

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61 NO. 37 OCTOBER 27, 1997

## Equal rights for all immigrants!

N.Y., L.A. actions condemn anti-immigrant laws

BY FRANCISCO PICADO

NEW YORK — "We are here and we are not leaving," chanted hundreds of people in Spanish, marching through Manhattan in defense of immigrant rights October 12. The more than 1,200 demonstrators included contingents from cities such as Los Angeles; Chicago; and Lawrence, Massachusetts. It was one of several regional actions held that day across the United States.

Among the marchers were workers and young people born in Mexico, Bangladesh, Poland, Haiti, Morocco, Korea, Puerto Rico, the United States, and many other countries.

"We are here demanding amnesty for Bangladesh ... and all immigrants," said Mafizur Rahman, pointing to the contingent of some 150 Bangladeshis. Rahman is a part-time construction worker and cab driver in Queens. General amnesty for all immigrants was a central demand of the action.

"I'm here to make it clear that we're going to put a halt to the racism against immigrants," said José Antonio Padilla, a member of Local 79 of the Laborers' International Union of North America. Other unions present were the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, Service Employees International Union; Teamsters; Brotherhood of Carpenters; and the United Electrical, Radio, and



Marchers demanding immigrant rights in New York City, October 12.

Machine Workers of America.

Close behind the laborers were more than 100 Salvadorans from Hempsted, Long Island, and Newark and Elizabeth in New Jersey. "We are here and we're not leaving, and

if they take us away, we're coming right back," they chanted.

New immigration laws that are about to go into effect will make gaining legal resi-

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## Cuban party congress strengthens socialist course of revolution

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL  
 AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA — "We are open to all options and all experiences — all except surrendering, except giving up socialism, except renouncing the gains of the revolution and the power held by the people, except allowing others to be the masters of our country." Affirmation of this fundamental political course was at the center of Cuban president Fidel Castro's opening report to the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, held here October 8–10.

It was confirmed by the almost 1,500 delegates attending the gathering and was voiced repeatedly both in the congress discussion and on the street by working people who followed the deliberations on television and radio, which broadcast many hours

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## Workers in Asia resist austerity measures

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Workers and students have begun to organize protests against austerity measures imposed by the regimes in Southeast Asia in response to continued economic turmoil in the region. Transport workers struck in the Philippines and paralyzed traffic in eight cities demanding a reversal of increased oil prices and calling for a pay raise. Under this pressure, the Philippine Supreme Court issued a 30-day injunction October 7 on any new price increases.

Some 16,000 aerospace workers in Bandung, Indonesia, struck October 13 and held mass rallies protesting threatened layoffs. Indonesian students rallied October 6 outside the Bulog — the state monopoly that regulates food prices — demanding the resignation of its director and a price freeze

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## Amtrak workers prepare for strike

BY RUTH ROBINETT

NEW YORK — The 2,300 members of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) who work at Amtrak are preparing for a possible strike against the national passenger railway. Recent negotiations between the company and the union have yielded little progress.

Earlier, the BMWE blasted Amtrak for rejecting wage recommendations from a government-appointed board and for refusing to negotiate a contract with the union under those recommendations. The wage recommendations are the same as those that were agreed to last year between the BMWE and other Class-1 railroads. Despite arguments by the union, the "presidential emergency board" did not recommend the same benefit, job security, or work rule improvements that were also part of the agreement. Instead, it recommended that these and other local issues be placed into binding arbitration for final resolution. BMWE members at Amtrak have worked without a general wage increase for more than two years. The union organizes workers who construct and maintain railroad tracks, buildings, bridges, and electrical systems that power trains.

A strike could close down service for 600,000 railroad riders and affect much of the 22,000 mile Amtrak system. Commuter trains in the Northeast Corridor — from Washington, D.C., to Boston — would be affected, as well as service in Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco, Amtrak said. Also, Conrail's freight service along the Northeast corridor and local commuter service would be affected. New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman urged

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**Why 'Militant' opposes bosses' trade pacts — page 14**



### Zimbabwe farm workers strike

Farm workers in Zimbabwe launched their first national strike in that country's history in late September demanding substantial wage increases. The farm workers, who are among the lowest paid workers in the country, are demanding a 135 percent increase. The bosses' Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) offered a mere 20 percent raise. The CFU called for government intervention into the dispute.

On October 7 in Trelawney, Zimbabwe, normally one of the most productive zones for tobacco and horticulture, 15,000 striking farm workers brought production to a standstill, blocking off roads and holding rallies. The government deployed armed police and helicopters to patrol the 144 mostly white-owned farms. The cops arrested more than 100 protesters. The Associated Press said that some farm workers destroyed crops. General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union spokesperson Cuthbert Hute called for a return to work October 9, but strikers stayed out.

### U.S. war jets fly deeper into Iraq

U.S. secretary of defense William Cohen announced October 9 that U.S. jet fighters will be "flying farther north [into Iraq] than they were before — in other words, they're going deeper into the no-fly zone" which extended to the 33rd parallel. The aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Nimitz* arrived in the Persian Gulf October 12, flanked by several U.S. warships. Washington's stepped-up threats are supposedly in response to Iraqi flights into the so-called no-fly zone — imposed and maintained by Washington since 1991 after the imperialist war against Iraq.

### Cabinet resigns in Kazakhstan

Under the pressures of an economic crisis in Kazakhstan, Prime Minister Akezhan Kazhegeldin and the entire cabinet of that country resigned October 10. "It is bitter to acknowledge that we are poorer today and behind in development," said President Nursultan Nazarbayev, comparing their status today with its status as part of the Soviet Union. The oil-rich country was held up as one of the likely nations to climb out of third world status, but has yet to do so. While



Panamanians celebrate the transfer of Albrook Air Force Base to Panama October 1. Under the Panama Canal treaties of 1977, Washington must remove all U.S. military forces from Panama by Dec. 31, 1999.

Nazarbayev accepted Kazhegeldin's resignation for "health reasons" the former prime minister had been under attack from other government members for allegedly secretly acquiring shares in Kazakhstan's lucrative oil refineries. He denied the charges.

### Mexican cops 'disappear' workers, youth in 'war on drugs'

The Mexican government's "war on drugs" in has emboldened the cops to attack working people there. Cops smash their way into working-class families' homes, drag people out, and cart them away — some have never been seen again. Morris Tidball Binz, head of Amnesty International's Latin America programs said that "even though the police or the military are responsible, there is absolute denial."

In Juárez, Mexico, reported an October 7 *New York Times* article, "nearly 90 people have vanished, including 8 United States citizens." The article continues, "The Clinton Administration largely appears to have turned a blind eye toward the disappearances, consistently praising the Mexican Government's anti-drug efforts." Nine-

teen elite cops were implicated in the September 8 disappearance and execution-style killing of six Mexican youth. After initial denial, cops admitted that evidence found by the press matched the blood of the dead youth to blood traces in one of the police trucks.

### Canadian gov't tightens borders

After dropping visa requirements for citizens of the Czech Republic last year, the Canadian government reinstated them in early October, saying there was an overflow of Roma (Gypsy) immigrants from that country. Seeking refugee status, the Roma say they are subject to attacks by skinheads, and discriminated against by the Czech government.

### House passes school vouchers

The Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich, cast the tie-breaking vote for a budget for the District of Columbia October 9, which includes issuing vouchers to public school students to help pay tuition at private schools. Gingrich said the vouchers are needed because children "are being cheated by the politicians, they are being cheated by the teachers, they are being cheated by the unions." U.S. president William Clinton has said he would veto the voucher proposal.

### Army sergeant stripped of post

On October 9, the U.S. Army stripped Gene McKinney of his post as Sergeant Major — the top enlisted position — a day after it was announced that he would be court-martialed on charges of sexual misconduct. Army chief of staff Gen. Dennis Reimer stated that he had no opinion on whether McKinney was guilty or innocent, but removed him because trial proceedings would make it impossible for McKinney to fulfill his duties as Sergeant Major. The in-

vestigation began in January when McKinney's former public relations aide Sergeant Brenda Hoster alleged that he made sexual advances at her during an April 1996 conference in Hawaii.

### Antiabortion bill vetoed

Clinton again vetoed a ban passed by Congress against the late-term abortion procedure called "intact dilation and extraction," on grounds that it did not include an exception when the health of the woman is in serious jeopardy. Supporters of the ban on what they have misnamed "partial-birth abortion" say they will try to override the veto this year. If enacted, it would be the

first ban on an abortion procedure since the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion.

### 'No selling off of Panama!'

About a dozen people picketed outside the offices of the Organization of American States (OAS) October 7. They carried picket signs that read, "Stop privatization! Justice for workers in Panama!" Thousands of Panamanian workers have lost their jobs in recent years due to the government's sale of major industries to private investors. Among those companies sold have been Panama's two principal concerns, the National Telephone Company and the State Cement Factory. "This has been a very hard struggle, but it is important to continue and we are confident we will win," explained Rolando Gómez a representative of the hydro-electrical worker's union in Panama. Gómez was joined by fellow unionist Luis Batista. Gómez and Batista had come to Washington seeking to speak before the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the OAS.

In January 1994 unions in Panama filed human rights violations charges with the commission against the Panamanian government. They charge the government with violation of that country's labor laws and those of international conventions. The commission accepted the unionists' petitions, but it has declined to schedule a hearing on the charges. On September 24 Gómez and Batista were informed by the commission that their case would not be heard during its fall session currently taking place. In response Gómez announced the unionists would maintain a hunger strike until the commission meets with them.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Sam Manuel, a member of the United Transportation Union in Washington, D.C., contributed to this column.

## THE MILITANT

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# Bonn leads interest rate hike despite record joblessness

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM — The Bundesbank, the German central bank, unexpectedly raised a key short-term interest rate from 3.0 percent to 3.3 percent October 9. The central banks of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg followed suit.

These countries comprise the core group for the projected European economic and monetary union (EMU). Their coordinated rate hike suggested that Bundesbank's decision was not only dictated by the recent fall in the value of the German mark relative to the dollar and pound, but also a preparation for the introduction of the "euro" single currency, scheduled for Jan. 1, 1999. In order to avoid setting off the kind of currency turmoil that hit Europe in 1992-93, this core of governments have to act to a degree as if the single currency already is in effect, with fixed exchange rates and close to no differences in interest rates.

The higher interest rates will tend to further restrict economic growth, at a time when unemployment rates continue to hit new highs. The jobless rate in France stands at 12.5 percent, and unemployment in Germany reached yet another post-war record of 11.7 percent in September. Most of the increase in Germany came in the eastern part of the country, where the official jobless figure is now 19.2 percent, underlining the widening economic division between the two parts of the country.

"Why would a central bank start a new cycle of higher interest rates in a country suffering from unemployment at levels not seen since the 1930s?" asked an editorial in the October 10 *Financial Times* of London. "A part of the answer is that the Bundesbank believes unemployment is almost entirely a structural phenomenon," the editors declare, suggesting there's nothing to be done to improve the situation.

Meanwhile, French prime minister Lionel Jospin pledged October 10 to introduce a law that would reduce the workweek to 35 hours from 39 by the end of the century. Jospin's move followed a fresh outbreak of strikes during the week by workers on the French railroad system and the Paris Metro.

Differences in the economic conjuncture among countries within the European Union (EU) will also build up tensions between the member states. The Bundesbank is trying to converge interest rates at a level below those in effect in Ireland, Portugal, and Spain, which average 5-7 percent. These regimes want to keep their interest rates higher either to defend their currency exchange rates or because they have come further in the business cycle than in Germany and France, where the upturn is weak.

The British rulers are still fiercely debating whether and when London will join the single currency project. While unemployment as an average among the EU member

countries has increased to more than 10 percent, the jobless rate has fallen in Britain to 5 percent, only half its rate in 1992. An editorial in the September 26 *Financial Times* commented that this is "good news for Britain but what does it say about the rest of the world? A 5 percent unemployment rate was, after all, only the average at the end of the 1970s and much above the 3 percent considered excessive at the start of that decade."

The attempt to push through austerity measures in the name of meeting the criteria for the monetary union has contributed to the collapse of the coalition government in Italy. After a week of wrangling over the 1998 budget, Prime Minister Romano Prodi resigned October 9 as he failed to get the support of the Communist Refoundation Party (RC) for austerity measures totaling \$3 billion in cuts in pensions and other social spending. This was Italy's 55th government since World War II, and it had unexpectedly survived for 17 months with a stable showing that had placed Italy among the 11 countries expected to join the single currency from the start.

On October 14 Prodi was reinstated after reaching an agreement with the RC to introduce legislation to reduce the workweek from 40 hours to 35 hours by 2001. Nevertheless, the stamp of political instability and Bonn's opposition to including Italy in EMU makes it more likely now that Rome will be kept outside the Union from the start.

## Tensions over EU enlargement, budget

At a meeting of the finance ministers of the European Union in Mondorf in southern Luxembourg on September 13, German finance minister Theodor Waigel opened a battle over the EU budget. Waigel, who in interviews in German press has complained that Bonn pays more than 60 percent of the net costs of the EU, declared, "It is an absurdity that the German people will not accept. A new mechanism for the sharing of the budget burdens in the Union must be worked out before there will be an enlargement of it with new members."

The representatives of the Netherlands, Austria, and Sweden — governments that also pay far more than what they get back in agricultural and other subsidies — immediately backed Waigel in his demand for a revision of the budget mechanisms. The finance ministers from Spain, Greece, and Portugal, whose governments get more back, especially in agricultural and regional subsidies, weren't favorable. Charles McCreedy, the Irish finance minister, was openly negative to the proposal. Dublin is one of the bigger net receivers of agricultural subsidies within the Union.

Waigel argues that Germany is slipping down the rankings of the rich countries — it is now fifth in terms of per capita gross domestic product behind Luxembourg,

## Venezuela students: 'Clinton no!'



A group of university students in Venezuela protested U.S. president William Clinton, who arrived in Caracas October 12. Clinton signed an energy agreement with the Venezuelan government, which is the biggest supplier of oil to the United States. U.S. oil executives met with Clinton there to discuss Venezuela's oil industry — expected to open for new private investments worth \$30 billion.

Denmark, Austria and Belgium — thanks to the addition of the low income region of east Germany. A column in the September 17 *Financial Times* argued that "Germany could do much better if they agreed to support further CAP [Common Agricultural Policy] reform. Farm spending still accounts for almost half the EU budget. But the Bavarian farm lobby has tied the Bonn Government's hands."

Another motive for Bonn not pushing the demand for reforming CAP is that it could fracture the fragile consensus the countries within the European Union has on enlargement of it to new members. In the long term, enlargement to central and eastern Europe will shift the center of gravity away from Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, toward Poland, Czech Republic, and Hungary, the countries that the German rulers see as their backyard.

The rift between Paris and Bonn again came to the fore when Jospin and Kohl met for the 70th bilateral summit in Weimar, Germany, September 17. Instead of taking initiatives to develop further the European Union, the agenda focused on issues of less importance like strengthening of cultural and educational exchanges and for mutual recognition of vocational and educational qualifications.

The French and German delegates at the meeting agreed to proceed with the change in Airbus status into a joint-stock company by January 1999. The declaration stated that the French and German governments are "in complete agreement" that a restructuring of Airbus is "urgently imperative" to create an agile European competitor to Boeing Co. of the United States. Boeing acquired McDonnell Douglas in August to form the world's biggest aerospace company. Paris had earlier been unwilling to incorporate state-owned aircraft factories into a jointly owned Airbus company, however, and details implementing the agreement remain to be worked out.

At the meeting of the EU foreign ministers in Brussels, other questions of dispute over the enlargement of the EU came up. The Belgian government, supported by Paris and Rome, demanded a streamlining of institutions and decision making before enlargement goes ahead. They said a further strengthening of EU institutions was "an indispensable condition" for concluding negotiations with the applicants.

## Debate over delay of EMU in Germany

Meanwhile, the debate over a possible delay in starting the common currency has heated up in Germany. In early September Bundesbank president Hans Tietmeyer suggested that a postponement of the euro would pose no great problem. While avoiding any direct comment on the possibility of the delay, he told the newspaper *Die Woche*, "I simply cannot agree with those who argue that a delay to the euro would cause the heavens to cave in or the economy to come off the rails."

These remarks came up one day after Lamberto D'Ino, the Italian foreign minister, called for a year's delay in the EMU if many countries fail to meet the entry conditions next spring. These moves were immediately countered by the government in

Bonn. "There is absolutely no reason for a discussion about a delay," stated government spokesman Peter Hausmann.

Foreign minister Klaus Kinkel also issued a statement rejecting Tietmeyer's views. Others have since then joined the debate. Germany's Economics Minister Günter Rexrodt said, "In my view, a delay implies the great danger of a definitive collapse [of the EMU] and renationalization within the EU. Things must not get that far. The introduction of a common currency bears great importance for Europe."

In an article in the September 18 *Financial Times*, Wolfgang Schäuble, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) coalition in the German parliament, wrote, "In view of the past successes of European stability policy and the efforts of individual EU member states to attain stability, there is no reason to postpone EMU. Doing so would not only ease the pressure to reach convergence but would also call into question the successes so far. The entire project would run the risk of collapsing."

But Edmund Stoiber, a CSU politician and government chief in Bavaria, said in a September 15 interview in the Swedish daily *Svenska Dagbladet*, "If someone says that the timetable is more important than the criteria, I answer that it is contrary to what is written into the Maastricht Treaty. We will respect both the criteria and the timetable, but if it is not possible the criteria have priority over the timetable."

