. military men — including Eisenhower and the chief of staff of the U.S. armed forces at the time, Adm. William D. Leahy — declined to support use of the bomb. In his book, *I Was There* (1950), Leahy says: "It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons.

"It was my reaction that the scientists and others wanted to make this test [!] because of the vast sums that had been spent on the project. Truman knew that, and so did the people involved. However, the Chief Executive made the decision to use the bomb on two cities in Japan."

## Live targets

This "test" on Hiroshima and Nagasaki cost, by the conservative American estimates, 110,000 dead and as many injured; and, by Japanese estimates, twice that many. The evidence strongly indicates that one major motivation of the A-bomb decision was precisely to test the bomb on live targets, so as to confront the postwar world with the proven fact of overwhelming U.S. military superiority. It also established the fact that U.S. imperialism not only had the bomb but had the ruthlessness to use it.

The haste with which the bomb was used indicates that the U.S. purposely ignored the Japanese peace requests (which were known in Washington on July 13) in order to drop the bomb before the war ended. No one was sure the bomb would work until July 18 when it was tested in New Mexico. The only other two bombs in existence were quickly dispatched to the Pacific base and were dropped on Au-

gust 6 and 9. This haste is unexplained by combat problems. By that stage of the war U.S. bombers and ships encountered no serious resistance and no U.S. troop attacks were scheduled until November 1, so the haste was not necessary to "save American lives."

One of the most thoughtful works on the subject is that by the British nuclear scientist, P.M.S. Blackett, entitled *Fear, War and the Bomb* (London, 1949). Blackett points out: "If the saving of American lives had been the main objective, surely the bombs would have been held back until (a) it was certain that the Japanese peace proposals made through Russia were not acceptable, and (b) the Russian offensive, which had for months been part of the allied strategic plan, and which Americans had previously demanded, had run its course."

## Bomb aimed against Soviet Union

This last is the final piece in the puzzle. It is Blackett's well-founded thesis that one reason for the haste was to drop the bomb before the Russians entered the war against Japan. The allies had already agreed at Yalta that the USSR would attack Japan three months after Germany surrendered. Stalin had notified the United States that the Russian armies would be ready for that attack on schedule, that is, August 8. The bomb was dropped on Hiroshima August 6.

In another book by Blackett, *Atomic Weapons and East-West Relations* (London, 1956), the scientist discusses the later feelings of some of his American colleagues who had been involved in the decision to use the A-bomb:

"The opposition between 1949 and 1951 of so many atomic scientists to the H-bomb program must, I think, be taken as the price the American Government paid for lack of candor in 1945. If the scientists had been told that Japan had been essentially defeated and was suing for peace, but that the dropping of the bombs won for America a vital diplomatic victory, since it kept the Soviet Union out of the Japanese peace settlement and so avoided the difficulties and frictions inherent in the German surrender, I expect most would have accepted, however reluctantly, the practical wisdom of the act. They were not told this, but they were told that the bomb saved untold American lives. When they later learnt that this was rather unlikely, many of them must have begun to fear that their government might not be able to resist some future temptation to exploit America's atomic superiority..."

To sum up: That Japan was defeated and suing for peace before the bombs were dropped is a fact established beyond doubt. The motivations of U.S. rulers in dropping the bombs anyway is, of course, a disputed question. But the evidence utterly fails to support the official alibi that it was done to avoid costly battles. On the contrary, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were murdered, not to end World War II, but to launch what later came to be known as the cold war.

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# Antinuclear conferences open in Japan

BY BOB MILLER

HIROSHIMA, Japan — More than 300 people met here July 31 for the opening of the Fifty Years Since the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki International Symposium. In addition to participants from Japan, 73 international delegates came from 23 other countries, including Australia, Cuba, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Marshall Islands, South Korea, Tahiti, and the United States.

The July 31-August 2 conference is cosponsored by the Japanese Preparatory Committee and the Special Non-Government Organization Committee for Disarmament based in Geneva. The Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers is playing a major role in this conference.

The International Symposium is one of several conferences that will precede the 50th commemoration of the U.S. government bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Aug. 6 and 9, 1945. More than 200,000 people were killed in those first atomic bomb attacks or died later from radiation poisoning.

The other meetings include the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, August 3-9; the 50th Anniversary Conference, August 1-9; and the Hiroshima Conference for Peace-oriented Social Alternatives, August 5-6.

Discussions at the first conference are focusing on the reasons Washington dropped the atomic bombs and the devastating effects on the people of Japan that

resulted from the blasts.

Conference participants have been relating their efforts to fight for compensation and medical attention for the bomb sufferers, many of whom are Korean. How to fight against further testing, possession, and use of nuclear weapons is also part of the deliberations.

The decision of the French government to conduct a nuclear test on the Moruroa atoll in the South Pacific is an important issue here. Protests in Japan have begun against the testing; similar actions are taking place throughout the Pacific, including in Tahiti, Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia. On July 19, for example, 250 people held a street protest in Osaka. The action was called by a coalition of antinuclear groups. Marching by the French consulate protesters chanted, "Stop the nuclear tests!"

Some capitalist politicians, including finance minister Masayoshi Takemura, are seizing the issue to step up nationalist, anti-French rhetoric, calling for a Japanese boycott of products from France.

The ruling coalition parties, along with the major opposition party, are denouncing nuclear testing as an unforgivable act.

Tokyo is also aiming its fire on the government of China, which it says carried out a nuclear test in May.

A delegation of socialist workers and young socialists from the United States will be participating in the 50th anniversary conferences and reporting for the *Militant*. They will be writing on the fight for



Ruins from the atomic explosion near the hypocenter of the blast in Hiroshima. Some 92 percent of the 76,000 buildings in Hiroshima were destroyed.

compensation for atomic bomb survivors, the situation facing Korean victims of the bombings, discussions among auto workers and youth, and the interest in socialist literature among political activists and

workers in Japan.

Bob Miller is a member of United Auto Workers Local 980 at the Ford plant in Edison, New Jersey.

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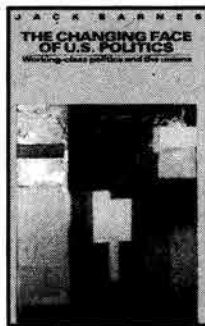
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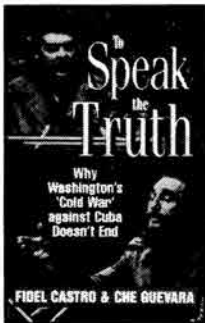


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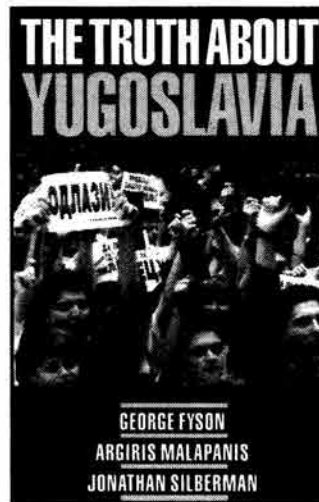


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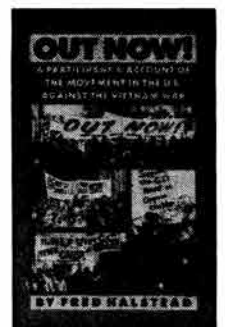
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# NOW conference focuses on elections, affirmative action

BY NAOMI CRAINE

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Defending affirmative action, support to Democratic Party candidates in the 1996 elections, the rise in right-wing groups, and campaigning for an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to the U.S. Constitution were some of the main issues discussed at the annual conference of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Some 700 delegates and guests participated in the plenary sessions, workshops, and other activities held here July 21-23.

The day before the conference opened, the board of regents at the University of California voted "to remove race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin" from criteria for admissions by 1997 and in hiring and contracting by 1996. This was one of many attacks on affirmative action that participants discussed how to resist.

"We're going to be protesting full-blast, at every board of regents meeting, until the decision is reversed," said Janice Pemberton from California. Participants from around the country snapped up buttons and placards reading "Support Affirmative Action" that the NOW members from California sold.

"We're planning a march and rally for affirmative action September 8," said Ruth Wyman, a student at the University of Illinois in Champaign. "We see what's happening in California. If we don't mobilize now, it will be too late."

## How to defend affirmative action

In the workshops and discussions on conference resolutions, different views were put forward on what affirmative action is and how to defend it.

Several speakers referred approvingly to the July 19 speech by U.S. president Bill Clinton in which he criticized those who would end entirely affirmative action programs. At the same time, White House officials stated that Clinton would soon require federal agencies to eliminate or reform any program that includes quotas or creates "reverse discrimination."

"Clinton gave a strong speech for affirmative action," declared NOW president Patricia Ireland in her main address to the conference. "I'm proud of him and I'm proud of you for making sure he did it."

One participant in a workshop asked, "How do you answer when white men say affirmative action is taking away their jobs?" Her question was echoed by many others.

Kathy Rogers, executive director of the NOW Legal Defense Fund, responded,

"We need to explain that affirmative action is for qualified people only; otherwise businesses couldn't function."

"In 1982 I got a job in an ironworks along with four other women. That was because of quotas," said Lea Sherman from Brooklyn, taking a different approach in the discussion on a proposed resolution on the issue. Supporters of affirmative action should answer the right wing by supporting quotas, she said. "They are the teeth to affirmative action."

