

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban workers discuss
theses for union congress

— PAGES 6-7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 60 NO. 17 APRIL 29, 1996

North Korea gov't rebuts Washington and Seoul

BY HILDA CUZCO

Portraying the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as the aggressor, Washington and Seoul have stepped up their propaganda that the DPRK is preparing to provoke a war against South Korea. At the same time Pyongyang has made it crystal clear that it is more than ready to defend its sovereignty against assault by Washington and its allies in the Korean peninsula.

The *New York Times* and other big-business media reported that up to 300 North Korean troops entered the "demilitarized zone" (DMZ) that separates the DPRK from South Korea April 12-14. A 1953 armistice agreement was negotiated that imposed a cease-fire and created the DMZ. No more than 35 soldiers and 5 officers with side arms are to enter the zone from either side. The treaty was signed after North Korean troops with the aid of Chinese volunteers fought the invading imperialist armies led by Washington to a stalemate.

Kim Kwang Jin, first vice minister of
Continued on Page 10

Wildcat strike shuts down Ohio GM plant

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

A wildcat strike by members of the United Auto Workers shut down a General Motors assembly plant in Lordstown, Ohio, April 15. All 1,800 workers on day shift walked off the job to protest the firing of the longtime chairman of the union's local bargaining committee, Al Alli.

The UAW national leadership did not authorize the strike and quickly urged workers to return on the job. Tony Zone, president of UAW Local 1112 in Lordstown, and Alli also called for an end to the walkout. The local represents about 5,500 production workers on three shifts.

Despite the instructions from union officials, about half the first-shift workers did not report to work April 16. The same day U.S. District Judge Patricia Gaughan issued a temporary restraining order demanding the strikers return to work.

The *Tribune Chronicle* of Warren, Ohio, reported that Alli was fired for improperly clocking out. Alli told the newspaper that he clocked out the same way he has for 20 years.

Negotiations are deadlocked between Lordstown GM management and the UAW local over use of outside sources for the manufacture of some car parts, hiring, and health and safety issues. Alli told the press last month he considered whether to authorize a five-day strike notice.

Jobs and outsourcing of car parts were also the main issues in the 18-day strike at two GM brake parts plants recently. That walkout was settled March 22.

In a telephone interview April 18, Pat Knoske of UAW Local 1112 said all workers had returned to work the day before.

Israel out of Lebanon! Stop the bombing now!

Socialist Workers call for protests

The following statement was issued April 17 by Socialist Workers Party candidates James Harris, for U.S. president, and Laura Garza, for vice president.

Working people around the world need to mobilize in action to demand an end to Israel's war on the people of Lebanon and the immediate withdrawal of Tel Aviv's troops from the land it occupies in that nation.

The Socialist Workers campaign will initiate and join actions to place the blame for the destruction and slaughter squarely where it belongs: on those who have been systematically unleashing terror on the toilers of the Middle East — the Zionist masters of the colonial-settler state of Israel and its backers in Washington and other imperialist capitals.

Picket lines, public speakouts, protest meetings, and other actions should be organized to stand up and say clearly: "Israeli forces out of Lebanon now!" "End all aid to the Zionist regime!"

Washington has joined Tel Aviv's campaign, claiming its indiscriminate brutality is justified by their need to fight the militants of Hezbollah. But isn't it the state terror of the occupiers of 440 square miles of Lebanese land against which the oppressed masses revolt? This terror is now depicted graphically on television every day. Some 400,000 people have been driven from their homes, Lebanon's infrastructure is being blown up once again, and dozens of its citizens are being murdered. What a price to pay for being a neighbor to the Zionist state!

No lie is too bald-faced for the U.S. or
Continued on Page 10



Lebanese villagers give victory sign as they flee Israeli bombing of town of Damour, near Tyre, April 14. Inset: rockets from Israeli warplanes blast Lebanese village of Nabatiyeh. Tel Aviv says it is responding to Hezbollah, a group fighting Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.



Tel Aviv launches terror campaign

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

In mid-April Israeli gunships and heavy artillery squadrons began a massive bombing campaign against Lebanon. Dozens of people were killed and more than 400,000 — one-tenth of the country's population — driven from their homes in the first week of what Tel Aviv has dubbed "Operation Grapes of Wrath." This latest act of aggression has been the most serious escalation by Israeli forces since 1993 and the first assault on the Lebanese capital, Beirut, since 1982.

The Israeli government says the bombings are retaliation for recent Katyusha rocket attacks by Hezbollah (Party of God) in northern Israel and the

Israeli-occupied region of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah is an organization that has been fighting for 11 years to free southern Lebanon from Israeli occupation. The air raids, however, have been indiscriminate. Civilians, their homes, buildings, and vehicles continue to be hit in the bombings.

In one incident shown on television across the world, an Israeli helicopter gunship blasted a vehicle clearly marked as an ambulance, near the Lebanese city of Tyre. Among the six passengers killed were the wife and three young daughters of the driver, Abbas Jihah. Israeli officials attempted to justify the April 13 attack by

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Thousands join 'March to Fight the Right'

BY JIM ALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO — Tens of thousands of people marched here April 14 in a spirited protest against a broad range of attacks working people face today. Sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and endorsed by some 600 community and political organizations, trade unions, social service groups, and others, the "March to Fight the Right" was called to defend affirmative action and abortion rights; fight racism and attacks on immigrants; and protect badly needed social services such as welfare and Medicare.

Organizers said 40,000 people joined the march and rally; the police gave an estimate of 13,000. A large number of participants were young, including many college students from campuses across California, Oregon, and Washington state. Some came from Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., and Massa-

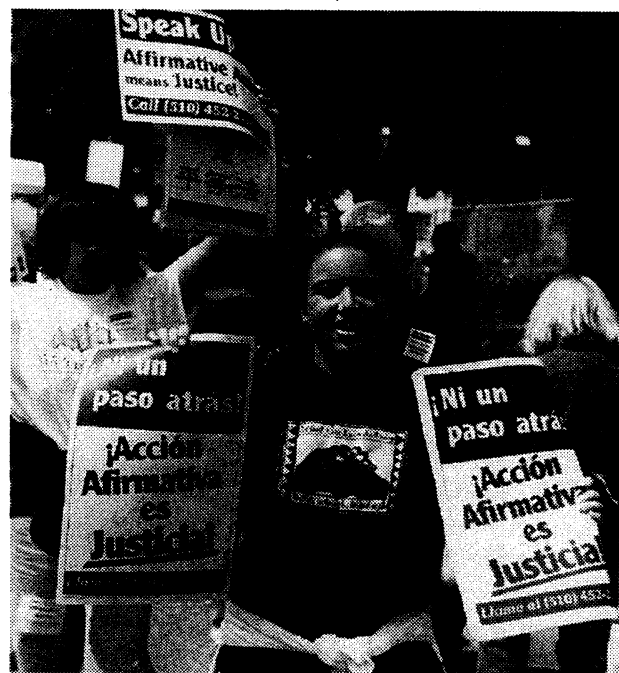
chusetts.

Many demonstrators said they came to answer the continued drive by California politicians against affirmative action. Last July the University of California Board of Regents, including the state governor, Peter Wilson, voted to end affirmative action programs in admissions and hiring at UC. Although their decision has not yet been implemented, students and faculty at the university continue to protest each move the Regents make.

A ballot measure, the "California Civil Rights Initiative," which bans affirmative action programs by the state and local governments, will be up for a vote in the November elections. Hundreds of marchers carried signs condemning this "Civil Wrongs Initiative" and rally speakers called for its defeat.

"I am a direct recipient of affirmative action, and I have a di-

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Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

April 14 'March to Fight the Right' in San Francisco

Rebellions don't explode politely — page 10



IN BRIEF

Israeli warplanes bomb Lebanon

Israeli gunships, helicopters, and warships launched an attack on Lebanon April 11, firing rockets into the southern outskirts of Beirut that killed several civilians.

The bombing was the first assault on that country's capital since Tel Aviv's army invaded Lebanon in 1982. Israeli troops and the Hezbollah group in Lebanon have been exchanging fire across the border for the last few weeks.

The Israeli military has occupied what it calls a "security zone" in southern Lebanon since withdrawing some of its troops in 1985. Hezbollah has been waging a guerrilla war to oust the occupation force. "We have always acted in defense against what the army of conquest has done against villages and civilians in Southern Lebanon in western Bekaa," Hezbollah leader Sheik Nasrallah stated.

U.S. war jets to use Jordan base

For the first time since the Persian Gulf war, U.S. Air Force F-15 and F-16 fighter warplanes will launch missions from the Azraq air base in Jordan to enforce the no-flight zone imposed by Washington on Iraqi aircraft since August 1992. As part of this military operation, a 1,500-troop Air Expeditionary force began arriving in the first week of April.

Clinton administration officials said joint U.S. and Jordanian military maneuvers, including nearly 1,000 U.S. troops, will be conducted.

The F-15 and F-16 fighter jets will join with other U.S. warplanes that have carried out daily patrols to prevent Iraqi planes from flying over the southern third of their own country. Washington, Paris, and London conduct similar patrols over northern Iraq from bases in Turkey.

Paris gets \$1.5 billion China deal

Chinese prime minister Li Peng signed a hefty \$1.5 billion contract in Paris April 10 for 10 passenger jets from Airbus Industrie. That corporation, a consortium of British, French, German, and Spanish capitalists, is the U.S.-based Boeing Company's largest competitor in the Asian aircraft market. Competition has intensified between Boeing, Airbus, and McDonnell Douglas, the other major U.S.-based plane



Some 3,000 farmers rallied in Athens March 19 protesting low prices they receive for their produce. "I can't even feed my animals with what they give me for my milk," a dairy farmer remarked. Some 300,000 people have left the land each year during the past 10 years because of the farm crisis in Greece.

manufacturer.

"We're disappointed in China's decision to purchase Airbus aircraft," grumbled Cindy Smith, a Boeing spokesperson. After the France-China deal was announced, Boeing's shares on the stock market fell \$1.37 the next day to \$79.12, while McDonnell Douglas shares dropped \$1.62 to \$87.

U.S. to vacate a base in Okinawa

Japan prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and U.S. ambassador Walter Mondale announced April 12 that U.S. military operations at the Futenma Air Base in Okinawa — where mass protests have erupted against the U.S. bases over the past year — will cease in five to seven

years. The U.S. official also said Washington would return up to one third of the land it occupies on Okinawa. The nationally televised live news conference came four days before the arrival of U.S. president William Clinton.

Meanwhile, more than 3,100 residents of Tokyo suburbs near the Yokota military air base filed a lawsuit against the U.S. and Japanese governments, demanding a ban on night flights between 9 P.M. and 7 A.M. Elsewhere in Japan, the mayor of Iwakuni said he was "outraged" after learning that aircraft from Futenma would be shifted to the base there.

IMF reneges on Belarus loans

Istan Szalkai, an International Monetary Fund official, announced March 29 that the imperialist financial institution was reversing a \$300 million loan agreement it made with Belarus in 1995. "There is no political will to continue market-oriented stabilization and structural reforms," Szalkai complained. "Instead of the invisible hand of the market, the very visible hand of the president allocates economic resources in this country."

Belarus has been economically drained by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. The government has allocated more than 15 percent of its gross national product — \$235 billion over the past 10 years — to pay for resettling tens of thousands of

people. Some 25 percent of the country is uninhabitable as a result of the 1986 nuclear catastrophe, which released radiation 200 times that of the atom bombs Washington dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Rail strikers win in Slovenia

Rail workers in the Yugoslav republic of Slovenia won a 20 percent pay increase for Saturday work April 10 after waging a national strike for six hours. Union officials had already accepted a 6.2 pay hike.

The rail strike paralyzed 70 percent of the domestic trains in Slovenia. Meanwhile, the union representing doctors and dentists in that republic entered the fourth week of a strike demanding a 25 percent pay hike.