Some Social Democratic Party (SPD) politicians have joined the chorus for postponement. Earlier Gerhard Schröder, one of the Social Democratic candidates for chancellor in the upcoming German elections, said that EMU should be delayed if the criteria are not fulfilled. He was joined in early September by prominent Social Democratic opposition politician and mayor of Hamburg, Henning Voscherau, who in his election campaign stated, "If the criteria are not met the euro will not be a stability currency but an inflationary currency, and that we can not have." Voscherau played a key role in national politics as coordinator of his party's opposition to government tax reform blocked by the SPD-dominated Bundesrat, the upper house of parliament. In 1992 both houses of parliament reserved the right to evaluate terms under which Germany would join the single currency.

The Social Democrats were stunningly defeated in the Hamburg elections in early October, losing several percent while both CDU and the far right gained. Voscherau resigned his posts within the SPD and a debate over the election strategy of the Social Democrats broke into the open. Oscar Lafontaine, now the SPD chairman and also a likely chancellor candidate in the 1998 elections, joined Rudolf Sharping, the head of the Social Democrats parliamentary faction, in criticizing Voscherau's election campaign as too centered on "law and order" and "euroscepticism." Instead, they said, the Social Democrats should focus their election campaign on the classic themes of social benefits and fighting unemployment.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

## Madrid begins show trial of 23 Basque fighters

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

The Spanish government began the trial of 23 central leaders of the Basque independence organization Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity Party) October 13. The activists are accused of aiding the E.T.A. — a Basque separatist group who Madrid has labeled terrorist. Prosecutors in the trial are seeking an eight-year sentence for each of the fighters, while the Association of Victims of Terrorism pushed for 22 years.

The trial, set to start a week earlier, was postponed after Herri Batasuna's defense questioned the impartiality of judges and the lack of possibility for a fair trial given the government pressure on the court for a conviction. Seventeen supreme court judges rapidly organized a two-hour meeting and rejected the defense attorneys' claims. Outside the Su-

preme Court, rightist demonstrators demanded the death penalty for E.T.A. rebels. The group's name is Basque Homeland and Freedom.

Herri Batasuna leaders have called the case a show trial. The main piece of evidence being used against the independence activists is a video they tried to air during the 1996 general elections that allegedly contained E.T.A. members in it. Madrid courts also alleged that Herri Batasuna issued statements "encouraging more terrorist attacks." Herri Batasuna was the third-largest party in elections to the Basque parliament in 1994, and has two members of parliament in Madrid. On September 24, Madrid cops shot and killed two Basque rebels in the northern city of Bilbao. Later, 12 other people were arrested and labeled members of Basque rebel groups.



# Book fund: \$18,000 this week

BY LUIS MADRID  
AND RUTH ROBINETT

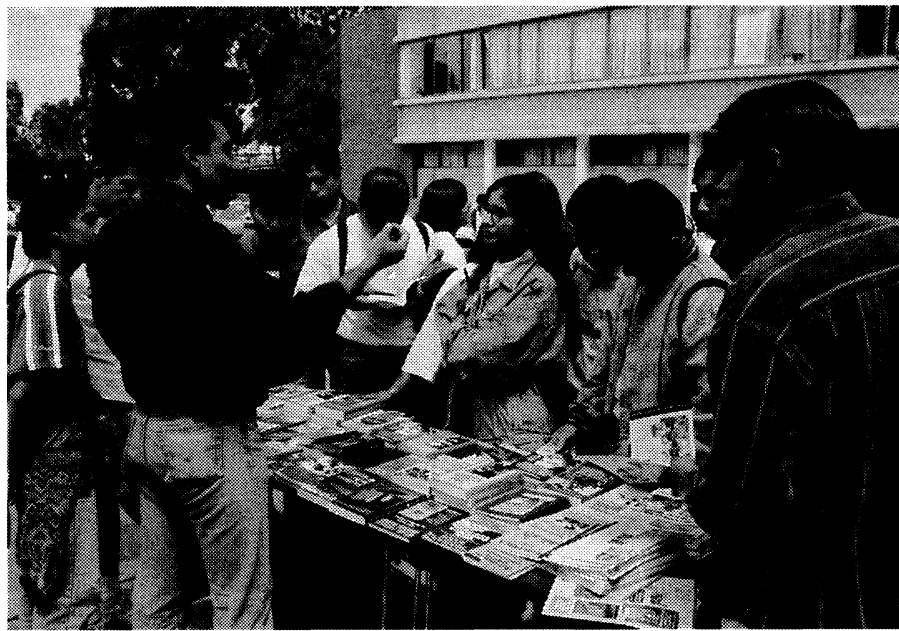
NEW YORK — Pathfinder Fund supporters internationally rose to the challenge laid out in this column last week. The \$18,309 collected — the best one-week total yet — puts the campaign on solid ground as we enter the last three weeks of the drive.

Supporters in New York City and Canada led the way, each jumping nearly 40 percentage points on the chart. Participants in an October 11 fund rally in Brooklyn paid nearly \$5,000 toward the local goal. On their part, supporters in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver organized collections adding up to \$2,043, to cruise to the top of the chart.

The funds received this week indicate that with similar attention the pace of contributions can be maintained and the pledges further increased. Comparable collections will be necessary in each of the final three weeks to successfully meet the \$125,000 campaign.

The drive was also boosted by efforts made in several areas focusing on securing pledges from individuals in order to match or exceed their area goals. In the case of San Francisco, pledges now total \$12,312 out of a goal of \$11,000; pledges by Atlanta supporters stand at \$124 over their \$4,500 goal. Similar efforts led in Chicago to an increase in pledges of \$2,707 for a total of \$10,653 toward their \$12,000 goal. After reviewing their pledges, fund backers in London and Manchester increased their joint goal from \$1,200 to \$1,500.

"The new spirit of labor resistance" was the theme of Robert Miller's talk at the New York fund event. An assembly worker and member of the United Auto Workers, Miller is also the Socialist Workers' candidate for governor of New Jersey. Pointing to the re-



Militant/Margrethe Siem  
Pathfinder editor Luis Madrid, left, talking with students October 2 at a commemoration of the 1968 student massacre in Tlatelolco, Mexico. Madrid and Pathfinder supporter Margrethe Siem, who were on a sales trip there, were invited to the event by students at BUAP university in Puebla, Mexico. They sold 69 books and pamphlets to students, professors, and others over the week. Pathfinder's newly published *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism* in Spanish was the top seller, with 16 copies.

cent victories by the Teamsters over UPS, and the transportation workers in the San Francisco Bay Area, Miller underscored the new opportunities presented to Pathfinder supporters to reach out in the broadest way possible with the political weapons published by Pathfinder and with the fund ef-

fort. He pointed to increased resistance by workers to the economic pressures brought forth by the crisis of capitalism. Farm workers organizing campaigns in the West Coast and elsewhere and the Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel strike, he said, are examples of that resistance.

## Thousands march for immigrant rights

Continued from front page

dence in the United States much harder. Up to 1.5 million people could be required to return to their homelands while awaiting residency papers. The government has greatly stepped up deportations of immigrants who at some time in the past were convicted of a crime under U.S. law. And under another law that took effect in September, any undocumented immigrant who leaves the United States after being here more than 180 days cannot return for between three and 10 years.

"We have the right to choose where we want to live and work, and to do so without getting separated from our families," explained Esly Umanzor, a member of the Workplace Project for Labor Rights.

"Let them become citizens like everyone else," agreed Glen Russo, who was watching the march in front of the Winter Garden Theater, where he works. "My family came to this country three generations ago from Italy. Why would I want something different for them?" he asked.

Representatives of the participating organizations spoke at a rally close to the UN headquarters later that afternoon. "I know what it means to be an immigrant in this

city," said Lolita Lebrón, a Puerto Rican Independence fighter who spent 25 years in U.S. prisons. Lebrón, who is president of the Nationalist Party, explained, "I remember walking the streets, hungry and unemployed, reading the 'Puerto Ricans need not apply' signs."

Other speakers included Alfonso Benítez, the president of the Independent Telephone Workers Union of Puerto Rico, who had just led a demonstration of 60,000 people against the proposed sale of the Puerto Rico Telephone Co. in San Juan the previous week. Former Democratic Party candidate for mayor Alfred Sharpton, as well as representatives of the Communist Party and Workers World Party also spoke. Olga Rodríguez, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for mayor got a warm welcome at the speaker's platform as the only candidate who promoted the demonstration on the recent televised mayoral debates.

Ryan Lewis contributed to this article.

BY BARRY FATLAND

LOS ANGELES — Nearly 1,000 people marched from East Los Angeles down César

Chávez Blvd. to City Hall here for a rally demanding "real amnesty" and "papers for everyone" on October 12.

The action was sponsored by the International Network for Full Rights for Immigrant Workers and Their Families that included marchers from Central America and Mexico who protested proposed changes in the immigration laws.

Sponsoring organizations, part of the Network, include the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), the Association of Salvadorans in Los Angeles (ASOSAL), Coordinadora 96-2000, the FMLN of El Salvador, El Rescate, a Central American service center, the Party of the Democratic Revolution of Mexico (PRD), the Community Services Organization and other political organizations including the Labor Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Workers World Party.

An October 9 news conference publicizing the march and rally was covered by the three Spanish-language TV stations and the daily *La Opinion*.

When asked what she thought of the recent legislative attacks on immigrants, marcher Carolina Rodríguez of Santa Ana, Orange County said, "It's another way to

### \$125,000 Pathfinder Fund September 1 - November 1

CITY / COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
<b>CANADA</b>			
Vancouver	1,150	1,258	109%
Toronto	2,500	1,736	69%
Montreal	1,650	930	56%
<b>CANADA total</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>3,924</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>UNITED STATES</b>			
Seattle*	9,000	6,900	77%
Boston	5,500	3,736	68%
New York*	13,500	8,492	63%
Detroit	4,000	2,526	63%
Chicago*	12,000	7,325	61%
Philadelphia	4,000	2,387	60%
Des Moines	2,400	1,426	59%
San Francisco*	11,000	6,530	59%
Twin Cities*	7,750	4,520	58%
Atlanta*	4,500	2,499	56%
Birmingham	3,500	1,650	47%
Pittsburgh	5,000	2,355	47%
Newark	8,500	3,898	46%
Cleveland	2,400	1,005	42%
Miami	3,000	1,272	42%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	1,158	39%
Los Angeles	10,000	3,585	36%
Houston	5,500	1,910	35%
Other	2,919	2,576	88%
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>117,469</b>	<b>65,750</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>			
Auckland	2,100	1,027	49%
Wellington	130	64	49%
Christchurch	640	276	43%
<b>N.Z. total*</b>	<b>2,870</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>			
London*	600	25	4%
Manchester*	900	50	6%
<b>UK total</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>5%</b>
Iceland	150	0	0%
Sweden	700	0	0%
Other Int'l		10	
<b>INT'L TOTAL:</b>	<b>129,139</b>	<b>71,526</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>SHOULD BE:</b>	<b>125,000</b>	<b>82,500</b>	<b>67%</b>
*raised goal			

keep immigrants on the bottom rung of the ladder." She marched behind a banner written in Spanish that said, "Orange County for the human rights of immigrants."

An hour-long rally was held on the steps of city hall with speakers from the sponsoring organizations and individuals affected by the changes in the immigration laws.

Other actions that day included a demonstration of 1,000 in Austin, Texas. In Tucson, Arizona, 80 people marched to the local border patrol headquarters and planted 18 crosses in front of it with the names of undocumented people killed by the Border Patrol in that state.

Barry Fatland is a member of the United Transportation Union Local 1544.

## Track workers may strike at Amtrak

Continued from front page

that negotiations continue, saying that a strike would be a catastrophe for New Jersey and other states in the region. She announced she had sent letters to President William Clinton, Speaker of the House Newton Gingrich, and Amtrak president Thomas Downs asking them to "take extra steps to resolve the situation."

The bulletin boards in Amtrak's crew rooms in New York are posted with statements of the BMW, The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), and the Transportation Communications International Union (TCIU) urging support for the track workers.

"No one wants to go on strike, but we must be prepared to strike on or after October 22, 1997 if it becomes necessary," said a letter sent to BMW members by union officials in the region. "We have strong strike organizations on the property and in our lodges and you will be notified of the need to set up picket lines through these organizations. We must act in a disciplined and

organized fashion."

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers District 11 sent out a memo to all members regarding strike instructions. The memo stated "Passenger Engineers are not expected, nor will they be ordered to cross picket lines. BLE members will be governed as we have in the past, when fellow unions have withdrawn from service," and will honor picket lines.

At Amtrak's Sunnyside yard in Queens, New York, discussions about the upcoming October 22 deadline are everywhere. "How long can you last? Won't Congress stop it?" "It will never happen!" "We can't strike." "I'll never cross a picket line!" These statements were expressed in numerous conversations that can be overheard among workers — coach cleaners, engineers, conductors, brakemen, track workers, and others represented by various unions. P. J. Graziano, an engineer said, "I hope they get the money they want, because I don't want to go on strike. I've got bills, too." He added, "A lot of waste goes on here. The company

says it can't pay wage increases, but they should pay those guys first before 'upgrading equipment.'" Stephen Young, a conductor and member of the United Transportation Union, stated, "Let 'em strike. It would be good for the unions, it needs to be done."

Mary Wilson and Lilly Lewis are coach cleaners and are outraged about Amtrak's management position. Wilson declared, "They're telling people who have been here 20 years 'No' who are only making \$12.69 per hour." Lewis added, "And they need the sick days, just like we do. If they get them maybe it will help us."

Amtrak worker Margrethe Siem said the yard crew she works on here was greeted by a group of track workers at the yard with, "Hey, will you honor our strike?" The yard crew yelled back, "Sure, we won't work!"

A mechanic asked the yard crew, "Are you ready for next week? We all have to stay out here, we have to stick together."

Ruth Robinett is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1370 at Amtrak.

In New International no.10

**What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold**

**&**

**Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War**

by Jack Barnes

\$14.00

New International 10

New International 4

Imperialism's march toward fascism and war

La marcha del imperialismo hacia el fascismo y la guerra

Available from Pathfinder bookstores. See page 12



# SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

## 300+ sign up in best week of drive

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The October 4-12 target week of sales was the best week of the subscription drive so far. Nearly 200 new readers signed up for *Militant* and 113 for *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions since the last scoreboard was published. *Militant* supporters also sold 106 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* during the sixth week of the campaign.

"The target week came in handy," said Anita Östling from Stockholm in a note to the *Militant*. Members of the Young Socialists and the Communist League in Sweden started the week considerably behind schedule, but ended ahead and number one

on this week's chart. After their success, they raised their goals slightly.

"October 4-12 coincided with a number of activities commemorating 30 years since Che Guevara's combat in Bolivia," Östling noted. "Meetings, concerts, and teach-ins related to the anniversary took place around the country. The high point was a demonstration of 700 in Stockholm on October 8, starting from the city center, passing by the Cuban embassy, and ending at the U.S. embassy. Marchers handed a note to U.S. officials protesting Washington's economic war against Cuba.

"A large number of the demonstrators were young people, many of whom knew little about Che and were curious to find out what he stood for. Two of them subscribed to the *Militant*. One of these new subscribers had gone to the World Festival of Youth and Students in Cuba this summer. YS members in Stockholm who had taken part in the festival were among the main organizers of the march."

The same day, other *Militant* supporters in Sweden traveled to the town of Västerås, about 70 miles west of Stockholm, where a similar demonstration and meeting took place. They sold another *Militant* subscription there and three copies of the *New International*.

"During the target week we organized carefully a variety of sales," Östling said. "The YS chapter in Stockholm was very active

in Los Angeles, more than 70 people attended a *Militant* Labor Forum on "Defending the Legacy of Che Guevara" October 10. "People came partly as a result of increased sales tables and political work to build speaking engagements for Cuban brigadier general Harry Villegas (Pombo) at UCLA and Cal State L.A.," said Carole Lesnick, a member of the United Auto Workers there. "We sold three *Militant* and three *PM* subs at the forum and several hundred dollars worth

of literature." Socialists in San Francisco jumped ahead of schedule. In addition to signing up many new subscribers at events marking Che's fall in combat, "we sold one *Militant* sub on the job to a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union and a copy of the *New International* to an International Association of Machinists member," wrote Larry Lane from San Francisco.

The momentum from the target week can now be used everywhere to make a final effort to meet the goals in full by the October 26 deadline. The biggest challenge is the *Militant* subscription goal. The *Militant* needs to receive an average of 207 *Militant* subscriptions per week for the next two weeks — slightly more than those sold during the target period — to meet the goal.