Affirmative action does not just benefit women and minorities, contended Amy Husk, a laid-off garment worker from New York City, in one of the plenary sessions. The labor movement "should defend affirmative action as part of a fight for jobs for all," she said. "Affirmative action strengthens the working class as a whole, including workers who are white men, because it puts us in a better position to unite. At the same time we need to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, a higher minimum wage, and international solidarity."

## Equal rights amendment

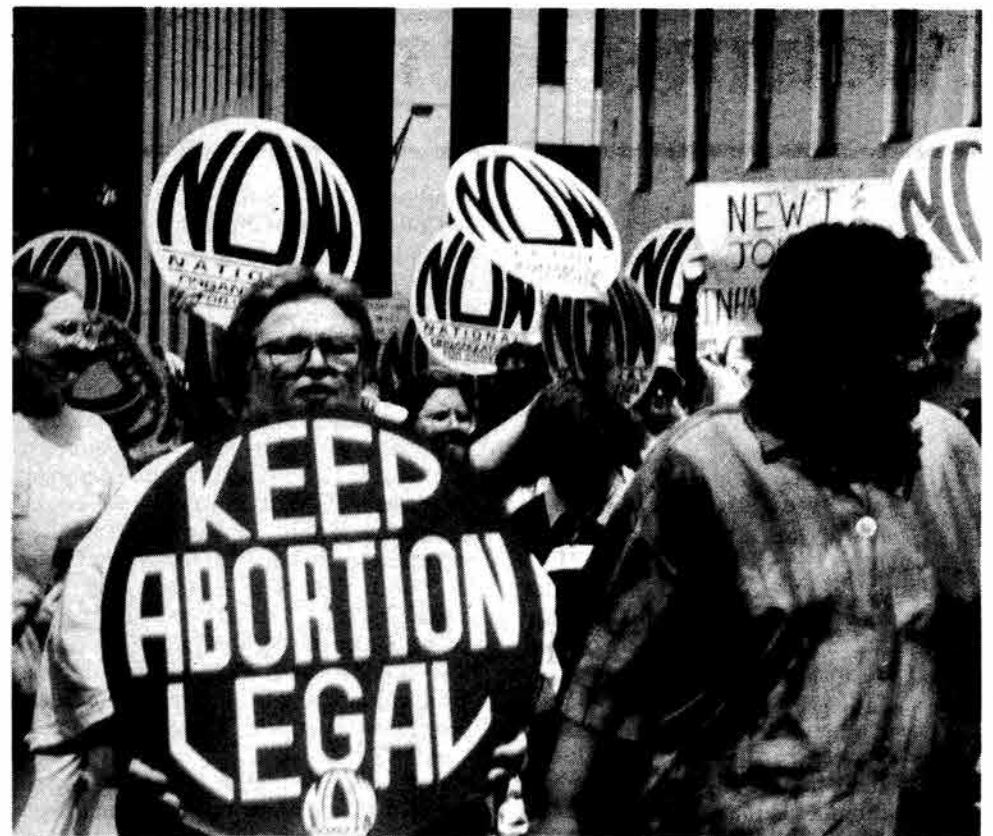
Extensive discussion at the conference focused on a campaign for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing equal rights for women. Ireland laid out NOW's perspective of getting the ERA passed by the year 2002 by "moving more of us into public office. We need to get more feminist candidates in the pipeline," she said.

Delegates debated whether to present the original wording from the 1972-82 ERA fight — "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any state on account of sex" — or a new version barring "discrimination on account of sex, race, sexual orientation, marital status, ethnicity, national origin, color or indigence." The new wording was eventually adopted as a working draft.

Another topic of discussion was answering right-wing politicians and groups. This mostly focused on the Republican Party and the 1996 presidential elections.

Participants in a workshop titled "Rise of right-wing violence" debated how to respond to militia outfits, antiabortion terrorists, and other ultrarightist forces. Eleanor Smeal, one of the workshop presenters and president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, said women's rights activists need to work with various police agencies to combat these organizations.

One participant spoke against giving greater powers to the cops, noting the history of government spying and disruption



Militant/Melanie Zimmer

Rally in Columbus during NOW gathering protests bill in Ohio legislature to limit abortion rights. Conference participants also discussed affirmative action fight.

of political organizations, including NOW.

Smeal replied, "It's an outrage that the militias openly organize to violently overthrow our government. It's treason. The laws are too lenient. There's got to be some law and order."

A workshop on "Welfare and poverty issues" generated debate as well. One participant proposed that NOW counter the propaganda against women who have children while they are receiving welfare. "Poor women should have the right to have a baby if they choose," she said. Another woman argued instead that women on welfare should be educated against having babies "that they can't take care of."

## Defending abortion rights

One of the few discussions on abortion rights at the conference focused on bills currently before the Ohio legislature and in Congress that would outlaw D and X (dilation and extraction) abortions. This is a rare procedure for late-term abortions, generally used in cases of severe birth defects or when a woman's life is endangered by the pregnancy. Participants agreed that these bills are aimed at making inroads against the right to abortion in general.

A number of participants were youth who took part in a Young Feminists Summit sponsored by NOW last April, which drew 1,200 participants. A resolution proposing that young feminists conferences be held at least once every four years was debated and referred to the NOW National Board for decision.

Participants in the conference were in-

involved in a wide range of other activities. Cathleen Bonner, a student at Gettysburg College in Maryland, described how she helped organize a panel discussion last December to speak out against the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 adopted in California. "This law is disastrous for anyone who looks immigrant," she said.

Several NOW members from New Jersey brought their experience in fights against police brutality to the gathering. "Women don't just face domestic violence," explained Isabel Espinosa. "We face brutality from the police, the government, the welfare system."

Espinosa was charged with assault last January by a Jersey City cop after she resisted his assault on her. A couple months later she helped start the New Jersey Committee against Police Brutality after Julio Tarquino died in police custody in Jersey City.

Diana Newberry, from New York City, who is attending the Cuba Lives International Youth Festival in August, said there was a lot of interest in that trip. "About half a dozen people offered to organize report-back meetings for young people going to the festival," she said.

A women's rights march through downtown Columbus during the conference protested the proposed restrictions on abortion rights pending in the Ohio state legislature. The rally drew workers and youth from the area, and several hundred conference participants.

Leaflets were also distributed at the conference for a march planned for August 26 in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the 75th anniversary of women winning the right to vote.

# Hundreds rally to turn back assault on affirmative action in California

BY OSBORNE HART

SAN FRANCISCO — Demonstrations and rallies denouncing the July 20 University of California (UC) board of regents' vote to eliminate affirmative action programs drew hundreds of protesters during the hours and days following the decision.

The regents voted 14 to 10 to remove race, religion, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin as factors in admission policies by 1997; and 15 to 10 to end affirmative action in hiring and contracting by 1996. The officials delayed announcement of their decision until 8:30 p.m.

Affirmative action is "a piece of civil rights history," said Hatem Bazian, a UC Berkeley student and leader of the Affirmative Action Coalition, at one rally of 300 at the campus. "We can't allow them to implement this." Bazian announced a series of pro-affirmative action demonstrations for the nine UC campuses being planned by the systemwide UC Student Association for the opening of fall classes.

The largest protest — more than 700 people — occurred during the 13-hour-long regents' meeting.

Demonstrators, who gathered the night before at the UC San Francisco site, were confronted with barricades and hundreds of campus cops, city police, and California Highway Patrol in riot-gear.

"It will be detrimental for a lot of us. It will create more divisions among students," said one young Latina student picketing the meeting. Ending affirmative action will mean "less understanding among different cultures."

All nine UC campus chancellors have stated their support for affirmative action and condemned plans to end it. There are no clearly defined regulations requiring campus admissions offices to implement the regents' mandate.

In June, California governor and presidential candidate Pete Wilson signed an executive order repealing affirmative action policies for a number of state agencies. He publicly urged the regents to do the same. Also, Wilson supporters are petitioning to get a proposition to eliminate affirmative action policies for California on the November 1996 ballot.

Regent Ward Connerly, a Black busi-

nessman and a Wilson political appointee, was the main author of the proposal before the university board.

The UC campuses have an enrollment of more than 162,000 students. The end of affirmative action programs could result in a 75 percent drop in Black student enrollment and a nearly 15 percent decrease of Latino students, according to UC Berkeley administrators.

Commentators have pointed out that the vote to gut affirmative action programs at California's universities does not mean the fight is over.

The vote "could turn out to be more smoke than fire," complained an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. The big-business paper noted that affirmative action policies can still be applied to students with "economic and as-yet undefined 'social' disadvantages."

The regents also approved a provision that rules out any changes in programs that might result "in a loss of federal or state funds for the university." The UC system receives about \$2.5 billion a year in federal funds.

## Socialist literature well received at conference

BY SUSAN HOPE

Sales of socialist literature at the NOW national conference reflected a broad range of interest in politics today. The biggest seller was *New Internationalist* no. 10, with the article "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War." Three conference participants bought copies of the Marxist magazine from the Socialist Workers Party literature table in the conference exhibit center. One woman who bought the *New Internationalist* commented, "You can't continue to beat workers down without expecting a fight sometime down the road."

Other titles that were sold included *The Communist Manifesto*; *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*; *Teamster Rebellion*; *The Truth about Yugoslavia*; and *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It* by Leon Trotsky. Altogether book sales totaled about \$100.

