

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

L. A. meeting protests visa denial to Cuban general

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Cubans celebrate Che, fellow combatants

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

SANTA CLARA, Cuba — “We come not to bid farewell to Che and his heroic comrades, but to welcome them,” Cuban president Fidel Castro told an overflow crowd in the Ernesto Che Guevara Plaza here October 17. “I see Che and his men as reinforcements, as a detachment of invincible fighters, who this time include not only Cubans but Latin Americans coming to fight alongside us and write new pages of history and glory.”

He added, “Che was a genuine communist — and today he remains an example, a model of a revolutionary and a communist.”

Guevara is inseparable from the Cuban revolution, Castro emphasized, and his political values and principles become more

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Socialist candidate backs rail workers in N.Y. debate

BY RYAN KELLY

NEW YORK — “The Socialist Workers Party advocates that working people chart a political course independent from the Democrats and Republicans, the twin parties of war, racism, and economic depression, by using our own collective power through our unions and actions in the streets,” stated Olga Rodríguez, the Socialist Workers Party’s candidate for mayor of New York City, during a debate with Democratic candidate Ruth Messinger and the Republican incumbent Rudolph Giuliani. The debate, which was sponsored by the Campaign Finance Board, was televised live on New York 1 cable television and on WNYC radio.

Rodríguez, who works as a baggage handler for Northwest Airlines at Newark airport and is a member of the International Association of Machinists, explained that the working class needs a voice in the elec-

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California poultry strikers demand raise

2,300 workers reject company’s ‘best offer’

BY OSBORNE HART

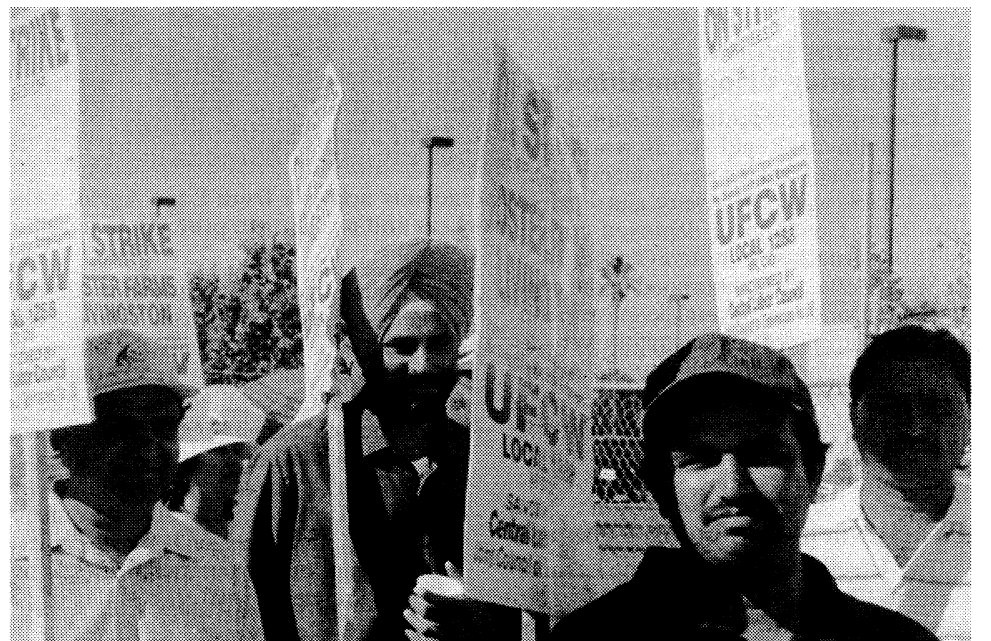
LIVINGSTON, California — Workers at the Foster Farms chicken slaughtering plant struck the country’s largest poultry operation here October 6 after rejecting the company’s offer.

Members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1288 — 2,300 strong — set up a 24-hour picket line at the sprawling plant, 113 miles from San Francisco in Merced County, in the agriculture producing Central Valley.

The workforce of chicken pluckers, cutters, and packers is about 50 percent Mexican, 25 percent are Punjabi, and a smaller percentage of workers are Blacks or Asian, including Hmong and Vietnamese.

Sukh Purewal, who is Punjabi, has worked at the plant for 15 years. In that time “my pay has gone from \$6.70 an hour to \$8.08,” he said. “Near Christmas time, when they are running turkeys instead of chickens, we may only get 22 to 30 hours work a week. It’s the same thing again in the spring.”

Seventy-seven percent of the ranks rejected Foster Farms’ “final offer,” against the union’s bargaining committee’s recommendation. The 150 mechanics, who earn more than \$4 an hour more than production



Militant/Osborne Hart

United Food and Commercial Workers picket Foster Farms poultry plant October 18

workers, are standing firm with the strike, despite company pressure to divide them from their fellow strikers.

“They want us to work like slaves,” José Castro explained. “This is the ‘90s. It was

the 1800s when people had to work like slaves for free.”

The company’s five-year offer includes a 1.5 percent yearly raise — 65 cents for the

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Thousands say, ‘Clinton go home’ during his tour in Latin America

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

“Fuera Clinton” (Clinton go home) read the lead banner carried by workers protesting the U.S. president’s arrival in Argentina. In a time-honored tradition, workers, peasants, and young people from Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela greeted William Clinton with protest marches and street demonstrations throughout his tour of the three Latin American countries. The week-long trip, an unusual one for the U.S. president, began October 12. It was designed to shore up trade pacts, spur austerity measures aimed against the working class in South America, and deepen Washington’s domination in the region.

In Caracas, Venezuela, Clinton’s first stop, protesters spray-painted “Millions for banks — hunger for the people” and “Raise the general salary” outside the National Pantheon, the building where the U.S. president spoke. During his sparsely attended speech October 13, Clinton praised Venezuelans for accepting austerity measures and said he “cared” about their future. A *Washington Post* article the next day, however, questioned whether the “feeling was mutual.” Some 80 percent of Venezuela’s more than 20 million inhabitants live in poverty, according to the government’s estimates.

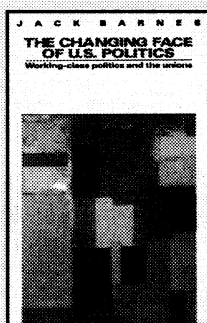
On October 14 dozens of Brazilian activists met Clinton on his arrival at the Foreign Ministry building in Brasilia chanting, “Clinton go home!” and “Imperialist Yankee!” Some protesters burned an effigy of the U.S. president. After the meeting with legislators, demonstrators bombarded Clinton’s U.S. embassy-bound limousine with manure. Many were angry at a state-

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Ecuadorans halt oil transport

Oil workers in Ecuador paralyzed production at Petro Ecuador's eight oil wells in the Amazonian region after they took over the first pumping station in early October. The strikers halted oil transport all over the country as they closed highways and air strips linking the Amazon province to the rest of the country.

The workers have occupied the oil wells there for more than 10 days, reducing daily output by 15 percent. Amazonians are demanding among other things that the government repair and build roads and bridges there, and that it give wage increases to government-employed workers. Meanwhile, the teachers union workers are also on strike demanding a pay hike.

Dominicans protest deteriorating living conditions

Demonstrations continue to spread in the Dominican Republic, as working people demand that the government provide potable water, electricity, and repair the roads. Government-deployed cops and troops attacked protesters October 14 in Villa Mella, a neighborhood in the capital Santo Domingo. Several people were injured and dozens of demonstrators were detained. In another battle, 21-year-old Adolfo Jiménez was killed — shot eight times — by the cops, reported local residents in the eastern town of Monte Plata, who were on the scene during the shooting.

Israeli warplanes bomb Lebanon

Two Israeli warplanes flew into Lebanon October 17, and in two passes fired four air-to-surface missiles, hitting the base of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, some 10 miles from Beirut. Tel Aviv said the attacks were aimed at a weapons storage facility allegedly in the area. Palestinian guerrillas have been fighting to push the 1,500 Israeli troops out of Lebanon, who occupy 10 percent of their land.

Saudi gov't attacks immigrants

After final warnings were issued by the Saudi Arabian interior ministry October 15,



Indigenous activists from Lago Agrio, Ecuador, marched to Quito in early October, joining workers and peasants in protests demanding a popular assembly and constitutional reforms.

thousands of foreign-born workers in that country — Indian, Pakistani, Filipino, and Egyptian — are lining embassy offices to avoid arrest, fines of up to \$27,000, and possible jailing. Saudi bosses who hire or accommodate "illegal" immigrants also face stiff penalties. More than 700,000 undocumented workers have immigrated to Saudi Arabia seeking jobs. Several of the embassies asked for an extension before the crackdown began, but government officials rejected the request.

U.S. sanctions on Iran boomerang

The Clinton administration faces a dilemma as the Russian oil company Gazprom, the French energy company Total SA, and the Malaysian company Petronas have refused to back away from a \$2 billion oil deal with Tehran. This move violates the U.S. Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, which calls on Washington to impose sanctions on any country doing business with energy indus-

tries in either of the two countries that exceeds \$20 million dollars. Gazprom has defied Washington's threats saying that the profit to be made outweighs "those incurred by sanctions against us."

If Washington severs any business deals with Gazprom, this would pave the way for more investments in the Russian firm by its imperialist rivals in Europe. The Clinton administration's efforts to isolate Tehran could cripple a \$1 billion investment in Gazprom by the Wall Street giant Goldman, Sachs & Co. for a major pipeline project already under construction in Russia.

Rome makes deal for stability

On October 15 Italian prime minister Romano Prodi, who had resigned a week earlier, struck a deal with Fausto Bertinotti, the leader of the Communism Refoundation Party (RC). Prodi is seeking stability for his government, which collapsed when the RC backed away from supporting the package of austerity measures that he says are needed to get Rome in shape to enter the European Monetary Union.

The agreement allows the government to raise the "early retirement" age from 52 to 57 over the next several years while exempting "blue collar" workers from this "reform." Rome also scrapped the idea it floated of paying pensions based on the average wage of a worker over the duration of work life, instead of at final wage levels. Some union officials were poised to accept the so-called pension reforms, but Bertinotti is posturing for a confrontation with the regime against the pension cuts, as well as pressing for legislation to introduce a 35-hour work week.

Hungary: no foreign ownership

The Constitutional Court of Hungary on

October 14 ruled against opening up the country to foreign ownership of agricultural land, sending Budapest into urgent negotiations to attempt to reverse the decision, which was taken just before a scheduled vote on Hungary's membership in NATO. An October 15 *Financial Times* article described the court ruling as "an embarrassing setback for the ruling coalition." The Hungarian parliament failed to reach a compromise that would avert a delay of the NATO referendum.

Meanwhile, the land question "is being taken as an important test" of whether Budapest is ready to enter the European Union, according to the *Financial Times*. Earlier this year the government introduced a law that allowed foreign-or domestic-owned Hungarian businesses to own up to 740 acres of agricultural land. In August, main opposition parties organized a petition against foreign land ownership to force a referendum.

Siberian energy workers strike

Some 1,500 machine operators struck the Chitaenergo company power plant October 16 demanding payment on the \$2.5 million owed to them in back wages.

Most of the maintenance and repair workers had gone out three days earlier. The workers at Chitaenergo provide electricity for close to half of the 2 million people in the Chita region in Russia.

U.S. environmental laws lifted

The California government has dumped laws protecting endangered species from capitalist expansion September 26, and adopted a plan that merely seeks "compensation" for the damages the companies cause to wildlife. This course, summed up in two bills signed into law by Republican governor Pete Wilson got bipartisan support. Wilson said the laws struck a "sensible balance" between industrial development and the protections of threatened species. The new laws only address compensation — that will usually mean providing "environmentally valuable" land somewhere else — for the actual loss of a species. There are no provisions for habitat destruction, which can cause long-term damage or extinction to rare plant and animal species.

Dairy farmers face crisis

In New York State, the crisis of overproduction, and government's moves to cut subsidies threatens to put 1,000 of the state's 9,000 dairy farmers out of business. Connecticut commissioner of agriculture Shirley Ferris said, "Dairy farmers are getting the same amount for their milk as they did 10 years ago, but the cost of everything they have to buy has quadrupled." Dairy farmers are disappearing. Since 1987 the number of dairy farmers in New York has dropped from 14,500. The flooding of milk in the market also meant a 14 cent loss per gallon in sales for dairy farmers.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Defend affirmative action

The University of California administration has taken the lead in attacking affirmative action. Students there, however, are fighting these assaults. The 'Militant' covers the ongoing struggle of the oppressed for equal rights and opportunities.

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Adams: 'British gov't is the cause of conflict in Ireland'

BY PAUL DAVIES
AND DEBRA JACOBS

MANCHESTER, England — "We want you to be the last British prime minister with jurisdiction in Ireland," Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams told British prime minister Anthony Blair. The exchange took place October 13, during the first meeting between a British prime minister and a Sinn Fein leader since London imposed the partition of Ireland in 1921. "From our point of view the biggest cause of the conflict is British government involvement in our country," Adams went on to explain.

Following the meeting Blair was jostled by Unionist supporters, angry that he had met with Adams. The prime minister had to abandon his planned walk through a predominantly Protestant area in east Belfast.

Despite the claims of the Unionist protesters that Blair is a "traitor," the British government makes clear that it will try to use the all-party talks to bolster the "union" of Britain and Northern Ireland. In an interview in the *Irish News* Adams stated, "For the British government 'consent' [of the Unionists] is the last refuge; a camouflage behind which it is attempting to conceal the reality... the legislature, courts, and Armed Forces Act in every conceivable way to maintain the Union."

Evidence of this reality can be seen in the stepped-up harassment by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) of nationalists and the expansion and reinforcement of army bases. This has been met by resistance of Sinn Fein Youth, who have organized hundreds of young people to demonstrate outside RUC barracks in Belfast in recent weeks. The demonstrators demanded the release of Irish political prisoners and the disbandment of the RUC. Sunday drivers and mass goers honked their horns in support, as youth climbed the barracks's metal guards and placed Irish tricolors on them.

Going into the talks, the British government presented a "framework document," signed jointly with the Irish government, that clearly reflects its determination to cling onto Northern Ireland. The document proposes the election of a new Northern Ireland Assembly and commits the Irish government to changing its constitution to renounce its territorial claim to any part of Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein documents argue that ending the union is the only way "to create viable conditions in which the people of Ireland can find agreement on the exercise of national self-determination without external interference.... An internal six-county arrangement cannot work."

During the meeting with Blair, Sinn Fein negotiator Martin McGuinness demanded an inquiry into the killing of 14 unarmed civil rights protesters in Derry in 1972 by the British army. The British government has begun to hint that it may issue an apology for Bloody Sunday. Tony Doherty of the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign said, "It appears that the British government is happy to follow the apology option. We have never campaigned for an apology, nor never will. How can you apologize for murder? We are campaigning for justice."

"Despite new evidence which emerged last year, successive British governments have failed to admit responsibility for Bloody Sunday," said Enda Finlay of the Bloody Sunday March Organising Committee. By pointing to the findings of the whitewashed Widgery inquiry carried out at the time, "they have actively suppressed the truth," she declared. The opinion of some ruling class politicians towards British rule in Ireland was reflected in comments made by Conservative Member of Parliament (MP) Alan Clark. Speaking at a side meeting at the Conservative Party conference Clark said, "The only solution for dealing with the IRA is to kill 600 people in one



An Phoblacht

Above: Sinn Fein youth rally outside Omagh Courthouse demanding disbandment of RUC. Left: Youth raise Irish flag over RUC barracks. Young activists have called for release of political prisoners and stepped-up protests against British troops in Northern Ireland.



night — let the UN and Bill Clinton and everyone else make a scene — and it is over for 20 years."

Sectarian killings such as those Clark advocates have been put into practice, over years by British governments and loyalist paramilitaries. This was recently brought to public attention by the transfer request of convicted murderer Jason Campbell. Campbell was convicted in 1996 of the sectarian murder of 16-year-old Mark Scott outside a football match in Glasgow. Scott was wearing the colors of the Celtic team when Campbell slit his throat. Many Celtic supporters identify with the national struggle in Ireland. The transfer to a prison in Northern Ireland where loyalist prisoners are held, had been requested by the Progressive Unionist Party, which is linked to the loyalist paramilitary group the Ulster Volunteer Fighters. The transfer had been part of at-

tempts by the British authorities to placate loyalist groups. Scottish Nationalist Party MP Roseanna Cunningham condemned the proposed move, saying, "Campbell is a thug who was jailed for a brutal and repugnant murder with no motivation other than senseless bigotry. 'The government eventually reversed its decision to make the transfer."

Meanwhile, the British army and its officer caste faced further dents to their credibility, following revelations of several cases of racism against soldiers who are Black. The *Guardian* published reports of a number of Black soldiers who had resigned as a result of racism instigated in many cases by officers. "Whether we like it or not, there is a perception that the army is a racist organization," said Chief of General Staff Roger Wheeler. Major Eric Joyce is expecting to face a court martial following public accusations he has made about "snobbery, racism and sexual discrimination" in the army.

In Ireland nationalist fighters are taking to the streets to press for the release of Irish political prisoners. Several thousand republicans traveled to Coalisland in early October to support the demands of Saoirse, the prisoners support organization, for the release of all political prisoners.

UK prime minister prepares for more austerity

BY IAN GRANT

LONDON — Prime Minister Anthony Blair and other government figures used the platform of the Labour Party's annual conference the first week of October to showcase policies that will target workers' social wage. The National Health Service, state funded pensions, sickness and unemployment benefits, and access to further education were all earmarked for "radical reform."

Many ruling-class commentators remained unimpressed. *Financial Times* columnist Philip Stephens commented, "So far...all we have had is rhetoric. Mr. Blair promises political will to accompany it. But serious welfare reform will be unpopular. There is no painless way of taking money from people. And this is a prime minister who has only experienced adulation."

