

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Introduction to 'Episodes of Cuban Revolutionary War'

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW—PAGES 5-12

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NATO escalates war drive against Yugoslavia

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Despite severe winter weather that closed runways for several days, 150 U.S. combat troops, including 60 paratroopers, landed in Tuzla, northeastern Bosnia, December 18 in preparation for war in the Balkans. Two days later, the NATO force took command of the "peacekeeping" mission from the United Nations.

In a ceremony filled with symbolism at Sarejevo airport, French Gen. Bernard Janvier handed over military authority to U.S. Adm. Leighton Smith, the NATO commander in southern Europe.

NATO's war drive — the largest military operation in Europe since World War II — is aimed at overturning the workers state in Yugoslavia and reestablishing capitalism there.

Washington is sending 32,000 troops to the region as part of the NATO occupation force of more than 60,000 to impose the

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Textile mill: 'A time bomb was waiting to go off'

BY KAREN RAY

LAWRENCE, Massachusetts—"Everyone knew it was a time bomb waiting to go off." This is how Pedro Bares, a production worker from the apparel division, described the fire that consumed the Malden Mills textile plant in nearby Methuen December 11. The four main mill buildings,

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France: workers deal blow to Juppé austerity plan

Union, student mobilizations show power of united action

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

PARIS — "Winners (Rail Unions) and Losers (Juppé) in France" headlined the December 18 edition of the *International Herald Tribune*. That was the assessment of this big-business paper as tens of thousands of rail, bus and metro, gas, electricity, postal, and other government workers began returning to work after Prime Minister Alain Juppé backed down on some aspects of his attacks on workers' rights.

The rail workers have been the backbone of the protest movement. "All together we won," said a large banner at the entrance of the rail station in the southern city of Nice, in one of the many strike celebrations workers held before going back to work in organized and fighting contingents.

The protests, which have drawn in massive numbers from throughout society in the past two weeks, were spurred by Juppé's November 15 announcement of a package of austerity measures aimed at gutting the social security system, extending by two and a half years the retirement age for government employees, and privatizing sectors of the nationalized rail, gas, electricity, and telephone enterprises — likely to result in thousands of layoffs.

This sweeping attack blew up in the French rulers' faces. On November 24 rail workers joined students already on strike across the country demanding a substantial increase in the national university budget. They were followed over the next couple of weeks by millions of other government workers. Public transportation came to a grinding halt in France, especially in Paris.



Militant/Derek Jeffers

"All together." Strikers demand withdrawal of Juppé plan, Paris, December 16.

Eight national days of protest have taken place called by three of the main trade union federations whose members were involved in the fight — the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), Workers' Force (FO), and the teachers' United Trade Union Federation (FSU). Working people began referring to the mobilizations as the "Juppéthon" because of the escalating number of participants. The last two protests went over the 2 million mark.

The officialdom of the French Confederation of Democratic Labor (CFDT) did not support the mobilizations, even though

thousands of their members participated.

On December 10, Juppé announced he would indefinitely suspend his austerity plan for the railroads, maintain the current retirement system for public workers, and hold a tripartite "social summit" involving himself and top representatives of labor and the bosses. This summit will begin December 21 and is to center on youth unemployment and the reduction of the workweek. The "Juppé Plan" will not be on the agenda. The prime minister maintains that he will not back down on his

Continued on Page 4

Arsonists attack Pathfinder bookstore in Iowa

BY JOHN STUDER

DES MOINES, Iowa — The Pathfinder bookstore here was the target of an arson attack in the early morning hours of December 18.

The bookstore has been open in Des

Moines since 1987 as a source of political books that make available the ideas and writings of working-class and revolutionary leaders. Among the authors published by Pathfinder are Fidel Castro, Nelson Mandela, V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky and

other leaders of the Russian revolution, Malcolm X, Farrell Dobbs, and Thomas Sankara.

"This arson attack is part of a pattern of one of the worst political crimes of our age — the burning of books," bookstore manager John Cox said in a fact sheet prepared after the attack and distributed to area bookstores, political organizations, and supporters of democratic rights.

The fire was set along the outside front wall. It damaged a section of wall, burning through to the inside of the bookstore beneath a large plate glass window. The books and other literature in the store suffered extensive smoke damage.

Firefighters responded quickly, preventing the blaze from consuming the building. A fire investigator determined that the incident was the result of arson, adding, "It looks like someone was trying to do you some damage."

The Pathfinder bookstore also rents space to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and the Socialist Workers Party.

Two nights before the fire, the Militant Labor Forum, which holds weekly programs at the bookstore, had organized a panel discussion opposing the sending of U.S. troops to Yugoslavia.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee (MCDC), which has been organizing an international fight for justice for Mark Curtis — a socialist and union activist imprisoned on frame-up charges of rape and burglary in 1988 — sponsored a highly

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Sponsored by the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party
For more information on classes, presentations, and travel to events, see listings on page 12.

Dozens of copies of Marxist magazine sold in France — page 4

NATO escalates war drive in the Balkans

Continued from front page

"peace" accord signed in Paris December 14. The agreement, brokered by the White House on a military base in Dayton, Ohio, in November, partitions Bosnia between pro-Belgrade Serbs and a fragile Muslim-Croat federation.

Some 1,000 U.S. soldiers, including 800 men from the 3rd Battalion, 325th Infantry Airborne Combat Team, will take over the Tuzla Air Base. A train carrying 130 soldiers arrived in the Croatian town of Koprivnica December 17, loaded with four M1 Abrams tanks, 13 Bradley fighting vehicles with 30 mm cannons, and armored ambulances.

U.S. president Bill Clinton and other spokespeople for imperialist powers continue to profess their war moves are intended to bring peace in the Balkans. Reports in the big-business press, however, have begun to point to the real goals.

An article in the December 13 *Financial Times* outlined some measures Belgrade must implement on the road to restoring capitalism, which was abolished in Yugoslavia through a popular revolution by workers and peasants in the 1940's. "To restart the economy and join the western economic community, Serbia will have to break the state's hold over the economy and close white elephant factories," the article said. Other proposals pushed by the *Times* include opening the door further to foreign investments, privatizations, and payment on Yugoslavia's \$8 billion foreign debt.

The *Times* writers began licking their chops at "Serbia's most promising economic sectors." They said the Yugoslav republic's "agriculture, food-processing, copper mining, textiles, tourism, and machinery — all need fresh capital."

The Dayton agreement gives U.S. and British troops the right to go anywhere in Bosnia, drive past military checkpoints, and the option to use force against anyone who tries to stop them. Washington's commanders have demanded absolute authority over the Bosnia "peacekeeping operation," which includes soldiers from France, Britain, Germany, and elsewhere.

London is deploying six navy warships along with 13,000 troops — which represents 12 percent of the British army's 109,000 men. British air force planes that are currently part of the NATO overflights are stationed in Italy.

Ottawa has agreed to send 1,000 Canadian soldiers by February. Another 3,000 Canadian troops have been trained for the

mission and could be rapidly deployed as well. In addition, 250 Canadian marines are already patrolling the Adriatic Sea.

The Canadian government sought to give the appearance of acting independently of Washington. Ottawa claims the operation will be for "one year and one year only." Bob Mills of the right-wing Reform Party said, however, "I don't think the one year commitment is at all realistic." At the same time, Preston Manning, another Reform Party leader, warned that Ottawa should be prepared to send the Canadian army into Quebec should it unilaterally declare independence.

'Arc of containment'

The *Washington Post* reported that Washington has built up a military network in every country that borders Yugoslavia to build an "arc of containment" aimed at Belgrade. "We've got to make the Balkans safe from Serbia," said a Clinton administration official, who stressed that Belgrade must begin to meet Washington's demands by making "deep cuts" to its military arsenal. U.S. officials emphasize that the remaining regimes in the area, including those in Croatia and Albania, could "bear the brunt" of U.S. military might if they buck Washington's dictates.

The governments of Hungary, Romania, Macedonia, and Albania have all signed military agreements with Washing-

ton and are participants in NATO's Partnership for Peace program. The government of Hungary signed a deal to allow the U.S. army to use two large logistics depots on its soil, which were former missile sites, for deployment from Germany.

According to the *Washington Post*, the regime in Albania "has run headlong into the embrace of the U.S. Defense Department since 1991." The U.S. military uses its airfields, beaches, and mountains for training, while CIA agents and army personnel launch spy planes from its air bases. "They act like an ally," a U.S. officer told the *Post*, pointing out that the Albania government was not paid for hosting the spy plane operation, "only better."

The Romanian government initiated a contract with Bell Helicopter Textron to produce AH-1F Cobra attack helicopters for its armed forces between 1999 and 2005. Washington hopes to strengthen its influence in Romania, the largest country in the region. Meanwhile, some 650 U.S. troops have been stationed in the republic of Macedonia since 1993.

Explosive conflicts with imperialist forces appear inevitable. "The arc of containment around us and this arms control pressure are not friendly acts," said Radovan Radinovic, a retired general in the Yugoslav army. In addition, the International War Crimes Tribunal released a most-wanted list of alleged war criminals,

composed mainly of Serb officers, guards, and civilians. Washington is contemplating whether to use its occupying army to pursue the alleged outlaws.

Another powder keg involves the Posavina corridor and the industrial city of Brcko in northeastern Bosnia, linking Serbia with areas in Bosnia controlled by pro-Belgrade troops, who seized the area in 1992 and insist on retaining control. No agreement on the issue was reached at Dayton. Munib Jusufovic, mayor of the 65 percent of Brcko controlled by Sarajevo, declared, "We'll take Brcko," if an international arbitration panel does not turn it over to the Bosnian republic.

Conflicts between Washington and Paris also continue to widen. "The Dayton agreement leads straight to a dead end," declared Gen. Jean-René Bachelet, the former UN commander in Sarajevo who was recalled to Paris after criticizing the pact. "For the Serbs living in these neighborhoods the choice will be between the suitcase and the coffin."

A British army officer told the December 17 *Guardian Weekly*, "The French are going about wrecking the Dayton agreement's equilibrium.... By supporting and encouraging the Serbs, the French are encouraging them to resist. One mustn't moan afterwards if violent clashes break out between the Ilizda Serbs and the international forces."

—YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD— 'No to U.S.-NATO occupation of Bosnia'

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS, write P.O. Box 2396, New York, NY 10009. Tel: (212) 475-6482, Fax: (212) 388-1659.

BY DOUG NELSON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — On December 15 the Young Socialists organized a speak out here entitled "No to U.S.-NATO occupation of Bosnia." It was hosted by the Twin Cities Militant Labor Forum.

The goal of the U.S. government is not "peace in the Balkans," any more than it was peace in Vietnam, said Megan Arney, one of the speakers. "The goal of the im-

perialists is to overthrow the workers state and re-establish capitalism in Yugoslavia." Arney is the coordinator of the Twin Cities Young Socialists. In fact, she said, the 60,000-strong NATO occupation force is responsible for escalating the conflict. As someone in the audience put it during the discussion, "It's like putting out fire with gasoline."

Arney urged all youth repelled by the evils of capitalism to take part in a campaign to fight the war drive. This includes talking to co-workers, students, and other activists about the true aims of NATO's war moves; selling Pathfinder books and the *Militant* at plant gates, picket lines, campuses, and political activities of all kinds; and organizing teach-ins, forums, and other events on Yugoslavia, she said.

Prior to the forum, YS members participated in a picket line in downtown Minneapolis protesting U.S. intervention against Yugoslavia. It was sponsored by the Committee Against U.S. Intervention in the Balkans, Women Against Military Madness, and others. Some 25 people took part. Two local television stations covered the action.

San Francisco meeting celebrates life of Ed Shaw

More than 100 people came to the Bayview Opera House in San Francisco on Sunday afternoon December 17 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Ed Shaw.

The audience included friends and comrades of Shaw — a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party who died in Hialeah, Florida, November 9 at age 72 — as well as family members, activists in the local Mumia Abu-Jamal coalition, and a dozen members of the Young Socialists and other youth. In addition to the Bay Area, participants came from Los Angeles, Salt Lake City, San Diego, Seattle, and Vancouver.

After a fund appeal, participants contributed \$2,291 toward Pathfinder's program to continue to publish the history of the Cuban revolution and the record of its leadership.

An 'antiwar' rally with an anti-Islamic edge

BY GREG ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — About 60 people gathered here across from the White House in Lafayette Park December 16 for what was billed as a protest against the U.S.-led NATO war drive in Bosnia. The event was marked by a decidedly pro-Belgrade flavor, with a heavy dose of anti-Islamic chauvinism.

The main groups sponsoring the rally were the International Action Center, led by members of the Workers World Party; Women Strike for Peace; Women for Mutual Security; and the National Traditionalist Caucus, a rightist outfit. The crowd was older. About a quarter of those present were born in Yugoslavia.

Rally chairperson Peter Makara said the purpose of the gathering was "to say that American troops should not die in Bosnia, and should not support Muslim fundamentalists in Bosnia." A promotional flyer for the protest, signed by the "Coalition Against Military Intervention," said that instead of introducing troops "we should go back to the UN and demand more negotiations until an agreement is reached that satisfies all the ethnic groups."

Signs planted around the stage declared: "Why arm Islamic fundamentalists in Bosnia" and "We need jobs and health care, not war in Bosnia — International Action Center."

"Victory to the Serbs! Defeat Amerikkka's fascist alliance in Eastern Europe," said another sign. This placard, identified with the Coalition Against Western Intervention in the Former Yugoslavia, depicted an equal sign between the fascist swastika and the words "U.S. & Germany & Croatia & Bosnia."

"American youth have always rushed to the defense of their country and to rescue others from aggression when there was a clear call to do so," proclaimed the chairman of the National Traditionalist Caucus (NTC), Don Rosenberg. "To send them into harm's way when there is no national strategic or security interest is criminally irresponsible."

Rosenberg, who identified himself as a supporter of the presidential campaign of Patrick Buchanan, the ultrarightist Republican contender, was accompanied by a couple of young NTC cohorts. One sported half a dozen "Buchanan for president" buttons on his bomber jacket and a hat from the National Rifle Association.

The NTC chairman declared from the stage, "the United States can't say it is neutral when it bombs the Serbs and helps the Muslims." Moreover, he said, Washington was opposing the Serbs, "who rescued American flyers during World War II." This brought one of the biggest rounds of applause. The Buchanan supporter said that Clinton was "now in alignment with militant Islam," adding that the Bosnia intervention would represent "colonization by the IMF [International Monetary Fund], World Bank, and the secret councils that govern this country."

Other speakers included representatives of the International Action Center, Women Strike for Peace, and two professors. No speaker objected to Rosenberg's strident anti-Islamic proclamations.

An International Action Center leaflet distributed at the rally stated, "The civil war in the Balkans was not started by internal divisions. It was the result of external Big Power intervention.... This illegal

tearing apart of Yugoslavia by the Big Powers is now used as a legal justification for attacking the Serbs who've resisted the breakup of their country."

Sean Gervasi, who teaches at universities in Paris and Belgrade, said, "The U.S. has intervened in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina to defeat the Serb population, which has lived there for 500 years."

A similar action called by the International Action Center took place in New York the day before.

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'Campaign against imperialism and war'

The following are excerpts from the article "The Working-Class Campaign Against Imperialism and War" by Jack Barnes, first published in the Dec. 21, 1990, *Militant*. The full article appears in issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, which also contains the article by Barnes "Opening Guns of World War III." These excerpts are copyright © *New Internationalist* and are reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

The deepening crisis of the world's capitalist economies and of the imperialist system will keep driving the U.S. rulers and their allies to war, if not in the Middle East then in Asia, if not there, somewhere else. And the handwringing in Washington will continue.

Military power is the main advantage left to the U.S. rulers in their decline relative to their imperialist competitors and to the world's toilers. While U.S. capitalism still has enormous economic power, as well, its position has slipped substantially in recent decades vis-à-vis its German, Japanese, and other rivals. Moreover, the entire world capitalist system itself has become more vulnerable and crisis-ridden than at any time since the Great Depression.

Washington has not undergone anything approaching a comparable weakening of its relative world strategic military power, however. One fact is sufficient to illustrate the point: it is impossible to conceive of any other single imperialist power—or even any coalition of other imperialist powers—capable of mounting a military operation in the Gulf to take on the Iraqi regime and have a reasonable chance of a military victory.

British imperialism certainly couldn't. And Britain was the former colonial power in Iraq and Kuwait, as well as in Egypt and in Palestine (what is now Jordan and Israel)....

Moreover, there's not some clever trick being carried out by the German and Japanese ruling classes, who haven't committed any military forces to the Gulf. They aren't waiting in the wings to somehow grab part of the spoils of war when it's over. It's not for lack of desire that the German and Japanese ruling classes are not more involved. They are simply too weak politically to confront the consequences at home of trying to commit major military forces abroad for the first time in half a century....

Washington's preparations for previous wars in this century have not been characterized by any similar lack of confidence. In fact, prior to World War I the main protagonists on all sides thought they knew what was going to happen. They thought they were going to win and profit greatly from the outcome.

The same was true prior to the outbreak of World War II. In the United States, Wall Street and its bipartisan representatives in Congress had concrete goals that they were confident could be met by crushing their Japanese and German imperialist rivals. Of course, as it turned out they didn't exactly get everything they had hoped for, even with their victory over Tokyo and Berlin. They hadn't planned on being unable to crush the Chinese revolution, to cite just one example. Or on the scope of anticolonial struggles throughout Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas that received an impulse from the inter-imperialist conflict. Nonetheless, the U.S. rulers had been overwhelmingly united and confident in going into that war....

That is not true today. They are not confident they know how the war they are preparing will actually turn out. So both sides in the tactical disputes in the U.S. ruling class argue on.



The danger of denial

Right now, at this stage in the rulers' war drive, perhaps the biggest hazard that faces the working-class vanguard, including communists among them, is the danger of denial.