Two participants bought *Militant* subscriptions. Another 30 bought single copies of the socialist weekly, and one picked up a copy of the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*.



# Nicaragua: stability still eludes capitalists

BY FRANCISCO PICADO  
AND SEBASTIAN O'GRADY

MANAGUA — Five years after Violeta Chamorro and the U.S.-backed Opposition National Union (UNO) coalition won the elections here, their dreams of capitalist stability are still far from being a reality.

The government was virtually paralyzed recently by a four-month-long constitutional battle between a majority of the National Assembly and President Chamorro. Although an agreement was finally reached June 15, in part under pressure from international aid donors, the underlying causes of the conflict have not gone away.

Land disputes in the countryside continue to smolder. On one side are peasants who received land from a Sandinista-led government placed in power by the popular armed insurrection that overthrew the Anastasio Somoza dictatorship in 1979, and those who have occupied land in more recent years. On the other are the previous large owners who want the confiscated land back, new landowners who were given large holdings in the aftermath of the electoral defeat of the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front), and both government and private-owned banks, which have been slow to give loans to those who obtained land through the revolution.

Austerity measures and free market policies — initiated under the FSLN at the end of the 1980s and deepened since 1990 under the current regime — have battered working people in the city and countryside. Many refuse to give up their "Sandinista roots," as one telephone worker described the gains made during the revolution.

The Chamorro government points to the new factories in Managua's free trade zone as a glowing success for the free market and capitalism in Nicaragua. Sergio Novoa, Human Resources consultant for the government-run Free Trade Zone Corp., said in an interview that things have been improving since the defeat of the "Sandinista communist government."

Since 1991 employment in the zone has jumped from 900 to more than 6,000. Even the old prison at the outskirts of the zone has been converted for the 15 businesses there. Owned by U.S., Taiwanese, Korean, and Nicaraguan capitalists, the shops mostly make clothes for export to the United States for J.C. Penny, Wal-Mart, Sears, and K-Mart.

Until 1990 most of the factories there were government owned. Now they are all private.

## 'An abundance of peasant women'

"Foreign investors are really impressed when they see what we have here," Novoa said. "We have an abundance of peasant women who come from having done nothing but milk cows all their life, to running industrial machinery. They learn fast, and become agile, rapid, versatile, high-quality workers."

"And a big part of the attractiveness is how cheap labor is," boasts Novoa. "It's cheaper than in the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, or Mexico."

But there are still problems, he added. "Some investors come from New York trembling with fear. We have to convince them that the Sandinistas and the strikes of tire-burning workers are a thing of the past."

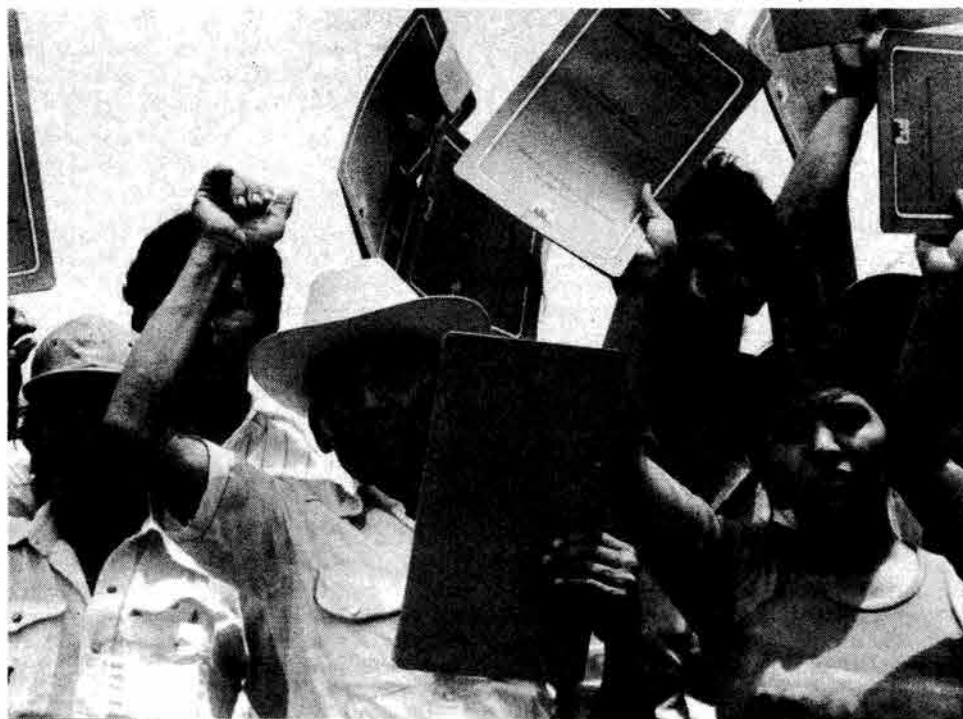
There is not one union in the free trade zone, even at a shoe factory owned by a member of the FSLN.

Three workers at the new enterprises in the zone, formerly employees at the state-owned ENAVES garment factory, were taking their lunch break as these reporters were leaving.

"It's the same now," one of the women said. "Except that in 1990 we received a free lunch every day, free transportation to and from work, and a package that included rice, beans, soap and other essential items each month, and there was a bus that picked us up every morning. Now all those things have to come out of our wages."

"That means it's not the same," added another worker. "I only make 140 córdobas a week (about \$19). Do you know what it means living on that?"

"We've been forced to speed up our work. And any one who talks union is



Landless peasants who had just received land titles at June 13, 1982, public ceremony in Carazo, Nicaragua. Land disputes continue to smolder in the countryside.

fired," said the first woman.

Carlos Borge, a leader of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST), said that the CST has lost 50 percent of its membership in the last five years, mostly due to growing unemployment. At the same time, he noted, the Ministry of Labor has blocked union recognition including in the free trade zone.

Strikes are harder now, commented Mario Malespin, head of the Enrique Schmidt Telecommunications Union and a leader of the CST. "Workers are afraid to lose their jobs."

Few new unions have been formed. "This is true even in the many businesses now owned by the FSLN," Malespin, himself a member of the FSLN, said. "As far as I know not one of them is union. They are just like any other recalcitrant capitalist."

A fight is now brewing at the state-owned phone and mail company Telcor. The government is planning to sell Telcor — one of the most profitable companies in the country — ostensibly to raise money to compensate capitalists for land that was confiscated and turned over to peasants and farm workers during the revolution.

"We're fine just the way we are," said Veronica Wayman, a cashier and operator at Telcor in Managua. "Privatizing would mean layoffs and a loss of benefits." Phone workers make triple and quadruple what garment workers in the free trade zone make and they still get free medical, dental, and eye care, and a food package each month.

"I'm not against compensating the old landowners," she said. "But not at our expense."

In 1990 Telcor workers went on strike in spite of opposition from the FSLN leadership.

## Headache for capitalists: land disputes

Ongoing land disputes in the countryside are at the center of the problems the capitalist class in Nicaragua faces trying to establish some kind of stability.

In the early to mid-1980s, the Sandinista-led government confiscated the landholdings of capitalists tied to the Somoza dictatorship and some other large capitalists. Thousands of acres were distributed to landless peasants, most to cooperative and collective farms. Other large estates were organized into state-owned enterprises.

After its 1990 electoral defeat, the FSLN distributed additional farm land to peasants and lots in the city for housing.

Chamorro, during her campaign for president, promised to give land back to many of the previous landowners or compensate them. Some small factories have been returned to the previous owners. But in the countryside, for the most part, Chamorro has not tried to evict peasants from the land they won or occupied. Instead she offered government bonds to the expropriated capitalists, many of whom refused the offer. Unable to get any financing or other assistance a number of peasants have sold their land.

In early July former U.S. president

Jimmy Carter brought the opposing sides together and worked out a deal. The Chamorro government agreed to recognize the titles of the peasant and peasant cooperatives and guarantee a major portion of the bonds with dollars in part by selling off Telcor. Some capitalists still insist on getting their land back and have refused to back the accord.

State-owned farms, however have already been divided up in a process that began several years ago. According to Jose Adan Rivera, an executive committee member of the Rural Workers Association (ATC), the government, the ATC, the FSLN, and others agreed to a four way division: 29.5 percent of the farms were returned to their old owners, 21.3 percent to former contras, 17.2 percent to Sandinista Army veterans, and 32 percent to farm workers and the old state farm administrations.

All sides agreed to maintain the same benefits and not to fire current employees. But many former owners, and new owners, have violated this agreement, Rivera said. Farm workers are in bitter disputes over these lands.

Many farm workers and small peasants complain that most, and the best, of the land destined for veterans and former contras, was given not to rank and file soldiers, but to Sandinista Army officers and high-ranking ex-contras.

The other problem has been credit to work the land. The government has refused to recognize the titles of many cooperatives and state farms. Without titles, the private and state-owned banks refuse credit. Without credit, small peasants and other farmers cannot buy what they need to farm.

Thousands of peasants led by the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG) marched in Managua June 16 to demand that the government recognize the titles of all those who received land.

Farm workers and peasants, with the support of the ATC, have been camping out on the grounds of the University of Central America in Managua to highlight their demands for titles and credit. Twice a day, 150 rural toilers block the street in front of the university. Every week, some head back to their farms and others take their place. The "sit-in," as they call it, began in May.