NY cops plan military operation

The *New York Times* reported that the administration of New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani plans to deploy up to 3,000 cops in Black and Latino neighborhoods in early April, outfitted with steel-plated bullet-proof vests and armed with hydraulic battering rams, under the pretext of battling drug dealers.

The six-month terror campaign is set to seize up to 15,000 people with outstanding warrants for violations for everything from "graffiti vandalism to robbery," with the assumption they are guilty of dealing drugs.

"We are going to surgically attack the problems and take out those people, those locations, those stores that are causing the problems," declared Deputy Police Chief Joseph Dunne, who will oversee the operation. Police officials said they plan to send cops to public high schools to prepare the groundwork for the crackdown, which may result in 10,000 arrests the first six months.

Boy must register as sex offender

A three-judge appellate court panel in New Jersey ruled April 9 that a 12-year-old boy who allegedly confessed to groping his 8-year-old step brother must register in the state as a sex offender. New Jersey's 1994 sex offender notification law, known as Megan's Law, is one of five in the country that includes children convicted of such charges. Enforcement of the law was halted March 15 until a federal court rules if it can be applied to people convicted before the law went into effect.

Federal judge Denny Chin of New York suspended that state's version of Megan's Law March 5 until hearings on the law's constitutionality are conducted. In response to Chin's ruling, the pro-cop Guardian Angels organization distributed a leaflet in Manhattan declaring its intention to "continue to notify residents of New York neighborhoods of the identities and addresses of registered 'high risk' sex offenders who move into their community."

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Campaign for the socialist candidates

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'We want to sign up young workers'

BY VED DOOKHUM

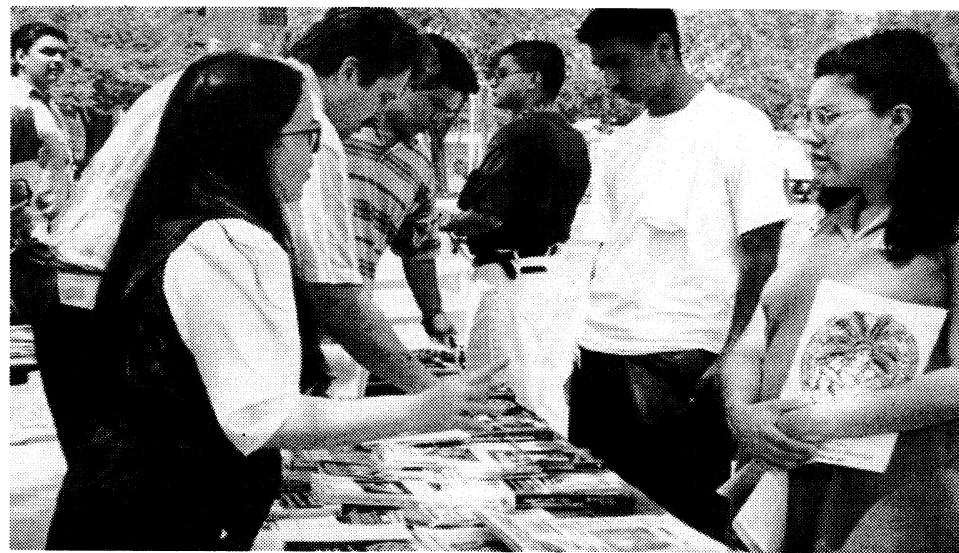
SAN FRANCISCO — There is an alternative to supporting Clinton, Dole, or other pro-capitalist politicians. That's what many of the demonstrators at an April 14 March to Fight the Right here found out when they were introduced to James Harris, candidate of the Socialist Workers Party for U.S. president.

Nearly 40 youth signed up for more information on the campaign at the demonstration and at a young feminists sleepover the night before. Some decided to join Young Socialists for Harris and Garza.

"We want people who are interested in campaigning for a socialist alternative to become Young Socialists for Harris and Garza," said Jack Willey, a leader of the Young Socialists who marched in San

Francisco. The YS launched the effort to support the campaign for Harris and vice-presidential candidate Laura Garza at its national convention the week before.

"This is an opportunity to learn about the socialist perspective and join with candidates who are involved in the struggles against the horrors of capitalism, like this demonstration, protests against police brutality, actions defending the Cuban revolution, and picket lines of striking workers," Willey said. "Young Socialists for Harris and Garza are people who want to set up speaking engagements for socialist candidates at their high school or college, circulate petitions to put the candidates on the ballot, set up campaign tables on the streets and at political events, and get involved in other ways.



Laura Garza, Socialist Workers vice presidential candidate, talking to participants at MEChA conference at Pan American University in Edinburg, Texas, April 13.

"We want to sign up young workers," Willey noted. That weekend the SWP's national trade union committee decided to take a goal of winning 100 co-workers to

campaign with Young Socialists for Harris and Garza by May 27. "That can include setting up house meetings or lunchtime discussions with the socialist candidates," he said.

"Today's demonstration is an example of the kind of things the socialist campaign will take part in," said Harris speaking to around 40 people at a campaign-sponsored open house held at a restaurant after the march. "This was a highly militant, young demonstration. It was larger than people thought it would be.

"A lot of people today told me, 'It's good to see a third party,'" Harris said. "But that's not what we are. We're a working-class alternative to all those — Democrats, Republicans, and others — who support or accept the capitalist system. We explain there is no way to reform capitalism. What we need to fight for is a workers and farmers government." As he spoke, several of the restaurant workers stopped to listen.

Campaign supporters joined Harris
Continued on Page 5

'Militant' announces staff changes

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

With this issue, the *Militant* announces several staff changes.

Naomi Craine is the *Militant*'s new editor. Craine, 25, joined the *Militant* staff in August 1992. Since then she has written extensively on U.S. politics, the labor movement, the Irish freedom struggle, and the Cuban revolution. Recent reports by Craine include coverage of the campaign for the Republican presidential nomination of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan and the launching of the Socialist Workers Party presidential slate last month. During this period, Craine has traveled to Canada, Cuba, Ireland, Sweden, and many U.S. cities on reporting assignments.

Prior to joining the paper's staff, Craine was an active socialist in the trade union movement for several years. Before moving to New York in 1992 she was a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) and worked at Fieldcrest Cannon's Decorative Bedding mill in Eden, North Carolina. At that time, Craine was a member of the steering committee for the national work of the SWP's members in ACTWU.

During the U.S.-led war against Iraq in 1991, Craine announced her campaign to run for mayor of Greensboro, North Carolina, on the Socialist Workers ticket. Between August and November 1994 Craine took a leave from the *Militant* to campaign as the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in New York. She is currently a member of the SWP's National Trade Union Committee.

Steve Clark, the *Militant*'s editor since January 1995, has been released from the paper's staff to concentrate on editing a new book Pathfinder Press will publish later this year. The book's working title is *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics in the 21st Century*. It will include a series of public talks and reports by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes from 1992 until today. These documents, which have been adopted by the party's National Committee and conventions, summarize the SWP's view of the evolution of world politics since the onset of the world capitalist depression in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

Clark, was the editorial director of Pathfinder Press for several years and is also the managing editor of the Marxist magazine *New International*. Over the

next several months, he will be part of the editorial team that will produce the next issue of the magazine.

New staff writer

The *Militant* also has a new staff writer. Brian Taylor, 21, was an airplane cleaner for Northwest Airlines and a member of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, D.C., before joining the staff. Taylor was elected as a regular member of the Young Socialists National Committee at the organization's first national convention, held April 6-7 in Minneapolis. He is also a member of the SWP's National Committee.

In February, Taylor was part of an international team of *Militant* reporters who traveled to Cuba to cover the seventh Havana book fair and other political developments in the Caribbean nation. On April 20 Taylor will travel to Cuba again on a two-week editorial assignment as part of a delegation of trade unionists from the United States who will attend the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC).

Prior to joining the socialist movement in 1991, Taylor was active in the struggle for Black freedom in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was a member of African Awareness, an antiracist high school group. He was also one of the leaders of Cincinnati Area Coalition Against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, which organized protests against Washington's war on the Iraqi people.

Laura Garza, a member of the *Militant* staff since January 1995, will be on leave from her editorial responsibilities in early May to campaign full-time for U.S. vice president on the Socialist Workers Party ticket. She was chosen March 25 by the SWP National Committee to run on the socialist slate along with the party's presidential nominee, James Harris.

Paul Mailhot, who has been on the *Militant* staff since July 1994, was released from the paper to take full-time responsibilities in the SWP's national office. Mailhot also served an earlier stint on the paper from March 1992 to April 1993 and was the *Militant*'s labor editor for a period.

To complete staff transitions and necessary changes in editorial and business responsibilities, the *Militant* began publishing 12-page issues in early April. It will resume its regular 16-page size by mid-

May. This will allow the editorial staff to improve the daily and weekly routines necessary for producing a newsweekly with timely and perceptive coverage of working-class politics. These include following and filing articles from a wide array of publications from around the world, maintaining a library of hundreds of periodicals, and indexing every issue of the paper right after it goes to press.

During this period, the *Militant* will also switch to a more high-powered desktop publishing program, which the staff uses to output pages directly from the editorial department's computers onto film. The new software will allow for time savings and better organization of production.

Socialists campaign in N.J.

BY KATY KARLIN

NEWARK, New Jersey — "You like Cuba? I'm down with that!" a Rutgers University student said enthusiastically as he signed a petition to get Socialist Workers candidates on the ballot in New Jersey. Another student sunbathing on the grass opened her eyes wide when she heard the socialist campaign was fighting Buchan- anism. "I'll sign!" she said.

These were typical responses campaign supporters got as they spread to different cities across the state and collected more than 1,000 signatures for Olga Rodríguez for U.S. Senate and four Congressional candidates.

Toni Jackson, 29, who is running in the 10th Congressional District, led a team of campaign supporters to Orange, New Jersey, where they met a young man who expressed interest in going to the upcoming Young Socialists national convention. "I want that book," he said, picking up Fred- erick Engels's *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* from the table, "because I'm a socialist."

William Estrada, 29, the socialist candi- date in the 13th Congressional District, campaigned in downtown Elizabeth. There he met a high school student who told him she knows other communists in her high school, where they meet on a weekly basis to discuss politics. She in-

vited Estrada to speak to her club.

Campaign supporters in Elizabeth also met a member of the Service Employees International Union in New York who had been on strike earlier this year. He was in- terested in getting a subscription to the *Militant* and coming to an upcoming Mili- tant Labor Forum on the recent strike at General Motors. He asked to get more in- formation on the campaign.

In New Brunswick, campaign support- ers petitioned for Stefanie Trice, a 25- year-old rail worker who is running in the sixth Congressional District. Many Rut- gers students there welcomed the opportu- nity to support a socialist candidate. "This is the first time I'm voting," a freshman told a campaign supporter. "I'm like a lot of people my age. You want to make a dif- ference, but you want to vote for someone you can really believe in, too."

A student from the gay and lesbian group on campus and others from the Puerto Rican student group asked if candi- dates could address their organizations.

Robert Robertson, a pharmaceutical worker who is a member of the Oil, Chem- ical and Atomic Workers union, is running in the seventh Congressional District.

Katy Karlin is a member of the Oil, Chem- ical and Atomic Workers Union in Rah- way, New Jersey.



Brian Taylor



Naomi Craine

Campaign for the socialist alternative! Contribute to \$90,000 campaign fund!

- ☐ Sign me up as a Young Socialist for Harris and Garza. I want to campaign for the socialist alternative and against the parties of exploitation, racism, and war.
 - ☐ Sign me up as a campaign supporter and keep me informed of protests, picket lines, and other political activities.
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 - ☐ I want to invite a candidate to speak at my union, school, or organization
 - ☐ Enclosed is \$10 for a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, a socialist newsweekly, or \$6 for 4 months of *Perspectiva Mundial* in Spanish
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Mail to: Socialist Workers 1996 Campaign, P.O. Box 2652, New York, NY 10009

Radio Rebelde: voice of revolutionary army

In February, Pathfinder Press released a new edition of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War — 1956-58*.