These hazards are compounded for those who are buffeted by the day-to-day swings and tactical divisions reflected in bourgeois public opinion. One day the

news covers a tough-talking press conference by Bush—war! The next day, a sharp exchange at congressional hearings between Baker and several senators—war has been pushed back. The UN Security Council adopts a new resolution—war! The Iraqi regime releases the hostages—war has been pushed back. Several returning hostages call for bombing Baghdad—war! And so on.

The political vanguard of the working class must itself against such impressionistic reflexes. The workers' movement has always faced a double problem leading up to every imperialist war.

On the one hand, the capitalists and bourgeois politicians who are themselves preparing the war always claim to be acting in the interests of peace—and of freedom, democracy, and national sovereignty as well. They are the most fervent opponents of war! They publicly agonize, as cameras roll and reporters fill up their notebooks. The bosses and politicians do this in order to maintain support for actions they must take to preserve their social system.

But it's not just the bourgeois propaganda that is disorienting. Individuals and currents from the petty bourgeoisie—sometimes because of the depth of their shock at the horrors of war, and their fears of its consequences—lose their moorings and get drawn into the undertow of one or another section of the war makers and their political parties. These middle-class currents have a bigger direct impact on layers of fighting workers and farmers since—unlike the employers and most bourgeois politicians—they frequently function in or around organizations of the labor movement and in broader radical politics.

They often make common cause with petty-bourgeois bureaucrats in the unions and other workers' organizations—whether social democrats, Stalinists, or the homegrown U.S. business-unionism variety. These middle-class layers, whether well intentioned or incurably corrupted, serve as a culture for the growth of all varieties of bourgeois ideas and pressures inside the working-class and labor movement.

Based on the facts, communists can provide an independent working-class answer to the question of whether the capi-



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Activist buying *Militant* subscription at Nov. 12 rally in Seattle to support Boeing strikers. Socialist propaganda at plant gates and picket lines is at center of working-class campaign to oppose war drive against Yugoslavia.

talist rulers are pushing us closer to war. The answer is yes. The danger of a bloody slaughter in the Middle East is greater today, and the need for a working-class campaign against the imperialist war drive is more pressing.

Danger of bloody war closer

It is closer, first of all, because Washington is nearer to having in place in the Gulf the forces it needs to fight a war and win it militarily.

There is a second reason as well. Marxists understand that economic relations—or more precisely, the social relations of production that constitute the economic structure of society—are ultimately the determining factor in the evolution of history. But the specific actions that make history at any given time are the product of political decisions by human beings.

While politics has correctly been called concentrated economics, there is no precise time in the ripening of economic and social contradictions that determines when or how a particular political decision will be made. Big events are determined in their timing and in the character of their outbreak not by the broadest economic and social factors underpinning them but by the political decisions of organizations and individuals reflecting the conflicting

interests of various classes operating in the larger historical framework. And this includes accidents....

In this regard, there's something else we need to keep in mind as we follow Washington's buildup in the Middle East day in and day out, and its stiffening enforcement of the embargo. Just as politics is concentrated economics, military force is the carrying out of politics by specific means—by violent and explosive means that have their own momentum in the short run. In fact, over the past month the very weight, speed, and massive character of the order of battle that the U.S. government is putting in place in the Gulf pushes politics and conflicts in the region toward resolution by military means. Never in this century has an imperialist ruling class assembled such a gigantic military force without these preparations eventuating in a full-blown war.

The events pushing humanity toward carnage and devastation in the Middle East have already been set in motion by Washington. They have already produced permanent, and potentially explosive, shifts in the balance of class forces in the region. There is nothing pessimistic or fatalistic about recognizing this reality. To the contrary, only by looking at it and refusing to blink in the face of it will vanguard fighters in the working class in the United States and other countries be prepared to act in an effective way against the war drive....

This war drive and its results are being orchestrated by the bipartisan government of the United States. But the people in whose name this is being done—those whose economic livelihoods will be devastated and whose sons and daughters will die in combat—have no say....

That prerogative is reserved to the representatives of the twin imperialist parties that control the Congress and White House. After much argument and debate over tactical alternatives—and unanimous protestations of a desire for peace—those same parties have already dragged the people of the United States into four horrendous world wars this century: in 1917, 1941, 1950, and 1964. They are on the verge of doing it again, with all the unspeakable consequences it will entail in the Mideast and in the United States itself.

Publication schedule

After this issue, the *Militant* will not publish for one week because of our end-of-the-year shutdown. The next issue will be printed and mailed to distributors on January 4 and will be dated January 15, 1996.

This week we publish a special eight-page *International Socialist Review*. For this reason, we did not run some regular columns, including "In Brief" and "On the Picket Line."

BOOKS FOR
WORKING-CLASS CAMPAIGN
TO OPPOSE WAR DRIVE
AGAINST YUGOSLAVIA

Pathfinder publishes a number of books and pamphlets that are valuable weapons for working people opposed to the imperialists' march toward war against Yugoslavia. Below is a selection of titles documenting earlier opposition to imperialist war, battles to defend unions and democratic rights at home, and the struggle for socialism.

Opening Guns of World War III

WASHINGTON'S ASSAULT ON IRAQ Jack Barnes
In *New Internationalist* no. 7. \$12.00

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Jack Barnes In *New Internationalist* no. 10
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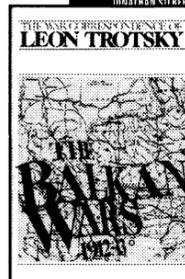
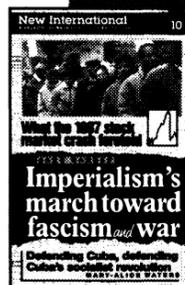
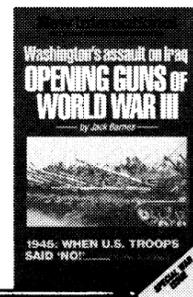
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Workers push back Juppé austerity plan

Continued from front page

overall goal of tearing up major portions of the social security system.

"Did we win?" a rail worker shouted to the crowd gathered for a victory celebration at the Austerlitz train station in Paris on Monday, December 18. "Yeah, a bit... no, a lot!" another shouted back.

That morning, some 60 rail workers at this station had successfully "negotiated" with the rail manager that 19 temporary conductors will become permanent as of January 1, and that the next 20 people to be hired will also get permanent jobs. Because of the strength of the workers' mobilizations, the nationalized rail company SNCF has agreed to negotiate paying workers for the days lost during the strike. Teachers will also be paid for the days

they struck in December.

"The rail workers were the engine of the strike, carrying the others," said Eric Thomas. "The government gave us a bit to stop the engine." Catherine Pencolé explained how the Austerlitz rail workers conducted their strike. "When we went out," she said, "we went to the postal workers nearby, the metro, the hospital, and the teachers. The students were already out. Then we saw we weren't alone. We went on talking to other public sector workers. So the [next] demonstration was bigger than the first one."

Many workers had a sober assessment of their victory, with Juppé still pressing for his plan to dismantle social security. "We couldn't continue without the private sector," stressed Claude Villard, in a refer-

ence to the fact that the strike wave didn't expand to workers in private industry. "Workers in both the public and private sectors have to take up the torch. If they come, we'll go on. We are still vigilant. Juppé is quiet now, but he is hiding something," Villard added.

Mario Nascimbene, of the CGT Federal Sector in the 13th Region, addressed the rail workers' meeting. "What you have won is huge," he said. "In 25 years rail workers haven't won such a victory." In response, Christine Boydenis, a young controller and CGT delegate, shouted back, "That's because you didn't have us!" referring to the many younger workers who have helped to lead the strikes.

This same determination and fighting spirit characterized the December 18

demonstration in Paris. According to the organizers, some 300,000 participated here, with more than 2 million altogether in various demonstrations held that day across the country.

"This is not a victory as long as the Juppé Plan is not withdrawn," said a driver from the Lilas subway center.

The huge demonstration was headed by a large contingent of rail workers with their drums, whistles, colorful banners, chants, and spectacular red emergency flares — the symbol of this struggle. They were followed by sizable groups of bus and subway workers, teachers, gas and electricity workers, and by student contingents. Also present were large groups of demonstrators defending the rights of the homeless and unemployed.

Hand-made placards, signs, and banners dominated the action, denouncing the Juppé Plan, unemployment, or simply capitalism. Some youth bore red flags with the portrait of Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara. Others were dressed up with hats, masks, and clown costumes making a political statement against the French government.

Several times there was spontaneous singing of the "Internationale," the revolutionary song of the world working class.

Hundreds of people lined the route waving, watching the demonstration, and applauding the banners and the contingents. I was wearing a sign that read, "Worker from Quebec in solidarity," and heard again and again from the sidewalks, "Long live free Quebec."

At the end of the march, some of the biggest applause from the crowd went to international contingents from Britain, Belgium, and Germany.

Derek Jeffers from Paris and Pamela Holmes from London, contributed to this article.

Interest in Marxist magazine

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

PARIS — "What you're saying about Yugoslavia sounds right to me. I want this book for sure, and this one on Iraq, I guess I should get that too." This was the response of a striker marching in the labor demonstration here December 16 against Prime Minister Alain Juppé's plan to cut social security. The young worker had just come over to a literature table of socialist books and periodicals featuring the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*, a French-language edition of *New Internationalist*. He bought the two issues with the articles "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" and "Opening Guns of World War III."

The table was one of four set up at the march by an international team of 23 supporters of *Nouvelle Internationale* from Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, New Zealand, and the United States. The socialist workers and young socialists staffing these tables were involved in wide-ranging discussions on imperialism's drive toward war against Yugoslavia and the working-class response to depression conditions around the world.

Communist workers in Canada have launched a special Can\$12,000 fund to send supporters of *Nouvelle Internationale* to sell the magazine in France. *Nouvelle Internationale* is edited by volunteers in Montreal, and is the product of worker and student translators across Canada and in other parts of the world.

The four teams at the Paris demonstration sold 66 copies of *Nouvelle Internationale*, dozens of copies of the *Militant* newspaper, and a number of books published by Pathfinder Press. One woman, a student, bought the entire set of five issues of *Nouvelle Internationale*.

"I didn't know you could sell books like this in the United States," said one rail worker. He was talking to one of the salespeople who was wearing a small placard reading "U.S. worker in solidarity."

A student with his father, a state worker on strike, was happy to see the volunteers selling *Nouvelle Internationale*. "You mean you're not here on holiday, you came to support us?" he asked. Like many others, they had first noticed the signs on the literature tables saying: "No to the Juppé Plan — No to France, NATO War Drive against Yugoslavia — Defend the Socialist Revolution in Cuba."

Team members were invited to a meeting of rail workers at the Austerlitz rail station. Five copies of *Nouvelle Internationale* were sold there December 17. "Just the fact that there are people ready to come from other countries because they understand this fight is important," said one rail worker.

Two other sales teams went to university campuses that day, at St. Denis and Jussieu in Paris. Each sold seven copies of *Nouvelle Internationale* as well as other books in French, including three copies of *Malcolm X: The last speeches* and *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Che Guevara.

Elizabeth, a student from Jussieu, joined the campus sales team for the several hours that it was set up at the school. She had met team members the night before at a meeting supporting the homeless takeover of the George Pompidou cultural center. One member of the international team had spoken at the daily rallies organized by the homeless there.

At St. Denis the response to *Nouvelle*

Internationale led to a class being organized that afternoon on the imperialist war drive against Yugoslavia. One young woman who bought a copy of the magazine featuring "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" explained she didn't support the strike but was open to looking at this point of view. A number of Haitian students came by the table and were especially interested in Cuba and literature against U.S. imperialism. A Mozambican student bought books by Malcolm X and Thomas Sankara.

As of Tuesday, December 19, after participating in another labor demonstration of many thousands, the international sales team had sold a total of 124 copies of *Nouvelle Internationale*, overwhelmingly issues no. 4 and no. 5 dealing with imperialism's drive toward fascism and war. The team has sold over \$2,000 worth of socialist literature so far.



Militant/Laura Anderson
Selling socialist books in Paris, Dec. 12.

Arson attack on socialist bookstore

Continued from front page

publicized meeting at a downtown hotel the night before the attack. The event, held to celebrate the recent decision of the Iowa State Board of Parole to grant Curtis parole, was covered by Des Moines TV channel 13, the local NBC affiliate.

The bookstore and MCDC headquarters have been victimized by politically motivated vandalism in the past, including having a gunshot fired through one of the front windows and a physical assault that caused \$2,000 in damage.

Pathfinder representatives arrived at the bookstore at 4:30 a.m. after hearing about the fire from a supporter of the bookstore who had been following calls over his police scanner. They immediately began notifying the press, and the three local television stations sent reporting teams to the store.

Police not keen to pursue investigation

Senior police investigator Dennis Morgan, the Des Moines police officer who responded to the call, left before fire authorities determined the blaze had been set on purpose. When contacted later, Morgan said the police were convinced that it was arson, but had decided to put the case on "hold" unless bookstore or MCDC volunteers would provide them with the name of someone to investigate.

"This cowardly act was clearly a politically motivated act, an attempt to close down the free exchange of books and ideas, a blow to free speech. The book burners hoped to shut down the bookstore and intimidate those who rent space there," bookstore manager Cox said in a statement released to the press that morning. He demanded that "the Des Moines police do all in their power to catch and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those responsible for this attack."

Notice of the fire and efforts of bookstore supporters to press authorities to catch those responsible were carried by all the area television stations and the *Des Moines Register*, the only daily newspaper here.

"Store owner believes fire was politically motivated," read the headline on the front page of the *Register*'s Metro section. "Des Moines Fire Investigator Robert Nifenger said no arrests immediately were

reported, but he verified that the fire was a case of arson. He said someone applied some kind of accelerant to the front of the building and ignited it."

Supporters of the free exchange of ideas and opponents of violent attacks against political groups organized a protest meeting and press conference at the Pathfinder bookstore December 19. Held amidst the fire-damaged store — which volunteers have kept open with a sign in the door reading "Excuse the fire, we are open for business" — local activists gathered and spoke out against the attack.

Many join protest meeting

"Join in a nonpartisan effort to protest this criminal attempt to burn down the Pathfinder bookstore and to press the authorities to act swiftly and with determination," Cox told the 30 people present. "Send a message to John 'Pat' Dorrian, mayor of Des Moines, urging that city authorities take decisive action to find those responsible and prosecute them. This is the best way to send a clear message that book burning will not go unpunished."

"We are here to talk about hate crimes," Tim Andrews, president and executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Resource Center, said. "Right-wing extremists should be opposed by every rational Iowan. They are being fueled by hate mongers on the radical fringe of the right wing. I call on every reasonable Iowan to oppose such acts and to work towards healing our society rather than destroying it."

Cox read from a message sent to the meeting by Ed Fallon, Iowa State Representative in the 70th District, who said, "I do not know whether the recent act of arson at the Pathfinder Bookstore was politically motivated or just another random act of senseless violence. Either way, it is highly condemnable, and the entire greater Des Moines community should speak with one voice against such violence, whenever and against whomever it may occur."

Larry Ginter, a family farmer and leader of the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, told the meeting, "It is an outrage that the police have taken a blasé attitude towards the fire at the bookstore. Finally, I want the folks who run the bookstore to understand that I am in complete

solidarity with them because damage to one is damage to all." Earl Simes, a farmer and member of the Iowa American Agriculture Movement, also spoke.

Jane Magers-Fionoff, a leader of the local chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; Bob Peters, a former striker at Firestone; and a number of other workers active in the United Auto Workers and United Food and Commercial Workers unions attended the meeting.

A statement from Rev. Gil Dawes, a leader of Prairiefire, an area group that aids farmers facing hard times, noted, "The Pathfinder bookstore has long proclaimed its point of view publicly, which is more than can be said for individuals who are only able to argue their point of view by private acts of terrorism.... None of us should remain silent, for such acts are a threat to all."

Harold Ruggless, president of United Auto Workers Local 270, said, "We cannot allow this kind of attack to go unanswered. No matter where it starts, ultra-right-wing violence always comes to roost against the labor movement. We must stop it in its tracks."

"This attack on the bookstore and our offices comes within weeks of our scoring a significant victory on Mark Curtis's behalf," Hazel Zimmerman, secretary-treasurer of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, told the media. The attack came "only hours after we held a widely publicized meeting to celebrate this victory and plan our next steps," she said (see article on page 16).

"Until those responsible for this crime are caught and prosecuted, we can't know who their target was — the political books in the Pathfinder bookstore or our defense committee. Either way, this form of cowardly attack must be condemned and brought to a halt."

Statements were also read from Rev. Ken Stuber; Mack C. Shelley, political science professor at Iowa State University; and Roxanne Gould, a Native American activist in Sioux City, Iowa.

Messages urging action to catch and prosecute those responsible for the arson attack can be sent to Mayor John Dorrian, 400 East First, Des Moines, Iowa 50309.

Che Guevara's firsthand account of the battles that led to triumph of Cuban workers and peasants

Introduction to 'Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War'

The following is the introduction to *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara. It is copyright © Pathfinder Press and is reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

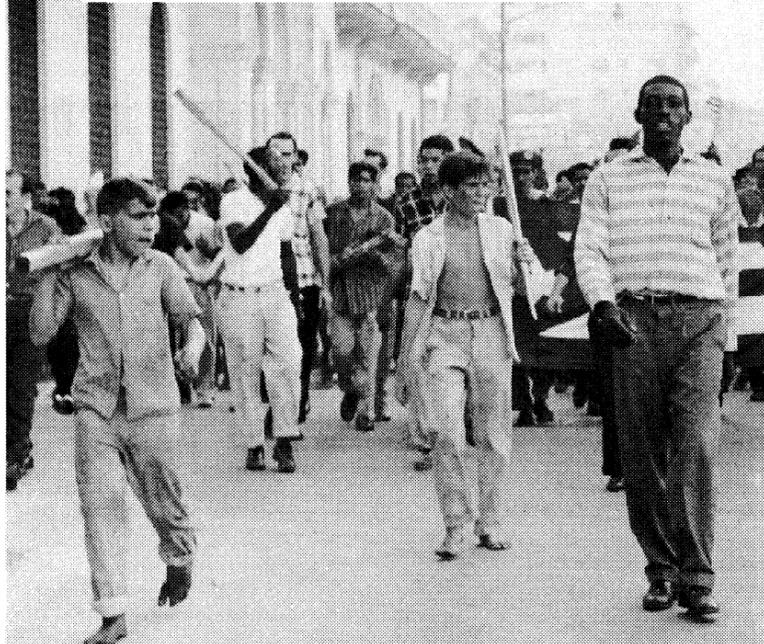
Without pretension or exaggeration — indeed, with humor and simple clarity — Ernesto Che Guevara provides a firsthand account in these pages of the final two years of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba that culminated January 1, 1959, in the destruction of the brutal U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

The workers and farmers government consolidated in the following months rapidly became “the hope of the unredeemed Americas,” as Guevara says in an article in this collection. It opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the hemisphere, a reality that almost four decades later still stands at the center of world politics.