Blair's keynote address to the conference used the themes of national pride and partnership between workers and bosses that marked Labour's election campaign earlier this year. "For business this will be a government on your side, not in your way," he said. There was "no place for militant trade unionism or uncaring management today."

Packaged as "compassionate with a hard edge," the thrust of the government's program continues a campaign by the rulers to scapegoat those receiving social benefits. Following close behind Home Secretary Jack Straw's probes a few days earlier around the introduction of youth curfews, young people were also the target of Blair's speech, which pledged Labour to adopt "zero tolerance" anticrime policies. The Labour government would not dodge the "tough choices" Blair warned.

For the big-business press, however, Blair's "tough choices" were all ahead of him. "In theory his programme... is as bold as any since the 1945 Labour government, including Baroness [Margaret] Thatcher's," wrote Robert Peston in the *Financial Times* October 4. "But... he has yet to face any really 'hard choices.' So far his road in gov-

ernment has been relatively smooth. But there is a rocky ascent ahead."

Avoiding debate on austerity

The potential for the government's anti-working-class measures to run up against resistance from workers themselves was an unspoken assumption underlying many of the conference debates. Rejection by working people of deeper austerity and belt tightening demanded by the capitalist class lay at the root of the Conservative's election defeat in the May ballot. Government figures collaborated with top trade union officials, who wield powerful block votes at the conference, to keep tensions generated by this reality to a minimum.

At a side meeting addressed by Trades Union Congress (TUC) general secretary John Monks and Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio in the Labour government, the two faced off over the level of a proposed national minimum wage. While claiming to await the deliberations of the government's "Low Pay Commission," Mandelson echoed statements by other government figures that a lower minimum might apply to workers under 25 or to trainees. Monks said that the unions expected the minimum wage to apply to "all fully trained adult workers under 25." Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) general secretary William Morris in remarks made at the conference conceded that "trainees" and workers under 18 should be excluded.

Mandelson reasserted the government's commitment to give a legal right to union recognition where the majority of workers voted for it, but claimed the "legitimate concerns" of employers opposed to this limited measure would need to be resolved before the publication of the government's promised policy document on "fairness at work."

The government and the union officials also avoided a brush on the issue of railway renationalization. Deep attacks on the conditions of rail workers, which began before

the sale of the state rail system to individual capitalists but have since intensified, have led to industrial action by some workers in recent months. Challenged by a motion from the railway union bureaucrats to renationalize a part of the railway system, Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott countered by arguing that it would cost the government £4.5 billion (US\$7.3 billion) to "buy back" the industry from its new owners.

Delegates were persuaded to drop motions opposing government plans to charge students tuition fees of £1000 (US\$1,500), and end student grants. Several thousand predominantly young people demonstrated outside the conference against the government proposals. Student bodies are currently building for a national demonstration opposing these measures on November 1.

Moves to privatize pensions

Using popular demagoguery, veteran Labour Party stateswoman Barbara Castle criticized plans by the government to establish a system of compulsory private pensions to replace the state scheme. "I'm darned if I am going to hand my social conscience over to the man from the Pru!" she declared, referring to Prudential Insurance Company. The week of the conference saw one mutual life insurance company fined £450,000 (US\$675,000) for "mis-selling" private pension schemes. In the last year, 49 insurance companies have been fined over £2 million (US\$3 million) for wrongly advising hundreds of thousands of people to leave occupational pension plans.

Frank Field, minister for welfare reform, has recommended that mutual insurance companies should play a prominent role in replacing state schemes. However, the conference motion Castle was addressing, which called for linking state pensions and average earnings, was also remitted for further consideration another time. Secretary of State for social security Harriet Harman told delegates, "Because people live longer,

we all have to save more." Harman has been in the fore of presenting the attempt to dismantle welfare as "compassionate."

In the face of the advances made by fighters for Irish unity and independence over recent months, Marjorie Mowlam, secretary of state for Northern Ireland, put forward several minor reforms. The government committed itself to abandon the provision to intern suspects without trial, unused for several years, when it replaces the existing "antiterror" laws with a new bill. They also propose to scale back, but not to scrap, juryless trials in the six counties of the Northern Ireland statelet.

In a minor upset for the government, left-wing MP Kenneth Livingstone was elected to the Labour Party's National Executive Committee (NEC) in a runoff with Blair favorite Peter Mandelson.

A package of measures eroding internal party democracy was agreed to, including reducing the constitutional rights of the conference to formulate policy. While Labour governments have never considered themselves bound by party policy, the conference has in the past provided a focus for opposition to unpopular government policies. Reforms to the structure of the party NEC reduce the influence of the trades unions and local Labour Party organizations.

Blair is also preparing to counter future opposition by seeking allies outside of his party who will assist in pushing ahead unpopular government policies, against resistance from the Labour Party's working-class base. The Labour government has pursued closer collaboration with the Liberal Democrats, Britain's third-largest bourgeois party. In his conference address Blair stressed his affinity with so-called "radical reforming leaders" in recent history, including among them Liberal Party prime minister from 1916-22, David Lloyd George.

Ian Grant is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union at Ford.

New Pathfinder books in October

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

NEW YORK — Pathfinder's publication list for the month of October gives a concrete picture of the importance of the \$125,000 Pathfinder Fund, which has entered its final weeks. *Europe & America: Two Speeches on Imperialism* is now back in print, after being unavailable for many years. The pamphlet consists of two speeches by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky from the 1920s. *Socialism on Trial*, the testimony of Socialist Workers Party leader James P. Cannon in his 1941 trial for speaking out against World War II, has just been issued with new, more readable typesetting.

The text for *Le visage changeant de la politique aux États-Unis*, the French translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics — Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, is now on the press, and the book will be released October 28, in time for the Young Socialists founding convention in Canada at the end of the month.

A steady flow of fund payments is coming into Pathfinder's office now, putting supporters of Pathfinder in a strong position to not only meet the goal in full and on time, but surpass it, by the November 1 deadline. The \$19,468 received brings the campaign to nearly \$91,000. Comparable collections in the remaining two weeks will take the fund drive beyond the \$125,000 international goal.

Chicago and Des Moines supporters of the fund were also co-sponsors of the conference entitled "The Coming American Revolution." Featuring Jack Barnes, author of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and Mary-Alice Waters, Pathfinder's president, the conference celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the 30th anniversary of Ernesto Che Guevara's death in combat in Bolivia.

"The October 18 event in Chicago helped us take a big leap in the amounts pledged and collected," wrote Ray Parsons. His note

was sent with more than \$800, putting Des Moines backers at 96 percent of their goal.

"We worked on the fund in the course of the conference, and got 13 new contributors as a result," reported Alyson Kennedy of the collection efforts that brought Chicago supporters up on target. "We only need \$286 in pledges to match our \$12,000 goal."

Toronto and Vancouver met their goals two weeks before the deadline, helping to keep Canada fund supporters at the top of the chart.

Supporters in Pittsburgh are discussing who to approach on the job and in their unions for contributions, Chris Remple wrote, and are planning similar discussions "with those we work with in solidarity with the Cuban revolution, with the Irish struggle, and with the fight for justice for Jonny Gammage," who was killed by the police. Remple reported a fund meeting is also being organized in collaboration with supporters in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

Bosses campaign against Amtrak strike

BY RUTH ROBINETT

NEW YORK — "I don't like it — they're making workers look like bad guys. We are just asking to get paid." This is how Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way (BMW) member Chris Nickoless, who works in the Building and Bridges Department at New York Penn Station, responded to the effort by Amtrak and the ruling class to turn people against the fight of BMW members for wage parity.

Amtrak recently rejected wage recommendations from a government-appointed board. The wage recommendations are the same as those that were agreed to last year between the BMW and other class 1 railroads. The board did not recommend the same benefit, job security, or work rule improvements that are also part of the agreement, but instead proposed these and other local issues be placed into binding arbitration for final resolution.

BMW members have worked for over two years without a wage increase and had been preparing for a possible strike on October 22. At this time, the strike deadline has been extended from 12:01 a.m. October 22 until 12:01 a.m. October 29. Amtrak had asked the BMW for a postponement until November 5.

A new development is an agreement, brokered by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, between union officials and Amtrak to try to keep the Long Island Rail Road (L.I.R.R.) running into Manhattan even if a strike occurs.

The agreement lets several dozen workers from other unions cross BMW picket lines to maintain four miles of Amtrak-owned tracks that connect the L.I.R.R. system with N.Y. Penn Station, the destination of most of the L.I.R.R.'s 260,000 daily passengers. Negotiations are still under way between the BMW and Amtrak. The BMW organizes workers who construct and maintain Amtrak's railroad tracks, buildings, bridges, and electrical power systems that power trains.

The concerted effort being led by the ruling class to turn public solidarity away from the Amtrak workers includes Amtrak, other railroads, the news media, and politicians.

"Commuter doomsday is detailed, Fears of Amtrak strike" was the headline of an October 16 *Daily News* article here in New York. The first line says, "Transit officials have a one-word prediction for next week's threatened Amtrak strike: pain."

New Jersey Transit issued a notice to passengers warning, "If a strike occurs, railroads throughout the country, including NJ TRANSIT will not be able to operate rail service on portions of railroad which are owned and maintained by Amtrak." New Jersey governor Christine Whitman created an Emergency Transportation Council to "oversee statewide contingency plans in case of a strike."

Whitman announced last week that 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 this situation."

Warning signs about the strike have also been posted in Penn Station and in the New York subway system.

The anti-working-class propaganda has



Possible strike is big discussion among workers at Sunnyside Yard in Queens, above.

had an effect. One newly hired conductor described how over a two-day period passengers repeatedly asked if there was going to be a strike, some grabbing her arm to speak to her. One passenger lectured that if she and others walked out, Amtrak would go down and there would be no more jobs.

The hysteria around the strike includes lies about the fight of the track workers. The *New York Post* reported that BMW "members earn about \$42,000 a year." But BMW members at Amtrak earn \$12.69 an hour — about \$507 for a 40-hour week, or \$26,400 per year. The "presidential emergency board" recommended a 3.5 percent wage increase for just three of the six years between 1995 and 2000.

Among workers here at New York's Penn Station and Sunnyside Yard in Queens, many are angry about the campaign to slander the track workers, and the BMW's recent announcement that it will try to keep the L.I.R.R. running.

"Look at the facts," said coach cleaner Juliette Jusino, "give us more money!" Her coworker Betty Key agreed. "I want them to strike because we need the money. We should be equal to the rest of the railroads."

Referring to the L.I.R.R. arrangement, coach cleaner Shirley Quinn said, "They shouldn't strike if they're going to let everyone ride on the rails. The point is to stick together."

Engineer Leonard Robinson said,

Socialist candidates get hearing in N.Y.

Continued from front page

tions. She put forward a program that, if taken up by the unions, could advance the fight to unite workers and defend them from the crisis of capitalism. This includes fighting for jobs for all by demanding a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, defending and extending affirmative action, and calling for a massive public works program to put people to work at union-scale wages rebuilding the infrastructures of the cities.

In a segment of the debate where the candidates asked each other questions, Rodríguez asked Messinger if she would use her influence to demand that Democratic president William Clinton not intervene to prevent track workers from the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMW) at Amtrak from going on strike in the battle shaping up in that passenger rail line for a decent contract. Messinger said she would have to check out the situation and try to keep the two sides talking. Rodríguez then explained the socialist campaign's opposition to any government intervention to stop a strike by BMW workers, and pledged that she and her supporters would walk the picket lines and build solidarity with the BMW workers should they be forced to strike.

Many of Rodríguez's co-workers heard the debate on the radio or saw it on televi-

sion. "Several of them mentioned the significance of seeing a worker standing up for workers on television," said Rodríguez.

The topic of police brutality was raised several times by questioners in the debate. When the socialist candidate was asked if the attention given to police brutality was an exaggeration, she responded, "No, I don't think it's exaggerated. The city cop department and other repressive forces have one aim: to defend property for the few who have it. We are for the arrest, prosecution to the fullest extent of the law, and jailing of any cop accused of police brutality." Two young co-workers of Rodríguez agreed with her assertion in the debate that "the most dangerous gang working people, Blacks, and Latinos have to deal with is the gang in blue," referring to the police.

The day following the debate phone calls poured into the campaign headquarters. Campaign volunteer Nancy Rosenstock reported that two students from New York Technical College interviewed her and another volunteer for their campus newspaper. They said they wanted to encourage other students on the campus to support Rodríguez's campaign and are trying to organize a meeting on their campus for her.

A young campaign supporter was part of the delegation to the mayoral debate after buying a subscription to the campaign news-

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

CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
Canada			
Toronto	2,500	2,500	100%
Vancouver	1,150	1,150	100%
Montreal	1,650	1,416	86%
Canada total	5,300	5,066	96%
United States			
Des Moines	2,400	2,295	96%
Detroit	4,000	3,374	84%
Seattle*	9,000	7,345	82%
San Francisco*	11,000	8,865	81%
Boston	5,500	4,361	79%
Chicago*	12,000	9,213	77%
Philadelphia	4,000	3,051	76%
New York*	13,500	9,754	72%
Miami	3,000	2,117	71%
Twin Cities*	7,750	5,455	70%
Los Angeles	10,000	6,350	64%
Atlanta*	4,624	2,824	61%
Pittsburgh	5,000	2,930	59%
Newark	8,500	4,684	55%
Houston	5,500	2,960	54%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	1,603	53%
Birmingham	3,500	1,630	47%
Cleveland	2,400	1,005	42%
Other	2,919	2,751	94%
U.S. Total	117,593	82,567	70%
New Zealand			
Wellington	130	130	100%
Auckland	2,100	1,462	70%
Christchurch	640	315	49%
N.Z. total*	2,870	1,907	66%
Sweden	700	450	64%
Australia	750	375	50%
France		285	71%
United Kingdom			
Manchester	600	310	52%
London	900	25	3%
UK total*	1,500	335	22%
Iceland	150	0	0%
Other Int'l		10	
INT'L TOTAL:	129,263	90,995	73%
SHOULD BE:	125,000	97,500	78%
* Raised goal			

"Whoever's against it [the strike] is crazy because first it's them and then it's us." Track workers are "the hardest working people out here with the least amount of money."

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

paper, the *Militant*, at a debate between the candidates for New York's Public Advocate, which included Socialist Workers candidate Shoghi Fret.

Rodríguez encouraged listeners to the debate to join the demonstration outside the United Nations on October 12 to demand equal rights for all immigrants. "My campaign will be participating along with hundreds of others as we call for a world without borders and to stop the deportations for all immigrants." Some listeners to the debate responded to this call. Campaign supporter Nell Wheeler from New Jersey reported that a young woman who heard Rodríguez on television came to the protest and bought a copy of the campaign newspaper, read it, and bought a subscription.

On October 15 Rodríguez was interviewed on WLIB radio in New York. Following the talk show, she was approached by a young worker on his lunch break at a nearby pizza parlor who asked if she was Olga Rodríguez. He followed by saying, "I saw you on TV, which was wonderful." After further discussion he expressed an interest in joining the socialist candidates and supporters in walking the picket lines with workers at Amtrak, should the track workers go out on strike, and he attended a Militant Labor Forum on "The Communist Legacy of Che Guevara."

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Final push can meet goal of 1,300 new readers to press

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"Leading up to the strike deadline by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) against Amtrak last week, discussion on the pending union action was intense on the job," wrote Ruth Robinett in an October 21 note to the Militant. Robinett is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1370 and works for Amtrak in New York.

During that period, socialists sold 26 copies and two subscriptions to the Militant to rail workers there, Robinett said. Of those, 15 single issues and one subscription were sold to fellow

unionists on the job and the remaining by two teams of Militant supporters at the entrance of the Amtrak station in New York. "Many workers noted the contrast between the Militant's coverage and the articles on the possible BMWE strike in the big-business press."

Another highlight of the seventh week of the Militant/Perspectiva Mundial subscription drive was sales at the October 16-19 Claridad festival in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Militant supporters from the Caribbean island and from Atlanta, Miami, and Newark, New Jersey, took part and set up a booth at the event. They sold \$1,300 worth of Pathfinder books and other literature, including 17 copies of Nueva Internacional, the Spanish-language sister publication of the Marxist magazine New International. In addition, they sold 53 subscriptions to Perspectiva Mundial and two Militant subs. "Books by Ernesto Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, and Malcolm X were among the most popular," said Rollande Girard, a member of the United Steelworkers of America and the Socialist Workers candidate for Miami City Commission, District 5.

"Tens of thousands of young people, workers, and others participated in the annual festival sponsored by Claridad, a weekly newspaper that supports Puerto Rico's independence from the United States," Girard said. "This year the festival was dedicated to Che Guevara because of the 30th anniversary of his death in combat in Bolivia. The main slogan was, 'Che: A man who lived by his ideas.' The banner that adorned the festival's central stage had a portrait of Che and read, 'Now is the time to bring them back home,' referring to 15 Puerto Rican independence fighters currently incarcerated in U.S. jails."

