

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Manuel Piñero on Che Guevara's internationalism

— PAGES 6-7

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U.S. gov't prohibits Teamster president from race

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

After ordering new elections for the president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), U.S. officials on November 17 barred the current Teamster president, Ronald Carey, from running.

Washington launched its latest "anticorruption" campaign against Teamster officials during the 15-day strike by 185,000 union members at United Parcel Service in August. That fight drew broad public support as the main demands — the creation of more full-time jobs, maintaining union control of pension funds, and wage increases — struck a common cord among other workers. Days after the strikers' victory at UPS, Clinton administration officials invalidated the December 1996 union election and stepped up their investigation into alleged misuse of funds by Carey.

Kenneth Conboy, appointed by the U.S. government to oversee IBT elections, disqualified Carey for allegedly diverting union funds for his own election campaign. Carey's election was nullified by Conboy's predecessor in that post, Barbara Zack-Quindel. Conboy wields as his main source of evidence a statement by Carey campaign director Gere Nash, who pled guilty to

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Indiana Uniroyal strikers fight work-rule demands

BY GARY BOYERS AND CHUCK GUERRA

WOODBURN, Indiana — "I'm tired of being treated like a piece of meat. I'm a human being. I'd like to be treated that way." Rick Rowe, a mechanic with 20 years' seniority at the Uniroyal Goodrich tire plant outside of Fort Wayne, was echoing the sentiments of his 1,200 co-workers, members of United Steelworkers of America Local 715. They are on strike against company demands to unilaterally change work rules for union members.

Steelworkers struck the Woodburn plant October 24. This is the seventh strike since the plant opened in 1961, but the first since Michelin acquired Uniroyal Goodrich seven years ago. On November 10 the company began removing equipment to produce minispare tires. Michelin bosses had previously threatened to do this if the strikers didn't return to work.

Strikers on the picket line explained that there are no wage issues in dispute. These have been settled in the master contract with Uniroyal Goodrich this summer and in local negotiations before the talks broke down. The union made several monetary concessions, including tying future wage increases

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U.S. Hands off Iraq! Coalition crumbles, Washington suffers defeat

BY MEGAN ARNEY

Washington's latest attempt to launch a military assault on Iraq and consolidate U.S. military and economic dominance in the region has ended in defeat. Unable to put back together the coalition that carried out the U.S.-led slaughter in the 1990-91 Gulf War, the U.S. rulers had to accept negotiations spearheaded by Paris and Moscow to resolve the crisis they had provoked. At the same time, the Clinton administration is continuing its military buildup in the Persian Gulf.

Over the weekend of November 15-16, Washington's campaign for a military air strike against Iraq, on the pretext of the alleged threat of Iraqi chemical weapons, was still in full swing. But by November 17 the U.S. rulers were forced to openly negotiate with Baghdad.

Through French and Russian diplomats, Washington and London offered to slightly ease the draconian sanctions against Iraq if U.S. officials were allowed back into that country as part of a group of United Nations "weapons inspectors." Under restrictions first imposed by the UN Security Council in 1990 at Washington's insistence, Baghdad can sell only \$2 billion in oil every six months, a large portion of which must go to pay "war reparations," and the rest of which is limited to purchasing food and medical supplies. The deal would raise the allowance to \$3 billion.

Iraqi representative to the United Nations



Above, dozens of Iraqis gather in front of the presidential palace in Baghdad November 12, determined to defend their sovereignty against Washington's war threats.

Nizar Hamdoun rejected this scheme as a "nonstarter in trying to resolve the current crisis." Hamdoun reiterated the Iraqi demand to end the UN sanctions entirely.

On November 20 Iraqi officials said they had reached agreement with Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov to allow

the UN inspectors back into Iraq. In the negotiations, Primakov reportedly suggested softening and possibly end the sanctions against Iraq. Less than a week before, U.S. president William Clinton had proclaimed that the sanctions "will be there till the end

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As debt crisis shakes south Korea, workers resist layoffs and austerity

MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Bank of Korea, south Korea's central bank, announced November 17 that it was dropping its efforts to hold the nation's currency link to the U.S. dollar. The announcement came the same day that the 10th largest bank in Japan, Hokkaido Takushoku Bank Ltd., went belly up. Both moves reflect a deepening crisis for the capitalist rulers as the storm of currency devaluations

continues to hammer the region.

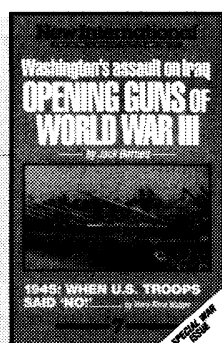
A financial collapse in Seoul would compound the economic turmoil gripping Southeast Asia. It has the world's 11th largest economy and a gross domestic product larger than Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia combined.

In response to the nation's currency woes, south Korean president Kim Young Sam dumped his finance minister, Kang Kyung-

Shik, on November 19 as the Korean won fell to a record low of 1,035 to the dollar. The currency has dropped 16 percent this year, which among other things means that south Korean banks and companies must use more won to repay dollar-denominated loans.

The country's foreign debt is estimated at \$160 billion, with about \$30 billion

Continued on Page 12



Opening Guns of World War III

WASHINGTON'S ASSAULT ON IRAQ

Jack Barnes

The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. It includes

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Rail merger and speedup cause gridlock, wrecks— page 11

UN rejects Israeli settlements

On November 13 the United Nations General Assembly, in a 139-3 vote, condemned Tel Aviv's refusal to comply with UN demands to halt construction of 6,500 housing units for Zionist settlers in East Jerusalem. The governments of the United States, Israel, and Micronesia voted against the resolution and 13 others abstained.

That same day Israeli soldiers shot eight-year-old Palestinian Ali Jawarish at close range, leaving him brain dead. Israeli troops claim that the rubber-coated bullet lodged in Jawarish's skull was meant for an older youth who was throwing rocks at them. Officially, Israeli forces are barred from firing the bullets at youth, must not shoot within 40 yards of their target, and must aim for legs.

Opposition forces brew in Israel

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is facing greater divisions, both within his Likud party and among opposition parties. The opposition Labor party organized a memorial demonstration of some 120,000 people on the second anniversary of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin November 8, which included an amorphous call for "peace."

Floods plague Somali villages

Torrential rains in Somalia that began October 5 have flooded villages in the Juba Valley, home to more than 1 million people. A UNICEF report place the death toll at more than 1,000. Rising waters threaten to ruin stockpiled food and other supplies. At least 11,000 head of cattle have died. The European Union said on November 13, that it would allocate a mere \$2.5 million in aid. Washington and other imperialist governments have been stingy with aid, following the 1995 ousting of so-called humanitarian forces that occupied the country.

In 1992 the UN, and later the U.S. government, sent thousands of troops into that country under the pretext of bringing humanitarian aid to the famine-struck country.

Cops fire on East Timor students

On November 14 Indonesian troops and riot cops fired shots into a crowd of 300 students from the University of East Timor and



Protesters marched through the streets of Brussels, Belgium, during the weekend of November 8-9 calling for justice for Said Charki, a Moroccan who was killed by the police. Police in the Belgian capital were put on high alert November 10 after immigrants from North Africa protested this assault by the cops.

two high schools who gathered after a group of youth chased down undercover agents who were snooping around the campus. The incident took place just two days after students there held a rally to commemorate the massacre of pro-independence activists gunned down by the military in 1991. Five students were injured, including one who "received a life-threatening gunshot wound in the neck," according to an Amnesty International report. Unnamed students said two activists were killed, while cops denied the accusation, claiming they only fired warning shots.

New president elected in Ireland

Mary McAleese, candidate of the ruling Fianna Fail and Progressive Democratic parties, was elected president of the Republic of Ireland October 31. She defeated Fine Gael Party candidate Mary Banotti, independent candidate Rosemary Scallion, Labor Party choice Adi Roche, and ex-cop Derek

Nally, who finished last.

The pro-British Unionist party had called for McAleese, who is from Northern Ireland, to quit the race, citing leaked government documents claiming that McAleese was a closet supporter of the nationalist party Sinn Fein. She denied all allegations of being a Sinn Fein sympathizer or supporter. During the campaign, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams stated that he would back McAleese — if he were allowed to vote in the Republic.

Abortion doctor shot in Canada

On November 11 Jack Fainman, a Winnipeg obstetrician and gynecologist, was wounded in the shoulder by a bullet that came through a window of his home. There have been two other shootings of doctors who perform abortions as part of their practice in the last four years.

Henry Morgenthau, a physician who served prison time in the 1970s fighting to establish women's right to choose abortion, said the attack is aimed "to scare doctors off from performing abortions." But he continued, "The service we are providing women is absolutely essential." The assault was also denounced by the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League and the British Columbia Coalition for Abortion Clinics.

Congress eases immigration law

U.S. Congress in early November slightly eased parts of an anti-immigration law passed in 1996 that requires undocumented workers applying for legal status to first leave the country. Related laws deny reentry for 3-10 years to workers without papers who leave the country. Washington granted an extension through Jan. 14, 1998,

to about 1 million workers with families or employer sponsors in the United States who wish to apply for residency and stay in the United States while the application is processed by paying a \$1,000 fine. Anyone seeking residence after January 14 will still be subject to the 1996 law.

Another bill, already sent to the White House, calls for legal status for 150,000 Nicaraguans who left during the revolution there in the 1980s, 5,000 Cubans who have arrived over the past two years, and 250,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans. Haitian rights activists held protests in Miami and Washington, D.C., demanding that Haitians who fled after the 1991 rightist coup in that country be included in the bill, but they were not successful.