Reports from several cities where socialist workers and others are still behind schedule indicate that it can be done. In the Twin Cities, for example, YS and SWP members sold 17 *Militant* subs last week — more than the previous five weeks altogether — in-

### Book Sales from Pathfinder Bookstores

Countries/Cities	September			Previous months		
	Goal	Sales	%	August	July	June
<b>FRANCE*</b>	30	160	533%	280%	228%	180%
<b>GREECE</b>	13	29	223%	77%	69%	100%
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	36	39	108%	178%	178%	180%
<b>UNITED STATES</b>						
Washington, D.C.*	70	156	223%	205%	150%	158%
Boston	65	108	166%	192%	137%	163%
Detroit	45	64	142%	106%	61%	144%
Newark	171	220	129%	184%	42%	46%
Los Angeles	120	153	128%	160%	81%	118%
Chicago	77	93	121%	178%	148%	140%
Miami	60	72	120%	172%	80%	73%
New York	245	281	115%	183%	122%	96%
Philadelphia*	55	58	105%	149%	134%	217%
Birmingham	40	41	103%	170%	75%	113%
Pittsburgh	63	63	100%	73%	235%	194%
San Francisco	200	178	89%	94%	119%	175%
Atlanta	48	42	88%	123%	69%	160%
Des Moines	50	32	64%	144%	154%	404%
Seattle	80	48	60%	80%	115%	113%
Twin Cities	104	62	60%	83%	108%	43%
Houston	65	32	49%	60%	109%	103%
Cleveland	50	16	32%	56%	38%	50%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	1608	1719	96%	123%	95%	114%
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	1800	1800	100%			
<b>SWEDEN</b>	55	49	89%	224%	136%	115%
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>						
London	150	140	93%	185%	168%	200%
Manchester	56	40	71%	113%	61%	0%
<b>U.K. Total</b>	206	180	87%	166%	139%	146%
<b>CANADA</b>						
Vancouver	41	36	88%	100%	95%	202%
Toronto	80	62	78%	88%	84%	75%
Montreal	72	46	64%	83%	65%	0%
<b>Canada Total</b>	193	144	75%	111%	74%	71%
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>						
Auckland	49	36	73%	129%	140%	196%
Christchurch	28	15	54%	100%	171%	143%
<b>N.Z. Total</b>	77	51	66%	214%	154%	173%
<b>ICELAND</b>	5	0	0%	520%	120%	

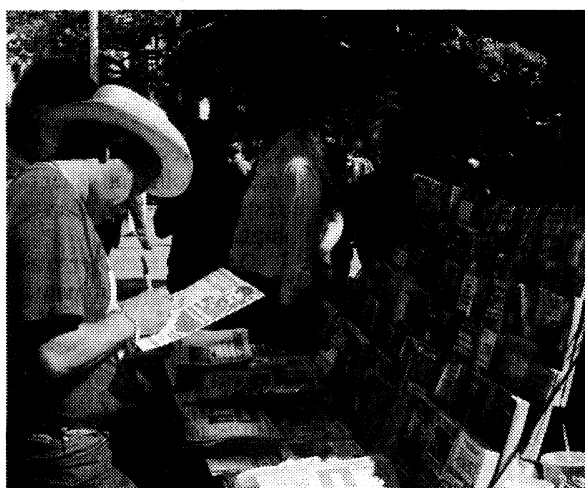
\* raised goal

'MILITANT' SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE September 1 - October 26 WEEK 6							
City/Country	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
<b>SWEDEN*</b>	17	14	82%	9	8	10	9
<b>AUSTRALIA*</b>	16	12	75%	6	5	13	11
<b>CANADA</b>							
Vancouver	50	36	72%	5	5	20	6
Montreal	30	21	70%	10	5	30	17
Toronto	50	32	64%	10	2	20	15
<b>Canada total</b>	130	89	68%	25	12	70	38
<b>UNITED STATES</b>							
Washington, DC*	45	42	93%	15	11	15	13
San Francisco	70	59	84%	30	18	35	22
Birmingham, AL*	47	37	79%	5	5	15	12
Atlanta*	33	25	76%	15	17	15	5
Miami	40	29	73%	22	15	25	18
Philadelphia	25	18	72%	8	3	8	4
Boston	40	28	70%	15	11	35	21
Des Moines	40	28	70%	20	24	20	13
Los Angeles	110	75	68%	55	38	55	37
Seattle	70	47	67%	20	11	20	11
Pittsburgh*	48	31	65%	3	1	15	4
Detroit*	40	25	63%	8	7	12	13
Cleveland	30	16	53%	6	2	10	5
New York	140	70	50%	70	54	60	67
Chicago*	95	46	48%	45	34	40	15
Houston	40	19	48%	15	7	15	4
Newark, NJ	120	57	48%	40	28	60	55
Twin Cities, MN	70	33	47%	15	5	15	6
Other		12					
<b>U.S. total</b>	1103	697	63%	407	291	470	325
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>							
Auckland	30	18	60%	2	3	10	5
Christchurch	15	7	47%	1	1	5	4
Wellington	3	2	67%	1	0	1	0
<b>N.Z. total</b>	48	27	56%	4	4	16	9
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>							
London	50	27	54%	12	14	38	49
Manchester	25	12	48%	2	0	12	12
<b>UK total</b>	75	39	52%	14	14	50	61
<b>ICELAND</b>	10	4	40%	1	1	5	1
<b>Other international</b>		4			0		40
<b>International totals</b>	1399	886	68%	466	335	634	494
<b>Should be</b>	1300	975	75%	400	300	600	450

\* raised goal

#### IN THE UNIONS

	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
<b>CANADA</b>							
USWA	5	4	80%	1	0	5	1
IAM	10	5	50%	1	0	5	2
<b>Canada total</b>	15	9	60%	2	0	10	3
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>							
AMWU	2	1	50%	0	0	1	0
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>							
UFBGWU	2	1	50%	0	0	1	0
EU	7	3	43%	0	0	1	1
MWU	2	0	0%	0	0	1	0
<b>N.Z. total</b>	11	4	36%	0	0	3	1
<b>UNITED STATES</b>							
IAM	50	28	52%	15	4	22	3
UFCW	9	4	44%	13	10	9	6
UTU	50	19	38%	5	0	20	3
USWA	38	11	29%	4	0	22	1
UNITE	8	1	13%	8	7	6	1
UAW	50	6	12%	5	0	25	1
OCAW	30	1	3%	10	1	15	0
<b>U.S. total</b>	235	68	29%	60	22	119	15
<b>UNITED KINGDOM</b>							
RMT	3	2	67%	0	0	2	1
AEEU	5	0	0%	0	0	5	2
TGWU	5	0	0%	0	0	4	0
<b>UK total</b>	13	2	15%	0	0	11	3



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Sales at October 12 immigrant rights rally in L.A.

in this effort. They surpassed the goals they had set for *Militant* and *PM* subs in these nine days. Some *Militant* supporters took off work or school for all-day sales. We spent two days at the university, sold at two high schools, an antinuclear protest, and a concert in memory of Che Guevara, set up literature tables at numerous shopping and communication centers, and went door-to-door at student dorms.

"In addition to 14 *Militant* and *PM* subscriptions, we sold 40 Pathfinder books. The best seller was Guevara's *Socialism and Man in Cuba* in Swedish with 16 copies sold."

Similar results came in from the other end of the globe. "On the afternoon of October 11 we set up two stalls at a rally of 5,000 people to defend Aborigi-

of literature."

Socialists in San Francisco jumped ahead of schedule. In addition to signing up many new subscribers at events marking Che's fall in combat, "we sold one *Militant* sub on the job to a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union and a copy of the *New International* to an International Association of Machinists member," wrote Larry Lane from San Francisco.

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#### PATHFINDER BOOKS SOLD IN THE UNIONS

Countries/Cities	September			Previous months		
	Goal	Sales	%	August	July	June
<b>BRITAIN</b>						
RMT	6	5	83%	67%	17%	17%
AEEU	5	2	40%	20%	60%	80%
TGWU*	7	0	0%	114%	0%	29%
<b>Total U.K.</b>	18	7	39%	50%	14%	27%
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>						
AMWU	4	1	25%	200%	200%	0%
<b>CANADA</b>						
IAM	8	6	75%	0%	75%	63%
USWA*	18	0	0%	33%	11%	0%
<b>Canada Total</b>	26	6	23%	23%	31%	19%
<b>UNITED STATES</b>						
UFCW	6	14	233%	267%	83%	67%
UAW	50	12	24%	84%	6%	110%
UNITE	14	3	21%	21%	108%	47%
IAM	60	12	20%	100%	48%	83%
UTU	62	9	15%	35%	8%	28%
OCAW	44	6	14%	18%	61%	27%
USWA	65	7	11%	25%	0%	68%
<b>U.S. Total</b>	301	63	21%	30%	24%	55%

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMW — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

cluding the first subscriptions to co-workers on the job. "We are now confident we'll make our goal," said Michael Pennock from Minneapolis.



# Actions defend Cuba, celebrate Che Guevara

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY VERÓNICA POSES  
AND JOSHUA CARROLL

CHICAGO — "Cuba Sí!, Bloqueo No!" was the main chant at a march and rally to end the embargo against Cuba held here October 8. Nearly 200 people, overwhelmingly college and high school students, participated in the event.

Two marches took off from points on the north and the south sides of Chicago, and met up for a rally at the federal building downtown.

The action was organized by the October 8 Coalition, made up predominately of young people after returning from the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students. Members of several political organizations, including the October 22 coalition against police brutality, the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners, DALE (De Paul Alliance for Latino Enrichment), the Young Socialists, and a Zapatista support group were there. Organizers of the United Farm Workers union were also present building support for the fight to unionize the fields of California.

Chants against police brutality, for immigrant rights, and for independence for Puerto Rico were also prevalent at the march and rally. "There is a connection between Cuba, immigration, and police brutality," explained Sarah Wood, a student at De Paul University and one of the organizers of the event.

Jessie Mumm, an activist with the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, was the first speaker. He read a letter from the October 8 Coalition to the people of Cuba. "We are united in the knowledge that the United States Government is still waging a war to destroy the Cuban Revolution, and that it is our duty to end the international crime perpetrated against Cuba for the past 36 years: the United States blockade," the letter stated.

A number of speakers pointed to the importance of the Cuban revolution today. Rudy Lozano Jr., a participant in the World Festival, recounted: "In Cuba, I learned about how the Cuban peasants and working class came together to overthrow the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Cuba took back its land and resources from the Cuban oligarchs and U.S. businessmen. It is for this reason that the U.S. government tried to keep us from attending the festival, for fear that we might learn what I have learned and we might want to do the same." He was referring to the U.S. government's refusal to grant licenses to travel to Cuba to members of the U.S. delegation.

Another participant in the Youth Festival who addressed the rally was Marcelo Venegas, a medical student at UIC. Venegas spoke about the example of the health system in Cuba. He explained, "In order to cure a person you must first change the sick society of capitalism, where the majority work to fill the pockets of the rich."

Gisela López, from the Chicago Cuba Coalition was the last speaker at the rally. "Che is really not dead" she warned, "He lives today in all the young people that are here." Representatives from the Nation of Islam, Pastors for Peace, and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center also spoke at the rally.

BY HEATHER WOOD  
AND PAUL PEDERSON

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — In response to a call coming out of two international conferences held in Cuba this past summer for activities to mark the 30th anniversary of the fall in combat of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a Cuba solidarity coalition formed in the Twin Cities. Sixteen organizations participated, including The American Indian Stu-

dent Cultural Center, Pastors for Peace-Minnesota, La Raza Student Cultural Center, Progressive Student Organization, University Young Women, Women Against Military Madness, and the Young Socialists. The coalition organized activities for the week of October 8-13.

The activities began with an October march and rally built around three demands: End the U.S. embargo against Cuba! End the travel ban! and Repeal Helms-Burton! About 60 people participated.

Rafael Noriega, Third Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., arrived in the Twin Cities October 9 to begin three days of speaking events that were organized by the coalition. That day he addressed a crowd of 40 students at Macalester College in St. Paul, and another meeting at St. Olaf College in Northfield of over 50 students.

The La Raza Student Cultural Center held a panel discussion on the political legacy of Che Guevara on October 10. The panel consisted of an activist in the Chicano movement, a member of the Progressive Student Organization, and a member of the Young Socialists. Noriega also participated in the discussion, which focused on the impact and



As part of international events in October to celebrate life of Che Guevara, a statue was unveiled in Bolivia.

relevance of Che's example to different struggles taking place in the world today.

The highlight of the week's events was a teach-in October 11, attended by more than 125 people. Noriega gave the keynote address on Che Guevara and Cuba today. He said that Guevara's contribution to the revolution was similar to that of Máximo Gómez, a Dominican who became a leader of Cuba's struggle against Spanish colonialism. In comparing the two, Noriega said, "even though Che was from Argentina, he immediately identified himself completely with the cause of the Cuban revolutionaries."

Noriega's presentation was followed by a panel of other speakers, who addressed such topics as: the U.S. embargo against Cuba; gains made for oppressed nationalities and women through the revolution; and how people in the United States can fight against the embargo.

Michael Rothman, a panelist who is a professor of Caribbean Studies, spoke favorably about the progress in health care and education in Cuba and the gains for Blacks, women, and other oppressed layers. But he put forward the view that these gains and the revolution itself are counterposed and should not be confused with the "Castro regime." His view was that this "regime" was going to fall.

Another panelist, Betsey Stone, a member of the International Association of Machinists and editor of *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder Press, responded to this. "You cannot separate the revolution from those who have lead this process from the beginning and still lead it today," she said. Stone, who attended a conference of the Central Organization of Workers (CTC) in April of 1996, explained how workers at the congress and in union and factory meetings discussed and made decisions on the most important questions facing Cuba today. She contrasted this to the situation in the rest of the countries in the



Militant/Betsey Stone

October 8 march and rally in Chicago to end embargo against Cuba

Americas where workers have no voice in the basic decisions that mark their lives. The Minneapolis *Star-Tribune*, several smaller papers and radio stations covered the events.

BY JUAN FIGUEROA  
AND CAMILO BOSSI

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — On September 26 the YS chapter in Stockholm launched its first fund drive. The chapter adopted a goal of 12,000 kronor (\$1,500). The money will be raised from pledges by YS members and supporters, through dinners, selling snacks at Militant Labor Forums, and more. This will allow us to reach out to workers and youth at political activities in and outside of Stockholm, and send members to events like the upcoming YS convention in Canada. The YS will also be part of a Pathfinder team at a book fair in Gothenburg October 28 - November 2.

In mid-August, two YS members returned from the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students. Since then, they and other youth who went to the festival

have spoken at several report-back meetings in Stockholm and other cities. Interest in the festival and the Cuban revolution has been high.

One YS member traveled to Roskilde, Denmark, to participate in a mobilization of

1,000 people to protest fascists commemorating the death of Nazi leader Rudolf Hess. In early September YS members took part in protests against the rightist Sweden Democrats in the capital's main square. The rightists had been given permission to hold rallies every Saturday until December. They haven't shown up since September 6, however, when 100 people held a counter-mobilization.

In October several activities are taking place across the country around the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the death of Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara. On October 3, some 20 people attended a Militant Labor Forum titled "Who was Che?" On October 8, around 700 people marched to the U.S. embassy in Stockholm in solidarity with the Cuban revolution. The YS participated with a banner and set up two tables with communist literature.

After the rally and march, the Communist League and Young Socialists co-sponsored an open house. Four youth interested in the YS came and stayed for a long time talking politics.

Two people have since joined the YS. Following up on the October 8 events, the Young Socialists held a class on two pamphlets, *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, by Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro and *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today: Cuba Confronts the World Crisis of the '90s*, by Mary-Alice Waters. Ten youth attended, including a couple who are interested in the YS.

The YS is also part of the international effort to attract new subscribers to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* and the Marxist magazine *New International*, and has adopted goals for the subscription drive.

## 'Pombo' invited to speak in L.A., Houston

BY GALE SHANGOLD

LOS ANGELES — Harry Villegas, known as Pombo, has been invited to speak at several campus events here in late October. These include a class on "Revolutionary Art" taught by University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) professor David Kunzle and a class on "Revolution in Central America" sponsored by the Latin American Studies Program and History Department at California State University in Los Angeles. Kunzle and the UCLA Latin American Center initiated the invitations to Villegas.

Today, Villegas is a brigadier general in the Cuban army and fought with Che Guevara for over 10 years in Cuba, the Congo, and Bolivia. For much of the 1980s, he was part of leading the Cuban volunteers who fought against the apartheid South African army in Angola.

The Latin American Center and UCLA Department of Art History are sponsoring a two-day symposium October 24-25 on the cultural legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara, to which Villegas has been invited as one of the main speakers. The symposium is entitled "Thirty Years Later: A Retrospective on Che Guevara, 20th-Century Utopias and Dystopias." Other speakers at it include UCLA professors Kunzle, Fabián Wagmister, Maurice Zeitlin, and José Moya, as well

as Jorge Castañeda, a Mexican author and journalist who opposes the Cuban revolution.

A number of student groups and other organizations have also invited Villegas as the featured presenter at a UCLA presentation entitled "Ernesto Che Guevara and Cuba: Past, Present, and Future" on October 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Also speaking there and at the other events will be Félix Wilson and Emilio Pérez from the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. The meeting is sponsored by a range of organizations at UCLA, including the African Student Union, La Gente de Aztlan, Latin American Students Association, MEChA, NOMMO, Proyecto de Inmigrantes y Refugiados Latinoamericanos, USAC Academic Affairs Commission, and the USAC President's office, as well as by the Young Socialists and the Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba.

Villegas has also been invited as the main speaker at an event at the University of Houston October 28. The panel discussion on "Che Guevara, Internationalism, and His Legacy Today" will also include Thomas O'Brien, chairman of the university's History Department; Kairn Klieman, associate director of the African American Studies Center; and professors Robert Buzzanco and John Hart of the History Department.



# Boston socialists: 'cops out of Chelsea High'

BY TED LEONARD

CHELSEA, Massachusetts — "Chelsea High School Jail." That is how Tysha, a 10th grader at the school, described it to Linda Marcus, the Socialist Workers candidate for City Councilor at-large in Chelsea. The candidate and a team of supporters went to the school to express the campaign's solidarity with students who had staged a walk-out there and to protest the harassment of the Socialist Workers campaign a week earlier at the high school.

Forty students walked out of the high school September 17 in protest of the school administration's refusal to hold an assembly to discuss draconian new rules it had implemented. Dozens more attempted to leave but were prevented by the police, who blocked the doors of the school. The students who got out marched to City Hall and asked for a meeting with school Superintendent Douglas Sears. He refused, saying, "I don't meet in the face of demands couched in abusive language and loud tones."

Responding to the walkout in an interview with the *Chelsea Record* Chelsea High School principal Lincoln Tamayo said he was "not going to succumb to mob rule."

The new rules lower grade points for being late to school and a student automatically fails a class for six unexcused absences. Also prohibited are cellular phones, beepers and other electronic devices.