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War is also a book about the education of Ernesto Che Guevara, the young Argentine rebel who became one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution. It is the story of his political coming of age — often to his own surprise — as he is transformed from a serious student of Marxism with little practical political experience into a seasoned combat leader of men and women. We watch him as he takes on greater and greater responsibilities. We follow his growth, his education, and his transformation by the Cuban workers and peasants alongside of whom he is engaged in a life-and-death struggle. From a determined revolutionary intellectual imbued with a spirit of adventure, a self-described Quixote, one of the great communist leaders of the twentieth century begins to emerge.

“Some time ago,” Guevara wrote to his parents from Mexico in July 1956, “I met a young Cuban leader who invited me to join his movement, dedicated to the armed liberation of his country. I of course accepted.” Guevara’s letter, which appears here in full for the first time in English, continued, “My future is linked to the liberation of Cuba. Either I will triumph with it, or I will die there.”

The young Cuban leader was Fidel Castro, twenty-nine years old but already a well-known political figure in Cuba. As a student leader at the University of Havana law school in the late 1940s he had begun to assume growing leadership responsibility within the Latin American anti-imperialist student movement. In 1947 Castro became a founding member of the Cuban People’s Party — the Orthodox Party, or *Ortodoxos*, as it became known — which campaigned on a platform of opposition to Yankee domination and rampant government corruption and graft. He was a leader of the party’s student-based youth organization, which at the same



LEE LOCKWOOD (TOP THREE PHOTOS) / INSTITUTE OF CUBAN HISTORY (BOTTOM RIGHT)

January 1, 1959. Newspaper headline (top left) reads, “Batista flees.” Working people in Havana celebrate victory, taking over the streets. Armed revolutionary citizens (top right) stop cars on Havana’s waterfront, looking for Batista’s henchmen.

A week later, on January 8, Rebel Army columns commanded by Fidel Castro enter Havana (lower right). From left are Antonio Enrique Lussón, Augusto Martínez Sánchez, Raúl Castro, Ramiro Valdés (in white hat), Fidel Castro, Ernesto Guerra (above Castro), Camilo Cienfuegos, William Gálvez, Ernesto Che Guevara.

time was its left wing. That same year he volunteered for an armed expedition to the Dominican Republic aimed at overthrowing the dictatorship of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo. The operation, led by bourgeois forces, was aborted, however, before even leaving Cuba.

A year later Castro was in Bogotá, Colombia, helping to organize a Latin American student conference to coincide with a meeting of foreign ministers from North and South America, when opposition Liberal Party leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was assassinated. The city erupted in a mass popular uprising soon known as the *Bogotazo*. Joining with thousands of others who rushed to the police stations and seized arms, Castro found himself help-

ing to organize the resistance to the impending military assault on the working people and youth who had poured into the streets.

While a student at the university, Castro came in contact with Marxist literature, including the *Communist Manifesto* and other classic works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and he began to develop a materialist world outlook and a revolutionary perspective.¹

In 1952 Castro was running as an Orthodox Party can-

All notes appear on ISR 8



Police chief Quirino Uria (right) confronts Fidel Castro during November 1950 demonstration in Havana, one of numerous student-led protests against the corrupt government of Carlos Prío and its subordination to Wall Street and Washington.

didate for the house of representatives when Batista and his generals seized power on March 10 and scuttled the scheduled elections. Within weeks of the coup, Castro began putting together an armed movement to overthrow the dictatorship, an underground organization that grew, in little more than a year, to twelve hundred men and women.

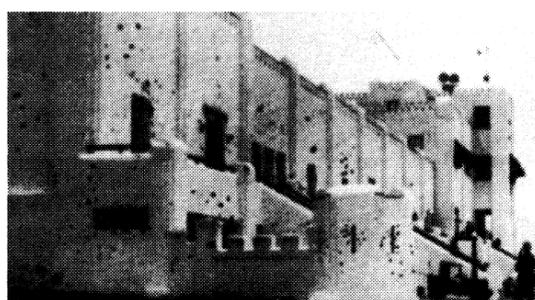
On July 26, 1953, 160 of these combatants carried out simultaneous armed assaults on the army garrisons in the eastern Cuban cities of Bayamo and Santiago de Cuba, hoping to create the conditions for an armed popular uprising in Santiago, the island's second-largest city and a historic center of anti-imperialist activity in Cuba. If Santiago could not be held, the plan was to retreat to the Sierra Maestra mountains and regroup a force of several thousand combatants to dig in and continue the armed insurrection.

The attacks were crushed. Nearly half of the revolutionaries were captured, brutally tortured, and murdered. Twenty-eight of those who escaped this slaughter, including Castro, who had headed the assault force in Santiago, were tried and sentenced to up to fifteen years in prison. Castro's defense speech before the court, later reconstructed by him in prison and smuggled out, was published under the title *History Will Absolve Me* and initially circulated in some 100,000 copies as part of a growing popular amnesty campaign in Cuba.

In May 1955, in response to this campaign, Castro and other veterans of the attacks on the Santiago and Bayamo garrisons were released from prison. Together

At right, Cuban troops occupying streets in Havana on day of Batista's coup, March 10, 1952. Below, student-led demonstration in Havana shortly after the coup. Raúl Castro, then a university student, is carrying Cuban flag at head of action.

COUNCIL OF STATE OFFICE OF HISTORICAL AFFAIRS, HAVANA (BELOW)



The Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba following armed assault by revolutionaries, July 26, 1953 (left).

with other groups moving in a revolutionary direction, they founded the July 26 Movement. Then, with persecution mounting in Cuba, Castro left the island for Mexico in July 1955 to prepare an expedition that would establish a base that could be defended in the Sierra Maestra mountains of Oriente province and relaunch the armed struggle against the Batista dictatorship.

In Mexico City, Castro soon met Ernesto Guevara and signed him up as the third confirmed member of the expedition. Raúl Castro, Fidel's brother, had been the second. In the closing weeks of 1956, eighty-two combatants with relatively few weapons returned to Cuba aboard the yacht *Granma*, and the revolutionary war whose episodes are recounted in these pages began to unfold.

Che, as Ernesto Guevara was called by his Cuban comrades, was twenty-seven at the time, two years out of medical school in Buenos Aires, Argentina, when he met Fidel Castro. He had spent most of the preceding three and a half years traveling through the Americas. Riding a motorcycle, then hitching transportation in trucks, boats, rafts, and planes, bumming food wherever possible, Guevara immersed himself in the lives, culture, and, increasingly, the struggles of the peoples of the Americas.

In December 1953 Guevara arrived in Guatemala, drawn by the popular upsurge that accompanied the limited land reform program being advanced by the government of Jacobo Arbenz. In pre-land reform Guatemala, counting each imperialist-based corporation as one person, 98 percent of Guatemala's cultivated land was owned by 142 people.² The United Fruit Company, one of the biggest landowners, and its government in Washington responded to the threat that even this timid land reform represented to propertied interests by organizing a mercenary army to overthrow the Arbenz regime in 1954.

Along with thousands of Guatemalans, Guevara volunteered to fight, but Arbenz rejected arming the population and resigned. As the mercenary troops entered Guatemala City and began massacring supporters of the Arbenz regime, Guevara took refuge in the Argentine embassy, and in September 1954 escaped to Mexico.

In Guatemala Guevara had become friends with Níco López, a veteran of the assault on the "Carlos Manuel de Céspedes" army barracks in Bayamo in 1953. López and several other participants in the Bayamo action had escaped arrest and fled Cuba, ending up in Costa Rica and Guatemala.³ López and Guevara found themselves together again in Mexico, where the Cuban fighter introduced his Argentine comrade to Raúl Castro and then Fidel Castro. As Fidel recalls in the 1971 speech that opens this book, he met Che a few days after arriving in

Mexico:

Because of his state of mind when he left Guatemala, because of the extremely bitter experience he'd lived through there — that cowardly aggression against the country, the interruption of a process that had awakened the hopes of the people — because of his revolutionary vocation, his spirit of struggle, we can't say it took hours, we can say that in a matter of minutes Che decided to join the small group of Cubans who were working on organizing a new phase of the struggle in our country.⁴

"Che wasn't Che then," Castro added. "He was Ernesto Guevara. It was because of the Argentine custom of calling people 'Che' that the Cubans began calling him Che." That was how he got the name he later made famous.

Throughout this period, in addition to holding down a number of odd jobs, Guevara worked on and off at hospitals and other places related to his medical training. But, as letters to his family attest, he found himself drawn more and more to a serious study of Marxism. "My path seems to diverge gradually and firmly from clinical medicine," he wrote his mother in August or September 1956. "St. Karl," as he humorously referred to Karl Marx, "has won a studious adherent."⁵ On the eve of departure aboard the *Granma*, he explained:

I'm in the process of changing the direction of my studies. In the past, for better or worse, I concentrated on medicine while devoting my free time to an informal study of St. Karl. The new stage of my life demands a change in the direction of my studies as well. St. Karl now comes first. He is the axis of my studies and will remain so for the years that remain to me in the outermost layer of this spheroid....

In addition, I was beginning to draw a series of conclusions that clashed sharply with my trajectory as fundamentally an adventurer. I decided to tackle first things first, to enter into battle against the way things are, a shield upon my arm, full of dreams; and then, if the windmills didn't crack my skull, to write.⁶

Guevara departed Mexico as the troop's doctor. In the battle of Alegría de Pío, the first episode of the revolutionary war described here, he tells how he had to choose between rescuing a knapsack full of medicine or salvaging a box of ammunition. After brief hesitation, he picked up the ammunition.

Six months later he became the first combatant to earn the rank of commander, leading the first column separate from the nucleus directed by Fidel. Within two years, as columns led by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro closed the encirclement of Santiago, Che commanded the Rebel Army campaign in Las Villas province to the west that cut the island in two, capturing Santa Clara, Cuba's third largest city. The fate of the Batista dictatorship was



AIN (ABOVE)

sealed.

“The war revolutionized us,” Guevara wrote to Ernesto Sábato, a prominent Argentine novelist, in 1960:

There is no more profound experience for a revolutionary than the act of war; not the isolated act of killing, or of carrying a rifle, or of undertaking a struggle of this or that type. It is the totality of the war itself, knowing that an armed man is worth something as a combat entity, and is worth as much as any other armed man, and no longer fears other armed men.

It is the process of continuing to explain to the defenseless peasants how they can take up a rifle and prove to the soldiers that an armed peasant is worth as much as the best of them; of continuing to learn how the efforts of one are worthless if not surrounded by the efforts of all.

It is the process of continuing to learn how revolutionary slogans have to reflect the tangible aspirations of the people, and of continuing to learn from the people what their most deeply felt desires are, and to transform these into banners of political agitation.

This we have all been doing, and we understood that the peasants' yearning for land was the most powerful motive of struggle that could be found in Cuba.⁷

As Guevara explained on several occasions, he did not foresee the opening of the socialist revolution in the Americas as the outcome of the revolutionary war in Cuba. Based on his knowledge of the history of Latin America, and his reading of books, Marxist ones included, he was convinced that the forces being assembled under the leadership of Fidel Castro could bring down the Batista tyranny, one of the bloodiest yet seen in the long list of Latin American dictatorships. That was an objective for which he was willing to give his life. But he thought that imperialist dollars and bourgeois greed would then once again assert their dominance, and the revolution would go the way of all movements trying to reform capitalism.

The workers and peasants of Cuba would teach Che that a different outcome was possible.

As the war transformed the Rebel Army, and the July 26 Movement as well, Guevara's assessment of the social and class dynamics of the revolution, including the course of the central leadership of the movement, changed also. The turning point came in December 1957, as he explains in the chapter “One Year of Armed Struggle.” That was when Fidel Castro, speaking for the leadership of the July 26 Movement, publicly repudiated an agreement among bourgeois opposition forces, known as the Miami Pact, after its drafters falsely claimed that the document, which contained both public and secret clauses, had been signed by authorized representatives of the July 26 Movement.

Throughout the *Episodes*, Guevara tells much of the story of the July 26 Movement's unceasing, though generally unsuccessful, efforts to secure arms and money from the parties that opposed the Batista dictatorship but had come to fear even more the growing organization and confidence of the armed workers and peasants. “The opposition groups were varied and dissimilar,” Che wrote, “even though most had as a common denominator the wish to take power (read: public funds) for themselves. This brought in its wake a sordid internal struggle to win that victory.”

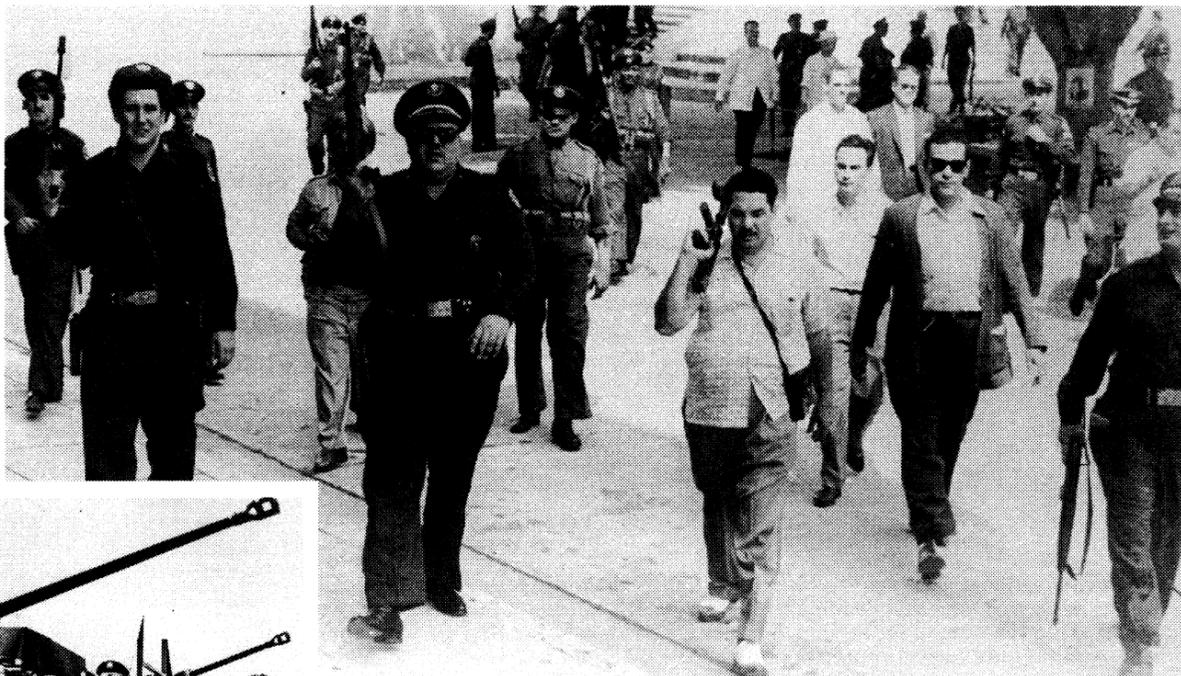
The July 26 leadership fought throughout the revolutionary war to win political leadership of the broadest possible forces influenced by the bourgeois parties. The stakes were high: preventing those parties from coalescing and mobilizing Washington's support behind them in order to usurp the victory being won by the Rebel Army at the head of a popular insurrection.

Fidel Castro's December 14, 1957, letter, on behalf of the July 26 Movement, repudiating the Miami Pact — printed in full by Guevara in the single longest chapter of the *Episodes* — was the turning point in the political battle. Thousands of copies were produced by the fledgling print shop (a mimeograph machine brought up to the Sierra) and propaganda apparatus of the Rebel Army under Guevara's command. Then, during a window of opportunity when press censorship was briefly lifted by the Batista regime, *Bohemia*, the most widely circulated weekly magazine in Cuba, published the letter in full in a print run of half a million copies.

While the long record of negotiations with all the diverse forces made clear that compromise on many points of difference was possible in order to maintain unity, “what is important for the revolution is not unity in itself, but the principles on which it is based,” Castro's letter stated.

No matter how desperate our situation in face of thousands of the dictatorship's troops mobilized to annihilate us, and perhaps with more determination because of it (since nothing is more humiliating than to accept an onerous condition under trying circumstances), we would never accept the sacrifice of certain principles that are fundamental to our conception of the Cuban revolution.⁸

Those conditions had been contained in an earlier agreement with some of the forces behind the betrayal of



GRANMA (LEFT)

BOHEMIA (ABOVE)

Above, Batista police occupy and sack University of Havana, April 21, 1956; in front, with sun glasses, is Rafael Salas Cañizares, one of regime's most notorious murderers. University remained shut down until Batista regime fell Jan. 1, 1959.

Left, U.S. and Cuban military officials, early 1957, discussing increased U.S. aid to Batista. At center is Col. Harold Isaacson, head of U.S. Military Mission in Cuba; to his right is Francisco Tabernilla, head of Cuban general staff.

the Miami Pact, especially former National Bank head Felipe Pazos, who thought he deserved praise for not being corrupt, and the “absolute mediocrity” Raúl Chibás. Guevara colorfully describes them both as “two Stone Age mentalities” imbued with deep antipathy to the peasants' demands for agrarian reform.

