

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Revolution is fruit of struggle'
Interview with Cuban general

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 60 NO. 29 AUGUST 19, 1996

Defend democratic rights!

Gov't uses TWA crash to expand use of wiretaps

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

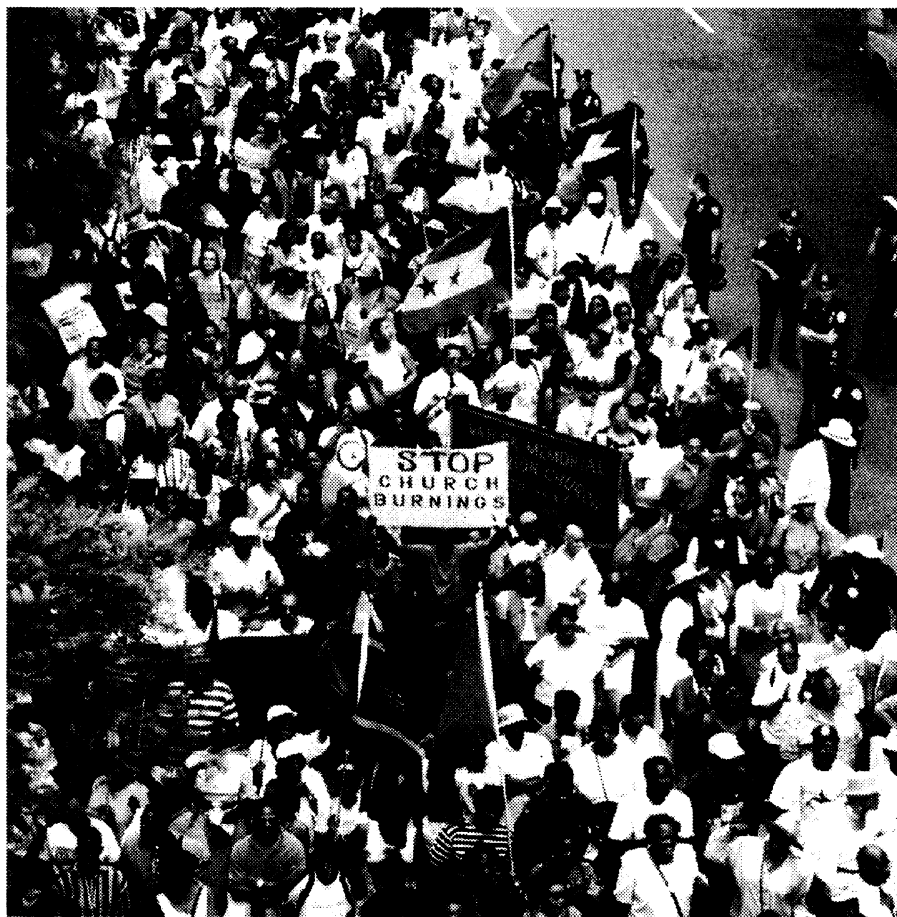
NEW YORK — In the weeks since a Trans World Airline 747 jet crashed over the Atlantic July 17, killing all 230 aboard, President William Clinton and Republican politicians have stepped up a bipartisan campaign calling for stiffer "antiterrorism" measures. These include increased inspections at airports, investigations into airport workers' backgrounds, expanding the use of police wiretapping, and putting chemical tracers in explosives.

The crash of TWA flight 800, which had just taken off from Kennedy Airport here, bound for Paris, was the second worst disaster in U.S. aviation history. The cause of the crash has not yet been determined. Most of the wreckage was still under water two weeks after the disaster, and investigators admit they still "need the forensic evidence." Almost immediately, however, the big-business media began painting the picture that the crash was the result of a bomb or missile, and downplaying the possibility of a mechanical failure.

This campaign accelerated after a pipe bomb went off July 27 at the Olympic Centennial Park in Atlanta, killing one woman and injuring 111 others. A Turkish TV reporter also died of a heart attack while running to cover the blast.

A security directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on July 25 states that on international flights, "the luggage and carry-on items of certain passengers will be emptied and searched and in some cases bags will be X-rayed and scanned with an explosive detection device." Continuing with the directive, the FAA said, "Passengers will be subject to the increased searches if they have a passport from or plan to travel to Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria." In addition, the FAA mandates that "other passengers on international

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Leonard Tucker

July 28 march on way to UN, New York, to protest racist arsons of Black churches.

'Stop racist church burnings'

BY AL DUNCAN

NEW YORK — Some 1,200 people marched to the United Nations in "A Call For Action against church bombings, police brutality, and racial injustice" July 28. The protest was called to commemorate the July 28, 1917, silent march against lynchings that was organized and led by W.E.B. Du Bois, a founder of the NAACP. The 1996 march was called to protest the burning of 70 Black churches in the South that have been torched in the last 18 months.

"People should get involved," said Harriet Lewis, a transit worker. "We need

unity to fight the attacks on affirmative action, welfare, and bad working conditions."

A contingent from the 6,000 striking hospital workers of Service International Employees Union Local 144 participated in the protest. "No Justice, No Peace," chanted the marchers, who were majority Black and included a sizable layer of youth. Speakers included Rev. Al Sharpton; Pam Africa, of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Conrad Muhammad of the Nation of Islam; and Rev. Calvin Butts, of Abyssinian Baptist Church.

'Anti-terrorist' measures aimed at working class

The following statement was issued July 31 by Socialist Workers Party candidates for U.S. president and vice-president, James Harris and Laura Garza.

Capitalizing on the explosion of Trans World Airlines flight 800 with the loss of all 230 passengers and crew, and the pipe bomb in Atlanta, the administration of William Clinton is spearheading a campaign to

Stop Clinton's assault on welfare! — editorial, p. 14

curtail democratic rights and push back the right to privacy. The government is targeting immigrant workers and has increased pressure against countries such as Cuba and Iran that attempt to defend their national sovereignty. Each of these moves must be energetically opposed by the labor movement and young people involved in social protest action.

The harsher measures are being put in place for one reason: to protect the interests of the wealthy minority that rules the United States. These billionaire families more and more fear working people. That fear comes from the fact that we are resisting—and will wage more widespread struggles against in the future—their drive to make working people pay for the crisis of their system of exploitation and oppression, that of capitalism.

The U.S. government and the wealthy families it serves recognize that a sharper class struggle is developing. They are preparing for bigger battles ahead in which tens of millions will organize a revolutionary movement for a government of workers and farmers.

From just moments after the explosion the government has downplayed the notion that the crash could be the result of a catastrophic

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Saturday and Sunday, August 10 & 11

Celebrate victory in Mark Curtis's fight for freedom!

Special weekend of campaigning for socialism across the U.S.

Honor the example of Mark Curtis, recently paroled to Illinois after seven and a half years in Iowa prisons on frame-up charges.

Join with others in your city to help sell Pathfinder books, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial* and campaign for Socialist Workers candidates. (See directory on p. 12 for special weekend campaigners nearest you).

Illinois welcomes Mark Curtis back to the struggle

Saturday, August 10
7 PM reception, 8 PM program
1223 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago

Naomi Craine will speak for National Committee of Socialist Workers Party

Auspices: Mark Curtis Defense Committee in association with Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc.

Endorsed by Illinois Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists

Iowa celebrates release of Mark Curtis

Saturday, August 10
6:30 reception, 7:30 program
2724 Douglas Ave., Des Moines

Speakers:
Norton Sandler, member, National Committee of Socialist Workers Party
Hazel Zimmerman, longtime leader of Mark Curtis Defense Committee
Larry Ginter, hog farmer and member of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Auspices: Militant Labor Forum

Cubans mark revolutionary anniversary

BY BRIAN TAYLOR
AND JACK WILLEY

SANTIAGO DE CUBA — "We will continue fighting each time with more efficiency, with more consciousness, with more responsibility.... We don't forget for a second the moment in which we live, the epoch in which we live, the world in which we live," said Cuban president Fidel Castro in his speech on July 26 in Holguín. Thousands gathered there to celebrate the 43rd anniversary of the 1953 assault on the Moncada barracks, which initiated the revolutionary war to overthrow the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista.

"The capitalist system is creating a world where there is increasing poverty," Castro stated. "It's a world with growing illiteracy, where people have less security, a world with more drugs and more violence.... This is the world the U.S. empire is offering us — a world with less and less independence,

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UN hears debate on Puerto Rico independence — page 7



Tel Aviv shuts West Bank again

Israeli troops once again blockaded the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank July 26, citing the killing of two Israeli citizens allegedly by Palestinian gunmen. This action, which prevents 1 million Palestinians from entering Israel, came just three days after newly elected Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu had announced a slight easing of the five-month closure of the Palestinian self-ruled areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Even that limited measure would have only allowed 10,000 Palestinians who normally work in Israel to cross the border, and only persons over 30 years of age and married.

Half million strike in Israel

Hundreds of thousands of workers in Israel went on strike July 17 to protest budget cuts of \$1.5 billion and thousands demonstrated outside parliament in Jerusalem. It was a 10-hour strike, led by Histadrut trade union federation, which has over 700,000 members in private industry and government service. The walkout closed the Haifa oil refineries, the Israel Electric Corporation, the giant Israel Chemicals corporation, and the Mekorot Water Company and spread throughout the city closing all government offices, hospitals, the postal service, fire departments, day-care centers, and Israel TV.

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange was forced to close, still spinning from 10 days of losses after a 15 percent drop since the budget cuts were announced. Among the planned budget cuts are more expensive bus fares and doctor's visits, lower child-care allowances, cutting pension plans for civil servants, and reduced spending in the public sector, eliminating as many as 10,000 jobs.

U.S. Congress passes sanctions against Iran, Libya investments

The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation July 23 approving sanctions on foreign countries for investing in the oil industries of Iran and Libya. U.S. companies already face restrictions to investing in either country because of Washington's allegations that they are "rogue" nations that support terrorism. The Senate has already passed the bill and congressional aides said

U.S. president William Clinton will sign it. The bill allows the president to impose two of six sanctions. Sanctions include export and import bans on companies, denial of U.S. bank loans and official credit, and exclusion from U.S. government contracts and markets.

Hugo Paemen, the European Commission ambassador to the United States, called the bill "an extreme case of extraterritorial legislation" and warned that the European Union "is now considering countermeasures in order to defend its citizens and industries." Libyan officials condemned the sanctions as "state-sponsored terrorism."

Loan delay for Russia

The International Monetary Fund said it will delay its \$330 million monthly payment to Russia, citing problems with tax collection, according to July 23 news reports. The IMF has set strict conditions in order for Russia to receive its \$10.2 billion three-year loan granted in February, including monthly reviews of Russia's economic status. The payment delay by the IMF comes three weeks after Russian president Boris Yeltsin's re-election.

A few days after the IMF decision, the Russian central bank announced it plans to limit foreign investors in treasury bills to 19 percent yields. Many capitalists had been raking in up to 200 percent returns by investing in the treasury market through Russian intermediaries.

Meanwhile, a nearly two-week strike by coal miners in Russia's Far East had swollen to 8,500 by July 26. The workers have not been paid in five months. Power plant workers in the Primorye region are also protesting unpaid wages, and 106 have begun a



Thousands of Bosnian veterans demonstrated at the parliament building in Sarajevo July 26 demanding the government pay back pensions and other state aid. In other developments, chauvanist Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic announced his resignation from his political posts July 21. U.S. spokesman Richard Holbrooke declared that Washington still wants Karadzic brought to trial for alleged war crimes.

hunger strike.

Aborigines die in Australia jails

In mid-July two Aboriginal men died in jail in Australia; one in Queensland and one in New South Wales. This brings to 100 the number of Aborigines who have died in police custody since June 1989. Amnesty International reported 22 Aborigines died in detention last year — the highest annual number since records started being kept in 1980.

London holds up EU retaliation against U.S. anti-Cuba law

The British government, saying it needs to protect its own sovereignty, has waffled on the European Union's attempt to retaliate against the U.S. legislation tightening the embargo on Cuba, commonly known as the Helms-Burton law. The law opens the door for private court actions against foreign companies that "traffic" in Cuban property that was nationalized after the revolution in 1959. London asked for and received a "stay of execution" on the draft, saying British officials needed time to study its provisions.

The Spanish hotel giant Sol Meliá said it will stay in Cuba and begin a lobbying campaign to revoke the Helms-Burton law. Sol

Meliá operates six hotels in Cuba and had sales of \$1 billion in 1995. Officials of the hotel giant said they would rather pull out of Miami Beach than leave Cuba.

Argentina's recession

Argentine president Carlos Menem dismissed his finance minister, Domingo Cavallo, July 26 after some members of Menem's Peronist Party said they would oppose Cavallo's budget cut plans. The economy in Argentina plunged into in a deep recession following the Mexican financial crisis last year.

Protests had mounted against government cuts from social benefits and some union officials called for Cavallo's ouster saying his policies had led to record unemployment and increased poverty. They organized a demonstration July 26 of 30,000, and are planning a general strike in August. Hugo Moyano, the leader of the truck drivers' union, told the *Washington Post*, "Changing a person doesn't change unemployment or poverty."

Peasants in Colombia

The Colombian army stopped a march by thousands of peasants who were heading to San José del Guaviare, southwest of Bogotá, protesting the destruction of their coca farms. The peasants had organized a strike in Guaviare since July 13 against a government measure that restricts democratic rights.

Several people were injured in clashes when the army confronted the peasants in riot gear and threw tear gas at them. The struggle involves some 15,000 peasants concentrated mainly in the town of Miraflores, southwest of Bogotá, where most of the coca farms are located.

Profit crisis for steelmakers

Competition is tightening in the steel industry worldwide, putting downward pressure on prices. According to the UN Economic Commission for Europe, the world is heading for a glut of crude steel capacity in the next few years. The *Wall Street Journal* reported July 18 that it is "bizarre" that U.S. steelmakers have been slashing prices while the industry is in "its third consecutive year of booming production and theoretically in a position to rake in enormous profits. But profitless prosperity may be about as good as it gets."

— MEGAN ARNEY

Linda Harris in Sydney, Australia, contributed to this column.

THE MILITANT

Defend Democratic Rights

The Clinton administration is leading the bipartisan assault on democratic rights under the guise of "fighting terrorism." But working people — especially immigrant workers — resist. The 'Militant' brings you the news from participants in the struggle. Don't miss a single issue!



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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Bonn fails to pass austerity budget

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The lower house of Germany's parliament (Bundestag), voted for major cuts in social programs on July 10 and 11. It approved raising the retirement age, cutting sick pay and pensions, reducing unemployment benefits, postponing an increase of payments to workers with children, and making it easier for small businesses to fire workers.

But less than two weeks later, the upper house of parliament rejected the plan.

German finance minister Theo Waigel said the cuts are necessary to bring the budget deficit below the ceiling of 3 percent of the country's gross national product. European Union members are required to meet this standard by 1997 in order to join a projected common currency.

Bonn is pushing these austerity measures as the German economy is entering another recession after a three-year upturn in the business cycle during which unemployment steadily rose to more than 11 percent. Joblessness has been much higher in East Germany where two-thirds of factory workers have been unemployed since 1990. Bonn has been pouring more than \$100 billion a year in the East, much of it for relief and make-work programs, to quell accelerating unrest over economic and social conditions there. The proposed budget cuts include a

reduction in these payments for eastern Germany.

More than 100,000 workers across Germany protested the parliament's decision in demonstrations and strikes on July 10. In mid June 350,000 workers had marched in Bonn against the federal austerity package.

The deep austerity measures of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government caused new headaches for the French rulers. "German budget puts pressure on Paris; France may have to try harder to meet Maastricht criteria for monetary union," read the headline of an article in the July 15 *Financial Times* of London.

French premier Alain Juppé's austerity plan could bring Paris's budget deficit to some 4 percent of France's GDP.

"But if Bonn, in the words of a French newspaper, is set on being Europe's 'best pupil' by doing its utmost to ensure its deficit really is 3 percent, is there not a danger that France will similarly have to be seen to be trying harder when it presents its 1997 budget in September?" asked the *Times*.

The trouble is that the Juppé plan already provoked the biggest labor mobilizations against capitalist austerity last November and December since the May 1968 revolt in France. The prospect of pushing for even deeper cuts raised the specter of new social explosions — which the French employers



Militant/Markie Wilson

Public workers march against austerity measures in Bonn, Germany, June 11.

and government are not looking forward to.

The German rulers are also nervous about mounting labor resistance. On July 20, Germany's Bundesrat, the upper house of parliament, rejected the government's austerity package. It sent the measure to a parliamentary arbitration committee. This vote may delay a final deal for at least two months. The Bundesrat is elected by the 16 state governments and is dominated by the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Oscar Lafontaine, SPD leader, made it clear, however, that his party has no intention of blocking Kohl's plan.

All the capitalist governments in Europe

are on the lookout for an upturn in the business cycle. Without that there is no possibility that either Germany or France will meet the 3 percent deficit criteria for EU monetary union. But the government policies of pushing for the elusive common currency are threatening to increase unemployment, accelerate deflation and the looming downturn in the business cycle, and even trigger a major financial collapse.

Adolf Roth, the budget expert of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union, was quoted in the *Financial Times* warning, "The budget contains no reserves to deal with the unexpected."

Washington contemplates intervention in Burundi

BY MEGAN ARNEY

On July 25 the army seized power in the central African country of Burundi, ousting the elected government and president Sylvestre Ntibantunganya. The military appointed major Pierre Buyoya as president after the coup d'état, outlawing political parties, disbanding parliament, imposing a dusk-to-dawn curfew, and closing the airport and borders.

The United Nations Security Council voted July 29 to condemn the coup. At the same time it voted to withhold from publication a report on the 1993 assassination of the country's first elected president. The big-business press claims the document may implicate the current officers in power. On July 31 the Organization of African Unity decided to impose sanctions on Burundi.

The *New York Times* had reported July 24 that the UN Security Council was preparing to send troops into Burundi. But Kofi Annan, UN Undersecretary General for "peacekeeping" missions, said that country after country has stalled in committing troops. U.S. representative to the United Nations Madeleine Albright declared July 24, "Under no circumstances would we tolerate a government installed by force or intimidation." But she added, "There will not be United States ground forces in such a peace-keeping operation."

"I think on a practical basis we will have to work with these people," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said two days later, referring to the new military junta in Burundi.

Buyoya has had ties to the Clinton ad-

ministration for some time. On July 29, Democratic Party officials said that prior to the coup Buyoya had been invited to attend the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in August. The *New York Times* described Buyoya as an "authoritarian democrat." Between 1994 and 1996, Buyoya received \$145,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (AID) for his Foundation for Peace, Unity and Democracy.

The July 27 *Washington Post* quoted a U.S. diplomat saying, "Considering the cast of characters who could have taken over, there could have been worse scenarios. If there was going to be a coup, and you had to pick someone to take over, he would probably be the one."

A government official in Washington reminded the world that Buyoya is "no stranger to the United States, and he may represent the last chance at stability and the resolution of Hutu and Tutsi problems."

Meanwhile, the ousted president Ntibantunganya who fled to the U.S. embassy in the capital city of Bujumbura on July 24 remains there.

The coup is the latest stage of years-long fighting between rival groups vying for power in the interests of competing layers of privileged professionals, wealthy merchants, and other capitalists.

The big-business press has consistently described the carnage in Burundi and neighboring Rwanda as the result of centuries-old tribal warfare between the Hutus and Tutsis. "The slaughter in Burundi, as in Rwanda, stems from hostility between two tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis," said an

editorial in the July 25 *Washington Post*.