"The government is fighting for the bourgeoisie," said Santos Paez from San Juan del Rio Coco, who works at La Dalia coffee plantation, formerly a state-owned farm that is now formally owned by the farm workers. The workers were forced to "hire" the old administration, which in turn has the power to hire and fire, and to set wages. The government "doesn't care about the peasants. We want titles and credit."

## FSLN promises 'stability'

In the midst of the deepening economic crisis and continuing resistance, 40,000 people overflowed the Plaza of the Revolution July 19, the anniversary of the Sandinista revolution.

Workers, students, and army veterans, many dressed in the red and black colors

of the Sandinista flag, some with homemade signs, turned out to hear speeches by FSLN leaders Tomás Borge and Daniel Ortega. The latter is expected to be the FSLN candidate in the 1996 presidential elections.

"The FSLN is the only alternative for those of us that have nothing," said Alcino Benavides.

Ortega portrayed the FSLN as the party that can bring stability to Nicaragua.

The FSLN is "the poor peoples' front, the peasant front, the workers' front, the front of the hungry, the unemployed, the barefoot and the humble," Ortega said.

"But that is not enough," he added, calling for unity among everyone including professionals, merchants, and "capitalists who stayed in our country and are willing to really work for Nicaragua."

The former president of Nicaragua also said, "The FSLN is willing to indemnify all of those who should be compensated," for land that was taken from them.

Dozens of FSLN leaders, led by former Nicaraguan vice-president Sergio Ramirez, recently split from the FSLN and formed the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS). Almost the entire FSLN faction in the National Assembly are with the MRS with a few exceptions. Former FSLN leaders in the new party include Dora Maria Tellez, Carlos Zamora, Daisy Zamora, Reynaldo Tefel, and Rene Arce. Other long-time figures have left the FSLN without joining any other party, including Ernesto Cardenal.

Several leaders of the MRS have stated that they will never form an alliance with the "corrupt" FSLN or the government.

## Constitutional crisis

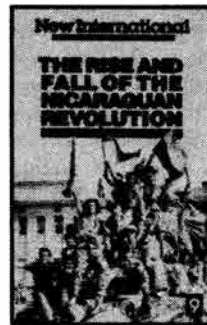
Ortega said little about the still simmering constitutional crisis. For months Nicaragua in effect had two constitutions. Neither President Chamorro nor the National Assembly majority would recognize the validity of each other's actions. After months of negotiations involving Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, a behind-the-scenes deal led to a version of the National Assembly reforms finally being adopted.

This deal includes limiting the presidential term to five years instead of six, prohibiting the election of anyone to president for more than one term in a row, prohibiting relatives of the current president from running for office in the election immediately following the term, and strengthened the role of the assembly. The reforms also call for increasing the Supreme Court from 7 to 12 justices and dropping the word "Sandinista" from the name of the army and the police.

The FSLN deputies in the assembly abstained on the final vote, while the MRS voted in favor.

Few workers saw the debate over the constitution as something that mattered to them. But the constantly shifting alliances, along with the splits in the FSLN and the traditional bourgeois parties, underscore the continuing inability of the capitalist class in Nicaragua to resolve the deepening crisis in their favor.

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## CALIFORNIA

### San Francisco

**Why Washington and Tokyo Went to War.** Speaker: Jeanne Tuomey, Young Socialists, recently returned from 50th anniversary commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing in Japan; David Matsuda, adjunct professor of anthropology, California State University at Hayward. Fri., Aug. 18, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission BART). Donation: \$4. Tel: (415) 285-5323.

## ILLINOIS

### Chicago

**Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 50 Years After U.S. Nuclear Bombing.** Speaker: Betsy Farley, National Committee member Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 11, 7:30 p.m. 545 W. Roosevelt. Donation: \$4 Tel: (312) 829-6815.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: How Can We Avoid a Nuclear Holocaust?** Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Aug. 11, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

## MINNESOTA

### St. Paul

**Report Back from Hiroshima.** Speaker: Doug Jenness, Socialist Workers Party candidate for St. Paul City Council and participant in 1995 commemoration in Hiroshima. Fri., Aug. 11, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. (east side of Hwy. 280, on 16A bus line). Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Greensboro

**Why the Debate Over Hiroshima and Nagasaki?** Fri., Aug. 11, 7:30 p.m. 2000C South Elm-Eugene St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (910) 272-5996.

## UTAH

### Salt Lake City

**Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the Death Penalty!** Speakers: Ron Yengich, Rocky Mountain Defense Fund; Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Transportation Union Local 1416; Peggy Wilson, William Andrews Equal Justice Committee. Fri., Aug. 11, 7:30 p.m. **Recent Labor Union Mergers — Are They A Step Forward?** Fri., Aug. 18, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 147 East 900 South. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**The Struggle for Self-Determination in Ireland.** Speakers: Bill Hughes, author of *Creating a New Ireland*; Rita Brown, Irish activist; Rebecca Flynn, student activist representing Irish American Unity Conference. Fri., Aug.

11, 7:30 p.m. 1802 Belmont Rd., NW (in Adams Morgan near 18th St. and Columbia Rd.). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

## AUSTRALIA

### Sydney

**From Hiroshima to Nuclear Testing in the Pacific — The Real Record of Australian Imperialism.** Speaker: Ron Poulsen, Communist League, member of AMWU. Fri., Aug. 11, 7 p.m. 66 Albion St. Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281-3297.

## BRITAIN

### Manchester

**Hands Off Iran. End the Trade Sanctions.** Fri., Aug. 18, 7 p.m. First Floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: (0161) 839-1766.

## NEW ZEALAND

### Christchurch

**No To Nuclear Tests! Oppose sending NZ Naval Ship to Moruroa. Oppose NZ Chauvinism.** Speaker: Joan Shields, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 11, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: 365-6055.

# Support grows to stop Abu-Jamal death sentence

Continued from front page

that led to his arrest. An unemployed journalist working as a cab driver, Abu-Jamal had approached Faulkner after seeing him beating a Black man on the street.)

In his detailed written report of that night, Wakshul noted descriptions of witnesses, cars, and Abu-Jamal's clothing. He noted that "the Negro male made no statements." On two follow-up interviews with investigating officers, Wakshul did not mention any confession. Yet at the original trial, prosecution witnesses — the partner and a friend of the slain cop — claimed that Abu-Jamal confessed while in the hospital.

When Abu-Jamal's court-appointed attorney sought to put Wakshul on the stand to rebut this testimony, he was told the officer was out of town on vacation. Sabo refused a defense request for a postponement until Wakshul's testimony could be heard.

Now Wakshul says that he was so shocked by the killing of Faulkner that he was in a fog and couldn't remember the confession at first. Two months later he did.

Big-business dailies like the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *New York Times* are giving increased attention to what the *Times* describes as Sabo's "openly contemptuous" treatment of the defense. "Objection is over-ruled, whatever it was," the judge told Mr. Jamal's lead lawyer, Leonard I. Weinglass, the *Times* recounted July 30.

"Judge Sabo has sustained virtually every prosecution objection while shooting down almost every defense objection," noted *Times* correspondent Don Terry. "At one point, when Mr. Weinglass asked for a four-minute recess to locate a crucial witness, Judge Sabo, looking at his watch, said, 'It's ten-twenty-eight-and-a-half. You have until 10:30.'"

Terry described how at one point, Sabo walked out of the courtroom while a defense lawyer was speaking, later complaining "that he could not hear because of the noise coming from the street, where a large group of Mr. Abu-Jamal's supporters were chanting, 'Free Mumia now.'"

Such obvious bias makes it more difficult for the capitalist rulers to win the political fight to be able to use the death penalty. Abu-Jamal's refusal to back down in his fight for justice — and the widespread support he has won — makes this case an important battlefield in the struggle against the death penalty.

On July 25, for example, Cardinal An-

thony J. Bevilacqua, head of the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia, issued a statement condemning capital punishment. "I strongly encourage Gov. Ridge, as well as our judicial, legislative and penal systems, not to allow the imposition of the death penalty," Bevilacqua said.

Although not mentioning any names, the statement was issued during the hearings on Abu-Jamal's appeal for a new trial. Three other condemned men in Pennsylvania also face execution in August. Gov. Thomas Ridge has signed 18 death warrants since taking office in January. Keith Zetlemoyer was put to death May 2, the first execution in Pennsylvania since 1962.

The *Philadelphia Inquirer* published an editorial welcoming the cardinal's statement. "Much of what Abu-Jamal's supporters claim about his innocence doesn't square with the facts," the editorial claims. "But they raise the kinds of doubts about the trial's fairness that make the irreversible death penalty unjustifiable."

Other voices raised recently on Abu-Jamal's behalf include:

A July 29 editorial in *The New York Amsterdam News*, a paper widely circulated in the Black community there, stating that, "With less than three weeks left before Abu-Jamal is scheduled to die, efforts must be re-doubled in order to save him from death while a new trial before an untainted judge and jury is being sought."

Academics for Mumia Abu-Jamal, representing some 150 university professors,

also called for a retrial. Spokesman Mark Taylor, a Princeton University religion professor, told a July 11 news conference, "The case of Mumia Abu-Jamal is not just one man's legal case. It's the public focal point for broader issues about the death penalty."