"Che was a revolutionary and this is what we the students like," Mariela Collazo, a student at the University of Puerto Rico, told Militant reporters. Among those who subscribed at the San Juan event was Harry Barbosa, a repairman at the Puerto Rico Telephone Company and a member of the Inde-

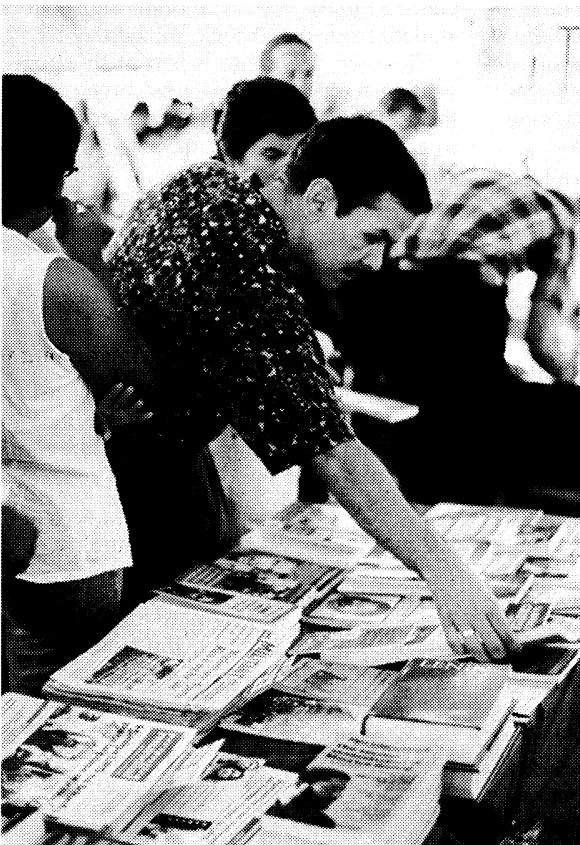
August Sales of Pathfinder Books to Non-Pathfinder Outlets						
SEPTEMBER						
CITY	GOALS	SOLD	%	AUG	JUL	JUN
BOSTON	50	414	828%	223	174	19
CLEVELAND	40	146	365%	13	60	0
LOS ANGELES	95	288	303%	209	137	62
CHICAGO	60	129	215%	30	83	35
HOUSTON	32	59	184%	87	23	10
TWIN CITIES	67	121	181%	18	15	10
MIAMI	42	69	164%	61	48	1
ATLANTA	32	29	91%	63	22	5
NEW YORK	190	160	84%	292	364	99
DETROIT	60	50	83%	16	73	1
SAN FRANCISCO	74	25	34%	128	243	239
PITTSBURGH	49	16	33%	64	0	23
WASHINGTON, D.C.	42	13	31%	76	141	33
SEATTLE	60	9	15%	30	16	11
NEWARK	133	2	2%	0	0	2
BIRMINGHAM	50	0	0%	55	22	0
DES MOINES	35	0	0%	0	18	7
GREENSBORO	36	0	0%	0	0	4
MORGANTOWN	25	0	0%	0	0	0
PHILADELPHIA	49	0	0%	19	15	1
TOTAL	1221	1530	125%	1384	1454	562
SHOULD BE	1400	1400	100%			

'MILITANT' SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE							
September 1 - October 26							
WEEK 7							
City/Country	Goal	Militant Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold	New Int'l Goal	Sold
SWEDEN*	17	14	82%	9	8	10	11
AUSTRALIA*	16	13	81%	6	6	13	11
CANADA							
Vancouver	50	45	90%	5	5	20	8
Montreal	30	22	73%	10	6	30	22
Toronto	50	36	72%	10	6	20	18
Canada total	130	103	79%	25	17	70	48
UNITED STATES							
Washington, DC*	45	45	100%	15	15	15	15
Atlanta*	33	32	97%	15	35	15	14
Miami	40	36	90%	22	27	25	30
Birmingham, AL*	47	42	89%	5	6	15	15
San Francisco	70	62	89%	30	19	35	26
Philadelphia	25	22	88%	8	3	8	7
Des Moines	40	33	83%	20	25	20	13
Los Angeles	110	89	81%	55	43	55	46
Boston	40	32	80%	15	14	35	25
Detroit*	40	29	73%	8	8	12	15
Pittsburgh*	48	34	71%	3	1	15	5
Twin Cities, MN	70	49	70%	15	7	15	8
Seattle	70	48	69%	20	11	20	17
New York	140	93	66%	70	67	60	80
Chicago*	95	58	61%	45	43	40	17
Newark, NJ	120	71	59%	40	50	60	65
Cleveland	30	17	57%	6	4	10	9
Houston	40	20	50%	15	7	15	4
Other		13					
U.S. total	1103	825	75%	407	385	470	411
UNITED KINGDOM							
London	50	34	68%	12	15	38	58
Manchester	25	16	64%	2	1	12	12
UK total	75	50	67%	14	16	50	70
ICELAND	10	6	60%	1	1	5	3
NEW ZEALAND							
Auckland	30	20	67%	2	3	10	6
Wellington	3	2	67%	1	0	1	0
Christchurch	15	7	47%	1	1	5	6
NZ total	48	29	60%	4	4	16	12
Other international		5			16		48
International totals	1399	1045	80%	466	453	634	614
Should be	1300	1138	88%	400	350	600	525

* raised goal

IN THE UNIONS							
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
CANADA							
USWA	5	5	100%	1	0	5	1
IAM	10	8	80%	1	0	5	3
Canada total	15	13	87%	2	0	10	4
AUSTRALIA							
AMWU	2	1	50%	0	0	1	0
NEW ZEALAND							
UFBGWU	2	1	50%	0	0	1	0
EU	7	3	43%	0	0	1	1
MWU	2	0	0%	0	0	1	0
NZ total	11	4	36%	0	0	3	1
UNITED STATES							
IAM	50	30	60%	15	5	22	3
UFCW	9	4	44%	13	15	9	8
UTU	50	19	38%	5	0	20	3
USWA	38	12	32%	4	1	22	7
UAW	50	11	22%	5	0	25	1
UNITE*	8	1	13%	8	7	6	1
OCAW	30	3	10%	10	1	15	0
U.S. total	235	80	34%	60	29	119	23
UNITED KINGDOM							
RMT	3	2	67%	0	0	2	1
AEEU	5	0	0%	0	0	5	2
TGWU	5	0	0%	0	0	4	0
UK total	13	2	15%	0	0	11	3
* no report this week				0	0	11	3

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; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.



Militant/Linda Joyce
Perspectiva Mundial and Pathfinder books sold very well at Claridad festival in Puerto Rico.

pendent Union of Telephone Employees (UEIT). Barbosa had participated in the October 1 UEIT strike and demonstration of some 100,000 people that day against the government's attempt to privatize the telephone company. "I oppose privatization because those who will mostly be affected will be the consumers," Barbosa said. The attempted sale of the company will also result in job cuts, he told Girard.

Young Socialists, Socialist Workers Party members, and others are finding a similar response through sales on campuses, door-to-door in working-class communities, and at political events. During the October 17-19 conference of Anti-Racist Action in Columbus, Ohio, YS and SWP members sold 4 Militant subscriptions, two copies of New International, and 10 Pathfinder books and pamphlets to the nearly 300 participants, reported Kibwe Diarra from Cleveland. Socialist Workers candidates are also using their election campaigns to promote the socialist press. In Atlanta for

example, Doug Nelson, SWP candidate for mayor of that city, and Arlene Rubenstein, socialist candidate for school board there, took part in campus meetings October 13-14 where Palestinian leader Hanan Ashrawi spoke. Nelson and Rubenstein's supporters participated in the discussion on the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and sold 12 copies of the Militant, 12 copies of the Pathfinder pamphlet Palestine and the Arabs' Fight for Liberation, and two copies of New International no. 7 with the article "The Opening Guns of World War III; Washington's Assault on Iraq."

Perspectiva Mundial is a particularly hot seller. In addition to the Puerto Rico sales, many new subscribers signed up during the October 12 marches for immigrant rights held in several U.S. cities and other related activities.

At one such rally of 800 in Chicago, for example, YS members and others sold 22 PM subs. With these successes, we have already surpassed by 53 the goal of selling 400 PM subs, one week before the drive ends, as well as surpassing the New International goal.

Socialist workers and others around the world are using the momentum from increased sales in the last two weeks in an all-out effort to meet the Militant subscription goal by the October 26 deadline as well. The Militant will count on the final chart all subscriptions received at the business office in New York by Wednesday, October 29.

after the million woman march...

Meet the Socialist Workers campaign and the Young Socialists at an OPEN HOUSE 3:00 pm on Saturday

1906 South Street

From the rally site: Go to Logan Circle (on Parkway) and walk 10 blocks south on 19th St. to South St. For more information, call (215) 546-8218

YS in Canada builds national convention

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 VICTORIA MARSHAL

TORONTO — “We need more Cubas around the world,” explained Evelyn Encalada during a discussion on Ernesto Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution at York University in Toronto. Cosponsored by LACSA (Latin American and Caribbean Studies Association) and the Young Socialists, the meeting on October 16 featured Young Socialists leader Maria Isabel LeBlanc, from Montreal, who is on tour in Toronto to build the upcoming founding convention of the Young Socialists from October 31 – November 2 in Montreal.

A student who is a teacher’s assistant and member of CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) picked up a subscription to the *Militant* at the York meeting to follow developments in Cuba and the labor movement. The YS and Communist League set up literature tables on campus in the days leading up to the meeting where several students signed up for more information on the YS and bought two *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions, one *Militant* subscription, a copy of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* no. 8 on Che Guevara, and a copy of *Pombo: A man of Che’s ‘Guerrilla.’*

The next day YS members participated in the Day of Action labor protest in Windsor, Ontario. This was one of a series

of actions organized by the Ontario Federation of Labor (OFL) are to protest the cuts by the provincial government. This time some 20,000 workers and youth mobilized on October 17 to shutdown three major auto plants, post offices, bus service, and schools.

On the following night, two YS leaders, LeBlanc and Mick O’Donnell, spoke at a Militant Labor Forum preceded by a successful benefit dinner that raised more than \$200 for the tour. LeBlanc began the forum stating that “in just 13 days, the YS will be having their founding convention.... One of the key questions before the convention will be the fight for Quebec independence and its place in the struggle for a workers and farmers government in Canada.”

After the forum, Fabian García, who had met the YS at the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana this summer, asked to join the YS because, “I want to learn more about socialism and get more involved. You can’t just wait for freedom to get here. You have to be active and do something.” In addition to García, three other young people at the forum signed up to go to the convention, including Kevin Austin, a high school student and YS member in Woodstock, Ontario.

On October 19 the YS organized a class on the struggle for Quebec independence and the socialist revolution in Canada. After the class, Andrew Souran, another high school student from Woodstock, joined the YS.

The tour in Toronto is part of three convention-building regional tours organized by the YS in Canada to recruit young fighters to communism and participate in the YS convention.

A regional tour took place in Vancouver October 11 – 13 where the YS chapter or-



Militant/John Sarge
Young Socialists leader Maria Isabel LeBlanc sells the *Militant* at October 17 Day of Action labor protest in Windsor, Ontario.

ganized a class on a section of the book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, by Jack Barnes.

They also participated in a rally on the border between the United States and Canada where 150 demonstrators demanded freedom and justice for Native American fighter Leonard Peltier who has been in prison since the late 1970s on framed-up charges. A subscription to the *Militant* and a pamphlet on *Genocide against the Indians* were sold at the rally.

YS members have participated in several conferences taking place in commemoration of the political legacy of Che Guevara. Sixty people came to one conference in Quebec City. Carlos Catalán, a YS leader from Montreal, spoke alongside a student leader from Coalition Y (a student group for the right to education), a representative of the Federation of Cuban Women on tour in Quebec, and speakers from Latin American countries

now living in Quebec.

Many youth visited the YS literature table during the conference, buying more than 20 copies of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and several pamphlets on Cuba, *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*, and Lenin’s *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination*. Several are interested in attending the convention. Three young people are interested in joining the YS there, including two Quebecois.

Conetl Tonatiuh García Ramírez, a YS member in Quebec-City who helped organize the conference, also organized a YS class on Che Guevara the following day.

The final regional tour is scheduled for Montreal and Quebec City on the weekend of October 24 – October 26.



Youth speak at conference on Ernesto Che Guevara

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

COLUMBIA, Maryland — Nearly 80 people celebrated the legacy of Ernesto Che Guevara here on October 11. The program, sponsored by the Howard County Friends of Central America and the Caribbean (HOCFOCA), consisted of a report-back from two participants in this summer’s 14th World Festival of Youth and Students; poetry and music celebrating the life of Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution; and speakers who addressed the need to fight the U.S. embargo against Cuba. A delegation from the Cuban Interests Section was in attendance.

Basilio Gutiérrez, a representative of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), spoke on the ideas and legacy of Che Guevara. Gutiérrez was in town from Cuba and had been invited to make a six-week U.S. tour but the U.S. government prevented him from traveling outside a 25-mile radius of Washington, D.C.

Berkeley students defend affirmative action

BY CATHLEEN GUTKANST

BERKELEY, California — Students at the University of California Berkeley kicked off a week of planned rallies, demonstrations and teach-ins in defense of affirmative action with a sit-in at the Boalt Hall Law School October 13. Fifty-four demonstrators were arrested.

Most of the 200 protesters were Boalt Hall students, who noted that this year’s first-year class of 270 students, the first to be admitted since the board of regents banned affirmative action programs in the University of California system, included only seven Latino students and no African-American or Native American students. One Black student and seven other Latino students were carried over in their enrollment after deferring enrollment last year.

Norma, a first-year law school student, explained that the Boalt Hall Coalition on Diversity had gone on a campaign to collect signatures on a letter to the administration, protesting the ban on affirmative action. She said that “194 students out of 270 signed the letter, more than 70 percent. Most of the students here support affirmative action. When we presented our letter to the admission committee, he said, ‘Well, how many of you would be willing to give up your place at the school?’”

The week of protest began with a symbolic action as an answer. More than 100 students who are Black, Latino, or Asian marched into two first-year law school classes, where white students stood up and gave their seats to the protesters.

Later in the day, students attempted to present their demands to the Boalt Hall Dean Herma Hill Kay. The demands included:

- Removal of the text of the U.C. regents’ anti-affirmative action policy from the school’s admission packet.
- Revision of admissions criteria to assist students from working-class families.
- Provision of scholarships for minority students.
- Hiring of more Black, Latino, Asian and women faculty members.
- A policy statement by [Hill] Kay urging the U.C. regents to support race-targeted outreach programs.

José Palofox, a U.C. undergraduate and a photographer for *La Voz*, was one of those

arrested. He explained that he had identified himself to police officers as a press photographer and was taking pictures at the time. “They just came up to me after a while and said ‘You’re under arrest,’” he said. “I think it was because I was taking pictures of them using chokeholds and neck compression.”

Palofox stated that he thought the protests against the ban on affirmative action in admissions were needed, but added, “It’s broader than that. It’s the attacks on immigrants, on indigenous people. They’re trying to say that it’s in our interests to send Huey helicopters to kill indigenous people. What kind of society do we want to see here? One that puts profits before people? I don’t think so.”

“This week of activities and teach-ins we’re putting on at the Third World College

is just the beginning,” said Mirella Rangel, a member of the Students of Color Solidarity Council (SCSC), a coalition of student organizations that are demanding that the administration implement affirmative action. Classes given in the Third World College Teach-In include such topics as: Social Movements in the United States; the IMF, the World Bank, and Structural Adjustment; Political Prisoners; and the Oppression of Women. Rangel continued, “We’re saying if the school is not going to teach us these things, we’re going to do it ourselves. This is a mobilizing as well as an educational program.”

Cathleen Gutekanst is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Local 1-5 in Richmond, California.

Anti-Cuba rightists are set back in Miami

BY MAGGIE McCRAW

MIAMI — In a blow to ultra-rightist Cuban groups who oppose cultural exchange between the United States and Cuba, government officials and businesses in nearby Miami Beach proposed a plan October 7 to circumvent a Miami ordinance that threatened an international music conference by barring the participation of Cuban artists.

The music conference — MIDEM Latin American and Caribbean Music Market — is an international gathering for artists and music executives. It has hosted Cuban artists at meetings outside the United States, and in September held the first of five annual conferences contracted for Miami.

A 1996 Dade county ordinance prohibits the county from funding events that allow participation by Cuban artists or businesses that do business with Cuba. This year the MIDEM organizers complied with the ban.

Facing a threatened boycott by the music industry if they continued to adhere to the anti-Cuba ordinance, MIDEM, which received \$125,000 from the county, indicated it would cancel its contract with Miami. In an effort to keep the conference and its multi-million-dollar revenues, government officials and businesses interests in Miami Beach proposed October 7 to bypass the

ordinance by soliciting the \$125,000 from private and corporate contributions.

This followed an outcry over the September firing of Peggi McKinley, an appointee of the Dade County Commission and chair of the film advisory board. Supporting the effort to get the ordinance waived for MIDEM, McKinley publicly stated that “allowing a few people’s political standpoint to dictate the potential economic growth of the area is not for the benefit of the community as a whole.”

Following this statement, the Dade County Commission unanimously voted to dismiss her. Later one commissioner, Katy Sorenson, voiced opposition to the firing and changed her vote. Commissioner Javier Souto denounced Sorenson’s decision, declaring, “You are playing with fire.... There are a lot of Cuban people who vote.”

The rightist Cuban American National Foundation accused McKinley of making a “patently racist statement...[that] is an affront to the many victims... of Fidel Castro’s human rights atrocities.”

Several prominent political figures spoke out against McKinley’s firing. At the same time, many of them seized on the opportunity to try to smear the Cuban revolution. Andy Kayton, legal director of the Florida

American Civil Liberties Union, described the firing as “the type of government action one might expect in a communist dictatorship, but not in the United States.”

After McKinley’s firing, the *Miami Herald* urged readers to write in their opinions on McKinley’s termination and the political questions involved. The majority focused their fire on the county commission’s firing of McKinley and the attempts of the more vocal right-wing elements in the Cuban community to eliminate discussion.

The *Herald* gave prominent attention to a statement made by Gloria Estafan. The popular Cuban-American singer, who described herself as “staunchly anti-communist,” said she felt “dismay” at McKinley’s firing and called for defense of “each other’s right to voice an opinion without fear of reprisal, whatever the opinion might be.” Right-wing radio stations and groups began a campaign against Estafan, with some calling for a public burning of her CDs.

Janet Post, Socialist Workers candidate for the mayor of Miami, told the *Militant*, “I condemn attempts by Miami’s rulers to stifle a free and open discussion on these issues and call for support to forums, picket lines or any other protests against these attacks on all our democratic rights.”