In 1995 Washington sent 6,000 troops to Rwanda and the surrounding area under the guise of humanitarian aid to stop the "ethnic killing." With that move, U.S. imperialism displaced Paris and Brussels — Rwanda's former colonial master — as the dominant power in that country.

David Gakunzi, a native of Burundi and editor of *Coumbite*, a French-language magazine on politics in Africa and the Caribbean that was published in Paris, has put forward a different view. In an interview in 1988 with the *Militant*, he explained that the conflict between rival groups in the region was "political and social," not tribal.

"You do not have a situation where all the Tutsi are in power and all the Hutu are poor," he said. "You have Tutsis and Hutus who are bourgeois, Tutsis and Hutus who are peasants and suffering."

Both groups speak the same language, share the same territory and traditional political institutions, and — in spite of caricatures to the contrary — it is often impossible to tell which group an individual belongs to on the basis of physical appearance.

As a result of colonial rule and imperialist domination, Rwanda and Burundi are two of the poorest countries in the world. Life expectancy is 48 years in Burundi and 46 in Rwanda. At least half the population is illiterate. Some 85 percent of the population of Burundi lives in rural areas. Since 1993, per capita annual income in the country of 7 million has dropped from \$180 to \$165.

The area that makes up Rwanda and Burundi was part of German East Africa from 1899 until the end of World War I, when the League of Nations declared it Belgian territory under the name of Ruanda-Urundi. The Belgian imperialists took advantage of tribal divisions to maintain their rule. They built a power base among the feudal aristocracy that was drawn primarily from the Tutsis. Some 85 percent of the population of Burundi is Hutu, while Tutsis make up 14 percent. The composition in Rwanda is similar.

In the decade and a half following World War II, toilers in countries throughout Africa and other parts of the world led successful anticolonial uprisings winning political independence from the imperialist powers. In Rwanda, for example, a 1959 revolt — involving people from both tribes — wrested control of most government functions from the Belgian supported government, which was still dominated by people of Tutsi origin.

But working people did not take power in their own hands. The regimes that assumed the reigns of government in most

cases remained subservient to the former colonial masters or new imperialist powers that continued to dominate and exploit these nations.

In Burundi, where no similar uprising took place as in Rwanda, government power after the 1962 declaration of independence remained in the hands of the Tutsi-dominated monarchy. A 1965 rebellion forced the dissolution of the monarchy. But a succession of military regimes, backed by the Belgian and other imperialist powers, ruled the country for the next two decades. Power continued to be exercised by the section of the local bourgeoisie that came primarily among the members of the Tutsi tribe.

Buyoya, a Tutsi, was president in Burundi from 1987 until 1993, as the army's choice. In 1993 Cyprien Ntaryamira was elected in a nationwide ballot, the first ever Hutu president of Burundi. Ntaryamira and Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana were killed when their plane was hit by gunfire in 1995.

Since 1993, over 150,000 people have died in the fighting and 200,000 have been displaced from their homes. The rival groups, representing different sections of the local bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy, have mostly targeted civilians as revenge against their opponents.

Although Buyoya seized power under the guise of restoring peace, tranquillity is not likely in Burundi. The *Washington Post* reported that the military killed at least 50 people during the last weekend of July.

New 'Militant' business manager

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Beginning with this issue, Maurice Williams is the business manager of the *Militant*.

Williams, 39, has been a *Militant* staff writer since May 1994. He has written regularly on a wide range of topics, such as the U.S.-NATO war drive against Yugoslavia, the popular resistance to the Russian army's occupation of Chechnya, the U.S. ruler's attempts to attack Medicare and other social gains, and the growing use of the death penalty in this country.

He has provided firsthand coverage for the paper on the recent United Nations hearings on Puerto Rico's colonial status (see elsewhere in this issue), the NAACP convention held in July in Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Million Man March last October in the U.S. capital. In addition,

Williams has frequently written the popular In Brief column. He will remain a staff writer for the *Militant*.

Before joining the paper's staff, Williams was a meatpacker at the Monfort packinghouse in Marshalltown, Iowa. He was well known by his co-workers as a unionist and a socialist who sold the *Militant* and Pathfinder books on the job and participated with others in broader political activities, which he frequently covered for the *Militant*. In Des Moines, Iowa, he ran as the Socialist Workers candidate for city council. He was previously a member of the Steelworkers union in Cleveland, where he was active building and recruiting to the communist movement.

Naomi Craine, the business manager for the past three years, has been serving as the editor of the *Militant* since April.

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Garza, St. Louis strikers discuss immigration

BY JOHANNA RYAN

ST. LOUIS — "What you are seeing at McDonnell Douglas is not that unusual," Socialist Workers vice presidential candidate Laura Garza told a group of workers on strike against the aerospace giant here July 28. "From Caterpillar to the Detroit News, we're facing companies that are pushing to take back a whole chunk of the rights and benefits we've had for decades."

Garza's stop in St. Louis began with a visit to International Association of Machinists (IAM) District 837's union hall, a hub of strike activity where union volunteers staff a telephone hotline, run a strike kitchen, and dispatch pickets in yellow school buses to the struck plant's 60-plus gates. A group of strikers then invited Garza and her supporters on board one of the buses for a tour. As the bus passed various plant entrances, trad-

ing honks and cheers with squads of pickets on the line, striker Paul Wiley talked about the course of the struggle so far.

"Here's a 'construction gate,'" he pointed out. "The company set up these special gates, and the courts made it illegal for us to picket them. There's union contractors going in those gates." Wiley was part of mass picketing on day one of the strike. "They were set up for us that first day," he recalled. "About a hundred cop cars, helicopters, paddywagons all set to take us away."

"There's the Asset Protection Team guards, what we call the Ninjas," said striker Joe Bales. The nickname has been given to the private security cops because of their black karate-style uniforms and general air of intimidation. "These Ninjas are a professional union-busting outfit. They're actually provoking us out on the line, trying to get



Militant/John Steele

SWP presidential candidate James Harris addresses hotel strikers in Toronto July 29

us to do something illegal. I guess the reason this union is being targeted is simple," Bales reflected. "Slap the biggest kid in the group, and the other kids will fall into line." "The bosses are watching this fight," Garza agreed. "We need to get a little better at that as workers, being aware of what's happening to our brothers and sisters."

A lively discussion took place on the conditions faced by immigrant workers, and the crackdown on their rights advocated by Republicans and Democrats. Among the replacement workers crossing their picket lines, strikers say, are Mexican workers recruited by the company's California division. "I can't blame any of those people coming over, who can't get enough to feed their family in their country," commented Bales.

Another striker wasn't so sure. "I'm not for amnesty for any of these scabs, whether they're union members, immigrants, or whatever."

"Yeah, but it's the company that's creating the problem," Bales pointed out.

Garza agreed, adding that "one thing we can do is to rally behind our brothers and sisters in Mexico when they stage a strike or any struggle." This approach to workers from other countries was met with considerable interest from the IAM strikers.

"Building a fence is not the answer!" Bales said. "What we need is for the Mexican worker to get the same type of pay and conditions we get."

Back at the union hall, steward Jim Page told Garza about a union conference he'd attended in Germany, where he had met fellow workers from Airbus, the European industry giant. "They told us the bosses are constantly after them to work faster and make do with less, because they've got to compete with those Americans. And I thought, that's exactly what they say to us about you."

The following day the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* interviewed Garza about her support for the strike and for upcoming actions in defense of immigrant workers.

SWP on ballot in Washington State

BY EMILY FITZSIMMONS

SEATTLE — The Washington State Board of Elections informed the Socialist Workers Party July 24 that Jeff Powers, SWP candidate for governor, was certified to be on the September primary ballot. Powers had submitted over 2,000 signatures to the board.

The signatures were presented in lieu of paying a \$1,210 filing fee. Each valid signature was worth \$1.

James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for president, and Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party candidate for vice president, were earlier certified on the bal-

lot for the November election. The socialist campaign submitted over 500 signatures to obtain that goal — well over the 200 required.

Powers, a switchman on the Burlington Northern railroad, explained that media and speaking requests were coming into the campaign headquarters from all over Washington State. "We will be going to Bremerton, Everett, Yakima, and Spokane in the next few weeks to be interviewed by newspapers and radio talk shows," Powers said. "In Yakima and Spokane, I will be in candidate debates which will be televised on cable TV."

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD — Campaign is best tool to recruit to YS today

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS, write P.O. Box 14392, St. Paul, MN 55114. Tel: (612) 644-0051, Fax: (612) 645-1674.

BY JACK WILLEY

OBERLIN, Ohio — More than 75 Young Socialists and other youth met here July 8 during the Active Workers and International Socialist Conference to discuss the next steps in building our organization. The meeting was kicked off by Verónica Poses, from the YS National Steering Committee. Poses recently toured with Socialist Workers vice presidential candidate Laura Garza.

Poses reviewed the two major campaigns launched at the YS convention: working with others to build the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange and joining in the Socialist Workers election campaign.

"One of the best tools we have in the next

four months to recruit young fighters to the YS is the SWP election campaign. Everywhere James Harris and Laura Garza go, we find people who like what we say and want to get active," stated Poses.

Several people spoke about the opportunities to use the tours of the SWP presidential and vice-presidential candidates, local and state campaigns, and petitioning to get on the ballot to reach out and draw young fighters into the communist movement.

"We are facing a big test now," said Tom Alter from Chicago. "In the next four months we need to build chapters where we already have YS members."

YS leaders have been traveling with Harris and Garza as they tour throughout the U.S. and internationally. At every stop, they meet with local YS members to discuss out how to take the campaign to protest actions and how to increase the striking power of the YS by building local chapters that meet to plan out what to do every week.

Vanessa Knapton explained that the Los

Angeles chapter drove to Fresno to participate in a demonstration organized by La Marcha in defense of affirmative action and for immigrant rights. Through this experience, the chapter decided to hold classes based on *The Politics of Chicano Liberation* because they wanted to get a better understanding of the fight against national oppression and its importance in politics today.

Defending the Cuban revolution

Another main focus of the discussion was the upcoming U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange. Many YS members reviewed how they worked with other Cuba solidarity activists to build the broadest delegation of young people going to Cuba.

"Many of those on the exchange will want to do ongoing work in defense of the Cuban revolution when they return," stated Brock Satter of New York. Not only will this give a boost to existing Cuba coalitions, but will also make it possible to build coalitions in new places, he continued.

Others cited opportunities the YS has, working with others who are going to Cuba, to set up report-back meetings at high

schools, campuses, and work-places. These report-backs will be the first step in building the 1997 World Festival of Students and Youth in Havana next summer.

The YS reaffirmed the goal set at our convention in April of doubling the size of our membership by the end of the election campaign in November. Through going to protest actions, like those leading up to the Democratic and Republican conventions and the immigrant rights demonstration taking place in Washington D.C. October 12, several YSers noted the opportunities to win other youth to communism.

Some of the activists also spoke about the opportunities we have to get the recently published YS pamphlet into the hands of every young person interested in socialism. The new pamphlet contains the political principles, campaigns, and rules of organization of the YS adopted at our National Convention and Organizing Conference in April. A YS member from Reykjavík, Iceland, reported that the group there has translated the political principles and campaigns into Icelandic and are now working with a group of people in a northern city who are interested in the YS.

Now available!

**Young Socialists
First National Convention and
Organizing Conference
April 6-7, 1996**

**Political Principles,
Campaigns
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Newly published from the Young Socialists. Contains decisions from the first convention of the YS and revolutionary greetings from the African National Congress Youth League in South Africa, the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, and recently released Mark Curtis. This pamphlet is for all young people who want to fight the injustices bred by capitalism and are looking for a socialist alternative.

**1-9 copies, \$4 each
10 or more copies, \$3 each
Checks made payable to
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P.O. Box 14392,
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TWA plane crash

Continued from front page

flights will also be subject to increased searches if they fit a profile based on how and when they bought their tickets."

The *New York Times* reported July 26 that "on international flights, some passengers and their luggage will be selected for special attention, depending on their nationality and itinerary, among other factors."

The massive FBI investigation has been largely directed against airline workers. Every worker that had contact with the TWA plane, whether in Athens where it originated or in New York, has been interviewed by the FBI. This includes baggage handlers, food service workers, mechanics and others. Background checks have also been run.

The *New York Times* ran a front-page article July 29 headlined, "Limited Checks on Workers Who Have Access to Planes." In it John Kifner wrote, "Dozens of workers — hired with only the most cursory of background checks — have access to planes waiting on airport tarmacs and, security ex-

Continued on Page 12

Campaign for the socialist alternative!

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Enclosed is a \$ _____ contribution
- ☐ 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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SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK—Supporters of the socialist election campaign of James Harris for president and Laura Garza for vice president are finding that petitioning to get the candidates on the ballot in New York is also a great opportunity to reach workers and youth with Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Volunteers at the Manhattan and Brooklyn Pathfinder bookstores reported that more than 180 books have been sold in July, almost all of them since the middle of the month when the petitioning effort began.

"We've sold 39 books in just the last week," Eleanor García reported. García, who is running for Congress on the socialist ticket, is part of a team of supporters who are campaigning full time. They are joined before and after work, and on weekends, by scores of other volunteers who, armed with nominating petitions, stacks of books and pamphlets, campaign literature, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and folding tables, fan out to street corners in working-class communities, plant gates, college campuses, and political events across the city and state.

A team to Jamaica, Queens, sold four books, in addition to collecting 135 signatures on petitions. Dee, a student at LaGuardia Community College, bought a subscription to the *Militant*. After more discussion with team members about the campaign and the Young Socialists, she decided to get the *Communist Manifesto*. "I want to be part of this organization. How can I do that?" she asked. Dee is planning to set up a report-back meeting at her school for young people who are currently in Cuba as part of the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange.

The team also sold a copy of *New Inter-*

national no. 6 with the article "The Second Assassination of Maurice Bishop," the *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, and *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*.

Workers in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn bought eight titles—in English, Spanish, and French—in just two days. A worker who had been a member of the Sandinista youth organization in Nicaragua during the revolution joined the sales and petitioning effort for a while. He commented that the *Communist Manifesto* was one of his favorite books. A young woman, originally from Honduras, said she was part of a socialist youth group at a local community college. She asked for a member of the Young Socialists to give her a call.

On July 28, campaign supporters from New Jersey and New York participated in a protest against the burning of Black churches in the southern United States. One march participant bought a copy of *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara.

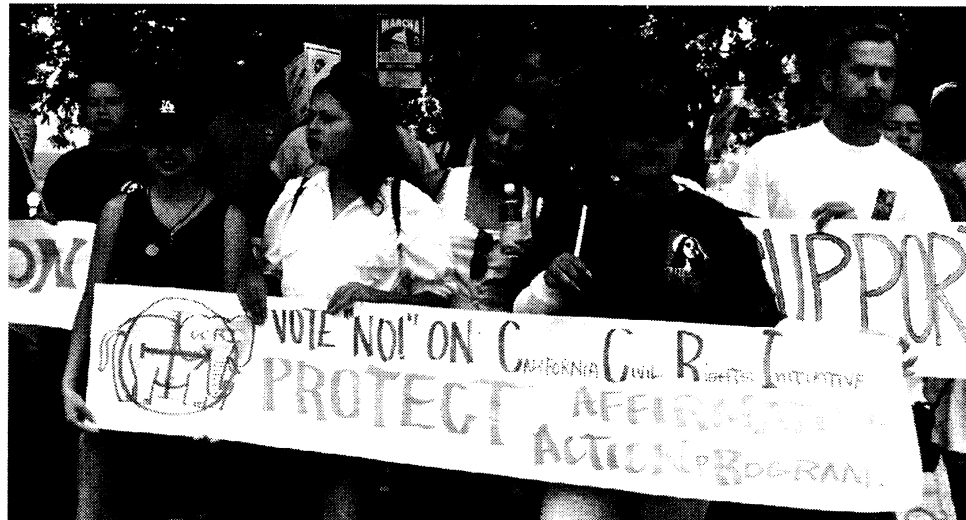
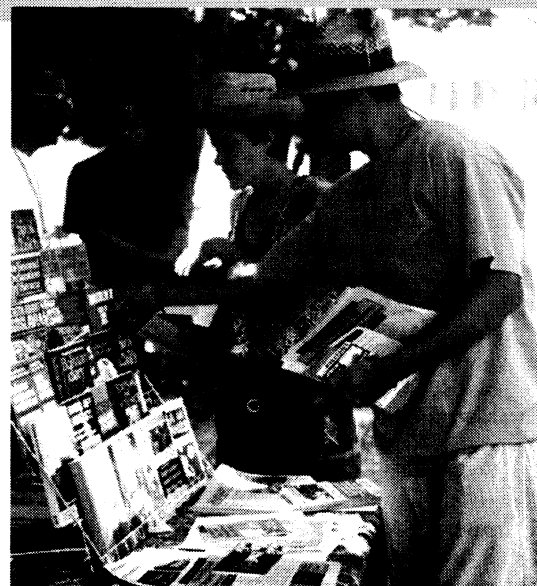


Socialist workers from New Jersey have been busy fixing up their new storefront bookstore. But that hasn't stopped them from selling books and getting out to political activities in the region. One day, two young people came by the bookstore-to-be. When they heard the books were packed in boxes in the basement while construction was under way, they asked to see them. They each bought a copy of *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Ernesto Che Guevara and promised to come back.

On July 28 socialist workers and youth set up a table at a Caribbean parade and car-

nival in Jersey City. They sold two pamphlets—one on Ireland and one on Cuba—and talked to four people who were interested in getting a copy of *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, by the leader of the 1979-83 Grenadian revolution. To take advantage of this kind of interest, the New Jersey socialists have decided to do "call-backs" to people who want one or another book but don't have the money on them.

The next issue of the *Militant*, which will be printed on August 15, will include totals for Pathfinder sales in July. Supporters in local areas should be sure to send their sales statistics in to the *Militant* no later than Friday, August 9.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Pathfinder tables set up at La Marcha events (top) have combined selling books and participating in politics. The marchistas, in lower photo, are in route to San Diego.

Marchers for affirmative action join in L.A. forum

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — A jam-packed meeting of the Militant Labor Forum heard Olga Rodríguez, editor of the newly reissued Pathfinder book *Politics of Chicano Liberation*. Guests of honor at the event were *la marchistas*, the group of young Latinos and Latinas who are walking more than 500

miles from the state capitol in Sacramento to San Diego. En route, they are rallying support against Proposition 209, a California ballot measure to scrap state-sponsored affirmative action programs.

They brought solidarity greetings to the meeting, called for support to their fight, and urged everyone to turn out for the demon-

strations at the Republican convention in San Diego. They received repeated ovations.

More than 100 people attended the July 20 meeting and the barbecue that preceded it. The audience included 40 socialist unionists, members of the International Association of Machinists, who held a weekend conference here.

Rodríguez saluted the marchistas as representing a generation of fighters that are in the forefront of a new upsurge in the Chicano struggle.

She discussed the world crisis of capitalism and the drive to make the workers of the world "foot the bill" for it. This has sparked working-class resistance, including a resurgent Chicano movement.

It is this rise in the struggle, she said, that prompted Pathfinder to reissue *Politics of Chicano Liberation*, a compilation of Socialist Workers Party resolutions and reports on the explosive battle of the Chicano movement from the 1960s into the early '70s.

She described the book as "an accurate account of real battles," particularly valuable for the Marxist perspective it offers "on the roots of the oppression of my people, the Chicano people."