To promote this book, the *Militant* is running "Pages from Cuba's Revolutionary History." This series features articles by and about combatants of the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army, which led the revolutionary war that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and opened the socialist revolution in the Americas.

This week's installment is on Radio Rebelde, the Rebel Army's radio station, which exercised a powerful political role in the revolutionary victory.

Enzo Infante, author of this account, served as the July 26 Movement's provincial coordinator in Oriente, Camagüey, and Havana during the revolutionary war, and was a member of its National Directorate. He is currently a retired lieutenant colonel in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR).

The article was published in *Verde Olivo*, March 24, 1974. Translation is by the *Militant*.



BY ENZO INFANTE

During the second year of the war, the Rebel Army succeeded in establishing and developing a system of communications that enabled it to control and direct its military operations, so as to broadly disseminate war communiqués and to politically orient the people in the nation's drive for liberation against the Batista tyranny.

The rebel station, established at the general command post in the Sierra Maestra, constituted the center of a system that included transmitters in other war fronts, in Havana, and abroad. It complemented the telephone network set up in the liberated zones, or in the areas controlled by the rebels in the First, Second, or other battle fronts.

The first steps in founding Radio Rebelde were taken at the end of 1957.

On December 23, Ciro del Río, a combatant who had been in the field for several months in the Sierra Maestra, informed Ernesto Che Guevara, head of Column no. 4, of a proposal by Eduardo Fernández, a friend of his living in Bayamo who was a radio technician. Fernández believed it was possible to build a radio generating system that would serve the various rebel units as a vehicle for communication between each other, and a transmitter that would send abroad news of what was occurring in the Sierra Maestra. Following up on this idea, Che ordered del Río's friend to be contacted in Bayamo and brought to the Sierra.

On January 4, 1958, in the El Hombrito zone, Eduardo Fernández was able to present his ideas to Che. Understanding the enormous importance of bringing the project to fruition, Che promised to put him in contact with the July 26 Movement in the cities. This was done. Days later he was

visited by some comrades who accompanied him to Santiago de Cuba to see René Ramos Latour. Together with Ramos Latour, they made arrangements to obtain the equipment for the generating plant, which was acquired in Havana and transported to Bayamo by the Movement. From there it was transported to the region of La Mesa, arriving between February 16 and 17.

As soon as the equipment was in his hands, Commander Ernesto Che Guevara decided to erect the generating plant in an abandoned house on Altos de Conrado. Installed there was a Collins transmitter, model 32B2, of low to medium power, from which they were able to get a 120- to 130-watt signal to the antenna; a 1 kilowatt gasoline-powered Jonand generator; a record player, and some light bulbs.

Che decided to name the station Radio Rebelde, and he created a team of combatants to attend to the operation of the plant and the preparation of programs. Luis Orlando Rodríguez was named director. Orestes Valera and Ricardo Martínez were editors and announcers. Eduardo Fernández was technician. Later on Olga Guevara, Violeta Casals, Jorge Enrique Mendoza, and Guillermo Pérez were added to the team.

Transmissions began on February 24, 1958, at five o'clock in the afternoon, broadcast from Altos de Conrado. The inaugural program went on the air to the strains of the Invasion Anthem, which was always its identification. It included reading the war communiqué on the second attack on Pino del Agua, a bulletin based on the actions carried out by Column no. 4, commentary on February 24, 1895¹, and the reasons for establishing the radio station. From that moment on, the revolutionary forces possessed a more powerful means to disseminate their ideas.

Little by little Radio Rebelde improved its transmissions, until it could be heard clearly both in Cuba and abroad.

Transfer of Radio Rebelde to the general command

The first intervention over Radio Rebelde by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro took place on April 15, 1958, a few days after the failed strike attempt.² After several days and nights without sleeping, Fidel had to leave the zone of operations of Column no. 1 to address "the public opinion of Cuba and the free peoples of Latin America" with a vibrant message of patriotism, full of confidence in the triumph of the revolutionary cause.

Two days later, on April 17, considering the strategic value of the radio station and the need to protect it from the enemy, which was preparing its military offensive against the Sierra Maestra,³ Fidel ordered the transfer of the station to the region of La Plata, site of the rebel command's gen-



Top and left photos: Council of State, Office of Historical Affairs
Top: Speaking over Radio Rebelde. At far right, Jorge Enrique Mendoza. Next to him is Violeta Casal. Left: Che Guevara communicating with rebel forces, Las Villas, late 1958. Above: Rebel Army, Sierra Maestra, 1958, at Altos de Conrado. Fidel Castro spoke on Radio Rebelde here for the first time.

eral command post. From there Radio Rebelde resumed its transmissions on May 1, beginning a new stage of its existence, in which it would function as an important center of military communications of all the armed rebel forces.

Radio Rebelde's center of military communications received and transmitted on a network that comprised some thirty transmitters located in Cuba and abroad, and a rudimentary but efficient telephone system set up in liberated territories. Its broadcasts included war communiqués, military orders, and instructions to rebel heads and leaders of the Movement, laws and regulations, instructions to the civilian population, notices to the Red Cross to hand over wounded combatants and prisoners, among other things.

The transmissions became regularized at night at two times, from seven to nine o'clock on the 20 meter band, and from eight to ten on the 40 meter band, on short wave.

Communications of a military character were done through simple codes, but very often — particularly at the end of the war — they were read quite openly. General orders emanating from general headquarters were read in their entirety.

For communications with the Movement's delegations abroad, special codes were used, designed by Che, Fidel, and Luis Buch.

All this activity gave an impetus to the task of coding and decoding, which the comrades of Radio Rebelde also did. The station always based itself on the principle of the absolute truth of the information and the instructions it gave to the people. This enabled it to enjoy extraordinary authority and wide belief, going beyond national boundaries.

In Venezuela the commercial long-wave transmitters taped the programs originating over Radio Rebelde and transmitted them to Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Peru, and other countries, informing them of the course of the struggle in Cuba.

The enemy also paid attention to Radio Rebelde. At the Observation Post of the Communications Department of the Military Intelligence Service of the general staff of the tyranny's army, all transmissions of the rebel station — from July 1 to December 31, 1958 — were taped and transcribed.

The commander-in-chief used Radio Rebelde to personally address the people and issue instructions during decisive moments of the revolution: on April 15, after the strike; on August 18-19, after the failure of the tyranny's great offensive against the Sierra Maestra; on October 25, to denounce the maneuver of Batista and the Yankee State Department with the aim of encouraging United States military intervention in Cuba's civil war; on November 12, to issue instructions to all heads of rebel fronts and columns and to the civilian population on the instructions for waging the final battle against the tyranny; on January 1, 1959, to denounce before the people the maneuvers for a coup sponsored by the Yankee embassy in Havana, and to issue a call for a revolutionary general strike.⁴

This last broadcast by the commander-in-chief was made from Palma Soriano, recently liberated, where the popular station had been installed.

Beginning with its founding by Commander Ernesto Guevara, Radio Rebelde had transmitted from Altos de Conrado, La Plata, La Miel (November-December), Charco Redondo (December), and Palma Soriano.

Radio Rebelde was used for the first time for special propaganda during the offensive by the tyranny against the Sierra. In the battle of Santo Domingo, loudspeakers were used for the first time to address the enemy troops. This method reached its highest level of efficiency during the battle of El Jigüe. Later it was applied in Las Mercedes and in the capture of Maffo.

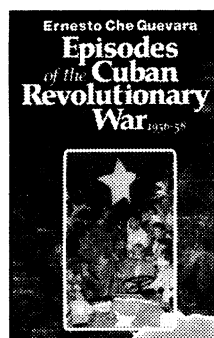
¹ The Cuban War of Independence from Spain was launched on Feb. 24, 1895, with the "Grito de Baire" call to rebellion.

² The July 26 Movement called a general strike on April 9, 1958. Lacking political preparation, the strike failed.

³ On May 25, 1958, Batista's army launched an offensive with 10,000 troops to "encircle and annihilate" the Rebel forces in the Sierra Maestra. The Rebel Army's defeat of the offensive by July was the military turning point in the war and allowed the rebels to go on the offensive.

⁴ Batista fled Cuba in the early morning of January 1, 1959. With the encouragement of the State Department, power was ceded to a military junta. The Rebel Army opposed the junta and issued a call for a nationwide general strike. The junta collapsed the following day and the Rebel Army took power.

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Cuban workers discuss document for

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN
AND SETH GALINSKY

HAVANA, Cuba — "We've been forced to take a series of measures to confront the special period," said production worker René Blanco, referring to the Cuban government's response to the country's sharp economic crisis of the past few years.

"But this does not mean we've adopted a capitalist approach. These measures have not led to a change in people's consciousness. State domination of the economy has been maintained. And we've safeguarded the conquests of the revolution, like health care and education."

Blanco was the first speaker in a union assembly at the Miguel Saavedra machine shop, a factory of 250 workers in Havana's San Miguel del Padrón district. The meeting had been called to discuss and vote on a resolution, prepared by the leadership of the national trade union federation, the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), for presentation to the CTC convention, which will be held April 27-May 2.

The document, written in thesis form, is divided into 11 major sections. It was published last November as a special supplement to the weekly union newspaper *Trabajadores* (Workers). Thousands of additional copies have been distributed to maximize access by the 3 million members of Cuba's trade unions. (The *Militant* published the entire resolution in installments in its March 18, March 25, April 1, and April 8 issues.)

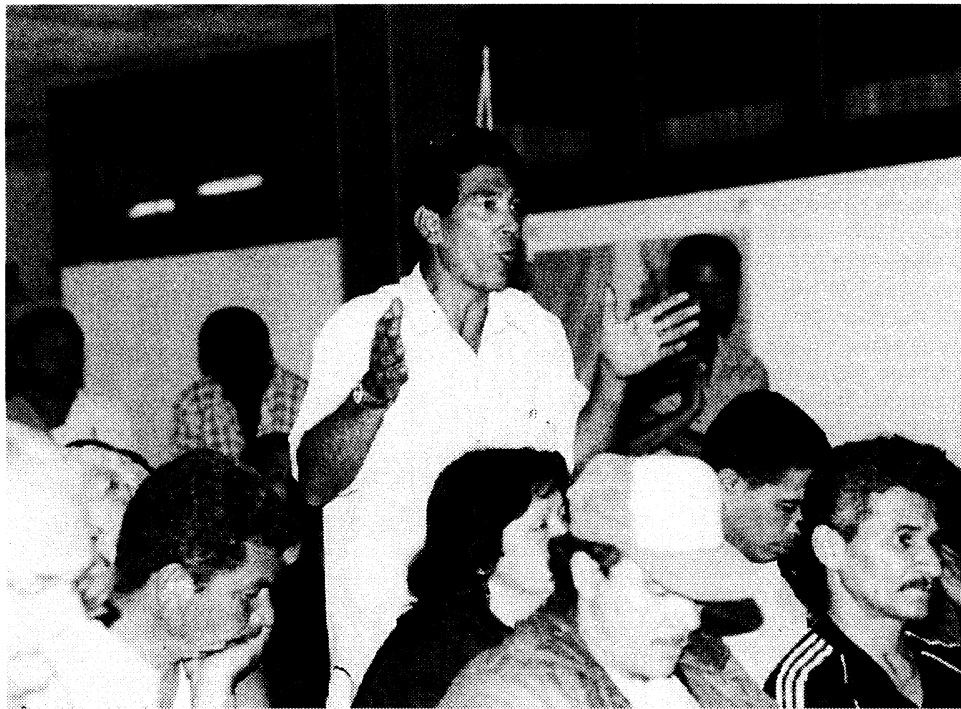
Preparations for the congress began about a year ago with a round of municipal CTC assemblies out of which the draft theses were prepared. Between January 15 and March 15, the CTC organized discussion of the Theses in 80,000 workplace assemblies. In each province special union congresses of delegates from the workplaces have been held.