Marilyn Justiniano, a junior, explained to the *Chelsea Record* that she has a problem



SWP candidate Linda Marcus (left) talks with students at Chelsea High School

making it to school on time because she has to take her four-month-old baby to the sitter in the morning. "I come in two minutes late and I get two points off my average," Justiniano said. Jon Pistone, a 10th grader, told the socialist candidate that the walkout "was like a strike." He added, "We tried to deal with the rules but they kept coming — like they were making them up as they went

along. They made up a student handbook, then added new rules as the days went on."

In a campaign statement defending the rights of the high school students Marcus, a railroad worker and member of the United Transportation Union, explained, "These rules are exactly what capitalist education is about. The capitalists want youth in school to learn to be obedient, to be prepared to

work hard throughout their life as a wage laborer and to be grateful to get any employment at all....

"For workers and youth, as the Teamsters at UPS and fighters against police brutality in New York have learned, our strength is in our collective direct action. It increases our self-confidence and develops leadership. This is the opposite of 'mob rule' as the student walkout was contemptuously described by the *Chelsea Record* and the school administration."

On October 7 the School Department and the Chelsea Police signed a contract placing two officers on full-time in the Chelsea schools. They will be permanently stationed in the schools and their positions are paid for by the school department.

The socialist campaigners got a taste of the police activity at Chelsea High School September 30, when Marcus and her supporters made their first visit to the high school to express solidarity with the students. They set up a table across the street on a public sidewalk and passed out dozens of flyers and had friendly discussions with students.

After the majority of students had come out of the school, a Chelsea police officer pulled his cruiser into a driveway near the campaigners, blocking the sidewalk, and approached the table. He threatened the socialists with arrest for blocking "public access." He said he had received complaints about this "military shit you were passing out." The Chelsea Police Report Department record indicated that the cops were dispatched to investigate "people passing out military flyers."

After talking with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the Chelsea City Solicitor, and some students, and filing a citizens complaint form with the police, the candidate and her supporters returned to the school a week later without harassment from the cops. They passed out campaign statements demanding "Police out of Chelsea High School — Stop the Harassment of the Socialist Workers Campaign." Many students stopped to talk with the campaigners, whose placards read "Student protest is not mob rule" and "Defend Immigrant Rights and Affirmative Action."

## International events celebrate Che

BY MARNIE KENNEDY

SYDNEY, Australia — Five hundred people crowded into the University Hall at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) here October 11 to "celebrate the life and ideas of Che," as the posters publicizing the event invited.

The two-hour program featured presentations on the Bolivian campaign, on Guevara's contributions to the transition to socialism, and on Guevara's internationalism. The talks were supported by documentary footage including interviews with Fidel Castro and with Cuban workers who spoke of their contact with Guevara and his legacy. It was initiated by young supporters of the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society who organized a coalition that included members of Cuba solidarity groups, political parties, student groups and trade unionists. Members of the Australian delegation to the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana last August took part.

The preparations took weeks, as members of the coalition read and discussed books by Guevara and his collaborators, and considered how to answer the slanders and myths about Che and the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban Consul, Jorge Valdez addressed the meeting. The evening also featured poetry readings including by Pablo Armando Fernández, a Cuban poet currently touring Australia.

office at 129, Seven Sisters Road, London N7 7QG (Tel: 0171-263-6452).

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG — "Che made the ultimate sacrifice to show the way forward against imperialism — and particularly U.S. imperialism, the enemy of humanity," said Angel Dalmau, Cuba's ambassador to South Africa. Dalmau addressed 100 people gathered here October 11 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Che

Guevara. The Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS) sponsored the event. Other speakers included representatives of FOCUS, South African Communist Party deputy-secretary Jeremy Cronin and South African deputy-minister of defense Ronnie Kasrils.

The interest in Cuba here is largely a result of the battle waged by hundreds of thousands of Cuban internationalist troops in Angola. From 1975 to 1988, Cuban volunteers played a decisive role in repelling successive invasions of Angola by the army of the former South African apartheid regime.

## Socialist Workers campaign in the news

The following article appeared on the front page of the October 1 issue of the *Des Moines Register* under the headline "Alter committed to his beliefs — Socialist Workers Party candidate is a revolutionary."

BY JIM POLLOCK  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Thomas Alter, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Des Moines, is only 23 years old, which suggests that he does not have a lot of political experience. But he has not exactly been sitting around the dormitory either.

In recent years, he visited Cuba three

times; campaigned door-to-door in Houston for Michael Dukakis; stood up for fellow students against the administration of a big high school; got arrested at an anarchist demonstration at Indiana University; and helped organize a Young Socialists chapter in Iceland, of all places.

### The Des Moines Register

So, while he may be tilting at windmills with his campaign for mayor of Des Moines — previous Socialist Workers Party candidates have drawn just a handful of votes — he comes across as very serious about politics.

In the hallowed socialist tradition, he's working for a revolution. "People used to think we were always going to have kings; they used to think we were always going to have slaves," he said. "I can see a time when everything is not based on the almighty dollar."

Alter grew up in Fort Wayne, Ind., a city not too different from Des Moines. His father, also named Thomas, was a lawyer and an active member of the Democratic Party.

The family moved to Houston when the younger Tom was 12 and his father taught there. When Tom was 17, the Alters returned to Fort Wayne.

Now his dad is the superintendent at Catholic Cemetery in Fort Wayne, and his mother, Maryanne, teaches second grade at a Catholic school. He has a younger brother and two younger sisters.

His great-great-grandfather served on the Fort Wayne City Council, as did his grandfather. His dad worked for Robert Kennedy's presidential campaign while attending the University of Notre Dame. So, "He's following in the family tradition," said his father.

"Basically, I think the Democrats and Republicans are the same, so I started looking around," Alter said.

"I was attracted to anarchy a little bit, but I didn't see that as realistic. I was attracted to the labor movement during the Caterpillar strike in 1994, and at the same time I was learning about Cuba."

In Houston, according to his father, Alter wrote an article critical of the administration of his high school over the suspension of some students. This was a school with an enrollment of more than 4,000; another high school of similar size sat nearby.

"There were 8,500 students in one block, ready to walk out, and Tommy was leading the charge," his father said. "The school backed down. I thought that was pretty good."

At Indiana University, Alter claimed to be the only member of the Young Socialists for a while. He said he was arrested during a demonstration there while trying to protect a friend from police during a scuffle.

Alter graduated from Indiana last year with a bachelor of arts degree in history.

"He really had a very sincere interest in the problems we discussed," said one of his

history professors, Phyllis Martin, who taught him in a seminar, "Imperialism and Decolonization in the 20th Century."

"He's committed to working out his beliefs in society, not just in an ivory tower," she said. "He wasn't there to get a grade and move on to a job."

She wasn't surprised to hear her former history student is employed in a meatpacking plant.

Alter works at the IBP plant in Perry, making \$7.45 an hour, and belongs to the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 1149. In other words, he's living the life of the workers that his political party wants to help.

"I wanted to be a history professor, originally. I started a novel; I did some painting. But I couldn't be at peace with myself. You have to take the times you're born into and be a part of it," Alter said.

He's trying to win votes in Des Moines while talking about defending the Cuban revolution and canceling the Third World debt, rather than focusing on local issues. "There are a few voters who are starting to get it," he said. In his party, "We don't see ourselves divided along borders."

It already has been an interesting year for Alter. He married Maryanne Russo, 22, in July. She's from Boston and they met in, naturally, Cuba. Earlier this year, they got away with nothing worse than bruises when their car rolled as they came off the freeway.

Now he has at least a few more days of campaigning as one of three mayoral candidates. After the Oct. 7 primary, just two will remain.

Alter has lived in Des Moines only since January, after stops in Chicago and Minneapolis. He won't get specific about his future. "I plan on being active in politics in Des Moines for a while," he said.

He is a meatpacker and a mayoral candidate, but he said, "My real job is as a professional revolutionary."

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — On October 25 the North East London Cuba Solidarity Campaign (CSC) is planning a day-school entitled "Viva Che." The program will highlight the life and ideas of Ernesto Che Guevara. "The idea is to provide some depth to the discussion that is going on about Che, most of which is focusing on the image and stereotypes rather than providing information," explained Emma Sangster, secretary of the N.E. London group. The event will include a presentation by Rodney López, the Cuban ambassador to London, among others.

The CSC is organizing a march on October 18 to oppose the United States' economic blockade of Cuba and in defense of Cuban sovereignty. A lead article in the latest issue of *Cuba Si*, the quarterly magazine of the CSC noted, "The last time we marched (in 1995), CSC managed to gather 1,500 people in Trafalgar Square (in central London) for a rally condemning the blockade."

Some 30 local and regional branches of the CSC have organized a wide range of events throughout the United Kingdom during October. Some of the activities include a speaking tour of Cuban student leader Evarista Sierra Utria, who will address public meetings in dozens of cities. Details of the tour are available from the CSC national



# Central goal of socialism is the creation of new man

The following interview with Orlando Borrego appeared in issue no. 10, 1997, of the international edition of the Cuban magazine *Bohemia*, under the title "Dream and Prophecy." Borrego worked closely with Ernesto Che Guevara in Cuba's Ministry of Industry, which Guevara headed in the early 1960s, and is the former head of the Sugar Ministry. The translation and footnotes are by the Militant.

BY ARIEL TERRERO

Although he has obtained a doctorate in economics, Orlando Borrego will always be, in spirit, the grumpy accountant who Ernesto Che Guevara once asked to work with him. Before giving a green light to the interview, he rapidly scans the questions, with avowed distrust and a careful eye. Fortunately, he eventually bestows his trust and speaks freely.

He was 21 years old when Che put him at the head of the Military Economic Junta of the La Cabaña fortress, after this Havana outpost fell into the hands of the Rebel Army. Later he was one of the first men who the mythic Argentine took with him to the Department of Industrialization of the Agrarian Reform Institute. He spent six years very close to Che, starting from when he joined Che's guerrilla column in the Escambray in 1958.

"I always say these were the equivalent of 10 or 12 years, because this was very intense, hard work, with days extending to two or three in the morning," says the present consultant to the Ministry of Transportation and the hotel chain Horizontes.

Later he was first vice-chairman and then minister of the sugar industry. But even in this last stage he continued working under Che. "He was my boss; I consulted with him about everything." And I suspect he has never stopped doing it.

From such a close relationship, Borrego

*This selection is part of a series marking the 30th anniversary of the death in combat of Ernesto Che Guevara. Argentine by birth, Guevara became one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution that brought down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in 1959 and, in response to mounting pressure from Washington, opened the socialist revolution in the Americas. Che, as he is popularly known, was one of the outstanding Marxist leaders of the 20th century.*

*In 1966-67, he led a nucleus of revolutionaries from Bolivia, Cuba, and Peru who fought to overthrow the military dictatorship in Bolivia. In the process, they sought to forge a Latin America-wide movement of workers and peasants that could lead the battle for land reform and against U.S. imperialist domination of the continent and advance the struggle for socialism. Guevara was wounded and captured on Oct. 8, 1967. He was shot the next day by the Bolivian military, after consultation with Washington.*

*As part of the commemoration of this anniversary in Cuba, dozens of articles, speeches, and interviews by those who worked with Che are being published, dealing with the Cuban revolution, its impact in world politics, and the actions of its leadership. Many of Guevara's collaborators and family members have spoken at conferences and other meetings, bringing Che to life for a new generation and explaining the importance of his rich political legacy today. These materials contain many valuable firsthand accounts and information, some of which are being written down and published for the first time. They are part of the broader discussion taking place in Cuba today on how to advance the revolution.*

*The Militant is reprinting a selection of these contributions as a weekly feature, under the banner "Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution."*

retains experiences, very personal memories, and documents, some unpublished, in which, for example, Che anticipated the debacle European socialism would undergo 25 years later.

*Q: In your opinion, what characteristics of Che's were most in harmony with his work as minister of industry?*

A: Che lacked experience as a statesman in that period, but he had various things in his favor. He was a man endowed with a very developed intelligence, and an extremely broad education. He was also aided by his inclination toward industrial activity. In the Sierra Maestra, as soon as he received the command of a guerrilla column, he organized a series of production activities: bakeries, shoe factories, weapons repair shops.... When he arrived at La Cabaña he did the same.

He also had iron discipline, dedication, exceptional will-power, a very original method of engaging others to participate in work, extraordinary interest in the development of the country, and knowledge acquired in the Sierra Maestra about Cuba, its history, and even its economy.

*Q: Che is remembered above all as a guerrilla leader. What in your opinion weighs most in history: Che's military ideas or the economic concepts he developed and applied?*

A: Perhaps the loss of Che is felt more keenly in his capacity as a revolutionary thinker than as a guerrilla. In that period he was making contributions to the ideas of socialism, with extraordinary value for the present and the future. It seems, however, that not many people in the world see things that way. Despite the great influence that Che exercises among the peoples, all of his ideas, as a whole, are still little known. Everyone takes Che in their own manner. Some see him as a guerrilla, others as a legendary figure, others value his capacity for sacrifice, his humanism, or the ethics of his life.

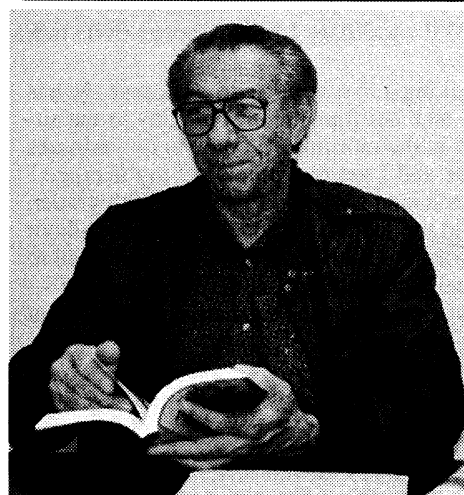
*Q: What principles and characteristics of the economy under socialism did Che put the most trust in?*

A: The central point in his vision of a socialist society was the development of the individual, the creation of a new man. That is the essence of everything he sought. Che was opposed to seeing socialist society as simply a question of production to satisfy the material needs of the individual. He used to say that this is what capitalism does, at the cost of exploitation. It is a tendency toward consumerism and nothing more. Che stressed as the central goal of a socialist society the creation of a new man — a man of solidarity, ethics, culture, and with the highest values that a human being could have; a patriot, sensitive toward any human being in the world. He liked to repeat Martí's idea: "Every true man must feel on his own cheek every blow dealt against the cheek of another."

The development of the productive forces under socialism must be indissolubly linked to the formation and training of the human being. Che set no time period to achieve this objective, but he was convinced of it. If these two lines of approach are not developed in a parallel way until they join up together; if emphasis is given to consumerism and material production and the individual is forgotten, then it is possible to attain a very high level of production and a deformed, selfish individual, similar to the one in capitalist societies.

*Q: Because of the emphasis he puts on humanism, some theoreticians—including on the left—classify Che's ideas as utopian, and some even say that they were an expression of a petty-bourgeois philosophy. What do you think?*

A: Many people insulted Che, and not only in the capitalist world. In the Soviet Union and other socialist countries they also



Top: Prensa Latina; Left: Militant/Martin Koppel  
Above, Guevara visits a factory in the province of Pinar del Río, 1962. From left to right: a local party leader, Che Guevara, army captain Pablo Ribarta, Orlando Borrego, and Aleida March, Guevara's wife. "There was nothing utopian in Che," said Borrego, left.

into practice.

In addition to applying intelligent methods to educate the individual, a great deal needs to be done in the field of management techniques and incentives. Che never rejected material incentives, but he emphasized moral ones, so the individual would increasingly acquire more consciousness of social property to make it more effective. Eventually the moment will be reached when the individual produces out of his social duty toward work.

*Q: Was Che's departure for the Congo and later Bolivia an expression of confidence in the fate of the Cuban revolution? Do you believe he would have taken another decision if he knew what Cuba would confront in the 1990s?*

A: In my opinion he would not have changed his decision. As Fidel has explained, from the time he was in Mexico, Che had expected to continue the struggle in Latin America, and specifically in Argentina, after the Cuban revolution triumphed. But I also think he departed confident that the revolution was in an advanced process of consolidation. I can state with certainty that Che was confident that if Cuba applied its own viewpoint and had a leader such as Fidel, there was no cause for concern about the stability and leadership of our revolution.

*Q: Did he have confidence, then, that socialism was irreversible?*

A: In the case of Cuba, yes.

*Q: But did he believe in the irreversibility of socialism in general? In other words, would Che have been surprised by the fall of the Berlin Wall?*

A: He believed that society on a world scale would go forward toward socialism. For him this was the solution to the problems of humanity. Nevertheless, Che did not believe that the socialist model of the Soviet Union and the other countries of Eastern Europe was viable or correct. After he became familiar with the conceptions of how the economy was being directed in these countries, he expressed great reservations, and predicted, 25 years in advance, that this model was heading back toward capitalism.

*Q: Reservations about which tendencies?*

A: He did not accept the view developed with the New Economic Policy in the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> Che felt that Lenin was forced to make concessions and apply the NEP owing to the complex and difficult political

Continued on Page 14

*Q: Nevertheless, man under socialism has not developed a consciousness as owner of the means of production, something fundamental to this system. There has even been talk of a certain alienation of the worker toward his condition as owner, and that property is state-owned, and not social.*

A: That is an old polemic, one that concerns a crucial aspect of socialism. But I would not speak of alienation. Che did not set time limits for the development of consciousness in socialism. For him it was a long process in which there could be advances and retreats. I am reminded of him very much with the Special Period. People who advanced in the development of consciousness have flagged in the face of shortages, they have retreated, and some have even betrayed. Fortunately, they have been a minority.