The developing struggle today, she explained is markedly different than the earlier one in that it is totally interwoven with the struggles of other oppressed nationalities — the Irish, Quebecois, Palestinians and more — as well as the beginnings of a fightback by the working class as a whole.

The Chicano movement that erupted on the political scene in the 1960s won major victories.

But that movement, like those of other oppressed nationalities and women, finally declined, Rodríguez explained, because there was not a similar development in the trade union movement.

The union bureaucrats stubbornly refused to take up these progressive struggles, and did so without much resistance from the ranks.

But, she emphasized, the

situation is very different today because there is a very different working class. The labor force now includes millions of Chicanos, Latinos, Asians, and others.

"Today, in every industry," she declared, "we work next to people from all over the world. They make our class stronger, and they open up the union movement in a different way."

Throughout, she stressed that the fight for immigrant rights is central for all working people. Among the oppressed nationalities, she continued we are seeing a vitally important, growing unity.

One of the greatest victories for the marchistas, she declared was the reception they got in the Los Angeles Korean community. There was an organized group of 50 Koreans, "waiting to cheer you on, to be part of the struggle — and to feed you."

Pointing to the more than 100,000 people who recently marched in Puerto Rico to affirm nationhood, including many who support independence Rodríguez observed, "It was a little bigger than la marcha."

"But," she added, "la marcha will get there. You have to start somewhere, and you don't have to start with 100,000!"

Youth at La Raza conference 'want to get involved in fight'

BY VERÓNICA POSES

DENVER, Colorado — Approximately 3,500 people participated in the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) conference that took place here July 14-17.

Although NCLR president Raul Yzaguirre denounced both major political parties for using Latinos as scapegoats, most of the discussions in the different workshops focused on electing Democrats, especially Latinos, to office. At a workshop focused on youth, a Democratic congresswoman from Denver argued, "It's the only way of having political power."

A Young Socialist member from Minnesota mentioned how thousands of ordinary working people and youth who demonstrated in California have been able to stop the implementation of the anti-immigrant law Proposition 187. Participants at the workshop, most of them high school students, applauded.

Interest in fighting against attacks on affirmative action and for immigrant rights was registered at the Pathfinder book table

set up outside the Denver Convention Center where the conference was taking place. Almost \$200 in books were sold. One conference participant was eyeing the book *The Politics of Chicano Liberation* when a woman from Chicago who was passing by told him, "Highly recommended." Six participants bought copies of that title.

Inside, the CIA, the FBI, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service had recruiting tables. Ramón, a young student from Arizona, thanked the socialists for being there. "I want to fight for affirmative action but the organizers of the conference say that what I should do is vote," he said. "What I want to do is get involved."

Outside the conference site, a group of Chicanos, mainly high school students, gave out leaflets urging people to boycott Coors Beer because of its long history of discrimination against Latinos and women. Coors was one of the sponsors of the event.

While in Denver, supporters of the Socialist Workers Campaign were able to get the party's presidential ticket on the ballot. People who stopped by the literature table, *Militant* subscribers, and others who heard vice presidential candidate Laura Garza speak during a tour stop in Denver volunteered to be among the eight electors needed to get on the ballot. The \$500 needed for a filing fee was raised at a class on "Immigrant workers and the fight for socialism."

"It's more important now than ever to fight for immigrant rights," said Vanessa Knapton, a Young Socialist member from Los Angeles who kicked off the class. Two students at the University of Colorado who attended the meeting, later decided to join the Young Socialists.

Defend Affirmative Action

Monday, August 12, 1996

- Rally at Chicano Park 3-4:30 p.m.
- March to Republican Convention 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- Rally at Convention Center 5:30-6:40 p.m.

San Diego, California

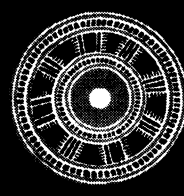
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Edited by Olga Rodríguez

Recounts the lessons of the rise of the Chicano movement in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. Presents a fighting program for those who are determined to defend hard-won social conquests and build a revolutionary movement capable of leading humanity out of the wars, racist assaults, and social crisis of capitalism in its decline. \$15.95

The Politics of Chicano Liberation

Olga Rodríguez



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Protesters block rightists in N. Ireland

BY PAUL DAVIES
AND SHELLIA KENNEDY

LONDON — Working people in Catholic areas of British-occupied Northern Ireland are stepping up their fight for the re-routing of marches through their neighborhoods organized by right-wing loyalist thugs.

People from all over the Six Counties converged on Garvaghy Road, Portadown, on July 20 to protest the decision of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to allow a loyalist Orange Order to march through their community.

Sinn Fein leader Jim Gibney stated, "They were there to say thanks to the local people for standing up for all the nationalists and for asserting in their own blood — spilt on Garvaghy Road, from bones crushed by RUC batons and plastic bullets — that nationalists have rights and no-one, no force, no matter how powerful, will be permitted to trample over those rights... They were there to celebrate the resistance of a small community, surrounded on every side by hostile forces, to tell them they were proud of them."

The action in Portadown was one of several to take place in the past ten days. Throughout the summer months loyalist forces organized actions aimed at intimidating Catholics as part of their attempts to pre-

serve the system that allows Protestants to be treated preferentially. This caste-like system has been at the center of the sectarian state in Northern Ireland since its establishment in the 1920s, following the defeat of a democratic revolution to end British rule throughout Ireland.

At a press conference in London, Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness held the British government responsible for the attacks on Catholic areas. "We are not against Protestants marching," he said, "but they can't march through nationalist areas. It's like the Ku Klux Klan marching through Black townships. Sinn Fein wants to discuss with the Orange Order and the RUC how everyone can march without confrontations."

The RUC, which is an armed, paramilitary police force under London's direct control, has been the backbone of the defense of the loyalist marchers.

The Constabulary has donned riot gear and fired thousands of rounds of lethal plastic bullets in this effort.

Despite plastic bullets and violence that caused injury to several people, the RUC was unable to shepherd a rightist parade through a Catholic area in Keady, County Armagh, July 27.

Residents of the small village of Dunloy, also prevented a rightist march on July 11.



Militant/Marc Lichtman

Activists protest unionist violence in N. Ireland at UK embassy, New York, July 20.

Dunloy Residents and Parents Association chairman Paddy O'Kane said, "We are a nationalist community here, there are no Protestants. The people who come to parade in this village, come from far and wide, even Newcastle, County Down. We had a very peaceful 12th of July. The Orangemen came

here on the 11th of July to parade, but they didn't."

The Residents Association had attempted to meet with the Orange Order on several occasions to no avail. The 1,500 residents of the village have now raised the £3,000 (US\$ 4,650) needed to seek court action to block the August 10 rightist demonstration, traditionally the biggest of the Orange Order marches.

When republicans took to the streets in north Belfast they too were met by extreme RUC violence. "Casualties kept coming in from all over the area," said local activist Kieran O'Sullivan. "Most were plastic bullet injuries, people had injuries to the head and upper body despite 'regulations' on the use of plastics. In all my years I've never seen so much blood coming from one district. It was a bloodbath and the RUC enjoyed every minute of it."

Community leaders in the predominantly Catholic Bogside area of Derry have succeeded in arranging a meeting with the rightist "Apprentice Boys" group about a planned August 10 march through the city. The march formally commemorates the siege of Derry in 1689, led by forces loyal to the British king, William of Orange, during Britain's military conquest of Ireland.

This is the first time that the rightist group has been prepared to talk with community groups in Derry led by republican ex-prisoners. The talks were announced 12 hours after 1,000 workers and youth took to the streets, demanding an end to loyalist marches through their area.

The ongoing republican resistance is fueling the visible crisis of British rule in Northern Ireland. The so-called "peace talks" relaunched in June have stalled as representatives of London and Dublin, bourgeois nationalists, and different brands of Unionists haggle over the proposed agenda and the ground rules for negotiations. Sinn Fein, the leading nationalist group, remains excluded from the talks.

Prime minister John Major let the cat out of the bag as to his real objective in excluding Sinn Fein: London's desire to maintain British rule. "Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom, just like Surrey," he said. Surrey is one of the richest counties in south east England.

London's pretext for excluding Sinn Fein — the ending of the IRA cease-fire — was shown to be spurious when on July 22 Major met with leaders of the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party. The two organizations are tied respectively to the loyalist death squads Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Freedom Fighters.

Sinn Fein national chairperson Mitch McLaughlin blasted the British government. "The parties he is meeting today are part of the unionist conspiracy, during which two men were murdered, nationalists were burnt out of their homes and widespread damage was caused," McLaughlin said. "Unionists clearly broke the Mitchell principles, yet Major refuses to meet Sinn Fein. His refusal to meet Gerry Adams lacks any credibility. He should meet him immediately."

Former U.S. senator George Mitchell, chairman of the talks, has proposed that the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons be removed from the main negotiations, now due to start in September. He proposed organizing discussion on decommissioning alongside the main talks.

U.S. protests say UK out of Ireland

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Activists in more than a dozen cities across the United States participated in a Day of Action July 20 to protest the recent actions of the UK government in occupied Northern Ireland.

Protesters demanded British troops get out of Ireland, the disbandment of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and for Prime Minister John Major to begin all-inclusive peace talks now.

The actions also called for an end to Washington's harassment and deportation of Irish activists from the United States, such as Jimmy Smyth, an Irish worker in San Francisco who currently faces an extradition order.

Paul Doris, chairman of the Irish Northern Aid Committee, issued the call for the protests. Doris urged activists to call for the

banning of plastic bullets, 6,000 of which were fired by the RUC at nationalist protesters in Northern Ireland in early July as they tried to prevent the right-wing Orange Order from marching through their neighborhoods.

Among the larger protests was a picket of 100 outside the British consulate in New York.

The Irish People reported a similar number of demonstrators in Philadelphia displayed black flags and marched around a mock coffin recalling Dermot McShane, who was crushed by a British Army vehicle during protests in Derry July 13.

Forty people turned out in front of the British consulate in downtown Boston. Protesters marched for more than an hour carrying signs that said "Disband the RUC" and "British plastic bullets kill Irish children,

Ban Them Now!" Speeches were made by demonstration coordinators, representatives of Irish Northern Aid and other organizations, as well as by Andy Buchanan, Socialist Workers candidate for Senate in Massachusetts. The speakers called for an end to British support to the Orange provocations in Catholic areas, and for an end to Washington's complicity in London's campaign of repression. "We'll be here if it takes 100 years," one demonstrator from Ireland said. "One way or another we'll remove Britain."

Protests were also organized in Albany, Cleveland, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Omaha, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Seattle.

Jarad Friedman, a Young Socialists member in Boston, contributed to this article.

'Celebrate victory of toilers in Korean War'

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

July 27 marks the 43rd anniversary of the end of the Korean War. Following World War II, the Korean peninsula was militarily occupied and divided — against the will of the Korean people — by troops from the United States and Soviet Union.

From the beginning, Korean workers and peasants fought against military occupation and for reunification.

Before the entry of U.S. or Russian troops, local revolutionary committees had divested the Japanese authorities — the former colonial masters — of power throughout most of the country. The network of "people's committees" was quickly consolidated into a "People's Republic" set up in Seoul, the capital, located in the South.

In the North the Republic's activities were eventually carried on with the sanction of the Soviet troops that recognized the people's committees — which implemented a thorough land reform, nationalized industry and banking, and established a worker's state.

On Sept. 8, 1945, Washington sent thousands of troops, under United Nations banner, to block reunification and protect imperialist interests. All revolutionary overturns in property relations in the South were ruthlessly suppressed by the invaders. In 1950, the U.S.-led forces, headed by Gen. Douglas Mac Arthur, invaded the North and attempted to reimpose imperialist domination on the entire Korean peninsula. But with the help of 1.2 million Chinese volunteers, the Korean people pushed the mighty army of Washington back and fought it to a standstill at the 38th parallel. The Korean War claimed more than 3 million lives.

Ever since, Washington has maintained a large force there, with 36,000 troops in South Korea today, deployed along the so-

called demilitarized zone that divides the peninsula. With U.S. backing, Seoul has built a wall dividing the country along the DMZ. Washington's troops in Korea are part of a U.S. force of 100,000 in East Asia. Recently, U.S. forces have carried out major military exercises in the area — termed "Rimpac" — simulating an invasion of North Korea.

In marking this important victory for working people internationally, we print below the message Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes sent to the Korean people on the occasion of this anniversary.



July 27, 1996

The Socialist Workers Party joins you in celebrating the 43rd anniversary of the victory of the Korean people over Washington's brutal, three-year-long war to impose its imperial domination on the entire Korean peninsula. The refusal of the Korean people to bend their knees helped defeat the drive toward a third world war and political reaction by the U.S. rulers and was a conquest for working people the world over. Your continuing fight for national reunification remains to this day an obstacle to the aggressive ambitions of Washington, its allied regime in Seoul, and imperial Tokyo.

Revolutionists are also celebrating another date in 1953 — July 26, the day that marked the start of the revolutionary war in Cuba that just a few years later opened the socialist revolution in the Americas. As in Korea, Washington has failed in every attempt to crush the Cuban people and turn back their revolutionary conquests. We are joining with others to oppose the latest round in Washington's unceasing economic, political, and military pressures against Cuba — the so-called "Cuban Liberty and

Democratic Solidarity Act," which further tightens the U.S. economic embargo.

The Socialist Workers Party condemns the U.S. government-led "Rimpac" war games in the Pacific in June by the armed forces of Washington, Tokyo, Seoul, Ottawa, and Canberra — flagrantly carried out as a threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. These are among the war preparations being stepped up by imperialist regimes around the world, as their rivalry and conflicts intensify. While there remains no replacement for the dominant weight of U.S. military might among the capitalist powers, the Japanese rulers, long blocked from using military force abroad following their defeat in World War II, are pressing to expand their military muscle in the region.

As the exploiters push along this course, however, they are meeting resistance. Fighters in Northern Ireland are refusing to submit peacefully to continued occupation and colonial rule by London. Palestinians refuse to accept permanent dispossession from their homeland. In the United States, workers and youth are taking to the street to defend the rights of Chicanos and immigrants, and to protest racist church burnings and police brutality. Aerospace workers at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis, Missouri, are on strike. Before the U.S. rulers drag humanity into fascism and another world slaughter, they will have to take on the toilers in class battles and defeat us — an outcome that your victory over imperialism 43 years ago shows is far from inevitable.

On this anniversary, the SWP pledges to continue joining other workers and youth to support the fight for Korean reunification and for the removal of all imperialist military forces from your country and the Pacific region.

Jack Barnes
SWP National Secretary

UN hears debate on Puerto Rico struggle

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

UNITED NATIONS — Prominent individuals representing the pro-independence movement in Puerto Rico, as well as figures advocating statehood and the U.S. colony's current "commonwealth" status, participated in a July 25 hearing before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization.

"This hearing occurs on the 98th anniversary of the armed invasion of Puerto Rico, which took place July 25, 1898, at the port of Guánica," said long-time independence leader Juan Mari Bras.

Statements were presented to the committee from Robert Underwood, the elected, nonvoting delegate of Guam to the U.S. Congress, and from Yann Celene Uregei, of the Popular Congress of New Caledonia, a French colony. Underwood urged the committee to "reaffirm the right to self-determination for the indigenous people of Guam." The native Chamorro people are 43 percent of the island's population.

Other participants in the session included Fernando Martín, vice president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party; Julio Muriente, president of the New Movement for Puerto Rican Independence (formerly Puerto Rican Socialist Party); Noel Colón Martínez, leader of the Hostosian National Congress; Carlos Vizcarrondo, a representative of the Popular Democratic Party in Puerto Rico's legislature; and Luis Vega Ramos, president of PROELA. The last two advocate maintaining the island's current colonial status as a commonwealth.

No UN resolution on Puerto Rico

From 1972 until 1991, the UN committee adopted resolutions supporting the right of the Puerto Ricans to self-determination and independence from the United States. As in the last several years, no resolution on Puerto Rico was introduced for debate this time, only testimony from groups speaking for the three main political currents.

Many speakers referred to the July 14 *La Nación en Marcha* (The Nation on the March) demonstration, where more than 100,000 people rallied in response to the

pro-statehood stance of Puerto Rico's colonial governor, Pedro Rosselló, who had told the media that Puerto Rico "is not and has never been a nation." The march was seen by many as a show of support for Puerto Rican nationhood and, for a significant number, for independence.

"Tens of thousands of Puerto Ricans repudiated Rosselló," said Mari Bras.

Víctor Vázquez Hernández, of the U.S.-based National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, said, "The march was the reaffirmation of Puerto Rican sovereignty." Vázquez and Mari Bras called on Washington to release the 15 political prisoners who are serving time in U.S. jails for their activities in the independence movement.

Some participants defended a bill introduced in the U.S. Congress in March by Rep. Donald Young, who is pro-statehood. The bill, dubbed the "United States-Puerto Rico Political Status Act," calls for a referendum in Puerto Rico before the end of 1998, the centennial of colonial domination by Washington.

The nonbinding referendum would ask voters to choose independence, statehood, or the existing commonwealth status. A plurality — 48.4 percent of voters — voted for the status quo in a plebiscite held in 1993 under Washington's supervision.

Muriente said the Young bill would be one of a series of "fraudulent and manipulated plebiscites" and an "attack on self-determination and independence." Colón Martínez stated that "as part of the Young bill, major U.S. Congressional leaders are proposing that Spanish be replaced by English as the official language of Puerto Rico." He pointed out that "only 20 percent of the population speaks English."

The 3.5 million residents of Puerto Rico are governed by U.S. laws and courts, and are subject to U.S. military service. They are U.S. citizens, but have no vote in federal elections.

"Puerto Rico is still one of the oldest colonies in human history," said Vázquez. "When the United States invaded Puerto Rico [in the late 1800s while intervening] in the Cuban war of liberation, Puerto Ricans



Militant/Ron Richards

Some 125,000 people marched in Fajardo, Puerto Rico, July 14 affirming nationhood.

operating out of bases in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston joined with their Cuban brothers and sisters to throw off the chains of Spanish colonialism. Once Puerto Rico became a colony of the United States, Puerto Ricans in the U.S. continued to defend the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination."

'An open wound in Latin America'

Humberto Riverio, counselor of Cuba's UN mission to the United Nations, said the "colonial situation of Puerto Rico is an open wound in the heart of Latin America." Riverio declared the 100,000-strong march on the island was a way for Puerto Ricans to proclaim, "We want to be Puerto Ricans, not North Americans."

Riverio said, "The Cuban delegation trusts next year our committee will be able to hold a debate and adopt a position to support the struggle of the Puerto Rican people who are crying out for independence."

Speaking on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party, Laura Garza backed the fight for Puerto Rico's independence. "The struggle for the defense of the Puerto Rican nationality and its integrity as a Latin American nation deserves the active support not only of other peoples of Latin America, but of all those in the Americas, especially workers and farmers in the United States," Garza

stated (see statement on this page).

Mari Bras, like other petitioners, noted that Washington "has never accepted the jurisdiction competence of the Special Committee" and "paralyzed" its actions regarding Puerto Rico.

"The U.S. government is trying to destroy the special committee because they have been unsuccessful in removing their colonies from the list of territories to be free of colonial domination," said Ronald Franquez Teehan, secretary of the Organization of People for the Indigenous Rights in Guam. He was there to testify on the status of that U.S. colony. Teehan explained in an interview how Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guam, and the Philippines were conquered by the U.S. military in its war against Spain in 1898.

Teehan, who spoke at protests against U.S. military bases in Okinawa, Japan, and organized similar actions in Guam, said the U.S. government and "their allies in Great Britain and France say the special committee has outlived its usefulness." He said the indigenous people in Guam are waging a struggle against the U.S. military over land rights.