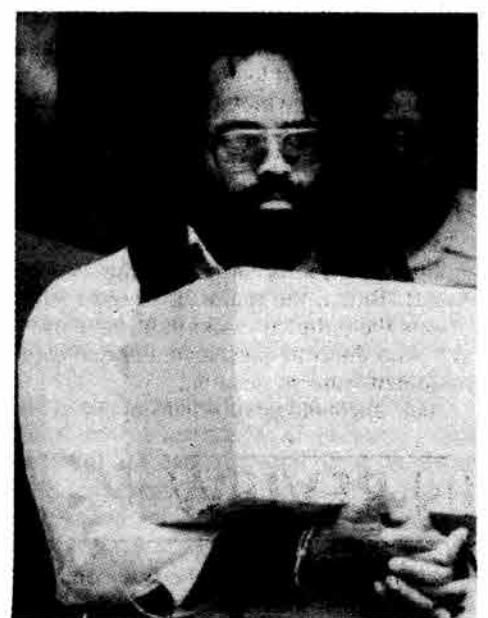
On Monday, July 24, the New York Association of Black Journalists announced it had broken ranks with the National Association of Black Journalists and was now calling for a new trial. The Association's Philadelphia chapter has also taken this position.

## BY ROGER ANNIS

**MONTREAL** — Two representatives of Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense committee were detained by immigration authorities here July 23. Under escort of a police riot squad, they were expelled from Canada the next day.

Supporters quickly mounted a vigil to protest this attempt to prevent Ramona Africa and Jay Africa from speaking at meetings organized in Montreal, Toronto, and other cities. The two detainees were not even allowed to receive visitors. Abu-Jamal defense activist Kim Vose explained that two scheduled events here went ahead anyway, "and were successful in informing more people about Mumia Abu-Jamal's case. The government's action has created more publicity and more potential support."

Ramona Africa charged Canadian offi-



Abu-Jamal leaves July 12 court hearing

cials with "misplacing" her personal telephone book, which has a list of contacts involved in the defense effort. "I think they want to see who we've been in contact with," she told the *Hour* newspaper.

If you would like to help get out the socialist press at the August 12 demonstration in Philadelphia come by the Socialist Workers Campaign table on the west side of City Hall (15th St. and Market) during the rally.

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## —CALENDAR—

## CANADA

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**The Cuban Revolution Today. Eyewitness Reports and Slides.** By participants in the August 1-7 Cuba Lives International Youth Festival in Havana, Cuba. Sun., Aug. 27, 1:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Cuba Youth Tour Organizing Committee. *St. Christopher House Auditorium, 248 Ossington (at Dundas, take bus south from Ossington subway station).* Donation: \$3.



**Punishing the victim** — An Ohio judge ordered probation for a man convicted of domestic violence. He stipulated that the man support his child, seek family



Harry Ring

counseling, and join an alcoholic treatment program. His key condition was that the guy marry his unwed, battered spouse. Declared

the judge: "I believe strongly in family values."

**The civilized society** — In Alabama, 10 women prisoners in an HIV isolation unit, and four on death row, had been allowed to plant vegetable gardens and grow potted vegetables. State prison commissioner Ron Jones — who revived use of prisoner chain gangs in the state — ordered an end to the gardening. "Today," he declared, "it's tomatoes and tomorrow it's marijuana and God knows what else."

**Thanks Newt** — Cassandra Mosley, 12, of Douglasville, Georgia, was the hands-down winner in Newt Gingrich's Earning by Learning program, which pays children \$2 for each book they read in 1991. Cassandra read 207 books in six weeks, earning \$414. Much of the reading was done at her housing project "summer camp," a back room of the project manager's office where as many as 60 youngsters crowded in to study or play.

**Learning by Earning** — The Earning by Learning program, which is privately funded, received \$20,000 in contributions in the past year. Of this, \$18,000 went to three professors, Gingrich

buddies, for helping him "evaluate" the program.

**Next case** — New York police officials conducted a two-month probe of that Washington wing-ding where drunken New York cops, "commemorating" fallen brothers, groped women, sprayed fire extinguishers, etc. A highlight was nude cops sliding down hotel banisters. For all this, seven cops, max, will face serious charges.

**And you thought cops were dumb** — The accounts of wild behavior by New York cops were exaggerated, investigators found. Like the report that six cops did

the strip slide. Probers said, two cops went down three times.

Also, some of the pranks were by cops from other cities wearing N.Y. shirts and caps. We assume they picked them up at the top of the escalator.

**Thought for the week** — "Increasing labor market flexibility — despite the bad name it has acquired as a euphemism for pushing wages down and workers out — is essential in all the regions of the world undergoing reforms." — World Bank annual report urging lower minimum wage standards and a curb on "monopolistic" union power.

## Another view of 'Men Who Sailed Liberty Ships'

*The Men Who Sailed the Liberty Ships*, an hour-long documentary, appeared on U.S. public television stations in May. Available on video, it was written and directed by Maria Brooks.

The review that appears here was written by Tom Leonard, who sailed in the merchant marine from 1943 to 1952 and was a member of the National Maritime Union. Leonard is a longtime union activist and leader of the Socialist Workers Party, which he joined in 1950.

BY TOM LEONARD

*The Men Who Sailed the Liberty Ships* attempts to portray the lives of the tens of thousands of merchant seamen who sailed aboard the "liberty ships" during World War II. But in the main the video really reflects the political thinking of the narrators, who don't always accurately convey the role of wartime seamen.

Their chronology of what happened to

10,000-ton cargo vessels constructed primarily for carrying war materials, although some were also converted into troop carriers. Nearly 3,000 such ships were built during the war, and most of them were either sunk or scrapped within a few years of the war's end.

What the video doesn't spend much time on is how shoddily built these ships were, due to horrendous round-the-clock speedup imposed on the labor movement to "support the war effort." Some of the ships were built in about 10 days; rushed welding encouraged by supervisors as well as poor design resulted in many of them breaking up and sinking in rough weather.

The seamen interviewed in the film were also members of maritime unions, including the National Maritime Union (NMU); Marine Firemen, Oilers, and Waretenders; and the Master Mates and Pilots. There is also mention of the Sailors Union of the Pacific.

At least two of the narrators were full-time union officials during some of the war years. One of them, Joe Stack, I recognized as the New York Port Agent for the NMU at the time I was a member of that union.

Stack narrates a segment on the red-baiting attacks against the union in 1943, and how the union responded with a picket line around the old World Telegram offices. I was at sea when that occurred, but I remember the attacks received wide publicity — including overseas — and created a lot of resentment among seamen against the witch-hunters.

That attack was a forerunner of the postwar witch-hunt, and was directed against the NMU and its Communist Party leadership. It is correctly reported in the video as being initiated by Walter Winchell, then one of the most widely syndicated news columnists.

Winchell accused the NMU of being Communist-led, which was true and publicly known at the time. But his added charges that union leaders were sabotaging the U.S. war effort had no foundation in the truth.

In connection with that smear, it's important to note that charges of sabotaging the war effort were often used to intimidate union militants during the war. The same accusation, for example, was leveled against the United Mine Workers when they struck in the early 1940s.

The Stalinists in general did not function as open members of the Communist

Party, for fear of putting off the trade union officials and Democratic Party politicians they worked so closely with. Many leaders of the union, however, such as Stack, were well-known at the time as members or supporters of the CP.

**Behind the patriotic fervor**

This brings me back to the difference I have with some of the narrators, whose professions of patriotic loyalty convey the impression that all seamen shared those views.

The tens of thousands of young seamen who were recruited and trained to sail the liberty ships for example, had just begun to be aware of how bad fascism was before the war. They had very little understanding of this historically new anti-working-class political movement. Like most prewar workers they weren't too happy about being drafted and many chose the alternative of joining the merchant marine rather than military service.

In counterposition to the loyalty of the narrators, it's far more accurate to observe that the overwhelming majority of working people in the United States, including seamen, became patriotic only after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. And they remained patriotic, especially in the early years of the war, in the mistaken belief they were defending the country against the possibility of "foreign invaders."

The trade union bureaucracy, the Communist Party, and nearly every other current in the labor movement collaborated with the U.S. government to paint World War II as a "war for democracy," a fiction that remains common currency today. Im-

mediately after World War II, after failing to keep the hot war going, the ruling classes of the United States and Great Britain jointly opened the cold war by equating the bloody crimes of fascism with communism. It was partly on that basis that the witch-hunt was able to register gains in the labor movement, including the seamen's unions, as early as 1946.

Another truth portrayed in the video is that despite services rendered to U.S. imperialism in World War II, the Communist Party took major blows in the postwar witch-hunt. As the film points out, in 1950 more than 2,000 seamen, many of them members of the Communist Party — but also members of the Socialist Workers Party and other union militants — lost their seamen's papers and right to sail at the hands of the U.S. Coast Guard, acting in the service of the employers and their government.

While important historical issues are raised, the theme of the film constantly returns to one of betrayed loyalty. The narrators succeed in projecting the message that while they did their utmost to support U.S. imperialism in the war, the government opened a witch-hunt against them. Now they want the recognition they feel they are entitled to.

Despite this, the film includes footage and some factual coverage about the life of seamen during the war that is not generally accessible. This makes *The Men Who Sailed the Liberty Ships* worth viewing. Young people in particular will be struck by the ruthless disregard for the lives of working people exhibited by the ruling class — especially during imperialist war.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People  
August 7, 1970 Price 10¢

CENTER, Colo., Aztlan — Anglos hold most of the administrative, teaching and professional positions in this town in the San Luis Valley. They own 96 percent of the businesses and hold 67 percent of the skilled jobs. For the majority of the Chicanos, who comprise 60 percent of the community, life means unskilled, seasonal work in the potato fields in winter and the lettuce fields in summer — with rotten wages and subhuman conditions.