School bans 'The Color Purple'

The Jackson County School Board in West Virginia banned Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize winning book *The Color Purple*, a novel about a Black family in the South during Jim Crow segregation. Some 15 other books were banned including one titled, *100 Q & A About AIDS*. Walker's book, unlike the others, was dismissed without a review. The school board said the books were being banned because of sexually explicit language, homosexual content, and/or violent imagery. Ripley High School principle Jack Wiseman disagreed with the board decision, describing it as an attempt "to shield all students from homosexuality," he said.

Mexico gov't rules against union

Welders at Han Young, an automotive chassis-making factory in Tijuana, Mexico, voted 54-32 in favor of replacing their current government-controlled union with an independent one. The October 6 vote was rejected by the Tijuana Labor Board on two counts. First, it said the union workers voted to affiliate to was for metal workers. Second, the labor board argued that the vote was not sufficient evidence to conclude the workers wanted a new union.

Land mines are 'weapon of poor'

Paris, London, and other imperialist regimes recently made a big deal of signing a treaty banning the manufacturing and use of land mines. Washington refused to sign, since it wasn't granted an exemption to continue to use mines in Korea, but then launched a political campaign supposedly to eliminate the threat of land mines to civilians.

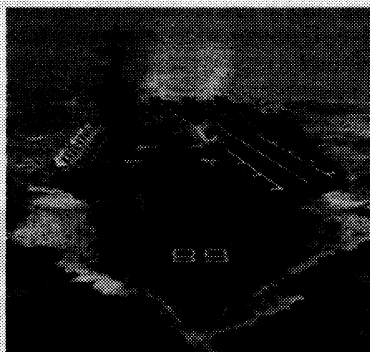
Meanwhile, Cuban Brig. Gen. Luis Pérez Róspide, director of Cuba's Union of Military Industries, pointed out that this was not discussed with the working people and peasants around the world who are threatened by nuclear weapons, but possess none of their own. "Land mines are the weapon of the poor," Róspide declared. He is responsible for making sure that every Cuban has a basic defense kit consisting of a rifle, a land mine, and a grenade.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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Basque activists speak in U.S. on fight for self-determination, prisoners' rights

BY NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK — "Our proposal for peace is simple: that our territory be recognized, that occupying forces be removed, and that the Spanish government recognize our right to self-determination," said Iñigo Elkoro, speaking at a Militant Labor Forum here October 25. He and Blanka Kalzakorta were wrapping up a three-week U.S. speaking tour on behalf of Senideak, the Association of Relatives of Basque Political Prisoners, Refugees, and Deportees.

This was their first visit to the United States, said Elkoro, a lawyer who defends Basque political prisoners. The Senideak activists spoke in Boston, Houston, New York, and Washington, D.C., in a tour coordinated by the New York-based Congress for Peace in Euskal Herria. Their itinerary included a number of campus meetings, a conference in Houston commemorating Ernesto Che Guevara, the National Lawyers Guild convention in Washington, and a visit to the United Nations. "We've gotten a very good response, which opens the possibility for more work," Elkoro said.

History of fight for self-determination

Elkoro began his talk with a brief explanation of the Basque struggle for self-determination. Euskal Herria, or the Basque country, has a population of about 3 million. Most of its territory is incorporated in the Spanish state; a portion is in southwestern France. The Basque people face national oppression under both the Spanish and French states. Elkoro noted that the use of the Basque language was banned under the dictatorship of Gen. Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain until 1975. Today about 25 percent of the population in the Basque country speaks Basque, though it is not recognized as an official language by the Spanish and French governments. The unemployment rate there is 21 percent. A majority in the Basque country opposed the Spanish Constitution, which rejects self-determination for Euskal Herria, in a 1978 vote.

During the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, the Republican government in Spain, under bourgeois leadership, granted limited autonomy to the Basque country but not independence. Basques joined in the fight against Franco's fascist forces because they "believed a republic would guarantee the rights of the Basque people," Elkoro said. Among the most infamous slaughters by the fascists during the civil war was the bombing of the Basque city of Guernica, he noted.

With the fascist victory, the brutality against the Basque people increased, with a toll of some 10,000 political prisoners, 40,000 exiles, and 200,000 dead. The Franco dictatorship carried out "attacks on culture, bookstores, and any use of our language," Elkoro said. The armed pro-independence group ETA (Basque Homeland and Liberty) was one of the organizations born out of a resurgence in the national struggle in the 1950s and '60s.

"'Democracy' has not changed the situation," Elkoro continued. "We have some liberties, but there have been more prisoners and more torture than under Franco. The dirty war has worsened." Revelations of the Spanish government's involvement in death squads that killed at least 27 Basque independence fighters in the 1980s were a factor in the defeat of social democratic president Felipe González in 1996 elections.

Today there are about 580 Basque politi-



Egunkaria

Demonstration in support of Basque youth who refuse to serve in French army

cal prisoners in Spanish and French jails, and about 2,000 activists forced into political exile. The Spanish government carries out a systematic policy of dispersing these prisoners throughout Spain, and even in the Canary Islands and Spanish bases in Africa, Elkoro said. This has been a source of outrage among Basques and others.

'Antiterrorist' tribunals

Speaking from his experiences, Elkoro described the treatment Basque prisoners receive from the "national tribunals" set up to try alleged terrorists. Special legislation allows the police to detain individuals as "subversive" and hold them for five days. "During those five days, no one knows where they are," he said. "Detention doesn't follow an investigation; it's the other way around. Electrodes, beatings, drowning, putting a bag over the person's head, sexual assault, and death threats" are among the methods of torture used to extract "confessions" and information. After that, the prisoner is brought before a judge. In a typical case, Elkoro said, "the judge asks questions and the prosecutor speaks first. We can't speak until after that. We can't even speak

to the detainee, who doesn't necessarily know who their lawyer is."

After this hearing, the prisoner can be held in "preventive detention" awaiting trial for up to four years. At the trial, self-incrimination from the "investigation" is permissible. Defense attorneys like Elkoro "try to prove the use of torture." He gave the example of a trial two years ago where one of the prisoners had been taken to the hospital with injuries, and the Civil Guard tried to torture him there. "This was one of the few cases where there was proof of torture," Elkoro said. Nevertheless, the defendants were sentenced to up to 30 years in prison.

Kalzakorta described her own experience with this "justice" system. She was arrested in 1987 on returning to the country from abroad. While she was not physically injured, the police subjected her to "psychological torture" including not allowing her to use the toilet or shower. "After six days I went before the judge, and in five minutes was sent to prison." She was jailed for nine months before being acquitted. Her mother had also been arrested, and was sentenced to 16 years in prison; she is still incarcerated. "The antiterror law means you have

no rights," Kalzakorta said. If you are acquitted, "they owe you nothing. If you were employed you lose your job."

Kalzakorta joined Senideak when the association was formed in 1991, and ever since has been "working to let people know about the prisoners."

Arrest of Herri Batasuna leaders

Elkoro noted one of the latest acts of repression by Madrid in the arrest of 23 central leaders of the pro-independence political party Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity) for making public the peace initiative of the ETA. The main points in the proposal are that the Spanish state recognize the right to self-determination and territorial integrity of the Basque country; the removal of occupation forces; and a general amnesty for political prisoners and refugees. It then points to issues "to be discussed and agreed among the Basque population," including how to realize self-determination, normalization of the Basque language, demilitarization of the Basque country, educational rights, and democratic liberties.

The Spanish government is demanding eight-year prison sentences for the Herri Batasuna leaders for televising an ETA video explaining these proposals. "This would open the road to a lot more repression," Elkoro said, not just against Basque nationalists but against environmentalists, those fighting for land rights, and others.

He also commented on the reactionary mobilizations by hundreds of thousands protesting the kidnapping and execution of a Popular Party politician by the ETA last July. The actions were orchestrated by the Spanish government, Elkoro said, adding that the incident was rooted in the 10-year fight against the government policy of dispersing political prisoners. After the ETA gave a 48-hour deadline to consolidate the prisoners in the Basque country, "the government made no attempt to meet and negotiate," Elkoro said. "They started preparing a funeral. Within two days all the headlines were on the funeral, with no mention of the prisoners." The demonstrations "put wind in the sails of the fascists," he added. On July 27, some 20,000 people answered the right wing with a march in San Sebastián in support of Basque independence.

Ecuador: strikes, protests paralyze gov't

BY NELSON PALACIOS
AND LUIS MADRID

The wave of protests and strikes that swept Ecuador in October underscored the political paralysis of Fabián Alarcón's interim government, and the increased confidence of workers and peasants in this Latin American nation of 11 million people, as they confront worsening social conditions.

In mid-October, inhabitants from five provinces in the overwhelmingly indigenous Amazonian region occupied about 50 oil wells belonging to the state-run Petroecuador, in some cases for up to 10 days. As a result, oil extraction — which can reach up to 400,000 barrels per day — was cut by 15 percent. Nearly 40 percent of Ecuador's budget comes from oil exports. Led by the region's mayors, the protests demanded more funding for infrastructure projects. The protesters demanded 3 billion

sucres (\$700,000) for each of the 38 municipalities, and 5 billion sucres (\$1.2 million) for each of the provinces' councils. They called for the construction of an inter-Amazonian region highway. Protesters also seized airstrips and roads in the Amazon, which is the country's richest oil region. At the same time, a group of 80 indigenous activists and others occupied the Papallacta water station October 14, closing the valves that control the water supply for half of the population in Quito, the capital.

Others have been fighting government austerity as well. The National Union of Educators (UNE) ended a 37-day strike October 16, after Congress gave in to the teachers' demands. These included pay increases and improved conditions for education at the elementary school level, and an increase in the resources allocated to it. "Congress erred in regards to the UNE case," complained César Verduga, secretary to the presidency, saying there was not enough room in the budget to implement the strike settlement.

After an eight-month contract dispute and four-month strike, workers from Ecuador's Electricity Enterprise won a court ruling entitling them to profit-sharing earnings owed for more than two years. Their victory coincided with a government crisis over electricity rationing of up to eight hours a day. Many people attribute the power outages to lack of planning. The blackouts led to the dismissal of Rafael Almeida, president of Petroecuador, and Miguel Calahorrano, manager of the country's Electricity Institute.