In larger enterprises, meetings have often been organized by separate departments to allow for greater discussion by the union membership, reported Luis Felipe Barallobre, a member of the national secretariat of National Union of Metal and Electrical Workers. The results of the meetings, including additional proposals made by workers and adopted by the local assemblies, are considered by provincial congresses and a special commission that will present its recommendations to the CTC congress.

Each assembly was conducted in a similar way, as laid down by the congress call. The chair announced the section of the theses under consideration and opened the floor for comments. When discussion on that section was exhausted, the chair called the vote and the meeting passed on to the next section. If in the course of the discussion a worker put forward a proposal, the chair would call a vote on it. An elected minute-taker recorded the proceedings to forward to the special commission. At each plant a representative of the municipal committee of the union who does not work in the factory participated

in the meeting.

The metal workers union leadership invited an international team of workers reporting for the *Militant* to observe three assemblies. One was at the Miguel Saavedra plant, which manufactures cutting tools, machine tool accessories, molds and



Militant/Martin Koppel

Workers assembly on CTC Theses at Cubana de Bronce foundry near Havana, February 19. Union members discussed how they could collectively boost efficiency and help agricultural workers increase food production.

dies. The others were at two plants in the Guanabacoa suburb of Havana — the Fixtures Plant, a factory of 600 workers that makes plumbing and fittings; and Cubana de Bronce, a foundry where 280 workers manufacture bronze barrels for production use in sugar mills.

Theses come from workers' experience

The first two sections of the Theses take up the world political and economic situation and the defense of Cuba's socialist course. In that framework, the document describes the country's economic crisis, which was precipitated by the post-1989 collapse of aid and trade at favorable terms with the former Soviet bloc governments.

Cubans have faced severe shortages of food and other basic necessities, as well as disruptions of industrial production and transportation. This crisis, considerably exacerbated by the intensified U.S. trade embargo, bottomed out in 1994 and a slight recovery is under way.

In the discussion on these first sections of the resolution, several workers at the Miguel Saavedra plant commented on the effects of measures the Cuban government has taken to stem the economic decline and stimulate agricultural and industrial production. The measures include decriminalization of the use of U.S. dollars, opening of agricultural markets, legalization of self-employment for numerous occupations, and obtaining foreign investment in various areas of the economy.

One worker, Abel, referred to the statement in the CTC document that the "need to introduce elements of capitalism" has inevitably generated social inequalities. In this context, the theses state, it is vital to "continue defending the revolution's values and principles."

"Some people suggest that we're heading towards capitalism," Abel commented. "But everything is being done under the control of the working class. It's being discussed out in the factories. We're safeguarding the conquests of the revolution. This shows we're not headed toward capitalism."

"In other countries, when faced by economic problems they shut hospitals, they cut pensions," Bernardo La Ho pointed out.

"That's the difference between us and capitalism," interjected local union secretary Felipe Vidal.

"Even if the socialist camp has fallen, we have not disappeared and we are not going to. This is a revolution by the people for the people," La Ho concluded.

At the meeting, workers welcomed the international observers with enthusiasm, urging them to say a few words. They were particularly interested to hear fellow workers describe the depression conditions they face in countries like Britain and the United States, as well as the working-class resistance to the employers' attacks.

Delegations of unionists from many countries will be present at the CTC congress itself. "We are making an effort to give the congress an international character," said Noel Carrillo, of the CTC's international relations department, in an interview. "Besides observing the congress, we are inviting people from around the world to participate in a big May Day rally in Revolution Square. And on May 2 we are organizing a solidarity conference for the international guests."

Workers' increased management role

The discussions to prepare the CTC convention drew on the experience of previous rounds of workers' assemblies in Cuba, described by the Theses as "genuine schools of economics and politics." In December 1993 Cuba's National Assembly met to consider measures to tackle the country's economic crisis. But since the measures under debate would increase the prices Cuban workers paid for a number of services as well as items like tobacco and rum, the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party and of the CTC proposed that meetings be convened in every workplace before the National Assembly made any decisions.

As a result, in early 1994, more than three million working people throughout Cuba discussed the alternatives they faced, made proposals, and profoundly influenced decisions later taken by the National Assembly on key questions facing the revolution.

These "workers parliaments," as they

became known, were followed up by regularly convened "economic efficiency assemblies" to assess the implementation of workers' proposals and make further decisions on concrete measures aimed at collectively increasing productivity in the plants. Unlike the situation in capitalist countries, where improvements in efficiency simply benefit the employers and often lead to workers being laid off, in Cuba the issue of efficiency is of direct concern to the workers and the unions.

"We're the socialist owners of the economy," the Theses say, "and it's upon the success of the enterprises and work units that the solidity of the revolution and quality of our lives, today and tomorrow, depend." The efficiency assemblies, the document continues, are "an essential instrument to ensure the direct participation of the workers in the direction and control of the entire management of their workplace."

Efficiency

At Miguel Saavedra the discussion on efficiency was kicked off by the plant director, Lenin Echarmino. He reported that production at the plant had gone up 17 percent from 1994 to 1995, that workers' productivity had also risen and that, through productivity incentives, average monthly wages had increased by 14 percent, from 184 to 210 pesos. Echarmino outlined the plan for 1996 with a goal for increasing production by 25 percent.

The director's report provoked a sharp debate, with several workers expressing opinions on how best to raise production. First to his feet was Fermín Peña, a machinist on the cutting tools line. "The machinery isn't up to what's projected," he said. "The machines are very old and give us a lot of problems. What's more, there's a lack of raw materials. Often the solution is out of our hands. This month we're not going to produce any more than last month."

"We need new machinery if we're to set production targets like that," said section union representative Mercedes Vargas. "Workers in my section have made major efforts to achieve what we did in 1995. There's not much more room for improvement. We can't achieve a goal of 25 percent just through greater efforts."

Echarmino said he wasn't proposing this. "But we simply don't have the possibility of getting new machinery. We don't have the resources. That's the contradiction we face. We must boost production before we can finance new machinery."

The plant director noted that production increases over the last two years had enabled them to install a new cutter-grinder and improvements were going to be made to the welding machine. "We have to advance step by step," he said. "The only thing which we can be sure of in this world is change and instability."

"If you set unrealistic goals it will just lead to demoralization and apathy," replied Gustavo Pérez. "That's going to happen if this plan's not met."

"If the goals are not reached we won't receive our productivity bonus," added Marta Beláez.

Vargas, who operates the welding machine, remarked, "We feel bad if we don't make goals. The plan must be more than ideas from the head of the director. The union has an important role to play, not only in fulfilling the plan but in drawing it up."

"People predicted that last year's plan couldn't be met, but we made it," plant manager Ramón Bello commented. "But it's true we can't make the goals by effort alone. Scientific and technical advances are necessary."

Another worker said the heart of the problem remained the supply of raw materials, as well as tooling and maintenance of the machines, which he argued were "management problems beyond the control of the workers."

Wilfredo Reyes wasn't so sure of that assertion. "Work discipline is key to efficiency, and that's within our control. So is maintenance. Sure, they're old machines, but we shouldn't unthinkingly run them until they break down. If we hear a noise we should report it. We should take care of our work area. We need to develop a cul-

Dozens demand, 'reverse visa denials'

BY MACEO DIXON

BOSTON — "I am writing to protest the March 29 U.S. State Department decision to deny visas to Maika Guerrero and Iroel Sánchez from the Center for Studies of Youth in Havana. This is not only an attack on academic freedom but also an attack on democratic rights and freedom of speech. I urge you to reverse your decision and grant the requested visas immediately." This is what Luis Matos of the National Dominican Congress in New York wrote to the U.S. State Department demanding that the two Cuban youths be granted visas to speak on U.S. campuses, as they were scheduled to do this month.

Guerrero, 20, and Sánchez, 31, had received 119 letters of invitation from professors and student groups at 73 universities in 22 states and the District of Columbia. Washington denied them entry on grounds that their trip was "for the purpose of advocacy" for the Cuban government. Their visit was organized by the Faculty-Student Cuban Youth Lectures

Committee based at Roxbury Community College here.

"I just learned that you have denied visas to two Cuban researchers," wrote Nancy Winitzky, associate professor at the University of Utah, in another letter. "I vigorously protest this action. As tensions mount, we need more, not less communication between the people of our two countries.... Access to diverse points of view is, I thought, one of the hallmarks of the U.S. political system. It is completely unacceptable to block the free exchange of ideas."

The Lectures Committee is urging that more such letters be sent to Michael Ranneberger, Coordinator for Cuban Affairs; Richard Nuccio, Special Advisor for Cuban Affairs to Secretary of State, and Sean Murphy of the Cuba Desk, all at the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20520; tel.: (202) 647-9273, fax (202) 736-4476. Copies of such messages should be sent to the Lectures Committee at fax: (617) 776-5832.

union congress

ture of production."

The assembly took a vote and decided to propose that Reyes's point be incorporated into the Theses.

"Another area that's within the control of the workers is quality," said Federico Martínez. "Scrap levels are going down, which means productivity per worker is increasing. That's our collective achievement. We need to be more inventive." Martínez pointed to the importance within the plant of the National Association of Innovators and Problem Solvers (ANIR) and the Technical Brigades of Youth (BTJ).

ANIR was established by the CTC in 1976. Soon afterward the Union of Young Communists initiated the BTJ. These voluntary organizations involve tens of thousands of workers and technicians who work outside of the regular working day to keep machinery running, invent solutions for unavailable spare parts, and come up with suggested improvements in work methods. Each year a national Science and Technology Forum meets to consider suggested innovations and prizes are awarded for the best ideas. With the acuteness of the crisis in recent years, especially the shortages of spare parts for machinery made in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as is the case with the bulk of machinery at Miguel Saavedra, this movement has grown in importance.

After two-and-a-quarter hours' debate, workers decided to call it a day. They would have to come back to another meeting to complete the discussion on efficiency, after more work was done on management's proposed plan, and consider the rest of the theses. The assembly then recessed and the workers threw a party.

After the meeting, Pedro García, Communist Party secretary at the plant, commented that the very fact of discussing a plan that day was an advance. "Planning was made virtually impossible between 1990 and 1992 by the fact that we lacked raw materials, and by the extreme shortage of oil. As this situation improved, by the end of 1993 we were able to start planning again. We're making progress."

Militant reporters had visited the Miguel Saavedra shop in December 1994. At the time, workers explained the victory that they had achieved by adopting their first plan in a number of years.

"During the workers parliaments, workers stressed the importance of improving job conditions, the canteen, and services available at the factory," reported Alba Estevaces, UJC representative at the time. Workers and union leaders reported that a big effort was going into improving the midday meal, as well as cultivating some land around the factory to grow fresh vegetables, generally very scarce at the time.

Another measure of progress, workers pointed out, was a change in the make-up of the union leadership, with some younger delegates being elected, many of them women. Estevaces is today a sectional union representative. She said such changes had strengthened worker solidarity in the plant. Grisela Quintano, the current UJC representative, agreed. She expressed pride in being among a number of younger women who had opened the doors for women operating machines and getting elected as part of the leadership.

The discussions at the assemblies on efficiency have always extended to broader

aspects of the country's economic situation. The foundry workers at Cubana de Bronce devoted some time to the question of agricultural production, which is taken up at length in the Theses.

'We can solve our problems'

One worker commented on the agricultural markets, noting that these had helped increase the availability of food at prices lower than on the black market, but that prices were still too high. "That's not the fault of the peasants and cooperative members, but of the middlemen who have nothing to do with production and who are profiteering" at the expense of working people, he said.