"I believe people will refuse to accept denial of their right to self-determination. If the U.S. government continues to deny this right there will be increased social strife," Teehan said.

Socialist speaks for Puerto Rican independence at UN

Below is the statement presented July 25 by Laura Garza, representing the Socialist Workers Party, before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. Garza is the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. vice president.

Distinguished Chairman,
Members of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization,

A week and a half ago I joined some 125,000 Puerto Ricans at two rallies in Fajardo, Puerto Rico. The marchers were there to affirm Puerto Rican nationhood, stand up for self-determination, and, for many, to express the desire of the Puerto Rican people for an independent country. Fishermen from the island of Vieques also protested the U.S. Navy's use of their island and surrounding waters for military exercises and target practice.

The marches were held at the site of the conference of U.S. governors — representatives of the power that colonizes Puerto Rico, the U.S. government. At the meeting, the governors discussed the ways in which the Democratic and Republican parties would press forward their assault on the social gains and democratic rights of working people both in the United States and Puerto Rico. Concurrent with similar moves by the administration of William Jefferson Clinton, the governors discussed how to deny welfare payments and food stamps to hundreds of thousands of workers, how to organize the attacks on the rights of immigrants and terrorize those without legal papers in the United States, and how to expand the use of the death penalty.

These two events symbolize the growing tensions and conflict involved in the question of the U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico.

On the one hand, the Puerto Rican people desire to end the national oppression they face, and working people in Puerto Rico

seek to defend themselves against the ravages of the capitalist economic crisis.

On the other hand, the billionaire owners of banking and industry are driving to resolve the crisis of their system on the backs of those who labor for a living, of those who through their labor create all wealth in society. This wealthy minority controls the reins of power in the United States. In order to press forward this assault they must reinforce national oppression, drive down the standard of living, deal blows to union organization, push back affirmative action programs, and widen the layers in society who are considered outside of constitutional protections and therefore fair game for superexploitation — be they immigrant workers, members of oppressed nationalities, or victims of the so-called criminal justice system.

During the 1993 plebiscite on the status of Puerto Rico, wealthy powers and their dependents in Puerto Rico cynically pointed to the paltry "benefits" of commonwealth status as a reason to reject independence. They contrasted the standard of living in Puerto Rico with conditions in other Latin American countries — those most decimated by imperialism — to try to prove that Puerto Ricans should be thankful for the fruits of the oppressive relationship. They fail to point out, of course, that Puerto Rico is a source of profits for U.S. corporations, that the country's natural resources benefit these same corporations, and that Puerto Rico remains a strategic staging ground for U.S. military policing and intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition, opponents of democratic rights and social justice in the United States, getting wind in their sails from the rightward drift of the big-business parties, are pushing for English-only legislation in states across the country. This reveals truly how unwilling the ruling powers are to incorporate a Spanish-speaking country on an equal

basis into the United States of America.

Distinguished Chairperson,

The U.S. government denies and attempts to camouflage the fact that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States. The show of strength at the protests in Fajardo and the testimony given here today once again richly document the fact that Puerto Rico is indeed subject to colonial domination.

Denial of sovereignty and independence

The oppressive character of the U.S. domination of Puerto Rico stands out in the world today — despite attempts to paper it over — because of Washington's direct economic, military, and political hold over the island. To grasp the full burden of 500 years of colonial domination of Puerto Rico is to understand why the fight to free Puerto Rico from this yoke must be the utmost concern for working people and fighters for social justice in the United States.

Colonial rule means the Puerto Rican people are subject to glaring inequality and abuse. I witnessed U.S. National Guard patrols and tanks stationed at the entrances to housing projects in working-class neighborhoods. Residents have protested widespread mistreatment at the hands of the National Guard. Puerto Ricans have no equal hand in making the U.S. laws that govern them. They are subject to U.S. courts over which they have no control.

Puerto Ricans were made citizens of the United States in 1917 so that thousands of men from the island could be drafted into the U.S. army to fight and die for the few dozen ruling families of the United States. Ever since, Puerto Ricans have served as cannon fodder for their colonial masters — in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq.

The Pentagon occupies 13 percent of Puerto Rico's most arable land with army and naval bases where it trains military personnel, tests new weapons, and conducts large-scale surveillance operations. These

operations pose a constant reminder to Puerto Ricans and all working people in the region of what Washington's response will be to independence and liberation struggles.

Washington uses its secret police and court system to perpetuate this oppression and to disrupt actions for the liberation of the country. Fifteen Puerto Rican patriots remain in U.S. jails, a situation that has led many to ask, "Why are the 15 still in prison?" A majority of these fighters have been behind bars for 16 years on charges of seditious conspiracy, which is more than the average time served for murder. Washington has not freed these activists for political reasons: the striving for independence has not been broken and a warning needs to be sent to others who consider setting out on the road of the freedom struggle.

The fight in Puerto Rico against colonial oppression today is intertwined with the

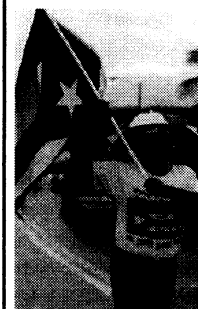
Continued on Page 14

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'Revolution is the fruit of struggle'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA, Cuba — Cuban brigadier general Harry Villegas recently completed a highly successful tour of Argentina and Uruguay to promote his new book, *Pombo: Un hombre de la guerrilla del Che* (Pombo: A Man in Che's Guerrilla Army). The book, which Pathfinder Press will publish in English in the coming months, is based on the diary that Villegas — who was known as Pombo — kept during the Bolivian guerrilla campaign led by Ernesto Che Guevara in the mid-1960s.

The Cuban publishing house Editora Política launched the book in February at the Havana Book Fair. The Buenos Aires-based publisher Colihue then produced another edition. Colihue invited Villegas to the Buenos Aires book fair in late May and sponsored his two-week tour in the two South American countries.

Iraida Aguirrechu, editor of the Cuban edition, reported in an interview that the Argentine edition sold out all 5,000 copies during the tour, and Colihue is planning a new run of 10,000.

In 1957 Villegas joined the Rebel Army, which under the leadership of Fidel Castro was spearheading the struggle to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. The young fighter served in Che Guevara's column. Guevara, an Argentine-born revolutionary who joined the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army, became one of the central leaders of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba.

After the victory of the Cuban revolution, Villegas fought with Guevara in the Congo in 1965, and then in Bolivia in 1966-67. Following Guevara's capture and murder by CIA-organized Bolivian troops in October 1967, Pombo led the six Cuban and Bolivian combatants who eluded the Bolivian army's encirclement. After almost five months, the three Cubans eventually made their way to Chile and then back to Cuba.

A veteran of three internationalist aid missions to Angola between 1975 and 1990, Villegas took part in the defeat of the invading apartheid army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988. Today he is the officer in charge of political education for Cuba's Western Army.

The following is an interview Villegas gave here June 22.

Question. Given the topic of your book, the revolutionary struggle led by Che Guevara in Bolivia, what was the response to your tour in Argentina and Uruguay?

Answer. There was an extraordinary response. I didn't expect this book would stimulate Argentine and Uruguayan youth as much as it did.

At the Buenos Aires book fair, a large event that draws people from many countries, Cuba's booth and the Colihue booth

were permanently jammed. The two stands, and this book in particular, were the center of attention.

For the book launch we had to find a bigger room, and many people couldn't get in.

I traveled to Buenos Aires, Rosario, La Plata, Córdoba, and Santa Fe in Argentina, as well as Montevideo, Uruguay. I did four book launch meetings, all of which drew big audiences. In Rosario there were so many people they couldn't all fit in the hall. We had to repeat the meeting the following morning.

Students as well as others we spoke to — such as the children of the disappeared and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo — were full of questions and interest.¹

In Uruguay I had the opportunity to talk to various groups of members and leaders of the Broad Front. This gave us an ample platform to talk about Cuba, because you can't talk about Che without talking about Cuba. Che's revolutionary perspective was based on the experiences he acquired in Cuba.²

The young people asked why the book has been published now. I explained that my diary had previously been published in the United States, along with Che's diary, by Stein and Day. It had later been published in Venezuela and Mexico. But these had all been very partial and limited versions of the diary. It was only the section of the diary that had been seized in Che's knapsack when he was captured.

But my book includes the other section of the diary, which I continued to write after Che's death. That part was captured in Chile but was later returned. This is a more complete edition because it includes the organizational phase of the struggle, the development of the war, and the later period, after Che's death, when the group of survivors was able to leave Bolivia.³

People really liked the book's message, which is about Che's example: his spirit of sacrifice, his leadership capacity, his confidence in the future and the ability to achieve victory, the enthusiasm with which he confronted everything.

We received coverage in practically all the media. Between the press interviews and university meetings, I must have taken part in 10 events a day — every day — during the two weeks I was there. We were on almost all the TV stations and live radio shows.

We were able to explain the truth about the Cuban revolution, the situation we are confronting today, what the U.S. blockade against Cuba means, and how, through our efforts and work, we are overcoming the conditions imposed by the blockade.

We were also able to explain why the U.S. government is trying to implement the Helms-Burton law right now. It's an effort to prevent the current process of economic and social revitalization of the Cuban revolution.



At the guerrilla camp in Bolivia, from left to right: Alejandro, Pombo, Urbano, Rolando, Che Guevara, Tuma, Arturo, and Moro (El Médico). Inset: Brigadier General Harry Villegas, known as Pombo, who fought with Che Guevara in the Bolivian campaign.

We spoke about the values of the Cuban revolution, and why youth in Cuba support our revolution.

Q. What was the reaction to what you said about the Cuban revolution?

A. It was very good. Above all it was a desire to find out the truth.

We talked about their concept of democracy and ours. We explained how in Cuba we have a truly participatory democracy, which is much broader than in other countries. Even the children, in the Pioneers organization, take part in organizing their activities as students and raise their views about how they should be taught.

We explained that even within the narrow framework of bourgeois democracy, our country is more democratic than the United States. In the United States Clinton was elected with a turnout of somewhat over 40 percent of the voters. In our case, there was 96 percent participation in the last elections.

But we added that the most important thing about democracy isn't that, but rather how our people take part in the decision-making, in managing the economy and directing social life. And that process has been institutionalized. We explained the process of how the trade unions discuss all the economic and other measures the government is planning to take, and how every union assembly has become a parliament, a "workers parliament."

People in the audience were surprised. They would ask: Is that possible in Cuba?

Q. Was the social crisis in Argentina and Uruguay reflected in the course of your tour and your discussions?

A. We saw that Córdoba was one of the cities hit hardest by the social crisis. Many big factories have been privatized and some have shut down. And this has a big impact on the population.

In Rosario we passed through some vil-

las miserias [slums] that were extremely poor. We also saw them in Santa Fe. On the outskirts of Buenos Aires we saw the slums in El Tigre, where people are putting up shacks.

Of course, this is the impression from a visit of a few days. We weren't able to live among the people. Nonetheless, we noticed a deep concern that the privatization measures have in no way benefited the population. Instead, they have only enriched a few people. And we saw how there has been a huge rise in the cost of living, leading to impoverishment.

Although the indicators of economic development are higher in these two countries, there is a social layer that is becoming pauperized and has less and less access to the wealth.

Growing numbers of people are falling into debt. This creates more tensions, hardships, and worries for them. They see a future of uncertainty.

We met primarily with intellectuals and people from the middle class, not workers. But people we talked to were asking, with a great deal of insistence, how to fight against all this. They didn't see the way out, but they thought there had to be a solution to these problems.

Q. In this context, did some people view Cuba as an alternative?

A. Some people are longing to achieve all the things we have won in Cuba, despite the fact that we are in the midst of the special period.⁴

When you compare our economic situation in absolute numbers with the situation facing the rest of Latin America, you realize that our special period may be very difficult for us, but it's relative and temporary. In contrast, people in other Latin American countries live in a permanent special period.

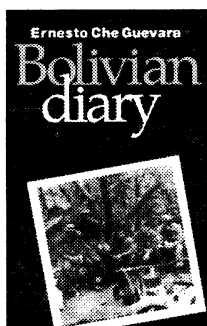
Also, here in Cuba people are aware of why these conditions exist and what they are fighting for.

Q. "Benigno," as Daniel Alarcón, one of the three Cuban survivors of the Bolivian guerrilla campaign, is known, recently defected in Paris and published a book against Che Guevara. Continued on Page 10

To read more about Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution

The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara

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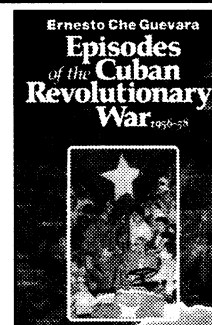
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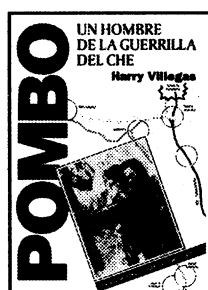
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Notes

¹ The organization Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo has fought for justice for the tens of thousands of political activists who were "disappeared" and murdered by the Argentine military dictatorship in 1976-82. Children of the disappeared in Argentina have also formed a human rights group.

² The Broad Front is a bloc of social democracy, liberal, and other parties in Uruguay.

³ *The Complete Bolivian Diaries of Che Guevara and Other Captured Documents*, published by Stein and Day in 1968, was based on the documents captured and released by the Bolivian regime. The rest of Villegas's diary, covering the period beginning May 29, 1967, was seized by the Chilean regime when the surviving guerrilla fighters entered that country in February 1968. The notebooks were subsequently returned to Villegas by Salvador Allende, then president of Chile's Senate.

⁴ The "special period" refers to the economic crisis in Cuba that was precipitated in the early 1990s by the collapse in aid and trade at preferential prices with the Soviet bloc countries.

U.S. gov't can't win UN sanctions on Cuba

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

UNITED NATIONS — Washington failed in its objective of using the February 24 shootdown by the Cuban air force of two hostile aircraft over Cuba's territorial waters to gain international support for further punitive measures against Havana.

On June 27 the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) adopted a resolution on the incident that was a far cry from what Washington was seeking.

One month later, on July 26, the U.S. government got a watered-down version of the resolution it wanted passed by the United Nations Security Council. In an article headlined "UN won't punish Cuba in downing of planes," the July 27 *New York Times* said, "Unable to gain international support for strong action against Cuba over the shooting down of two civilian planes in February, the Clinton administration got backing today for only a mild resolution of regret over the incident."

The ICAO resolution reaffirmed "the principle that States must refrain from the use of weapons against civil aircraft." It also said that "each Contracting State shall take appropriate measures to prohibit the deliberate use of any civil aircraft registered in that State or operated by an operator who has his principal place of business or permanent residence in that State for any purpose inconsistent with the aims of the Convention on International Civil Aviation."

Members of Brothers to the Rescue, a Miami-based group led by Cuban counter-revolutionaries with a long record of terrorist actions, piloted three Cessna aircraft that repeatedly violated Cuba's airspace February 24. Two of the three planes were shot down after ignoring unambiguous warnings by Cuban air traffic controllers and air force jets. The third plane, piloted by the group's head, José Basulto, returned to Florida. The Cuban government reports that this invasion of Cuban airspace was the 10th such violation over the past 20 months. Washington has acknowledged many of these violations but refused to stop them.

The ICAO resolution did not condemn the Cuban government for the action it took on February 24, nor did it state that the two planes were downed in international waters. The White House had campaigned fiercely for inclusion of both such provisions.

Washington has used this claim to justify passage of the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act — also known as the Helms-Burton law — which escalates its economic war on Cuba. It was also hoping to use the conclusions of the ICAO to press for further sanctions, such as a UN resolution demanding reparations to the families of those killed during the downing.

The ICAO resolution took note of a report by the ICAO secretary general, which was based on an investigation by an ICAO commission and concluded that Havana downed the two "civilian" planes over international waters, not in Cuba's airspace. The resolution said the investigative report

would be forwarded it to the United Nations Security Council. But the ICAO council refrained from approving that report.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, headed Cuba's delegation at the June 26-27 ICAO council meeting in Montreal. In a press conference after that meeting he said that Washington failed in its quest to assure a condemnation of Cuba. Cuban delegates also said that U.S. secretary of transportation Federico Peña acknowledged before the vote that the final resolution was substantially different from what his government pushed for.

"The Americans made very strong efforts to express condemnation of Cuba in the resolution," said Abelardo Moreno, a spokesman for the Cuban consulate in Montreal. "The final resolution shows very clearly that the Americans cannot manipulate the ICAO council."

On June 20 U.S. undersecretary of state Peter Tarnoff had held a press conference at the White House where he quoted from the investigative report, which ICAO council members had not seen yet. "While Mr. Tarnoff was meeting with journalists at the White House," Alarcón said at a June 24 press conference in Havana, "representatives of sovereign states on the ICAO council in the city of Montreal were wondering what had just been published that morning in the *Miami Herald* and reprinted in other

U.S. media announcing Tarnoff's press conference and referring to the report," which they themselves hadn't received.

Cuban authorities cooperated fully with the ICAO investigators and allowed them to interview Cubans involved with the incident. Washington, on the other hand, stonewalled for two months and refused to provide pertinent radar data to ICAO. Besides U.S. officials, the ICAO team interviewed only one person: José Basulto. The evidence in its report allegedly substantiating the claim that the planes were downed over international waters comes from eyewitness reports from crew members of a fishing vessel and cruise ship that supposedly were close to the scene at the time. But ICAO investigators acknowledged at the hearings in Montreal they never interviewed a single crew member or passenger of these vessels. Their information came from assertions by the U.S. authorities.

While the U.S. government had announced it would quickly push for a vote to condemn Havana at the UN Security Council, the result of the ICAO meeting in Montreal seemed to slow them down. The big business press carried virtually no news coverage of the results of the Montreal resolution. Alarcón and other Cuban diplomats waited for 20 days in New York before the Security Council was convened.

The Security Council finally approved a

resolution with 13 votes in favor. Russia and China abstained. This document endorsed both the ICAO resolution and the findings of the investigative report and "expressed deep regret over the loss of four lives." It described the February 24 incident as an "unlawful shooting down by the Cuban air force of two civilian aircraft." And it called upon Cuba "to join other states in complying with their obligations" under international aviation provisions.

But even this resolution stopped short of calling for punitive measures against Cuba.

Bruno Rodríguez, Cuban ambassador to the United Nations and part of the Cuban delegation at the Security Council, spoke at a celebration of the July 26 attack on Moncada, which marked the start of the Cuban revolutionary war in 1953.

He described the UN Security Council as a "den of thieves dominated by the U.S." during his address at the July 27 event, sponsored by the group Casa de las Américas. "We don't like the Security Council resolution, because it's based on distortions and lies," he said. "But even there, at the most undemocratic UN body, the United States didn't quite get what it wanted."

"Standing transparently with the truth and determined to defend our sovereignty and independence at any cost is the best weapon we have against the most powerful empire on the earth."

Atlanta activists welcome Cuban athletes

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

ATLANTA, Georgia — "Cuba Yes, Blockade No!" and "Go Cuba" chanted the enthusiastic crowd of 125 people who welcomed a delegation from the Cuban Olympic team to the Atlanta area on July 27.