The question of acquiring real consciousness of social property — and above all that this property be highly productive and efficient — is a very complex one. We should keep working at it, above all, at putting it

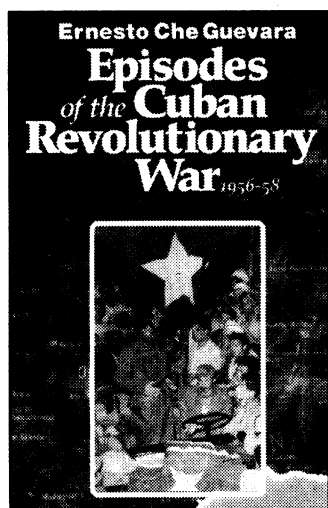
<sup>1</sup> "Special Period" is the term used in Cuba to describe the economic crisis triggered by the collapse in long-standing trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries at the start of the 1990s.

<sup>2</sup> The New Economic Policy was adopted by the Russian Communist Party in March 1921, following the economic devastation caused by World War I and the subsequent civil war. Aimed at reviving an economy in which industrial production had fallen to less than 20 percent of pre-war levels, the measure allowed a limited return to free trade and the operation of foreign concessions alongside the nationalized sectors of the economy.



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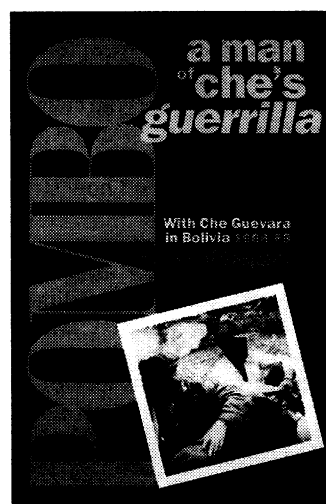
### Pombo: A Man of Che's Guerrilla

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HARRY VILLEGAS

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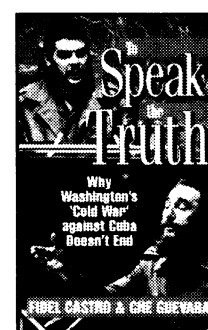
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# Congress strengthens socialist course of

Continued from front page of coverage.

The party congress "focused on the question we have all been discussing — the economy," said Juan José Iglesias, 51, a worker from a paint factory here. "Fidel was right in what he said. To get out of the 'Special Period' there are no recipes or miracles. We have to keep fighting, working very hard, relying on the intelligence and creativity of every human being. What we won't do is go back to the old days of capitalism."

Iglesias made this comment as he stood in line with 60 of his co-workers and thousands of other people at the Plaza of the Revolution to pay tribute to Ernesto Che Guevara and his fellow revolutionaries who fell in battle in Bolivia 30 years ago (see accompanying article below). He was referring to the severe economic crisis in Cuba — known here as the Special Period — precipitated in 1990 by the abrupt loss of some 85 percent of the small island nation's foreign trade as the Soviet bloc regimes disintegrated.

The congress itself opened on the date commemorated as the 30th anniversary of Che's murder by the U.S.-backed Bolivian military. It closed on October 10, anniversary of *El grito de Yara* (the Cry of Yara), the call to arms that launched Cuba's first war of independence from Spain in 1868.

Delegates to the fifth congress adopted four major resolutions: a document titled "The party of unity, democracy and the human rights we defend"; a resolution on economic policy; a resolution approving the line of the main report given by Castro; and modifications to the party's statutes. They also elected a Central Committee, the decision-making body between congresses, and ratified the Political Bureau and the first and second secretaries elected by the new Central Committee.

The Communist Party had published and circulated "The party of unity, democracy and the human rights we defend" shortly after the congress was called in mid-April. The document was discussed over the past months by party members, members of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), and in thousands of meetings at workplaces and neighborhoods, organized by the trade unions and other mass organizations.

The document traces Cuba's revolutionary legacy — from the 19th century battles for independence from Spain, to the struggles against U.S. imperialist domination throughout the 20th century, to the 1959

revolutionary overthrow of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship — and reviews the gains of the socialist revolution. Answering the arguments by opponents of the revolution that the Cuban government and Communist Party are totalitarian, it defends the democratic character of Cuba's socialist revolution as one in which working people hold state power.

## Concrete discussion on economy

The heart of the congress deliberations was a concrete discussion of the severe economic

crisis Cuba has lived through since the last party congress took place in 1991, and a reaffirmation of the determination to find a collective, working-class road forward.

This discussion began with the opening report by Fidel Castro, the party's first secretary. Castro put aside the written report that had been prepared for him to read to the congress, and simply spoke to the delegates — and through them to the Cuban people — for almost seven hours. He detailed the conditions that Cuba has faced and dealt with over the past six years.

Between 1989 and 1992, Castro noted, Cuba's imports had dropped from roughly \$8 billion a year to one quarter that amount. "What a brutal and sudden drop this was in food and other basic necessities of life for

or raw materials in the factories. The amount of paper money in circulation expanded to startling proportions. Our currency was tremendously devalued. State subsidies expanded. The budget deficit grew, reaching 30 percent or more of the Gross Domestic Product." Castro added that even arms supplies and other defense-related equipment for Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces shrank to zero.

Given this drastic picture, made even more critical by Washington's economic war against Cuba, which time and again torpedoed new painstakingly negotiated trade agreements, capitalist spokespeople around the world "predicted the revolution's days were numbered. They predicted this small country would be unable to stand up to the United States," Castro noted.

But what did they think we were we going to do? he asked. "Go down on our knees? Surrender?... That's what they demanded of Cuba: unconditional surrender, turning over the entire nation and people to the enemies of the nation and people, renouncing our gains, ideas, and ideals."

The Cuban revolutionary leadership took a different course, Castro said. They rejected going back to "the indignities of the past." In doing so, Castro noted, they have also had to wage a fight inside the country "against those who become disheartened, demoralized, those who have no principles, those who break laws at the expense of everyone else."

## Refuse to go back to capitalism

Castro reviewed some of the most important measures taken to reverse the economic free fall and to revive production, such as allowing use of the U.S. dollar as a legal currency, developing tourism and encouraging foreign capitalist investment in Cuba. "Although we did not like this very much, development required capital, it required seeking new technology and markets," he said.

These measures, the Cuban leader noted, have inevitably generated undesirable social differences. He went on to say that despite these negative consequences Cuba has been able to maintain the most basic conquests of the revolution. The plunge in the Gross Domestic Product bottomed out in 1994 and since then a slight economic recovery has been under way.

In contrast to "other countries that live in a permanent Special Period," Castro said, Cuba still has social indices such as life expectancy and infant mortality that are comparable to those of the industrialized nations.

He referred to the rise in infant mortality, decline in life expectancy, and other deteriorating aspects of life in the former Soviet Union. He said this demonstrated what it means to renounce a socialist course and follow a road toward capitalism, "a system that, while dominant, is prehistoric because it has nothing to offer humanity — a wolf trying to devour another wolf has nothing to do with human beings."

Washington is waging a full-fledged economic war against Cuba, Castro stressed. "That's why we must be soldiers and fight like good soldiers in the economic war." He emphasized the need for political leadership to fight these battles, noting that "special work is needed for the education of youth."

## 'Che and revolution are same thing'

Castro devoted the whole final part of his speech to the importance of Che Guevara's leadership qualities, his ideas, the role Guevara played in Cuba and the identity between Che and the Cuban revolution. Che and Cubans came together on the *Granma*, Castro explained, to begin the revolutionary war. Together they lived through the October crisis in 1962 when Washington threatened to annihilate the Cuban people in a nuclear confrontation. Together "they began the construction of socialism, this socialism that is as much ours as his." And together they fought and died in Africa and Bolivia. "Che and the revolution are the same thing," he declared.

The major discussion at the congress took place under the report on the draft Economic Resolution, which was given by Political Bureau member Carlos Lage, who is also secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. Despite increases in areas such as nickel production, light industry, construction materials, and tobacco — signs of the recovery — the Cuban economy has grown by only 2.1 percent so far this year. Last year's growth was 7.8 percent.

The main cause of the lower economic growth, Lage noted, was the fall in sugar production. While no official figures have been released on the size of this year's sugar production, the most common estimate is 4.2 million tons, down from last year's level of



Granma photos by Liborio Noval (inset) and Ismael Francisco (above)

Cuban president Fidel Castro (inset) gives opening report to fifth congress of Communist Party of Cuba, on October 8. Congress delegates approve resolution (above). Portraits on stage depict (from left to right) Karl Marx, founder of modern communist movement; Bolshevik party leader V. I. Lenin; José Martí, Cuba's national hero; Julio Antonio Mella, founder of the Cuban Communist Party in 1925; and Ernesto Che Guevara. Slogan on stage says, "These people, this party, will never surrender their unity. Fidel."

## Working people of Cuba pay tribute to Che

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA — For three days, a seemingly endless river of people flowed into the Plaza of the Revolution here, as tens of thousands of workers and other Cubans came to pay their last respects to Ernesto Che Guevara and his fellow combatants, who fell in battle 30 years ago in Bolivia at the hands of the U.S.-backed Bolivian military.

Thronged of workers, high school students, soldiers, entire families, a scattering of international visitors from around the Americas, people of all ages and walks of life filed through the José Martí monument, past the honor guard and the seven caskets, each draped with the flag of their country. The six fighters whose remains were recently taken to Cuba along with those of Guevara are Alberto Fernández Montes de Oca, Orlando Pantoja, René Martínez Tamayo, and Carlos Coello of Cuba; Simeón Cuba of Bolivia; and Juan Pablo Chang-Navarro of Peru.

The outpouring has been a solemn reaffirmation by working people in this country of the internationalist working-class course of the Cuban revolution and

its leadership. There has also been an element of celebration, as one Havana worker, Blanca Santacruz, put it, of "our Che — the Che the imperialists could not kill because his ideas are in millions of Cubans and people all over the world."

Santacruz was one of the hundreds of workers who had volunteered after work to serve as monitors guiding the snaking line of people. They contributed to the general air of quiet discipline. The line was so long that most people had to wait several hours to get to the monument.

"Why are we here? Because of what Che represents: his ideas about the importance of work," remarked José Jacomillo, 30, a construction worker who came with 500 co-workers from the March 13 Contingent of volunteer construction workers. "And Che's internationalism, because he is a reminder of the international missions Cubans have been part of, and that if we had to do it again, we would do it again."

Among the first in line was a group of University of Havana students who have formed a study group to read and discuss Che's works. The group calls itself "Vive" (He lives). Maily Bayona Hernández, 18, one of its members, said, "Imperialism now

is trying to present Che as a harmless figure, a saint, San Ernesto de La Higuera. But he is a son of our revolution and that is what we're saying here."

"Look at all the people here in the Plaza," said Juan José Iglesias, a worker from a paint factory who came with dozens of co-workers. "I'm not surprised at the large turnout. It shows how strong the revolution is, and how strong Che's ideas are."

The remains of the seven revolutionaries lay in state for three days in Havana. On October 14, a military caravan took them to Santa Clara, passing through Matanzas and other cities and towns on the way, as tens of thousands of people lined the streets for miles. On October 17, a solemn ceremony will be held in Santa Clara to lay the combatants' remains to rest at the Ernesto Che Guevara monument there.

Guevara commanded the forces that liberated Santa Clara on January 1, 1959 — the last major battle of the revolutionary war that brought down the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. The people of Santa Clara consider Che a native son.



# the Cuban revolution

4.45 million tons. In comparison, for several years immediately prior to the beginning of the Special Period, annual sugar production ran close to 8 million tons.

The biggest blow to this year's sugar harvest was the loss of \$200 million in financing due to the U.S. government's implementation of the so-called Helms-Burton act. This law mandates sanctions against companies "trafficking" in property formerly owned by U.S. citizens in Cuba. The Cuban government lost these short-term, high-interest loans at the crucial time needed to finance imports of fertilizer, spare machine parts, and other supplies for the harvest.

Lage highlighted some of the problems facing the Basic Units of Cooperative Production (UBPCs), both those growing sugarcane and those producing food crops. According to the figures released in late September, at the National Conference of Non-Sugarcane UBPCs in Santiago de Cuba, some 69 percent of the non-sugarcane UBPCs in Cuba are operating at a loss, although overall it is a smaller loss than a year ago. Barely one out of four of these co-ops is self-sufficient in food today. These problems are even more critical in the cane-growing UBPCs.

The Cuban government began the transformation of the country's state farms into smaller cooperative units four years ago. In these UBPCs, which account for 42 percent of the arable land, cooperative members have the right to use the land and own the fruit of their labor.

## The challenge in agriculture

The richest part of the congress discussion focused on the crisis in agriculture today. Numerous delegates gave clear and concrete assessments of the challenges faced, and in some cases described examples where workers and farmers had made important advances. The thread running throughout the discussion, as Castro emphasized in his report, was that there are no magical solutions, that what is needed is communist leadership to eradicate administrative, routinist methods, combined with just plain hard work.

Ramón Romero, president of the Primer Soviet de América (First Soviet of America) sugarcane-producing cooperative in Mabay, Granma province, described with a wealth of detail how the farmers there had consistently obtained good yields for the past 14 years. The Primer Soviet is a kind of cooperative, known as Agricultural Production Cooperative (CPA), that was organized much earlier than the UBPCs.

Romero explained their careful attention to cane varieties used, efforts to reduce costs, the active involvement of all members of the co-op, and the resulting high morale. They also work an average of 10 hours a day, he said, whereas the average on many newly formed UBPCs is reported to be closer to 5 hours a day.

The presidents of 39 other CPAs from provinces across Cuba have traveled to the Primer Soviet, Orlando Lugo Fonte, president of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), told delegates, taking that experience back with them to generalize the example. Part of the discussion by congress delegates was on the role the Cuban army has played in helping increase agricultural production through the Youth Army of Labor (EJT).

The EJT, volunteer units of young army recruits, often takes on farms that are the most difficult challenge. They work along-

side the civilian workers and set high standards of discipline and productivity.

Róger Delgado, from Matanzas, recounted the experience at the Victoria de Girón (Girón Victory) citrus orchard in Jagüey Grande, of which he is the director. On this farm, organized by the EJT, workers produced 400,000 tons of fruit in the last year, breaking their historic record set in 1989, before the Special Period. They did so with only half the cultivated land, fewer tractors, and less fuel consumption. They organize two daily shifts and have taken other steps to improve their efficiency.

Belén Peña, 37, from Santiago province, is the president of a coffee farm belonging to the Naranjal UBPC, as well as secretary of the Communist Party nucleus at that farm. She related how workers there had completely turned around coffee production on the farm, transforming it from the worst in the municipality to the best. Then she sparked surprise, laughter, and applause, when she described how she and other workers had replaced the entire executive board, including the UBPC administrator — who is her husband, she told the congress — for "cronyism."

## Discussion on UBPC cooperatives

At the request of the congress presiding committee, several provincial Communist Party secretaries in major sugar-producing provinces addressed the political problems behind the economic difficulties faced on the UBPCs. Pedro Sáez, party first secretary in Sancti Spiritu, stated, "When the state farms were turned into UBPCs, many of the directors of the state farms went on to become presidents of UBPCs. There was no change in mentality — they still had the idea that there were limitless resources and no consequences."

Similarly, Jorge Luis Sierra, first secretary in Holguín province, said that in the reorganization of state farms "the structures changed but the cadres didn't."

The first secretary in Santiago province, Juan Carlos Robinson, argued that if there is no discipline, even a considerable productive potential will be frittered away. Other key factors, he stressed, are the use of the workday and the political leadership by the local party unit. In Santiago province, one of those that has registered real gains, "we have 100 percent of the cane-producing areas planted — there are no unused areas; that makes a big difference."

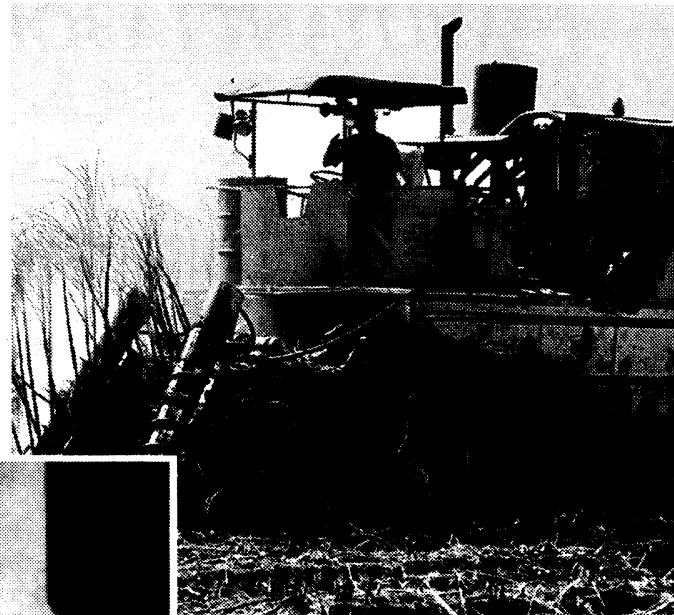
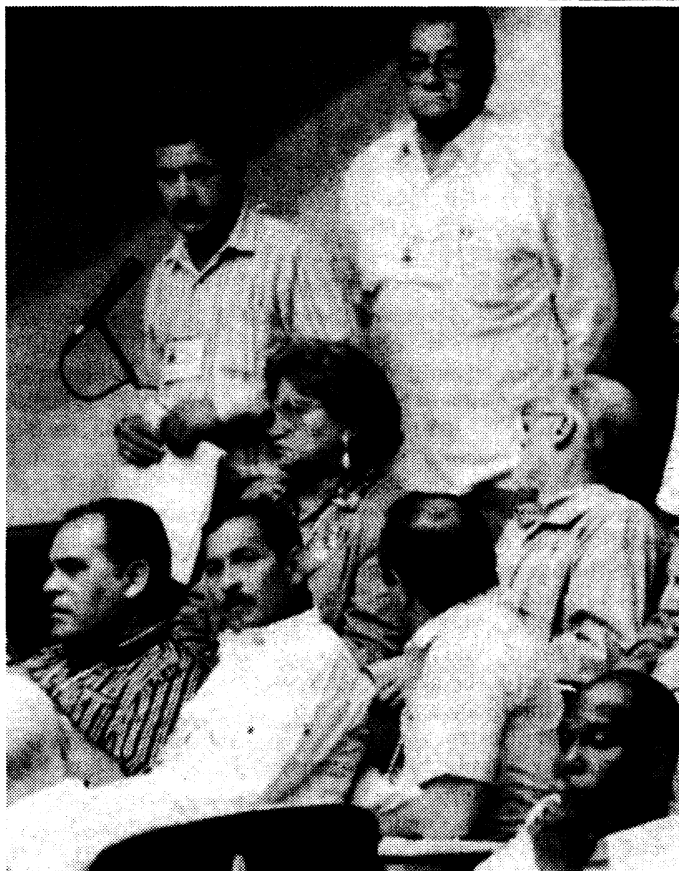
## Leadership question

One of the most important points on the congress agenda was the election of the Central Committee. Raúl Castro, second secretary of the party, reported on the work of the commission that made nominations for the new body. The congress decided to elect a new Central Committee of 150, one-third smaller than the previous one. Castro explained that the last two congresses had elected a committee of 225, eliminating the category of candidate CC members. He said the committee had become overly large and that many did not really function as part of a collective working body.