Alarcón himself was named interim president of Ecuador last February after a national strike that involved 2 million workers resulted in the ouster of Abdalá Bucaram, six months after he took office. The mas-

sive protests were called to oppose the austerity measures the government was trying to implement, including cuts to social expenditures. Bucaram said these cuts were needed so that Ecuador could continue making payments on its foreign debt and comply with the demands of the International Monetary Fund.

In response to the current government's refusal to convene a new constitutional assembly — promised by Alarcón when he took office — some 5,000 indigenous fighters and members of labor and social organizations marched from all four corners of the country to converge on the capital October 12.

A commission of about 90 delegates was assigned to address economic questions. It adopted a report proposing that "the state ceases paying the foreign debt, which is illegal, and was immorally obtained by a minority on behalf of the country." There is not unanimous support for this among the forces involved, however. Napoleón Saltos, a leader of the commission from the populist group Pachakutik, opposed the proposal, which also calls for rejecting the privatization of state-owned enterprises.

The economics commission also demanded that more of the national budget be devoted to health care, education, and municipal and province governments. Another commission proposed the recognition of Ecuador as a multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual country.

The documents that were brought before the plenary session of the People's Assembly, which ended October 17, are being debated in different communities and organizations across the country. They will be taken up by the assembly again at the end of November when it reconvenes and will draft a constitution.

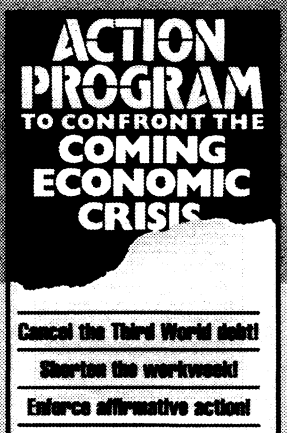
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YS says no to 'Canada first' at APEC Youth Forum

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 JAKE GARVEY

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Some 100 youth met here November 7-11 to discuss what the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) — an 18-country trade forum that will hold a summit here November 19-24 — means for youth and working people around the world.

The APEC Youth Forum was aimed at students and activists aged 16-19 interested in finding out more about APEC. Most came from across Canada, but around 15 came from other countries that participate in APEC, including Chile, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. The forum focused on jobs, education, and the environment.

The youth meeting was part of the broader APEC People's Summit, a series of forums and workshops running throughout November in Vancouver. The People's Summit, organized by groups such as the Canadian Labor Congress and nongovernment organizations, is among the many conferences, protests, and other actions responding to the APEC summit. At that meeting, government officials and business representatives from the region will negotiate the deepening of exploitative trade relations between imperialist nations of the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand on the one hand and the region's semicolonial countries on the other.

Virtually all presentations at the youth forum put forward the view that APEC is about trade liberalization, or free trade, and serves the interests of "multinational corporations," particularly those from the United States. Keynote speaker David Orchard of Citizens Concerned about Free Trade, for example, asserted that "Canada is a semicolony of the United States, like Mexico." During the question period, Young Socialist delegate Vuk Grkavac, 17, challenged this view. "Canada is an imperialist power that oppresses Quebecois, Native people, and people around the world," he said.

Orchard and other speakers also based

their opposition to APEC on the loss of "Canadian jobs" to other countries with cheaper labor markets. Young Socialists explained that this stance undermines international solidarity among working people. "The bosses are only committed to the labor they can exploit and profit the most from," said Grkavac. "It's not like they care about Canadian jobs or American jobs. They would love to pay workers in Canada \$2 an hour, which is what they're imposing on the semicolonial world. It's essential for the workers in imperialist countries to unite with those in exploited nations."

Delegates from Papua New Guinea said that it isn't enough to reform the imperialist trade block, explaining why they oppose it altogether. "We're just a source of raw material for APEC," Catherine Sasa told the *Militant*. "APEC gives free license for corporations to rape and pillage, for them to cut down all the trees, take all the gold, and kill all the fish so there's nothing left for the local people."

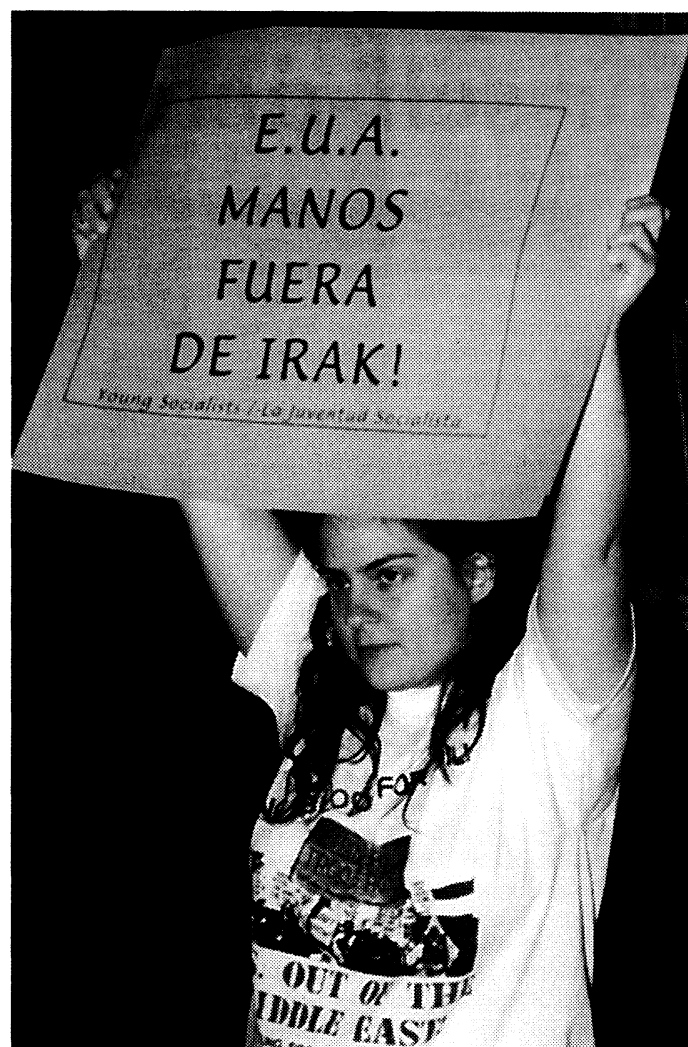
Another guest speaker, Libby Davies of the social-democratic New Democratic Party, advocated pressuring the Canadian government to "put human rights on the APEC agenda."

Keynote speaker Raymond Chan, the Canadian Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific), promoted APEC, saying that the Canadian government plays a progressive role in the economic and political development of the region. As an example, he said, "Canadian troops played an important role in Korea." Chan's presentation was attacked by many delegates during the question period. Grkavac responded, "Canadian troops intervened in Korea against the struggle of the

Korean people for self-determination." He added, "Ottawa is trying to impose what you call 'solutions' on Asian countries in the interests of the banks and corporations."

Presenters and organizers advocated letter-writing campaigns, boycotts, and reliance on governments to "improve" APEC. For example, one resolution from the forum's steering committee states "APEC countries should abide by common rules dedicated to trade, human rights and our environment. If any one of these rules are violated, that country would have their membership revoked."

Discussions on human rights at the forum tended to focus on abuses in the semicolonial countries such as Indonesia and the workers state in China, with little mention of the role of the imperialist governments who install and profit from dictatorial regimes to protect their prerogatives. As a young woman from the Philippines explained in response to Chan's presentation, "It's hypocritical to talk about



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Young Socialists joined actions protesting Washington's war drive against Iraq. Above, April Holland pickets in Los Angeles November 17 with sign that reads "U.S. hands off Iraq!"

developing countries' human rights violations without talking about Canada's."

Jake Garvey is a member of the Young Socialists in Vancouver.

U. of Pittsburgh forum celebrates Che

BY CHRIS REMPLE

PITTSBURGH — One hundred fifty people, most of them youth and students, crowded into a meeting on the University of Pittsburgh campus November 13 to hear a discussion of Che Guevara's legacy for fighters today. Chairs were brought in from other rooms and even then, people stood and some sat in the aisles.

The meeting was sponsored by the Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition; the Cuba Studies Group of the Center for Latin American Studies at the university; the Pittsburgh delegation to last summer's World Festival of Youth and Students in Cuba; the Socialist

Workers Party; the Campus Coalition for Peace and Justice, a central group in the fight to prosecute the cops who killed Jonny Gammage; the Western Pennsylvania Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal; and several other organizations.

José Moreno, a Cuban professor of sociology at the university, chaired the meeting. "It is a great honor to be here tonight to commemorate Ernesto Che Guevara," he said, and introduced the speakers: Rafael Noriega, the third secretary of the Cuban Interest Section in Washington, D.C.; Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara, Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* by Guevara, and *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'* by Harry Villegas; Dennis Brutus, a professor and poet from South Africa and a longtime opponent of the apartheid regime that was overthrown in 1994; and Gustavo Machín, also of the Cuban Interest Section.

Waters placed the commemoration of Che in the context of world politics. "This meeting is not about the past, not about history, but about today," she said. The Argentine-born revolutionary's "example, his legacy, his writings are weapons in the struggles of today. Che Guevara is about the strength of the Cuban revolution today — as the Cuban people are demonstrating."

Waters noted, "The question is posed often by many different people and forces: Why is Che, 30 years after his death, still the lightning rod that he is; why does he continue to be looked to by thousands, even millions, especially young people coming into consciousness of the world and trying to figure out what needs to be done? The world Che lived in, the world that made him a revolutionary, a fighter, remains the world we live in today."