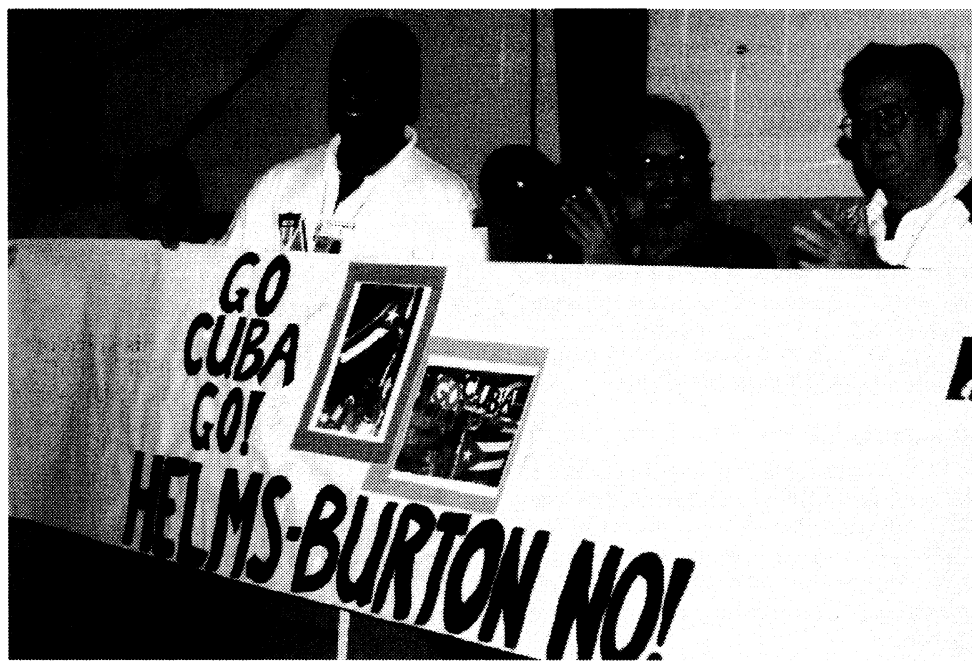
They gave a standing ovation to the featured speaker, Doctor Rodrigo Alvarez Cambra, who is the head of the medical team attending to Cuba's Olympic athletes. Alvarez is also a member of Cuba's National Assembly. Five other athletes and trainers represented the Cuban Olympic delegation at the welcome event.

Alvarez said only a few hours before the meeting, during the Olympic basketball game between Cuba and the Ukraine, "We saw a small Cuban flag among all those thousands in that great hall. We felt we were not alone," he said.

"For us it's very important to know that there are millions who will fight for the same ideals we fight for."

Bernardo Gómez, from the Atlanta Network on Cuba, chaired the meeting. He said that the event was an opportunity to show that many people in the United States understand that Cuba is an independent and sovereign country.

Reverend Timothy McDonald welcomed the Cubans to his church, the First Iconium Baptist Church. McDonald, who has visited Cuba twice, has been prominent in the news speaking out against the burning of Black



Militant/Salm Kolis

Atlanta Network event welcoming Cuban athletes. From right are Cuban basketball commissioner Tomás Herrera, Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, and Rodrigo Alvarez, head of the Cuban medical team.

churches in the South. Luis Miranda from Casa de las Américas in New York and Andrés Gómez, the head of the Antonio Maceo Brigade from Miami also spoke.

Others in the Cuban Olympic delegation in attendance were three members of the

skeet shooting team; Pedro Cabrera, chief of the Press Office of the National Institute of Sports; and Tomás Herrera Martínez, National Commissioner of Basketball.

After the meeting, Herrera was asked if the difficult economic conditions facing the Caribbean nation in recent years has affected the sports program.

"This has affected everything in Cuba," he said, "but we have maintained our position in international events. Sports is part of our educational system and we're not giving that up."

Several young people attended the welcome event. Natalie Spring from Campbell High School in Smyrna, Georgia, said she heard about the meeting the day before at the Atlanta Pathfinder bookstore. She said the books she saw there and the Cuba event were exactly what she had been looking for. She decided to give her Saturday evening Olympic tickets to friends so she could attend the activity.

Media cameras and reporters were a feature of the meeting from beginning to end. Spanish language news stations Univisión and Telemundo; Cine Canal, a Spanish-language movie channel, and *Mundo Hispanico*, Spanish-language newspaper here, covered the activity.

Earlier in the week, Miranda, Bernardo Gómez and Andrés Gómez were interviewed by Radio Rebelde, the main radio station in Cuba, and Eco, a Mexican based television newstation that broadcasts throughout Latin America.

Salm Kolis, of the United Auto Workers in Atlanta, contributed to this article.

Workers in Houston discuss Cuba

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

CHANNELVIEW, Texas — Three women refinery workers who recently visited Cuba, spoke and showed slides about their trip to coworkers and neighbors at a house meeting here.

Channelview is located just north of the Houston Ship Channel. Held at the home of Patsy McMichael, one of those who visited Cuba, the house meeting was attended by nine oil workers and about 20 more neighbors and friends and who were interested in developments in Cuba.

The three oil workers were part of a U.S. delegation that attended the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers. Nearly 2,300 delegates and guests from Cuba and 1,400 international observers met in Havana for five days at the end of April.

"A congress of workers in power was the way Cuban President Fidel Castro accurately described the conference," said Patti Iyama, an operator in the heavy oils department at the Lyondell-Citgo refinery. "It took a couple of days for it to sink in that the delegates to this union congress were discussing and debating not just 'union' questions but how they would run their country. "You could see that in the pride, atten-

tion to detail, heated debate, and self-confidence workers expressed while describing their success in reversing the decline in sugar cane production for the first time in half a decade."

The Houston delegation, all first-time visitors to Cuba, were credentialed to report on the congress by their local union newsletters (Locals 4-227 and 4-367 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers), the national union magazine, the *OCAW Reporter*, and by local radio stations and papers.

A front-page article on the trip appeared prior to their departure in the *Pasadena Citizen*, a daily newspaper. Entitled "Plant workers to view Cuban working conditions," the article was accompanied by a picture of two of the delegation members. This story circulated in the refineries around here and was posted on many control room and break room bulletin boards.

During their slide presentation, McMichael described the conditions in Cuba before the 1959 revolution. Over 30 percent of the people were unemployed, she said. Some 37 percent of the population was illiterate. U.S. businesses and crime bosses owned and ran the Cuban economy with the help of the brutal dictatorship of Fulgencio

Batista

"What the CTC Congress showed us was how workers can take power and change all that," stated Iyama.

A technician at the Shell Deer Park complex questioned whether the Cuban people really supported the government and felt free to openly voice their opinions.

Another person asked why people fled Cuba last year in rafts. "Why do most people in the world come to the United States?" asked Iyama. "Because the U.S. is a rich country and they come from poor countries. Cuba is still a poor country despite the advances made since the revolution. But more importantly, just like in a strike situation, there are always going to be people who want to get out of the line of fire. And Cuba has been 'under fire' from the colossus to the north for more than 35 years."

At least three of the oil workers and a postal worker present indicated their intentions to visit Cuba next summer as part of the international trade union conference slated to take place there concurrently with the World Festival of Youth and Students.

Jerry Freiwirth is a member of OCAW Local 4-367.

Canadian gov't is enemy of socialist Cuba

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — Cuba, Canada, and the United States were hot topics of discussion among my co-workers during the week when U.S. president William Clinton authorized implementation of Title III of the so-called "Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act" July 16. The legislation, which the media refers to as the Helms-Burton law, tightens Washington's 37-year trade embargo against Cuba. My T-shirt with the slo-

UNION TALK

gan "Hands off Cuba, Worker to Worker, Canada, Cuba Labour Solidarity" helped get the discussion going.

During the week there was a lot of patriotic flag waving by the Canadian government and the media, presenting Ottawa as the leader in an international fight against Washington's legislation. This was coupled with nationalist hoopla around Canadian athletes going to the Olympics in Atlanta, and the release of the United Nations Human Development Report declaring Canada the number one country to live in for the third year in a row.

A number of co-workers asked me my opinion and expressed their views on Title III of the anti-Cuba law. This section allows U.S. citizens whose property was taken over by Cuban workers and farmers in the 1959-61 socialist revolution to sue Canadian, European, Mexican, and other non-U.S. companies currently doing business in Cuba by what the law says is "trafficking" in these confiscated properties. Clinton said this section would be implemented, but he declared a six-month moratorium on actually filing such lawsuits.

Workers in my plant were also concerned about another section of the law — already in effect — that bans the officers of Sherritt International Corp., a Toronto-based mining company, from entering the United States. Sherritt operates a state-owned nickel mine jointly with Cuba. The mine was expropriated from a New Orleans company shortly after the 1959 revolution.

Boycott Florida?

The Canadian government is opposed to the sections of the law that penalize Canadian companies that do business in Cuba. A coalition of organizations that includes OXFAM, churches, some unions, and Cuba solidarity groups is calling for a boycott of Florida.

A statement that is being circulated says: "This winter you may want to think twice about a visit to Florida. The United States government is interfering in the internal matters of the Canadian people. The Helms-Burton legislation punishes Canadian companies and workers by dictating who we may or may not trade with.... The arrogance demonstrated by this legislation is remarkable. Canadians should spend their money where they are respected and appreciated. And not in Florida."

Here are a sampling of opinions expressed by different coworkers on these events:

"Canada is really standing up to the U.S."

"[Prime Minister Jean] Chretien is really supporting your friend Castro."

"My mother was in Florida and she said the people were rude to her and she won't go back until this whole thing blows over."

"The U.S. just wants to take over Cuba and everyone else."

"[Senator] Jesse Helms [one of the authors of the law] is a nut case. The Americans are the most ignorant people in the world."

Most comments were tinged with anti-Americanism. Only a couple of co-workers who emigrated from Columbia and Argentina, who are supporters of the Cuban revolution and Fidel Castro, talked about the right of the Cuban people to defend their sovereignty and socialist system.

I didn't agree with the anti-American comments or the idea that working people should support the government by organizing a boycott of Florida, and said so.

The day after President Clinton ratified the legislation one lunch room discussion got to the heart of the matter.

"What does this mean for Canada," one worker asked.

"That's not what we should be concerned about," I argued. "The issue is Cuba's right to trade with any country it wants to without interference from the U.S. or any other country."

"Do you like Cuba? Isn't it a communist dictatorship," asked another person.

"Yes, I support Cuba," I said. "It's a country where working people not only make the country run, they run the country. Here, parliament is run by and in the interest of a few billionaire and multi-millionaire families that own the big corporations and banks."

I pointed out how the UN report ranking Canada as the number one country describes the growing inequalities in the world and reports that the assets of the world's 358 billionaires (there are about six in Canada) exceeds the total annual income of 2.3 billion people or 45 percent of the world's



Militant/Monica Jones

March 6 picket line in Montreal at International Civil Aviation Organization meeting to investigate downing of counterrevolutionary planes over Cuban airspace

population.

These statistics are what capitalism is all about. When Cuba's workers and farmers took power in 1959 and then started to build socialism, they got rid of these kinds of monstrous inequalities, which condemn workers and farmers to poverty, sickness, illiteracy, and other horrors. Today, Cuba shows there is an alternative to capitalism. That's why capitalists everywhere and the governments that defend their interests hate the revolution and want to destroy it one way or another.

Stick with working-class interests

The Canadian government and the class of ruling rich it represents are not concerned about our problems, or the problems of working people anywhere in the world, as the racist murders of Somalis by Canadian "peace-keeping" troops shows. Ottawa's opposition to the Helms-Burton law has nothing to do with defense of the rights of Cuba's workers and farmers and everything to do with growing trade competition with U.S. capitalists as the world capitalist depression unfolds. Ottawa has repeatedly stated that it shares Washington's aims in Cuba.

Canadian Ambassador to Washington Raymond Chretien recently stated that Ottawa agreed with Washington on the need to establish "democracy, a free market, and human rights" in Cuba — their code words

for a return to capitalist exploitation. Their only disagreement was over how to achieve those objectives.

On September 14 the Canadian Auto Workers union contracts with the GM, Ford, and Chrysler auto assembly plants expire. As a Ford employee and member of the Machinists union in Ford's electronics division, it would make no sense to line up with the Ford's owners in their competitive drive against GM and Chrysler. As a worker I can only defend my class interests by helping to build solidarity with auto workers around the world in their fight with the bosses.

For exactly the same reason, we should not line up with Ottawa's trade war against Washington around the Helms-Burton law or nationalist anti-American campaigns to boycott Florida. That would just tie our class and our unions to the interests of our class enemies.

Instead, through conferences, organizing visits to Cuba, tours of Cubans to Canada, demonstrations, sales of Pathfinder books on Cuba and other means, we need to support the fight of Cuba's revolutionary workers and farmers to end the U.S. trade embargo, defend Cuba's sovereignty and build the socialist alternative to capitalism.

John Steele is a member of Local Lodge 2113 of the International Association of Machinists.

'Cuban revolution is fruit of years of struggle'

Continued from Page 8

the revolution and its leadership. Did you find out about Benigno's desertion during your South American tour?⁵

A. Yes. I think Benigno betrayed himself, because he betrayed the Cuban revolution, which made him who he was. Benigno was a peasant in the Sierra Maestra mountains who was illiterate, and it was the revolution that gave him the opportunity to learn to read and write.

Personally I was outraged. I was outraged that a person who had fought alongside Che could have committed treason.

He has told a lot of lies. I won't try to expose all of them. What's important is for people to know the fake assertions he has made about himself in order to justify what he's saying right now.

It's a lie that he was head of Che's personal escort.

It's a lie that he was ever the national prison director in Cuba.

It's a lie that he graduated in history and social sciences. He doesn't have a degree.

It's a lie that he was a member of the commander-in-chief's [Fidel Castro's] personal escort.

It's a lie that he fought with Che in Africa. That's easy to verify because there's a book, *El año que estuvimos en ninguna parte* [The Year We Were Nowhere], which at the end lists all the participants in that struggle.⁶

It's a lie that he was in Algeria.

You can't equate the Benigno of the Sierra Maestra, the humble peasant who joined the struggle, with the Benigno who betrayed. The original Benigno disappeared. He's a traitor worthy only of contempt, because he betrayed his homeland and the cause to which he had devoted more than 30 years.

Q. The last two issues of 'Juventud

Rebelde, the newspaper of the UJC [Union of Young Communists], ran an excerpt from your book and then an interview with you. What has been the response of youth in Cuba to your book?

A. The response to the book in Cuba has been very positive. I recently had a meeting with the UJC members at the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television. I also had the opportunity to discuss the book with the young people on the Blas Roca voluntary work contingent. The book inspired them because it conveys the capacity of self-sacrifice of a group of Cuban revolutionaries, because of its message of ideological firmness and confidence in the future.

Among Cuban youth there is a great desire to know this history. Many aspects [of the Bolivian guerrilla campaign] are not well known, such as the part about the departure from Bolivia by those of us who remained. This attracts their interest.

Neither Che's Bolivian diary nor this book reflects a trace of weakening. Instead, what you see is militancy and a determination to keep fighting. Nowhere is there a hint of giving up. That word — giving up, cease-fire, surrender — does not appear. In the book you see Che acting as the leader of the guerrillas. You can see his leadership capacity.

I believe Che's heroic undertaking in Bolivia is extremely important for us today, because history takes us to our roots. And when we go to our roots we see a history of combativity and steadfastness, a history of fighting for justice. And we see that the Cuban revolution is the fruit of all those

years of struggle.

These are the kinds of things that inspired Che, when he wrote *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, to describe the man of the future who is imbued with human and cultural richness. These are qualities we will fight to maintain. And the special period is not going to corrupt our system of human and cultural values.

We can say the special period has helped us learn that the future depends on our own efforts, on what we are capable of doing. Our goal can be achieved only through devoted work and a firm conviction that we are defending our cause.

The special period has forced us to keep our feet on the ground, to strive to be more efficient, more productive, and less wasteful. It has led us to fight and defend more vigorously the gains we have won.

Notes

⁵ Daniel Alarcón's book *Vie et mort de la révolution cubaine* (Life and death of the Cuban revolution), which has appeared only in French so far, was released in Paris in early May by the publisher Fayard. His defection and book briefly received extensive press coverage, mainly in France and in the Spanish-language media internationally.

⁶ *El año que estuvimos en ninguna parte* (Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz publishers, 1994) documents the guerrilla struggle led by Guevara in the Congo (now Zaire) in 1965. The book, which draws on Guevara's unpublished Congo diary, is by the Mexican writer Paco Ignacio Taibo Jr. and two Cuban journalists, Froilán Escobar and Félix Guerra.



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Winnipeg Boeing workers walk out

BY KATY LE ROUX
AND BOB CANTRICK

WINNIPEG, Canada—On July 11, at one minute past midnight, the 900 members of Canadian Autoworkers Local 2169 went on strike against Boeing Canada, Winnipeg Division. These workers supply Boeing's U.S. plants with substructures for aircraft.

Within minutes after picket lines went up, management tried to move a line of eighteen-wheelers onto company property through the west gate, aided, according to strikers, by half the Winnipeg police force. Refusing offers from picket captains to contact national union officials, the cops waded into the picket line and began beating workers and using pepper spray on them.

A union witness said, "They were pushing the people into the van, and then you would continue to see them open the door and launch more pepper spray inside the closed van."

Police prevented ambulances from responding to calls for medical assistance and kept media away from the site. However, a former Boeing worker who remembered the experience of past strikes had brought her video camera and caught dramatic images of the cop attack. National television news picked up a segment of it showing five cops beating and kicking a striker.

Thirteen pickets were initially taken into custody; eleven were charged with causing a disturbance. Zvonko Jovanovic, one of

those charged, said, "I never swore once, never pushed anyone. The next thing I know, I'm being bulldogged into the ground." James, another striker, explained, "It was a classic case of Nazi cops, corporate cops."

The police are conducting an internal investigation. The CAW is calling for a public inquiry.

James also explained one of the main reasons for the strike. "It's not a money thing," he said, "it's for seniority rights." Boeing wants to hire hundreds of skilled assembly workers who are on layoff from nearby Bristol Aerospace and pay them entry-level wages, thereby avoiding training costs. Boeing workers with years of seniority stand to lose their jobs if denied the opportunity to bid on the assembly positions.

Strikers are also asking for a wage increase and better benefits. The strike update bulletin reports that Boeing projects cornering the lion's share of world-wide aircraft sales, which will amount to US\$1.3 trillion over the next decade. Boeing workers in Canada are the lowest paid in the industry, according to the CAW.

As much as a third of the work force is Filipino, a significant proportion is from Poland and other eastern European countries, and almost half the work force is female.

"They tell us that Filipinos are stupid," a picketer of Filipino origin told the *Militant*.

"It's my belief that the company hired Filipinos to divide the work force. They



Militant/Katy LeRoux

Workers at Boeing Canada went on strike for seniority, wages and benefits July 11.

thought they'd be less militant. But with them, an injury to one is an injury to all. They're solid," said Dale Walker, Local 2169 financial secretary.

The company has threatened to close the plant and is shipping tooling and unfinished parts to Boeing plants in the U.S. Union officials in Seattle are calling on the membership there to refuse company offers to travel to Canada as replacement workers.

"It's a scary thing for me, the possibility of the plant shutting down," said Leslie, a picket captain who has worked at Boeing for eleven years. However, she stressed that no one has crossed the line.

Striker Guy Rehel said Boeing forced the union out on strike. "They wanted to see how strong the union is," he said, and pointed with pride to semi-trailer trucks driving by honking in support. "They're

Teamsters. They won't cross our line," he said. "They can't take the union away from us," said Margaretta Dumbovic, "it's the only freedom we have!"