In arguing for the size reduction, Raúl Castro pointed out that the Chinese Communist Party has a Central Committee of 300-plus even though the party membership is 58 million — compared with some 600,000 members of the Cuban Communist Party. The Central Committee, he argued, should not be based on representation, but on demonstrated leadership capacities.

He noted that "there exists a perception that someone who comes off the Central Committee will never be returned" to the CC, but that this is false.

Castro also spoke about the need for renewal and continuing the transition in leadership. The election of the Central Committee was seen by many as a way to advance this transition toward an increasingly ex-



Granma/ Ismael Francisco (left); Militant/ Laura Garza (above)

Ramón Romero (left, at microphone), president of the Primer Soviet de América (First Soviet of America) sugarcane-producing cooperative in Mabay, Granma province, tells delegates how the farm has consistently obtained good yields for the last 14 years. Standing behind Romero is Orlando Lugo Fonte, president of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). The richest part of the congress discussion focused on the crisis in Cuba's agriculture today and perspectives for overcoming it. Above, workers harvest sugarcane at cooperative in Santa Clara, March 1996.

control of the country's economy for the benefit of humanity.

## 'We can do it better than capitalists'

"If capitalists can manage a company efficiently, we socialists can do so better than the capitalists," Castro argued. "We have the obligation to become administrators, good administrators. Let us do it not only for our well-being. Let us do it for the beautiful ideas that we are defending [and] to fight this unsustainable and ruthless capitalist system that has no future."

In the early years of the Cuban revolution, "we had the spirit of 'Homeland or Death, We Shall Win.'" Now, Castro added, "we must have that same spirit" in fighting to improve productivity.

Castro returned in his closing speech to the kind of leadership working people need. He underlined the capacity of human beings to transform themselves through revolutionary struggle, pointing to the thousands of Cubans who have taken part in international missions in countries like Nicaragua and Angola. "This is what Che meant when he said that being a revolutionary is the highest expression of humanity," he emphasized.

Castro recalled the life of Roberto Rodríguez, a combatant in the Rebel Army better known as El Vaquerito (Little Cowboy) who rapidly became an outstanding fighter in Guevara's Column 8 and a leader of the celebrated "Suicide Squad," which took on some of the most dangerous military assignments. He was killed in Santa Clara on Dec. 30, 1958, on the eve of the revolutionary victory.

"Vaquerito himself could not have imagined what he became. Humans have more capacities than what people think, and our duty as communists is to discover, promote, and develop those qualities. That was Che's virtue — his ability to promote these capacities, mainly by his own example.

"Now, when we are commemorating the 30th anniversary of his death, we must bring back something more than his mortal remains. We must also bring back his immortal ideas and example."

perienced generation of Cuban leaders that grew up within the revolution.

The new committee includes a number of younger party cadres, including a significant number who were formerly central leaders of the UJC and are today taking on major day-to-day party and government leadership responsibilities.

The Political Bureau of 24 was also renewed. The six members who have not previously served on it include some of the younger provincial party secretaries, such as Sáez, Robinson, and Sierra, and Misael Enamorado from Las Tunas.

Of the congress delegates themselves, 16 percent were under the age of 35. Some 22 percent were women.

In a major speech closing the congress, Fidel Castro returned to the main political questions discussed. He emphasized the positive examples that delegates had described of working people taking control of decisions and organizing themselves to make gains in raising production while holding down costs.

In each case, there was nothing mysterious or unique about the reasons for their success, he noted. "We must turn the exceptions into the rule, we must turn efficiency into the rule."

Castro pointed out that in the name of efficiency, capitalists and their governments carry out policies against the interests of working people. "We are not going to privatize companies — we will not take that road," he said. In capitalist countries such moves have led to layoffs and speedup on the job. In a country where workers and farmers hold power, the struggle for efficiency and quality and against waste must be part of working people taking increasing

## CORRECTIONS

In last week's *Militant*, an error was introduced in the translation and editing of Ricardo Alarcón's speech at the symposium on "Che: Man of the Twenty-First Century." On page 10, Alarcón's description of Che's ideas should read: "His humanistic, renovational, and ethical conception of socialism enriched the Cuban revolutionary process and has been present throughout its history, in competition, of course, with tropical expressions of 'real socialism' and in the midst of the most far-reaching confrontation ever with imperialism." (Emphasis added).

## for further reading

### Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism

In *New International* no. 8

Ernesto Che Guevara, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Carlos Tablada, Mary-Alice Waters, Steve Clark, Jack Barnes

Debates from the early 1960s and today on the relevance and importance of the political and economic perspectives defended by Guevara. \$10.00 Also available in Spanish.

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## ALABAMA

### Birmingham

**Black Farmers Fight to Keep Their Land.** Speaker: Eddie Slaughter, vice president, Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association. Fri., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

## CALIFORNIA

### San Francisco

**70th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution: Lessons of October, 1917 — What They Mean for Working People Today.** Speaker: Ove Aspoy, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Steelworkers of America, Local 1440.

Fri., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. 3284 23rd St. at Mission. Donation: \$4. Tel: (415) 285-5323.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Che Guevara and The Imperialist Reality Today.** Panel discussion. Sun., Oct. 26, 2 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

## NEW JERSEY

### Newark

**Smog Crisis Hits Southeast Asia — Disaster Threatens Health and Livelihood of Workers and Peasants.** Speaker: Jon Erway, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. 87A

Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

## NEW YORK

### Brooklyn

**The Basques: A People in Resistance.** Speakers: Blanka Kalzakorta and Inigo Elkoro, leaders of the Association of Relatives of Basque Political Prisoners, Refugees and Deportees now touring the United States. Sat., Oct. 25, 7:30 p.m. 59 4th Ave. (near Bergen). Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Philadelphia

**The Middle East Today.** Fri., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

### Pittsburgh

**The Fight Against Police Brutality Today.** Fri., Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Che Guevara: His Legacy for Today.** Speaker: Ved Dookhum, National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Oct. 25, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. NW (at 18th & Florida, entrance on Florida). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

# Workers in Asia resist rulers' austerity measures

Continued from front page

on staple foods. Factory workers there are organizing work stoppages to force the employers to pay their wages.

Indonesia's currency, the rupiah, has lost some 35-40 percent of its value against the dollar since August 14, when it was freed from any set relation with the U.S. currency. With a public debt estimated at more than \$50 billion and private debt at \$55 billion, the regime requested aid October 8 from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. On September 3 President Suharto announced a "self-imposed IMF program" of budget cuts that included suspension of \$13 billion in construction projects for power plants and toll roads.

A team of IMF officials traveled to Jakarta October 10 where they are drafting a "rescue package" of at least \$12 billion. In re-

turn, the officials of the imperialist financial institution are pressing the regime for steeper budget cuts and urging a reduction in subsidies on imported diesel and kerosene. More than 60 percent of the people living in rural areas in the country rely on kerosene for energy and lighting.

This comes at a time when Indonesia is suffering from its worst drought in 50 years. The drought is exacerbated by smog, as large plantation owners are torching forests and brush to clear land to grow palm trees as international demand for palm oil has soared. The Indonesian government is pushing for production of 7.2 million tons of crude palm oil by 2000, while plantation areas will more than double to 13.5 million acres. Residents of the island Siberut went to Jakarta in mid-September to protest the environmental disaster.

Suharto told the military during an October 5 parade to be prepared for any unrest. Gen. Feisal Tanjung, chief of the armed forces, pledged to crush any action that would disrupt the upcoming presidential elections, scheduled for March 1998.

In response to these threats, Abdurrahman Wahid, a leader of Nahdlatul Ulama, an organization that opposes the government, declared, "If there are any unconstitutional actions, we will not hesitate to use our force to defend democracy."

"What we're seeing is that the turmoil in Asia has not run its course," said head Greg Fager, head of the Asian department at the Institute for International Finance, after the Indonesian rupiah reached a new low October 6. This U.S. organization represents major financial institutions that invest in and provide loans to "emerging markets."

The currency turmoil in the region was triggered July 2 when Thai government dropped its currency peg to the dollar and the baht plunged. The Thai currency has lost

38 percent since that time. Many Asian companies borrowed heavily in U.S. dollars and were forced to repay loans with diminishing export earnings. According to figures from a 1997 report issued by the World Bank, Thailand's foreign debt climbed from \$8.2 billion in 1980 to more than 56 billion in 1995. A banking crisis continues to stalk Malaysia as well. "Only a handful of finance companies are tipped to survive beyond 1999," the *Financial Times* of London reported October 8. "The chances of a systemic banking failure such as is unfolding in Thailand, are considered remote," however, the article assured.

As a result of the currency crisis, the government of Thailand recently dropped its plans to build a \$3.7 billion mass transit and tollway system in Bangkok. The regime in Malaysia postponed building a \$5 billion hydroelectric dam, and Jakarta shelved 14 infrastructure projects in Indonesia, including a \$525 million-gas fired power plant owned by the U.S.-based Enron Corp.

Meanwhile Tokyo has the worst budget deficit among "Group of Seven" major capitalist nations. Industrial production declined 2.2 percent in August. Japan's gross domestic product fell 2.9 percent in the second quarter.

## 'Million Women March' called in Philadelphia

BY HATTIE McCUTCHEON

PHILADELPHIA — Two hundred people came to a meeting October 10 to hear plans for the upcoming Million Woman March, scheduled to take place here in Philadelphia on October 25. The meeting was built on a day's notice by the two local Black radio stations. The march is the result of a year-long effort by local Black women activists, following the 1995 Million Man March initiated by the Nation of Islam.

Scheduled speakers at the event include, Winnie Mandela from South Africa; Congresswoman Maxine Waters; Ramona Africa, national chairperson of MOVE and spokesperson for the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Julia Wright, daughter of author Richard Wright; and others.

Hundreds of buses will be coming to the march from a wide radius. Auto workers from Michigan and New Jersey say some union members from there will participate.

### Los Angeles, California

#### Ernesto Che Guevara:

#### Past, Present, and Future

October 22, 6:30 p.m.

Haines Hall, Room 220

Speakers: Harry Villegas (Pombo), Cuban general; Félix Wilson, Deputy Chief of the Cuban Interests Section; Emilio Pérez, Cuban Interests Section Officer.

#### SYMPOSIUM ON CHE GUEVARA

#### Thirty Years Later:

#### A retrospective of Che Guevara,

#### 20th Century Utopias and Dystopias

October 24, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Dickson Auditorium

October 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Fowler Auditorium

University of California

Invited speakers:

Harry Villegas (Pombo), Cuban general, and Jorge Castañeda, Mexican author

Sponsored by the UCLA Latin American Center and UCLA Art Department

For more information, call (310) 825-4571.

### Houston, Texas

#### Che Guevara

#### Internationalism, and His Legacy Today

Tuesday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m.

University Hilton Hotel

University of Houston

(Main campus — Gate 1

(Calhoun St. entrance).

A panel discussion featuring

Harry Villegas (Pombo)

Panel participants include: Professor Thomas O'Brien, Chairman, History Department; Dr. Kairn Klieman, Associate Director, African American Studies Center; Dr. Robert Buzzanco, History Department; Professor John M. Hart, History Department.

For more information, call Department of History, University of Houston (713) 743-3085; Houston Cuba Coalition, Tom Kleven (713) 313-7355.

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## SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

## — CALENDAR —

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Philadelphia

**Peoples International Tribunal for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal.** Initiated by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Ad Hoc Coalition for a Peoples International Tribunal for Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sat., Dec. 6, 11 a.m. *Blue Horizon*, 1314 N. Broad St. For more information, call (215) 476-8812, Fax (215) 476-7551. E-mail: Mumia@aol.com Web Site: http://www.Mumia.org

## GREECE

### Athens

**The Cuban Revolution in Today's World.** A presentation of the Greek edition of *The Second Declaration of Havana*. Speakers: Anna María Gonzales, Ambassador of Cuba; representative of the Greek-Cuban Friendship Society; Peter Clifford, Pathfinder, London; Henri Eménye, Congolese immigrant and Young Socialist; Sotiris Siokos, Executive Board of the Federation of Bank Workers Union; Natasha Terlexis, President of International Forum. Sponsored by International Forum, publishers of *The Second Declaration of Havana* in Greek. Thurs., Oct. 23, 7 p.m. *Hall of the Union of Employees of the Bank of Greece*. For more information: Tel 22 86 068.



The civilized society — A prison supply firm is offering "Violent Prisoner, DeLuxe II Safety Model." Molded with space for wrists cuffed behind back, and seat-



Harry Ring

belt type straps for chest, waist, and legs. Accessories include padding to adjust chair for juveniles.

P.S. The manufacturer of that restraint chair advises: "A couple of

hours is not a problem as long as the individual is healthy." Perhaps he had in mind the mentally retarded Utah prisoner who died of a blood clot last March after 16 hours in the chair.

**Seize the time** — A group of foundations are doing a test program to help the poor buy a house, go to college or start a business. Open a savings account and get matching funds of up to \$500 a year. The program will end in four years. The coalition will then spend two years analyzing the results to determine if they should spend more.

**Nothin's easy** — Robert Friedman, chairperson of the Corporation for Enterprise Development, says that savings program will be a chal-

lenge. According to Friedman, half of all U.S. households have less than \$1,000 in financial assets. A third of all households — and two thirds of Black households — have nothing in the bank and zero extra cash.

**...meanwhile** — With a lackluster bottom line, Occidental Oil imposed a takeback contract on its top dog Ray Irani. His base wage was trimmed from \$1.9 million to \$1.2 million, and he lost benefits, including a payment of \$35 million if he drops dead this year. In a gesture of appreciation for accepting the contract, Oxy gave him a one-time payment of \$95 million.

**Pragmatist** — In New Zealand, disclosure that up to five people with

criminal records had been recruited as cops in the past year sparked a debate at a Police Association meeting. The association president felt that life experience is important. In a tight situation, he said, he'd rather have "someone with a conviction for assault than a Greek and History graduate beside me."

**Them that has want** — "Top directors...boosted their remuneration by an average of 16 percent last year. New findings show that the pay of directors...rise by more than five times the rate of inflation...and went up four times faster than average earnings. — *Guardian*, London.

**GE finger caught in wringer** — Two years ago, GE unveiled a

"new" clothes washers trumpeted as a "Major Laundry Breakthrough." The key part, however, was a knockoff of one that Whirlpool developed nearly 20 years ago. Whirlpool's U.S. patent expired a few years back but GE also sold the machines in Canada where the patent still holds. Whirlpool lawyers are reportedly licking their chops.

**Mr. Big Nose** — Are you "wasting time" on the job? Are you not following company rules? Are you failing to work fast enough? Are you trying to start or join a union? A recent survey indicated 63 percent of U.S. companies are spying on their employees for answers to the above questions and many more.

## What were first steps after Bolshevik revolution?

The selection below describes some of the first steps taken by the Bolshevik-led soviet government that came to power 80 years ago in the October 1917 revolution in Russia. It is excerpted from the first volume of *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.* by Farrell Dobbs from the chapter titled, "First Workers' State." The book is copyright © 1980 by the Anchor Foundation, Inc. Reprinted with permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

BY FARRELL DOBBS

The welfare of the peasants and oppressed nations was bound up with the fate of the unfolding of the socialist revolution. As concrete action was taken to meet their needs, they could be induced to support broader measures required to safeguard these gains. To assure such an advance in fundamental outlook, however, these sections of the population had to be drawn into all aspects of the continuing struggle on an extensive scale against the exploiters and conditions of life they had created....

#### Distribution of land to poor peasants

Landed estates were expropriated with government authority and parceled under management of the peasants themselves. Primary responsibility for redistribution of such holdings was assigned to soviets of poor peasants, which were organized separate and apart from units representing better-off peasants. All categories of small farmers were encouraged to help increase the total agricultural output, and industrial aid was extended in the form of implements, fertilizer, etc., to help them do so.

While concentrating on the foregoing measures, a first step was taken toward development of a transition from small-peasant farming to socialization of the land. Where feasible, model collective farms were established and operated by soviets of agricultural laborers. Even though these units

could as yet constitute only a minor part of the economic complex, it was expected that they would increase as the farm equipment and supplies necessary for collectivization were produced, and the example they set would contribute to ultimate peasant recognition of the advantages inherent in mechanized, socialist agriculture.

High priority was also given to the exercise of self-determination by oppressed nationalities. This question involved a democratic right, not a principle of socialist organization. These nations had been denied the elementary democratic right of self-government by the Russian bourgeoisie after it took power in February 1917, and the violation could be corrected only under proletarian leadership....