Waters concluded her remarks by paying tribute to the Cuban people whose determination to defend their revolution forced the U.S. rulers to retreat from their plans to invade Cuba 35 years ago, in October 1962, over the pretext of Soviet missiles being installed for Cuba's defense.

She pointed out that their courage and determination, not the wisdom of U.S. president John Kennedy or Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev, tipped the balance against a U.S. invasion.

Prof. Dennis Brutus related the important

role of Cuban troops in helping defend the sovereignty of Angola and defeat the South African army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988.

The South African forces first invaded Angola in 1975, right after that country won independence from the Portuguese colonial rulers.

Immediately, Brutus explained, "when the MPLA [People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, the governing party in Angola] appealed for help, the Cubans sent troops, advisers, and arms to confront the South African army and decisively defeat it. This was the most important military event in the history of apartheid."

Brutus linked this to the Cuban defense of the African liberation struggle, when Guevara and a team of Cuban veterans went to the Congo to fight alongside revolutionaries there. He also paid tribute to the campus-based divestment movement of the 1980s, which sought to force universities to cease investing in companies doing business in South Africa.

Rafael Noriega stated, "I was a very young boy when Che was killed. I was eight years old. This means that since my earliest days, I learned about Che and about Fidel, as well as other heroes of our revolution."

"I don't have enough words to say what Che means for us. Che means justice and human solidarity.... He was a citizen of the world, a man of the 21st century." Acknowledging the interest in Che's life and ideas, he noted proudly, "Thirty years have passed and Che's legacy has grown, having an impact even among people who might not know that much about Che."

During the discussion, a questioner asked what Guevara would think if he came back to life in today's world, after the collapse of the Soviet bloc in eastern Europe. Noriega responded, "We have no fetishes. We are trying to develop our economy and defend our social achievements. This attitude toward people was not present in the eastern bloc. The Soviet leaders were not examples of leaders of humanity. They destroyed themselves."

Waters noted that Guevara would be proud of the revolutionary response of the Cuban people and their determination to find a socialist road forward despite the economic war waged by Washington.

YS fund money starts coming in

BY VERÓNICA POSES

CHICAGO — Pledges to the Young Socialists fund drive now total more than the \$4,400 national goal, and YS chapters have started raising the money. The chart below shows what had arrived at the YS national

office by the end of the first week of the drive.

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, YS members organized a dinner before a forum reporting back from the Million Woman March. They sold refreshments after the forum, raising a total of almost \$100. YS members there have sent \$50 towards their monthly pledge to the national office and \$35 for the fund drive. Heather Wood, a member of the chapter there, reported, "There were a few young people who came to a Militant Labor Forum for the first time. We had a panel that included a member of the Africana Student Cultural Center who participated in the Million Woman March in Philadelphia. That evening, a young woman we met at a literature table asked to join the Young Socialists."

The YS chapter in New York has started hosting weekly Saturday night dinners as a chance to raise money and talk politics with young people interested in the organization. The first of these events raised \$80 and drew several youth, two of whom came to a picket against U.S. war moves against Iraq two days later.

In order to stay on target, \$733 needs to be raised each week. Contributions towards the drive can be sent to: Young Socialists, 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave #478, Chicago, IL 60622.

Young Socialist Fund Drive November 7-December 19			
CITY	GOALS	PAID	%
Los Angeles	350	73	21%
Twin Cities, MN	300	35	12%
Pittsburgh	450	50	11%
Chicago	700	18	3%
Atlanta	165		0%
Des Moines	250		0%
Houston	300		0%
Miami	200		0%
New York	500		0%
Newark	500		0%
Philadelphia	100		0%
Seattle	500		0%
Washington, DC	150		
TOTAL	4,465	176	4%
Should be	4,400	733	17%

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

'Stop attacks on Iraq,' says socialist candidate

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In the closing weeks of the election campaign for the D.C. City Council at-large seat, Socialist Workers Party candidate Mary Martin has been speaking out against Washington's war moves against Iraq and in support of statehood for D.C. The special election is scheduled for December 2. Martin is one of four candidates on the ballot. Her opponents include two Democratic Party politicians and a Republican.

"The threat of military attacks by Washington against Iraq is the flip side of the U.S. government's drive here at home against the working class, with austerity policies and attacks on democratic rights," Martin told the 50 people attending a candidates forum November 13 sponsored by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3E.

She also addressed the issue of the city's financial control board, which was put in place by Congress and President William Clinton to run the city with powers that supersede those of the elected mayor and city council. "My campaign's answer to the financial control board is statehood for D.C.," stated Martin, whose campaign calls for abolishing the control board. To resolve the problems facing working people in this city, throughout the United States, and internationally, "we need to fight for a workers and farmers government that can overturn capitalist political rule and put in place a socialist system that will place human needs before prof-

its," she added.

One of the big issues in this election is the disastrous state of the public education system. The financial control board has led the charge in eliminating vitally needed funds for the public schools while many of the 60-year-old school buildings are literally falling apart. "The rulers' approach has been to set up an 'education dictatorship,'" stated Martin at a November 13 forum sponsored by the Federation of Citizens Associations of the District, attended by 60 people. An emergency board of trustees with a retired army general in charge was appointed to replace the elected school board.

Martin also spoke out against the drive to privatize education. "I'm opposed to school vouchers in which public funds are made available to allow a couple of thousand children attend a private school," she stated. "I'm against the approach promoted by the Clinton administration to set up charter schools in which private boards are put in charge of running particular schools." Under the guise of cutting regulations, the boards can disregard union rights that protect teachers and students. "What's needed," stated Martin, "is a fight to fund and upgrade the entire public education system."



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

Pickets vs. U.S. intervention in Iraq check out the *Militant* in New York November 17

Martin gave a 15-minute presentation to the November meeting of International Association of Machinists Local 1759 in Herndon, Virginia, of which she is a member. After the meeting John Adams, a member of the local and also the union's delegate to the Maryland-DC Machinists Council, told Martin that he "hoped people had listened closely and would carefully consider the choices in the election because her message deserved the support of working people." Martin also participated in a candidates forum November 11 sponsored by the Capital Area Log Cabin and several other gay rights groups attended by 75 people. The next day she fielded questions as part of a one-hour

call-in program on WPFW, the local Pacifica radio station.

Upcoming events for the socialist candidate include a candidates forum sponsored by the Howard University Student Association; a debate at American University with a representative from the Democratic Socialists of America; a meeting sponsored by the Chevy Chase Citizens Association; a WAMU public radio show; and interviews with the Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO, and the *Washington Post* editorial board.

Brian Williams is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2609.

Ohio bookstores buy range of Pathfinder titles

BY SARA LOBMAN

"Someone just came in asking if I had anything on the stock market crash," the buyer at a small community college bookstore in Ohio exclaimed as a Pathfinder supporter showed her a copy of the Marxist magazine *New International* no. 10, with the article "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold." In addition to that title, she also ordered two copies each of *Teamster Rebellion*, by Farrell Dobbs, *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'* and *At the Side of Che Guevara* by Harry Villegas, Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956-58*, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*, and *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*.

The visit was part of a successful week of sales organized by Pathfinder supporters in Cleveland to bookstores and libraries in the region. Luis Madrid, from Pathfinder's New York office, participated in the effort, which won four orders for a total of 112 books. Eight local supporters participated in the visits, several for the first time. The buyer for a store near Oberlin College ordered 70 books and pamphlets. After saying she wanted to expand the section on the labor movement, she ordered *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes and the *Teamster* series by Farrell Dobbs. She also ordered three copies each of *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'* and *The Bolivian Diary* by Ernesto Che Guevara, and two copies each of *New International* nos. 8 and 10 and placed advance orders for two new titles by Frank Kofsky, *John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution*

of the 1960s and *Black Music, White Business*, which will be available soon.

She ordered several pamphlets, including *At the Side of Che Guevara* and *Europe and America: Two Speeches on Imperialism* by Leon Trotsky, noting that booklets were popular and affordable for students. She plans to place some of these face out on display so they are more visible and do not get lost among the larger books.

At another campus, this one in Cleve-

land, the buyer did not want to talk much. He carefully read through many of the book descriptions in the catalog, marking the order form as he went. In the end he placed an order for 19 books, including *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*, by Fidel Castro and Guevara, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Frederick Engels, and *Sexism and Science* by Evelyn Reed.

The Cleveland trip was part of a regular series planned by the Pathfinder staff to

complement and boost the efforts by local supporters to get Pathfinder books and pamphlets into as many bookstores and libraries as possible and to introduce the titles to professors who might be interested in using them for their classes. In September and October for the first time in many months, sales to these non-Pathfinder accounts were higher than for the same period a year ago. Local supporters who are interested in hosting a trip by someone from Pathfinder can call the New York office at (212) 741-0690.

Minneapolis official drops charges against socialist for selling 'Militant'

BY CHESTER NELSON

MINNEAPOLIS, Minnesota — Supporters of free speech scored a victory here November 10 when the city attorney's office dropped the last of two charges against a supporter of Jennifer Benton, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, for selling the *Militant* newspaper and posting fliers.

Doug Jenness, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of St. Paul and a member of the United Steelworkers of America, was cited by police in the Uptown area of Minneapolis on August 31 under city ordinances that require permits for selling and posting literature. He faced a maximum penalty of a \$700 fine or 90 days in jail or both for each citation.

The citation for selling the socialist weekly was dropped at his arraignment November 7. The second charge was dismissed after city attorneys had a few days to study a court order temporarily enjoining the city from enforcing the ordinances Jenness was cited under. The injunction was issued October 28 by federal district judge John Tunheim in response to a civil lawsuit brought against the city by Benton.

The lawyer assigned to Jenness' case from the criminal division of the city attorney's office claimed that she had not seen the 12-page opinion and court order before the arraignment. A differ-

ent department — the civil division of the city attorney's office — is defending the city against the socialists' lawsuit.