Two principles were omitted from the Miami document, Castro wrote: first, “the explicit declaration that we reject every form of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Cuba,” that is, not only aid to Batista but any other attempt to determine the course of events in Cuba; and, second, “the explicit rejection of any kind of military junta as a provisional government of the republic,” that is, rejection of any government that did not derive its legitimacy, authority, and composition from the hard-won victory of the insurrectionary forces.

Moreover, the secret clauses of the Miami Pact provided that “the revolutionary forces are to be incorporated, with their weapons, into the regular armed bodies of the republic,” a condition the July 26 leadership categorically repudiated as an invitation to “gangsterism and anarchy.”

“The July 26 Movement claims for itself the role of maintaining public order and reorganizing the armed forces of the republic,” Castro responded, with a conviction born of hard-won experience in the mountains dealing with banditry and crime unleashed by the disintegration of the old repressive order, and often carried out by those camouflaging themselves as part of the guerrillas. No other force could guarantee the revolutionary victory and maintain public order.

With the rejection of the Miami Pact, the deepening social revolution in the Sierras, led by the vanguard forces of the Rebel Army, was strengthened, and the march toward the establishment of a popular revolutionary government of the workers and peasants accelerated. But these two factors were intertwined. Without the victories of the first year of struggle in the Sierras, without the growing support of the peasantry, without the increasing political homogeneity of a battle-tested cadre committed to deep-going social transformation, the uncompromising rejection of the Miami Pact would not have been possible.

Throughout the *Episodes* we can follow the birth of the first free territory of the Americas, high in the Sierra Maestra, as the guerrilla forces grew strong enough to win the confidence and collaboration of the peasants, and as the declining morale of the dictatorship's troops enlarged the terrain the army treated as a no-go zone.

Out of the poverty, hopes, and dignity of the men and women of the Sierra, out of the struggle for change, new social relations began to emerge, at the center of which was the land reform, the right of each peasant family to the land they tilled. Military Order no. 1, issued by Guevara as the commander in chief of the Las Villas region during the closing months of the war, reprinted here as part of the documents from the Las Villas campaign, underscores the place of land reform in the revolutionary program of the advancing Rebel Army: “Every peasant who for at least two years has been paying rent, either in cash or in kind, for working a parcel of land in the territory covered by this military order is hereby declared free of all payment obligations and is invited to claim his rights over the land he works.”

The new legal system emerged as a reflection of already changing social practice, Guevara noted, before

any written law of the Sierra had been promulgated. The land reform, for example, had begun well before Law no. 3 of the Rebel Army was issued on October 10, 1958, granting land to the tillers.

“The execution of antisocial individuals who took advantage of the prevailing atmosphere in the area to commit crimes was, unfortunately, not infrequent,” Che writes. But such severe measures had the “full public blessing” of the local residents, Fidel points out in the letter rejecting the Miami Pact.

The local residents, accustomed in the past to viewing agents of authority as enemies of the people, quite understandably offered protection and shelter to those fleeing from the former system of justice. Now, when they see our soldiers as defenders of their interests, the most complete order prevails; and the best guardians of it are the citizens themselves.¹⁰

The great miracle of the revolution, Guevara writes, is “the rediscovery by the Cuban peasant of his own happiness.” The happy, hearty laughter that can be heard in the new Sierra flows from “the self-confidence that the awareness of his own strength gave to the inhabitant of our liberated area.”

Guevara's description of El Hombrito, the base where his column took steps to establish the first industries — a forge and crude armory, an oven for baking bread, a leather goods shop, preparations for hydro-electric generation of power, a newspaper, *El Cubano Libre*, and later the increasingly important Radio Rebelde — provide a glimpse of life in the liberated Sierra. The total destruction of that base in a matter of hours by the forces under the command of Ángel Sanchez Mosquera, “the bravest, the most murderous, and one of the most thieving of all of Batista's military chieftains,” was a bitter lesson in the limits imposed by war, as well.

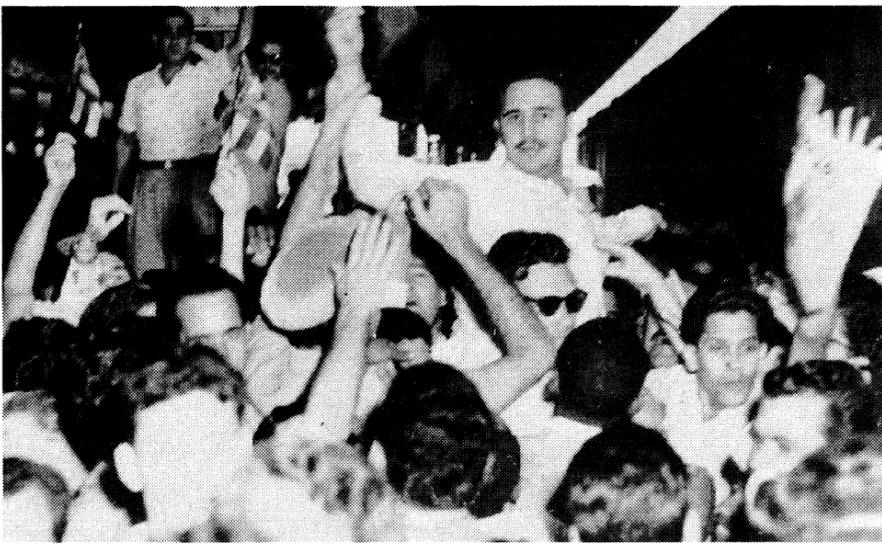
The Sierra peasants longing for land to till, the exhausted women condemned to too much work on too meager a diet, and the children whose bellies were distended with parasites, taught Che in the course of day-to-day struggle that revolutions are not born directly of a set of ideas or from the history of previous revolutions, but from the line of march of a class fighting for its liberation.

The opening of the socialist revolution in Cuba turned out to be much closer than any of the revolutionary combatants thought when they began their struggle. It came about because — with growing political clarity and leadership capacity forged in battle — they refused to be diverted from that line of march and the confrontation with imperialism it provoked.

In the eyes of the North American rulers, Guevara wrote in a 1960 letter printed in these pages, “we constitute the great fraud of the century: we stated the truth in an attempt to deceive.” To Washington

the words “We will nationalize public services,” were to be read as “We will prevent this from happening if we receive a reasonable amount of support.” The words “we will eliminate the system of large landed estates,” were to be read as: “we will utilize the large landed estates as a good source of funding for our political campaigns, or for our personal enrichment.” And so on and so forth. It never entered their heads that what Fidel Castro and our Movement were saying so candidly and sharply was what we actually intended to do.¹¹

Throughout the *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary*



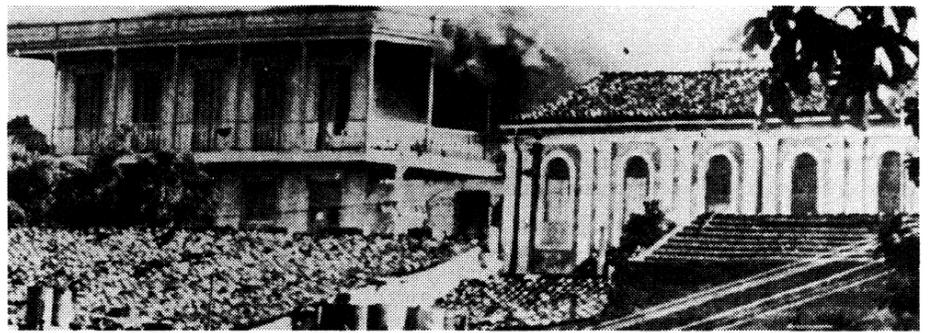
Fidel Castro arriving in Havana, May 16, 1955, following release of Moncada prisoners after mass amnesty campaign. A few weeks later July 26 Movement was founded. As government repression mounted, Castro left for Mexico to prepare armed expedition to overturn Batista regime.

War, Guevara also describes his evolution as a leader of the July 26 Movement. Working together with Fidel Castro, Che learned the revolutionary art of uniting diverse forces around the central objective of taking power, while avoiding premature conflicts and allowing time and experience in struggle to create the conditions in which differences could be settled in practice if not superseded. Fidel's course was to fight from a political base in the Sierra to win the uncontested leadership of those social forces that, unlike the bourgeois parties, were committed to the insurrectional struggle to overthrow the Batista regime.

Throughout the book, we see how the leadership of the July 26 Movement charted a course to forge a revolutionary united front with the student-based Revolutionary Directorate, which maintained its own political and military structures during the war. We follow this political evolution from the Mexico Pact signed by Fidel Castro and José Antonio Echeverría in August 1956; to the assault on the Presidential Palace in March 1957, in which Echeverría and other Revolutionary Directorate leaders were killed; to the split in the Directorate's forces that gave rise to the current known as the Second National Front of the Escambray, whose cattle rustling and thievery, Guevara said, was responsible for "sowing more terror than Batista's army"; to the Pedrero Pact between the July 26 Movement and Revolutionary Directorate during the final push toward victory in December 1958.

With careful precision, Guevara also sketches the relations between the July 26 Movement and the Popular Socialist Party, the name taken in 1944 by the Communist Party. "The PSP joined with us in certain concrete actions, but mutual distrust hampered joint action and, fundamentally, the party of the workers did not understand with sufficient clarity the role of the guerrilla force, nor the place of Fidel in our revolutionary struggle," Guevara writes.

Guevara recounts a discussion he once had with a PSP leader during the war. "You are capable of creating cadres who can silently endure the most terrible tortures



Santiago's main police station burns to the ground Nov. 30, 1956, during uprising organized by July 26 Movement to coincide with scheduled Granma landing.

in jail," Guevara told him, "but you cannot create cadres who can take a machine gun nest." This PSP leader, Guevara writes, later repeated this observation to others "as an accurate characterization of that period."

"As I saw it from my guerrilla vantage point," Guevara continued, "this was a consequence of [the PSP's] strategic conception: a determination to struggle against imperialism and the abuses of the exploiting classes, together with an inability to envision the possibility of taking power."¹²

Each of these three forces — the July 26 Movement, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the Popular Socialist Party — was put to the test in the course of the deep-going revolution described in these pages, and a process of political differentiation and transformation took place within and among them. Following the defeat of the Batista regime, and under the leadership of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army that had organized the victorious popular revolution, the forces that emerged from these organizations and from this experience came together to form a united party that in 1965 took the name Communist Party of Cuba.

Guevara's most concentrated political education took place within the July 26 Movement itself. In the chapters "One Year of Armed Struggle" and "A Decisive Meeting," Che explains how Fidel successfully worked to bring about a revolutionary political resolution of differences between "two quite clearly defined tendencies" within the July 26 Movement, known as the *Sierra* [mountains] and the *Llano* [plains]. "Differences over strategic conception separated us," Guevara notes, above all over counterposed assessments of the vanguard position of the Rebel Army in creating the political and military conditions for victory. The *Llano* current saw the work in the cities, Guevara says, "as having greater relative importance than the *Sierra*."

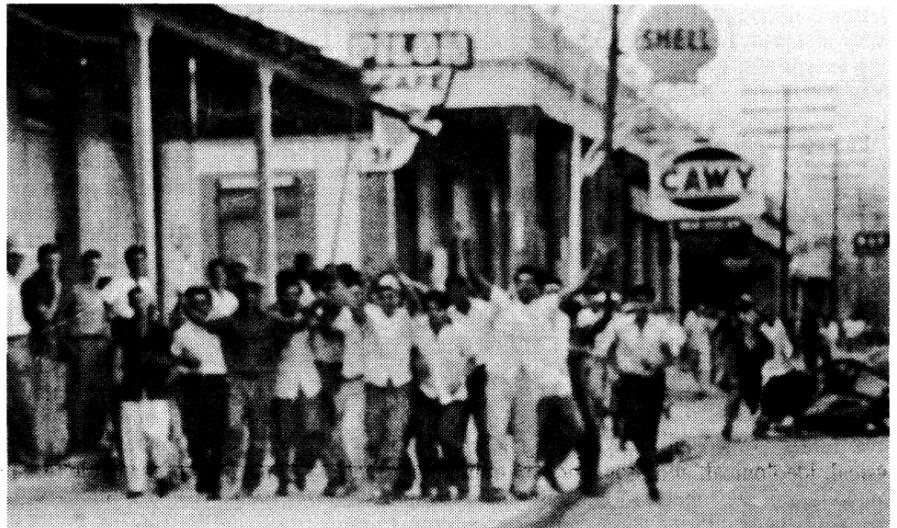
The frictions were ongoing, and sometimes intermixed with differences within the July 26 Movement over broader class and political perspectives. As Guevara describes in the chapter "The Second Battle of Pino del Agua," when a broadening polemic threatened to erupt, Fidel stepped in to prevent it and allow the differences to begin being resolved in a revolutionary direction, as the entire leadership of the July 26 Movement united around a public repudiation of the Miami Pact. This was an important leadership lesson for Che. "It is important to point out," he emphasizes, "that the fighters against the dictatorship in both the *Sierra* and *Llano* were able to hold opinions on tactics that were at times diametrically opposed, without having this lead to abandoning the insurrectional struggle."

The resolution of the conflicts came later in 1958, following the disastrous outcome of the April 9 general strike called by the July 26 Movement's National Directorate, despite the strong reservations of the *Sierra* about the adequacy of its preparation. At a May 3 gathering of the National Directorate held in the *Sierra* Maestra, which Guevara describes in the chapter "A Decisive Meeting," those who had been centrally responsible for the April 9 action were replaced in their *Llano* responsibilities and reassigned to the *Sierra*. The national leadership was reorganized.

Fidel Castro was elected general secretary of

the July 26 Movement, and was named commander in chief of all armed forces, including the *Llano* militias. The *Sierra* leaders assumed undisputed political guidance of the movement, their authority having been won as a consequence of "their accurate interpretation of events."

The defeat of the April 9 general strike led to some dark days for the rebel forces, as Guevara describes, and opened the door to the final "encircle and annihilate" offensive mounted in the *Sierra* by the Batista regime. On May 25 an invasion column some 10,000-strong was sent into the mountains to wipe out the combatants of the Rebel Army — at that time numbering 300, with 200 usable weapons.



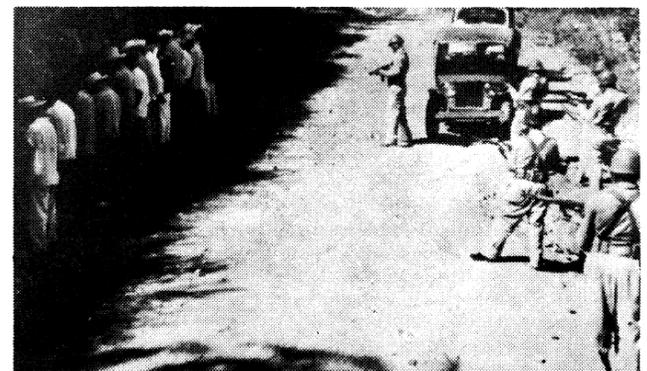
Strike by over 200,000 sugar workers in December 1955 to protest government attempts to lower workers' wages. A number of towns in Las Villas province were virtually taken over by strikers and their supporters.

The Batista army's advance into the *Sierra* did prove to be its final offensive, but it did not succeed in encircling the Rebel Army, let alone annihilating it. With the victory by the revolutionary forces at El Jigüé in July, the tide turned once again, and the rebels' retreat was over. "Once the regiments that assaulted the *Sierra* Maestra had been wiped out, once the front had returned to its normal level, and once our troops had increased their strength and morale," Guevara recounts, "it was decided to begin the march on the central province of Las Villas." Guevara was placed in command of that new front.

The final march toward victory accelerated toward New Year's Day 1959.

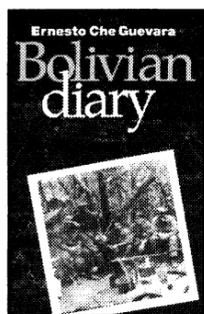
The Rebel Army was a political vanguard organization, built around an expanding cadre that was painstakingly selected and tested in battle. As the revolutionary war advanced, these cadres became more educated and more politically homogeneous in the process.

Out of the eighty-two combatants who participated in the *Granma* expedition, Fidel Castro told Italian journalist Gianni Minà in 1987, "there were many young men who, had they survived the initial expedition, were well suited to become leaders. At least fifteen or twenty out-



Peasant supporters of Rebel Army rounded up. Batista's army routinely rounded up peasants in the Sierra and frequently executed them.

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standing leaders could have emerged from our group — because a man needs both the opportunity and responsibilities to distinguish himself." The accuracy of this judgment, Fidel noted, was confirmed by the fact that "out of those few who survived, several brilliant leaders emerged," men such as Che, Raúl Castro, and Camilo Cienfuegos.¹³

Fidel, like Che, first "looked for men and women who are made of good timber," is the way a former Rebel Army combatant, today a brigadier general in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces, explained it. If the human material is there, "it can be shaped. Leaders who are forged in adverse conditions develop a deep sense of fraternity, of comradeship, knowing that human beings need each other, cannot live as hermits like Robinson Crusoe. In order to withstand the hostile environment of the Sierra, to really be able to fight, one has to be part of a collective effort. In such a context human qualities are born, allowing future leaders to be forged."¹⁴

Throughout the pages of the *Episodes*, we are introduced to hundreds of the men and women whose courage and capacities made possible the Cuban revolution; and we see in turn, how they grew into the fighters and leaders they became.

"Men may contribute to the making of history," Castro tells the people of San Miguel in Santiago de Chile in the speech about Che at the opening of this volume, "but history also makes men."