The agricultural markets, established in 1994, are supplied by cooperatives, individual private farmers, and state farms, including those run by the armed forces. Prices there are based on supply and demand.

Another worker, Agustín Miranda, replied: "The only solution is to increase agricultural production; then the prices will go down." He spoke about the need to join with agricultural workers to boost the efficiency of the farm cooperatives known as UBPCs. The Theses raise the need to recruit more workers to these cooperatives, whose members belong to the CTC-affiliated agricultural workers union.

Luis Iglesias added that the problem is that the private peasants need the middlemen to take their produce to market. "They can't regularly leave their plots to go into town. The UBPCs use middlemen to sell their goods too, so the high prices are inevitable."

"But if we could help in increasing production in the UBPCs and other state agricultural units, and they marketed their own produce, prices would be forced down," he said. "The middlemen couldn't artificially inflate the prices and would be put out of business."

Helping to boost agricultural production was also discussed in the meeting at the Fixtures Plant in Guanabacoa. "Given the importance of sugar to the economy" one worker said, "it's important that we all do what we can to increase the harvest."

Over the last few years sugar production plummeted. Last year's harvest of 3.3 million tons compared with 7 million tons in 1992 and was the lowest level in half a century. It is too early to know the results of the current harvest, but Cuban officials have said they expect sugar production this year to increase for the first time since the beginning of the "special period."

Under the discussion on thesis IV, titled "The decisive effort to increase sugar production," Francisco Estuvero got up and asked, "What is happening with the sugar harvest?" He referred to recent press reports expressing concerns that the targets might not be met. "What is the problem? Is it poor machinery? A lack of machetes? Do we need better mechanization, new tractors or what?"

When a union official suggested he read the press to find the answer, Estuvero responded that the necessary information was lacking in the papers.

"It's not enough to see the statistics," he stated. "We need to really know what's involved. For example, if the problems are due to a lack of spare parts, we can make them; if it's a shortage of labor, then we



Militant/Seth Galinsky

February 16 CTC meeting at Miguel Saavedra machine shop outside Havana. Alba Estevaces (front right) and Grisela Quintano (front middle) noted progress in young women becoming machine operators and being elected as part of leadership.

can send more workers to help out with the harvest. We can solve the problems if we know what they really are." His remarks drew applause from other workers present.

Improved living standards

The increased self-confidence of workers expressed in the assemblies reflected the conviction that their collective efforts to resist the hardships and fight to raise production have begun to pay off, and that the worst of the economic crisis is over.

The gross national product, which fell by 34 percent between 1989 and 1994, last year rose by 2.5 percent. The National Assembly has adopted an economic plan for 1996 projecting a growth rate of 5 percent.

A small but significant improvement in living standards has been registered. Efforts to halt the erosion of the social wage, which accounts for a high proportion of workers' standard of living in Cuba.

The long hours of electrical blackouts have been dramatically reduced since the worst period in 1994, and transportation within major cities has improved. Agricultural markets and special efforts at workplaces have improved food availability. In many cases, greater attention has been paid to provide other services at the worksite itself. At the Fixtures Plant, workers reported that they have a cobbler, a tailor, a hairdresser, TV and radio repair facility, bicycle repair shop and other services — all on the job.

One of the biggest factors contributing to improved living standards has been lower inflation and improved buying power of the peso. The amount of currency in circulation has been significantly reduced, from a high of 12.4 billion pesos in mid-1994 to 9 billion today. The dollar exchanges on the street for about 25 pesos now, down from as much as 140 in August 1994.

This has had the effect of increasing the value of the monthly basic wage. In addition, varying systems of bonuses and other material incentives have contributed to increased living standards.

Discussion on wages

The discussion on wages was the single most debated point in the assembly at the Fixtures Plant.

The discussion was kicked off by Renimo Velázquez, who said his wages really were not enough to live on. This sentiment found an echo among other workers present. "Low wages have led to a 'brain drain' out of the factories," he stated. "Even with the sharp new tax hikes for people who are self-employed, many such people can earn more in a day than I do, as a machinist, in a month."

At the beginning of this year, some 204,000 people were registered as self-employed in Cuba — a relatively small increase over the 180,000 a year earlier, although there are undoubtedly many more who are not registered. Of those accounted for, 25 percent are retired, 28 percent hold other jobs, and 45 percent were formerly unemployed or housewives, indicating that few workers have actually quit jobs to go into business for themselves.

One worker got to his feet to complain that an agreement he had struck a couple of years ago to raise his own wage had been blocked by the union. He referred to

thesis 47, which states that management must strictly adhere to agreements.

Other workers took the floor to answer him. One pointed out he had negotiated this deal behind the backs of the union. The union is the workers' organization, another emphasized. "All such issues should go through the union," he said.

"We shouldn't be looking at individual solutions but at collective solutions to our problems," another worker insisted.

A third worker joined the debate to argue that the solution to the question of further raising wages had to be based on increasing productivity and output.

A reorganization of the wage structure is under way in Cuba to link pay more directly to production. The Theses state that the goal is that "wages paid in Cuban pesos must become the fundamental channel for work incentives." Over the past years, however, different types of incentive programs, described by the CTC document as "transitory measures justified by our economic situation," have been used.

In sectors that are key to production of exported goods, such as tobacco, the ports, and electricity, a percentage of the basic wage is often paid in "convertible pesos," a national bank-issued currency that exchanges with dollars at 1:1. In some enterprises workers receive a *bolsa de aseo* — a bag of goods like soap, toothpaste, deodorant, and shampoo, at rates cheaper than street prices. At others they get a *jabita* (small basket) of food items or other necessities.

To qualify for such incentives, workers in a particular enterprise must both achieve collective production targets and meet strict norms of attendance, safety, and discipline.

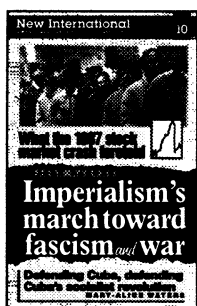
At the Fixtures Plant meeting, a worker complained that the system of material incentives at the plant was "garbage." He proposed a factory store be opened to allow workers who meet production and work discipline goals to buy goods at cheap prices.

José Luis García commented that he was in favor of incentives "but we shouldn't look at this in personal terms — for me or for my kids. Incentives are important because what's needed is to get the whole country to work. We need to increase the value of wages. That's the way to do it and to answer those who say we don't have the resources."

García and others said that a factory store where everyone could buy many basic products at reduced prices can only come as a result of productivity increases so the enterprise has the resources to subsidize prices. This would at least be a collective solution to improving the workers' living standards, not an individual one, and would have a bigger impact than a even wage raise for everyone.

That's what the entire CTC theses and the discussion on them in the factories are all about: how the working class is bringing its weight to bear in finding a way out of the economic crisis through social solidarity, not dog-eat-dog competition.

Jonathan Silberman is a machinist and member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union in London. Seth Galinsky is a conductor/brakeman and member of United Transportation Union Local 1138 in Miami.



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May Stark: a communist for half century

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — A celebration was held at the Pathfinder bookstore here on March 15 to honor the life and political contributions of May Stark, a veteran cadre of the Socialist Workers Party.

"May Stark — Fifty-six years in the fight for socialism," read a banner over an attractive display of front pages of the *Militant* spanning the late 1930s to today and photos of Stark over this period.

Some 65 people attended the event, including family members and friends, SWP members and supporters, and Young Socialists.

Stark died of a heart attack February 29, a week before her 80th birthday. She joined the SWP in 1939 and remained politically active to her last day.

Gale Shangold, organizer of the Los Angeles SWP branch, opened the program. Shangold is a garment worker and member of the United Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees union.

The last political activity Stark attended, Shangold said, was an SWP meeting called on short notice to plan a campaign to protest a new wave of hostile measures by Washington against Cuba after two planes were downed February 24 while violating the island's airspace. The intruding aircraft were piloted by Cuban counterrevolutionaries based in Florida.

At that meeting, Shangold recalled, Stark described a discussion she had with a plumber who came to do a repair job at her home. Learning he was Cuban, Stark engaged him in a conversation on the February 24 incident. "We disagreed," Stark said, "but I think I made an impact on him." Always approaching other working people as equals and trying to engage them in politics was a quality Stark developed over decades in the communist movement, Shangold said.

Joel Britton, SWP national trade union director, spoke on behalf of the party's Political Committee. He described some of the events in the late 1930s that shaped the party Stark joined: capitalist depression, the victory of fascism in Spain, and the rivalry between capitalist powers for world domination.

Britton noted that political developments in the 1930s paralleled in many ways what is opening up today with a worldwide capitalist economic crisis, imperialist war preparations against China, Cuba, and Yugoslavia, sharpening trade offensives by Washington, the growth of fascist currents, and the beginning of labor resistance.

1939 antifascist fight

May Stark joined the SWP in New York and participated in the party's efforts there to help mobilize the labor movement and antifascist youth to oppose ultrarightist groups that were gaining strength at the time, the SWP leader said. Earlier in 1939, the German-American Bund and other fascist organizations had called a rally in Madison Square Garden. The SWP led a campaign for a mass workers counter-demonstration. Some 50,000 workers turned out, pushing back the rightists.

Britton noted the participation of Sam Stark and his brother in the antifascist action; both attended the Los Angeles celebration. Sam, May's companion for 55 years, was part of the young worker cadres of the SWP and union movement who were an essential component of the 1939 action. Party leaders took turns atop the sturdy shoulders of Sam and others, addressing the crowd.

May Stark joined the working-class campaign by the SWP to oppose U.S. entry into the second imperialist slaughter. She sold the *Socialist Appeal* — the name the *Militant* took at that time — which promoted the party's program of struggle to overthrow capitalism.

In a single weekend of street sales during this period, 6,000 copies of the socialist weekly were sold in New York by the "Appeal Army," as reported in the paper's sales column of the same name.

At the time, the SWP campaigned with the slogan of opening the U.S. borders to Jews and others fleeing the Nazi terror in Europe. The Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt stubbornly kept them out.

"As May was committing to a fighting party," Britton said, "others were prepar-



May Stark at Los Angeles SWP headquarters in the early 1980s

ing to desert our cause under powerful pro-imperialist pressures."

A political crisis in the SWP broke into the open, precipitated by the Stalin-Hitler "nonaggression" pact between the governments of the Soviet Union and imperialist Germany on Aug. 22, 1939, and the outbreak of World War II a week later with the German invasion of Poland.

Struggle for a proletarian party

A substantial minority in the SWP leadership and membership concluded there was no longer anything progressive in the Soviet Union to defend. This panicky recoiling from historic conquests of the international workers movement reflected a more fundamental retreat from the perspective of building a revolutionary proletarian party in the United States.

Britton explained that the SWP actively collaborated with Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian revolution who had been expelled from the Soviet Union by Joseph Stalin's regime and forced into exile in Mexico. Trotsky intervened actively in the debate, supporting the party majority in its unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist assault and its simultaneous effort to deepen the orientation of the whole party toward political work in the factories.

Stark, said Britton, stood firmly with the majority, which also organized SWP members not already in industry to get factory jobs and systematize the practical political activity of the entire party in industrial trade unions.

At the time, Stark was a member of the branch in the Bronx, New York, composed almost exclusively of white-collar workers, most of whom supported the petty-bourgeois minority in the party. She had recently graduated from college and was a social worker.

Move to Los Angeles

In 1941, Britton said, Stark made something of a "jailbreak," leaving home, where she felt restricted by her family ties. She quit her job with the welfare department and moved to Los Angeles to join the turn to industry.

There Stark learned to operate a drill press and got a job in a tool-making plant. She got hired at Douglas Aircraft and carried out the party's campaigns on the job until the end of World War II.