The injunction also bars the city from enforcing an ordinance requiring permits for setting up tables on sidewalks.

In addition to requesting the temporary order, the socialist lawsuit calls on the Court to grant a permanent injunction and a declaratory judgment stating that the permit scheme is unconstitutional. In all three ordinances in question the only specification for obtaining permits is that they are granted by the city council. In his memorandum Judge Tunheim stated that this allows the city the opportunity "to discriminate on the basis of the content of protected speech, and that the ordinances lack procedural due process protections for permit applicants." He added that Benton, the plaintiff, "is therefore likely to succeed in demonstrating that the ordinances are unconstitutional as applied to protected speech on this basis alone...."

Faced with the likelihood of losing in court, the city attorneys' office has informed Benton's attorney, Randall Tighe, that it is attempting to get the city council to amend the ordinances in question.

The Committee to Defend Free Speech, formed to organize support and raise funds for the socialist lawsuit, has announced that it is continuing to fight for a victory in the lawsuit that would open the door wider to the First Amendment fight to freedom of

speech. More than 200 people have signed petitions supporting the effort and a number of professors, civil libertarians and union officials have either sent letters or called Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton's office demanding the charges against Jenness be dropped and supporting the lawsuit.

Pathfinder Fund contributions keep coming

BY LUIS MADRID

NEW YORK — The success of the recent fund drive has inspired other Pathfinder supporters to send additional contributions to help finance the slew of new titles and reprints being produced. As of November 18, another \$2,219 had been received, bringing the international fund grand total collected to \$136,549 — or more than 9 percent beyond the \$125,000 original goal.

Also, due to an error, the scoreboard printed in the November 17 issue of the *Militant* mistakenly showed Miami supporters as not having met their goal on time. In fact, they surpassed their \$3,000 goal, raising \$3,062 by the November 1 deadline.

Once again, we want to thank the nearly 800 contributors from around the world who made this campaign such a success.

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'Aim was to spread anti-imperialist fight'

Interview with Manuel Piñeiro on Che Guevara's internationalist missions

This week we reprint the second half of an interview with Manuel Piñeiro, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, that was featured in a special 30th anniversary issue of the Cuban magazine *Tricontinental* devoted to Ernesto Che Guevara. During the 1960s, Piñeiro was the head of the General Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior of Cuba, which among other things was in charge of relations with revolutionary movements in the Third World. The first half was printed in *Militant* issue no. 40. The interview is reprinted by permission. Translation and footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BY LUIS SUÁREZ SALAZAR,
IVETTE ZUAZO,
AND ANA MARÍA PELLÓN

Q: During that same period, Che paid close attention to the efforts at insurgency in Peru. Is it true that this country was an alternative evaluated by him prior to selecting Bolivia?

A: Argentina, Peru, Bolivia — all of these were part of his integrated plan of advancing his strategy of a continental revolution.

Parallel to the Salta operation, in January 1963 a group of Peruvian combatants led by Alain Elías, and among them Javier Heraud and Abraham Lamas, attempted to begin armed struggle, entering Peru through the zone of Puerto Maldonado, on the border with Bolivia. The young Peruvian poet Javier Heraud and other comrades were killed there. They had the support of various cadres of the Bolivian CP, especially the Peredo brothers, who provided them with logistical support and served as guides for their column to enter Peru from Bolivia. Years later the ELN¹ reinitiated the struggle under the leadership of Héctor Béjar. The guerrilla movements of Luis de la Puente Uceda and Guillermo Lobatón, leaders of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), also emerged. Che had met with all these Peruvian leaders previously.

In other words, there was a certain degree of organization and a popular upsurge. Social struggles were going on, such as the land seizures led by Hugo Blanco. At the same time Peru was attractive to Che because it was closer to Argentina. Besides, in that period a democratic government existed in Bolivia, which had arisen out of the revolution of 1952, and it lasted until 1964. However, the guerrilla effort of the ELN, as well as those of the MIR, were destroyed. Luis de la Puente Uceda was killed (in November 1965) as well as Lobatón (in January 1966); Héctor Béjar was arrested in 1965 and the column he led was defeated....

Q: How did Che react to these reverses,

which clearly postponed his continent-wide effort?

A: He seemed very impatient. He did not stop exploring the possibility of joining the armed struggle in other countries, such as Venezuela and Colombia. Nevertheless, favorable conditions did not exist to receive a revolutionary of his political and military stature, with all the consequences this would entail.

Q: When did he begin thinking about Bolivia as a scene of battle and not just as a zone of support? Why did he decide on that country?

A: In 1964 Barrientos carried out a coup d'état in Bolivia and a period of intense repression was opened. At the same time, however, there was a movement of popular resistance, particularly by the miners and students. From that time on, Che began to watch



Cuban volunteers training for internationalist mission in Bolivia in San Andrés, Pinar del Río, Cuba, fall 1966. Left to right: Joaquín, Braulio, Rolando, Urbano, Alejandro, Marcos, Benigno, Antonio, Che Guevara (Ramón), Miguel, Rubio. Goal was to advance revolutionary struggle through the Americas.

the unfolding of events. Two years later, while he was in Tanzania, Che decided to send Papi to Bolivia to evaluate the situation. The latter confirmed Che's view that this was the only viable option, in the sense that there existed the minimum political conditions and there were experienced Bolivian cadres, who had taken part in assisting Masetti and the Peruvian guerrillas. That is, there were steered individuals who were prepared, politically and ideologically, to give solidarity to any revolutionary movement that arose in the area.

Q: How did the Bolivian effort fit into Che's continental strategy?

ter 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."

A: In his view, that guerrilla effort was to have become a school for forming Latin American cadres, above all from the Southern Cone — among them Argentines — which would help extend the armed struggle to neighboring countries. At the same time, it would enable him to accumulate political and military forces and wait for the most opportune occasion to continue the struggle toward his native country.

This would depend on the development and growth of the mother column established in Bolivia. Without that, it would not be possible to continue toward Argentina, where a bloody military dictatorship had also been installed, supported by the United States and repudiated by the most combative sectors of the Argentine people.

In a realistic manner, Che calculated that if, beginning with Bolivia, other guerrilla columns arose and evolved, composed of

counterinsurgency campaign of supporting the regimes of the area, which it supplied with arms, financial resources, and military training. They wanted to prevent at all costs the spread of the Cuban revolution's example.

Q: It has been said that after publication of his farewell letter, Che felt he had made a moral commitment not to return to Cuba, or not to take on a visible post again in the leadership of the revolution....

A: In my opinion, with or without a farewell letter, Che's plan was unalterable. He was determined to fulfill what he had laid out as his historic and strategic objective: to spread the anti-imperialist struggle throughout the continent.

Q: If we discount Ciro Bustos, only one Argentine remained in the Bolivian guerrilla movement, Tania. What do you think was the explanation for the almost insignificant presence of Argentines there?

A: Bustos was a liaison who had a series of connections and relations given him by Che, so that contact could be made with Argentines of different organizations and brought to the zone where he was operating in Bolivia. After Bustos was taken prisoner and turned informer — offering information and drawings identifying Che and the guerrillas — Argentina was "frozen." Remember too that when the army discovered the guerrilla base, the whole plan unfolded in an accelerated way. The guerrilla unit had to stay on the move constantly, and at that stage it became very difficult to maintain contact with the urban base and contact with those outside the country.

Had this not occurred, I believe, then when Che's presence in Bolivia became known, many cadres and combatants from various revolutionary forces on the continent would have looked for a way to come and participate. Che's call to action exerted a great influence on many revolutionaries inside and outside Latin America.

Q: What merit is there to the story spread around the world that Cuba's political leadership abandoned Che in Bolivia and did not provide him the support necessary for the success of his operation?

A: From the very beginning of the Cuban revolution — and much earlier, going back to our first wars of independence — the empire has practiced a strategy of trying to divide the revolutionary forces. First it circulated the story that the disappearance of Camilo was the result and consequence of differences within the revolutionary leadership;³ later it spoke of supposed differences between Raúl and Fidel; and later between Fidel and Che. In this way it mounted a whole campaign of disinformation that has lasted up to the present, to try to sow confusion not only in Cuba but in the Latin American and world revolutionary movement, and in international public opinion. One of the centerpieces of these campaigns is the supposed abandonment of Che's guerrilla movement, which is based on questioning why we didn't send military reinforcements to support him and to help him break the Bolivian army's encirclement.

Anyone who knows the laws of guerrilla warfare is aware that in the initial and most difficult phase, the guerrilla column is compelled to be on the move constantly to avoid the ambushes of the enemy army, especially if it is at a disadvantage. In such a phase, the guerrilla unit depends on its own forces

¹ National Liberation Army of Peru.

² Guevara's "Message to the Tricontinental," written in 1966, called for creating "two, three ... many Vietnams." It is printed in *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'Guerrilla.'*

³ Camilo Cienfuegos was a Rebel Army commander who became chief of staff in January 1959. He died October 28, 1959, when his plane was lost over sea.

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, af-

and the backing it can receive from the urban network, which at that time had been hard hit. Therefore, it would not have been such an easy task to send — to use their term — military reinforcements. It's pure fantasy.

*Q: And is it also a fantasy to compare, as has been done, the supposed lack of support to Che with the successful Cuban efforts to get its officers out of Venezuela?*⁴

A: With absolute knowledge and responsibility I can state that in Venezuela the Communist Party, the MIR [Movement of the Revolutionary Left], and other revolutionary forces, although they had suffered some defeats, maintained clandestine structures and operational facilities that helped make possible the patient and meticulous organization of the operation to get these comrades out. Those circumstances did not exist in Bolivia.

Q: Returning to 1965, you were very closely involved in the preparations of the Cuban internationalist mission in the Congo led by Che that year. In your judgment, what did that stage represent for him in relation to his final strategic plan?