Workers throughout the city have seen media coverage of the police attack. *Militant* reporters spoke to railworkers going into the CN Symington yard for the morning shift. Many did not know details of the strikers' demands, but most condemned the police actions.

The July 24 *Wall Street Journal* reported that Boeing "is scrambling to meet [orders] by hiking output to record levels." Workers said that since the company's annual shutdown falls during the last two weeks in July, they will not begin negotiating in earnest until August.

Picketing here continues around the clock, seven days a week.

McDonnell Douglas hires strikebreakers

BY JIM GARRISON
AND MARY MARTIN

ST. LOUIS, Missouri — The strike of 6,700 members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) against McDonnell Douglas Corporation, now in its ninth week, has been marked by intensified company attacks against the union.

These attacks include the introduction of some 1,200 scabs in the plant, escalated harassment of pickets both by company officials and security cops, and a hardening stance in contract negotiations.

At the same time, most of the 6,700 strikers remain determined to continue their battle against job cuts, reductions in pensions and health benefits, and other concessions.

"This company has been looking down their noses at us for so long they don't even know what we're capable of," Harold Sullivan, a precision tool grinder for over 33 years, said in an interview on the picket line.

District 837 of the IAM has filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) accusing McDonnell Douglas of illegal surveillance and harassment of its members on the picket line.

"McDonnell Douglas is ordering our members to picket dangerously close to traffic or face arrest for trespassing. At one gate picketers are being ordered to stand only 10 inches away from moving traffic," said IAM District 837 president Jerry Oulson in a news release. "Three members already have been hit by cars and it's a miracle no one has been critically injured or killed."

The union also charged that guards with the hired security force, Assets Protection Team (APT), have screamed obscenities,

made obscene gestures at several picketers, and tailed and videotaped strikers in their cars. APT is a division of the notorious strike-breaking outfit Vance Security Systems.

With federal mediation, the company resumed negotiations with the union on June 27. At that session, McDonnell spokesman Tom Williams said, "Everything from the previous offer is off the table." Subsequently, negotiations broke off on July 18 with no further meetings scheduled.

The July 21 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that to date the company has brought in 1,200 strikebreakers to work with the 3,300 non-union employees already producing in the plant.

McDonnell president Herb Lanese boasted in a July 26 interview with the *Post-Dispatch*, "In many places, we have reached the highest efficiency we have ever had in the history of the company."

The machinists struck June 5 primarily over job security. The company plans to eliminate up to 1,700 jobs through outsourcing and job combination and also wants take-backs in pension and health insurance provisions. The workers here have not had a wage increase for the last two contracts. Since 1990 the union workforce has shrunk from 11,000 to 6,700 due to layoffs. The last strike by machinists at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis occurred in 1975. It ended after 13 weeks with the union membership returning to work for one cent less than they were making before.

A non-union employee component of 15,000 remains on the job at McDonnell Douglas facilities here. This includes engineers, supervisors, secretaries, medical personnel, and cafeteria workers. A 1994 or-

ganizing drive to bring 5,000 of these workers, called Free Enterprise Personnel (or FEP's) into the union was unsuccessful.

On a recent four-hour picket duty turn strikers shared with *Militant* correspondents their views on the strike.

"This strike really changed my view of the union," said Thomas Dell, a sheet metal inspector, and one of the younger workers, who has been in the plant for 10 years. "I was never really a hard-core union man, but I have a new respect for the union and the struggle of the workers. I never used to pay much mind to, say, a picket line set up at a grocery store. But when you're on this side of the line you see what's going on. I'll never ignore another picket line at a grocery store or anywhere else."

Another striker, Kim, who works as a janitor at McDonnell, angrily recounted her recent experience in trying to apply for food stamps and a Medicaid card for her daughter. She said she was turned away by a welfare office caseworker who told her she was a "greedy Mac worker" who didn't deserve these benefits. "People don't seem to realize that some of us, like single parents, are hurting already," she stated.

Other St. Louis-area unionists have begun to organize support efforts for the strik-

ing Machinists. In the past two weeks, members of the United Auto Workers union at General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler assembly plants have conducted plant gate collections at shift changes. A total of \$18,000 was collected.

A speakers bureau of strikers and district officials has been established to reach out to other unionists to win support for the strike. They have visited union locals in Illinois, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Machinist union members who work for Northwest Airlines in Minneapolis recently donated \$2,000 to the strike fund, according to Jim Price, co-chair of the strike security team of District 837.

A strike solidarity march and rally is tentatively planned for Sunday, August 11, at 1:00 p.m. at the IAM District 837 union headquarters in Hazelwood, Missouri. For more information call strike headquarters at (314) 731-0603.

Jim Garrison is a member of United Auto Workers Local 110 at Chrysler in Fenton, Missouri. Mary Martin is a member of IAM Local 1759 at Northwest Airlines in Washington, D.C.. Danny Booher, a laid off member of IAM Local 1018 at U.S. Air in New York, contributed to this article.

Rail unions approve contracts

BY BILL ARTH

BROOKLYN, New York — A July 24 strike deadline on major U.S. railroads passed without a walkout. The Transportation and Communications Union (TCU), which organizes about 20,000 clerks and 12,000 carmen, agreed to a tentative contract hours before the deadline. Union officials did not release details of the settlement, which is subject to membership ratification.

The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE), which organizes 27,000 track workers, reached a tentative agreement July 22 with all the railroads except Conrail. According to a statement issued by BMWE President Mac Fleming, Conrail refused to accept terms agreed to by the other railroads concerning "job security provisions" for workers with 10 years' seniority, as well as "production gang definition."

BMWE officials sent a written pledge to the companies, the Clinton administration, and Congress that they would not strike before July 31. "We also have committed to take no action beyond July 31 that would disrupt essential rail service to the nation,"

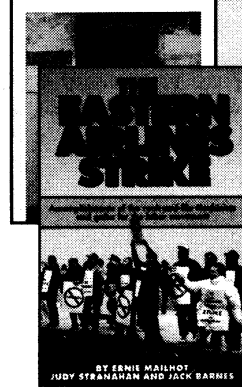
Fleming added. The BMWE and Conrail are continuing to negotiate.

The framework for the TCU and BMWE negotiations had been set by an earlier settlement with the United Transportation Union (UTU), which organizes about 50,000 conductors, brakemen, and yardmasters, as well as a few engineers. The UTU membership, in their first-ever vote on a national agreement, rejected a settlement that contained minimal wage increases and some concessions on work rules. Seeing the giant profits posted by the railroads this year, UTU members wanted a better contract after two decades of setbacks on wages and working conditions.

UTU officials instead voluntarily submitted the offer to binding arbitration, citing fear that a Republican-dominated Congress would impose a worse contract. The arbitrator rapidly issued a ruling that imposed the exact same provisions the membership had rejected. This contract then served as the pattern for the other settlements.

Bill Arth is a member of UTU Local 1447, and is a brakemen for Conrail.

JACK BARNES
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Washington uses TWA crash to assault rights

Continued from Page 4

perts say, could easily plant a bomb aboard an airliner."

Kifner goes on to quote Henry DeGeneste, a former superintendent of the Port Authority Police, which oversees the three New York area airports. "This is the major hole in the system," DeGeneste said, referring to airline workers. "I would be less concerned with the luggage screening; what I would be concerned with is what goes on the tarmac."

The article also suggests that airport workers, particularly low-paid ones, are thieves who could easily be bought off. It points to the theft of a diamond necklace from the Duchess of York's luggage last December by a 19-year-old baggage handler at JFK International Airport. Kifner quotes Richard Critta, an airline "security expert," as saying, "If I were a terrorist, I probably would go to a subcontractor" for help.

Immigrants from the Middle East are one focus of the investigation. Immediately following the crash, the July 28 *Times* stated, the FBI set up a command center in the Federal Building in Manhattan and began the process of tracking "terrorists." According to widely publicized media reports, high on the FBI's list were associates of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, who is currently on trial in the bombing of the World Trade Center in Manhattan.

The FBI also went after supporters of Omar Abdel Rahman, the Egyptian cleric who was convicted last year in a frame-up trial, accused of plotting to bomb several buildings in New York. Several of Rahman's followers were put under active surveillance.

Brian Duffy wrote in the July 29 issue of *U.S. News and World Report* that Athens "has long been a favorite operations base of pro-Palestinian terrorists" and that "Yousef is a Baluchi with strong ties to the Afghan mujheddin and radical Islamic groups supported by a handful of wealthy Saudis." The *New York Times* reported that Osama bin Laden is also being investigated by the FBI. Bin Laden is from Saudi Arabia and the *Times* said he "is affiliated with Islamic militant fighters based in Afghanistan."

Deportations under 'antiterror' law

Duffy's article also hints at U.S. military moves, saying if the possible bombing leads to a connection with Iran, Iraq, Libya or the Sudan "President Clinton would be faced with difficult decisions about how and whether to retaliate."

The "Group of 7" and Russia adopted a 25-point "antiterrorism" plan in Paris July 30. Officials of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States agreed to measures that include restricting access by those termed terrorists to electronic communications, including the Internet; tightening restrictions on money transfers; strengthening border controls and cracking down on forged travel documents; and developing or simplifying extradition agreements.

In Washington, Clinton vowed to push for legislation the first week in August that would expand wiretapping authority and allow prosecution of those charged with terrorism under federal racketeering laws — making them subject to asset forfeitures and longer sentences. These are measures Clinton tried to include in an earlier "antiterrorism" law signed in April this year, but was unable to get through Congress. "I think we're going to have a package," said Republican Sen. Larry Craig, head of a bipartisan congressional task force that is working with the White House on this.

One piece of the earlier legislation that did pass allows the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to detain without a legal hearing an immigrant who is not a naturalized citizen and who has been convicted of a crime in the United States, which includes most felonies and some misdemeanors. And while the deportation hearing is under way, the person can be held in jail.

This provision has begun to be enforced. For example, the INS recently picked up

Lorraine Parris at JFK International Airport. She was returning from Guyana, her country of birth, with her U.S.-born husband. Why? In the 1970s, Parris had been convicted of marijuana possession. She is now in an immigration jail awaiting deportation. According to the *Carib News*, hundreds of immigrants with U.S. residence permits (green cards), just like Lorraine, have been arrested since Clinton signed the law April 24.

Previous explosion, fuel leaks

While speculation on possible bomb theories dominates the daily news, the July 27 *Seattle Times* carried a front-page story that received scant notice elsewhere. Aerospace reporter Byron Acohido wrote that in the mid-1970s, another Boeing 747 owned by the Iranian military blew up in a similar mid-air explosion near Madrid. The cause of the blast was never determined, but an electrical spark igniting fuel in the wing was suspected. The crash "provides authorities with an extensive analysis of how a catastrophic mechanical failure can detonate a 747 jumbo jet," the *Times* article said.

In June 1976, as the Madrid investigation was under way, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) "issued an airworthiness directive, ordering 747 operators to inspect for fuel leaks in the dry bay [of the aircraft]. Most found leaks," Acohido wrote.

At the time, the plane that blew up this year also happened to be owned by the Iranian military under the former U.S.-backed regime of Shah Reza Pahlavi. The plane

"was exempt from civil-aviation rules and directives because it was in military service," the *Times* article notes. "Boeing spokesman Doug Webb said he could not say whether the fuel-system upgrades were made once the jet was repurchased by TWA in December 1976."

Investigators in the recent crash announced July 26 the results of the preliminary analysis of the plane's cockpit and flight data recorders. Acohido wrote, "The voice recorder showed no signs of a crisis among the cockpit crew, and some analysts are citing that as evidence that the crash was not caused by a mechanical failure. However the NTSB [National Transportation Safety Board] report on the Madrid explosion noted that the voice recorder also provided few clues in that crash."

He continued, "NTSB Vice Chairman Robert Francis did say yesterday that one of the TWA pilots noted an 'erratic fuel-flow gauge' two minutes before the recording ends but didn't mention the problem again."

George Stephanopoulos, President Clinton's advisor, said after the latest directive by the FAA that "we felt it prudent to reassure people, even before a final judgment was made, about the safety of the airlines."

Other recent incidents had already shaken many people's confidence. In May, ValuJet Flight 592 crashed near Miami, killing all 110 people on board. On July 6, an engine on a Delta plane taking off from Pensacola, Florida, exploded, killing two people. Now with the TWA crash, the government is

working overtime to keep the focus off of any safety problems.

Faced with declining profit rates and intense competition between different carriers, airline bosses have been cutting costs and wrenching deep concessions from airline workers over the past several years — undermining safety.

At TWA, which has been in and out of bankruptcy twice in the past eight years, workers have taken major concessions all in the name of "saving" the company. New hires, ramp service workers and mechanics, start at a lower rate of pay and most are hired only on a part-time basis. Vacations have been slashed and pensions have been frozen. Cost-cutting has been the motto for the airline bosses. Starting flight attendants at TWA must pay for their own six-week training program and then receive a base pay of only \$12,000 a year. 1996 was the first year the government approved regulations that guarantee flight attendants minimum rest periods, which can be as little as nine hours between flights.

Delta has cut about 12,000 jobs just since 1994 and USAir just went through a round of cutbacks, including layoffs cuts at its maintenance base in Miami. The Associated Press reported that Delta officials rushed to reassure the public "there was no connection between the [July 6] accident and deep cost-cutting."

Nancy Rosenstock is a member of the International Association of Machinists and works at TWA in Newark, New Jersey.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON

The Lesser Evil? The Democratic Party and Working-Class Politics. Speaker: Mary Nell Bockman, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress, 9th C.D. Fri., Aug. 9, 8 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

NEW YORK

BROOKLYN

The Fight for Independence in Puerto Rico. Eyewitness Report. Speaker: Ruth Nebbia, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Transportation Union Local 1447, participant in 'La Nación en Marcha' in Puerto Rico. Fri., Aug. 9, 7:30 p.m. 59 4th Ave. (corner with Bergen St.)

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PENNSYLVANIA

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Report Back from South Africa Today. Speaker: Gary Rosemont, just back from a tour of South Africa. Fri., Aug. 9, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY

Life in Cuba Today: A First-Hand Report by Utah Students. Discussion with high school and college students and a young industrial worker just back from their trip to Cuba on the Cuba Youth Exchange. Fri., Aug. 9, 7:30 p.m. 209 E. 300 South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Crisis of Capitalism: Workers and Farmers Need to Fight for Power. Speakers: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers candidate for Washington, D.C., Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, and Mary Martin, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate. Sat., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m., 1930 18th St. N.W. #3 (18th and Florida N.W., entrance on Florida). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

NEW ZEALAND

AUCKLAND

Hear James Harris, Socialist Workers Candidate for U.S. President. Sat., Aug. 10, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. Donation: \$3. *La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. (opposite McDonald's).* Tel: (09) 379-3075.

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—CALENDAR—

NEW JERSEY

IRVINGTON

Join In a Fight To Stop Police Brutality. Fri., Aug. 2, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. *Irvington City Hall.* For information, call (888) 938-6874.

That's capitalism — World-wide, more than one person in five lives on less than \$1 a day, according to a World Bank report. In 1987, 1.23 billion people were in that in-



Harry Ring

come bracket. By 1993, their numbers had climbed to 1.31 billion.

Separate, but firmly linked — "In the wake of reports that gaps between rich and poor in the United States are wider than they have been

in half a century, a United Nations survey...finds that the phenomena is worldwide and that the wealthiest and poorest people — both within and among countries — are living in increasingly separate worlds." — July 15 *New York Times*.

The virtues of 'English only' — In San Francisco, Nancy Yu and her son put down \$6,000 on a \$12,000 Toyota and thought they had signed a loan for the balance. They learned they had signed a lease and, to finally own the car, would be shelling out some \$26,000.

Declared the Toyota manager: "The burden is on the consumer to know what they're signing. There's

no obligation on the dealer's part to translate for them."

'Free world' ally — The president of the advisory council appointed by Saudi Arabia's King Fahd ruled out any prospects for elections and, also, the idea of any woman being added to the council. "In elections," he said, "candidates require publicity for their campaigns and this could lead to negative campaigning, which is not approved in Islam."

They don't see how well the system works — The British Parliament took a brief break from the drive against workers' standard of living to vote themselves a 26 percent pay hike. Meanwhile, Labor

Party honcho Anthony Blair found it "a frightening fact" that in the last election 2.5 million people eligible to vote for the first time didn't bother to do so.

Better to vote Tory than not vote, he declared.

Terrorists? — "The sophisticated radar system designed to warn pilots of dangerous wind conditions at Washington's National Airport has been down almost once a week on average since it started operating in January, the *Washington Post* reported. The same system has frequently been out of commission at other major U.S. airports." — News item.

We promise, no more — Be-

sides the reported £17 million divorce settlement, Princess Diana will have a rent-free home and £400,000 in "office expenses." Plus access to the Royal Squadron and Royal Train. But, investment experts warn, if she doesn't earn some extra, in 50 years she'll be down to peanuts.

Thought for the week — "Some economists and social critics warn that Yeltsin must attend quickly to weaving a more durable safety net for the poor if Russian society is to maintain stability and be safe for private enterprise. Part of building capitalism, they say, is constructing a means to help the new class of poor it creates." — *Los Angeles Times* on growing Russian poverty.

Bougainville rebels continue independence fight

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia — A major new offensive by Papua New Guinea (PNG) troops on the island of Bougainville has run into stiff opposition from the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA).

In the largest build-up of the seven-year war some 1,800 PNG troops, police, and support staff are now on Bougainville attempting a pincer movement against BRA-held territory in the center of the southern part of the island. According to sources close to PNG prime minister Julius Chan, PNG's goal is to "wipe out" BRA, "destroy forever" its goal of an independent Bougainville, and re-take the giant Australian-owned copper mine at Panguna, which has been closed since the start of the war.

The offensive comes Chan's government ended an 18-month cease-fire on Bougainville in March, threatening that BRA's "darkest hour had come." Chan became prime minister in early 1994 on a platform of a rapid, peaceful solution to the Bougainville war.

The Australian government has distanced itself from this latest offensive. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said he feared that "an attempt to achieve a military solution... will simply exacerbate the situation." However the Australian government in Canberra continues to supply the PNG government in Port Moresby with around A\$20 million

(A\$1=US \$.79) in military aid each year, by far its largest supplier.

The Papua New Guinea armed forces are essentially Canberra's creation. In order to protect Australian capitalist interests, which dominate the country, it has spent A\$500 million in military aid to its former colony since granting independence in 1975. It has armed, trained, financed, and advised PNG armed forces throughout the fighting on Bougainville, and Australian-supplied helicopters and patrol boats are a central part of the war effort. Australian advisors also continue to play a central role in the Port Moresby administration.

In recent years Canberra has sought to broker a negotiated settlement to the conflict, short of independence for Bougainville. For instance, representatives of BRA and the pro-independence Bougainville Interim Government met with representatives of the Port Moresby-appointed Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG) for talks in Cairns, Australia, last December.

Theodore Miriung, who was appointed Bougainville premier in the BTG administration last year, has condemned Port Moresby's new offensive. In an interview with the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Miriung said, "I believe the results of this operation will be zero for the national government. The end result will be that lives will be lost, people will be injured and ordinary Bougainvilleans will be dis-

lodged from their villages."

He called for a referendum to determine whether Bougainville would remain as part of Papua New Guinea, saying he believed a majority would opt for independence.