'Our task is to organize and fight now'

Chicago conference celebrates 1917 Russian revolution and Che Guevara

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — More than 100 people turned out here October 18 to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution and the 30th anniversary of Che Guevara's combat in Bolivia. The Saturday afternoon educational conference on "The Coming American Revolution" featured talks by Mary-Alice Waters, the president of Pathfinder Press, and Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. It was also a celebration of the books published by Pathfinder Press, and a benefit for the \$125,000 Pathfinder Fund.

The meeting was sponsored by the Pathfinder bookstores in Chicago and Des Moines, Iowa, and by the Young Socialists. It was cochaired by YS leader Verónica Poses and Joe Swanson, a member of the United Auto Workers from Des Moines. The event was held at Decima Musa restaurant in the mostly Mexican community of Pilsen.

Several participants learned about the celebration at political activities in Chicago over the previous 10 days. These included an October 8 demonstration of 200 people, most of them young, against the U.S. embargo on Cuba, as well as an action in defense of immigrant rights held here October 12, which drew more than 800 people from around the region.

Trade unionists and students from throughout the Midwest and as far as Pittsburgh and Birmingham, Alabama, attended the celebration. Two packinghouse workers from Perry, Iowa, were attending their first socialist conference. Bob Peters, a veteran of the 1994-95 Bridgestone/Firestone strike, also attended from Iowa. Now a member of the Communications Workers of America, Peters said he wanted to hear the speakers after reading issue no. 10 of *New International*, which includes "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes and "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution" by Mary-Alice Waters.

Melissa Kaplan, 22, came with a carload from Birmingham, Alabama. She has been active in the fight for women's rights on campus. Kaplan said the conference gave her a "broader perspective and a more clear picture of what the party stands for."

Hiryu Abdu, a student who came to the meeting from Evansville, Indiana, said he gained respect for the Cuban revolution from his experiences in Ethiopia following the 1974 revolution in that country. He said, "I first made contact with Cubans in Ethiopia, who helped both militarily and medically in the war" to push back the 1978 invasion by the government of Somalia, which was instigated by Washington.

Paul Cornish, 23, is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) who recently joined the Young Socialists in Atlanta. He was in Chicago for a meeting of socialist workers who are members of UNITE, which coincided with the educational conference.

Che and the imperialist reality

The first speaker was Mary-Alice Waters, who had just returned from a three-week reporting trip to Cuba. While there she spoke on "Che Guevara and the Imperialist Reality" at a conference on Guevara sponsored by *Tricontinental* magazine. Waters also attended a conference on the legacy of the Argentine-born revolutionary at the University of Havana, and reported for the *Militant* on the fifth congress of the Communist Party of Cuba. Immediately after the event in Chicago, she and Barnes left for Havana to attend an international workshop commemorating Guevara, titled "Socialism Towards the 21st Century."

Waters opened her remarks by pointing to how U.S. president William Clinton was greeted by workers when he arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the previous day. In what is a tradition among working people throughout Latin America, he was met by thousands of demonstrators carrying a huge banner that read "Fuera Clinton" (Clinton go home). He got a similar reception on earlier stops in Venezuela and Brazil.

"The world in which Che Guevara was born and fought, the imperialist reality that made him a communist, remains the same," Waters said. Nothing fundamental has changed since the Cuban revolutionary war in 1956-58 and the combat led by Guevara



Workers and students involved in actions like October 8 protest of 200 against U.S. embargo on Cuba (above) turned out for Chicago event celebrating examples of workers and farmers taking power in Russia and Cuba, and coming American revolution.

in Bolivia 10 years later. As the protests in Latin America showed, the gap continues to widen between the wealth of a tiny minority and the declining living and job conditions of the toiling majority.

The world imperialist system is relatively weaker and more vulnerable today than it was 30 years ago, Waters said. This was a point of contention at the Havana conference on Guevara's legacy where she spoke in September. Some participants argued that imperialism is stronger than ever. The course carried out by Che and the Cuban leadership in the 1960s to advance the fight against U.S. imperialist domination and for socialism is no longer possible in today's world, these conference participants argued.

That is the opposite of the lesson being drawn in Cuba during the events this month to inter the remains of Guevara and several of his co-combatants, which were unearthed in Bolivia earlier this year. The big-business press, Waters said, falsely portrays these events as hero worship. Meanwhile, many of these same voices in the capitalist media express dismay at the "hard line" of the October 8-10 congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, where delegates held a broad-ranging discussion on how to move forward today on a socialist course.

In fact, Waters said, the commemorations this month were a solemn celebration and affirmation by millions of working people in Cuba of what Guevara and his fellow combatants had fought for — their internationalism and conviction that the fight for socialism is the only road forward for humanity. That was the message of the Cuban party congress as well, she said.

Importance of Bolshevik revolution

The October 1917 revolution led by the Bolshevik party in Russia was the most important event in this century, said Jack Barnes in his talk. It was the first practical example that the working class can take power out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters and open the struggle for socialism.

The most important outcome of the October revolution was that a new kind of professional revolutionist — the worker-bolshevik — was forged in the process. The Bolsheviks built the first party in history whose membership and leadership were composed in their big majority of worker-bolsheviks. Ever since, Barnes said, that has been the kind of party communists the world over have worked to emulate.

Celebrating the 80th anniversary of the October revolution and 30th anniversary of Che's combat in Bolivia, are part of celebrating the coming American revolution, Barnes said. The example of the victorious workers and farmers in Russia and Cuba poses the possibility and necessity of revolutions elsewhere in the world. Revolutionists in the United States — the world's mightiest and most brutal imperialist power — have a special obligation in that regard.

There are fewer obstacles today than at any time since the mid-1920s for fighting workers and youth to find the road to revolution instead of the road of accommodation with imperialism carried out by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union in the

years after Lenin's death.

Barnes pointed to the essential place of books for communist workers and youth in applying the continuity of revolutionary struggle, and the greater political leverage of those books in today's world. Che Guevara, like other communist leaders, continually organized to read and study with others. Joe Swanson appealed to those present to contribute to the \$125,000 Pathfinder fund. Participants gave more than \$1,500 at the meeting itself, and pledged an additional \$1,000. Many also took advantage of the literature sale there to stock up. Sales included six copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics — Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes, as well as four *Militant* subscriptions.

Imperialism is more vulnerable

Barnes noted that the imperialist system is more vulnerable to shocks and explosive breakdowns today. The economic crisis in Mexico at the end of 1994 is a harbinger of what is coming, he said. Who benefited from the "recovery" in Mexico trumpeted by the Clinton administration? Not the Mexican workers and peasants, who are worse off today. And Mexican banks and industries are being bought up by U.S. and other imperialist interests.

An even larger economic disaster is unfolding in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and other countries of Southeast Asia, Barnes said. Wall Street forced massive, unsustainable loans on the capitalists in these countries, and now the local and foreign exploiters are attempting to make working people pay the consequences.

The imperialist regimes themselves are in the midst of a deflationary crisis. In Japan economic growth remains stagnant. Unemployment is at double-digit highs throughout much of Europe. In Germany the economic gap is widening between west and east, as social conditions for all workers slide. In the United States, the economic upturn of the mid-1990s has been the weakest since World War II.

There is no way for the capitalist rulers to resolve the crisis they face short of battles with the working class. The Teamsters strike at UPS in August and the beginnings of labor resistance to the bosses' austerity drives across Europe are important signs of class battles to come, Barnes noted. He pointed to a few examples of the reactionary ways the employing class tries to prepare the ground politically for such conflicts, including stepping up executions and the use of subtle and not-so-subtle anti-Semitism.

An indication of the kinds of forces the bosses will try to unleash against the working class could be seen in the recent strike by workers at Bay Area Rapid Transit in San Francisco, who were fighting to push back the two-tier wage scale that had been imposed on them. Workers on the picket lines described how outraged middle-class commuters yelled abuse and threw things at the strikers. Those attending the Chicago conference were given copies of a letter Barnes had received from a trade unionist in the Bay Area during the strike. The letter described the "calculated hysteria of the ruling-class-orchestrated campaign against these unionists and the petty-bourgeois venom that accompanied it. The mass psychology of fascism reared its head an inch above the sand." It noted the "similarities between the emotive wellsprings of anti-BART-worker venom and pro-Lady Di hysteria."

Task is to organize, prepare, and fight

In closing his talk, Barnes referred to greetings sent on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee to the recent congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, copies of which were available to participants. The party congress and Guevara commemorations in Cuba not only remind "us all of the course that Fidel has fought for from the beginning," the message said, but also foreshadow "the battles that will decide the fate of the 21st century."

"New generations of revolutionary toilers — including those inside the most brutal and mighty imperialist power in history, the United States of America — will draw strength from the example of these heroic fighters and the lessons we have learned from the men and women who made the Cuban revolution possible and changed the course of history in our time."

"The reality that will mark the century on whose threshold we stand is that of the growing historic weakness of U.S. imperialism — faced as it is around the world with ever increasing numbers of gravediggers of its own creation, and diminishing political barriers to unity in struggle amongst them."

"As that truth breaks through the surface of imperialist wealth and arrogance," the message said, the example of the combatants in Bolivia and Cuba "and of the worker-bolsheviks who established and defended the first socialist victory in our century will be emulated."

"Our task is to organize, prepare, and fight — now."

Tom Alter, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149, and Amanda Ulman, member of United Auto Workers Local 270, from Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this article.

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 Available in English and Spanish.

In *New International* no. 10

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

by Jack Barnes

\$14.00 Available in English, French, Spanish, and Swedish.

Available from Pathfinder bookstores. See page 12.



Guevara: 'Human beings are no longer beasts of burden'

The following is a speech given by Enrique Oltuski at a conference at the University of Havana on "Che: Man of the Twenty-First Century," October 1-4. Oltuski worked closely with Ernesto Che Guevara in the Ministry of Industry, which Guevara headed in the early 1960s, and today is Cuba's deputy minister of fishing. Translation, subheadings, and footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BY ENRIQUE OLTUSKI

What is happening in the world that makes the figure of Che grow larger and larger every day. Is it not because he fills a moral void? Is it not because he inspires confidence in the future? Is it not because he is the human being we all want to be? Is it not because Che is the herald of the new man?

Asthma, which he eventually would bring under control with his willpower and which he began to suffer at age two, compelled him to rest during periods of acute attacks. As a child of educated parents, books were familiar objects in the house, and thus books became a refuge over long hours.

As a 15-year-old he read Freud, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Zola, Sarmientos, Faulkner, Steinbeck. An interesting mix of authors, seeds of the future forest of ideas, planted as yet with no order.

Over time and as his intellect grew, his interest in works with a social content grew. He intensified his reading of Marxism and also read Kafka, Camus, and Sartre.

His travels to South America were decisive in his formation. He became conscious of the Indian of the Americas; there arose in him a fraternal spirit toward the indigenous peoples. With his stay in the mines of Chuquicamata in Chile, he got to know the life of the copper miners, and the oppression they are subjected to by the Yankee owners. He felt in his own blood and bone

how the U.S. archeologists pillaged the ruins of Machu Picchu. His love for his fellow man led him to live side by side with lepers, who bid him farewell as a brother.

He met Bolivian and Guatemalan revolutionaries. In Mexico he joined up with the Cuban revolution. He was no longer a mere spectator; he was now a revolutionary who wanted to change things.

When they went to the encampments in the final stage of their training as a *Granma*¹ expeditionary, Che told of his travels through Latin America. The anecdotal side was not what he wanted to stress; rather the poverty, how the people lived, how the Mayan Indians lived in Guatemala, the corruption of the governments. He wrote a great deal on these topics: his trip from one country to the other, the persons he met, but above all the poverty, the state of slavery that the Indian of the Americas lived in.

Later came the epic events in Cuba, his apprenticeship as a guerrilla together with his teacher Fidel; the invasion, the battle of Santa Clara, the Ministry of Industry.

With the Ministry of Industry the first steps were taken to create an organizational structure of a socialist character in Cuba. The system of management being developed at the time was based on a fundamental theoretical conception; the aim was to develop man's consciousness and to develop the productive forces in such a way that, in a given period of time, the development of the productive forces would coincide with the formation of the new man. In this way a just society would be created, where man would be brother of man, and where happiness of the individual would be the happiness of all.

The system of the Ministry of Industry was being consolidated as the result of an experience where man was at the center. Man's education, the development of his consciousness, and moral and material incentives played a principal role.

The element of voluntary work

A new element made its appearance as part of this conception: voluntary work. Che characterized voluntary work as an absolutely selfless contribution, a transformation of work into a social duty — and more than a duty, a social pleasure. The idea of work as a completely integral function of man was also part of the theoretical conception that Che was completing during his years in Cuba.

In August 1964, at a ceremony awarding communist certificates to the best workers of the Ministry of Industry, Che, with his fine human sensibility, cited a few paragraphs from a book by the poet León Felipe:

"But man is a hard-working and stupid child, who has turned work into tiresome toil, he has turned the drumstick into a hoe, and instead of tapping out a song of joy on the land, he began to dig . . ."

The poet continued:

"I want to say that no one has been able to dig to the rhythm of the sun, and that no one has yet cut a stalk of corn with love and grace."

Che stated in reply:

"That's why I wanted to quote those lines. Because today we could tell that great desperate poet to come to Cuba to see how man, after passing through all the stages of capitalist alienation, and after being considered a beast of burden harnessed to the yoke of the exploiter, has rediscovered his course, has found his way back. Today in our Cuba, work takes on new meaning every day. It is done with new joy."

And we say as in the song: Che, you are the poet.

But there was another element in the conception of the new life, the new society, the new man. It was the human warmth that



Left, Militant/Martin Koppel; above, Granma Above, Che Guevara taking over as president of Cuba's National Bank, November 1959. From left, José Naranjo, Osmany Cienfuegos, Osvaldo Dorticós, Che Guevara, (unknown), Felipe Pazos, Enrique Oltuski, Faustino Pérez. Left, Oltuski speaking in a conference "The 21st Century: The Legacy and Relevancy of Che's Works," held in Havana, September 25-27, sponsored by *Tricontinental* magazine.

consciousness also develops. This too was part of forming the new man.

But . . . what was Che's personal life like? How was this human sensibility manifested, a sensibility that has so rarely been reached? Let us poke through the recollections of those who had the privilege of knowing him.

Stories of those who worked with Che

Arsacio Vanegas, the Mexican who trained the future guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra, relates the following:

"I opened the door that afternoon in Mexico City, as I was attending to my friend María Antonia González, who was then ill, and whose house served as general headquarters to the Cuban exiles.

"Before me appeared a young man, with uncombed hair, attractive in appearance, whose clothing indicated that his economic situation was not particularly flourishing.

"I'm looking for Nico López," he said.

"Who's looking for him?"

"Doctor Guevara."

"I'm sorry, but he's not here."

"The voice of María Antonia came from inside the apartment.

"Who is it, Vanegas?"

"A young doctor who's looking for Nico."

"Well, stop fooling around, tell him to go to hell. This isn't the time for social visits."

"It's the owner of the house, María Antonia González, and she doesn't feel well." Vanegas said, trying to smooth things over.

"Boy, does she have a temper," said the young man. He left a message and rapidly left.

"The day Che and Fidel met they talked a long time. I waited outside and when they left the house where they were meeting, Fidel told me:

"Vanegas, my friend, Doctor Guevara is now a member of the July 26 Movement. Make arrangements with him to begin his training."

"I told Che to bring adequate clothing because we would be scaling some hills. We would meet near Guadalupe, at the Buenavista movie theater. Everybody was assembled there and we began to walk north. As we climbed the hill we practiced how to breathe, how to guide ourselves, learning which direction was north, where the sun rose, where it set. Days later we quickened the pace. It was very hard to climb the hill with its steep slopes. Che had gone separately, falling behind, and suddenly I heard a strange sound. I told the guys to keep walking, and I went back to where Che was.

"What's the matter, doctor?" He didn't say anything to me. He made signs for me to wait, and I did so for a long time, until his attack of asthma passed.

"I don't want you to tell anybody what happened, Vanegas, because this must not hinder me from going on the expedition."

"I tried to limit Che in the exercises, because I was concerned with his asthma. Che eventually became very upset, and told me, 'Don't prohibit me from doing exercises.

They don't affect me, and if they do, it's my problem."

"When the exercises began in the gym, I taught the people to defend themselves, how to grab other people's clothes, how to hit someone, what the vulnerable parts are, how to hurt them, even to the point of causing death, and so on. One day he called to me:

"Hey, Vanegas, how long are we going to go through this routine. What is it we're learning? I'm not going to join the circus or be a gymnast."

"I said something rude to him, and grabbed him by surprise and threw him on the canvas. 'This is what I'm showing you, and if you don't know how to defend yourself, I'm going to break your arm.'

"He remained there thinking, and said to me with a humility that I found moving:

"That's OK, Vanegas. You're right. Pardón me."

Enemies of Cuba falsify Che's image

Orlando Borrego, Che's first deputy minister of the Ministry of Industry, tells us:

"Today Che is a figure of world stature. Now that Che is an example and a banner of young people around the world, the enemies of the Cuban revolution are trying to give a false image of his personality. Today those of us who had the privilege of knowing him and living at his side during that fleeting but profound stay in our country, cannot fail to remember his affection and human warmth in his relations with his comrades during wartime, with the workers during peacetime, with his subordinates in the Ministry of Industry, with his family, with members of his escort, with his friends, and above all, with Fidel."

Aleida March, his companion in the mountains of the Escambray, in the battle of Santa Clara, and in life, recalls:

"Che spent very little time at home. Only Saturday night and some Sunday afternoons, after voluntary work. There was never a lot of time to talk. Che told me to study history, that someday we would sit down together in front of the fire to talk about this favorite topic of his, and that was what I studied when he went off to Bolivia.

"After the Africa campaign we were together in Tanzania for almost a month and we talked about many things we had not had time to speak about before. We read and Che wrote. In Prague, for the first time, we had a home life. I cooked, washed the clothes. We lived the life we had not been able to.