About 83 percent of the Chicano population falls below the federal poverty guidelines of \$3,200 for a family of four. Fifty-six percent earn less than \$2,000 annually.

Center is the scene of a strike by Chicano workers that began June 2. The more than 100 strikers and their families are demanding a pay raise from \$1.40 to \$2.00 an hour and from \$1.50 to \$2.50 an hour for Chicano supervisors. They are also demanding the right to collective bargaining and recognition of their union, *Dicho y Hecho* (Said and Done), by the growers, and an end to the use of child labor. (Children as young as eight years of age are put to work in the fields at half the wage of an adult.)

The growers are not simply one more business in the area — they represent the economy of the entire area. With this, of

course, comes considerable power. Judges, for instance, give prisoners over to the growers when they are needed in the fields. And growers are able to dictate who may work and when.

### THE MILITANT

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

August 11, 1945

Decisions for the dismemberment of Germany, the permanent strangulation of its economy, and indefinite military occupation and control of the country by the Allied powers — these are the broad features of the communiqué issued from Potsdam on August 3 at the conclusion of the 17-day conference of the "Big Three" which is to be known as the Tripartite Conference of Berlin.

In language which stands in glaring contradiction to the plain intent of the decisions regarding Germany, Truman, Attlee and Stalin declare that "it is not the intention of the Allies to destroy or enslave the German people." Yet that is precisely what will follow from the application of the agreements arrived at in Potsdam.

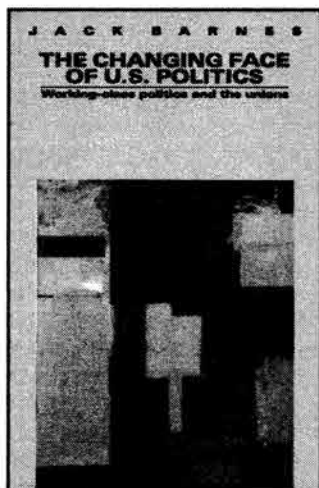
The standard of living of the German people under this oppressive plan is clearly envisaged in the communiqué, which, while speaking about a "subsistence" level, declares that the economic strangulation of the country shall not go beyond limits "essential to maintain in Germany average living standards not exceeding the average of the standards of living of European countries.

## The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

*Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*

by Jack Barnes

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. \$19.95



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## Hiroshima haunts warmakers

Although the nuclear inferno that instantly incinerated some 200,000 people at Hiroshima and Nagasaki has long since cooled, the controversy over the United States bombing continues 50 years later. For working people, the stakes in this political battle are of much more than simply historical interest.

Today, in a world that has entered an economic depression, the wealthy rulers of the United States, Germany, Japan, and other capitalist powers are increasingly competing with each other in the world market, while trying to squeeze every drop of profits from the livelihood of workers and farmers in their own countries. In this process, much of the same political propaganda used by all these imperialist governments leading up to World War II is again being dusted off.

Once again, the big-business media and politicians from both the Democratic and Republican parties are urging workers and farmers to look at fellow working people in other countries as rivals, often as less than full human beings, rather than equals with common interests. Workers are told we must accept lower wages, increasing unemployment, economic uncertainty, and attacks on fundamental social rights so "our country" can be "competitive."

Events like the 1987 stock market crash, the U.S.-led slaughter against Iraq, and the increasing military involvement of the imperialist powers in the carnage in Bosnia make it clear imperialism's march toward fascism and another worldwide war, while at an early stage, has already begun. Before reaching that point, however, the employers will need to defeat working people in the major class confrontations that will erupt. Chauvinist appeals, pitting workers here against workers abroad in the name of the "national interest," "saving our jobs," or "saving our lives," are therefore a central part of the political softening-up operation being attempted by capitalist politicians against the labor movement throughout the world.

This is why the controversy over Hiroshima and Nagasaki cannot be shoved aside.

The capitalist rulers have a problem. Millions of working people around the world are repulsed by the horrible crime of the 1945 U.S. atomic bombing. And they are deeply suspicious of a government that has continued to militarily intervene around the world on behalf

of capitalist profits, from Vietnam to Iraq — the same government that today is also leading an assault on their own wages and living standards. For this reason, many question the official hypocrisy on Hiroshima and insist on discussing the issue and finding out the truth.

An objective study of the facts about Hiroshima, such as the one by Fred Halstead reprinted in this issue, makes it clear that the U.S. bombing had nothing to do with saving "American lives" in the face of an allegedly evil, subhuman Japanese enemy prepared to fight despite irrational odds.

Neither do the war crimes committed by Tokyo in China, Korea, and Vietnam justify the nuclear atrocities perpetrated by the warmakers in Washington, who were fighting in the Pacific for only one reason — to win the "right" to replace Japanese with American exploitation throughout the region.

Washington made a cold-blooded decision to annihilate the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki because it wanted the peoples of the Soviet Union, China, Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, and elsewhere to know it not only had the bomb, but was willing to use it against human beings. This nuclear terrorism has been a central prop of U.S. imperialist domination for 50 years. Questioned about Washington's holocaust, President Bill Clinton insists to this day that there's nothing to apologize about.

It was precisely to close off discussion as to whether or not this was in the interest of humanity that rightist groups mobilized to force the gutting of an exhibition on the atomic bomb planned by the Smithsonian Institution earlier this year. The Smithsonian's secretary at the time argued, "In this important anniversary year, veterans and their families were expecting, and rightly so, that the nation would honor and commemorate their valor and sacrifice.... They were not looking for analysis and, frankly, we did not give enough thought to the intense feelings such analysis would evoke."

This is a lie. The ruling capitalists don't need analysis and discussion — all they need is to continue to get away with justifications for their continued domination. Working people, however, both in and out of uniform, do have the capacity, desire for, and stake in an objective discussion of the facts. That is what the warmakers in Washington are afraid of and would like to prevent.

## Peasants in Brazil press fight for land

Continued from back page

members wore buttons and T-shirts in support of the Cuban revolution.

Atop the sound truck, rally organizers presented a representative of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, Martín Koppel, with a second set of 5,000 letters to Clinton and asked that they be delivered to the authorities in Iowa, where Curtis is imprisoned. Koppel read greetings from the U.S. unionist. In his message Curtis expressed solidarity with Brazil's farmers and workers and thanked the MST for championing his case.

A few days earlier, the 49-member PT caucus in Brazil's parliament sent a letter to the U.S. government requesting a review of Curtis's case.

Similarly, the chemical workers union in the industrial center of Campinas, outside São Paulo, published an editorial in the July issue of its newspaper condemning the frame-up and "the cowardly beating of Mark Curtis" by Des Moines cops.

After the embassy rally, dozens of delegates approached this reporter asking that he convey their support to Curtis. Francisco Moura, 24, from the northern state of Pará, remarked, "I was victimized too. They accused me of taking part in an illegal occupation of a landlord's estate by 1,500 families. The cops attacked and beat us. I spent five months in jail, until I was acquitted."

"But we're still occupying the land," he concluded. "Tell that to Mark."



Militant/Martín Koppel

Landless peasants march to U.S. embassy in Brasília.

## Build on Cuba Lives success

More than 1,200 people from around the globe have gathered so far in Havana for the Cuba Lives youth festival. By traveling to Cuba and participating in the festival, they have dealt a blow to efforts by capitalists everywhere to isolate and slander Cuba. They have gone to Cuba because they want to find out for themselves the truth about a revolution that has stood up — despite immense pressures from imperialism — for the rights of workers and farmers everywhere in the world for 35 years.

During the festival, these youth will ask questions and exchange experiences with Cuban workers, farmers, and students, not only in Havana but throughout the island. They will see what Washington's travel ban tries to prevent them from seeing: that after more than 35 years, the majority of Cuban working people continue to stand up in defense of the hard-won dignity, sovereignty, and social gains made possible by their socialist revolution.

Youth from more economically developed capitalist countries will be impressed with this staying power of the revolution in the face of the extremely harsh economic difficulties Cubans have confronted in the past five years.

Youth from Mexico, Brazil, and other semicolonial

countries ravaged by mass unemployment, disease, and increased police violence will see in the Cuban revolution an example of how workers and farmers can free themselves from the depression conditions imperialism has created for the overwhelming majority of people in the world.

Delegates returning from the youth festival will be eager to relate what they saw. Supporters of the revolution in every country have a golden opportunity to struggle alongside these young people to win even greater numbers to the defense of the Cuban revolution.

Now is an ideal time to start organizing events to greet returning delegates at airports, insuring there will be a presence in defense of their right to travel and as a way to get media coverage of their trips. To help them organize report-back meetings, which can be hosted by a broad range of sponsors: campus groups, unions, political organizations, and church groups. To make sure the articles they write appear in as many newspapers and magazines as possible. To get them the maximum number of radio and television interviews.

These activities will help build the regional actions against the U.S. government's anti-Cuba policies called for this October by the National Network on Cuba.