Even a viable federated structure could exist, moreover, only through voluntary acceptance of fraternal association by the nations involved; the right of self-determination had to remain fully operative. For these reasons, the new Bolshevik-led government extended freedom of choice to all nationalities. They could either remain part of the Soviet Union with broad local autonomy, or peacefully secede from it should they so desire. In most cases they joined the federation of soviets.

Concerning the situation in industry, changes had already begun concurrent with the reappearance of soviets when the tsar was dethroned [in February 1917]. Organization of factory committees was initiated by the Petrograd workers and gradually extended elsewhere. These committees went beyond actions to improve wages, hours, and job conditions. They also took measures to alleviate shortages of goods and curb price gouging. Factory owners were forced to open their books for inspection by the workers. Capitalist profiteering was exposed. Supervision was expanded step by step over factory operations and the distribution of products.

Dual power of an economic character began to develop, with neither the workers nor the bosses having total control. It was not possible, though, to resolve this contradiction in the workers' favor at the factory level. A political obstacle had to be removed. At every turn the bourgeois Provisional Government sided with the bosses. The compromisers in the soviet leadership backed the government, and the workers found themselves stalemated.

#### Workers' control of industry

Although the October insurrection ended capitalist use of the government against the workers, it did not follow that they could achieve full economic supremacy in one stroke. More was involved than the seizure of capitalist industry by the soviet regime. For this step to become practical, the workers first needed to gain experience in administering the national economy while most factories remained temporarily capitalist owned.

To carry out the desired measures in the industrial sphere, Lenin explained, revolutionary democracy had to be applied so the masses could develop confidence in their own strength. In addition to their other functions, the trade unions had to become schools for managing the economy. The workers had to be schooled in the art of administration in handling overall management of production and distribution. Toward that end their control over the bosses had to be extended at once to every facet of industry and trade. Knowledge acquired through such activities would prepare them to administer the whole economic structure, and all capitalist enterprises



Soldiers, sailors, and workers listen to Bolshevik speech in Petrograd, March 1917.

could then be expropriated.

Quick action was taken by the soviet government to set this process into motion. By official decree workers' control was established over all industrial, commercial, banking, and agricultural enterprises employing five or more people. Committees elected by the workers in these enterprises were authorized to keep a constant eye on company books, records, inventories, etc.; ferret out secrets kept from them by the bosses; and see that all operations were conducted in the public interest.

Factory committees of this kind constituted the organizational nuclei for state regulation of the industrial economy. They became part of and subordinate to the trade unions in the various branches of industry. The unions, while independent, were in turn

responsible to the soviets, and subordinate to them on matters of planning and state policy. By means of this overall structural form, the workers in each factory could defend their immediate interests. Actions they took could be coordinated with the general policies required for the given branch of production, and all this could be done in a way that served the broad objectives of the working class as a whole.

Disputes with individual employers were handled by the factory committees. Where necessary they conducted strikes to enforce their demands. It was no longer possible, though, for the bosses to retaliate by using lockouts as a punitive weapon against the workers. The capitalists could do no more than appeal their cases to higher workers' bodies.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



October 27, 1972

NEW YORK — Although the New York State legislature does not begin its next session until January 1973, both sides in the struggle over the N.Y. abortion law are already preparing for battle.

In the defense of the right to abortion, the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) is sponsoring hearings on abortion in New York and other cities during the next two weeks.

New York State's law allows abortions up through the twenty-fourth week of pregnancy. Last spring antiabortion forces succeeded in forcing both the State Senate and the State Assembly to pass a bill calling for repeal of the liberalized law. Governor Nelson Rockefeller's veto of the bill preserved the right to abortion temporarily.

The two largest women's groups, the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the Women's Political Caucus, had thrown their energies into primary campaigns and did not mobilize their memberships to march on May 6. Some leaders in the women's movement, such as Betty Friedan, later expressed the belief that campaigning for legislators who "vote right" is the best way to win legal abortion.

Since then, the rejection of abortion rights planks at both the Democratic and Republican conventions has helped convince a number of abortion activists that

independent political action is necessary.



October 27, 1947

Large scale communal rioting in the Punjab has only slightly abated. A mass of Hindu, Sikh, and Moslem refugees are on the move. What is the basis of the riots?

The problem of the Punjab must be clearly separated from the rest of India. In dividing India, British imperialism, supported by both Hindu and Moslem feudal-capitalists, paid no attention to the nationalists as such. Artificially, the country was divided, severing indigenous language groups into different provinces. This operation was calculated with the object of dividing the country in order to keep the imperialist stranglehold. Thus, the Punjab, where Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs speak the same language with a unified economy, was divided into two provinces. Similarly the Bengal was partitioned, and the whole scheme was put into operation without voting of any kind.

In Bombay, sporadic riots admittedly engineered by the "Goondas" (contemptuous term for declassed elements) have been taking place since September, 1946. The city has had periods of curfew and under section 144 of the Indian Criminal Code, processions and demonstrations are banned. A Goonda Act has been passed with powers to extern and imprison people responsible for riots.



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# Support the Amtrak workers

The entire labor movement needs to get behind the 2,300 Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMW) members who are preparing for a possible strike against Amtrak. The workers who build and maintain the tracks, buildings, bridges, and electrical systems for the national passenger railway have gone two years without a general pay raise — an experience all too familiar to workers in many industries. Their demand is that Amtrak agree to wages and other contract terms on par with those reached last year between the BMW and other major railroads. As a number of workers and even some union officials point out, it's not the union's concern how the company will resolve its alleged operating deficit. That's the bosses' and the government's problem.

In response to this just fight, the rail barons and other capitalists are already trying to whip up panic among middle-class commuters and others over the possibility of a rail strike. With dire warnings about chaos along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, New Jersey governor Christine Whitman has been publicly urging the White House and Congress to take "extra steps to resolve the situation." This echoes Amtrak management's appeal to Congress to "prepare to take appropriate action to avoid disruption of

service which could cripple Amtrak operations." In other words, outlaw any strike action.

In fact the Clinton administration has already intervened in the dispute, invoking the Railway Labor Act August 21 to prohibit the BMW from striking for 60 days and impose a "presidential emergency board." Such government-appointed bodies are not neutral. Aside from a small wage raise, this board proposed sending all other issues to binding arbitration — which is the bosses' terrain.

A strong show of working-class solidarity for the BMW members is needed to win broader support for the rail workers' fight and counter the calculated hysteria Whitman and other cheerleaders of the employers are promoting as the strike deadline approaches. At the same time, the labor movement needs to demand that Washington keep its hands off the union, vigorously opposing the use of any antistrike legislation.

We urge our readers to get out to rail yards leading up to the October 22 deadline, to offer solidarity to the BMW workers, learn about their fight, and bring the facts and lessons of other working-class struggles reported in the *Militant* and recorded in Pathfinder books to rail workers who are preparing to resist Amtrak's austerity demands.

# All U.S. troops out of Korea!

The U.S. State Department recently announced it was donating \$5 million to the United Nations supposedly to provide medicines and other supplies to north Korea. This paltry sum is another slap in the face to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and adds to Washington's ongoing campaign of provocations against this workers state. In early October, U.S. troops conducted maneuvers along with south Korean forces near Seoul, specifically aimed at the DPRK. And on September 23 U.S. secretary of defense William Cohen announced an agreement stating that Tokyo would provide support for U.S. military operations in the event of a military confrontation in the region.

Washington has refused to accept negotiations with the DPRK that would include discussions on withdrawing 37,000 U.S. troops from south Korea, lifting economic sanctions, and sending a million tons of food aid to north Korea. The negotiations would conceivably establish a formal end to 1950 – 52 Korean War. Below are greetings to the Workers Party of Korea by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes on October 8, expressing support for the Korean people's refusal to submit to the dictates of the Clinton administration.



The National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party sends communist greetings on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of the founding of the Workers Party of Korea.

The Socialist Workers Party supports the Korean people

in face of the continued provocations by U.S. imperialism and its backers in Seoul. The recent war games carried out by Washington in collusion with south Korean forces underline the importance of the demand by the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that any genuine peace must include the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Korean peninsula.

This month we also celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the world's first socialist revolution, and the 30th anniversary of the fall in combat of Ernesto Che Guevara, who set an example of proletarian internationalism as part of the central leadership of the Cuban revolution. All these anniversaries are rich in lessons for what toilers the world over will be able to accomplish once again in fighting imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation as we enter the twenty-first century.

The Korean people's refusal to bend their knees in the fight for national reunification and sovereignty is an integral part of this worldwide resistance. We pledge to continue to tell the truth about your struggle, to demand that all U.S. troops and weapons get out of Korea, to demand unconditional food aid, and to work with all those fighting to advance the world struggle for national liberation and socialism.

Comradely,  
Jack Barnes  
National Secretary  
Socialist Workers Party

# Socialism is creation of new man

Continued from Page 8

and economic situation of the country at that time. But Lenin died almost immediately, and his successors did not make a correction in time. Che felt that introducing capitalist categories in socialist countries threw them off course, with all the consequences this brought for the formation of the new man and for society as a whole, including its effects on the system's superstructure. They did not promote the search for economic mechanisms appropriate to socialism, and arrived at a dead end, which would produce a return to capitalism. That was Che's assessment.

Q: Where did he say this?

A: In a still-unpublished manuscript he sent me attached to a letter, at the end of 1965, after the campaign in the Congo ended. In that analysis Che stated the following:

"The changes produced by the New Economic Policy, the NEP, have penetrated so deeply into the life of the Soviet Union that they have left their mark on this entire stage, and the results are discouraging. The capitalist superstructure has influenced, in a sharper and sharper way, the relations of production, and the conflicts provoked by the hybrid that the NEP was, are being resolved today in favor of the superstructure. There is a regression toward capitalism."

Q: Even so, other experiences accept a larger role for the market in the socialist economy. How would Che view what is happening in Cuba, for example?

A: The current moment is very different from the one we are analyzing in relation to the polemic on models of economic management in socialism. How do I picture Che? I picture him studying and obtaining a deeper theoretical understanding, doing a careful analysis of the phenomenon of globalization and all these backward ideas of neoliberalism. I picture him trying to give a practical solution to the extraordinary shortages and difficulties we

have in Cuba, while avoiding concessions of principle in the management of the economy that could bring disastrous consequences to our revolutionary process, as happened in the former Soviet Union.

There are concepts in Che's body of ideas that can and must be applied at the present time, and others that should be adapted to current conditions, which are very different than those existing then. And I believe Fidel is doing this: making indispensable changes to survive, because it would be absurd not to make them, but with no concessions of principle that would lead us toward reversing the progress we've obtained and the values we've achieved in developing a higher form of society.

Q: In light of everything that has happened in recent years, does history have any debt to Che?

A: If not a debt, then a certain commitment, a commitment that implies concrete actions by all sensible and honest persons in the world to appropriate the most valuable parts of his historical legacy. In turning himself into a model of the new man owing to his ideas and exceptional qualities, Che represented an essential point in the progress of humanity, in the search for a higher form of life for human beings.

Q: And does Che have any debt to history?

A: Che would have to respond to this. But if I am asked, I believe that Che was a man who was never satisfied, who always considered his contributions to be small. His plans and ideas were so ambitious and creative that I imagine he would feel a debt to history. Perhaps what would pain him most would be to not have continued in other countries the job he began in Cuba and left as an extraordinary heritage. He would feel it his debt, perhaps, not having seen the development of a new man on a broader scale, on a world scale, or at least, in Latin America. That was his dream.

# 'Militant' was never neutral on NAFTA

In his letter to the editor in last week's *Militant*, Roger Annis takes issue with the column I wrote on imperialist trade pacts that appeared in the August 25 issue.

He argues that I failed to set the record straight on the *Militant's* coverage of pacts such as the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The *Militant's* stance, Annis contends, was "neutral." The paper, he says, "argued why workers should reject any opposition to these pacts that would be based on a nationalist, pro-capitalist attitude. But it stopped short of arguing that workers should oppose these pacts and along what lines."

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

I don't intend to defend every jot and tittle the *Militant* has ever written on this in the 69 years it has been published, or dispute whether there have been articles that weren't totally clear. But I disagree that the general orientation of the *Militant* on imperialist trade deals has been neutral. That would be an unpardonable departure from 150 years' experience of the working-class vanguard since Karl Marx and Frederick Engels first got involved in the workers' movement and began writing on this question.

Even the three articles Annis cites to make his case refute him. For example, the Dec. 12, 1994, editorial points out that GATT will greatly benefit "a majority of the U.S. employing class." It punctured the myth propagated by the ruling rich that GATT would solve unemployment and other evils facing working people. It further argued that President Clinton "promoted the deal as a great 'liberalization' of world trade. But like all trade agreements it contains a multitude of protectionist measures and contains the seeds of future trade wars between Washington and its competitors in Europe and Asia."

Following this denouncement of the GATT agreement, the *Militant* editors sharply criticized both the ultra-rightist and liberal opposition to GATT, both of which were "draped in the same nationalist cloth."

The other two pieces Annis refers to make similar points.

I would also refer Annis and other readers to two articles that appeared in the September 27 and October 4, 1991, *Militant*. Both were later reprinted as the final two parts of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s*. The first article focused on why workers and working farmers should reject the ruling class' "free trade" campaigns and pacts. The second centered on what's wrong with the rulers efforts to construct a "protectionist fortress" and the treachery of labor officials and farm leaders joining this campaign. Articles by Marx and Engels were quoted to help ground the arguments on trade in the continuity of the revolutionary workers movement. The conclusion of the 1991 articles: "Neither capitalist protectionism nor free trade offers a solution to the price-cost squeeze facing the big majority of working farmers. Moreover, both perspectives draw working farmers into tying their fate to either 'free trade' capitalists or the 'protectionist capitalists' — all in the name of defending 'American' interests." Had there been representatives of the working class in Congress when GATT, NAFTA, or any other trade pact came before the body for ratification, what conclusion would they have drawn from the *Militant* articles referred to here as well as many other similar pieces? Would they think they should abstain and not vote on the proposed trade deal? Or would they cast their votes against it? It seems to me that the *Militant's* stance would clearly indicate taking the latter course.

There's no question that the preponderance of the *Militant's* coverage has been to explain what was wrong with the chauvinist campaign conducted by the labor officialdom in opposition to NAFTA and other such trade accords. This is where the greatest confusion is to be found among workers and working farmers. It's where there is the most pressure to get caught up in supporting one wing of the capitalist rulers and their politicians.

Part of explaining the need for the working class to chart a course independent of the capitalist parties and present its own alternatives to the deepening crisis of capitalism requires refuting in detail the erroneous course of attempting to protect "American jobs." This also means taking on progressives, including some who call themselves socialist, who argue that class-conscious and revolutionary-minded workers should become the left-wing, the internationalist voice of the opposition movement to NAFTA and other accords.

Admittedly, it is a challenge to oppose imperialist trade deals from the framework of projecting an independent, working-class political course and not get sucked into or tail end the labor officials' nationalist campaign. Rather than tackling this task with the vigor and thoroughness required, it may be easier to take refuge in the notion that the trade pacts are of no concern to workers and argue for neutrality. This, however, is not the course the *Militant* has followed.

— DOUG JENNESS



# Maritime workers score a victory in Australia

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

Sydney in 2000 with union labor. It was reported September 22 that OOCL had reached a deal with the NSW state government and the MUA. The federal government has an-

community, and fax to union offices and other supporters around the country. Strikers have been on union-organized speaking tours to the central North Island, where the biggest forests and processing plants are located.

These efforts to reach out have won the strikers wide support. As well as support from throughout the WIU, solidarity has been received from the Watersiders Union and unions in Japan. Workers at the big Glenbrook steel mill in Auckland heard a report on the JNL strike at their regular union meeting, and made donations from union funds, as well as taking an additional collection at the meeting. Supporters groups in Whangarei and Auckland have collected and sent food, and some local farmers have donated beasts to feed the strikers. Leaders of local Maori tribal groups have been invited to meetings with the strikers, and have offered support.



Workers in Cairns, Australia, celebrate win against union busting.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

**SYDNEY, Australia** — The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) won a significant victory on the Cairns docks in north Queensland September 18, when International Purveyors Inc. (IPI) backed down from using nonunion labor to load the *Java Sea*, a ship bound for the Freeport mine in Indonesia. All 27 workers at Northern Shipping and Stevedoring Services, which runs the Cairns port and held the contract for loading Freeport vessels, were fired September 12. Three days later, IPI took over the contract with plans to use nonunion labor to load ships.

MUA members from Sydney, Brisbane, and Townsville traveled to Cairns to join picket lines of around 60 unionists at the Cairns wharf and outside IPI. Crucial support came from the International Transport Workers Federation, the international umbrella organization, which had affiliate members on board the Freeport vessel, *Java Sea*, and threatened IPI with placing a ban on the vessel entering the port.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* lamented the union's win, with a front-page headline: "Round one to unions," accompanied by photos of celebrating unionists.

In another blow to the federal government, Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) will be opening its new container terminal in

nounced that it will pursue attempts to break the MUA, by directing that nonunion labor be used by Defence Maritime Services in its new contract servicing the Australian navy.

### Board mill strikers win support in New Zealand

**KAITIA, New Zealand** — At the end of September, as they began their sixth week on strike, 88 percent of the 195 workers at the Juken Nissho Limited (JNL) board mill here voted in favor of continuing their fight. The Juken Nissho Triboard mill is the biggest employer in this small town in the far north of New Zealand. It processes timber from local forests into a high-quality particle board. Most of the workers belong to the Wood Industries Union (WIU), but members of the Engineers Union and Northern Distribution Union are also on strike.

The strike is in response to the company's demands for cuts in the contract conditions, including a reduction in overtime rates from time-and-a-half and double time down to a maximum time-and-a-quarter. Service allowances and annual leave would also be slashed in the company's plan.