"At the beginning Che did not want to return. He thought this would implicate Cuba, but Fidel insisted he come and train.

"During the training in Cuba, I brought Celita and Ernestico, the youngest children, to see him. I didn't bring the older ones, so that they wouldn't recognize him. Che

Continued on Page 10

¹ *Granma* was the name of the boat that carried 82 revolutionary combatants, including Che and Fidel Castro, from Mexico to Cuba in December 1956. The fighters formed the core of the Rebel Army that led the struggle to overturn the U.S.-back Batista dictatorship.

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."

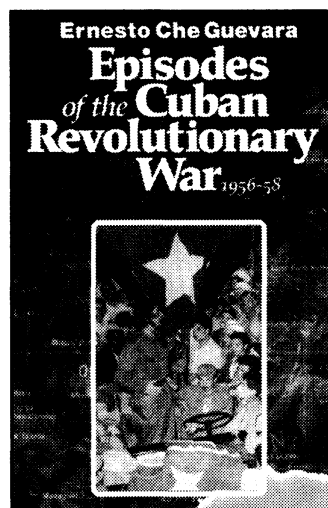
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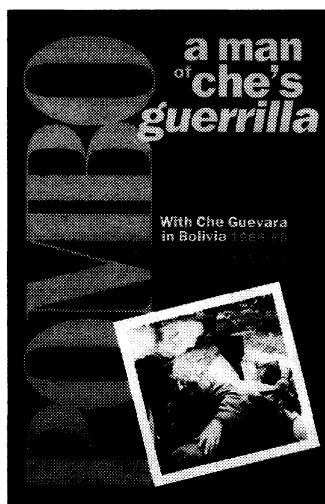
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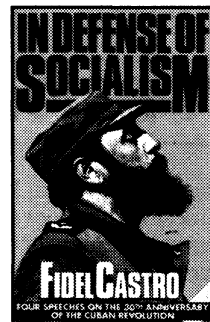
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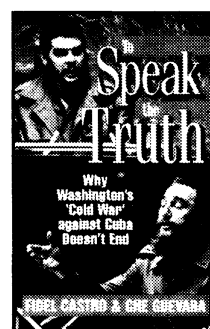
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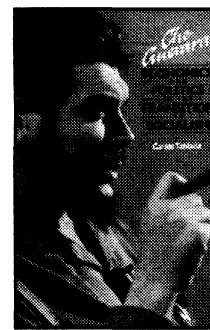


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'Bolivian Diary' film is caricature of Che

The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara. A film written and directed by Richard Dindo. Produced in France/Switzerland, 1994; 94 min.

BY MA'MUD SHIRVANI

Richard Dindo's movie about the guerrilla campaign in Bolivia led by Ernesto Che Guevara, which has been shown extensively at movie theaters in the United States and other countries over the last two years, presents a caricature of the Argentine-born revolutionary and his political course. It is part of a propaganda offensive by the enemies of the Cuban revolution to use the 30th anniversary of the combat in Bolivia by Che and his comrades to divide Guevara from the Cuban revolution and its central

IN REVIEW

leadership and smear his legacy.

Ernesto Che Guevara, one of the great communist leaders of the 20th century, was the product of the Cuban revolution. In 1955 Fidel Castro recruited Che to the Rebel Army that he was organizing in Mexico. After graduating from medical school in 1953, Che had set off to travel the Americas. While in Guatemala a year later, he became involved in political struggle, supporting the elected government of Jacobo Arbenz against the CIA's eventually successful attempts to overthrow it. He then escaped to Mexico, where he soon joined Fidel Castro and other Cuban revolutionaries of the July 26 Movement seeking to overthrow the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the Caribbean island.

In December 1956 Guevara was part of the expedition that landed in Cuba aboard the yacht *Granma* to begin the guerrilla struggle. Originally the troop doctor, Guevara became a commander of the Rebel Army. As he fought alongside Castro and other combatants in the Sierra Maestra he grew to be an outstanding military and political leader. Workers and peasants in Cuba through the revolutionary war of 1956-58 took power, made a socialist revolution, and established the first free territory in the Americas and defended it against the murderous empire to the north.

Following Batista's fall on Jan. 1, 1959, Guevara became one of the central leaders of the new workers and farmers government. He held a number of posts, including president of the National Bank and minister of

industry, and frequently represented Cuba internationally.

In early 1965, Guevara resigned his government posts and responsibilities and left Cuba in order to return to South America to help advance the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles that were sharpening in several countries. Along with a number of volunteers who would later join him in Bolivia, Che went first to the Congo where he aided the anti-imperialist movement founded by Patrice Lumumba. From November 1966 to October 1967 he led a guerrilla movement in Bolivia against that country's military dictatorship that was backed by Washington. Wounded and captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-organized operation on Oct. 8, 1967, he was executed the following day.

Che died in Bolivia in 1967 fighting to extend the free territory to the southern cone of the continent. His actions exemplify the internationalism of the Cuban revolution, and the Cuban communist leadership continues on the same course to this day.

The Bolivian Diary movie gives a different picture, closer to a caricature than a real life portrait. The film discards the Cuban revolution, abstracts Che and makes him into some kind of a romantic, naive, and a good-hearted military man that peasants in Bolivia would not and could not understand.

Produced in a documentary style, Dindo's movie has little to do with the facts or an accurate portrayal of the guerrilla movement in Bolivia. At the outset, the narrator sets the political frame of the film. He states that in February 1965 Che made a speech in Algiers allegedly "criticizing the socialist camp for exploiting the Third World countries, thus collaborating with Western imperialism." Earlier you hear the narrator saying that Che was opposed to the policy of peaceful coexistence because it allowed "the Russians and Americans to divide up the world," putting words in Che's mouth.

When Che returns to Havana from a trip in Africa "Castro and Che spent the next two days behind closed doors. No one knows what goes on between the two men or exactly what it is they discussed." The narrator continues, "Nevertheless a week later Che submits his resignation to the Ministry. From that moment on he will never again be before public eye." The implication is clear and it is the same theme that the Hollywood film *Che* pushed in the late 1960s, where Omar Sharif played Che. That Sharif movie was a crude "cold-war" imperialist production. Dindo's movie has a left veneer,



Dindo's movie attempts to regurgitate the lie that Cuban president Fidel Castro (right) and Ernesto Che Guevara (left) had a falling out before Che left for Bolivia. In his letter to Fidel in 1965, Guevara wrote, "I have always been identified with the foreign policy of our revolution, and I continue to be. Wherever I am, I will feel the responsibility of being a Cuban revolutionary, and I shall behave as such."

but conveys the same message regardless of writer's and director's intentions.

The rest of the film includes scenes of the locations where Che and his comrades moved along the mountains of Bolivia, selected quotes from Che's *Bolivian Diary* and interviews with some of the peasants who had come across the guerrillas.

One peasant remembers the guerrillas as very polite, saying they paid for what they took, "and they said that they wanted to transform the country, introduce communism, and that would be good for us." Another peasant recalled one of the combatants with Che, Inti Peredo, gave a speech to a group of peasants, saying "we have brought you together so that you understand that we are not bad people. We are fighting for the poor and the dispossessed." Meanwhile, the camera pans across a photo of peasants, pausing for a rather long time on each face who just stares, giving the impression that the words have fallen on deaf ears.

A peasant woman tells Che "they say you take things from the peasants without paying them," to which Che supposedly responds, "That is not true, señora, the peasants have betrayed us. We are fighting for the poor, for humble people. But they have never helped us." Gloom and resentment permeates the film, not the combatants' determination to fight against great odds as they did, and the leadership capacity, and strategic thinking of their commander that reading of Che's entire *Bolivian Diary* conveys. The movie portrays toilers as victims, lacking the capacity to organize and fight.

Quotes from Che's *Bolivian Diary* are usually taken out of context. For example,

disagreement with Mario Monje, general secretary of the Communist party of Bolivia, is portrayed in the movie falsely as a personal power struggle on who was going to be the military commander of the movement. And there is no mention of the fact that the leadership of the Bolivian CP sabotaged the guerrilla movement.

The disagreements between Guevara and Monje were not personal, but were based on fundamentally divergent political strategies. Che was fighting to emulate the Cuban socialist revolution, and the Stalinist leadership of the Bolivian CP practiced class collaboration and looked the other way to find possibilities to reform capitalism.

Che's strategic prognosis of the Latin American revolution was confirmed shortly after his murder by the Bolivian generals after consultation with Washington. This is elaborated by Mary-Alice Waters in her introduction to Che's *Bolivian Diary*. Mass struggles broke out in Bolivia in 1970, in Argentina 1969 with a semi-insurrection in the working class city of Córdoba, and rising working-class and peasant militancy in Chile that carried the Socialist Party leader Salvador Allende into presidency in 1970. But a conscious revolutionary leadership that could lead the workers and peasants on a continental scale remained absent.

Finally, the film belittles Che's participation in the liberation battles in Africa, and says in passing that he went there "to participate in an obscure liberation battle in the former Belgian Congo." That is not how liberation fighters assessed it. Nelson Mandela, who was in an apartheid prison at the time, spoke on this point a quarter century later, at a rally of tens of thousands in Matanzas, Cuba. Mandela acknowledged the impact of the contributions made by the "Great Che Guevara" and said that Che's revolutionary actions in Africa "were too powerful for any prison censors to hide from us."

After Che's death Cuban revolutionists continued to fight shoulder to shoulder with workers and peasants in Africa in their struggle for liberation. Over a span of 15 years several hundred thousand Cuban volunteers fought alongside the Angolan government forces and defeated the invading armies of the South African apartheid regime, the final blow being dealt to them at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in early 1988.

Referring to this victory in the same speech in Matanzas, Mandela said, "It is unparalleled in African history to have another people rise to the defense of one of us."

That is also how the conscious workers in industrialized countries and the oppressed peoples of the East saw the Russian revolution, early in the century. The internationalism of the Bolsheviks in Lenin's time and Cubans today are not isolated episodes in history, but are linked by the line of march of the working class for power. Che is part of that continuity. And a new generation of young fighters coming into politics around the world look to Ernesto Che Guevara as an internationalist revolutionary to emulate.

They will find distortions and slanders in Dindo's film. Reading what Che wrote himself in the *Bolivian Diary*, as well as Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956-58, Pombo: A Man of Che's 'Guerrilla': With Che Guevara in Bolivia 1966-68* by Cuban brigadier general Harry Villegas — all published by Pathfinder — will provide an accurate picture of the Cuban revolution and the Bolivia campaign from the mouths of the combatants.

Speech by Enrique Oltuski

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wanted to have children. The children were more attached to me, because they saw their father so little. He used to say: 'Enjoy them now because when they're older they'll be mine. Before the birth of Aleidita, our first child, Che thought it would be a boy and wanted to name him Ernesto. I said no, that calling him Ernesto Guevara would be a large burden for him to carry. 'We'll name him Camilo,'² Che compromised. 'That way he'll be a combination of two guerrilla fighters.'

"I didn't think Che would one day leave Cuba, until he returned from Africa and told me that this time the departure for Bolivia would be definitive. Che did not think about death; he was always an optimist. He thought he would triumph and that we would be reunited later.

"Che liked poetry. He left behind letters to his children, his parents, and his close comrades. He left me a tape recording of his voice, with the poems he loved most."

Revolution is more than social justice

Harry Villegas, "Pombo," who was with Che from age 16, tells us:

"With Che we learned what the revolution really was. The revolution was not only a question of social justice, but a moral question. For us it was a new outlook on life; simply put, it was to become a new man. The revolution wasn't a question of living one day at a time; Che set goals for us, objectives for which it was necessary to fight each day. That was what it meant to be a

revolutionary.

"My relations with Che began as those between a commander and his subordinate. Che was always our commander, our guide, and as such we respected him. But gradually and in a very subtle way, these relations became transformed into more fraternal ties and sentiments, of comrades, of friends. We saw his concern for us, as if he were our father. He wanted to prepare us for when the revolution triumphed, so we could be useful in building the new society.

"On October 8, 1967, I was 100 meters from Che in the Yuro ravine, although I didn't know this at the time. The ravine was in front of us and further, behind the ravine, was the little schoolhouse at La Higuera. We saw the movement, we heard the soldiers speaking, all of which gives an idea of how close we were.

"The news reached us via the radio. They gave details of how Che was dressed, of his two watches, since he also carried the watch Tuma had left with him before dying, to give to his son. All that convinced us that Che had really been killed.

"For us this was a mortal blow. At first, we felt crestfallen. But we were children of Che. We were the clay he had molded, and we understood that one had to overcome that state of mind, and we were able to overcome it. We reached the conclusion that the war was not over, that Che continued to be present among us with his ideas and his example, that it was necessary to continue the struggle until the final victory, something that revolutionaries could achieve."

Reviewing everything said by Vanegas, Aleida, Borrego, Harry, and many comrades who knew Che, who lived side-by-side with him, who were influenced by his ideas and above all his example, confirms once again his exceptional qualities as a revolutionary, because a revolutionary is one who changes things. His thinking knew no boundaries, and neither did his confidence in man.

The idea that the development of social consciousness would give birth to the new man, where intelligence triumphs over natural forces and where both of these triumph over personal selfishness, is the central concept of his thought and the force that moves and will continue to move men of good will around the world.

All this intellectual and physical strength harbored a sensitive man, human, who loved, laughed, joked, composed and recited verses, and who at the same time would suffer the injustices of the world he wanted to change.

The example, the teachings of Che have not died with him, nor have the men who can carry them out. Because despite having been an exceptional individual, Che was not someone out of reach. As Fidel once said about Camilo, among the peoples of the world there are many Ches, and they will complete his work.

² Camilo Cienfuegos was a *Granma* expeditionary who rose to commander in the Rebel Army in January 1959. He became Rebel Army chief of staff. His plane was lost at sea on October 28, 1959.

Cubans celebrate Che, other combatants

Continued from front page
attractive to millions as the horrors imperialism offers humanity are increasingly exposed. Tens of thousands packed the square at the entrance to this city to honor the revolutionary leader and his fellow communist fighters who fell in battle in Bolivia 30 years ago. The rally and military ceremony were the culmination of ten days of activities in which the remains of Guevara and six of his co-combatants, recently discovered and returned from Bolivia, were interred here.

The Argentine-born revolutionary joined the July 26th Movement and Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro in 1955, and soon became one of the outstanding commanders of the popular insurrectionary movement that overthrew the U.S.-backed tyranny of Fulgencio Batista. After the 1959 victory he shouldered central responsibilities in the new government, such as director of the National Bank and of the Ministry of Industry, as Cuba's revolutionary vanguard led millions of workers and farmers on a course independent of U.S. imperialist interests, opening the socialist revolution in the Americas.

In Bolivia, Che led a unit of Bolivian, Peruvian, and Cuban revolutionary combatants in 1966-67 in a struggle to topple the

Next week's Militant will feature the complete text of Fidel Castro's speech in Santa Clara

military regime there and forge an international movement capable of accomplishing in countries throughout Latin America what working people had proven was possible in Cuba. Che was wounded in combat and captured on Oct. 8, 1967, and the Bolivian military, after seeking agreement from their mentors in Washington, murdered him the following day.

Starting on October 11, for three days, thousands of people — 72,000 in the first day alone — filed through the José Martí monument in Havana's Plaza of the Revolution to honor Che and six other fighters in the Bolivian campaign. These revolutionaries, also known by their noms de guerre, are: Alberto Fernández (Pacho), Orlando Pantoja (Antonio), René Martínez Tamayo (Arturo), and Carlos Coello (Tuma) of Cuba; Simón Cuba (Willy) of Bolivia; and Juan Pablo Chang (Chino) of Peru.

The families of Simón Cuba and Juan Pablo Chang had asked that their remains be brought to Cuba together with those of their fellow combatants.

On October 14, a military procession took the seven caskets to Santa Clara, following the same route — in reverse — that the units of the Rebel Army commanded by Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos took in January 1959 as they marched victoriously on Havana. Tens of thousands of people lined the streets for mile after mile, not only in Havana but through numerous towns, villages, and rural areas along the 200-mile route.

Most people stood silently by the road as the caravan passed through. Some brought portraits of Che apparently taken from their living rooms, or signs painted with the slogan *Hasta la victoria siempre!* (Forward ever until victory). In cities such as Havana and Matanzas, many people hung Cuban flags and the red-and-black flag of the July 26 Movement from their apartment windows. The population of Santa Clara turned out in force to welcome the procession. During the following two days, groups of workers, schoolchildren, and many others stood in long lines to pay homage to the revolutionary fighters who lay in state in the José Martí library in the city center before being interred in a mausoleum, which is combined with a museum, in the Ernesto Che Guevara Plaza.

A few days earlier, youth from the Federation of University Students (FEU) held a march through the streets of Santa Clara celebrating Che's life with colorful banners. A group of several dozen students from Sancti Spiritu, east of Santa Clara, organized a bicycle contingent that pedaled through some of the key sites in central Cuba where Guevara's Column 8 of the Rebel Army had passed on its historic march westward into Las Villas province, which cut the island in two and captured Santa Clara, Cuba's third-largest city, on Jan. 1, 1959, sealing Batista's fate.

The night before the main rally, groups of youth lit bonfires throughout the city. Bringing guitars and Cuban flags, they sang



The population of Santa Clara turned out in mass for the celebration

songs and read poetry celebrating Che.

Under a burning sun, people filled the main square early on October 17. The mood was a mixture of popular celebration and solemn pride.

Fidel Castro was accompanied on the reviewing stand by Raúl Castro, minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, and other generals; other members of the newly elected Political Bureau of the Communist Party; relatives of the seven honored combatants; veterans of Column 8; and other invited guests.

Castro gave a brief speech before a quiet, disciplined crowd that seemed intent on absorbing every word. He described how Che Guevara's revolutionary life and struggle were intertwined with the Cuban revolution's history and political course.