Among those we meet are some of the legendary heroes and heroines of the Cuban revolution. People like Frank País, leader of the Santiago underground, whose "calm lesson in order and discipline" made such an impression on Che when País visited their camp in the Sierra; Celia Sánchez, organizer of the July 26 Movement's first peasant cells in the Sierra before the *Granma* landing, the person responsible for the urban supply and recruitment network for the Rebel Army, and the first woman to join the Sierra leadership; Camilo Cienfuegos, *Granma* expeditionary and rebel commander whose bravery and good humor made him one of the most beloved of the guerrilla leaders.

Even more centrally, however, we learn how "the revolution has been built on many sincere efforts on the part of simple men." We watch as those who join the Rebel Army are tested, the human material sifted, and those who are made of good timber distinguish themselves.

Che refers to the daily "struggle against the lack of physical, ideological, and moral preparation among the combatants" newly arrived. He describes how many were discharged and sent away after a period of testing. Others, he notes, developed what the combatants called "the hunted look." That look was "incompatible with guerrilla life," Guevara says — a sure sign that someone was getting ready to "shift into third" and risk the death penalty for desertion, rather than continue to face the psychological and physical hardships of life in the mountains.

Che tells the story of one of the many whose departure served to strengthen, not weaken, the fighting morale of the troops: "He had an attack of nerves, there in the solitude of the mountains and the guerrilla camp," Che writes. "He began to shout that he had been promised a camp with abundant food and antiaircraft defenses, but instead the planes were hounding him and he had neither permanent quarters, nor food, nor even water to drink.

"This was more or less the same impression that all new guerrillas had of campaign life," Guevara continues. "Afterward, those who stayed and passed the first tests grew accustomed to dirt, to lack of water, food, shelter, and security, and to a life where the only things one could rely on were a rifle and the cohesion and resistance of the small guerrilla nucleus."

The high level of discipline and fighting morale of the guerrilla fighters was not sustained on the basis of coercion, however. As Guevara explains in the chapter "An Unpleasant Incident," discipline was effective above all as it became a byproduct of the growing political homogeneity and commitment to the social program that was being implemented in practice as the revolution deepened its roots among the peasants of the Sierra. Che writes:

Our revolutionary war was already beginning to acquire new characteristics. The consciousness of the leaders and the combatants was being deepened. We were beginning to feel in our flesh and blood the need for an agrarian reform and for profound and integral changes in the social structure that had to be carried out in order to cleanse the country. But this deepening consciousness among the best and the most numerous part of our fighters provoked clashes with those elements who had joined the struggle solely out of a lust for adventure, or perhaps not just for laurels, but for material gain as well.¹⁵

It is not surprising that among those who not only stayed and fought but rose to become lieutenants, captains, and commanders before the end of 1958, one recognizes the names of a strikingly large percentage of those who have been in the front ranks of leadership of the Cuban revolution for almost forty years.

The power of the events Che recounts comes in great-



GRANMA BOHEMIA
Above, Santiago, July 31, 1957: funeral march of 60,000 for July 26 Movement leader Frank País, gunned down in cold blood by police the day before. Bottom, that same day, U.S. ambassador Earl Smith (foreground right) during visit to Santiago; he is met by women demonstrators calling for an end to U.S. support for Batista.

est measure, however, from the portraits of the ordinary men and women who joined in the revolutionary struggle, risking and often giving everything, including their lives. Men and women like Julio Zenón Acosta, Che's first pupil who, like hundreds of other combatants, was learning to read as part of becoming a Rebel Army cadre; Oniria, the very young woman combatant who demands to know if she too has the right to vote like the fighters who are men; Vaquerito, the head of the courageous and youthful "suicide squad" who is killed in the final days of the battle for Santa Clara; Crucito, the guerrilla bard whose ballads die with him at Pino del Agua; and hundreds more.



Every social movement lives within the channels of its own history and continuity. To mine the richness of the events Guevara describes in *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, the reader is obliged to enter the world of the Rebel Army combatants themselves. We need to learn a few of the often-cited names and places and events that are part of the revolutionary history and traditions of Cuba's century-long struggle to eradicate slavery, win freedom from Spanish colonial rule, and then break the stranglehold of U.S. imperialist domination.

Legendary figures abound: Simón Bolívar, hero of Latin America's struggle for independence from Spain; José Martí, great leader of Cuba's final struggle for independence, killed in battle in 1895; Máximo Gómez, Dominican-born general who was commander in chief of the independence forces in two wars against Spain; Antonio Maceo, the Bronze Titan, as he is known in

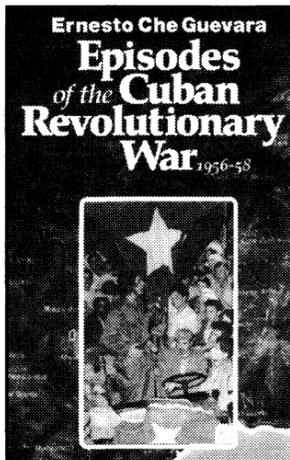
Cuba, who led a military column from eastern to western Cuba in the independence war of 1895-98. Often a simple reference to a name such as these is sufficient to an audience in Cuba to imply an entire political course or military strategy, or to provide a timely warning that needs no further elaboration.

To aid the reader in politically understanding this world of the Cuban revolutionary struggle, extensive footnotes and glossary entries have been provided.

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War is also a book about war, written by a military leader of exceptional ability. In the letter reprinted here repudiating the Miami Pact, Fidel Castro criticizes the signers for their "regrettable underestimation of the military importance of the struggle in Oriente," pointing out that "what is being waged at present in the Sierra Maestra is not guerrilla warfare but a war of columns," and explaining the political significance of that evolution of the rebels' military organization.

Guevara's accounts both give and demand attention to the details of war: to the weapons used; to the sounds of battle; to questions of military tactics and strategy and their interconnections; to the differences between guerrilla warfare and regular warfare; to command structure and order of battle; to military training, discipline, and morale; to the political education of the troops; and much more. The reader learns in almost every battle, for example, what weapons combatants are carrying, and why it is sometimes a life-or-death matter who has a Thompson submachine gun, who a Springfield bolt-action rifle, and who a Garand semiautomatic. We learn how the best soldiers have earned the best rifles avail-

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Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58
Ernesto Che Guevara

Ernesto Che Guevara, Argentine by birth, became a central leader of the Cuban revolution and one of the outstanding communists of the 20th century. This book is his firsthand account of the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba.

With clarity and humor, Guevara describes his own political education. He explains how the struggle transformed the men and women of the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement led by Fidel Castro. And how these combatants forged a political leadership capable of guiding millions of workers and peasants to open the socialist revolution in the Americas.

Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* appears here complete for the first time in English.

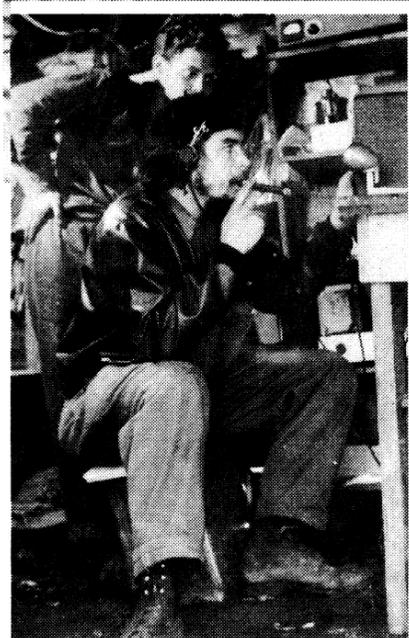
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GRANMA

"Suicide squad" of Guevara's Column 8 — volunteers who took most dangerous assignments. Second from left is unit leader Capt. Roberto Rodríguez (Vaquerito), who died in combat shortly after photo was taken. At left, Guevara communicates by radio with Rebel forces in Las Villas.



COUNCIL OF STATE OFFICE OF HISTORIAL AFFAIRS

able by their conduct in battle before they possessed those rare and precious weapons.

The reader also sees what happens as the fighting morale of a dictatorship's army declines.

Che describes how, in the twilight of the U.S.-backed tyranny, Batista's soldiers became "deaf to every suspicious sound," thereby easing the movement of the Rebel Forces. He recounts how, out of fear of ambush and improved accuracy of the rebel riflemen, the regime's soldiers more and more refused to take the point on patrol.

Numerous maps, battle sketches, and diagrams have been provided, to make it easier to follow the military campaign, along with charts that show the command structure and the branching-off of new columns and fronts as the Rebel Army grew and its zones of operation and political influence expanded.



Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War was written as a series of articles that appeared in the pages of *Verde Olivo* [Olive drab], the weekly publication of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR). The first article, on the battle of Alegría de Pío was published in February 1961; the last of the *Verde Olivo* articles, "A Decisive Meeting," appeared in November 1964.

A few months later, in March 1965, Guevara resigned his leadership responsibilities and posts in Cuba and left,

English followed in 1967, published in Cuba by the Cuban Book Institute.

In addition to the articles that appeared as part of the *Episodes* series, Guevara wrote dozens of other contributions on many subjects for *Verde Olivo* between 1959 and 1964. As head of political education of the Revolutionary Armed Forces during part of that time, he took a special interest in the materials that appeared in the magazine and worked with the editorial leadership responsible for its production.

In Guevara's introduction to the *Verde Olivo* series that appeared in February 1961 along with the first installment, "Alegría de Pío," Guevara explains his intention to make a contribution to the monumental task of recording the history of the insurrectional struggle before an accurate memory of those events, "which already belong to the history of the Americas," dissolves into the past.

By beginning to put down his own reminiscences of the major events in which he participated, Guevara hoped to encourage other survivors of the revolutionary war to contribute in a similar way. They did so, week after week in the pages of *Verde Olivo*.

first for the Congo (today Zaïre) and then, after returning to Cuba for several months, Bolivia.

In Bolivia, Guevara led an eleven-month campaign to begin forging a fighting movement of workers and peasants that could advance the revolution in the Americas. In October 1967 he was wounded in battle, captured, and murdered by the Bolivian Army under Washington's guiding hand. The story of that campaign is told in Guevara's *Bolivian Diary*, also published in English translation by Pathfinder.

The first collection of Che's articles on the Cuban revolutionary war to appear in book form was published in 1963 by Ediciones Unión, the publishing house of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. The first edition in

"I ask only that the narrator be strictly truthful," Guevara charged. "He should not present any inaccuracy in order to clarify his own role, exaggerate it, or claim to have been where he was not."

Che's insistence on historical accuracy, his war on exaggeration and retrospective self-aggrandizement, is a theme that runs throughout the pages of the book, including the letters to other veteran combatants. His October 1963 letter to *Granma* expeditionary Pablo Díaz González, for example, is a gem of Che's humorous and blunt style:

Pablo: I read your article. I must thank you for how well you portray me; too well, I think. Furthermore, it seems you portray yourself pretty well too. The first thing a revolutionary who writes history has to do is stick to the truth like a finger inside a glove. You did that, but it was a boxing glove.

Guevara's concern for accuracy was reflected in the way he worked on preparing these articles. They were not quickly thrown together recollections, as someone might innocently assume from their brevity and transparent clarity; they were carefully prepared and thoroughly researched contributions. Luis Pavón, the editor of *Verde Olivo* during the period the *Episodes* were written, described how Che prepared them.

The first articles by Che, Pavón wrote, "were based fundamentally on his diary, on photographs taken in the Sierra Maestra, and on his own personal memory.



COUNCIL OF STATE OFFICE OF HISTORICAL AFFAIRS

Fidel Castro, on mule, speaks with peasants in the Sierra, early 1958.

"Demanding in everything — and above all with himself — he constantly revised his opinions, compared them with those of other comrades, and thus continued to enrich his narratives in his own mind. Later he dictated them into a tape recorder that his secretary, Comrade Manresa, would transcribe. Che would then edit them over and over again with exemplary rigor."¹⁶

In drafting the articles from the September 1957 battle of Pino del Agua onward, Che had no diary to refer to. Those articles were "based on his recollections and those of other combatants. On various occasions he assembled together, in a meeting room of the Ministry of Industry, combatants who had been participants in the action to be related. Amid jokes and anecdotes, he would start to piece together maps and diagrams, spread out over the table, noting down people's responses.... In this way he reconstructed the battle, submitting to analysis each individual version, correcting them, eliminating exaggerations, until the most exact version was obtained."

All this was done while Guevara was carrying an enormous leadership load of other party, government, and military responsibilities. As a leading public spokesperson for the revolutionary government, he was deeply involved in internationalist work. And throughout these years, based on direct experience in beginning to transform the factory system and economic management in Cuba, Guevara was also putting down on paper the most valuable contributions on the practical connection between economics and politics that the workers movement has had since those of the leadership team forged by Lenin in the course of the Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia.

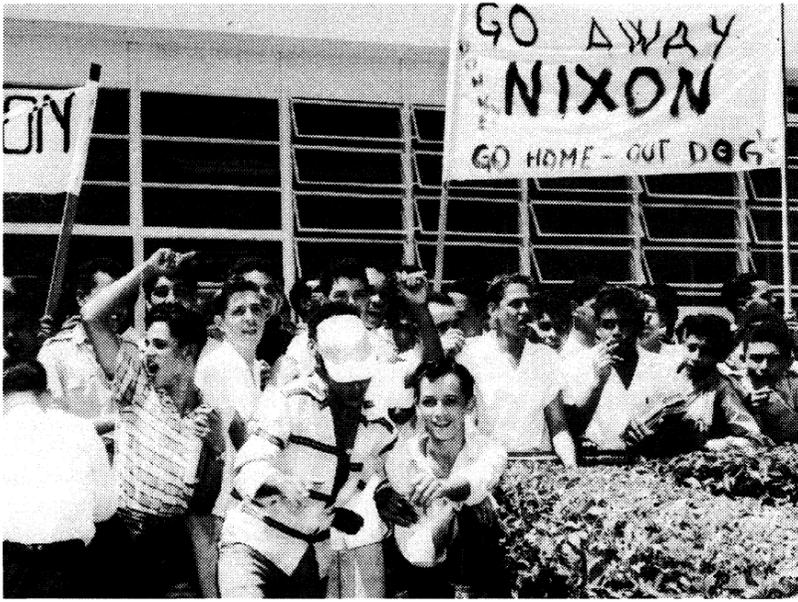
Che, as Pavón recounts, was "president of the National Bank and head of the Department of Instruction (today the Political Directorate) of the Revolutionary Armed Forces; minister of industry and head of the Army Corps of Pinar del Río; Cuba's representative at international events of special importance, etc; in addition to being a tireless student of political economy and of the classics of Marxism, constantly working in agriculture, promoter of scientific and cultural initiatives, etc. In the midst of this activity he continued writing his



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GRANMA

Left: Rebel Army combatants on the march — Haydée Santamaría, followed by Celia Sánchez and Universo Sánchez. Right: Mimeograph machine and typewriter used for producing Rebel Army newspaper *El Cubano Libre*, established by Guevara's column in November 1957. Inset: Members of Guevara's column and peasants at El Hombrito camp at end of 1957. Guevara is sitting with stick; banner reads, "Happy 1958."



As revolutionary war unfolded in 1956-58, anti-imperialist struggles were on rise in other parts of world. Above, students in Caracas, Venezuela, protest Latin America tour of U.S. vice president Richard Nixon, May 1958.

narratives, although the time gap between articles grew longer and longer.”

As Guevara says in his 1961 introductory note, in preparing these episodes, he was not trying to write the history of the war. The legacy he left was something more important: the political history of the maturing of the Rebel Army as a modern revolutionary leadership of the workers and peasants, reflected through the coming of age of Che, as he gains unshakable confidence in the men and women who are capable of remaking the world.

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War is a masterpiece of narrative writing in the Spanish language, some of the beauty of which survives even in English translation. The terrible eloquence of Guevara's description of the rout at Alegría de Pío is hard to forget:

Then everything became a blur, as low-flying planes strafed the field. This only added to the confusion, with scenes ranging from the Dantesque to the grotesque — such as a comrade of considerable corpulence desperately trying to hide behind a single stalk of sugarcane, while in the midst of the din of gunfire another man kept on yelling “Silence!” for no apparent reason.

Che was “a magnificent writer and understandably paid careful attention to the literary structure of his works,” Pavón noted. “But I dare to assert that for him this was secondary. What interested him was *historical truth*. If his writings are astonishing for their style and fluidity, if they are justly categorized by commander Fidel Castro as classics of our language, this is precisely because what motivated him was not merely literary concerns. He wrote not to show his hand as a writer — an art he mastered and loved — but because he



During last months of 1958, Rebel Army liberated town after town in central Las Villas. Top: army locomotive destroyed during battle of Santa Clara, the provincial capital; the army garrison surrendered to Guevara Jan. 1, 1959. Bottom: Members of Guevara's Column 8 following liberation of Fomento, Dec. 18, 1958. From left, Hermes Peña, Mongo Martínez, Che Guevara, Jesús Parra, Sobeida Rodríguez, Víctor Bordón, José Ramón Silva.

had something to say.”

Numerous editions of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* have appeared in both Spanish and English since the original volume in 1963. No two have had exactly the same contents.

Two previous English-language editions, both published in 1968 — one by International Publishers, the other by Monthly Review press — have long been out of print. A special run of the Monthly Review edition appeared under a co-imprint with Merit Publishers, predecessor of Pathfinder Press.

This new and expanded Pathfinder edition is the first in English to include the entire *Verde Olivo* series, as well as several articles written by Guevara for other publications and considerable additional material never before published in English.

Among the ample collection of historical photographs in these pages are a number that appear here in print for the first time.

The last of the *Episodes* Guevara completed for *Verde Olivo* was “A Decisive Meeting.” The narrative “From Batista's Final Offensive to the Battle of Santa Clara” was written well before the *Verde Olivo* series began, in May 1959, for the Brazilian magazine *O Cruzeiro*. Similarly the opening chapter in this edition, “A Revolution Begins,” also appeared in that Brazilian publication in 1959. The chapter “War and the Peasant Population” was originally published in *Lunes de Revolución*, the Monday cultural supplement to the Havana daily *Revolución*, the newspaper of the July 26 Movement. It was later incorporated into Guevara's book *Guerrilla Warfare: A Method*. “The Murdered Puppy,” previously unpublished in English, first appeared in the magazine *Humanismo*.