Between 1943 and 1948, a labor radicalization spread in the United States, along with an upturn in the fight for Black rights. Stark helped build large demonstrations and meetings of workers and youth against Gerald K. Smith and his antilabor, anti-Jewish Silver Shirts — a pro-fascist group that had been formed in 1932.

Stark joined the Los Angeles branch's orientation toward struggles of workers in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Although she had no knowledge of sewing, Britton said, she stubbornly persisted, going through job after job until she acquired a good amount of skill. She was eventually able to hold steady jobs in the industry and remained a garment worker until the late 1960s.

What in the eyes of Stark and other young revolutionists at the time looked like a straight line to revolution was not to be, Britton said. What followed instead

was a retreat of the labor movement and the anticommunist witch-hunt of the 1950s.

"Sticking with the building of a proletarian party during that retreat was what steered May Stark for a life-long commitment to be a disciplined, professional revolutionist," the SWP trade union director stated. During the 1950s, FBI agents visited the Stark household several times.

Active in his union at a Firestone tire factory, Sam Stark was fired after a visit by FBI agents with his bosses. May's modest but more stable garment worker income helped them survive.

Anticolonial revolutions

Stark identified with the powerful post-war anticolonial struggles that broke out, including the 1949 Chinese revolution, the fight by the Korean people who held off the invading U.S. armies, and the 1959 triumph of the Cuban revolution.

Stark was a resolute defender of these and other revolutionary gains throughout her life, Britton said. "She inspired us with her never-failing identification with and active support for the struggles of all the exploited and oppressed of the world."

In the United States there was an upsurge of the Black struggle and the emergence of Malcolm X as a major revolutionary leader. "Many who considered themselves socialists and communists found it hard or impossible to recognize the revolutionary importance of Malcolm X," Britton said, "but not May."

Stark's identification with the struggle against racism began early when as a youth her parents operated a restaurant in Harlem. As Sam Stark put it, "May believed in justice and she saw Black people in Harlem weren't getting justice."

Britton, who worked with Stark in the Los Angeles branch in the late 1960s, and again from 1982 to 1992, noted her participation in a day of protest against the Gulf War on Feb. 21, 1991, when most party members took the day off work to participate in student-led protests against the U.S. war on the Iraqi people. Britton joined Stark and younger socialists at an antiwar rally at Occidental College. "May made regular use of the campus library and was known to a good number of students and others," Britton pointed out. "We didn't have an official permit for the table, but no one tried to make us take it down — I think May's presence made a difference."

Afterward, he said, Stark helped get together students interested in participating in a socialist discussion group.

Britton noted that for many years Stark was part of a grouping within the SWP that rejected the party's assessment that the Chinese regime headed by Mao Tse-tung was Stalinist. This grouping tried unsuccessfully to win support

in the party ranks for their point of view.

In the late 1960s the group considered a proposal to quit the SWP and join the Progressive Labor Party, a Maoist sect. May and Sam Stark, Britton said, immediately replied that they would stick with their party.

Thabo Ntweng, a member of the SWP National Committee who is an airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists, and Reina Aparicio, a member of the Los Angeles Young Socialists, also addressed the meeting. Messages from long-time comrades of Stark were read during the meeting.

Elizabeth Stone, a leader of the SWP in Newark, New Jersey, also spoke. She got to know Stark in the 1980s in Los Angeles. "During the '80s," Stone said, "May got a kind of second wind — maybe we could say a third or fourth wind — and made some important contributions."

Pathfinder bookstore

"Two major political developments were occurring at the time that inspired May and were to have a lasting affect on the workers movement in Los Angeles."

"The first was the victory of the revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada and the strengthening of the Cuban revolution. The second was the transformation of Los Angeles resulting from the addition of hundreds of thousands of workers from Central America, Mexico, and other countries." Many of these immigrants, Stone said, moved into the area where the Pathfinder bookstore is located and quite a few were active in efforts on behalf of the Nicaraguan and Cuban revolutions, and in support of the revolutionary struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Stark was a regular participant in public meetings and protests in solidarity with the revolutionary struggles in Central America. She also contributed to recruiting young workers to the communist movement, especially immigrant workers, drawing on her long experience as an industrial worker, Stone said.

Stark's most important contribution in this period, Stone stated, was helping to transform and expand the Pathfinder bookstore. "May regularly worked one shift a week in the bookstore and more when needed. She helped make the expanded store possible, and you could tell she really enjoyed it."

She was often the first volunteer many newcomers to the store met. "Later," Stone said, "people would tell me how impressed they were on first coming to the bookstore and meeting this woman in her 70s, a fighter, talking revolution."

Her commitment to getting the political weapons produced and distributed by Pathfinder Press into the hands of as many other fighters as possible marked her through to the end, Stone said.

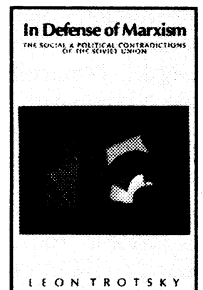
Harry Ring closed the event with a fund appeal in honor of Stark's life. Those present contributed more than \$800 to the Books for Cuba Fund, which makes possible donations of Pathfinder books to libraries and other institutions in Cuba.

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Tel Aviv out of Lebanon!

Continued from front page

the Israeli rulers, with Tel Aviv insisting that even the direct hit by its helicopters on a clearly marked ambulance — filmed for the world to see — was within its divine right since, according to its unfounded claim, the driver was a supporter of Hezbollah.

The biggest lie of all is that Hezbollah bears the blame for the current fighting. The source of the conflict in Lebanon, as in the occupied Palestinian territories and within Israel itself, is the actions of the occupier state. Israel exists on the land of people its rulers displaced and now preside over with an iron fist. Successive Israeli governments have attacked, invaded, and taken territory from neighboring Arab nations as well, all under the guise of “security” for the imperialist-backed Zionist state. Tel Aviv denies Palestinians a nation, the right to land, the right to jobs, and the right to equal treatment within its borders.

This is the root of the conflict. Without a just settlement of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination there will be no peace in the Middle East.

Despite the repression, checkpoints, military occupation, and indignities meted out to the Arab population in the region, Israel’s rulers cannot stamp out the resistance of the Arab people. Like the struggling Palestinians, the beleaguered masses fleeing the Israeli bombs in Lebanon are cheering the fighters in the south who refuse to bend their knees and accept the boot of the occupiers. We rejoice with them in that militant resistance.

Washington has a long, sordid history of direct military intervention and helping to impose reactionary governments on the people of Lebanon. The Clinton White House in particular is one the most openly pro-Zionist administrations. The “peace” agreement Washington is now promoting amounts to exacting help in a crackdown

on those who resist occupation in exchange for a promise that Tel Aviv will consider withdrawing from the Lebanon sometime down the road.

The Israeli regime has also sought deals with governments in the region, from Egypt to Jordan, to give back land it stole in previous wars in exchange for more open help in limiting the capacity of the Arab masses to put up a fight for their rights.

Washington has aided this campaign by placing the label of “terrorist” on any government that refuses to bow down to the wishes of the masters of western imperialism. These moves are part of the drive toward war by a capitalist power driven more to rely on military force to shore up its declining profit rates. Washington’s stepped-up probes against North Korea and China, its insistence that it must maintain a massive military presence in Asia, and its current occupation of parts of Yugoslavia point to the future the lords of Wall Street have in store for humanity — one of more interventions and wars.

All the deals Washington and Tel Aviv have patched together, however, have not succeeded in crushing the will to fight for an independent Palestinian nation and for the right to live as human beings with dignity.

We stand on the side of those who have continued to resist and who are battling Israel’s military might today in Lebanon. We are using our campaign to get out the truth about the history of imperialist intervention in Lebanon, and the role of the Zionist state of Israel as a brake on the struggle to free humanity in the Middle East from the yoke of colonialism and unceasing imperialist assaults. We call on all our supporters to organize actions across the United States to demand:

Israeli forces out of Lebanon now!

End all U.S. support to Tel Aviv!

‘We stand with Korean people’

Below we reprint major excerpts of greetings to the Korean people by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, sent on the occasion of the April 15 national holiday in North Korea.

As Washington and Seoul step up their military threats and provocations, we stand with the Korean people in support of your unconditional determination to win national sovereignty and reunification. The true aggressor on the Korean peninsula for the last fifty years has been U.S. imperialism, backed by Washington’s client regime in Seoul as well as imperial Tokyo.

The latest war preparations against your country are of a piece with Washington’s renewed threats against China, including sending the largest U.S. naval armada to the region since the war against the Indochinese peoples. These bellicose moves are aimed at upholding the national division of China between the mainland and the island of Taiwan — a division imposed nearly half a century ago by the political representatives of China’s defeated capitalist and landlord classes, with the backing of U.S. imperialism. On the eve of the restoration of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty after more than a century of British colonial domination, the Socialist Workers Party supports the Chinese people against the efforts of the capitalist rulers in Washington and Taipei to deny them national reunification.

Washington’s war drive extends to the socialist revolution in Cuba as well. The U.S. rulers know they have failed in all their attempts over more than thirty-five years to bring the workers and farmers of Cuba to their knees. So Washington is intensifying not only its eco-

nomic war against Cuba, but also military provocations conducted under the guise of “civilian” and “humanitarian” actions launched from U.S. soil.

Washington and its imperialist brethren around the world, however, face resistance to their profit drive and trade offensives, which threaten to drag humanity once again toward fascism and war. Protests in Japan demanding the withdrawal of tens of thousands of U.S. troops from Okinawa have grown in past months. Rebelious peoples from Ireland to Quebec and Palestine have given notice that they remain intransigent in their fight for national liberation. Koreans living in the U.S. have been among the thousands who have turned out to demand equal rights for immigrants and an end to the police brutality that was captured on film in the cop beating of Mexican workers near Los Angeles April 1.

The Socialist Workers Party identifies with the determination of the Korean people not to be bullied into submission. We salute the youth and workers in South Korea, who are demanding that former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo be brought to justice for their crimes, and who are also exposing the undemocratic nature of the current regime in Seoul. We support the fight to win freedom for student leaders Jong Min Ju and Ri Hye Jong, jailed by the South Korean government for exercising their democratic right to travel to the DPRK in support of the reunification of their country.

Our party pledges to continue to tell the truth about Korea and join with other workers and young people in championing the struggle for reunification and opposing threats against the DPRK by Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul.

N. Korean gov’t rebuts U.S. lies

Continued from front page

the DPRK’s armed forces, said in a March 29 statement that “the armistice on the Korean peninsula is reaching its limit.

“The chief executive of south Korea recently cried out over ‘possible military adventure’ of the north and ‘unpredictable danger.’ He even said the ‘south-north Korean issues can be settled only through military strength.’ Meanwhile, ill-boding military movements that can be seen on the eve of war are being made extensively in the area south of the military demarcation line.”

Seoul, Kwang Jin continued, “had staged a large-scale aerial ‘surprise attack’ exercise against the north” at the beginning of the year. “In February,” the statement said, “they held a joint naval exercise code-named Valiant Usher 96-2K involving many warships and fighter planes. At this moment, they are staging a large-scale combined exercise dubbed Hoguk 96.”

The statement pointed out that the “south Korean authorities regarded the temporary difficulties facing fellow countrymen in the wake of flood damage as a chance for northward invasion and to spread false rumors about ‘collapse’ of the north while obstructing international humanitarian assistance to the DPRK.”

This was in reference to massive floods last year that destroyed large parts of the country’s northwest region, its main source of rice, the basic food staple for the DPRK’s population of 21 million. The North Korean government has asked the United Nations for interna-

tional assistance of 1.2 million tons of grain by October to alleviate the hardships. Both Seoul and Washington are sabotaging the food relief effort.

The moves by Seoul are “part of a provocation for war,” said the statement by Kwang Jin.

To counter Seoul’s actions, backed by the 37,000-strong U.S. force deployed along the DMZ, the DPRK government announced it would carry out its own military maneuvers in the area.