"The invasion from the Sierra Maestra through immense and unprotected plains, and the capture of the city of Santa Clara with just a few men, are some of the actions that show the feats he was capable of achieving," he said.

As though addressing Che himself, the Cuban president declared, "Thank you for coming to reinforce us in this difficult struggle we are waging today to save the

ideas for which you fought so hard, to save the revolution, the country, and its socialist conquests — the part of your dreams that have been fulfilled."

He added, "This land, which is your land, this people, which is your people, this revolution, which is your revolution, continue to uphold the banners of socialism with honor and pride."

Answering those, both foes and would-be friends, who depict Guevara as a reckless adventurer or a utopian dreamer at best, Castro insisted that the Bolivian *guerrilla* was based on a solid political perspective. "His ideas about a revolution in his country of origin and the rest of South America, despite enormous difficulties, were possible [to achieve]. If they had been achieved, perhaps the world today would be different."

"Vietnam demonstrated that it was possible to fight against imperialism's interventionist forces and defeat them," Castro pointed out. "The Sandinistas [in Nicaragua] defeated one of the most powerful U.S. puppets. The Salvadoran revolutionaries were on the verge of attaining victory."

"In Africa, apartheid was defeated, despite the fact that it possessed nuclear weapons. China, thanks to the heroic struggle of

its workers and peasants, is today one of the countries with the best prospects in the world. Hong Kong had to be returned after 150 years of [British] occupation."

The Cuban leader noted that "not all times or circumstances require the same methods or tactics. But nothing can stop the course of history. Its objective laws have enduring relevance. Che based himself on these laws and had absolute faith in man."

Che's ideas attractive to fighters today

A combatant may die, Castro stated, but his ideas do not have to. "Those interested in eliminating him, in making him disappear, were incapable of understanding that he had already left his indelible mark on history and ... would become a symbol for all the poor of this earth, of whom there are billions."

In fact, he underlined, the ideas Che was fighting for are more important and attractive today for fighters because of the brutality and decay of the existing order. "The greater the injustice, exploitation, inequality, unemployment, poverty, hunger, and misery in human society, the greater his figure becomes," he explained.

Castro concluded his speech declaring, "Welcome, heroic comrades of the reinforcement units! The enemy will never be able to conquer the trenches of ideas and justice that you will defend alongside our people! And together we will continue fighting for a better world!"

Many of those taking part in the ceremonies here echoed this conviction. Isidro Reyes, a high school teacher, who along with many others stood in line for hours waiting to pay tribute to Che, remarked, "The U.S. government is annoyed by the meetings in homage to Che that are taking place in many countries of the world." He said he had read that a U.S. State Department official had tried to dismiss the commemorations in Cuba and elsewhere by saying they meant Cubans were "stuck in the past" in a changing world in which Che was irrelevant. "But the reason there are more sincere people interested in Che's thought is precisely because the world is changing, and it's getting worse for the peoples of the Third

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Meeting protests denial of visa for Villegas

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

LOS ANGELES — More than 200 students and others filled Haines Hall at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) on the evening of October 22 to mark the 30th anniversary of the combat in Bolivia of Ernesto Che Guevara and his comrades. The meeting, titled "Ernesto Che Guevara and Cuba: Past, Present and Future," was sponsored by an array of student organizations, including African Student Union, La Gente de Aztlán, Latin American Students Association (LASA), MEChA, the Cultural Affairs and Academic Affairs commissions of the Undergraduate Students Association, and the Young Socialists.

David Kunzle, professor of art history at UCLA, opened the meeting. He informed

participants that the U.S. State Department had just denied a visa to Harry Villegas, also known by his nom-de-guerre Pombo, who had been invited as the main speaker. Villegas, today a brigadier general of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, fought with Che Guevara during Cuba's 1956-58 revolutionary war in the Sierra Maestra and as part of internationalist missions in the Congo in 1965 and Bolivia.

Kunzle and other professors at UCLA and other campuses here had invited Villegas to speak at their classes. "The State Department considers him a threat to the interests of the government of this country, and they said they don't give members of the Cuban government a platform to speak in the U.S.," Kunzle said. He called on students and others to protest "this undemocratic decision."

Kunzle urged everyone to take part in the symposium "Thirty years later: A retrospective on Che Guevara, Twentieth-Century Utopias and Dystopias," scheduled for October 24-25 on the same campus. Villegas had been invited to address that conference.

Participants approved a letter to the State Department by the sponsoring organizations demanding that it reverse its decision and grant Villegas a visa "so we can organize another event to hear him at a later date."

Kendya Mosley, president of the Undergraduate Students Association Council, the UCLA's student government, chaired the program along with Gale Shangold, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). To loud applause, Mosley read a message Villegas had just sent to the event. "Che's example is more and more relevant because there are more evils that afflict the societies of the third world: more poverty, more hunger, more illiteracy," Villegas said.

Doug Williams, president of the African Student Union, presented greetings to the meeting on behalf of his organization. Hugo Maldonado, chair of the campus MEChA, presented a 14-minute video interview with Villegas shown on Cuban TV last year.

Sandra Escalante, chairperson of LASA, introduced the featured speakers: Félix Wilson, deputy chief of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., and Emilio Pérez, another officer of the Interests Section. "Che's life represents what Cuba is today and what it has been for 38 years: An example to the struggles of the dispossessed and exploited around the world," Wilson said. "The defeat of the invading armies of the South African apartheid regime in Angola two decades after Che was killed in Bolivia was a by-product of the internationalism of Che and the Cuban revolution."

Wilson and Pérez are invited to speak at Kunzle's class at UCLA on "Revolutionary Art" October 23. They will also address the classes of Marjorie Bray and Enrique Ochoa, professors of Latin American Studies at California State University Los Angeles, later that evening, and speak at another class at California State University Long Beach on the morning of October 24. Their visit will end with a meeting at the UNITE union hall here on the evening of October 25. Villegas had also been invited to speak at all these events.

Protest messages demanding the State Department grant Villegas a visa can be called or faxed to James Theis, Cuba Desk, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C. Street, NW, Washington D.C. 20520; Tel: (202) 647-9273; Fax: (202) 736-4475.

Why is Washington afraid to let Harry Villegas of Cuba come to the U.S.?

Tues., Oct. 28, 7:00 p.m.

Cougar Den, University Center
University of Houston
(Main campus, Gate 1)

For more information call U of H History Dept. (713) 743-3083 or Cuba Coalition of Houston (713) 313-7355

Protests greet Clinton in Latin America

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ment released by Washington that characterized corruption in Brazil as "endemic." Clinton apologized, claiming the description was "an appalling error."

In Argentina, according to an Associated Press report, Clinton faced protests "at every step of his two-day visit." Riot cops in full gear were deployed by the Argentine government October 16 to crack down on the hundreds of anti-imperialist activists. Two hundred protesters were detained. At a staged Argentine television program, designed to welcome the U.S. president to South America, youth from the audience grilled Clinton with questions challenging U.S. policy. In both Argentina and Venezuela chants like "Clinton No, Che Guevara Yes" were part of the actions. Guevara, born in Argentina, became one the central leaders of the 1959 revolution in Cuba, which overthrew the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. A convoy of a half-dozen cars drove past the foreign ministry building in Brazil waving banners with photos of Guevara. Some 30 protesters there demanded, "Get rid of the embargo [on Cuba]!" as one of their chants, referring to the trade and travel sanctions the U.S. government has enforced against Havana for more than three decades.

During the tour, Clinton made moves to strengthen U.S. economic ties to the three South American countries. He was accompanied by U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and a number of congressional officials. In Argentina, Clinton announced plans to give that regime "major non-NATO ally" status, making it the first Latin American government to join Israel, South Korea, Egypt, Jordan, Japan, and Australia under that designation. Clinton praised Buenos Aires for taken part in "peacekeeping operations" from Bosnia to Cyprus to Haiti. The government of Chile, which just got a waiver on U.S.-imposed restrictions of military sales and is now buying F-16 fighter jets, opposes Washington's

decision to give the Argentine government.

Clinton held up Venezuela as a positive example of carrying out austerity. "Americans look to Venezuela and see a growing economy, renewed and strengthened by sacrifice," he declared. In recent years the government in Caracas has rolled back the severance pay system for workers and is now looking towards "reforming" the social security system by partially privatizing it.

In Brazil, the U.S. president was looking to push further along the lines of the 1994 Summit of the Americas, where Brazilian president Fernando Cardoso agreed to work

toward forming a western hemispheric trade bloc dubbed the "Free Trade Area of the Americas." However, many Brazilian capitalists are hesitant. When the trade barriers for U.S. toy barons were lowered in 1994, more than 520 toy factories closed over two years. Some 15,000 workers were fired. "We don't want a U.S. economic invasion, at least not until we are in a position to compete," said Synesio Batista da Costa, president of the Brazilian Association of Toy Makers, following Clinton's speech to business leaders in São Paulo. Clinton stated that he accepted the Brazilian government's right to

increase business dealings with the European Union through Mercosur, a South American regional trade bloc. But he made a point of boasting that Washington has lower tariffs than its European counterparts.

Before the tour to the three Latin American countries began, Clinton was attempting to get "fast track" legislation passed in Congress. This would give the head of state the power to make trade proposals to Congress that would have to be voted up or down with no amendments. As of Clinton's tour, the "fast track" legislation was still being debated in the U.S. Congress.

California poultry workers demand raise

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life of the contract — with lump sum bonuses totaling \$1,500. At the same time, the company is demanding increases in medical co-payments and monthly insurance premiums. They are asking workers to pay \$600 a year more than the \$230 that they pay under the expired contract.

"I have been working here for 22 years," Ross Parcel said. "At the end of the contract the company is offering it will be \$8.95. That's ridiculous after 22 years. They run the newer lines at 160 birds a minute."

At full speed, the plant processes nearly 480,000 chickens in 24 hours. Foster Farms claims the plant is now running at 50 percent capacity — 250,000 a-day. Strikers say otherwise. After an hour on picket line, five trucks — two in, 3 out — pass through the gate. One *mexicano* striker, a 10-year vet-

eran, who requested anonymity, said, "They are running one of the five lines" and that can be no more than "100,000 chickens."

Joe Del Toro, a "chicken hanger" for 13 years, described to the *San Francisco Chronicle* his job. He works in a room dimly lit with red light to "keep the birds calm," grabbing 24 live birds a minute and hanging them by their feet on a conveyor belt. "This job I have, it's really something" — 11,000 chickens a day. "Your hands get big, just from grabbing so many chickens."

Along the picket line several women workers wear medical braces — a sign of carpal tunnel syndrome and other repetitive motion arm injuries.

With chants in Spanish, Punjab, and English resonating in the background, several strikers expressed their appreciation of the support they've received from other union-

ists. Earlier in the week, one worker reported, a United Parcel Service driver stopped his truck to give strikers two cases of sodas. Another said that United Farm Workers and Teamsters members from Watsonville strawberry fields joined the line.

The police are ever-present. A command post occupies a side street across from the picket line. Police barricades run parallel to several sections of the fence around the plant. Two sheriff's deputies ride horses back and forth along the line. The California Highway Patrol stands watch over the main intersection where trucks turn onto the street leading to the plant.

Osborne Hart is a member of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 1584. Norton Sandler, a member of IAM Lodge 1781, contributed to this article.

—CALENDAR—

FLORIDA

Miami

Socialist Workers Campaign Rally. Hear: Janet Post, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami; and Rollande Girard, Socialist Workers candidate for Miami City Commission, District 5. Sat., Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m. *Socialist Workers Campaign Headquarters, 137 NE 54th St. For more information, call: (305) 756-9917.*

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Socialist Alternative: How Workers and Farmers Can Fight for Their Own Government. Hear: Bob Miller, Socialist Workers gubernatorial candidate. Meet Megan Arney and Brock Satter socialist candidates for the 29th State Assembly District. Sun., Nov. 2, 4 p.m. *87 A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4.*

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Socialist Workers Campaign Rally. Meet Olga Rodríguez for mayor and other Socialist Workers candidates. Sat., Nov. 1, Reception 6:30, program 7:30 p.m. *59 Fourth Ave. (at Bergen St). Donation: \$5. For more information, call (718) 399-7257.*

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Report from Cuba. Hear: Rev. Estela Hernández Márquez, president, Ecumenical Distribution Committee in Cuba and co-pastor of William Carey Baptist Church of Havana. Sat., Nov. 1, 7 p.m. *Old First Reformed United Church of Christ, 153 N. 4th St. (at Race St.)* Hernández will also speak on Sun., Nov. 2, 11 a.m. at *Community of Joy United Church of Christ, Fairhill St. & Chew Ave. in Olney.* Sponsored by Cuba Support Coalition. *For more information, call (215) 232-7823, or (215) 482-4685.*

Pittsburgh

Socialist Workers Campaign Rally. Hear: Edwin Fruit, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, and member of International Association of Machinists Local 1976; Leroy Watson, Socialist Workers candidate for City Council 6th District, and member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 1843. Sponsored by Western Pennsylvania Socialist Workers 1997 Campaign. Sat., Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. For more information, call (412) 381-9785.*

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Washington Escalates Drive Against Immigrants. A panel of immigrant rights activists: Angela Sanbrano, executive director, CARACEN (invited); José de Paz, executive director, No Te Dejes; Olly Mongollón, Movement for Latin American Action; Barry Fatland, Socialist Workers Party; and rail unionist: Sat., Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. *2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (213) 380-9460.*

San Francisco

The Culture War and the Ruling Class Offensive against Working People and the Oppressed. Panel discussion. Sat., Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m. *3284 23rd St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (415) 285-5323.*

ILLINOIS

Chicago

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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

"Quite a stable system —
"Sales at the nation's biggest retailers took a slide last month, hurt by unseasonably warm weather and the funeral of Princess Diana, which



Harry
Ring

kept many customers out of the stores and glued to their televisions." — October 10 San Francisco *Chronicle*.

Easy on the expectations — The European Union rejected a proposal

to aim for the creation of 12 million jobs in five years and cut Europe's jobless rate from 10.7 percent to 7 percent.

A wire service report said the ministers of the 15 member countries "expressed concern that the adoption of such headline targets would raise false expectations that could lead to a popular backlash if the ambitious objectives were not met."

Enjoy — A scientist called in by the British government reports that E. Coli, the sometimes lethal meat contaminant, is now more common than salmonella. He estimates that a third of the uncooked chickens sold in Britain are contaminated and that each year up to half a million

people suffer food poisoning from it.

The British Way of Death — Smaller British funeral companies complain that unscrupulous conglomerates are offering "cash for corpses." They point to the practice of offering contributions to nursing homes in return for the inside track on death notices and pay staffers for placing the deceased in shrouds bearing their corporate logo.

Isn't even his nickel — The prez loves to get on the horn. He phoned the Superbowl champs in their locker room and put in calls to other winners, not to mention inviting donors over for coffee. But when Jody Williams won the Nobel

Peace Prize for her activity against land mines, Clinton skipped the phone and sent her a letter. His administration has refused to sign an international anti-mine treaty.

Miracle of the marketplace — In Russia, the Red Cross urged the wealthy to help an estimated 31 million people who are so impoverished that it's feared many may not survive the winter.

Meanwhile, reports the *Times* of London, with the drying up of government funding, health care "has deteriorated to the point of catastrophe."

Who says they're anti-entitlement? — Ex-Congressperson Daniel Rostenkowski was released

after doing 15 months on a corruption conviction. At 69, he may find it hard getting a job, but he'll probably scrape by on his \$100,000-a-year federal pension, which he drew even while in the joint.

Inching toward the millennium — In a test run at 800 parishes, the Church of England has altered the marriage vow so that a woman need not declare she will "obey" her spouse.

Join the fun — If you get a kick out of jabbing at the inanities of capitalism, how about sending clippings to this column? Great Society, c/o Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Los Angeles CA, 90006. Fax: (213) 380-1268.

What was New Economic Policy in Soviet Union?

Below we reprint excerpts from *Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922-23* that explain how the Bolshevik government initiated the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. In 1920 the revolutionary government in the Soviet Union defeated forces loyal to the capitalists, landlords, and the tsar which had launched a civil war to overthrow the workers state that was formed as a result of the October 1917 revolution led by the Bolsheviks. The war provoked a severe economic crisis that weakened the worker-peasant alliance. Through the NEP, the Soviet government restored production and trade, stabilized the currency, began regaining the confidence of the peasantry, while increasing production. Copyright © 1995 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

BY V.I. LENIN

The New Economic Policy is important for us primarily as a means of testing whether we are really establishing a link with the peasant economy. In the preceding period of development of our revolution, when all our attention and all our efforts were concentrated mainly on — or almost entirely absorbed by — the task of repelling invasion, we could not devote the necessary attention to this link. We had other things to think about. To some extent we could and had to ignore this bond when we were confronted by the absolutely urgent and overshadowing task of warding off the danger of being immediately crushed by the gigantic forces of world imperialism....

Owing to the course taken by the development of war events, by the development of political events, by the development of capitalism in the old civilized West, and owing also to the social and political conditions

that developed in the colonies, we were the first to make a breach in the old bourgeois world at a time when our country was economically, if not the most backward, at any rate one of the most backward countries in the world....

We began to develop the new economy in an entirely new way, brushing aside everything old. Had we not begun to develop it we would have been utterly defeated in the very first months, in the very first years. But the fact that we began to develop this new economy with such splendid audacity does not mean that we must necessarily continue in the same way. Why should we? There is no reason.

From the very beginning we said that we had to undertake an entirely new task, and that unless we received speedy assistance from our comrades, the workers in the capitalistically more developed countries, we should encounter incredible difficulties and certainly make a number of mistakes. The main thing is to be able dispassionately to examine where such mistakes have been made and to start again from the beginning. If we begin from the beginning, not twice, but many times, it will show that we are not bound by prejudice and that we are approaching our task, which is the greatest the world has ever seen, with a sober outlook....