Articles written for the *Episodes* series that have not before appeared in any English-language edition include “The Battle of Mar Verde,” “Interlude,” and “A Decisive Meeting.” “The Second Battle of Pino del Agua” is published here in full for the first time in English.

The articles have been arranged chronologically, based on the events described. The three “Portraits of Revolutionaries,” which are not part of the narrative sequence of events, have been included here as a separate section.

Two additional sections have been added. One presents reports, letters, and other documents written by Guevara during the course of the Las Villas campaign from September to December 1958. These provide a more detailed account of this decisive chapter of the revolutionary war, which is briefly dealt with in the 1959 article “From Batista's Final Offensive to the Battle of Santa Clara.”

We have also included a number of letters by Guevara related to the events covered in his narrative, written both during and after the revolutionary war.

Other items appearing in English translation for the first time include Guevara's Military Order no. 1 on the agrarian reform in Las Villas and the letters by Che to Enrique Oltuski, Alfredo Peña, the Las Villas Provincial Committee of the July 26 Movement, Ernesto Sábato, and Ezequiel Vieta.

Translation work for this new edition has been done by Pathfinder editor Michael Taber, who did the lion's share of the work on the notes, chronology, glossary,

and index, and gathered much of the information necessary for the maps. Monthly Review press gave permission to make use of its 1968 translation by Victoria Ortiz, which has been carefully checked and substantially revised. A major part of the work has been newly translated.

Book design, as well as the cover, photo sections, and maps, were done by Eric Simpson.

Photographs and reference materials were provided by Lee

Lockwood, who as a young reporter found himself in Havana on January 1, 1959, and captured for all time the faces of the revolution at the moment of victory.

This new and extensively annotated edition of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* could not have been prepared without the generous and enthusiastic collaboration of numerous individuals and institutions in Cuba.

The aid of Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, was indispensable, beginning with the support and encouragement of Editora Política's director, Hugo Chinaea.

Special appreciation, above all, goes to Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, whose long hours of work, attention to detail, and determination to provide accurate information made it possible to assemble the documents, photographs, and historical data incorporated into the notes, glossary, maps, photo captions, and other special features of this edition. María Cristina Zamora and Nora Madan, both members of the Editora Política team preparing a new edition of Guevara's *Episodes* in the Spanish original, assisted in collecting and cross-checking innumerable facts, as did Ella Hernández in the Library of the Central Committee.

Numerous veteran fighters of the Rebel Army and the July 26 Movement, many of them today officers in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, gave generously of their time and their own personal recollections to identify names and faces, locate places on maps, and clarify historical details, large and small.

Brigadier General Harry Villegas, who fought in Guevara's column not only in the revolutionary war, but later in the Congo and Bolivia as well, was unstinting in his aid and support. Colonel Enzo Infante, historian, combatant in the November 30, 1956, uprising in Santiago de Cuba, provincial leader of the July 26 Movement in Oriente and Camaguey and then coordinator of the July 26 Movement in Havana during the closing months of the war, gave many hours of his time to clarify innumerable questions.

Brigadier General Miguel Lorente, Colonel Enrique Dorta, Colonel Miguel Colina, Colonel Raúl Izquierdo, and Brigadier General Julio García Oliveras also gave invaluable help in reviewing maps and photos and clarifying other details. Hermes Caballero, adviser to the executive committee of the Council of Ministers, and veteran of the November 30 Santiago uprising, graciously gave his time and good humor to act as courier and collaborator, as well as providing firsthand knowledge of the work of the July 26 Movement in Santiago de Cuba throughout the revolutionary war.

The extensive selection of historic photographs and battle sketches, which help make the events Guevara writes about come alive, is the product of collaboration from numerous sources. Special appreciation goes to the Council of State Office of Historical Affairs; to Luis Serrano, director, and Marguerita Hernández, head of the archive department, of the Institute of Cuban History; Frank Agüero Gómez, director of the periodical *Granma*, and Delfín Xiqués, director of *Granma*'s photographic archives; and Manuel Martínez, head of the archive department, and archivist Irelia Rivera, of the magazine *Bohemia*.

To all those who helped make this book possible, the

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LEE LOCKWOOD (ABOVE)

Right: Castro reads call for nationwide strike to counter attempted coup aimed at thwarting revolutionary victory. The call, broadcast over Radio Rebelde, was heeded throughout island. Above, Jan. 2, 1959, rally in Havana in support of strike.



INSTITUTE OF CUBAN HISTORY

editors extend their deepest thanks.

The Cuban revolution, Guevara wrote Ernesto Sábato in 1960, "is the most genuine work of improvisation." The war whose episodes are the subject of this book was not the end but the beginning of the greatest historic event of the second half of the twentieth century. The story of that revolution is still being written by the creativity of millions of women and men determined to remake the world and transform themselves in the process. Almost forty years after they confidently set out on that road, the words of Che Guevara at the end of this book remain true. We Cubans have begun the struggle for our territory's total freedom, he wrote:

We know it will not be easy, but we are all aware of the enormous historic responsibility of the July 26 Movement, of the Cuban revolution, of the nation in general, to be an example for all peoples of Latin America, whom we must not disappoint.

Our friends of the indomitable continent can be sure that, if need be, we will struggle no matter what the economic consequence of our acts may be. And if the fight is taken further still, we shall struggle to the last drop of our rebel blood.¹⁷

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War is a book about the most important question facing humanity at the dawn of the twenty-first century. It is a book about forging a revolutionary cadre able — and willing — to lead a mass armed insurrection to power and establish a popular revolutionary government.

December 1995

"As a result of studying capitalist political economy, even before I discovered Marxist literature, I started drawing socialist conclusions and imagining a society whose economy would operate more rationally. I started off as a utopian communist. I didn't come in contact with revolutionary ideas, revolutionary theories, the *Communist Manifesto*, and the first works by Marx, Engels, and Lenin until I was a junior in the university. To be quite frank the simplicity, clarity, and direct manner in which our society are explained in the *Communist Manifesto* had a particularly great impact on me.

"Naturally, before becoming a utopian or a Marxist communist, I was a follower of José Martí.... I always wholeheartedly admired our people's heroic struggles for independence in the past century.... I'm absolutely con-

vinced that if Martí had lived in the same environment as Marx, he would have had the same ideas and acted in more or less the same way. Martí had great respect for Marx.... I think that Martí's thinking contains such great and beautiful things that you can become a Marxist by taking his thought as a starting point. Of course Martí didn't explain why society was divided into classes, though he was a man who always stood at the side of the poor and who bitterly criticized the worst vices of a society of exploiters.

"When I first got hold of the *Communist Manifesto* I found an explanation. In the midst of that forest of events, where it was very difficult to understand phenomena and where everything seemed due to the wickedness of men—their defects, perversity, and immorality—I started to identify other factors that weren't dependent on man, his morals, and his individual attitude. I began to understand human society, the historic process, and the divisions that I saw every day." *Fidel and Religion: Conversations with Frei Betto* (Pathfinder, 1986), pp. 112–13.

Editorial Sudamericana/Planeta, 1987), p. 149.

⁶ Guevara, letter from Mexico to his mother, October 1956, in Guevara Lynch, p. 152.

⁷ See *Episodes* Letters on the Cuban Revolutionary War, "To Ernesto Sábato."

⁸ See *Episodes* chapter "One year of armed struggle."

⁹ See "Military order No. 1" in *Episodes* section "The Las Villas Campaign, September-December 1958."

¹⁰ See "One year of armed struggle."

¹¹ See letter "To Ernesto Sábato."

¹² See "One year of armed struggle."

¹³ Fidel Castro, interview June 28–29, 1987, in Gianni Minà, *Un encuentro con Fidel* (An encounter with Fidel) (Havana: Oficina de Publicaciones del Consejo de Estado, 1987), p. 318.

¹⁴ Interview with Harry Villegas, brigadier general of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, in the *Militant*, December 18, 1995. Villegas was one of the young Rebel Army recruits who distinguished himself in the war. He later accompanied Che to the Congo and Bolivia.

¹⁵ See *Episodes* chapter "An unpleasant incident."

¹⁶ Luis Pavón, in *Días de combate* (Days of combat) (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1970), p. vi.

¹⁷ See *Episodes* chapter "From Batista's final offensive to the battle of Santa Clara."

² The figure is cited from John Gerassi, *The Great Fear: The Reconquest of Latin America by Latin Americans* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 164.

³ Of the twenty-one veterans of the 1953 actions who later joined the eighty-two-man *Granma* expedition, four had been part of the assault on the Bayamo garrison: Antonio "Nico" López, Calixto García, Enrique Cámara, and Antonio Darío López. Guevara had met Calixto García and another Bayamo veteran in Costa Rica before arriving in Guatemala, where he met Nico López and his comrades.

⁴ See *Episodes* section "Men contribute to the making of history, but history also makes men" by Fidel Castro.

⁵ Ernesto Che Guevara, in Ernesto Guevara Lynch, *Aquí va un soldado de América* (Here goes a soldier of the Americas) (Buenos Aires:



WIDE WORLD

Castro addresses residents of town of Colón, Jan. 7, 1959, one day before his Rebel Army forces reached Havana.

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Radioactive red tape — Nine cartons of "mildly" radioactive smoke detector parts were to have been shipped abroad, but the deal fell through. Neither the shipper nor Colorado officials want to



Harry Ring

spend \$40,000 to get it to a waste dump. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Energy Dept. and the EPA have each told them

to try the other guy. The stuff has been sitting in the trucker's parking lot since 1983.

The march of civilization — The new \$70,000 Mercedes-Benz includes a sensitive stereo control that raises the volume when you speed up and lowers it when you slow down. And, neat-est of all, a retractable trunk handle that pops out so your fingers won't get soiled.

Capitalism: It fouls things up — About 37 percent of U.S. lakes and estuaries and 36 percent of rivers are polluted to the point that makes them "not clean enough to meet basic uses," reports the Envi-

ronmental Protection (?) Agency.

'Their' company? — "In today's competitive world, most employees seem to accept the fact that they have to work harder for their company to succeed. But they don't really believe their employers are willing to pay them adequately for that hard work." — *Washington Post*

The silver lining — "Accountants pour over fiscal ledgers at \$325 an hour. Lawyers toil into the night... at \$385 an hour. Financial advisors... labor for the taxpayers at \$150,000 a month." — News report from bankrupt Orange County, where

1,600 municipal workers have been fired and social services chopped.

For the one who has everything — The Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace is offering a variety of stocking-stuffers. For instance, the American Leadership video speeches. Great oratorical moments from speeches by Tricky Dick, Bob Dole, and New Jersey Gov Christine Todd Whitman.

There's a real conspiracy — The children of the late Jim Garrison are suing Warner Brothers and other studios for their method of calculating "net profits." Oliver Stone's film *JFK* was based on

Garrison's book promoting his conspiracy theory on the presidential assassination. The film grossed a reported \$150 million worldwide. But Garrison's estate has yet to receive a dime.

Really — "Unfortunately, bankruptcy is expensive." — Orange County CEO Jan Mittermeier.

Merry Marxmas and a revolutionary New Year — Holiday greetings to all, a warm thanks to clipping contributors, and a reminder: Send clippings to Great Society, Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. 90027.

Peltier abruptly moved to Oklahoma City jail

BY STEVE CRAINE

DES MOINES, Iowa — On December 12 federal prison authorities, without prior warning, removed Leonard Peltier from the Leavenworth, Kansas, penitentiary and put him on a plane to Oklahoma City. He is now being held in a "temporary" prison there.

In a telephone interview, Bill May of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee said that the Native American leader was told he will be transferred eventually to the federal penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia, but has been given no reason for the abrupt action.

Lawyers for Peltier appeared in Oklahoma City December 15 to argue for a delay and to reverse this arbitrary move. Peltier wants to stay closer to his family and defense committee, which is based in

Lawrence, Kansas.

Peltier has been in prison since 1977, serving two life sentences on frame-up charges of killing two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in South Dakota. He was indicted along with other leaders of the American Indian Movement (AIM) after federal agents, South Dakota authorities, and goons from the Pine Ridge tribal council laid siege on Oglala, a small town on the reservation where AIM members were camped. The FBI-organized assault took place in 1975 at the center of the battleground between Native American rights fighters and the U.S. government.

Peltier and two other AIM activists were charged for the deaths of two FBI agents during that siege. No one was charged for the killing of a young Indian. The two other AIM defendants were ac-

quitted. Peltier was eventually arrested in Canada and extradited to the United States. He was tried separately in Fargo, North Dakota, and convicted on the basis of fabricated statements and circumstantial evidence the FBI presented. The judge excluded much evidence the defense tried to present, including the fact that the other two AIM activists had been acquitted.

Federal courts have since rejected three appeals by Peltier, even after ruling that the government withheld critical evidence from the defense and the FBI agents who directed the investigation had engaged in "improper conduct." At the original trial, prosecutors claimed Peltier fired the fatal shots. But during the appeals hearings government lawyers admitted they did not know who fired the shots.

The latest harassment of Peltier came just one day after he had participated in a parole hearing at the Leavenworth penitentiary, where he had been held since 1985. In this two-hour hearing Peltier presented his case for parole.

May said that government representative Lynn Crooks told the parole board, "Somebody murdered those agents. Even if it wasn't him, somebody had to do it."

May said the U.S. Parole Commission's representative indicated he was confused as to the original charges against Peltier.

He encouraged Peltier's defense team to supply him with further documents.

In 1993, the commission had ruled against parole, telling Peltier he would have to serve 15 more years — until 2008 — before he could again be considered for release. The defense committee expects a decision from the Parole Commission within a month.

Two days prior to the hearing, another inmate had attempted to provoke Peltier. Prison authorities put both Peltier and his assailant "in the hole" from Dec. 9 to Dec. 12, when a disciplinary hearing was held, which cleared Peltier of any wrongdoing in the unprovoked attack. Immediately following this hearing, Peltier was handcuffed and whisked off to Oklahoma City.

The Leonard Peltier Defense Committee is calling on supporters of the Native American leader's fight for justice, and all other democratic-minded people, to call or send messages to the Atlanta prison warden to let officials there know they will be held accountable for Peltier's safety.

You can call Warden Willie Scott at (404) 622-6241 or send a fax to him at USP Atlanta, (404) 331-2137.

Copies of messages can be sent to the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, Box 583, Lawrence, Kansas 66044; Tel: (913) 842-5774; Fax (913) 842-5796.

Rally for abortion rights

BY JENNIFER BANATHY AND MARY NELL BOCKMAN

BOSTON — Activists for women's rights have called a march and rally to defend abortion rights on Saturday, December 30. This will mark the one-year anniversary of the violent attack on two women's health clinics in Brookline, Massachusetts. Clinic workers Shannon Lowney and Leann Nichols were murdered and five others wounded in those attacks. John Salvi, the man charged with the killings, is a right-wing opponent of abortion rights. His trial is scheduled to begin Feb. 5, 1996.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) in Massachusetts is sponsoring the event. The flyer for the action states that protesters will demand "an end to attacks and harassment that occur daily to women who exercise their right to abortion and to those providing health-care services. We demand full prosecution of those responsible for these crimes and justice for all those who are on the front line defending a woman's right to choose."

Speakers at the rally will include David Gunn, Jr., son of Dr. David Gunn, an abortion provider murdered in Pensacola, Florida, in 1993; author and poet Marge Piercy; Kate DeSmet, a striking member of the Detroit Newspaper Guild; abortion rights leader Ellen Convisser; Domenic Bozzotto, president of Hotel Workers Union Local 26; and poet Rosario Morales.

Within hours of the shootings on Dec. 30, 1994, hundreds of abortion rights supporters gathered outside the clinics to protest. The following day, 2,000 demonstrated at the state capitol and a memorial service for Lowney and Nichols was attended by more than 1,000 people. On January 22, the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, 2,500 turned out for a march and rally in defense of abortion rights. Thousands more joined protest actions in Pensacola, New York, Miami, Norfolk, San Francisco, and many other cities.

The Brookline clinics have continued to be targeted by antiabortion rightists with visible monthly pickets. Nearly 100 abortion rights supporters turned out in front of the clinics in November, outnumbering the rightists for the first time in months.

Building for the upcoming action is going well. Supporters of a woman's right to control her body have already distributed thousands of leaflets in shopping areas, on campuses, and at social and political events. A 12,000-piece mailing went out along with a letter seeking endorsements. Volunteers are doing phone banking three nights per week from the NOW office. Leafleting teams are meeting on Saturday and Sunday mornings to hit major shopping areas around Boston.

Solidarity actions on December 30 are being planned in Pensacola, Washington, New York, and San Francisco.

After the Boston demonstration, the Planned Parenthood and Pre-Term clinics, the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, and the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights are holding a memorial service at Temple Ohabei Shalom, 1187 Beacon Street, in Brookline with a candlelight walk to the clinics to follow. March organizers are urging participants to attend the service.

For more information on the action or to volunteer to help build it call the Massachusetts NOW office at (617) 782-4059.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



Expressing years of hatred for U.S. occupation of their island, some 3,000 Okinawans attempted to storm the U.S. military base at Naha, Okinawa, early in the morning of Dec. 20.

The protest began at 1 a.m., "when a car driven by an American serviceman struck and injured an Okinawan outside the air base," UPI reported.

According to AP, the Okinawans "hurled gasoline bombs, empty bottles and stones at United States military personnel and Okinawan policemen and damaged 60 American vehicles...."

"Police sources said 16 Okinawans and a number of American servicemen had been injured. About 800 U.S. troops and military policemen fired warning shots and scores of tear gas shells to disperse the rioters. They arrested at least 50 Okinawans during the four-hour outburst."