“If the south Korean puppets dare encroach upon an inch of our land and a blade of our grass,” the statement concluded, “our army will take a powerful self-defensive step to defeat them. Our army and our people are resolved to smash the enemy’s aggression, full of confidence and revolutionary optimism.”

The capitalist media responded with accusations of aggression by Pyongyang.

On his way to Tokyo, U.S. president William Clinton stopped in Seoul and met with president Kim Young Sam April 16. While there, Clinton announced the White House has definitively turned down Pyongyang’s proposal for a separate peace treaty with Washington. The U.S. president proposed instead negotiations between Washington, Seoul, Pyongyang, and Beijing that may lead to a peace treaty that would replace the armistice accord. At the same time, Clinton pledged “the steadfast U.S. commitment” to keeping the U.S. troops in South Korea backing the 650,000 troops Seoul has stationed near the DMZ.

Rebellions don’t explode politely

“Should all armed actions by Hamas be defended uncritically because it speaks in the name of the oppressed?” asks Geoff Mirelowitz. Not so long ago the *Militant* characterized Hamas as right-wing, he says.

Washington’s propaganda campaign portrays many young Palestinian fighters as unthinking fanatics motivated by reactionary ideas. But the reality is different: hundreds of thousands of Palestinians continue to resist the Israeli government’s savagery and terror — with whatever methods of struggle they can find. Those

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

fighters are engaged in a progressive struggle that working people around the world rightly identify with.

For a brief period a few years ago the *Militant* did erroneously describe Hamas as a right-wing organization. Hamas however, is a bourgeois nationalist organization that has won growing support among workers and youth in the struggle for Palestinian national rights. Members of the organization participated in the *intifada* (uprising) that began in December 1987. Hamas has a pro-capitalist outlook and leadership. But by staking out a position of unyielding opposition to Israeli rule it attracts many workers and youth who have a healthy hatred of their oppressors and are seeking ways to fight.

Communists in Palestine would work with and try to recruit to a revolutionary program and organization members and supporters of Hamas, as well as activists in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). That would not be true if Hamas was a rightist organization.

Hamas’s surge in popularity is partly a reflection of the resistance against the Zionist occupiers, who are the real terrorists. But support for Hamas also stems from the political retreat and growing bourgeoisification of the PLO with the recoiling of its central leadership from the revolutionary course in the struggle for national self-determination the organization had charted earlier.

The March 13 imperialist-inspired “antiterrorist summit” showed Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat playing a central role in giving that gathering of world terrorists a facade of Arab representation.

The Zionist regime has demolished Arabs homes as collective punishment for struggling against the occupation force on and off since 1968, the year after it seized the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 war. Scores of Palestinians have angrily watched their homes bulldozed or dynamited by Israeli soldiers. Children have been shot down like animals by Israeli troops simply for throwing stones while protesting these atrocities.

In the absence of revolutionary leadership, the crisis produced the conditions where Hamas has increased its following. Its radical tactic of suicide bombing missions attracts young activists searching for ways to fight their bloodthirsty oppressors in Tel Aviv.

The spark of resistance has not been extinguished from the Palestinian people despite all the brutal measures inflicted on them. And the fighting Irish republicans continue to resist the British occupiers in Northern Ireland as the Canary Wharf attack reveals.

Both in Ireland and Palestine communist organizations lack presence, or size and political weight, and therefore cannot directly affect the relationship of class forces or the calculations of the respective ruling classes. That can and will change in the future.

Until then, however, Irish and Palestinian fighters will look out for themselves with the methods they’ve used for decades. Those methods have problems. But if fighters pledged to stop using them before having *better* methods and qualitatively *stronger* allies then the outcome would be unconditional surrender and defeat.

In 1965, 10 days before his assassination, Malcolm X told a packed audience in London, “When the Afro-Americans reacted against the brutal measures that were executed against them by the police, the press all over the world projected them as rioters.” The revolutionary leader continued, “This doesn’t say it’s intelligent, but whoever heard of a sociological explosion that was done intelligently and politely? And this is what you’re trying to make the Black man do. You’re trying to drive him into a ghetto and make him the victim of every kind of unjust condition imaginable. Then when he explodes, you want him to explode politely!”

Mirelowitz notes that Nelson Mandela insisted on “minimizing the loss of human life” when he led the armed wing of the African National Congress. It certainly would be fantastic if the Palestinians or the Irish freedom struggle had a leadership of the caliber of Malcolm X, Mandela, or Fidel Castro. But should they stop fighting until leadership of that caliber develops?

The key task for communists is not to criticize those who are resisting oppression but search them out, fight shoulder to shoulder with them, learn from them, and in the process arm them with the lessons of past struggles. The campaign to sell the *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, for example, is targeted at fighters like the Palestinian suicide bombers who are among the oppressed masses of the world who cry out for action against a common oppressor.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

Rail workers vote down contract proposal

BY BILL ARTH

NEWARK, New Jersey — Members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) have voted by a 54 percent majority to reject a contract proposal from the National Carriers Conference Committee, the employers' organization involving most major U.S. freight railroads. This was the first UTU rank-and-file ratification vote on a national contract. Its terms would have covered 50,000 conductors, brakemen, and yardmasters.

Many rail workers were dissatisfied with the wage package. The contract called for a 3.5 percent increase on ratification, retroactive to Dec. 1, 1995, and similar raises in July of 1997 and 1999. It also called for a 1 percent lump sum "signing bonus," as well as lump sums of 3 percent in 1996 and 3.5 percent in 1998. These would not be rolled into the basic wage rate. Up to half of this increase could have been deducted to pay for increased medical expenses. A cost-of-living allowance would have kicked in when the contract expired, on the last day of the 20th century.

Luis Santana, a Conrail brakeman in New Jersey, said, "We're getting short-changed. I don't understand how CEOs are getting \$4 million, \$5 million, or \$6 million and we're getting 1 percent."

Another sore point with many rail workers was the provisions intended to pressure them to take less time off work. The proposal increased the number of required days of work to qualify for medical and dental benefits from one day in the previous month to seven days, and increased by 50 percent the number of days required to qualify for a vacation. The contract also reduced from five days to 48 hours the

length of time a worker who was bumped from a job would have to bump onto another job.

The proposal included mechanisms for union-company collaboration on the further erosion of work rules. A section called "Enhanced Customer Service" allowed the railroads to institute on a "six-month trial basis" practices that violate work rules on "starting times, yard limits, calling rules, on/off duty points, and class of service restrictions." A "Joint Committee" of union and company representatives would assess "whether a need really exists" for the rules violations in order to "provide more efficient service" or "attract or retain a customer."

UTU officials sponsored meetings around the country to sell the proposal to the ranks. These meetings were modestly attended. Officials at the meetings stated that such a good proposal was possible only because of help from the Democratic White House. They warned that if the contract was rejected, a worse contract would be imposed by a Republican-controlled Congress.

Under the Railway Labor Act, a series of federal laws put in place mostly in the 1920s to hamstring the right of rail workers to strike, Congress can directly intervene to stop rail and airline strikes. Since 1963, Congress has intervened in at least a dozen strikes, including legislating the end of a 19-hour national strike on April 17, 1991. At that time, UTU officials ordered rail workers to return to work so as not to challenge the "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party who then had a majority in Congress. This was especially important, the officials argued, because rail unions needed to be seen as patriotic during the

war then being waged against the working people of Iraq.

The recent rash of fatal rail accidents has put a spotlight on the central issues facing rail workers: a reduced number of workers are working long hours moving more freight over less track with deteriorating equipment. At the same time, the railroad companies are posting giant profits and are pushing for mergers and work rule changes so they can make even more money. In 1985 the rail bosses got top union officials to sign concession contracts to begin to eliminate brakemen from crews. Since that time, crew sizes on most railroads have been slashed from an engineer, conductor, and two brakemen, to crews consisting of an engineer and conductor only. Wages for new hires have been slashed by 25 percent, while wages for workers with seniority have stagnated.

Many rail workers saw the current contract negotiations as an opportunity to make up some lost ground at a time when the railroads are making big profits. Instead, they saw the proposed contract as a continuation of concessions, and with their they vote said, "Not this time." Darryl Davis, a Conrail conductor in New Jersey, said, "From all the conversations I have with other people, every contract got worse and worse. They gave them a lump sum and they ran with it. It's about being greedy. This needed to be voted down. It wasn't worth nothing. Just take, take, take."

With the rejection, the negotiations will continue to wind their way through the elaborate procedures established by the Railway Labor Act.

In another railroad contract under negotiation, the Transportation Communications Union (TCU) has served notice of a May 9

strike deadline. The TCU represents carmen and clerks, who are facing massive job elimination due partly to computerization. The railroads have stonewalled in negotiations, demanding work rule concessions and sweeping rollbacks in health and welfare coverage. About 35 members of the TCU held an informational picket April 11 in front of Conrail's corporate headquarters in Philadelphia. Most were clerks who were laid off last summer after some 25 years working for the company, who were protesting the low railroad unemployment benefits and demanding better treatment.

Bill Arth is a member of the UTU at Conrail in New Jersey. UTU members Dennis Richter at Conrail in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania; Jeff Powers at the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe in Washington state; Jane Roland at Norfolk and Southern in North Carolina; and Glova Scott in Philadelphia contributed to this article.

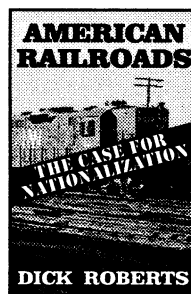
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LETTERS

Hamas and IRA bombings

An April 1 *Militant* editorial polemicalizes against those who tail after Washington's hypocritical "anti-terror" campaign and singles out for criticism the view that Hamas is a group of "right-wing extremists." In an accompanying article Naomi Craine defends the view that the IRA's bombing of London's Canary Wharf was "a shot across the bow" at the British government.

The rulers often apply the term "extremist" to anyone who fights oppression in an uncompromising fashion. However, it does not seem so long ago that the *Militant* characterized Hamas and its politics as right-wing. What accounts for the apparent change in your thinking? Should all armed actions by Hamas be defended uncritically because it speaks in the name of the oppressed?

When the IRA suspended its bombing campaign in 1994, articles in the *Militant* argued persuasively that those bombings had been politically counter-productive. Why view the Canary Wharf attack differently?

In defending the "shot across the bow" notion, Craine quotes from an inspiring article written by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky defending the political character of Herschel Grynszpan, a young Polish Jew who assassinated a Nazi official in Paris in 1938. A sentence that Craine did not choose to quote reads: "Our open moral solidarity with Grynszpan gives us an added right to say to all other would-be Grynszpans, to all those capable of self-sacrifice in the struggle against despotism and bestiality: Seek another road!"

Grynszpan killed a Nazi. Though his "mode of action" (as Trotsky refers to it) was wrong his target was clearer than a public building or bus.

Trotsky did not "critique" Grynszpan. Yet his article reads as an effective example of how a revolutionary voice can stand clearly against the chorus of capitalist reaction while expressing a

communist point of view on how to advance the struggle of the oppressed. The *Militant's* approach seems different and less persuasive.

Geoff Mirelowitz
Seattle, Washington

P.S.: In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Nelson Mandela writes about the choices made by Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) when, under his leadership, it launched armed actions against South Africa's apartheid regime.

Mandela explains, "Our strategy was to make selective forays against military installations, power plants, telephone lines and transportation links..." Mandela repeatedly emphasizes the ANC leadership's insistence on minimizing the loss of human life in these actions.

Eastern Germany

I sympathize with reader Mirelowitz's query [in a letter printed in the March 18 *Militant*] on what is meant by the "social relations" that the *Militant* reports have not been destroyed in eastern Europe. Before visiting eastern Germany last summer, I too found the term abstract.