## John Enestvedt

Continued from Page 7

is now the Pathfinder building a quarter century ago to house the expanding apparatus that allows comrades to produce a large and effective propaganda arsenal, John recognized the importance of this conquest for the world communist movement and threw himself into the needed reconstruction effort," Jack Barnes stated in his message. "His signal contribution — and sculptural inspiration to successive generations of construction brigades — was the spiral steel staircase that to this day connects the work spaces on the fifth and sixth floors of that building."

"John set a lifetime example for the militant farmers, workers, and youth who will be in the forefront of the coming class battles that world capitalism's deepening depression conditions are making inevitable. Some of us, as young communists, knew John personally and had the opportunity to laugh with him as we learned from him. And we learned directly from him why he had supported the proletarian majority in every struggle within the party for more than half a century."

"We stand in debt to John's sixty-one years of selfless communist work and will repay it as he did the efforts of those who preceded him," the SWP national leader said.

"We can pay no higher tribute to him than to devote our lives, as he did, to the proletariat's efforts to make 'everything possible' by taking power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters and war makers in this bastion of imperialism and elsewhere throughout the world."

Doug Jenness concluded the meeting by urging the audience to donate to the recently launched *Militant* fund drive. John's comrades and friends pledged \$2,500 to the effort.



# Filipino workers in Greece protest deportations

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

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

worker said. At the end of July, the workers were told they must leave the country by August 20 — well before their benefits expire or their case has been heard.

## One-day strike shuts down British Rail

Some 10,000 train drivers in England joined a national strike July 14. The strikers, members of

been charged with assaulting Kirlin while he filmed a small picket line by fired hotel workers.

The hotel has been the target of ongoing picketing since a group including former Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Ron Jaworski and former linebacker Bill Bergey purchased the facility in 1993. The new owners replaced 70 union employees with nonunion workers.

Rally speakers called for letter writing, creating a pro-labor city council, and for a union buyout of the hotel.

## 1,500 supporters rally for Irving Oil strikers

Fifteen hundred workers attended a rally July 17 to support striking workers at the Irving Oil refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick. It was the largest solidarity action since 264 workers walked out of the refinery, the largest in Canada, on May 12, 1994.

"The meeting shows the deep support which we have from working people in New Brunswick," said Larry Washburn, president of the striking union, in a telephone interview.

Irving Oil is part of the Irving family empire, which employs tens of thousands of workers in New Brunswick in forestry, papermaking, shipbuilding, construction, food processing, and petroleum refining and retailing. The strike was sparked by the company's demand to lengthen the average workweek from 37.5 hours to 42.

Strikers are members of Local 691 of the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP).

The rally was sponsored by the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. Workers from more than 70 union locals in the Saint John



Militant/John Sarge

Detroit nursing home workers, without a contract since May, struck July 25.

area attended.

"Since the meeting," reports striking worker Cathy Dube, "we have more unions joining us on the picket line and on the boycott campaign leafletting."

Strikers organize daily leafletting in the Saint John area, explaining the goals of the strike and urging residents to boycott Irving Oil products. They have taken the campaign to workers across New Brunswick and the other provinces of Atlantic Canada.

The strikers have strong support from unionists in the state of Maine, an important market for Irving Oil. They regularly visit cities and towns at the invitation of unions there.

"It's hard to be on strike for one year," commented one striker while attending the recent New Brunswick Federation of Labour convention. "But we made the right decision. The company wanted the union out of the refinery. If we hadn't stood up and gone on strike, we would be in a much weaker position today."

## Detroit nursing home workers stage walkout

One thousand nursing home workers staged a one-day strike July 25 in their fight for a new contract. The strikers, members of Service Employees International

Union Local 79, have been working without a contract since May 1.

The strike targeted nine facilities, seven of which are owned by GranCare, one of the largest nursing home chains in the United States.

"We're only striking for one day this time to get their attention," said Latonna Jarrett, a worker at Belle Woods home. "But we're ready to go out on a full strike if we don't get a contract. We had 14 negotiating sessions and they offered nothing."

The key demands of the workers are for a substantial wage hike and increased staffing levels to improve care and decrease health risks. The workers are also demanding a health care and pension plan.

One striker's T-shirt summed up the workers' sentiments, "We demand dignity, rights, and respect."

Contributors to this column include: Babel Munawar and Natasha Terlexis in Athens, Greece; Martin Hill, a member of the Transport and General Workers Union in London; Bob Stanton in Philadelphia; Roger Annis, a member of the CEP in Montreal; and John Sarge, a member of United Autoworkers Local 900 in Detroit.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Some 100 Filipino workers and their supporters protested July 23 outside the Philippine embassy in Athens. The event marked the fifth day that 55 terminated Filipino garment workers had camped outside the embassy to demand an extension of their August 20 deportation order. They had been working for Alexander Fashions on the Island of Kos for nearly five years under an agreement between the company and the Philippine government.

"We are here and we will stay here until we win our rights as human beings," said Roland McCarthy, president of the union at Alexander Fashions. Immigrant rights organizations throughout Europe, including the Panafrican Association, have backed the fight, as have unions in Greece and the Philippines.

The garment shop closed its doors last October, giving the 240 employees three days' notice. The workforce included 88 Filipinos as well as some Albanian, Turkish, Polish, and Russian workers.

Under Greek law, immigrant workers must leave the country within 15 days of vacating a job. But the Garment Workers Federation and the workers fought back. They filed suit in court against their illegal termination, and eventually won the right to receive unemployment benefits.

"We have been paying taxes in Greece and in the Philippines and they want to deny us the right to receive something in return," one

the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), shut down almost all of British Rail's network. The action was the first in a series of one-day strikes called by the union's executive committee after workers voted 2 to 1 for strike action.

The drivers are demanding more than the 3 percent raise offered by the company. Workers point out that British Rail cut 7.2 percent of the jobs and imposed more demanding work schedules through restructuring.

"Drivers are under increasing pressure to work when sick," ASLEF branch secretary Karen Harrison said on the picket line at London's Marylebone Station. "One driver here, who was off work with a back injury, was called in and sacked."

The unionists have set four more one-day actions. Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union working for London Underground have voted to strike July 27 over their pay claim, and ASLEF members on London Underground are being balloted on joining the action. This would bring all rail services in the capital to a standstill.

## Philadelphia hotel workers protest

Carrying signs stating, "It's no Holiday at Jaworski's Inn," hundreds of unionists rallied and marched July 18 at the Holiday Inn Philadelphia Stadium. They were protesting the physical assault of a union business agent, Edward Kirlin. Two private security guards from the hotel have

## LETTERS

### Indian land rights

Indians and their supporters have vowed to continue their struggle to save the sacred site of Puvungna on the California State University at Long Beach campus. An unfavorable court decision would allow the University to build a strip mall on the land. On April 6, Judge Abby Soven ruled that the law protecting Indian sacred sites on public land is unconstitutional since it violates the principle of separation of church and state.

The land at issue contains burial and reburial sites, two acres of community garden plots, and a large natural area where numerous birds, mammals, trees, and grasses flourish and where summer day camps for youngsters have been held for many years.

News that the university was now claiming that "no cultural resources" existed on the site evoked a storm of protests. Campus officials admitted they had made a "mistake," but now began to claim the site had not been proven to be sacred.

They promised a "cultural review" in which the university, not the Indians, would decide whether the site was sacred, and they would do this through an archeo-

logical dig.

All plans for archaeology were stopped, however, when the Native American Heritage Commission joined individual Indian plaintiffs to obtain a preliminary injunction until the case can be heard in court.

Puvungna has the potential of becoming a place not only of great beauty, but also of great educational value. To show your support for Puvungna, write or call: Dr. Robert Maxson, president, California State University at Long Beach, Long Beach, CA 90840; Tel: (310) 985-4121, Fax: (310) 985-5584.

Eugene Ruyle  
Long Beach, California

### Abolish the death penalty

About a dozen supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal's right to live attended an open-air music event in Sheffield, England, July 15-16 to arouse opposition to the planned execution of this death-row prisoner.

Hardly any of the hundreds of youth and working people we



"YOU SEE, CONGRESSMAN, WE HAD TO DESTROY THE VILLAGE IN ORDER TO SAVE IT..."

spoke to had heard of this case, reflecting the absence (so far) of coverage in the pro-capitalist media. However, virtually everyone we spoke to wanted to sign an open letter appealing for the rescinding of the death sentence.

Many expressed revulsion at the increased use of the death penalty.

They readily accepted arguments that, for those responsible for the death of countless human beings in Vietnam, Iraq, and else-

where, the death penalty is a weapon of terror to be used against youth and working people.

Supporters were able to point to the abolition of the death penalty in South Africa, and the support gained in that country for Abu-Jamal's right to life.

John Smith  
Sheffield, England

### Mexico bus strike

I attended the Great Marathon,

a festival in solidarity with the bus drivers' union, in June. Their strike has lasted almost three months now.

Absolutely everyone recognizes that this union is in the eye of the hurricane. The entire "independent" union movement has come out in support.

The May Day march and rally was absolutely one of the most inspiring political rallies I have ever attended.

The SUTAU-100 (Union of Urban Bus Workers) has been stopping traffic on main boulevards every week, if not almost daily.

N.S.  
Mexico City, Mexico

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.