A: At that time, although there was certainly a revolutionary upsurge on a world scale, headed by the heroic Vietnamese people, and under the impact of the Cuban revolution, nevertheless the minimum conditions for Che to materialize his plan in Latin America still did not exist. Based on this, and on the request for aid that had been made of Cuba, through Che, by the leadership of the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the Congo, Fidel proposed that the most useful thing Che could do was to head up the group of Cuban military advisers who would be heading off to that African country. The aim would be to allow Che to gain time while accumulating experience, getting himself ready again, and at the same time preparing some of the Cuban cadres and combatants who would accompany him later to Bolivia.

Che viewed the Congo stage as a stepping stone, an intermediate phase to prepare himself for his definitive goal. There he would wait for the evolution of developments in Latin America to create favorable political conditions to carry out his strategic plans. So much so that as he was leaving the Congo, Che asked Harry Villegas, Carlos Coello, and José María Martínez Tamayo if they were willing to continue the struggle together with him, in another country, a struggle that would be long, complex, and difficult. These comrades were later part of the Bolivian guerrilla movement under the pseudonyms of Pombo, Tuma, and Ricardo.

Q: What was the role of the vice ministry you headed in the delicate operations to get Che and his comrades to Africa, later return to Cuba, and then go to Bolivia?

A: Our department was in charge of the entire technical and operational preparation for the Congo mission, supplying the documents, travel itineraries, and false identities. Starting with our embassy in Tanzania, we

⁴ In 1967 several leading Cuban volunteers were in Venezuela, assisting in the armed struggle against the U.S.-supported regime in that country. Most were able to return to Cuba after the guerrillas were defeated.

constituted a support group in charge of seeking information and cooperation in the shipment of logistics from that country to Che's base in the Congo, the training of the radio operators, as well as other forms of contact and communication with Che.

On Fidel's instructions, the Technical Vice Ministry of the Ministry of the Interior gave support to Che on everything he requested in relation to the future mission in Bolivia. We supplied the documents, the false passports, the information he requested on various situations in Bolivia, the training in different specialized areas, such as communications and conspiratorial methods.

All the technical details were prepared by our officials, but each step was analyzed and approved by Che: the routes chosen and who would take them; how to pass unnoticed through airports, airport characteristics and border checks, the thoroughness of immigration checks, at what times and on what days was there less vigilance by the authorities. Toward this end a study was made on the operational, border control, and immigration situation, and the methods applied by the counterintelligence forces of the countries Che and the other combatants would be passing through.

Some day, at the right moment, this story will have to be told in more detail, and recognition given to the comrades who worked on that operation, and not a single name will be omitted. More than 140 Cubans went to Africa, and more than 20 to Bolivia, without being detected by the organs of Yankee espionage, nor by the security apparatus of the countries they were passing through. The work was carried out with great meticulousness, professionalism, strict division of labor, and above all with great motivation since it involved Che and those who accompanied him.

We lived through those days in great tension; I'm speaking for the entire team in charge of these tasks. We knew that a single error of any type could cost the life of a participant in the mission. These were hours of anxiety and permanent vigilance, until we received confirmation of the arrival of Che and the rest of the group at their destination. I will never forget those moments, nor will any of the comrades who carried out that difficult internationalist task in anonymity.

Q: What was Che's frame of mind in the months between his return from the Congo and his departure for Bolivia? He came from a defeat in Africa

A: A defeat whose causes he explained, making a self-criticism besides, as he was accustomed to doing given his personality and standard of ethics. But one must always remember that he went to the Congo to transmit his experience and to advise, not to lead that war of national liberation. Once he was there he came up against the cultural and religious traditions, the differences among the Congolese leaders, the lack of combat experience. Psychologically this was a very difficult situation to confront, above all for our combatants who were steered in battle, with experience of struggle, and who wanted not only to advise but to participate in direct combat against the enemy. It was not easy, understandably.

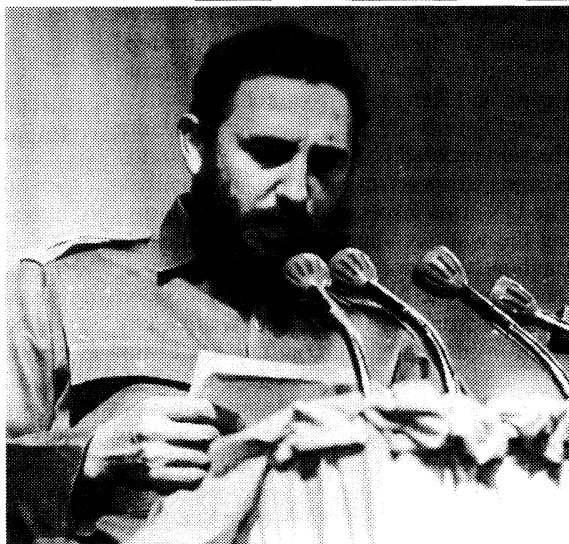
For that reason, Che directly took part in combat, and was prepared to accept the final consequences of his acts. Nevertheless, the decisions taken by the Congolese leadership and by the governments of Africa created a conjuncture where there was no alternative but to organize his departure from the Congo and that of all the other comrades.

With respect to Che's morale before leaving for Bolivia, he was like a child with a new toy. He was euphoric, happy, because he was with the group he had selected, and by then they had already been trained. He acted in a very fraternal manner with the comrades, although he was also very disciplined and demanding. They followed a plan of rigorous physical, military, and psychological training; reading of documents on that country, learning the Quechua language, mathematics classes. He was very much concerned with raising the cultural level of the combatants under him.

Q: In April 1967, when Che was already



Photos: (Top) Tricontinental, (Left) Granma
Top: Manuel Piñero (front, third from right) with Guevara at 1959 May Day celebration in Santiago, Cuba. Left: Fidel Castro reads Guevara's letter of farewell at meeting to introduce Central Committee of Communist Party of Cuba, Oct. 3, 1965.



in Bolivia, a supplement to our magazine published his "Message to the Peoples of the World." Nevertheless, according to some versions, this was not written in Bolivia but in Cuba. What can you tell us about this?

A: I believe that's basically correct, that he wrote it during the time he was at the training camp in Pinar del Río province, before his departure for Bolivia in November 1966.

Q: It's noteworthy that while he devoted so many intellectual and practical efforts at internationalism, he didn't attend the historic Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, held in January 1966. What was the reason?

A: He couldn't attend because while the Tricontinental Conference was being held, he was in Tanzania. But while there he received all the materials and an assessment of the meeting.

Q: What was the impact on you of Che's farewell letter?

A: I already knew of it before it was read by Fidel in the presentation of the first Central Committee of the Communist Party in October 1965. Nevertheless, every time I hear or read it, I'm deeply moved and it brings back many memories both of Che and of his comrades, since I knew all of them and had close personal and working ties with some of them.

Q: The last time you saw Che alive, did you think it would be the last time?

A: I saw him in the early morning hours of the day he went to the airport to go join

the guerrilla struggle in Bolivia. It was in a safe house where he held, I believe, his last conversation with Fidel. Raúl Castro and Vilma Espín were also there. Fidel and Che were sitting on a sofa, talking there by themselves, in low voices, for a very long time.

I didn't think this would be the last time I would see him, although those of us involved in this type of struggle know that in it one either triumphs or dies. We were very optimistic, and very confident in the determination, will, and capacity of Che, of the Cubans who accompanied him, and of the Bolivians, who had proven themselves in other tasks, to attain their objective and be able to deal capably with all the difficulties they would encounter. In reality, the Bolivian guerrilla movement was able to carry out a number of successful military actions, inflicting casualties on the army's soldiers and taking prisoners.

Che did not have a mystical view of death, as has been attributed to him. Had he survived alone or with another combatant he would have tried to reorganize the guerrilla unit and continue the battle. He was not a man to give his life easily to his enemies, nor did he have an inclination to be a martyr. Proof of this is that even when he was wounded and his rifle put out of action, he tried to escape from the encirclement to meet up again with his men. He never felt defeated or demoralized. He defended his ideas with his own flesh and blood, unconcerned about whether he might give his life in the effort.

Q: Did Che say goodbye to you? What kind of farewell was it?

A: He did so in the safe house I mentioned. He was happy, smiling. He was finally heading off to his long-awaited goal.

It was a simple farewell; he was not very effusive. Che carried his emotions inside himself; one had to know how to decipher them. But as always, the expression on his face transmitted great force and conviction.

Q: How did you learn of Che's death?

Continued on Page 15

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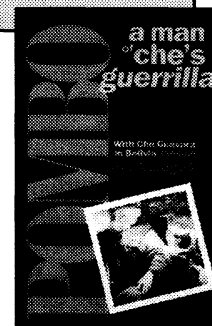
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Washington suffers a blow in Mideast

Continued from front page of time, or as long as he [Iraqi president Saddam Hussein] lasts."

At the same time Washington is forced to rely on Paris and Moscow to negotiate with Iraqi government, White House officials say they are discussing whether they will impose sanctions on the oil companies Total SA of France and Gazprom of Russia for a \$2 billion investment in Iranian gas fields. French oil and gasoline companies have also been negotiating further production deals in Iraq, and Russia's Lukoil signed a production-sharing pact with Baghdad in March valued at \$3.8 billion. Baghdad also owes Moscow billions of dollars incurred during its war with Iran during the 1980s, when the Soviet Union was a major arms supplier. Easing of the sanctions would advance all of these business interests.

No rebuilding Gulf War coalition

Washington's current fiasco stems from its inability to accomplish its aims in the 1990-91 Gulf War — to remove the Hussein government and install a subservient client regime in Baghdad that could better support the interests of U.S. capital in the region. Using the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a pretext, Washington orchestrated a massive military assault involving nearly half a million U.S.-led troops. The U.S. rulers forced their allies, including those with rival interests in the region such as Paris, and most of the governments in the region, into a coalition to carry this out.