We are developing our economy together with the peasantry. We shall have to alter it many times and organize it in such a way that it will provide a link between our socialist work on large-scale industry and agriculture and the work every peasant is doing as best he can, struggling out of poverty, without philosophizing (for how can philosophizing help him to extricate himself from his position and save him from the very real danger of a painful death from starvation?).

We must reveal this link so that we may see it clearly, so that all the people may see it, and so that the whole mass of the peasantry may see that there is a connection between their present severe, incredibly ruined, incredibly impoverished and painful existence and the work which is being done for the sake of remote socialist ideals. We must bring about a situation where the ordinary, rank-and-file working man realizes that he has obtained some improvement, and that he has obtained it not in the way a few peasants obtained improvements under the rule of landowners and capitalists, when every improvement (undoubtedly there were improvements and very big ones) was accompanied by insult, derision, and humiliation for the muzhik [peasant], by violence against the masses, which not a single peasant has forgotten, and which will not be forgotten in Russia for decades.

From retreat to renewed advance

Shall we accomplish our immediate task or not? Is this NEP fit for anything or not? If the retreat turns out to be correct tactics, we must link up with the peasant masses while we are in retreat and subsequently march forward with them a hundred times more slowly, but firmly and unswervingly, in a way that will always make it apparent to them that we are really marching forward. Then our cause will be absolutely invincible, and no power on earth can vanquish us....

Link up with the peasant masses, with the rank-and-file working peasants, and begin to move forward immeasurably, infinitely more slowly than we expected, but in such a way that the entire mass will actually move forward with us. If we do that we shall in time



Peasants farming in the Soviet Union, 1925.

progress much more quickly than we even dream of today. This, in my opinion, is the first fundamental political lesson of the New Economic Policy....

The capitalists create an economic link with the peasants in order to amass wealth; you must create a link with the peasant economy in order to strengthen the economic power of our proletarian state. You have the advantage over the capitalists in that political power is in your hands; you have a number of economic weapons at your command; the only trouble is that you cannot make proper use of them. Look at things more soberly. Cast off the tinsel, the

festive communist garments, learn a simple thing simply, and we shall beat the private capitalist. We possess political power; we possess a host of economic weapons. If we beat capitalism and create a link with peasant farming, we shall become an absolutely invincible power. Then the building of socialism will not be the task of that drop in the ocean called the Communist Party, but the task of the entire mass of the working people. Then the rank-and-file peasants will see that we are helping them, and they will follow our lead. Consequently, even if the pace is a hundred times slower, it will be a million times more certain and more sure.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



November 3, 1972

The second round of "weekender" strikes by powerful locals of the United Auto Workers Union against key assembly plants in the General Motors complex began Friday, Oct. 20.

Plants hit this time were Fairfax Kan. (4,100 workers); Janesville, Wis. (4,900 workers); and Arlington, Texas (3,500 workers). All three plants are among the 18 managed by General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD), which has a total of 85,000 workers on its payroll.

The rash of strikes aims not only to disrupt GM production schedules but also to publicly expose and discredit the GMAD product.

In St. Louis, Edward Gregory, a GM inspector for nearly 20 years, charged that the company turn out cars with shoddy paint, wrong parts, and safety violations because it refuses to hire enough workers to do the work properly.

"They cut out so much manpower these guys can't do it," Gregory said. "The cars pile up on the end of the line. We've lost one-third of our inspectors. If you don't have someone to inspect the cars and write up rejection sheets, then the repairmen aren't going to do the work." (*Detroit Free Press*, Oct. 10.)



November 3, 1947

Sitting in Washington as prosecutor, judge and jury is the Thomas-Rankin Un-American Committee "investigating" the movies. The two-bit politicians in charge are well suited for the task of whipping up the red-hunt and grateful for the opportunity to bask in the limelight. In the name of "Americanism" of the 200% Ku Klux Klan variety they violate the basic civil liberty of freedom of thought, guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

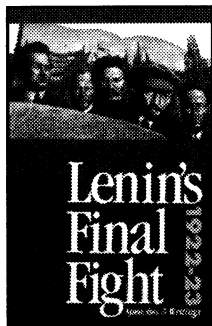
The truth is, Hollywood is "loyal" — not to the American people — but to Wall Street and the State Department. When World War II preparations started, Hollywood produced war propaganda films. When the White House and the Kremlin got together, appropriate propaganda films such as *Mission to Moscow* were ground out, giving the Stalinist version of the Moscow Trials, endorsed at that time by the State Department. As the current drive for war against the Soviet Union swings into high, we learn that Hollywood is already busy preparing anti-Russian films as its contribution to atomic destruction.

The Hollywood "probe" started off with open recommendation from Representative Thomas to the Hollywood employers that they fire and blacklist all "communist" employers.

from Pathfinder

Lenin's Final Fight Speeches and Writings, 1922-23 V.I. Lenin

In the early 1920s Lenin waged a political battle in the leadership of the Communist Party of the USSR to maintain the course that had enabled the workers and peasants to overthrow the old tsarist empire, carry out the first successful socialist revolution, and begin building a world communist movement. Also available in Spanish. \$19.95



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

Vote Socialist Workers!

In the 1997 elections for city and state offices across the United States, the *Militant* urges readers to vote for the Socialist Workers Party candidates in your area.

The socialist campaigns advance a course of action and a program in the interests of working people around the globe, and have been part of the resistance of working people to employer and government attacks. This includes backing the fight of rail workers at Amtrak for a wage increase; encouraging broad labor support for striking Teamsters at United Parcel Service; building and seeking union involvement in protests demanding an end to police brutality in New York; publicizing the fights of workers involved in union organizing drives; and joining in recent actions in defense of immigrant rights.

These candidates provide the only working-class voice in the elections. They set an example for the labor movement of the need to break from support to the two parties of the super-wealthy minority — the Democrats and Republicans — and chart an independent working-class political course as a means to increase the effectiveness of the struggles of workers and their allies.

The Socialist Workers campaigns defend the Cuban revolution against Washington's unceasing aggression and explain its example for working people. The candidates extend active solidarity and support to struggles for national liberation, from the fight for a united Ireland free of British domination to the demand of the Korean people for the removal of U.S. troops and the reunification of their country. They condemn imperialist military and economic alliances as chauvinist attempts to pit workers of one country against another. They speak out against the drive to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The socialist campaigners point a way forward for labor in the fight against the growing and devastating impact of the world capitalist economic crisis by advancing a program to unite working people internationally. Unemployment persists at double-digit levels across much of Europe, is a constant scourge across the Third World, and is higher in the current U.S. economic upturn than in most recessions since World War II. To combat the consequences of this and the drive by the employers to pit the

employed against the unemployed, the socialists call for a reduction in the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, along with a massive public works program to build needed infrastructure and social projects such as schools and housing.

The candidates put defense of affirmative action at the center of their campaign, joining protests in Texas, California, and elsewhere that are part of fighting back against reactionary legislation that has already had devastating consequences for enrollment of Blacks and Latinos in a number of university programs. The struggle to push back the government assault on this hard won gain for working people is a crucial one for the entire labor movement.

During the course of the campaign the true relations between the big imperialist powers and the Third World again revealed their true colors with the collapse of what had been touted by the big-business media as the Asian "miracle." Working people are the ones to bear the brunt of the currency devaluation and stock market collapse in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and elsewhere. The socialist campaign points to the need for working people and our unions to join together internationally to back the protests against austerity measures that are taking place and to demand an end to the growing and unpayable debt of the Third World to imperialist banks and governments.

The socialist campaign also charts a course for workers and working farmers to join together in a revolutionary struggle to replace the government of the ruling wealthy minority with that of the producing majority, installing a workers and farmers government than can deepen the battle to abolish capitalism and to join with workers around the world in the struggle for socialism.

Over the past months socialists candidates and their supporters around the country report an increased receptivity to their campaign and more opportunities to both join struggles and discuss these central issues in world politics with workers and youth. The *Militant* encourages our readers to join this effort between now and election day, cast your ballot for the working-class campaign, and to become a part of the socialist movement over the weeks and months ahead.

On Scottish independence

MANCHESTER, England — Recent letters to the *Militant* regarding different aspects of the question of Scottish self-determination give us an opportunity to take a broader look at the question following the recent devolution vote there. In a letter published in the October 6 issue, Pete Evans asks why the Communist League in the United Kingdom backs the independence of Scotland, as opposed to supporting "the fullest possible regional autonomy, e.g. a Scottish parliament, to support the decision of the majority of the Scottish people should they decide for independence, but to continually warn against the illusions of Scottish nationalism." He cites arguments made by Leon Trotsky in relation to the Basques and Catalans in Spain in the 1930s.

But all questions of self-determination have to be approached in a concrete way. The approach communists took to one concrete circumstance cannot be a template answer to every other national question.

The crisis of the United Kingdom (UK) today grows out of the increasing pressures of world depression. Regional disparities and inequalities fuel a growing nation-

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

alist agitation in Scotland, as workers search for ways to defend themselves. This has been the case in the face of previous economic crises. The difference this time around is that the ruling class is weaker than ever before, having been on a slide for the last century or so, and having seen since the last world depression the massive wave of anti-colonial revolutions that liberated millions from subjection to the crown. The unstoppable advance of the Irish struggle continues to deal hammer blows to the very core of the UK. The destruction of the United Kingdom is one of the historic tasks posed for workers and farmers here along the road to taking state power. Because of everything the British Empire ever stood for, this is a task communists should revel in.

The parliament to be established in Scotland cannot be said to represent "the fullest possible regional autonomy." Strict limitations on what it can legislate (e.g. the exclusion of social security and abortion), the need for everything to be approved by the Westminster government, and its negligible financial autonomy all underline this.

Contrary to Evans's assertion, independence is the only concrete form in which Scottish self-determination is posed today — the fact that every bourgeois political party explained its stance on devolution in relation to the question of independence reflects this.

Finally, Evans says the task of communists is "to continually warn against the illusions of Scottish nationalism." It is correct of course that independence will not solve the problems of working people, but will only help to clarify the root of them. But in the immediate discussion, the dangers of English nationalism would appear to be much more pressing to confront. The fight in England to win working people to ally themselves with the fight of Scottish workers and farmers for national liberation is key to strengthening the working class throughout the UK, as is the fight for solidarity with the Irish struggle.

In his letter that appeared in the October 27 *Militant*, Pete Seidman questions the Communist League's stance, as reported in the *Militant*, "in favor of a Scottish parliament, although not in favor of granting it the right to tax workers even more," which he says is contradictory.

What has been granted to the Scottish parliament-to-be is the right to vary the basic rate of income tax by as much as 3 percent. There is no right to vary corporate tax, value-added tax, or any other kind of national tax. The tax-varying powers do not in any real sense equate to the right to levy taxes. During the run-up to the devolution vote, the opposition made much of the supposed subsidy of Scotland by England. They argued that Scotland gets more money from the central government than it pays in taxes, and that if Scotland were to vote for a devolved parliament it would be right to end this state of affairs. Looked at from the point of view of the conditions of the working class, this argument is spurious, since social statistics for Scotland show the highest mortality rate in the UK, some of the worst housing conditions, and so forth.

The Communist League rejects the argument that workers have to pay more to get what is their right. Our intention was precisely as Seidman states "to keep our eyes on how [fighters in Scotland] view the fight right now."

However the statement that Seidman quoted did confuse two separate issues. Supporting the right to levy taxes, which is, as he notes, a necessary part of any genuine self-determination, does not in any way bind communists to supporting any specific proposal of a Scottish parliament to impose tax increases.

It is also clear that fighters in Scotland, and working people as a whole, took to this power and the parliament itself, regardless of how limited, as a down payment on a "real" parliament with "real" powers. A more correct position for the Communist League to take would have been to support a Yes vote on the taxation referendum.

— IAN GRANT
AND ANNE HOWIE

Listed below are the Socialist Workers candidates for state and local offices. Socialist candidates are running in 10 states and the District of Columbia. Due to undemocratic election laws designed to keep working-class candidates off the ballot, many of the Socialist Workers candidates will not appear on the ballot. Included here are the candidates' ages and union affiliations, where applicable.

FLORIDA

Janet Post, 47, IAM, Executive Mayor of Miami
Rolande Girard, 34, USWA, Miami City Commission District 5

GEORGIA

Doug Nelson, 22, USWA, Mayor of Atlanta ‡
Arlene Rubinstein, 47, UNITE, School Board *

IOWA

Thomas Altar, 23, UFCW, Mayor of Des Moines ** ‡
Ardella Blandford, 42, City Council At-Large **

MASSACHUSETTS

Linda Marcus-Leonard, 42, UTU, City Councilor, At-Large in Chelsea
Andrew Buchanan, 39, Mayor of Boston *

MINNESOTA

Jennifer Benton, 28, OCAW, Mayor of Minneapolis **

NEW JERSEY

Robert Miller, 41, UAW, Governor of New Jersey
Megan Arney, 28, State Assembly, 29th District
Brock Satter, 26, USWA, State Assembly, 29th District ‡

NEW YORK

Olga Rodríguez, 49, IAM, Mayor of New York
Shoghi Fret, 21, UNITE, New York Public Advocate ‡
Wendy Lyons, 52, UNITE, New York Comptroller
Brian Taylor, 23, Manhattan Borough President * ‡

OHIO

Steve Warshell, 43, USWA, Mayor of Cleveland *

PENNSYLVANIA

Edwin B. Fruit, 51, IAM, Mayor of Pittsburgh
Leroy Watson, 46, USWA, City Council in the 6th District

TEXAS

Patti Iiyama, 52, OCAW, Mayor of Houston *
Laura Garza, 38, IAM, City Council Position 3 *

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mary Martin, 45, IAM, D.C. City Council At-Large (election is December 2)

* Write-in candidate
** Was on primary ballot, now a write-in candidate
‡ Member of the Young Socialists
IAM — International Association of Machinists
OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers
UAW — United Auto Workers
UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers
UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees
USWA — United Steelworkers of America
UTU — United Transportation Union

Guevara celebrated in Santa Clara

Continued from Page 11
World," Reyes pointed out.

Luis Martínez, a textile worker, responded, "For me, Che's example is extremely important today. He was very demanding of others, but was always the first to do the most difficult job. Today, that's important for a leader and a revolutionary — it's what we need if we are to start getting out of the Special Period," referring to Cuba's current economic crisis.

Maylín Morera, 21, a student at the Pedagogical Institute attending the Ernesto Guevara Studies Program there, said, "My generation didn't live through the revolution, but we were brought up reading about Che, and he is one of my heroes. Some of the young people I know aren't interested in socialism and all, but I've read everything I can by Che." Morera said a group of students at her school were planning an event devoted to Che Guevara in late October.

Referring to Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas (also known as Pombo), who fought with Che in the Congo and Bolivia as well as Cuba's Sierra Maestra and Las Villas, she said, "Pombo came to speak at our university — he told us in-

credible stories about what Che was like, and how young people today have to learn from his example."

Antonio Martínez, 78, a veteran of the Battle of Santa Clara, described with pride how the rebel fighters under Guevara's command had crushed Batista's forces within a few days rather than the several weeks they initially thought it would take.

Martínez pointed to the military review that took place after Castro's speech. Commanded by Villegas, hundreds of troops from the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Ministry of Interior, and Territorial Troop Militias, marched with precision through the square along with veterans of the revolutionary war, of the crushing of the U.S.-backed Bay of Pigs invasion, of the fight against the counterrevolutionaries in the Escambray mountains, and of various internationalist missions. They were accompanied by units of workers belonging to voluntary work contingents and to Production and Defense Brigades, the workers militias that guard workplaces from enemy attack or sabotage.

"Look at our soldiers," Martínez remarked with a grin. "Their moves are impeccable, beautiful. Don't you think that scares the imperialists?"

Auto parts workers strike over wages in New Jersey

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a

The UAW members report that two months before the strike, the company bought two warehouses for the purpose of storing engines. And on the evening of the strike, the bosses changed all the locks on the doors and gates at the plants.

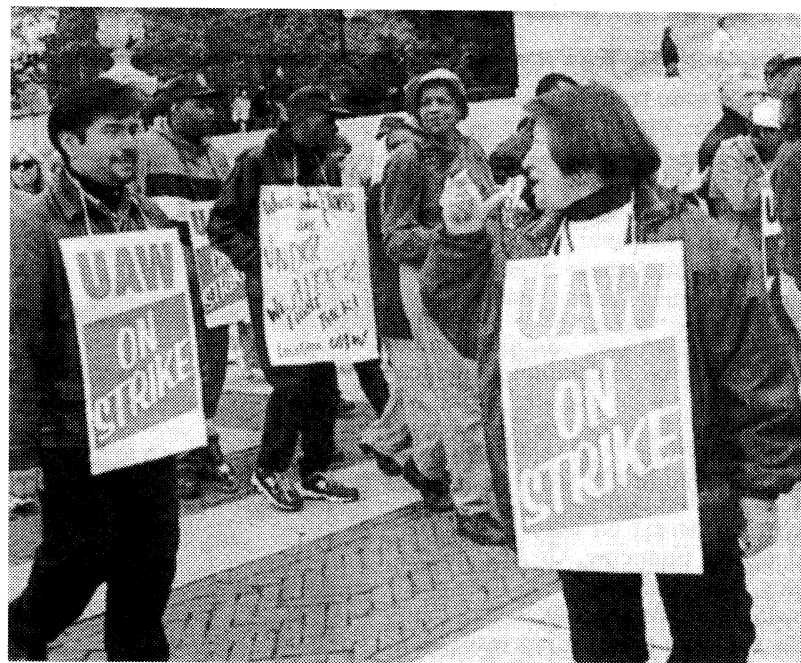
to \$57 per week. Top wages are \$11.45 per hour.

The strike vote was unanimous. One nonunion mechanic has crossed the line.