At Misato, the previous day, about 2,600 Okinawans participated in a demonstration demanding immediate and complete withdrawal of U.S. nerve gas stored on the island. Washington has stated its intentions of removing the nerve gas, but has not announced satisfactory safety guarantees for transmittal, the Okinawan demonstrators said.

The U.S. military complex on Okinawa constitutes the largest air base in the world. It is presently a key link of U.S. imperialism's global police network.

In addition to stockpiling nerve gases and other forms of chemical warfare, the Pentagon also maintains nuclear-armed

"Strategic Air Command" bombers at Okinawa. The base is a staging area for the B-52 fights that daily and nightly pound Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.



January 12, 1946

PARIS, France, Dec. 13 — Despite inadequate transportation, some 100,000 striking civil service workers demonstrated yesterday at the Velodrome d'Hiver against Plevin, Minister of Finance.

"We want our 1,000 francs!" shouted the demonstrators. "Down with Plevin!"

This demonstration is a highly significant indication of the militant mood of the French workers. It is the first strike of the civil service employees in years. The last demonstration occurred February 12, 1934, when these workers protested against the rising danger of fascism. But not even that demonstration was comparable in size to the present one.

If the de Gaulle government threatens the strikers with disciplinary reprisals, declared Jean Neumeyer, head of the Federation des Fonctionnaires (Federation of Civil Service Employees), a general strike will be called. Such a strike will have the approval of the CGT (General Federation of Labor).

The day before the huge demonstration, Andre Malraux, de Gaulle's Minister of Information, declared that "the government will not discuss under the strikers' threat." The day after the demonstration, however, a placard signed by the whole personnel under Malraux was posted at the entry of his Ministry threatening a general strike if the General Federation of Labor gives the word.

MARCH AND RALLY IN BOSTON TO DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS Saturday, December 30

March on the first anniversary of the murders of clinic workers Shannon Lowney and Leann Nichols and the wounding of five others by right-wing activist John Salvi. March to demand an end to the attacks and harassment of patients at clinics across the country, and full prosecution of Salvi, whose trial is scheduled to begin February 5, 1996.

Assemble at 12:30 p.m. Boylston and Tremont Street

March: 1:00 p.m.

Rally: 2:00 p.m.

Arlington Street Church 351 Boylston Street.

Speakers: David Gunn Jr., whose father, Dr. David Gunn, was killed outside a clinic in Florida; author Marge Piercy; poet Rosario Morales and others.

Sponsored by National Organization for Women. For more information, call (617) 782-9183.

Textile blast: pure boss greed

The fire that tore through the Malden Mills textile plant in Massachusetts and the response of the factory's owners, exposes the ugly face of capitalism. While the big-business press tries to give the impression that this was some sort of natural disaster that the company and employees are suffering through together, the testimony of workers in the plant makes clear that the December 11 explosion and fire was just one more case of a boss's criminal negligence and disregard for the lives of working people.

The company had been cited in the past for inadequate emergency plans, and faulty fire detection and suppression systems. There had been other serious fires in recent years, including in the area that blew up December 11. Workers often complained of inadequate ventilation, while being kept in the dark about what dangerous chemicals were being used. The boss put his precious profits first, and safety last.

Many workers barely escaped with their lives as supervisors ordered operators to stand by their machines as the fire spread. Yet, the owner of this death trap mill is now being hailed as a hero by the capitalist politicians and media — with some union officials joining the chorus — for promising to reopen the plant and agreeing to pay one month's wages to the 1,400 workers left jobless.

The state's gesture of "compassion" has been to waive the waiting period for workers to collect unemployment compensation. But these public relations gestures — aimed primarily at muting any calls for a thorough investigation into the fire — can't hide the fact that the company was running an unsafe plant for years and the fire was an accident waiting to happen.

There is nothing unusual about what happened at Malden Mills. As a norm, bosses plead poverty or "undue burden" to avoid taking serious safety measures. Government agencies that are supposed to watch for violations are often woefully understaffed or complicit with the bosses. The owners pressure workers to accept dangerous conditions out of fear of unemployment. According to big-business mouthpieces like the *Boston Globe*, we should feel "lucky" to have the job at all.

As competition deepens among the employers in this period of economic depression, they will cut more corners on safety at the same time that they drive to slash workers' wages and other conditions. The bosses will continue to press this war against working people here as they drive to war against the working class in Yugoslavia, and elsewhere around the world.

Working people must take an uncompromising stance against the greedy Malden Mills bosses and all other employers who act with a similar disregard for human life. It is the working-class movement above all that cares about safe job conditions — a life and death question.

Only workers and our unions have the interest and ability to wage a real fight for safe and healthy working conditions, along with jobs for all.

The labor movement should demand:

- A full, public investigation of the disaster at Malden Mills and criminal charges against those responsible.
- No loss of income for mill employees. Unemployment compensation at union scale wages for as long as the workers are out of a job.
- Full medical coverage for all those injured and out of work. The company must pay for the results of its actions.

Sanctions against Nigeria? No

A month ago, British premier John Major and other capitalist politicians floated proposals for economic and trade sanctions against Nigeria, after the military regime there executed nine political activists. Recently, several members of the U.S. Congress have joined the chorus. South African president Nelson Mandela has also called for an oil ban.

Many activists around the world, rightfully organizing picket lines to boycott Shell Oil — the huge imperialist monopoly in the most populous African country — have echoed such demands. We disagree. Asking Major and Clinton to impose sanctions on Nigeria is like trusting Dracula to head up the blood bank.

Class-struggle-minded workers and youth should reject any approach that disarms fighters by relying on the imperialists to deliver salvation. London, in particular, and other capitalist powers are concerned about instability that threatens the profits of Shell Oil — not about a lack of democracy in Nigeria. There is a long and bloody record on this front.

Nigeria was a direct colony of the British crown for a century (1861-1962). Shell Oil has been one of the main companies sucking the wealth produced by the workers there into its coffers abroad. London has repeatedly intervened in conflicts in Nigeria when its interests were threatened, often backing a series of dictators. This has been the case from the bloody assaults on the anticolonial movement in the 1940s; to the 1968-70 Biafra war, when a secessionist movement was brutally suppressed with British military officers directing operations; and backing the Abacha regime during the oil workers strike in 1994.

Communists and other class-conscious workers and youth in imperialist countries generally oppose trade and other sanctions, recognizing that they are part of the capitalist rulers' economic and military pressures against their rivals, or preparation for armed aggression against colonial peoples and governments that are not subservient enough to finance capital, or both. One such case is the U.S.-led sanctions against Iraq.

Exceptions to this general course are rare. In response to the call by the leadership of the African National Congress, a mass revolutionary democratic movement, for example, the *Militant* for many years joined millions of others around the world in campaigning actively for trade and other international sanctions against South Africa.

We did so to a large degree because the ANC leadership explained that sanctions would serve as a tool in the struggle to topple the racist regime. In this case, the ANC's call was correct from the standpoint of the strategic line of march of the working class worldwide. We joined that campaign because the leadership of the

democratic movement made a convincing case that the sanctions could be used to strengthen the fight of the toilers *themselves* in their fight to overthrow the white racist regime not because of the heinous nature of apartheid.

The only other such exception in recent history was the call for sanctions against Haiti for a brief period of time. In September 1991, the elected government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown in a military coup.

While there was no revolutionary democratic leadership in Haiti that advanced the interests of the toilers, such as the ANC leadership in South Africa, all reports from inside Haiti at that time indicated that the overwhelming majority of politically conscious workers and peasants supported international trade sanctions as a weapon to strengthen their hand in opposing the military regime. In doing so, they took the moral high ground, since the effects of the embargo were felt directly by themselves and other toilers in Haiti.

In the immediate aftermath of the coup large mobilizations took place in Haiti, as well as the United States and Canada, demanding restoration of the elected government, reinforcement of the sanctions, opposition to military intervention, and asylum for Haitian refugees. The call for sanctions at that juncture was again a tool in the hand of the toilers *themselves* in their struggle to topple the dictatorship.

This changed quickly in the next two years, however, as Haitian toilers were pushed back. Bourgeois figures such as Aristide disarmed Haitian working people by relying on hoped-for salvation by the U.S. government and by actively opposing efforts at independent organization and resistance by Haitian workers, peasants, and youth. The earlier overwhelming support for sanctions abated. By 1993, in fact, Washington began using the embargo to prepare for its military invasion of the island next year. At that point the *Militant* changed its position, and opposed sanctions.

There is not a demand for sanctions coming from within a mass democratic movement in Nigeria today. Calls for an oil ban or other such measures now can only throw fighters into the arms of the imperialist exploiters.

Actions like the general strike of oil workers in 1994 are examples of the "fires of resistance" the masses in Nigeria are capable of igniting. Battles like those and the struggles of the Ogoni people will open the space to organize and forge a leadership that can chart a course forward in the struggle against both military rule and imperialist domination. Working people can aid that struggle by joining protests against Shell Oil and against the regime, demanding an end to the repression of Ogoni activists and others fighting for their rights in Nigeria.

Textile mill fire

Continued from front page

over a century old, were razed. Thirty workers were hospitalized with serious injuries, a dozen of whom were in critical condition one week after the blaze.

The fire burned for over eight days, producing streams of acrid smoke that could be seen as far away as Merrimac to the east, and reaching such intense temperatures that firefighters described flames shooting 50 feet horizontally from the buildings and 150 feet into the sky. "It was like standing at the gates of hell," Methuen fire chief Kenneth Bourassa told the local newspaper.

In the end 2,400 people were left jobless, 1,400 of them members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). The plant had a full production shift of 700 working at the time of the fire.

Moreno Báez, a union worker from the woven division, had left work an hour before the explosion. He got a call from a friend and went to offer help to fellow workers. Within 15 minutes, he said, the fire spread to all four production buildings. "You could hear explosions all night long," Báez stated, as propane gas tanks and chemicals continued to burn.

The fire began in the flock division, where a synthetic upholstery fabric was produced. Workers report that a boiler, used in the production of the material, exploded. This was the same area where a similar explosion in 1993 left six workers hospitalized from burns and smoke inhalation. Nothing had been changed in the way production was organized after that incident. Malden Mills has been inspected by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 13 times since 1980. Five of the investigations resulted in \$38,000 in fines.

"Working in flock is like working in the mines. You felt like you were in a cave when you were in there." This is how Báez described the conditions. "Just this spring three people in less than six months died of heart attacks in flock," he said. Fabric was produced there by using a chemical with heat and electromagnetic process to glue tiny fiber particles to a cloth backing.

Workers tell the truth

While the company and owner Aaron Feuerstein are being painted as heroes in the media for their "compassion" following the fire, workers from the mill described what they saw happen.

"My friend Mario was working in one of the buildings when the explosion happened," said Báez. "He told me his supervisor wouldn't let anyone leave the building when the alarms went off — even though the fumes were coming in and tears were in people's eyes. She told them to keep working, the fire was in another building."

Julio Soto, a worker from the flock division, described carrying a co-worker out and asking him who he was, only to learn it was Jerry, with whom he had worked for over four years in the mill. "We put the bodies in the guard shack and then ran in for more. It was co-workers who ensured that everyone was accounted for."

"Aaron Feuerstein is being portrayed as a hero in the newspapers. But we have had safety problems for a long time. We knew something like this would happen — it was just a matter of time," explained Willie Sanabria, who was working in flock at the time of the explosion.

The much-publicized "heroic deeds" of the company amount to no more than the promise of paying 30 days' wages and a pledge to rebuild the mill.

Politicians rolled in for a day to shine in the spotlight with pledges to get state and federal aid for the company. "If there's one employer we are not going to let fail, it's this one," said Massachusetts governor William Weld. Senators Edward Kennedy and John Kerry showed up the day after the explosion.

A December 16 *Boston Globe* editorial, titled "Methuen's good fortune," cooed, "The truth is that as a group, the employees of Malden Mills are lucky, not unlucky. It is the thousands of workers whose employers, current and erstwhile, do not possess the foresight and social courage of an Aaron Feuerstein who need our support."

Large donations have poured into the company. The biggest one is \$100,000 from UNITE. The second, for \$50,000, is from the Bank of Boston. The only meetings called so far after the fire have been organized by the company. Some 80 people were evacuated from their homes following the fire. Area residents were allowed back after the Environmental Protection Agency completed air and water tests for cyanide, chlorine gas, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide benzene toluene, solvents, and other chemicals used in production.

"It is because of the working-class neighborhood that surrounds the plant that they say it's OK to go back to the houses," Báez stated. "These are working people who are mostly immigrants. They don't know they can raise their voice." Lawrence is a city of immigrant workers, many from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, and faces one of the highest unemployment rates in the state, officially 10 percent.

On December 15 Feuerstein announced at a meeting at a local high school that he would keep paying workers their wages for 30 days and everyone would get their \$275 "Christmas bonus." Never mind that this bonus was owed to workers who accepted a contract 10 days earlier in lieu of a raise for 1996. Representatives from the union stood with Feuerstein applauding the promise of reopening and saying nothing about the ongoing safety problems workers have faced for years.

Báez stated, "There is a cover-up going on. Safety is the issue, not only jobs."

Karen Ray worked at Malden Mills for three years.

More activities set to defend Abu-Jamal

BY HATTIE McCUTCHEON

PHILADELPHIA — The fight to win a new trial for internationally known Pennsylvania death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal became more focused as a result of a successful conference held here December 8-9. International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal hosted the two-day event. The weekend began with a town meeting against the death penalty attended by more than 100 people, followed by the conference.

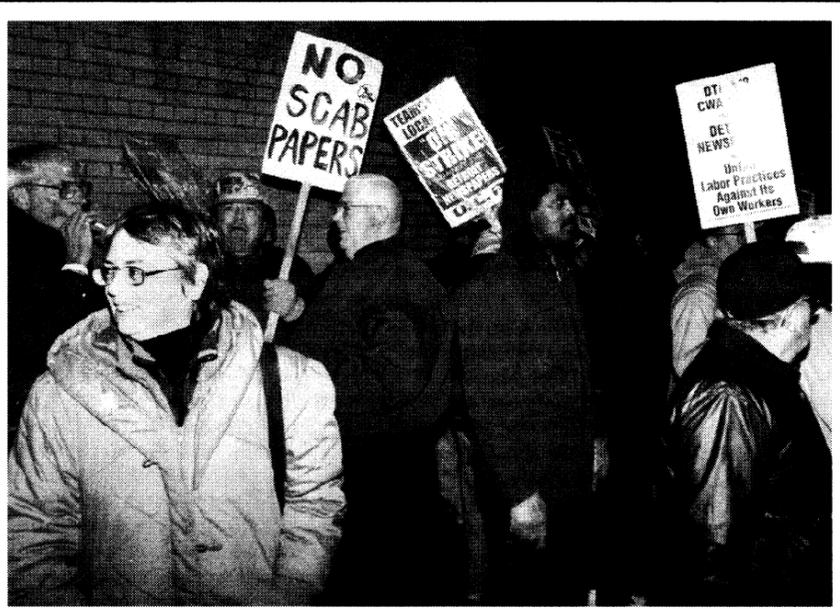
The 125 conference participants voted to build a series of activities geared toward educating and mobilizing new and broader layers of people in the United States and around the world to free Abu-Jamal.

Leonard Weinglass, Abu-Jamal's attorney, gave a legal update. He explained the defense has a deadline of Jan. 10, 1996, to file an official brief requesting that Abu-Jamal be granted a new trial. Weinglass said he has received many requests from around the world to speak on the case.

"Despite widespread support, it is important for Mumia supporters to have a sober view of the whole picture," he said.

"The state is moving more rapidly to execute prisoners." Post-Conviction Relief Appeal (PCRA) hearings, Weinglass noted, generally take years before completion in cases involving capital punishment. But Abu-Jamal's PCRA hearing was completed within a couple months. The attorney said he expects Jamal's case will be heard in the federal court reviewing death penalty appeals sometime in 1997. "Those seeking Mr. Abu-Jamal's execution hope that over this stretch of time, through 1996 to 1997, public support will diminish," Weinglass said. "The governor can sign a new warrant of execution and hope that support can not be rebuilt."

Abu-Jamal, an African-American journalist and political activist, was framed up by the cops for the killing of police officer Daniel Faulkner. He was convicted based on false police reports and given the death penalty in 1982. Last August, an international protest campaign forced Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the first trial, to grant a stay of execution. The next month, however, Sabo denied a new trial despite new evidence that has surfaced



Militant/John Sarge

Picket outside Detroit News editorial offices early in the morning December 1. The 2,500 strikers at the News and Free Press continue to organize activities to win support in their struggle to defeat the bosses' union busting attempts.

Blacks gunned down by racists

BY JIM ROGERS AND CHRIS CULBRETH

FAYETTEVILLE, North Carolina— In the early morning hours of December 7, Michael James, 36, and Jackie Burden, 27 — both Black — were gunned down in a city street here in what appears to be a racist shooting.

Two soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division of the U.S. Army, stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, have been charged with the execution-style murders. They are both white. According to press reports, a third defendant told police that Pvt. James Burmeister, 20, and Pvt. Malcolm Wright Jr., 21, went downtown "to mess with Blacks and drug dealers."

When police searched Burmeister's room, they allegedly found a Nazi flag, white supremacist literature, and a 9 mm pistol that they say was used for the shoot-

ing. According to a fellow soldier, Burmeister had earlier displayed the flag above his bed when he lived in the Ft. Bragg barracks.

The Fayetteville *Observer Times* and other papers reported that the local NAACP chapter has launched an investigation into possible racist and ultrarightist activity in military bases, particularly at Ft. Bragg. The FBI and local police are using the incident to conduct a sweeping investigation among the armed forces.

During a visit here December 16, most residents interviewed, including several in the military, said they had no doubt the murders were a racist act. The next day the local Friendship Baptist Church hosted a "reconciliation service," just a block from Campbell Terrace, a predominantly Black apartment complex where the killings occurred.

since the conviction. Abu-Jamal appealed the ruling.