Keith Shadbolt, a worker from the plant who chairs the strikers' welfare and finance committees, told the *Militant*, "We are rostered on the picketline in 12-hour shifts. We also have three all-up meetings per week, to which families of the workers are invited. We have committees to deal with food collection, finding casual work for strikers, publicity, a women's committee, and so on." The strike committee issues a news bulletin, of which they distribute 2,500 copies in the local

### UNITE members fight for contract in Miami

**MIAMI** — As "What do we want?" resounded from a bullhorn the 75 pickets outside Medi-Transportation chanted back "Contract." Cheers went up when a UPS driver honked his horn and waved.

Amed Santana, a 24-year-old recent immigrant from Cuba, had worked at Medi-Transportation for a year and a half before being fired six months ago for union organizing. He said several months ago 18 of the 24 drivers at Medi-Transportation had voted for the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in a union representation election; four voted against. Since then the company has refused to seriously negotiate a contract and not only fired Santana but some of the other drivers who were involved in the union organizing.

Angel Dominguez from UNITE told a rally following the picket that after the union election victory the company hardly talked to the union. In the last week, however, since actions like picket line began, the company had called several times.

Members of the United Steel-

### Concession contract passes at Deere & Co.

**CHICAGO** — United Auto Workers (UAW) officials announced October 6 that union members had ratified a new contract with the agricultural and construction equipment manufacturer Deere & Co. by more than a 74 percent majority. The six-year agreement covers some 9,000 members of 11 UAW locals in six states.

Over the course of the contract, current Deere employees will receive six lump-sum payments in lieu of raises. These payments, equal to three percent of an employee's income, will not be rolled into the base pay rate.

The contract also establishes a second tier, with deep concessions in pay and benefits for all newly hired employees. The second-tier workers will never achieve parity with the wages and benefits of the current Deere employees. According to the company, beginning employees will receive base pay ranging from \$10.47 — \$17 an hour.

Under the old contract, new employees received between \$14.42 and \$22.02.

According to the UAW contract summary, the wage scale of the new hires will increase by one percent for each year of service. A new employee hired in at the lowest pay level will start at \$10.46 an hour. After five years of service, this base pay will have risen to \$10.99.

With the new contract in hand, Deere has begun hiring new workers at the lower pay scale. At the UAW Local 450 ratification vote in Ankeny, Iowa, a worker with 37 years' seniority at Deere told the *Militant*, "They just want to get rid of us older workers and hire young workers for a lot less pay."

Outside Local 838's ratification meeting, Tom Swale, a worker at the Tractor Assembly plant in Waterloo, Iowa, said, "Since the last contract I have worked 9 — 10 hours every day, and turned down Saturday work. You only work an eight-hour day if they run out of parts. Now, the starting wage for new hires is like when I started in the 1960s."

Marnie Kennedy in Sydney; James Robb, a member of the Meat Workers Union in Auckland, New Zealand; Ernie Mailhot, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Miami; and Cappy Kidd, member of United Auto Workers Local 890 in Chicago, contributed to this week's column.

## LETTERS

### Write more on Scotland

After considering the *Militant's* coverage of the vote on devolution in Scotland (September 22 and 29 issues), it seems to me that perhaps there is a contradiction in the Communist League's (CL) position in that election. I was hoping that the *Militant* might consider developing a discussion on this very important point. My question regards the CL's position that it is "in favor of a Scottish parliament, although not in favor of granting it the right to tax workers even more."

The September 11 vote challenged revolutionaries to figure out what position would advance, as the CL explained, "working-class unity...through the self-determination of all oppressed nationalities."

But given the relationship of forces and the actual conditions of the class struggle today, a Scottish parliament coming out of this election would be a bourgeois parliament. Are revolutionary workers for this or against? Clearly, we should be for it, even if the new government is not socialist. Why? Again, as the CL explained, because devolution advances "the break-up of the institutions of the imperialist state."

So, if this is true, why would the CL also take the position that it is "not in favor of granting [a Scottish parliament] the right to tax workers even more?" If there is to be a real parliament, it will have the power to tax. Along with many other aspects of a bourgeois state, the class inequalities that become clearer and



clearer will be part of the engine that fuels the development of a socialist wing among fighters for Scottish self-determination.

Does not the CL's position put a barrier to joining them in their current struggle? While there was a ten percent discrepancy between those voting for devolution and those voting to empower the new parliament with taxation, it seems that the big majority of people in Scotland did not make this distinction. Shouldn't we keep our eyes on how they view the fight right now? Isn't that the best position from which to make our deeper points on where the struggle must go to succeed?

To do otherwise, it seems to me, would be to contradict the stance the *Militant* has taken towards other

developments in the struggle for national liberation. For example, no one opposed the right of the new South African government emerging from the struggle to overthrow apartheid the right to tax. Of course the question of how taxes would be formulated constituted a new battleground within the national democratic revolution. In another case, the Zionist state of Israel seeks to leave the Palestine National Authority crippled by strictly controlling the flow of tax revenues.

Perhaps there are some differences in the case of the devolution referendum in Scotland that make it hard for a distant observer to understand the CL's point. But I would appreciate some more discussion on this as it seems to be a very impor-

tant part of how communists today relate to critical struggles of this kind.

Pete Seidman  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

### Rail workers' fight

I spent an hour today talking with a group of Amtrak track workers at Sunnyside rail yard in Queens, New York. They have been working without a contract since 1995. Their union, the Brotherhood of Maintenance and Way Employees (BMWE), will be free to legally strike Amtrak on October 22.

On August 21 of this year President William Clinton ordered a Presidential Emergency Board (PEB) to forestall an impending strike by the BMWE, as all attempts at coming to a contract agreement had been exhausted. The board's findings, however, are not binding — and wonder of wonders it favored labor. The PEB ruled in favor of wage increases of 3.5 percent per year over the course of the contract, recommending a signing bonus and retroactive pay. The men I spoke with were pleased with the board's decision in every aspect. It was their opinion that given the high cost of living in the Northeast, the terms proposed would give them some degree of parity with fellow workers employed by other railroads within the region.

Unfortunately Amtrak President Thomas Downs felt differently, stating that if Amtrak was bound by the

PEB's decision, the short fall of funds would require shutting the company down. What, I asked, was the likelihood of a strike? To a man they agreed that if the company refuses to abide by the board's decision they will vote to strike. Several workers expressed doubts that the union leadership will actually call the strike.

A common theme runs through our conversation, the company has money for new trucks, cell phones, pagers and whatnot but no money for a pay raise for the workers. And work they do at times up to 16 hours straight in all kinds of weather, on bridges and mainline tracks traversed by 125 mph metroliners where a misstep gets you killed in the blink of an eye.

To a man they agree on one thing; they must have the full support of the other unions here at Amtrak if a strike is to be effective and in this respect I totally agree. The recent outcome of the United Parcel strike has shown workers that strikes can be won and gains made with unity.

Jeff Payne,  
New York, New York

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.



## Worker's death fuels outrage over cuts in New Zealand health system

BY AGNES SULLIVAN  
AND PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — "He was drowned by three top judges and two clinicians. He drowned internally, that's how he died." Said Jim Shortland as he described the death of his uncle, Rau Williams, of kidney failure in the early hours of Saturday, October 11. Shortland had helped lead a fight to have his uncle's "death sentence" — the refusal by health authorities to give him lifesaving treatment — lifted. The struggle, covered day-by-day in the media, proceeded alongside a series of protests around the country against health cutbacks.

Williams died after he was taken off dialysis treatment — which cleans the blood of impurities — on September 17, by decision of doctors working for Northland Health, the government-appointed body responsible for the provision of health services in the north of the country. Northland Health's decision was backed by the High Court, the Court of Appeal, and the Human Rights Commission, each of which turned down Williams's appeals.

Northland Health insisted that "clinical reasons" lay behind its decision, citing his "mild dementia," and claiming that Williams did not fit the medical criteria for either home or hospital dialysis. Martin Searle, the head of Middlemore Hospital's renal service, said the guidelines were set because of limits on government funding.

Williams, aged 64, was Maori and a former freezing worker (meatpacker). His kidney failure was associated with diabetes, from which Maori suffer at five times the rate of non-Maori. So far this year "Whangarei Hospital has assessed 10 patients as unsuitable for its end-stage kidney failure treatment, with most of them Maori," according to the *Christchurch Press*. With continued dialysis treatment Williams was expected to live several more years.

After the Life Care Trust offered a dialysis machine to treat Williams, an Australian renal specialist flew to New Zealand to examine him to assess his suitability. Whangarei hospital refused the doctor access. Around 200 people marched in Whangarei on October 3 supporting Williams's right to treatment. Williams himself took part in his wheelchair. The somber mood of the protest was punctuated by chants in the Maori language.

In the wake of the widely expressed outrage at Northland Health's, two members of parliament in the National Party/New Zealand First coalition government, Maori Affairs Minister Tau Henare of New Zealand First and John Banks of the National Party, felt compelled to protest the decision. The National Party Minister of Health, William English, backed Northern Health, as did Labour Party leader Helen Clark.

### Impact of cuts in health service

Hospital care in New Zealand has traditionally been provided through a public health system, and has been free. Since the 1970s, however, government pressure to reduce health spending has led to a deterioration in the service. Major steps to cut hospital budgets were taken in 1983. Eight years later the National Party government took further steps towards a competitive, market-oriented health system. A Ministry of Health report written last December stated that real health spending had fallen 10 percent since 1988 — 89.

On October 11 the *New Zealand Herald* published a summary of a confidential report by doctors at Waikato Hospital on the impact of the level of funding available to hospitals in the Waikato region from 1997 to 1999.

"Hospital funding cuts will result in early death, blindness, deafness, undiagnosed cancer..." stated the summary. "[F]uture patients will be denied semi-urgent and rou-

tine surgery." Heart patients "can expect heart damage and shortened life.... There will be no coronary artery bypass grafts, valve replacements, or congenital heart surgery.... People who would have benefited from surgery for limb complications face amputations.... There will be a reduction in dialysis treatment."

As reported in the *Herald*, the report warns Health Minister English "that it is pointless relying on private services to fill the gap in services, because a high proportion of children and elderly on waiting lists are from lower-income families."

The private health sector, however, is still in its relative infancy in this country. After Williams was refused dialysis, information emerged that this treatment is available only in public facilities. Around the country, waiting lists have lengthened in the face of inadequate funds for surgery. Health Minister English plans to implement a booking system in July next year to reduce the queues, calling this the "most honest" rationing the country has seen. Points will be awarded to patients on the basis of "clinical and social criteria," according to an article in the October 12 *Sunday Star Times*.

The government has also recently announced a "get-tough plan" to cut drug spending. The government advisory body,

the National Health Committee, suggests in a recent report that "patient charges could be increased to pay for more health care." The committee also asks, "When should we desist with publicly-funded interventions that add to pain and suffering, and prepare instead for a peaceful or 'good' death?"

### More for-profit medicine

Amid the controversy, government ministers have been urging a greater role for private, profit-making medical ventures. Prime Minister James Bolger used a speech at the opening of a new \$25 million clinic in South Auckland on October 8 to declare that "we must stop the nonsense that seeks to portray public health care as good and private health care as wrong."

The chairman of the major private health provider in New Zealand, the Southern Cross health insurance company, Hylton Le Grice, told the company's annual general meeting on October 9 that the public health system would in the future be limited to emergency services and major, expensive, or vital surgery. Southern Cross raised premiums an average 12 percent a year over the past three years.

More than 5,000 people protested in Whakatane on October 2 against a proposal to stop non-urgent surgery at the Whakatane

hospital. Some 2,000 people also rallied in nearby Tauranga, and a protest meeting was organized in the South Island city of Nelson. In September, Southern Health announced plans to stop providing services to the district of Gore. A march to protest the decision is planned in Invercargill in October.

Indignation over proposed cuts to public health services in Otago drew 7,000 people to a September 19 protest march in the southern city of Dunedin, in one of the largest protests seen in the city in years. The demonstration was organized by the Public Service Association, the chief union among public employees, and the Nurses' Organisation, the main nurses' union. In Auckland, the Nurses' Organisation scheduled a strike ballot later in October. Contract talks broke down after Auckland Healthcare refused base-rate pay rises. Management's stance falls in line with a government letter ordering hospitals to freeze pay unless they can shed staff or slash wages elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Shortland said that Williams's medical file should be open to the public, and vowed to help others caught in the same predicament as his uncle. "If you're denied dialysis contact me," he said. "I'm pretty much sure we'll come to your aid — no one has the right to deny life."

## Thousands of teachers, youth protest attacks on education in Ontario

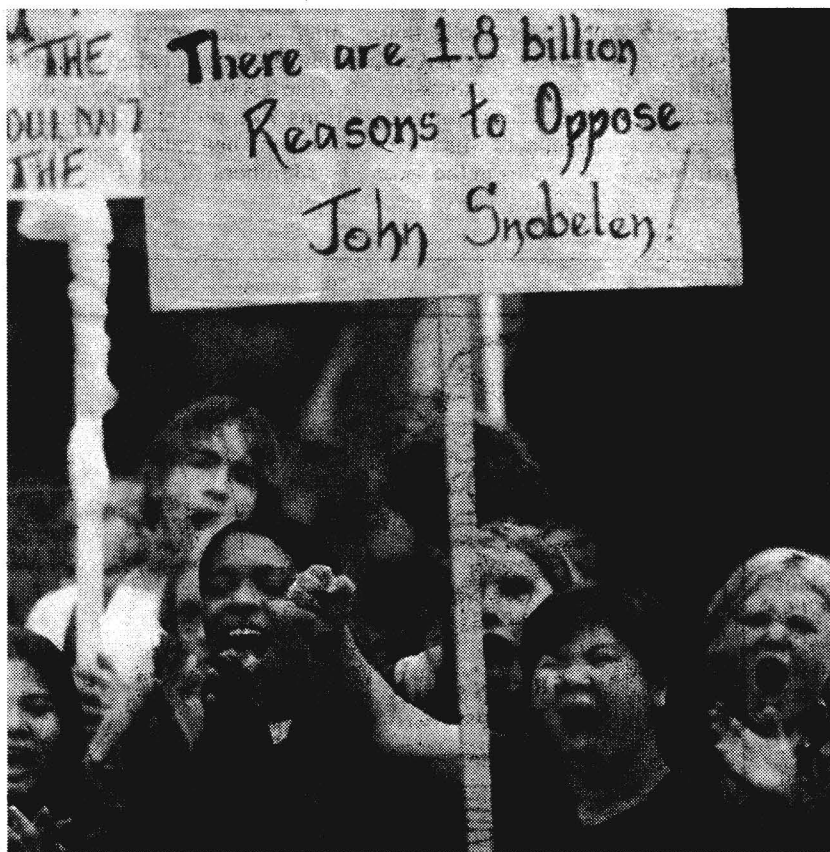
BY MICK O'DONNELL

TORONTO — Under the slogan, "We won't back down," tens of thousands of Ontario's 126,000 elementary and secondary school teachers have taken part in rallies and demonstrations to force the Ontario government to withdraw Bill 160 — legislation that cuts public education, would result in the layoff of up to 10,000 teachers, and slashes \$1 billion out of the \$14 billion provincial education budget. At the same time, high school students around the province have been walking out of school in demonstrations of support to the teachers and against Bill 160.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation, the umbrella organization for the five teachers' unions, has vowed to shut the province's 5,169 schools attended by over 2 million students in an "illegal" strike if the government doesn't back down. The teachers' mobilization, backed by the labor movement as a whole, has put the government on the defensive. Education Minister John Snobelen, who has earned the hatred of teachers, shifted to a new cabinet portfolio.

On October 6, some 24,000 teachers and their supporters filled every seat in Maple Leaf Gardens here, while 4,000 more who could not get in took over the street in front of the ice-hockey arena. That same night 7,000 rallied in Peterborough, and the following night another 8,000 in Hamilton. The teachers sang and waved placards and flags, listening to speeches from various union officials. Canadian Labor Congress president Robert White got a standing ovation after pledging the support of the CLC's 2.3 million members to the fight.

Construction workers, nurses, hospital



Students at six Toronto-area schools staged walkouts in October to back teachers protesting cuts spearheaded by Education Minister John Snobelen.

workers, provincial government workers, steelworkers, and others were at the rally. Representatives of the Liberal and union-based New Democratic Party also attended.

"The government wants to take away our right to strike," said Bob Waters, a teacher at Humber Collegiate Institute. "They want a total say over teaching conditions and what gets taught. It's an extreme attack against democratic rights." Waters is a veteran of the 1975 strike of secondary school teachers that forged the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation as a union.

"We can't vote, but we can make ourselves heard by supporting our teachers," said Robin Bryce, 15. Bryce was among the students who walked out of the West End Alternative school to attend the rally.

At Woburn Collegiate Institute 300 stu-

dents lined the road outside the school chanting "we won't back down," to protest Bill 160. "Our math class has 45 people in a portable" classroom trailer, Woburn student Tom Papuckoski, 16, said. "Teachers can't get to you if you want to ask a question."

Bill 160 would transfer decisions over class size, and curriculum from the teachers' unions and school boards to the provincial government; slash class preparation time for teachers, and increase the number of days students and teachers spend in class per year. It would also allow the use of non-certified instructors in some subjects. Similar teachers' struggles are taking place across the country. In early October about 14,000 teachers demonstrated outside the provincial legislature in Alberta demanding more money for education.

In Ontario, the teachers' struggle comes on the heels of a victory by the labor movement against Bill 136. Demonstrations and one-day protest strikes organized in "Days of Action" over the past year forced the government to drop antistrike provisions for government and hospital workers.

The next Day of Action against the austerity drive of the Conservative provincial government will be in the auto assembly center of Windsor October 17.

It takes place in the context of the countdown towards a possible teachers' strike, discussion by hospital workers who are members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees over whether to strike against hospital closures, and an impending national strike by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.