For 43 days more than 88,000 tons of bombs were dropped on the Iraqi people, crippling electricity networks and oil refineries, severing bridges, and destroying roads. This was followed by Washington's 100-hour ground invasion, in which fleeing soldiers and civilians were slaughtered. In all, an estimated 150,000 Iraqi workers and farmers were killed in this so-called war.

The U.S. government decided to halt the ground war short of going into Baghdad, leaving the Hussein regime in place. Former U.S. president George Bush explained his reasons for this decision in a recent British Broadcasting Corporation TV documentary. "The coalition would have shattered," Bush acknowledged. "I know the French would have left us in a minute, I know the Egyptians and the Turks would have been gone. Syria would have been long gone had we rolled into Baghdad."

There are still two UN-imposed "no fly" zones in Iraq, which are enforced by U.S., French, and British war planes. Since 1991,

however, Washington has never been able to put together the same kind of coalition. London was the only major power to back Washington in its recent war moves.

The recent events around Iraq began when Washington attempted to tighten the embargo against Baghdad in a UN Security Council vote in October. At first the U.S. government attempted to push through a resolution banning travel by Iraqi officials. When the delegates of France and Russia refused to go along, Washington conceded to a watered-down version. Even so, five members of the Security Council — the representatives from France, Russia, China, Egypt, and Kenya — abstained.

On October 29 Iraqi president Saddam Hussein ordered U.S. members of a United Nations weapons inspection team expelled. The UN arms inspections, imposed following the war, are supposedly to certify that Baghdad does not have major weaponry or the capacity to build it. The inspectors, led by those from the United States, are a key piece in justifying the continuation of the sanctions. Washington seized on the expulsion of U.S. members of the investigating team as justification to push through another Security Council resolution November 12 imposing a travel ban on some Iraqi officials. While the resolution warns of "further measures" if necessary, it does not include an explicit threat of military force. The governments of France, Russia, China, and Egypt again refused to go along with the military threat, and Washington conceded a weaker resolution to get a unanimous vote.

Four days later, Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz told *Le Figaro* in Paris that the crisis could be defused if the inspection group were to include an equal number of each permanent member of the UN Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China. Washington dismissed the proposal. "He [Hussein], being a parolee, is not in a position to determine who his probation officers are," scoffed U.S. defense secretary William Cohen.

Qatar conference debacle

Over the last few weeks Washington has also proved incapable of forcing the regimes in Arab-speaking countries that had backed the Gulf War to go along with a new assault on Iraq. This was brought home at the U.S.-led Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference held in Doha, Qatar, November 16. There Washington suffered an embarrassing defeat when, despite major arm-twisting, nearly every one of these



Baghdad after U.S.-organized bombing during the 1990-91 Gulf War

governments — including those in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates — boycotted the meeting. Months earlier, Arab officials began saying their attendance was contingent on the relations easing between the Zionist regime in Tel Aviv and the Palestinians. Since then, the conflict over Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Jerusalem has heated up. Several of the boycotting regimes publicly expressed that they do not support a military attack against Iraq. U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, who was at the Doha conference, was forced to shuttle from Qatar to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in an unsuccessful attempt to drum up support for the impending U.S. assault.

Syrian defense minister Mustafa Tlass told *al-Hayat*, a London-based newspaper, "All Arab countries are in solidarity with Iraq." Kuwaiti foreign minister Sabah al-Ahmed al Sabah said, "We do not support any military action against Iraq."

The Arab League voted in mid-November to express its "total rejection of any military action to be taken against Iraq." And according to the *New York Times*, the Clinton administration still does not have the backing of the Saudi government, where more than 100 U.S. planes are based. The force could support long-range B-52 bombers, and having Saudi support would be essential for a prolonged U.S. intervention.

Secretary of State Albright and Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi ambassador, held a joint press conference during the economic meeting. When asked if the Saudi government were willing to let Washington fly over their territory to attack Iraq, Bandar replied, "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it." In September 1996 during another military assault against Iraq, the Saudi re-

gime refused to allow U.S. warplanes operating from an air base in Dhahran to launch air strikes. The government of Turkey would not permit the U.S. military to launch attacks from its bases and the regime in Jordan refused to give U.S. fighter jets permission to enter its airspace.

Military buildup continues

Meanwhile, the aircraft carrier *USS Washington* arrived in the Persian Gulf, joining the *USS Nimitz*. This doubles the number of fighters and bombers off the Iraqi coast that could attack without crossing any other country's airspace. Each of the warships has about 50 offensive aircraft. The U.S. military also has more than a dozen ships capable of firing cruise missiles deep into Iraq. The armada includes cruisers and destroyers that can launch a total of about 500 cruise missiles, frigates, mine sweepers, support ships, and a submarine. There are some U.S. 20,000 soldiers stationed in the area. U.S. military officers say they could conduct round-the-clock bombing operations.

Clinton ordered additional aircraft to the Persian Gulf region November 18 for a total of about 300. Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon said that six F-117 stealth fighters were being dispatched to the Kuwait city airport. He added that six B-52s, capable of launching cruise missiles, are on their way to Diego Garcia, a British colony in the Indian Ocean.

A few days earlier, British foreign secretary Robin Cook announced that London had ordered an aircraft carrier, the *Invincible*, to the Mediterranean from the Caribbean and put a squadron of Harrier jets on heightened alert.

As they prepared for a possible assault on Iraq, Pentagon officials threatened to bomb bridges, military airfields, anti-aircraft radar sites, gun emplacements, and other facilities. In 1993, Washington bombed Iraq more than a dozen times. Last year Clinton ordered three rounds of attacks, firing scores of missiles into southern Iraq.

Another destabilizing factor in the region is the growing crisis in the Israeli regime. Tensions threaten to tear apart the ruling Likud party. At the Likud convention the right wing of the party was furious at supporters of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who maneuvered to strengthen their grip on the party structure. At the center of this conflict are disputes over how far to push the expansion of Zionist settlements into the occupied Palestinian territories and how to respond to Tel Aviv's inability to crush the Palestinian struggle.

The MENA economic conference in Doha ended with a call on Israel to exchange land for peace and "the immediate removal of all restrictions," on the movement of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza. Delegates demanded Netanyahu abide by agreements signed with the Palestinians. U.S. secretary of state Albright was among the signers on this statement. The interests of Washington and Tel Aviv have continued to diverge since the Gulf War, as the U.S. rulers have sought closer ties with Arab regimes in the region. Albright had earlier called for a "time out" on building or expanding of Zionist settlements on occupied Arab territory, but this has been regularly defied by Tel Aviv.

Adding to the tensions in the region is the \$2 billion investment by French and

Continued on Page 14

Effects of sanctions on Iraqi toilers

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As part of its military preparations against the Iraqi people, Washington led the imposition of UN sanctions against the regime in August 1990. It was a total embargo, where any ship that persisted in trying to run the blockade risked being blown out of the water — according to UN Security Council Resolution 665. That document called on governments "deploying maritime forces to the area to use such measures commensurate to the specific circumstances as may be necessary ... to halt all inward and outward maritime shipping."

The U.S. government estimated that the blockade had cut 90 percent of Iraq's imports and 97 percent of its exports and slashed nonmilitary economic production by some 40 percent by September 1990. Widespread starvation was avoided due to a public rationing system, which provided minimum quantities of food to the population.

"A resolution implementing a total blockade that did not exempt foodstuffs and medicines" has "turned millions of elderly people, women, and children ... into hostages of hunger and death," Cuban foreign minister Isidoro Malmierca explained to the Security Council in November 1990.

The sanctions remain in place seven

years after they were imposed and after Washington led the slaughter of more than 150,000 Iraqis, while destroying the country's power stations, sewage systems, and factories with indiscriminate bombing.

Here are some of the results:

- More than 1 million Iraqis have died — over 600,000 of them children, according to the December 1995 report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

- The United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) reported that 4,500 children are dying each month (one child every ten minutes) from problems related to malnutrition and a shortage of medical supplies.

- A March 1996 report from the World Health Organization states since the onset of sanctions there has been a six-fold increase in the mortality rate for children under five and the majority of the population has been on a semi-starvation diet.

- Scientific studies conducted by international researchers and scientists unequivocally confirmed that Washington has used banned weapons and ammunition enriched with depleted uranium in its military assault against Iraq, exposing vast tracts of Iraqi territory to contamination by deadly toxic chemicals.

Numerous cases of unfamiliar diseases have been recorded, such as congenital fetal deformities, bone deformities, and child

leukemia.

- A UNICEF survey on the availability of water and sewage systems reported that more than half the rural population did not have access to potable water, while sewage disposal for some 30 percent of the total population did not have adequate services with much of the waste being discharged directly into rivers and streams.

In response to growing worldwide opposition to the devastating effects of the sanctions, UN Security Council adopted Resolution 986, the "oil for food" deal, in 1995. It allows Baghdad to export limited quantities of oil to finance imports of food and other humanitarian needs.

In December 1996, the regime was permitted to sell up to \$2 billion of oil every six months, out of which \$805 million could be used for food imports and \$44 million for agricultural inputs. Agriculture has deteriorated significantly in 1990s, due to lack of investment and shortage of essential inputs. The balance of the proceeds from oil sales are required to go toward war "reparations."

Despite this agreement, Iraq has received only 25 percent of the medicine required and has not obtained any materials for agriculture, education, water, sewage, and spare parts for electrical power stations.

Protests demand: U.S. hands off Iraq!

Below are reports from *Militant* correspondents on a few of the protests that took place November 17-19 across the United States and elsewhere demanding an end to Washington's war moves and the UN sanctions against Iraq.

"Some 40 people demonstrated in downtown Boston tonight protesting Clinton's war preparations against the Iraqi people," writes Andy Buchanan. "The protesters included students from a number of local colleges and high schools, Cuba solidarity activists, members of pacifist and church groups, and others." A few of the young people who passed by the November 17 demonstration decided to join in, while others stopped and talked with participants in the action.