In workshops that followed the presentation by Weinglass, and during informal discussions, activists discussed the need to build the protest movement to maximize the possibilities of winning Abu-Jamal's freedom. Pam Africa, one of the central leaders of International Concerned Family and Friends, said the struggle can eventually be won with more actions in the streets.

Activists at the conference decided as one of their central tasks to launch a campaign to gather 1 million letters demanding a new trial for the framed-up journalist. Initiated by the New York defense coalition, the effort has won the support of the Black Congressional Caucus and the NAACP.

In such a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, Congressman Ron Dellums requests that "The Civil Rights Division conduct an investigation into Mumia Abu-Jamal's original and current appeal process for civil rights violations" and guarantee that the activist is not executed while this investigation is being conducted.

Project coordinator Susan Ross stated, "We want to wage a million-letter campaign—a million letters for Mumia — to

culminate in a dramatic presentation to the Justice Department in Washington, D.C., May 19-20."

May 19 coincides with the birthday anniversary of Malcolm X. The group will organize a national march in Washington that day and deliver the letters the next.

"To be successful, everyone must sign on — activists, clergy, politicians, co-workers, neighbors, family, friends, and organizations," Ross said. To obtain materials for this campaign, Ross urged activists to contact the MLM Campaign, c/o The Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, P.O. Box 650, New York, NY 10009. Tel: (212) 330-8029 or 281-4973.

The conference decided to promote a number of other actions. They include a series of student activities for Abu-Jamal on February 7; hearings in Philadelphia February 20-22 by the International Commission on the Death Penalty featuring this case; a March 2-3 regional student educational conference, also in Philadelphia; and local events on April 4 to build for the May 19 national march on Washington.

For more information and to send contributions to cover the legal and publicity costs, contact the International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal at (215) 476-8812.

LETTERS

Miners fight for jobs

In an article submitted to the *Militant* in early September, I pointed to the discussion taking place among area miners about the shutdown of two Consolidation Coal Co. mines. Also pointed to was the need for labor to fight for jobs. Labor-management participation schemes were pointed to as a step away from the road of working-class solidarity.

The coal bosses have driven these lessons home with yet another mine shutdown. Peabody's Tygart River Mine (formerly Martinka) closed December 5, wiping out 359 more mining jobs. With the two Consol closings mentioned in the previous article, the ranks of working miners in District 31 have been sliced by more than 600 in the last several months.

Peabody and the UMWA negotiated a concession contract last year to keep the mine open. A new period of labor-management cooperation was pointed to by one UMWA official in District 31 when he said, "Peabody's management has been willing to sit down with the union and work out ways to keep mines open and increase employment, unlike Consol, which recently announced that they were going to shut down three mines without even thinking to pick up the phone to talk to us about it."

But this cooperation was strictly one way. After the closing, another UMWA spokesperson pointed out that Peabody has fol-

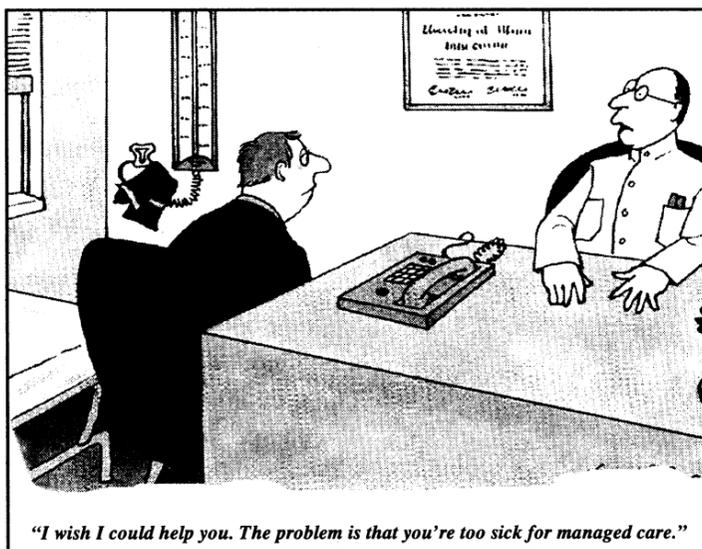
lowed the Consol script. "This was obviously not only unexpected news but very bad news." There are no guarantees against such "bad news." The capitalist bosses make only one guarantee — that they will always defend their profits at our expense. But by promoting international working-class solidarity we can prepare for the decisive battles as foretold by today's events.

Dave Salner
Morgantown, West Virginia

Keep up good work

Enclosed is a \$50.00 contribution to the *Militant* fund drive. Since the *Militant* is the only newspaper that has accurately predicted the economic crisis that we are currently experiencing, this contribution is well deserved. Today, it is more difficult to find a decent paying job than it has been in my lifetime. Not only are jobs hard to find, but the cost of education is astronomical. If that weren't enough, graduates from college are scrambling for jobs that have no health insurance coverage. Anyone who has followed the *Militant* is not surprised at this reality. While I applaud this effort and encourage my co-workers to read the *Militant*, I wonder if there might be areas where the paper might be improved.

An example of what I am saying comes from the last election campaign. The central demands of the candidates that the *Militant* supported come from the Action Program. I feel that this program



"I wish I could help you. The problem is that you're too sick for managed care."

needs to be expanded to include where the resources would come from to pay for the program. Most workers like the demands of the Action Program, but feel that it is pie in the sky. By looking at how capitalism works it becomes clear that there are vast resources that are virtually wasted.

In any event, keep up the good work.

Steve Halpern
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Blacklisting at Yale

On December 7, graduate student teachers at Yale University voted to withhold grades until the administration agreed to enter into good faith negotiations. The response of both faculty and the ad-

ministration has been one of intimidation, threats of academic reprisals and expulsion. One tenured faculty member responded with telling his teaching assistant that he would do everything in his power to get her expelled.

A famous, "radical" post-colonial tenured critic in the English department called in her TAs and threatened them with everything possible until a TA became hysterical. The dean of Yale college actually wrote a blacklisting letter because his graduate student was merely a member, before she even made a decision to strike.

Another famous historian, who has written a number of books on liberalism and the western tradition, equated striking TAs with

Rabin's killers and told his TA that he can not work with her as an advisor. She came to this university to work with him. Another tenured professor told his striking TA that she would refuse to write him a letter of recommendation if he participated in the strike. We accept having our pay docked if we strike, but being blacklisted from the academy is unacceptable.

Please, fax or e-mail the president of Yale, Richard Levin. Fax if at all possible. Tell him you have heard what is going on. Tell him to issue a statement that the right to organize will be respected at Yale. Tell him that this kind of behavior is unacceptable at such a respected and renowned university. Tell him you would not recommend graduate students apply here and that it is shameful. Also, if you will, urge him to sit down in good faith negotiations with TAs so as to avoid a full strike in the spring. Please send this message to all concerned. Levin's fax number is 203-432-7105. His e-mail is Ricard.Levin@yale.edu Also, please cc a copy to me at the Yale Daily News at 203-432-7424 (fax) or ydn@minerva.cis.yale.edu
Greg Grandin
Dept. of History, Yale University

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.

Protests persist against Nigeria dictators

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Several thousand students rallied on the campus of Obefemi Awolowo University in the Nigerian city of Ile Ife December 5. They were protesting the November 10 hanging of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others by the military regime of that country. "Down with the murderers of Ken!" and "No to the military dictatorship!" the students chanted. "The blood of Ken Saro-Wiwa will water the tree of freedom in Nigeria," opposition leader Gani Fawehinmi told the crowd.

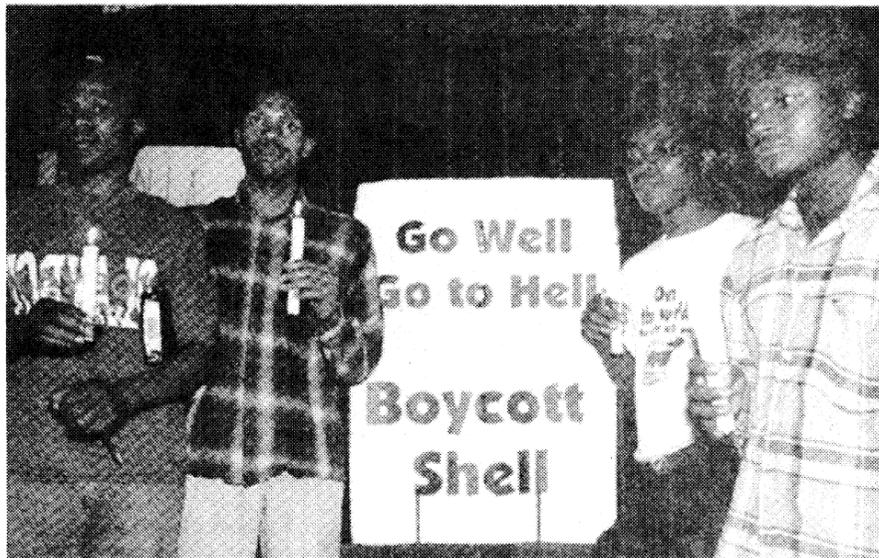
The rally, which was preceded by several smaller ones on that campus, also called for an end to military rule. Nigeria's military dictator, Sani Abacha, has staged pro-government rallies in nearly 30 cities since the hangings and ordered a general clampdown on actions against his regime.

"If we express our anger, the government will tell the soldiers to kill us," a teacher in the village of Bera told the *Washington Post*. Residents in Port Harcourt, where Saro-Wiwa was killed, said that Nigerian troops confiscated newspapers containing stories about the executions and public meetings are banned. The regime has arrested ministers accused of supporting the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), of which Saro-Wiwa was a central leader.

MOSOP was formed to struggle for the rights of the Ogoni people, one of the national minorities who live in the Niger delta region. Saro-Wiwa led MOSOP in a battle for compensation from the Royal-Dutch Shell Corp. for environmental damage in the oil-rich region known as Ogoniland. That fight forced Shell to abandon Ogoniland in 1993 and pushed the regime to raise compensation rates for oil-producing areas from 3 percent to 13 percent.

Critics of the military government assert that Abacha wanted Saro-Wiwa and the others silenced, so they could not hamper projects by the oil companies around Rivers state. That area produces more than 60 percent of Nigeria's oil, which accounts for 80 percent of the country's revenue. According to the November 21 New York *Village Voice*, Shell, concerned about growing protests by Ogonis against its polluting plants, reportedly helped frame Saro-Wiwa for the 1994 killings of four pro-government Ogoni chiefs.

Eyewitnesses say Saro-Wiwa's grisly execution was filmed by a video cameraman while government officials and



South Africans hold vigil at Nigerian High Commission in Pretoria, Nov. 11-12.

prison authorities watched. "Ken was struggling and thrashing his arms around," one eyewitness told *Newsweek*. "It took him 20 minutes to die." The tape was sent to Abacha as proof of Saro-Wiwa's death.

The executions prompted strong protests from around the world. Thousands of students and others have continued to organize pickets at Shell oil stations, calling for a boycott of the company until it leaves Nigeria, and other actions.

Calls for sanctions

In November, South African president Nelson Mandela called for a boycott of Nigeria's oil exports. "In my view we should use the strongest method to show

our disgust and resentment at what [Abacha] has done," Mandela told the *Guardian Weekly* in an interview published Dec. 3. "We are dealing with an illegitimate, barbaric, arrogant military dictatorship which has murdered activists, using a kangaroo court and false evidence."

Mandela warned Shell to "suspend" its \$3.7 billion liquefied natural gas project in Nigeria or face action against Shell in South Africa. Mandela also said that democratic forces were not waging a strong campaign against the dictatorship within the country. "It is not good enough for Nigerian leaders to shout from abroad and not ensure that the fires of resistance are burning inside Nigeria," he said.

Curtis supporters press efforts to win release

BY BILL KALMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa — A number of victory celebrations were held in several U.S. cities in mid-December marking the recent Iowa parole board decision to release Mark Curtis from prison.

Curtis, a former member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union at the Monfort plant in Des Moines and a militant in the Socialist Workers Party, was framed up by the police on charges of rape and burglary in 1988.

After a more than seven-year fight, the international defense effort finally won

Curtis's release effective December 7. He remains behind bars while his application to be paroled to Illinois, where his wife resides, is being processed.

People newly won to the Curtis case joined with longtime supporters to celebrate this victory in meetings in San Francisco; Washington D.C.; Houston; Birmingham, Alabama; Chicago; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Philadelphia.

In Des Moines, the Mark Curtis Defense Committee organized a successful meeting December 17 at the Best Western Starlight Village. One of the speakers, Juan Estrada Pérez, a vice president of UFCW Local 1149 in Perry, Iowa, told a television reporter why he was there. "It's important for workers around the world to unite. I hope this fight will not end until Mark Curtis is finally freed."

Don Barrell, a former Firestone striker and member of United Steelworkers of America Local 310, told the audience, "I always thought Mark was innocent. I'm also a rescue worker, and it did not seem like the physical evidence was there for conviction." Daniel Aguilar, a Nicaraguan worker at the Monfort plant here, and David Ochoa of the League of Mayan In-

On December 11, leaders of the 12-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) met in Pretoria, South Africa. SADC leaders decided not to take any actions against the Nigerian regime at that meeting. "We have refrained from taking any new initiatives as we are aware that the international community in general is addressing the issue," said Botswanan president Ketumile Masire, chairman of the SADC.

Asked after that meeting if he was still pursuing sanctions against Nigeria, Mandela said, "All possible options are not excluded... any such options must be through the [Commonwealth] structure."

The U.S. government, the European Union, and some African countries have put an arms embargo on Nigeria and recalled their ambassadors. The regime has been suspended from the Commonwealth. Almost half of Nigeria's oil exports are sold to U.S.-based companies, while those in Europe purchase 40 percent.

Randall Robinson, president of TransAfrica, and other Black political figures, including members of the Congressional Black Caucus, have called on the Clinton administration to impose economic sanctions against Nigeria, ban new investments in the country, and freeze international assets held by the military rulers.

On December 12, a Nigerian court delayed the trial of 19 youths who were arrested on charges of complicity in the murders of the four Ogoni chiefs. Human rights lawyer Fawehinmi had filed a suit on behalf of the young men, who are members of MOSOP. They face the same tribunal that convicted Saro-Wiwa.

Judge Babatunde Belgore adjourned hearing the suit until Feb. 12, 1996.

Low turnout in Haitian elections

BY SETH GALINSKY

MIAMI — With little enthusiasm, Haitians voted for a new president December 17. Less than 25 percent of Haiti's 3.7 million voters turned out for the contest.

"We are voting all the time. But we haven't found any solution to our problems," said Vigier Louis, a 24-year-old student in St. Marc. "Personally, I'm tired of voting."

Washington had pressured Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to proceed with the election. The Clinton administration sunk \$10 million into the election process. But even U.S. officials had to admit that many Haitians felt Aristide should stay in power three more years to make up for the time he was in exile after a September 1991 coup.

According to the *Miami Herald*, there were more posters calling for "three more years" for Aristide than there were for all of the 14 presidential candidates. Aristide officially endorsed René Prével, candidate of his Lavalas party, just two days before the election. The vote took place in the midst of rising inflation and unemployment. Faced with mass opposition to privatizing the state-owned cement and flour plants, the Aristide government put on hold plans to sell the factories.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Prével said, "The state has to create

the conditions for private business to invest, then leave the private sector to its activities."

Although Washington has been the most fervent backer of the elections, it has little confidence in the ability of the Haitian government to carry out U.S. dictates. Some 2,200 U.S. troops head the 5,800-member UN force, which was scheduled to leave after February 29. But the Clinton Administration has told the Haitian government it wants to keep U.S. and UN troops on the island well past that date.

In the meantime, Washington still refuses to turn over all the records it seized last year from Haitian army headquarters and from the paramilitary group FRAPH after the U.S.-led invasion that returned Aristide to the presidency. According to the *Herald*, the Pentagon now says it will turn over the documents after it purges the names of Americans.

At an election day rally held in Miami Romain Pierre, a construction worker and a supporter of Prével, said there "is no more use for U.S. troops. They don't do anything except help the Tonton Macoutes," referring to the thugs who backed various military regimes. "And when the Haitian people try to confiscate the arms, the U.S. troops raise hell. The U.S. troops must go," he said.

dians and packing plant worker at the IBP plant in Perry, also spoke.

Messages were read from Roxanne Gould, a Native American activist involved in a struggle against police brutality in Sioux City, Iowa; Larry Ginter, a hog farmer from Rhodes, Iowa, who is active in the fight against large-scale hog confinement; Alfredo Alvarez, who was the chair of the Des Moines Human Rights Commission in 1988 when Curtis was arrested; and from Curtis himself.

"The defense committee really lived by the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all," Curtis said. "By continuing on this road... we can make this an inspiration for the fight to release Leonard Peltier, stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal," and win freedom for others.

Through these meetings and other activities, \$15,000 has been pledged to date for the defense committee's fund drive, and \$11,000 has been collected. The drive, which ends January 1, aims to raise \$25,000 to pay continuing legal and other costs associated with Curtis's impending release. Contributions or pledges should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, IA, 50311.

N. Korea floods cause food shortages

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea faces the prospect of famine in large parts of the country. Capitalist governments around the world have responded with little or no aid.

Heavy flooding last August — described as the worst in the century — wiped out some 40 percent of the arable land, contributing to an estimated 3.2 million ton shortfall in the rice harvest. Some 500,000 people were left homeless by the flooding, and freezing winter weather is approaching. Pyongyang has appealed for international assistance.

The United Nations World Food Program requested \$8.8 million in contributions of food aid for North Korea,

but so far virtually none has been forthcoming. As of December 13, only \$200,000 had come in, and the agency said it would have to stop relief shipments.

The U.S. government claimed congressional regulations and pressure from the South Korean government prevented it from pledging more than a small amount of medical aid through UNICEF.

At the same time, Washington, which maintains a massive military presence along the border dividing the Korean peninsula, is using the situation to probe against Pyongyang. U.S. officials have insinuated that the North Korean government may provoke a military confrontation as a "distraction" from the food shortage.