The chance to talk to people in that area, however, gave me a somewhat better idea of what is meant. One anecdote will perhaps help illustrate this. One of the places I visited was the island of Rügen, off the northeast coast of Germany. Shortly after Germany was reunified in 1990, Prince Franz zu Putbus filed a claim to recover over 37,000 acres, as well as 78 agricultural concerns, chalk quarries, harbors, church grounds, hotels, houses, a brickworks, and at least one of his former castles. (He no doubt thought his request modest, as before the 1945 land reform, his father before him had owned fully three-fourths of the 185,000-acre island (pop. 83,600).

As I walked through the massive park in the small town of Putbus, I asked our hosts if the prince



had tried to reclaim the park as well (I knew from the guidebook that it had formerly been the castle grounds). The contempt with which our friend snorted, "He wouldn't dare!" gave an idea what these people think of the claims of former capitalists and landowners to "their" property, as did the tone — a combination of incredulity and pride — with our hosts described how they pushed back this unlanded nobleman's attempted land grab. Some 1,500 Rügen farmers and their supporters had rallied in Putbus in July 1993 to successfully oppose the prince's claim.

Our host was laid off shortly after unification. Although he is working now, many of his friends are not, and they clearly feel that they are losing much more than they are gaining. What they miss most is "the sense of community. The market economy is pulling people apart," he said, and "money corrupts."

The deep discontent we found in Rügen was repeated in different ways among many who we talked

to in eastern Germany. Despite 40 years of Stalinist, bureaucratic misrule, only 19 percent of people in the east think that socialism is "a system doomed to failure," according to a poll conducted by the *Spiegel* newsmagazine last summer; 79 percent, however, agreed with the statement that "the idea of socialism is good, but the politicians were incapable of accomplishing it."

Soon after reunification, 80 percent of all industrial jobs in the east disappeared; over 80 percent of those working in agriculture have lost their jobs; average apartment rent has soared nearly 800 percent; and unemployment, officially over 16 percent, with the real figure estimated at double that — is rising rapidly.

And the crisis in deepening, as is reflected in recent spectacular failures — despite massive subsidies — in the Bonn government's attempts to privatize industry in the east — including the recent bankruptcy of the Bremer Vulkan shipyards, threatening 23,000 jobs.

In my opinion, "social relations" is in part simply the attitudes people have toward the land, the factories, their co-workers, their children's right to day care and education. People in east Germany have not been won away from these attitudes by the taste of capitalism, and its deepening crisis, that they have gotten — quite the contrary. And these intangible "attitudes" have become the biggest concrete obstacle to reimposing capitalist relations in the area.

Robert Dees
Menlo Park, California

Why defend Cuba?

I was very interested in your article "Cuba Rebutts Lies in U.S. Press" (April 1, 1996, Vol. 60/No 13, no author listed), which I found while exploring the internet. I cannot understand why your author would argue over where the shooting of two American-owned aircraft took place, and not the morality of the issue itself. I assure you, I am not familiar with one American concerned with whether the planes were over international waters or not. Instead, the fact that the Cuban government would knowingly shoot down peaceful planes appears to be the common topic of discussion.

It would not have made a difference if the planes flew directly over Havana. In other words, the issue is not where the planes were shot down, but why they were shot down at all. Perhaps your reporters should tackle questions that Americans seem more to care about. It might help to bolster the *Militant's* apparently low circulation.

Chad Oakley

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.

ANC presses to end violence in KwaZulu

BY GREG ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The leadership of the African National Congress is continuing to press for a political solution to the internecine violence wracking KwaZulu-Natal. This South African province, adjacent to the Indian Ocean on the country's eastern flank, has seen up to 20,000 deaths over the past decade in political violence.

Most of the violent assaults have been carried out by supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party, headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who was head of the KwaZulu bantustan during the apartheid regime. Buthelezi is today minister for home affairs in South Africa's coalition government. Inkatha officials have increasingly voiced calls for provincial autonomy.

"The Inkatha Freedom Party is not interested in secession," ANC leader Thabo Mbeki, who is also one of the country's deputy presidents, told participants at a February 24 conference in Durban. "It is interested in creating a political system which will ensure that a small minority keeps power and uses that power for its personal interests."

On March 15, at the urging of South African president Nelson Mandela, a meeting was held between Buthelezi, Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini, Mandela, and 2,000 Zulu traditional leaders, appointed headmen, and their aides at the king's palace outside Nongoma.

The meeting was planned as a prelude to an *imbizo*, a conference of the Zulu people at which grievances can be aired. In early April, Zwelithini issued a suggested program for the proposed imbizo. The imbizo had been called at Mandela's urging to bring about a halt to fighting throughout the province.

Heated exchanges broke out at the March 15 meeting. At one point some Inkatha supporters began jeering Mandela during his remarks.

'Speak the truth'

"I am not afraid to speak the truth, no matter where I am," Mandela responded. "You can shout until you are blue in the face, I am going to lay down...the riot act for everybody in this country if you are killing innocent people...."

"What is happening in this province is that members of the ANC are killing members of the IFP. Members of the IFP are killing members of the ANC. That is what must be stopped," said Mandela.

Following Mandela's remarks some of the chiefs voiced grievances, particularly about the shooting of eight Inkatha supporters who had marched on the ANC headquarters at Shell House in Johannesburg in March 1994.

Buthelezi reiterated his call for "autonomy," criticized the ANC for the

Shell House incident, and complained that revenge was being taken against Inkatha in the trial of former apartheid general Magnus Malan. Inkatha's deputy secretary general Zakhele Khumalo is one of

people in the rural KwaZulu-Natal town of Donnybrook. All those killed were ANC supporters. Some 2,000 mourners attended the Donnybrook funeral, which was addressed by ANC leader Steve



Armed members of ultrarightist Afrikaner Resistance Movement outside Johannesburg Supreme Court April 3. Five of their cohorts were convicted of murder.

the accused.

Afterward, Mandela said he was pleased the conference had taken place. "Despite the discordance, one thing came out clearly: people were beginning to think. I don't get discouraged when we meet obstacles. The overwhelming majority of people in KwaZulu-Natal are for peace."

He added, "We must stop the slaughter. The only way of doing so is to call the Zulu nation together and to sort out our problems, in particular their complaints against the president and the government."

On March 22, a band of men wielding assault rifles and pistols slaughtered 11

Tshwete. "Inkatha has to be disarmed whether Buthelezi likes it or not," he told the audience.

Malan trial opens

Meanwhile, on April 3, five members of the ultrarightist Afrikaner Resistance Movement, whose leader is Eugene Terre Blanche, were sentenced to 26 years in prison for murdering 20 people in a 1994 bombing campaign aimed at disrupting South Africa's first one-person, one-vote elections that year. The bombings began three days before the election when the rightists set off a car bomb outside a Johannesburg hotel, killing nine people.

In early March the murder trial of for-

mer apartheid defense minister Magnus Malan and 19 others opened in Durban. Trial testimony has already begun to paint a vivid picture of the crisis facing the white minority regime in its final years, and the brutal steps it took in the attempt to hold on to power.

A December 1985 military intelligence report pointed to the importance of building up Buthelezi politically and militarily. "If the Charterists [ANC] succeed in neutralizing Inkatha, it is unlikely that the other groups will be able to withstand the pressure against them. The end result of this will be that the government will only have the whites as a bastion against the revolutionary onslaught on the Republic of South Africa," the report said.

A sizeable group heckled Malan as he arrived at the court. "Down with Malan, down!" they shouted in Zulu. "They have caught the big fish," shouted one demonstrator to cheers from the rest of the crowd.

Malan and his co-accused have pleaded not guilty.

On March 12, two survivors of the 1987 Kwamakutha massacre described the events in which an Inkatha hit squad murdered 13 people. Siwela Tusini told the court how she and her husband had lain on the floor while gunmen executed five of their children in an adjoining room.

The chief prosecution witness to date has been former South African Defense Force intelligence officer Major J.B. Opperman, who has turned state's evidence and is in a witness protection program. Opperman has provided extensive details of the chain of command, from the State Security Council on down.

Among other things, Opperman has testified that 206 Inkatha members were sent to a secret South African military camp in what was then South West Africa and is now independent Namibia.

He said the camp also trained recruits from Angola's counterrevolutionary UNITA, and Mozambique's RENAMO. He detailed their training in use of various assault rifles, grenades, explosives, and land mines.

Immigrants protest in Paris for rights

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—"Police Everywhere — Justice Nowhere," read one of the hand-painted banners where several thousand protesters hit the streets here March 30. It was the third demonstration in a week to support the struggle of hundreds of undocumented immigrants and protest the police repression against them.

On March 18, more than 400 undocumented immigrants of African origin occupied the Saint Ambroise church here demanding regular immigration papers.

Five days later, hundreds of police entered the occupied church at 5:00 a.m. and expelled 430 people, arresting 39 of them. The church priest had signed a letter calling on the police to intervene, and Paris Archbishop Jean-Marie Lustiger had personally authorized the action.

The police announced that the 39 arrested immigrants would be expelled from the country. The next day, however, the courts ordered their release because of errors by the police in the formal arrest procedure.

Many of the protesters were victims of the harsh immigration laws passed by former Interior Minis-

ter Charles Pasqua in 1993. Among other restrictions, the Pasqua laws mean that children born in France of immigrant parents are no longer automatically French citizens. They must apply for French citizenship at age 18 and can be refused citizenship by order of the police. Reunification of immigrant families, allowed under previous laws, has become virtually impossible.

In addition, demands for political asylum are now being systematically refused. Only 3,000 such requests were accepted last year out of a total of 19,000. Only 16 Algerians were granted political asylum out of 2,208 applications.

Last fall, under the *Vigipirate* "anti-terrorist" plan, the government sent troops into train stations, the Paris metro and airports in a virtual anti-immigrant witch-hunt. Nonwhite immigrants were stopped and searched at gunpoint, often four or five times a day, as the press waged an hysterical campaign against "Islamic terrorists."

Second occupation

Having been evicted from the Saint Ambroise Church, the protesters and their supporters then occupied the nearby Japy Gymnasium.

Two days later, on March 24, more than 1,000 police stormed the gymnasium and dragged out the occupants: 117 men, 77 women, and 100 children. Sixty-three more immigrants were arrested and threatened with immediate deportation. That evening, 1,500 people, a majority of African origin, demonstrated near the site of the police evacuation.

Ali and Samba, both from the former

French colony of Mali, were present at the demonstration, although neither had taken part in the occupation of the church and the gymnasium.

While they have both lived in France for many years and have worked regularly, neither of them has residency papers. "We need everyone's support to force the government to give us papers," Ali said.

Near the back of the demonstration a group of workers of African origin held an impromptu rally. With a bullhorn they led chants of "*Tous ensemble!*" (All together!), which had been the central slogan of the massive strike wave and demonstrations against the French government's austerity drive in December.

On March 28, 52 Malians, 7 of whom had taken part in the occupation of the Saint Ambroise Church, were expelled from the country and shipped back to Mali in a government-chartered airplane. They were not in a docile mood, though, as the French policemen who accompanied the flight learned. The 52 immigrants, some of them with their feet bound together by adhesive tape, revolted in the plane, seized the clubs the police had been using against them, and defended themselves.

On March 30, some 3,000 demonstrators marched in Paris protesting the arrests and deportations and calling on the government to grant papers to the remaining families. The demonstration was called by some 30 associations and unions.

Nat London is an auto worker at Renault and a member of the CGT union federation. Jean-Pierre Dubois contributed to this article.

For further reading

The democratic revolution in South Africa

Jack Barnes

The one-person, one-vote elections in 1994 and the sweeping victory of the ANC were historic steps in the democratic revolution in South Africa. A major article in *New Internationalist* no. 5 explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of social and economic inequality. Only among the most committed cadres of the ANC-led struggle, the article states, can the working class begin forging a communist leadership. Also includes "Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola," two speeches by Fidel Castro. \$9.00



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