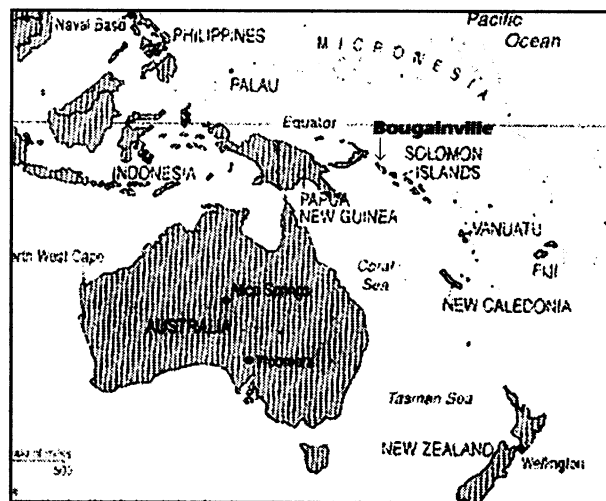
"We had been on this island for 25,000 years without anyone overlord us until stupid mistakes by [former colonial powers] Great Britain and Germany put us with New Guinea," Miriung said. "We are an island apart from all others. We have enough common sense and enough resources to run our own affairs," he added.

In mid-June PNG authorities ordered civilians still living in BRA-controlled territory to shift to government-controlled "care centers," or "face the consequences." This has swelled the number of refugees living in the 49 "care centers" around the island to 80,000, nearly 40 percent of the island's population.

Miriung, who has been confined to the offshore island of Buka by Port Moresby, has stated that there is a severe shortage of food and medicines in these camps.

A report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* July 13 cited "aid organization sources" as describing the so-called care centers as "prison camps," with armed guards patrolling the perimeters, and residents requiring permission to leave. A 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew is in force throughout the island.

BRA claims that it has held it own in



heavy fighting during the offensive. Following a bombardment by Australian-supplied patrol boats, a force of 250 PNG troops established a beachhead at the abandoned Aropa airport, south of the capital Arawa, July 8, but has since been forced to withdraw from BRA-held territory.

A report by Bacre Waly N'Diaye to the United Nations Commission for Human Rights lists 75 cases of alleged extrajudicial killings by members of the PNG army on Bougainville in the three years to October 1995.

In the most recent reported incident eight youths were taken by PNG troops from a "care center" near Sipai in northern Bougainville and executed June 19.

Bob Aiken is a member of the AWU-FIME union at Capral Aluminum in Granville, Sydney.

Activists prepare for national immigrant rights march

BY HIROKO TANAKA AND PACO SANCHEZ

NEW YORK — Activists here have begun preparations for a national immigrant rights march in Washington, D.C., on October 12. Around 20 people met on July 15 to organize a public conference in support of immigrant rights and to build the national demonstration. The march has been called by Campaign '96, a California-based organization, to demand human and constitutional rights, education, health care, and an end to police brutality against all immigrants.

Some of those present at the meeting had previously organized a demonstration to protest the beating of Mexican workers by police in the Los Angeles area last April. In early July they held a press conference in front of the Statue of Liberty to build the

national march, drawing 50 people.

Israel Galindo, a laid-off health-care worker and member of Local 1199 of the hospital workers union, had picked up a flyer announcing the meeting left by another unionist at his union hall. Galindo said he came because "history tells us that countries change through large social movements and revolutions and not through elections—although people should vote."

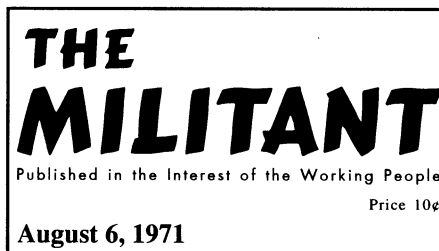
Among the participants at the meeting, there were people from Bangladesh, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Iran, Japan, Mexico, Spain, and the United States. The discussion was translated into Spanish and Farsi.

Abu Taher, a young journalist from Bangladesh, found out about the meeting after reading a local newspaper about the march on Washington. After making many phone calls, he found out the address for the meeting. "We need to reach out to different communities. There are many Bangladeshis in New York and they will be interested in going to the march," Taher said. The next day he wrote an article about the October 12 march for his newspaper, *The Weekly Thikana*.

At the meeting participants decided to organize a public conference and planning meeting on August 18 with activists from different communities. The conference will include presentations and discussion, followed by workshops where several aspects of the march will be planned, from outreach to publicity. More than 100 organizations in New York have endorsed the march. A number of groups are already filling up busses for the march on D.C.

For more information call (212) 473-3936 or (212) 505-0001.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



The recent issue of *La Raza* (Vol. 1, #6) is an example of how the emerging movement of Chicanas for liberation is catching on.

Both articles point out that much talent goes untapped because Chicanas are forced to remain in the background of the movement. The argument that Chicanas organizing as women will divide the movement is not valid, one article points out, because such divisions have already been created by this system and cannot be ignored. It is because of these divisions that women must organize ourselves before we can forge unity with other social forces fighting the same oppressor.

The articles express concern that Chicanas are not politically active in proportion to our numbers in the population, and that of those involved, only a small number are recognized as leaders.

The Chicana must organize herself, but she must also see her struggle as an integral part of the total struggle of *La Raza* for liberation. She must be able to identify the real oppressor — the system — and must be ready to fight this system along-

side her Chicano brothers.



August 10, 1946

The great city of Calcutta — approximately the size of Detroit — lay helpless last week before the mighty strength of the Indian working masses. For 24 hours, on July 29, the city was closed down tight by a *hartal*, or general strike.

Nearly half a million workers — about a fifth of the entire population of the city — joined in a vast march to Dalhousie Square in the center of the city, where an immense mass demonstration was held. The AP report states that "the marchers remained orderly."

In view of the fact that between 400,000 and 500,000 workers were participating, this is a significant indication of the degree of organization and discipline among these marching masses. All business places and factories were closed down. No newspaper was issued in the city. In the European section, shop-owners covered their doors and windows with steel grills. All but the most essential municipal services were halted.

This vast general strike was called in sympathy with the strike of postal and telegraph workers throughout India who walked out July 10, crippling communication services, especially in the key cities of Bombay and Calcutta.

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Stop Clinton's welfare attack!

President William Clinton announced July 31 he would "seize the historic opportunity" to "end welfare as we know it." He pledged to sign into law a new welfare bill that ends federal guarantees of cash assistance for children of working people thrown into poverty, puts a five-year lifetime limit on receiving welfare, and requires adults to get a job after two years or lose benefits. The act passed by Congress takes a major step in attacking immigrant rights as well, denying most benefits — including Supplemental Security Income and food stamps — to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen.

Clinton and the other big-business politicians cynically claim the measure is a way to "help the poor" and "break the cycle of dependency." Working people however, need to break the real "cycle of dependency" of the capitalist class, who depend on our acquiescence in exploiting our labor to amass their immense social wealth.

The Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, which the new law will eliminate, was originally part of the Social Security Act of 1935. It is a minimal measure that workers fought for to ease the burden of social catastrophe caused by the ravages of this dog-eat-dog society. No working person wants to be on the welfare rolls the way it's set up — a deeply humiliating experience that keeps you far below the poverty line. But workers should oppose the capitalist bloodsuckers taking even one penny from any of our sisters and brothers receiving benefits. Instead we need to demand more entitlements — such as unemployment compensation at union-scale pay for all

who face joblessness, without humiliating means testing — to buffer the working class from the impact of the international economic depression we are living in.

Capitalist governments worldwide are driving to slash the social wage of working people to shore up a falling rate of industrial profit in their crisis-ridden system. They scapegoat welfare recipients to pave the way for deeper attacks on entitlements such as Medicare, Social Security, and unemployment compensation, which they must ultimately try to eliminate. These benefits were historic gains won by the working class through past struggles.

This bipartisan assault, with Clinton leading the charge, goes hand in hand with cutbacks on workers' wages and working conditions, attacks on democratic rights, and a march toward fascism and war to reorder their system and open the door to another round of capitalist expansion.

More resistance to this onslaught is on the horizon. This can be seen in the young *Marchistas* for affirmative action in California, McDonnell Douglas strikers, and protesters against racist church burnings. Working people will gain more confidence as we participate in future battles.

Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign will be hitting the streets, plant gates, and factory floors to discuss the bipartisan attacks on entitlements, and how we can fight them. The socialist campaign points to the historic necessity of overthrowing the rule of the exploiting class and fighting for a workers and farmers government that will run society in the interests of the majority of humanity, like that of revolutionary Cuba.

Socialist speaks on Puerto Rico

Continued from Page 7

struggle against the economic and social conditions the big majority of people face as a result of the massive social transformation of the island over the last 50 years.

The economy has changed from predominantly agricultural to heavily industrial. A majority of the producers today are wage workers in manufacturing and other industries. This working population faces the same problems as workers in other countries, including the United States—deteriorating wages, high unemployment, speedup and safety hazards on the job, industrial pollution, assaults on the unions, and cop and goon violence against strikes. The inequalities resulting from colonial subjugation combined with imperialist exploitation have made these conditions substantially worse in Puerto Rico. Unemployment is more than three times as high as in the United States; median family income is less than one-third that in the United States; 50 percent of families have an income of less than \$10,000 a year, compared with 9.6 percent of families in the United States; 35 percent of the population over 25 years of age has less than a ninth grade education, compared with 10 percent in the United States. The country is a reserve army of labor for the industrial giants.

The struggle for the defense of the Puerto Rican nationality and its integrity as a Latin American nation deserves the active support not only of other peoples of Latin America, but of all those in the Americas, especially workers and farmers in the United States. To support self-determination and independence for Puerto Rico is to strengthen the hand of all those fighting for a world in which all nations are able to make their own social and economic decisions free of imperialist coercion.

This is more true today, as Washington, faced with a world capitalist disorder, more and more uses its military might and economic weight to attempt to dictate to nations less powerful than itself. This is true in the case of Cuba, where Washington has stepped up its economic war against the Cuban people and their revolution; in Yugoslavia, where tens of thousands of U.S. and NATO troops reinforce the division of that country while seeking to re-establish the political and economic rule of imperialism over the Balkans; in Iraq, where a criminal blockade has devastated the lives of millions of workers and peasants; in the case of the Palestinians and Lebanese, where Washington's backing of the Israeli state is a crucial component of the denial of self-determination for those peoples; and in the case of China, where a massive military show of force was organized to deny the unification of China and Taiwan.

Defense of Puerto Rican nation

The struggle, then, by the working class for social advances against the designs of the employers and the government goes hand in hand with the fight against colonial oppression. This fight is accelerating today as the onerous conditions resulting from the world capitalist economic crisis become more pronounced and as the employers drive to squeeze more out of Puerto Rican workers.

The colonial oppression of Puerto Rico reinforces this same assault on working people and oppressed nationalities inside the U.S. It helps to keep the working class divided and to keep its most oppressed and combative layers outside the organized labor movement. Colonial status is used to bolster chauvinism and prejudice, weapons the employers use to prevent workers in the United States from seeing workers in Puerto Rico—as well as elsewhere in the world—as fellow fighters in the same struggle.

If the labor movement accepts the subjugation of another people and does not unconditionally oppose it, political consciousness, a sense of justice, and elementary human solidarity will be sapped. Progress in our struggles is consequently weakened and the fighting strength of the labor movement undermined.

Example of Cuba

Cuba and Puerto Rico have shared a common history of colonial subjugation. The Cuban people were able to free their country in 1959, and since then the Cuban government has consistently spoken out against the denial of self-determination to the Puerto Rican people.

The Cuban people and their revolution more and more stand as an example of the road to independence. Washington, the most powerful and heavily armed empire ever on the face of the earth, cannot destroy the Cuban revolution despite 37 years of trying everything at its disposal. Today Cuba shows the way forward in the battle for sovereignty, independence, and dignity, and in the struggle for a social system based on human solidarity and cooperative labor — socialism. The Cuban revolution has shown the power of working people and their capacity to break out of the backwardness imposed by imperialism to chart a road forward for humanity.

The White House and U.S. Congress have consistently opposed the efforts of international organizations like this one to place their moral weight behind the fight for Puerto Rican independence. This hearing today is one small part of the fight to get out the truth about one of the few remaining peoples who live under direct colonial rule. While hundreds of millions of people have broken from their imperialist masters and established scores of independent countries, the 500 years of domination of Puerto Rico is still enforced. This is contrary to the interests of the people of Puerto Rico, the people of the United States, and indeed to all the world's peoples.

Defend democratic rights

Continued from front page

mechanical failure. Similarly after the recent ValuJet crash in Florida, the Federal Aviation Administration backed the airline's safety record until it could no longer cover up the government's complicity in gross safety violations, the inevitable result of the airlines' profit drive.

The labor movement can take this opportunity to step up demands for strict safety measures in the airline industry and the reversal of the speed-up and cost-cutting measures that increase profits at the expense of workers' lives.

Steps being rapidly prepared under the guidance of the Clinton administration will allow the government to expand wiretapping, eavesdropping, and other unconstitutional intrusions into the activity of individuals or organizations.

Under the press of nationalist propaganda, the bipartisan gang in Washington is also speeding legislation through Congress to deny an entire section of the working class—immigrants who are legally residing in the United States—access to welfare, Social Security, and other such programs. Legal immigrants are now subject to arrest and deportation without constitutional guarantees or due process, a measure approved under recent "anti-terrorist" legislation.

None of this legislation has anything to do with protecting the rights or defending the lives of working people: it is aimed at taking away our rights and reinforcing government control over our lives. It seeks to undercut the notion that "an injury to one is an injury to all," and instead to instill the idea that the very government that defends the exploiters and oppressors should be allowed curtail the rights of any individual.

Washington considers "terrorist" anyone or organization that threatens the social and economic interests of U.S. imperialism around the world or the banks, indus-

trial giants, and giant owners of land here at home.

In the recent past this has included the African National Congress and Nelson Mandela when they were banned under the South African apartheid regime, as well as Irish and Palestinian fighters for self-determination.

In recent decades the U.S. president and Congress maintained "subversive" lists of individuals and organizations that opposed Washington's wars abroad, such as in Vietnam; that sought to overturn racist segregation in the North and South; that fought to support liberation struggles around the world; and that organized to win unions around the country. This history has been well documented in "Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation" by Larry Seigle, published in *New Internationalist* no. 6, as well as in *Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* and other Pathfinder books.

"Our nation" is under siege, many government officials and writers in the big-business media report. But nothing could be further from the truth. America is class divided—now more than ever. Working people here and abroad have faced a common assault in the last 20 years by those who own the banks, factories, mines, and mills. We, working people around the world, have no common interests with them, the ruling rich.

Defending democratic and political rights becomes a pressing issue for the labor movement today and in the years ahead. Identifying with those fighting injustice around the world is a basic precondition to waging effective struggle here at home. Opposing the whole "anti-terrorist" drive, and not giving an inch to the "right" of the government to restrict democratic liberties, can be a step in the labor movement championing the interests of the entire working class and the oppressed.

Stop the assault on democratic rights! Equal rights for immigrants! Enforce airline safety!

Cubans celebrate July 26

Continued from front page

where a whole number of countries have less sovereignty."

At the same time, despite an escalating economic war by Washington, the Cuban people are succeeding through tremendous efforts to reverse the country's economic decline, Castro said, proving it's worth it to fight imperialist enslavement. "The country is recovering slowly," Castro said. "I say we are on a good path.... I say we can resist."

Cuba's gross domestic product grew 9.6 percent in the first half of this year, the Cuban president pointed out, following on the heels of a 2.7 percent growth rate in 1995. "The 9.6 is a salute, is a message to Mr. Helms and Mr. Burton," Castro said. He was referring to the original sponsors of the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, which U.S. president William Clinton signed into law March 12, significantly tightening Washington's economic and trade embargo on Cuba.

The 144 young people from 26 states across the United States who are here as part of the U.S.-Cuba Youth Exchange had the opportunity to hear Castro's speech on TV in Santiago while staying with Cuban families. We also had a chance to talk about it with dozens of Cuban youth and workers while visiting factories, schools, farms, taking part in demonstrations, or simply walking down the street.

"I support the Cuban revolution because I support autonomy for the oppressed," commented Ramón Harris, a

student from Los Angeles who is a member of the Chicano rights group MEChA, one of many Latino and Chicano youth on the trip. "It's becoming clear to me that the masses here are one with the revolution and their government."

In his talk the Cuban president explained that Holguín was chosen as the national site of the July 26 celebration because working people there set an outstanding example in the battle to meet the goal of 4.5 million tons of sugar — the country's main export crop and the major source of hard currency. As rains prevented combines from entering the fields at the end of the harvest in May and June, tens of thousands of factory workers, teachers, students, and others mobilized and cut the cane in the fields with machetes — often immersed in water to their knees. Holguín reached 510,000 tons, one of the highest amounts in the country. Miners also made big advances, Castro said, reaching 27,000 tons in nickel production thus far, putting the country well on the way to making a historic record in annual production this year.

This working-class determination and self-confidence to reverse the economic decline set off by the termination of favorable trade and aid from the former Soviet Union has spread in factory after factory and farm after farm around the island. "In bestowing this recognition to Holguín," Castro said, "we must also extend it to the entire country, because the entire country worked and fought hard."

Aerospace workers strike in Birmingham

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

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

a.m., the number had increased to 200.

Hotel strikers defeat injunction and fight on

TORONTO — After six and a half weeks on the picket line, the 600 cooks, bellhops, housekeepers, and other workers on strike against

during a coffee break at the court hearing.

Following the decision the strikers reinforced their picket lines. The walls of a trailer at the strikers' command center a few blocks from the hotel have become a bulletin board displaying strike support letters and newspaper clippings on the strike. Notices report that \$188 was collected for strikers at the recent Gay Pride march, and other \$215 at the June 24 Peterborough one-day strike and protest against the anti-labor policies and social service cutbacks of the Ontario government.

Montreal strikers fight for union

MONTREAL — "Oh, 'Solidarity with Native People!' Welcome," exclaimed Marc-André Lefebvre, as he read the slogan on the T-shirt of one of the *Militant* reporters who stopped by the picket line. Lefebvre is one of 42 workers on strike against Travail de Signalisation JP since July 10.

These workers install temporary road signs during repairs or traffic rerouting. They are paid CAN\$6.50 (US\$4.70) an hour, must pay for their own gloves, hard hats, and boots, and regularly work 16 hours a day without overtime pay.

Since the beginning of their unionizing drive in September 1995, at least 10 workers have been fired, leading to a reduction in personnel. Michel Nadeau was working with a reduced team when he was seriously injured by a car on the highway last fall.

This strengthened workers' determination to get a union in, according to Gilles Allard, local union president. The workers signed cards with the Confederation of National Trade Unions, and now the unionists are fighting for their first contract.

When workers began the strike by blocking the road in front of the workplace with trucks and road signs, their boss contacted workers at Mole, a company of which he is also the owner. He proposed they



Militant/Kevin Johnson
Hospital workers picket Menorah Home and Hospital, Brooklyn, New York. 6,000 members of Service Employees International Union Local 144 walked off job June 27 to protest wage and benefits cuts in contract proposal.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Some 950 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1155 went on strike here July 22, one day after they voted overwhelmingly to reject a final contract offer by Pemco Aeroplex. The strike halted the overhauling and refurbishing of KC-135 tankers and C-130 transport aircraft. Pemco's primary clients are the U.S. and other governments.

Unionists said that Pemco's final offer to combine and reduce 61 job classifications down to 31 would result in fewer workers being forced to perform more work, with no guarantees of employment for those displaced from their classifications. The workers also cited Pemco's insistence on no general increase in wages or benefits for two years and the company's proposal to reopen the contract at the end of the second year.