## Brazilian peasants fight for land

### Conference of the landless backs Cuba, justice for Mark Curtis

BY MARTIN KOPPEL

BRASILIA, Brazil — "Occupy, resist, produce!" This chant resonated loudly through the streets of Brazil's capital as 5,000 landless peasants, carrying their hoes, sickles, and hundreds of fluttering banners, converged on the presidential palace July 27 to demand land reform. President Fernando Cardoso felt compelled to meet with a delegation of 28 of the farmers, who had gathered here for the third convention of the Movement of the Landless Rural Workers (MST).

The July 24-27 convention put the struggles of rural toilers in a prominent national spotlight, drawing major news coverage. In response to demands by the MST, Cardoso pledged to grant land to 40,000 peasant families this year. He also promised loans at 12 percent interest for thousands of peasants throughout Brazil who have won legal recognition of lands they took over; interest rates here have skyrocketed to 28 percent.

The struggles of working people around the Americas were an important feature of the convention. A highlight of the event was a march to the U.S. embassy, where thousands of farmers demanded the lifting of the U.S. embargo against Cuba, protested imperialist economic policies toward Latin America, and called for the release of Mark Curtis, a framed-up unionist and political activist in the United States.

At the embassy, a delegation of parliamentary deputies from Brazil's Workers Party (PT) met with U.S. ambassador Melvyn Levitsky to discuss these demands. They handed him a pile of almost 5,000 letters signed by MST members demanding freedom for Curtis.

Among the international guests at the gathering were representatives of peasant organizations in Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Cuba. Guests were also present from Sweden, Italy, France, Belgium, and the United States.

#### Growth of landless peasant movement

The MST convention, the largest since the group's founding in 1984, reflected the growth of the movement of landless peasants in recent years. Delegates came from 22 of Brazil's 26 states. Hundreds came from as far away as Maranhão and other northeastern states — a 40-hour bus ride.

The majority of the delegates were young, some in their late teens. Many were women. In addition, numerous students and urban workers attended as observers.

"We've been involved in a hard fight to demand the government take over the idle land of big landlords and give us legal right to it," said Heldisa Muniz do Amarai, a young farmer from the northeastern state of Alagoas. "I know we'll win." Her confident assertion captured the general mood of the delegates.

The convention often had the air of a festival, as arriving delegations marched in waving the big red banners of the MST and singing the movement's songs. Thousands of families brought rolled-up foam mattresses and camped on the floor of the fairground in downtown Brasilia where the convention was held. Many set up stalls and sold handicrafts and foods from their regions.

A large, mural-style banner over the speakers platform declared, "Land reform — a struggle by all." Another banner portrayed Emiliano Zapata, leader of the Mexican revolution, and Subcommander Marcos of the Zapatista National Liberation Army. Many delegates expressed their identification with the ongoing struggle for land in southern Mexico.

Convention proceedings began early in the morning each day, as participants heard reports on and discussed the broad campaigns and demands of the MST. Several documents summarizing these proposals were adopted by unanimous vote on the last day. The convention projected a series of demonstrations and land occupations in coming months to press the fight for agrarian reform.

"Most of these topics were previously discussed in our home states, so that facilitated the discussion here," explained Rogerio Machado, 21, at a regional workshop during the convention.

ing power.

The Cardoso government's economic policies, designed to favor Brazil's capitalists, have aggravated this farm crisis. In the wake of the Mexican peso crisis last December, the Brazilian government has tried to stem the resulting capital flight by raising interest rates to record levels, threatening tens of thousands of farmers with bankruptcy.

In response to this crisis, scores of land takeovers have occurred throughout Brazil in recent years, particularly in the northeast and south. The tens of thousands involved in these occupations of big estates

us. We produce rice, beans, corn, and cassava, mainly for subsistence."

"We were working on an estate where the landlord denied us social security and other basic rights. We occupied a piece of his estate last October for 20 days," said Roberto Machado, from the western state of Rondônia. "After being evicted by the cops, we organized a march through the town. Through these pressures, the government was forced to grant us the land. Now we have some dairy cattle and we're selling a little on the market."

Machado was glad the government was promising land to 40,000 peasant families this year, although the MST had demanded enough land for 100,000. "I don't think they will actually carry out their promises, but it'll be easier for us to pressure them when we carry out occupations," he said.

Dozens of other delegates reported on similar fights, many of which had scored victories.

These struggles have met with fierce repression by the cops and the landlords' goons. Several dozen MST members have been murdered every year, and even more have been framed up and jailed. So it is not surprising the organization has embraced the campaign to win parole for fellow fighter Mark Curtis.

#### March demands release of Curtis

The march to the U.S. embassy and the call to release Curtis drew national media coverage. It was covered prominently on television, in the nationally circulated *Folha de São Paulo*, on the front-pages of two major Brasilia dailies, and in a Reuters news dispatch.

All along the six-mile route, as thousands of demonstrators marched toward the U.S. embassy in three single files, MST activists explained over and over from a booming sound truck, "We are marching to demand freedom for Mark Curtis. This brother is a unionist who was jailed and sentenced to 25 years in jail on fabricated charges of rape because he defended immigrant workers in the United States. We say to Bill Clinton: Stop this persecution of workers — in the United States and the world."

A five-person delegation, headed by PT federal deputy Jacques Wagner, delivered a letter from the MST to U.S. ambassador Levitsky. Besides calling for freedom for the unionist, the letter demanded an end to the U.S. embargo on Cuba and rejected Washington's efforts to strong-arm the Brazilian government into approving a patent law that, among other things, would allow U.S. agribusiness to patent breeds of animals and plants. It condemned imperialist bankers for extracting \$15 billion a year in payments on Brazil's foreign debt.

The delegation also gave Levitsky 5,000 letters by MST members addressed to U.S. president Bill Clinton calling for Curtis's release. "We approach you to ask that this frame-up conviction be reviewed," it stated. "We peasants in Brazil, representing millions of rural working people, were outraged when we found out about this case. We didn't think this could happen in the United States, with all the propaganda that it is a democratic country." The letter expressed "solidarity with Mark and with all those in the United States who are victims of injustice."

Meanwhile, on the lawn outside the embassy gate, a lively rally took place. The farmers waved banners and an effigy of Uncle Sam. PT congressman José Dirceu and other speakers called for "the freedom of the imprisoned unionist in the United States." The crowd lustily booed Washington and cheered whenever revolutionary Cuba was mentioned, as speakers condemned the U.S. trade ban. Many MST

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Militant/Martin Koppel

Some 5,000 members of the Movement of the Landless Rural Workers rally July 26 at U.S. embassy in Brasilia, Brazil. Protesters demanded an end to the U.S. embargo on Cuba, imperialist economic policies toward Latin America, and the release of unionist Mark Curtis.

"For me, the most important point was number 42," Machado added, referring to a document listing demands on the federal government. Point 42 demands the government halt the use of cops to evict peasants. Last October, the police had forcibly evicted his community of 230 families who were occupying land owned by the Brazilian airline Varig.

Several prominent figures addressed the MST convention, including PT president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Vicente Paulo da Silva, president of the United Federation of Workers (CUT). The MST has close ties with the union-backed PT and with the trade union movement. The peasant organization actively supported the month-long strike by oil workers last May.

#### Struggle on land heats up

The struggle for land has been heating up in Brazil, as the capitalist transformation of the countryside continues to drive millions of peasants off the land and into the cities. In a "Letter to Workers in the Cities" adopted by the convention delegates, the MST points out, "Big rural landlords represent less than 1 percent [of the population] but own 46 percent of the land."

Meanwhile, MST leader Jaime Amorim explained, "there are 4.8 million landless workers in this country, 32 million people suffer from hunger, and only 60 million of the 400 million hectares of farmland are under cultivation" (one hectare is about 2.5 acres). Much of this cultivated land is devoted to lucrative export crops at the expense of food staples like rice, beans, and corn.

The prices peasants receive for their crops continue to drop while prices for needed equipment rise. While in early 1994 a farmer had to sell about 2,100 bags of soybeans to purchase a tractor, by April 1995 he had to sell nearly 3,500 bags of soybeans, losing almost half his purchas-

include agricultural workers, sharecroppers, tenant farmers, peasants subsisting on tiny plots, and unemployed workers.

The MST has mobilized rural toilers by demanding the government take over idle lands on big capitalist estates, with compensation to the owners, and distribute it to landless peasants. At the convention, delegates also demanded the government expropriate 1,276 "deadbeat" landlords who are the biggest debtors to the Bank of Brazil, and give this land to peasants. The MST points to the 1988 Constitution, which authorizes such government action for the purpose of agrarian reform.

#### 130,000 peasant families organized

The organization is also demanding that the government legally recognize the thousands of squatter camps throughout the countryside. Most of these camps (*acampamentos*) are on vast estates that are barely utilized. Thousands of other peasant settlements (*assentamentos*) have won partial or complete government recognition, and the MST is fighting for these to receive state-furnished credit, equipment, schools, clinics, and other basic services, as well as price guarantees for the peasants' crops. In addition, it calls on the government to demarcate Indian lands to protect them from landlords and other thieves.

In the past decade and a half, the MST has organized 130,000 families on some 900 settlements, most of which were recognized by the government only after the peasants had occupied them. Dozens of these communities are organized as agricultural cooperatives.

"In our area we have a squatters camp of 1,500 families on a big, unproductive estate," said Roberto Ferreira, a 21-year-old from the state of Pará who sported a T-shirt portraying Cuban revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara. "We also have an *assentamento* of 240 families. It's not easy because the government doesn't support