"The UPS drivers are respecting our picket line. The railroad workers at Norfolk Southern haven't delivered tank cars since the strike began," said Curtis Lyles a striker. "The company filed for and won an injunction on October 3 limiting our picketing to five at one gate and two at the other."

The truck drivers who deliver the cases of soda are still picking up and delivering, although they are not crossing the picket lines. They wait down the street to pick up. They are also Teamster members but work under a different contract. The Atlanta factory is the only union plant owned by S. E. Atlantic. The company has brought in scabs from their non-union facilities in Florida.

Clerical workers strike Columbia U.



About 800 members of the United Auto Workers Local 2110 at Columbia University began a strike October 16 over job security and a wage increases. The clerical union is asking for an increase of 3 percent for each of the next three years. Honoring the pickets professors moved more than 100 classes to locations off campus. "Our union was formed in 1985 because the merit system led to wage disparities and gross pay inequalities between white workers and minorities," said Maida Rosenstein, president of the union. "Equality, fairness, justice—they [the university] don't seem to understand that." The union rejected Columbia's proposal of lengthening the contract, slowing promotions for new hires in a two-tiered salary scale, and the loss of union jobs.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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.

PHILADELPHIA — More than 200 members of UAW Local 1612 are on strike in southern New Jersey against Holman Enterprises, which supplies engines and automotive parts to dealerships across the Northeast.

The unionists rejected 173-11 a new proposed contract which lowers wages and cuts their benefits. This is their first strike since 1967.

"They told us we were family and we kicked butt for them. And this is the thanks we get? Well, we're no longer going to be a doormat" stated Keith O'Neil. "They're bloodsuckers," said Ken Gordy. "We have to be pretty mad to do this. We have guys close to retirement out here, 30-35 years," said Joe Sinni, another striker.

"All we're asking for is 25 cents more per hour and to keep everything else the same," said Scott McDonald, a member of the negotiating team who has worked for Holman Enterprises for 13 years.

In the last two contract agreements, the union has conceded sick days and 50 cents in wages and allowed a two-tier wage scale for new hires at less than half the average salary. The highest paid worker in the plant makes \$15 per hour; most make at least \$2 less.

McDonald said Holman Enterprises rejected the union's offer, instead asking UAW members to approve a contract that calls for no increase in salaries, taking back all their paid sick days and personal days, as well as giving up overtime pay on weekends. Workers now have four personal days, two sick days and two floating holidays for Christmas, said Tom O'Rourke, also a member of the unions negotiating committee. "Employees get paid time and a half for working on Saturdays, and double time for working on Sundays."

British miners win case over workplace injuries

LONDON — Over the past number of years, the National Union of Mineworkers has been fighting the former coal owners British Coal (BC) for compensation for vibration white finger (VWF), a condition caused by damage to the hand's circulation and nerves from vibration. Seven miners won a test case September 30.

Now the government could face a bill of up to £50 million in compensation claims from other former pitmen who are suffering from vibration white finger. More than 12,000 miners have already begun legal action against BC.

In severe cases of VWF, symptoms include a loss of grip, strength and sensitivity. Some people suffer paralysis of their hands.

The condition was identified in 1911 and information on it has been available since 1954.

Judge James Stephenson ruled that from at least January 1, 1993, BC should have known of the risk of vibration white finger from tools which were used in the coal mining industry.

Peter Cudlip, who was awarded £10,000 in damages, cannot handle small coins or do a host of everyday tasks requiring any dexterity.

Miners were given no protection against the vibration white finger, no padded gloves or padded handles on the machines. Road workers who operate jack hammers, or other tools which operate with high vibration will be able to clam if they develop the disease.

Beverage workers strike in Atlanta

ATLANTA—Twenty-one workers represented by Teamsters local 528 have been on strike against S. E. Atlantic Beverage Co. since September 29. Over the years, the company has increased the payroll deduction workers must pay for their medical insurance. Workers at the bottling company went on strike in response to the company's demand that the weekly payroll medical insurance deduction be raised again

Workers strike two plants in Yakima, Washington

YAKIMA, Washington — Workers at two plants here have been walking the picket lines since September 10. Eighty-five workers struck Summit Windows, a company owned by Jeld-Wen Corporation. About 50 workers also struck the John I. Haas Extraction Plant about a mile away from Summit.

The strikers at Summit are members of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters, Local 2739. They had voted in the union in 1995 by a large majority. In these contract negotiations, the workers were demanding a union security clause and wage increases that would put them at the same rates that Jeld-Wen pays in their other union window plants in Kent, Washington, and Hawkins, Wisconsin.

Their wages now vary from \$6.67 per hour to \$10.03, with the majority being paid between \$7 to \$8 per hour. Workers at the Kent and Hawkins plants make \$1 to \$4 per hour more than the Yakima workers. Jeld-Wen, which had an estimated \$850 million in revenues and \$64 million in profits in 1996, offered a paltry 21 cents per hour wage increase, and refuses to agree to a union shop agreement.

Since the strike, Summit has begun to hire replacement workers in retaliation.

The workers at the Extraction

plant are organized by the Teamsters union, local 760. They have been working without a contract for 15 months. Their strike was prompted by the company's proposals of a meager 1.6 percent wage increase each of 3 years; refusal to grant sick leave and allow employees to take holidays off; and the company demands for random drug and alcohol testing.

Garment workers rally to protest sweatshops

LOS ANGELES — Some 400 garment workers, other unionists, and students rallied and marched downtown here October 4. The protest was part of the National Day of Conscience to End Sweatshops called by the National Labor Committee in Support of Worker and Human Rights.

The Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) was active in building the October 4 events in many cities around the country.

In Los Angeles one of the most spirited contingents was a group of garment workers for the GUESS company that are currently fighting for union recognition. GUESS worker Enriqueta Soto said, "We are here today to protest with hundreds of others for no more sweatshops. There are many, many sweatshops and they owe workers money. The time to pay us is now." It was announced from the podium that

sweatshops owe workers \$89,554 in back wages. The marchers stopped at different shops leaving posters announcing how much they owed their workers in back pay.

Christina Vásquez, assistant regional director for UNITE in Los Angeles, said, "In Los Angeles there are 5,000 contract shops employing 160,000 workers. The Labor Department has cited these shops with 4,000 violations. Among the violations are paying less than minimum wage, not paying overtime, homework, and child labor."

In Atlanta some 400 UNITE members protested in front of Lord and Taylors department store at the posh Phipps Plaza mall during a break in the October 3-5 Southern regional UNITE conference here. Union members cheered when a banner that read "Unionize the South" was unfurled.

The largest contingent was over twenty textile workers from Kannapolis and Concord, North Carolina who are in a battle to win a union at the giant Fieldcrest-Cannon mills.

Hattie McCutcheon and Bob Stanton from Philadelphia; Don Fane from Atlanta; Jim Spaul, member of the RMT in London; Scott Breen, member of IAM Local 751A in Seattle; Gale Shangold, a member of UNITE Local 482 in Los Angeles; and Arlene Rubinstein, member of UNITE from Atlanta contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Scottish independence

In a letter printed in the *Militant* of October 6, reader Pete Evans, critiques the Communist League's statement of "...full support of Scotland's fight for independence." Evans states that support for independence is "a sharp break from the previous position of Communists on this subject." and then cites, out of context, an irrelevant quote from Leon Trotsky to support his position.

The statement of the Communist League, is simply an expression of the communist movement's traditional position of support to the struggle of oppressed nations for self-determination and independence. What does Evans pose as an alternative strategy, as a substitute for Leninism? This is what our critic proposed as a political course for the Communist League: 1. Support the call for a Scottish Parliament.

2. Carry on an agitation to "warn against the illusions of Scottish nationalism." 3. If in spite of these warnings, the Scots do choose self-determination, to support them in this choice. In other words, Evans stands for the present policy of the British government and the right wing, reformist Labor party that forms the government.

The policy of the Communist League is designed to strengthen working-class unity in a common fight to break up the imperialist state. The policy of the Labor Party, touted as "Communist" by Mr. Evans, is intended to strengthen the unity of the imperialist state. Any English party (and the League is primarily active in England) that engages in propaganda to warn of the alleged dangers of Scottish, Irish or Welsh nationalism, will be correctly perceived as a pro-imperialist party and an enemy of the op-

pressed peoples. Mr. Evans' policy is one designed to break down working-class unity and to strengthen that imperialist state, known as the United Kingdom.

Roy Inglee
Elsmere, Delaware

Making a difference

I would like to receive a 12-week subscription to the *Militant*, or however many weeks I can get for \$20. I would also like to thank you for truly making a difference.

While the mainstream capitalist media has devolved to being primarily sensationalistic, corporate, and commercial, while at the same time pushing fear and divisiveness, your newspaper provides a much-needed alternative.

I thank you.
C.F.
Spokane, Washington

Times 'objectivity'

Recently, working people here had an opportunity to learn a bit about the class bias and phony "objectivity" of the big-business press. This particular lesson we might call the *New York Times* school of falsification.

On Oct. 9, the first of only two scheduled debates between the various candidates running for mayor of New York took place. The debate, which was broadcast live over a local cable channel, included the three candidates who will appear on the November ballot: the incumbent, Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the Democrat Ruth Messinger, and Socialist Workers candidate Olga Rodríguez.

The next day's *New York Times* reported quite a different debate however. It's front page article was headlined: "Sharp Exchange Pepper Debate Between Giuliani and

Messinger."

Accompanying this article was a front page photo of the candidates during the debate, but the editors of the *Times* — whose motto emblazoned on it's front page is "All the News that's Fit to Print" — had deftly cropped the photo to leave out the Socialist Workers candidate Rodríguez, and to reinforce the impression of their headline that only the Republican and Democratic candidates had participated in the debate.

Mike Galati
Brooklyn, 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.

Ontario workers say no to austerity

BY ROBERT SIMMS

WINDSOR, Ontario — At an October 22 press conference the 126,000-member Ontario Teachers' Federation announced that a province-wide teachers' strike will begin October 27 unless the Conservative government of Premier Michael Harris drops major provisions of Bill 160, a law that the teachers have labeled as a "smokescreen" for massive cuts to the education system — including the firing of up to 10,000 teachers.

The strike, which the government has branded as "illegal," comes on the heels of a massive show of union power that effectively shut down the city of Windsor, October 17, in protest against the antiunion austerity drive of the government.

Bill 160 and the potential for a large-scale confrontation was a major theme of the Windsor Day of Action. The job action was embraced by more than 30,000 workers in this city of 200,000, who shut down 90 percent of the 200 unionized workplaces. It was the ninth city-wide protest organized by the labor movement in this province since 1995.

The action closed the city's main auto plants — a Chrysler minivan assembly plant, five Ford engine and casting operations, and one General Motors transmission factory, employing a total of 12,000 workers. Most of the auto parts plants in the city closed. Also shut down were the transit system, postal service, City Hall, other municipal services, and the Casino Windsor, which is organized by the Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW).

Most companies posted voluntary shut-down notices, but GM had threatened to fine workers \$2,500 each for the lost day of production. The few GM workers who showed



Workers march from Windsor stadium in Ontario for October 17 Day of Action

up to work did not cross the picket line.

Picket lines went up at the GM plant before midnight and by 6:00 a.m. about 150 pickets blocked the main entrance. Those on the line came from CAW Local 2027 at the Hiram Walker Distillery and from the Windsor Star newspaper. Two busloads from CAW Local 1286 at Chrysler's Bramalea assembly plant near Toronto arrived to swell the line and successfully block the few potential entrants, including the office workers who arrived about 8:00 a.m.

'We aren't backing down'

One the pickets at GM was Gino Loduca

from CAW Local 2027, who has worked for 18 years as a carpenter at the Hiram Walker facility. "We have to fight to defend our health-care system. We can't let them touch education. We aren't backing down and the government knows it," he told the *Militant*.

Although Chrysler had acknowledged to its workforce before the action that it would close, Othmar Stein, vice president of public relations for Chrysler Canada told the *Toronto Star* that the company didn't decide to close down, it was "shut down."

"When your 6,000 employees say they are going to strike illegally, what can you do?" he complained.

GM spokesperson Greg Gibson told the press after the action that GM hasn't decided if it will follow up its fine threat.

The Day of Action affected shipping and trade between industries in Canada and the United States. The Ambassador Bridge and the Windsor-Detroit tunnel are important border-crossings for trade between the two countries, handling 30 percent of the US\$290 billion yearly Canada-U.S. trade.

Pickets and marchers closed both intermittently between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. Moreover, many firms had not scheduled to ship things that day. "It's been a very light Friday," said Skip McMahon, manager of the Ambassador Bridge, which normally handles 10,000 trucks a day.

The Day of Action also featured a rally in downtown Windsor. An estimated 15,000 – 20,000 auto workers, municipal workers, steelworkers, teamsters, nurses, teachers, other unionists, and students took part. The large majority were either members of the CAW or among the 4,000 teachers in Essex County where Windsor is located. The central slogan of the teachers' fight across the province, "We won't back down!", was picked up by marchers and featured in a song at the rally.

"If Bill 160 passes, extra-curricular activities will be cut in half and all scholarships will be thrown out the window. I'm very mad," Stephanie Robert, a grade 10 student at Forrester High School told the *Militant*.

"Fighting back does work," Ontario Federation of Labour president Gordon Wilson told the rally in a park bordering the Detroit river. He and other speakers urged picket line support for the teachers if the government forces them to strike.

New Zealand students: 'don't privatize education'

BY CHRISTINE BERESFORD AND PATRICK BROWN

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Thousands of university students have taken to the streets to protest the rising cost of tertiary education, and proposals for its further privatization. The protests, centered in the North Island cities of Auckland and Wellington, were called by the official students associations to which virtually all full-time students belong. They have grown in size and determination as the students' demands have been ignored by government and university authorities, and as the police have responded with force, arresting more than 90 across the country and at times using batons against demonstrators.

The protests were sparked by the release on September 11 of a "Tertiary Education Review." The release of the document follows the leaking in early August of a Ministry of Education briefing, "which suggested voucher-financed students in privatized and profit-driven institutions," according to the September 13 *New Zealand Herald*.

The Tertiary Education Review, com-

monly called the "Green Paper," contains similar proposals to the leaked document, while modifying the language in which they are expressed. It proposes that Crown [state]-owned university, polytechnics, and other tertiary colleges become "Public Tertiary Education Institutions," based broadly on the Companies Act and expected to be "accountable." The *Christchurch Press* noted in an editorial that "although [the review] does not use the term education vouchers, they are clearly on its agenda." A *Herald* article reported that "under this system students can spend their subsidy at a crown-owned institution, such as a university, with a private institution, or use it for industry training."

Rob Crozier, the executive director of the Association of University Staff at Auckland University, said that this "would see private training establishments financed at the same level as public institutions."

The report's authors clearly favor courses more closely tailored to the needs of employers, suggesting that "purchasers of education" compare the "reputation" of various courses in the "workforce."

Professor Bryan Gould, the vice chancellor of Waikato University, referred in an article to the report's proposal that the Public Tertiary Education Institutions be run by government-appointed bodies. He stated that the "Green Paper ... paints a picture of New Zealand universities as subject to an unattractive combination of market pressures and government control."

The appraisal of the Green Paper's proposals by student protesters has been blunt — expressed in the chant of Auckland students: "Privatization stay out of education." New Zealand University Students Association (NZUSA) president Michael Gibbs described the report as a thinly veiled privatization bid. Proposals contained in the paper would lead to higher student fees, he said, adding that the average student fee had increased more than 100 per cent in the past five years.

University courses for most students were virtually free until changes that began under the Labour Party government in 1990. An official scheme of interest-bearing student loans for course and living costs was established by the National Party government in 1992. Government funding per tertiary student fell by 6.7 percent between 1990 and 1995. By the end of April this year, New Zealand students owed a total of more than \$2 billion under the scheme. Linda East, the fees, allowances, and loans manager at Canterbury University, estimated that the average third-year Canterbury student owes \$20,000.

The protests have occurred as the university year is drawing to a close. This is the period in which universities set fees for the next year's courses, giving the students' demonstrations a sharp focus.

On September 25 in the capital city of Wellington, 74 protesters were arrested during a rally of 400 people outside the parliament buildings, after the speaker of the House Douglas Kidd instructed police that demonstrators were trespassing. The cops used batons to force students to release temporary barricades, battering their hands. Stu-

dents Association spokesperson Jacob Brirs said that those arrested had been denied their right to see a lawyer who had waited at the station for about five hours. Many had been held overnight, he said.

Protester Rob Smitten told the *Militant* that "one result [of the arrests] was that the numbers of students at the next demonstration doubled." On October 1 up to 1,000 students and academic staff marched silently through Wellington as part of a national day of action called by NZUSA.

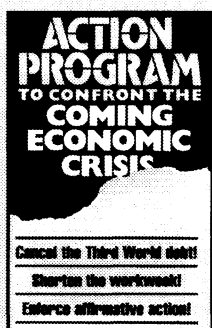
Students at Auckland University organized actions on the same days. Some 250 protesters faced a wall of baton-brandishing cops outside the Ministry of Education headquarters on September 25. One week later on October 1, police arrested 13 students in a protest that the youth termed "storming the castle" — the castle being the registry building, which houses the university administration. A *New Zealand Herald* report described "clashes ... as students and police battled each other during a fees protest.... Windows were smashed.... Some students' hands were stomped on; others were forced down the fire escapes as police tried to secure the building."

On October 8 the Auckland University Students Association called on students to protest again. One thousand mobilized to march along Queen St., near the university and in the center of the city's shopping area. Pedestrians and motorists for the most part watched with interest, as the students chanted "They say cut back, we say fight back!"

When the students sat down briefly in the middle of the street, cops seized the Students Association's sound truck, driving it away. Hundreds of angry students confronted the police on the campus. Some succeeded in occupying sections of a university office building before police forced them out, arresting six.

Christine Beresford is a member of the United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union in Wellington.

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