In the weeks leading up to the strike vote, discussion about Pemco's concession demands spread throughout the plant. The workers organized a show of solidarity July 19. Several hundred UAW members wearing their union T-shirts and stickers gathered outside the hangar bays at the start of the lunch break. At the end of the first shift the same day, hundreds of workers assembled at the union hall until late in the night.

About 30 workers set up a picket line at midnight after the strike vote, including some retirees. By 5:00

the union-busting drive of the owners of the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel are as determined as ever. The strike, which began June 10, is seen by workers as an important test of the Ontario government's new anti-union laws, which permit bosses to use scabs during strikes. Since the strike began 200 scabs, hired before the strike and herded by dozens of specially hired security guards, have been living and working in the hotel. The strikers are maintaining 24-hour picket lines.

Over the July 13-14 weekend, one of the hotel's busiest during the summer season, the bosses got a 48-hour temporary court injunction limiting the number pickets to seven, and preventing them from slowing traffic in and out of the hotel. The court action angered the strikers.

"We should march on Queen's Park and let the government know how we feel about other people taking our jobs," said Virla Ryan, a steward at the hotel for 21 years.

Over 70 strikers, including a number of their children, packed the courthouse on July 18 in a display of solidarity against the hotel bosses' further attempt to win a permanent anti-picketing injunction. For more than an hour the company lawyer argued that the picket line protocol established between the Metro Toronto cops and the union — permitting the stopping of vehicles for up to 15 minutes — was illegal. Pickets could only communicate passively with picket signs, he said. The court refused to grant the injunction, however.

"We are having an impact because everyone is united. We all face the same thing so we're strong," said striker Kuya Gwaan,

replace the strikers, only nine of whom were crossing the line. Mole employees categorically refused to scab and contacted the strikers to express their solidarity.

Bus drivers and other motorists honk their support as they pass the picket line, which is composed of workers from different countries.

Allard said, "This is the first time on strike for most of us. Here the boss acts like a dictator. It's exploitation and a whiff of paternalism. But that's over now. We're fighting till the end." The workers are demanding contract clauses on health and safety, retroactive overtime pay for the past year, and a substantial wage increase.

Sit-in at warehouse demands job protection

PHILADELPHIA — Eight union fighters, members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, ended a five-day sit-in at the Strawbridge & Clothier furniture warehouse here July 17. The workers barricaded themselves inside the building with stacks of Duraflame logs at the close of the Saturday shift after hearing rumors they would be locked out following a stockholders' meeting on Monday. The stockholders were expected to ratify the

sale of Strawbridge & Clothier to the May Department Stores Co. in a move that would result in the loss of about 100 jobs for Teamsters from Locals 169, 107, and 929.

"The union has been trying to negotiate and they [the May Department Stores Co.] won't even talk to us," complained warehouse worker John Dumphy. Dumphy was one of some 30 Teamsters and supporters who stood in front of the occupied warehouse to show their solidarity with those inside.

He explained that the local had made numerous concessions in their most recent contract in exchange for assurances that their jobs would be guaranteed until the year 2001. But May Department Stores have said they will not honor these agreements.

"They want to get rid of senior people so that they can hire people out of school for minimum wage," one Teamster said.

UAW members A.D. Thomas and George Williams in Birmingham; John Steele, member of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 2113 in Toronto; Young Socialists member Christian Cornejo in Montreal; and YS member Rebecca Arenson in Philadelphia contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Best tool to fight ultraright

In the last year in Montana we've seen the Militia, the Freemen, the Aryan Nation, and the Klan. Your newspaper is the best tool we have for fighting them.

L.M.
Helena, Montana

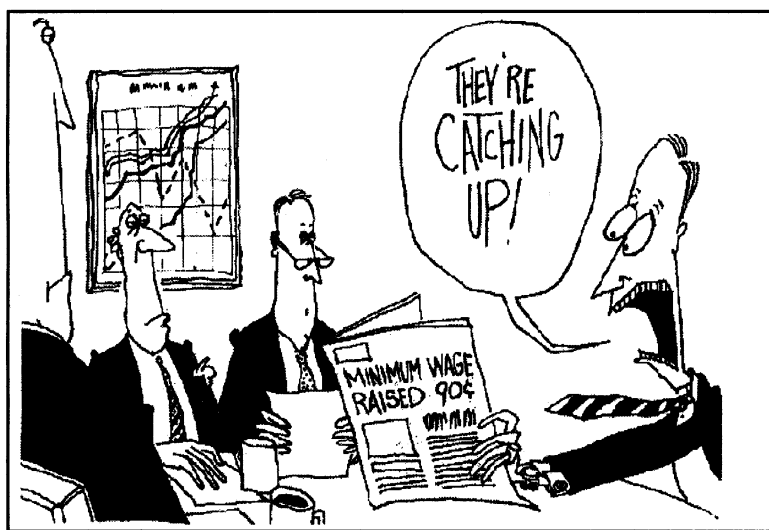
Why criticize CPUSA?

In the article "Communist Party Backs Warmongering President," [in the August 4 issue] Maurice Williams endangers the *Militant* by drifting towards sectarianism. Rather than attack President William Clinton for his disgusting policies, it attacks the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) for backing him.

It is a well-known fact that since the Vietnam War era the CPUSA has done little more than support the Democratic Party. This is not news to anyone. It is also old news that the CPUSA has not done anything constructive since the 1930s.

It is a simple matter to determine whether or not a paper is sectarian. If the articles reflect the policies of the upper class and what the working class should do to fight it, then the paper is legitimate. When said paper reflects the policies of other "communist" parties, it crosses the line into sectarianism.

Clinton's policies are of interest to working people and communists; they represent those of the upper



class. The policies of the CPUSA are of interest to no one, as they are no danger to the working class.

Adam Levenstein
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Instability of capitalism

Your editorial "Wall Street gets the jitters," in the August 5 issue was timely. Some of my coworkers, particularly those with low seniority, have the jitters too — about possible layoffs, along with others who gamble some of their pay check on the stock market.

The editorial gets down to business when it explains that the bosses can't turn around the depression conditions and raise profit rates

without defeating whole sections of the working class in key countries. The sharpening competition and trade battles for markets will be accompanied by growing fascist movements and a drive to another world war. The ruling rich need to destroy massive amounts of commodities and capital through this uncontrollable process.

However, I find one aspect of the editorial confusing when it states that "the inevitable companion of such an outcome [decisive defeats of sections of the world working class] would be devastating financial collapse, growing fascist movements and world war." This suggests that working class defeats are

a precondition for a world financial collapse.

However, in reading *New Internationalist* no. 10, recalling what happened going into World War I and II, and looking at the course of the capitalist depression since the 1987 stock market crash, it seems to me that a financial collapse could be triggered by any number of developments under today's conditions when the class struggle is at a relatively low level in the main imperialist countries.

This is important because it's the instability of the world capitalist system today that is forcing growing numbers of workers and young people to question the viability of capitalism, to look at revolutionary Cuba as an alternative, and to consider joining the communist movement.

John Steele
Toronto, Ontario

Labor Party convention

The article by Susan Zárate on the Labor Party convention (July 22, 1996) seemed to me to be written to make the facts fit her already preconceived negative notion of the convention. Her two comments regarding rank and file participation ("relatively few") and solidarity with ongoing labor disputes ("little talk") seemed based on poor investigation.

As a rank and file delegate from the rail industry with 20 years on

the job and real knowledge of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way delegation at the convention, I can strongly say that the majority of that delegation was made up of working railroaders. Many, like myself, are elected to some minor union office but work full time on the job. Are we then part of some "bureaucratic officialdom?" Other delegations seemed to me to have many working members. I did not carry out a scientific count, but I bet Susan Zárate didn't either.

Also I wonder if sister Zárate was in the convention when the stirring rally for the *Detroit News* strikers was being held, including the loudly proclaimed resolution to call for and help organize a "National Labor March" in Detroit, which was adopted with a huge shout of "yes" from the convention floor?

I agree that the Labor Party is weak and misguided in many areas, but I think it deserves a much more careful analysis than sister Zárate gave it. Please do more homework and write again.
Phil Amadon
Cincinnati, Ohio

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.

Prisoners win demands in Turkey

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Thousands of political prisoners in Turkey ended a 69-day-old hunger strike on July 28 after the government of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan conceded some of their demands.

Twelve prisoners have died, and doctors said as many as 100 others remain in danger, weakened by their long fast.

The protesters are mostly young people who have been imprisoned on charges of belonging to left-wing political organizations, which are banned by the government in Ankara. They won the removal of 102 fellow inmates from the Eskisehir high-security prison in central Anatolia, notorious for abuse of prisoners. The government also promised no more political prisoners would be transferred there.

Turkish justice minister Sevkettin Kazan said the authorities had also agreed to end the abusive treatment of prisoners, improve access to medical care, and stop dispersing prisoners far from the location of their trials. But the government refused to shut down the Eskisehir jail.

Authorities claim the main organizers of the strike were 900 inmates in Istanbul's Bayrampasa prison. The action began before Erbakan's government took office, after the previous regime issued a decree in May ordering the transfer of prisoners from jails like Bayrampasa — where they are held in communal wards — to Eskisehir, a newer institution with tiny individual cells.

About 300 people at 43 jails for political prisoners were on what they termed a "death fast," taking only sweetened water. The strike became a major challenge to Ankara. Some 2,000 other inmates supported the core group of hunger strikers. Toward the end of July, another 4,000 Kurdish prisoners held on charges of supporting an independent Kurdistan had joined the strike.

Solidarity actions were held across Turkey, often resulting in violent clashes as police assaulted protesters. Indignation against Turkish authorities grew among working people as television news broadcast scenes of relatives of strikers being roughed up by cops, with women dragged by the hair or turned away when they attempted to visit their loved ones. Protests and support rallies also spread in several European countries with large Turkish populations — especially Britain and Germany. Several solidarity actions of hundreds were also held here.

Meanwhile, Kurdish immigrants have continued a protest at a square in downtown Athens, demanding political asylum.

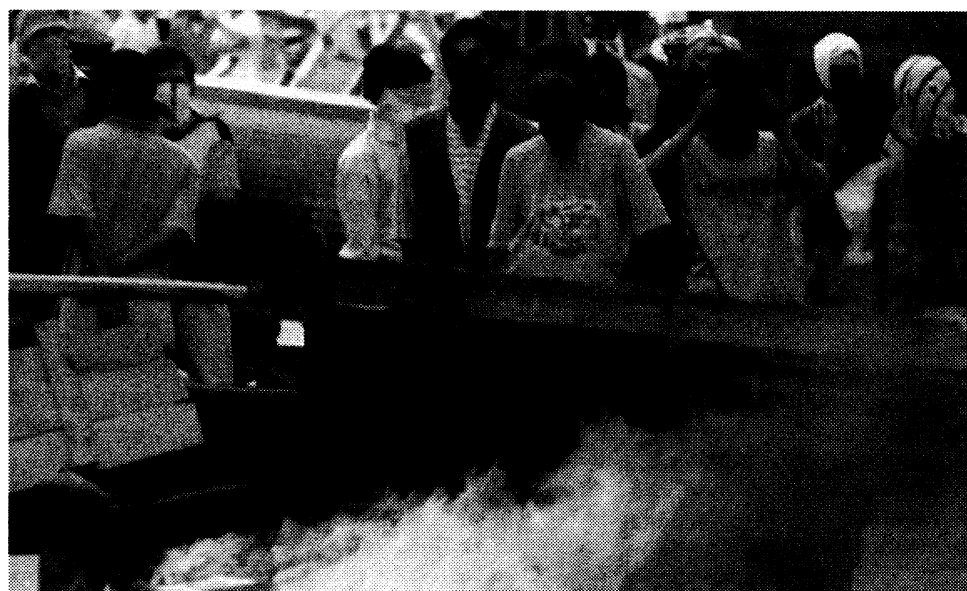
"For three months now, about 200 of us have been camped out here in this square, living in these shacks," said Ali, as he pointed to dozens of shanties made of pieces of wood and scavenged cardboard. "Is this the way human beings should live? This is like a strike. We will not be moved until the authorities give us a decent place to live. It is the government's responsibility."

Most of the protesters are Kurds from Iraq. They escaped Iraq, walked their way through Turkey and down to the Greek capital, hoping to win refugee status. A few are Kurds from Turkey and Iran.

"The Greek government says it is the friend of Kurds. But we have seen no friendship. We have been denied political refugee status because we are Iraqi Kurds and not Turkish Kurds. We have been declared illegal and deportable, and have no work permits or place to live," said Ahmad.

Often, some refugees from Turkey are given preferential treatment by the Greek government, which tries to use these cases to justify their territorial claims and trade offensives against Ankara.

The police initially gave the protesters a June 5 deadline to vacate the square or be arrested. Responding to a solidarity appeal, a coalition of 30 immigrant rights and anti-racist groups called for a protest at the site,



Reuters/Fatih Saribas
Youth stand guard at a barricade in the Gazi district of Istanbul July 18. The group organized support for the 2,000 political prisoners involved in hunger strikes.

which received widespread press coverage. The authorities backed off and extended their deadline. On June 12, after a meeting with representatives of the immigrant rights coalition, the mayor's office reportedly agreed to provide the protesters with free housing at hotels and rented rooms for three

months and promised no one would be deported. But at the end of July, no one had been offered housing or prospect of asylum.

Solidarity actions have continued. A flow of food and clothing has come from the Catholic church and concerned groups and individuals.

Immigrants wage protests in France

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS — Hundreds of undocumented immigrants are occupying churches, starting hunger strikes, and organizing demonstrations throughout France demanding they be given full legal status. On June 26 the government announced it was giving one-year renewable residency permits to only 48 of the 277 immigrants who started this movement by occupying the Saint Ambroise church in Paris March 22. The others were ordered to leave France within one month or face deportation.

In response, the immigrants from Saint Ambroise vowed to continue their fight until everyone received legal status. They occupied another church, Saint Bernard, in Paris on June 28 and organized a demonstration of 2,000 July 3. For the first time many Asian immigrants were among the marchers. The next day 10 of the immigrants occupying the Saint Bernard church began a hunger strike.

A first national coordination meeting of

immigrants without papers met at the all-union hall in Paris July 20. The 50 participants represented movements in 13 cities throughout France and elected a secretariat of five people to coordinate actions.

New legislation and administrative decisions, particularly the Pasqua laws of 1993 (Charles Pasqua was the interior minister at the time), over the past few years have pushed many immigrants who formerly held a legal status into illegality. A young immigrant from the West African country of Mali, one of those who occupied the Saint Ambroise church, told the *Militant* that he had worked as a gardener for the city of Paris until he was fired after orders from the Prefecture. "My boss wanted to keep me. I was fired without any severance pay or any rights to unemployment benefits." The government, under the Pasqua laws, can refuse to give him legal status but cannot deport him because he is the father of a French child.

On July 12, 30 of those from Saint Ambroise began a two-day symbolic occu-

pation of the all-union hall in central Paris with the support of the CGT (General Confederation of Labor) CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labor) and the FSU (Unified Union Federation) teachers union. In a written appeal the immigrants urgently called for solidarity from the unions.

"Almost all of us have worked here for many years and have often participated in struggles at our workplaces," the appeal said. "You know there is no difference between us, workers with or without papers. We are not in any way responsible for the increase in unemployment. Are we responsible for the closing of the mines in the North and East of France, the 'restructuration' at Air Inter or in the defense plants? Having no right to health care, we are not responsible either for the deficit of the Social Security system. On the contrary, many of us have paid Social Security taxes but have no right to it today."

"The government wants to break our struggle by 'offering' a one-year residency permit to 48 of us, and deportation orders to the others. We will not let ourselves be broken," the statement continued. "If we obtain papers, we will be better able to defend ourselves, French and immigrants. Our fight is also that of the French workers. If we win, it will be a victory for all. If we lose, it will be a defeat for all."

Union organizations have given some support, with the CFDT (French Democratic Confederation of Labor) rail workers federation helping those from Saint Ambroise find a place to stay in Paris after their expulsion from the church. They were housed in a railway yard for over two months before occupying the Saint Bernard church.

Hanafi, an Algerian worker from the GEC-Alsthom plant in Saint Ouen who participated in the June 15 anti-racist demonstration of 6,000 people in Paris, explained why he was there. "I have documents, I'm legal," he said. "You have to support the undocumented. It's not only because they're Africans. You have to participate whatever their nationality. It's a question of the unity of the workers."

For more information or to send a message of solidarity, contact Coordination nationale des collectifs de sanspapiers, 12, rue Saint Bruno, 75018, Paris, France. Telephone or fax 33-1-46-07-16-19.

Derek Jeffers is a member of the CGT at GEC-Alsthom in Saint Ouen. Young Socialists member Elisabeth Sanguenetti also contributed to this article.

Thousands of miners strike in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS
AND BOB AIKEN

GUNNEDAH, Australia — Coal miners in Australia struck July 23 in protest at the arrest of eight pickets that day at the Vickery open cut mine near Gunnedah, 260 miles north of Sydney. Some 17,000 miners struck for 48 hours, while 3,000 miners at pits owned by RTZ-CRA, Vickery's parent company, walked out for five days.

The 30 miners at Vickery, members of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), have been on strike since August 15 last year over the company's attempt to impose a 12 hour shift at the mine.

The 11-month strike became the focus of solidarity in the union and is seen by other miners as a test case for the industry as a whole. RTZ-CRA is notorious for its union-busting tactics. A strike for union recognition by 75 workers at its Weipa bauxite mine late last year led to national solidarity strikes by the coal and maritime unions.

Miners on the picket line said they thought the company's action was a provocation. The mine manager had arrived with a fire equipment safety contractor and had tried to take him across the picket line without notifying the union. The police then arrived promptly when they were called, with

two paddy wagons, though there is normally only one wagon in Gunnedah.

One of strikers, Martin Faith, said they have had a consistent record on maintaining safety during the strike and that on previous occasions contractors have been allowed to do agreed-on maintenance after consultation with the union.

This time, when the miners refused to let the contractor through without an agreement being reached with the union, eight pickets were arrested and charged with obstruction.

The day after the arrests, busloads and carloads of miners and other workers converged on the two picket camps the Vickery miners have set up. A busload of 40 miners from the Hunter Valley arrived and others were expected from Lithgow, west of Sydney, and Wollongong, south of Sydney.

Members of the Maritime Union of Australia in Brisbane, who had been on a planned visit to the picket line, arrived just two hours after the arrests. They promised to be back, with others, on August 9 for the court hearing.

In May the Industrial Relations Court ruled that the Vickery miners should work 12-hour shifts on a three month trial. The strikers rejected this. An end to the strike at the Vickery coal mine was announced July

28. Workers voted to accept a proposal, negotiated at a compulsory conference called by the Industrial Relations Commission, that includes a three-month trial of an 8.5-hour shift schedule, followed by a three-month trial of 12-hour shifts.

Robert Hobden, a working miner who is the CFMEU lodge president at the Howick open-cut mine, which is also owned by CRA, said the fight by the Vickery miners is important for other miners because if the company could impose 12-hour shifts in at Vickery then they could do this at other mines.

Miners throughout New South Wales are giving a weekly levy to the miners at Vickery to support the strike, he added.

Most of the miners here said that they were planning to go down to the national August 19 demonstration in Canberra that has been called by the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The rally has been called to protest the attacks on unions being proposed by the federal government, under prime minister John Howard, that came into office in March.

Joanne Kuniansky, a member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union at F. Muller contributed to this article.