Buchanan said many signs carried by protesters opposed both the current U.S. military threats and the on-going sanctions against Iraq. One read "Sanctions against Iraq are the real weapons of mass destruction." Speakers included representatives of the National Peoples Campaign, the Socialist Workers Party, a student leader from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and from the Sacred Earth Network. Elena Tate,

a high school student from Cambridge, Massachusetts, pointed out that "young people have a lot at stake here ... it is us who will be drafted to fight for big business."

Celia Pugh from London said, "A vocal 40 people picketed outside the United States embassy November 19 in London. They carried placards that read 'end the sanctions, hands off Iraq.'" Participants included Iraqi exiles in Britain and members of the London Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Pugh reported that three students from London universities said their parents were from Iraq.

"This was the first protest of this kind they had joined," Pugh stated. "One explained that she had just returned from a holiday in Iraq and was horrified by the devastation wrought by imperialist bombing and sanctions. Another student explained that she lives in Sweden, where she is involved in a group of young people who want to get the truth out about the impact of sanctions on Iraq."

The picket organizers, the Committee Against Sanctions in Iraq stated in their flier,

"In the first broad challenge to the new Labour government on foreign policy issues, a protest has been organized against U.S. and British threats of a military strike against Iraq."

Thirty-five people joined an emergency picket line in front of the White House November 18, Brian Williams from Washington, D.C. reported. "UN sanctions have got to go!" and "USA-CIA Hands Off Iraq" were some of the chants from the spirited participants. The action was supported by the Washington Peace Center, Nicaragua Network, National People's Campaign, Socialist Workers Party, Workers World Party, and the Young Socialists.

Among those addressing the crowd

was Sam Hussein from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (AADC). "The sanctions themselves are a weapon of mass destruction," he stated. Hussein also announced that the ADC-Iraq Task Force is sponsoring a teach-in at George Washington University on November 20 around the theme "End the Silent War on the Iraqi People! Let the children of Iraq Live!"

Deborah Liatos, a mem-



Militant/Hilda Cuzco
More than 100 people in New York protested Washington's war moves against Iraq November 17.

ber of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in New York, reported that more than 100 people picketed at Times Square November 17. In Los Angeles, some 30 people joined an emergency protest at the Federal Building downtown that same day.

Student groups at the City College of New York are planning a forum titled "What's behind U.S. war threats against Iraq?" for November 25 (see details on page 12). Other protests included August 19 actions of 125 people in Minneapolis and 25 people in Philadelphia.

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Castro at summit: 'A revolutionary change of course is needed'

Below are excerpts of the speech given by Cuban president Fidel Castro at the Seventh Ibero-American Summit November 7-9 in Margarita, Venezuela. Translation is by the *Militant*.

FIDEL CASTRO

At the first summit, Mexico invited Cuba. Apparently it was already time for an end to arbitrary and outrageous exclusions of a small country that has defended its right to exist with great dignity and through a solitary and heroic struggle....

We have never renounced our political, economic, and social system, a true democracy with a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and not of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich. In these times of so many inequalities and injustices, we have struggled more than anyone to defend the most sacred rights of every human being.

Let it be said by our children, who have the lowest mortality rates in the entire Third World; by our fully literate population; by the millions of mothers who have given birth with fewer

deaths than in any other country in Latin America; or our elderly, who live more than 75 years [on the average], just to cite a few examples. Let it be said by our extraordinary people, who for almost 40 years have resisted the longest and most criminal economic blockade ever....

Let others yield to lies and deceit, to the illusions and the interests of the powerful of this world. We shall continue to defend the ideas for which we have struggled all our lives alongside the poor; the ill who lack doctors and medicine; the parents without work, the hundreds of millions of boys and girls abandoned to their fate or are forced to work or to prostitute themselves in order to live, the hungry, the oppressed and exploited of the whole world, who constitute the immense majority of humanity.

A total change of course — even if few statesmen understand this today — is the most moral, democratic, and revolutionary action that must take place in the world today. If there is a desire to discuss this subject, let it be discussed, and let each one, according to their conscience, confront the irrefutable figures and concrete facts that demonstrate the accelerating growth of universal and unsustainable financial speculation; the increasing vulnerability of the economy; the destruction of the environment; the uncertain future and bottomless abyss to which they are leading us; the blind and uncontrollable neoliberalism and crushing and brutal globalism that exists under the aegis of the most powerful and selfish power in history. It is not necessary to wait for currencies to lose their value and stock markets to crash.

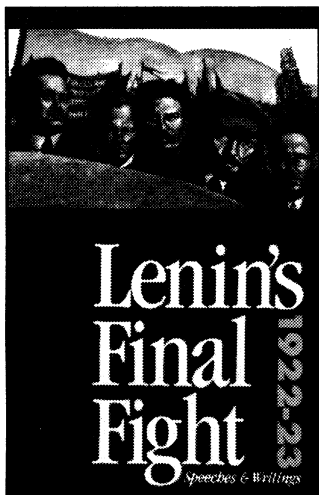
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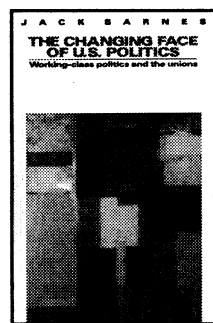


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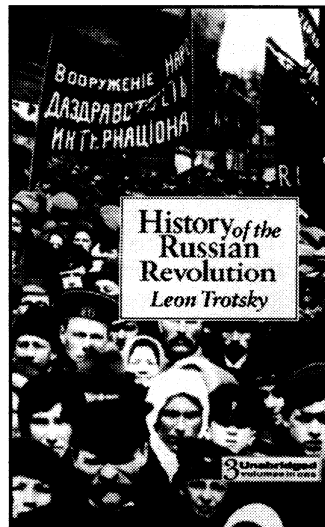


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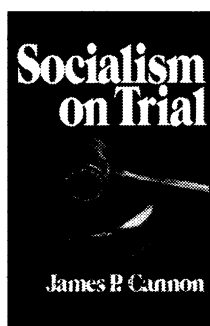
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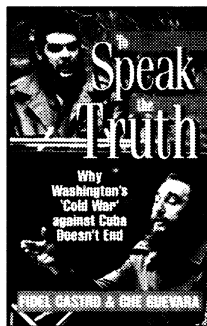
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Rail merger leads to gridlock in west, while speedup causes accidents to soar

BY BARRY FATLAND
AND CRAIG HONTES

LOS ANGELES — A near gridlock on railroads in Texas and California is causing dislocations throughout the economy of the southwest, as shippers are unable to deliver cargo on time by rail. The crisis stemming from the merger of the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroads last year led the federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) on October 31 to declare a "transportation emergency" from California to Oregon and the Midwest to the Texas Gulf. The list of deaths and injuries from train wrecks is also getting longer as a result.

Problems on the railroad have clogged California ports, stranded grain crops in the Midwest, and closed some Gulf Coast petrochemical plants that are unable to get needed materials. A U.S. Agriculture Department official warned of a potential disaster if Union Pacific doesn't pay more attention to grain shipments in this record harvest year.

In Los Angeles the breakdown in rail service tied up vital sectors of the city's economy November 3, leaving 16 ships backed up in the outer harbor unable to reach the docks to be unloaded. The crisis is even more acute in Texas. The estimated cumulative impact on that state since UP's service problems began is in the range of \$300 to \$400 million.

The meltdown in service began early this summer, just months after the Union Pacific bought out the rival Southern Pacific Railroad, forming a massive 36,000-mile system with more than 150,000 freight cars. The merged railroad was projected to carry 80 percent of all traffic to and from Mexico and 75 percent of the petrochemical goods produced along the U.S. Gulf Coast.

UP spent \$5.4 billion on the buyout. One of the first things the merged railroad did was cut the overall workforce by more than 2,000. The drive to squeeze as much work as possible out of fewer workers lies behind the safety disaster unfolding in Texas.

Growing safety disaster

Nine rail workers have been killed since June 22, as a result of numerous major rail accidents. In the last week of October two major wrecks occurred within 4 days of each other. "What we have on the UP Railroad is a case of the chickens coming home to roost," said James Solomon, a conductor who worked on Houston area railroads for 35 years. He was referring to UP's drive to get the freight over the road at all costs with a disorganized management and a work force stretched to the point of exhaustion.

Rail workers in Houston, who asked that their names not be used, report that UP trains are sitting back to back without moving over vast stretches of track in the state of Texas. Workers told a *Militant* reporter who visited the Englewood yard November 6 that crews sometimes sit on trains for 12 hours at a stretch without moving, with their relief crew doing the same. Exhaustion develops from being called out to work with as



Rail worker untangles 96-car wreck between New York and Pennsylvania in August

little as eight hours' rest.

On September 10 the Federal Railroad Administration issued a report that stated that the UP Railroad is suffering from a fundamental breakdown in safety procedures, primarily from deficiencies in training, dispatching, and employee fatigue. The FRA Report documents that 75 percent of all crews work the full 12-hour limit, and most crews wait an additional three or four hours to be picked up in a van and returned to their home terminal. One van driver said "she worked 18-20 hour days. She recounted sleeping in her van between calls in truck stops and roadside parks off and on for as many as five days in a row because she was simply too tired to drive home after dropping a crew off ... All but one driver admitted that train crew members periodically drive the crew vans because they were too fatigued to drive safely," the report stated.

The FRA also documented long layovers in terminals away from home, often for as long as 30 - 48 hours. One crew was stuck at a terminal away from home for five days.

Many of the workers in Houston were former employees of the Southern Pacific, where they had won pay and work conditions over the years that were superior to those on the UP and other railroads. Workers said that under the SP they were allowed to take up to 18 hours of undisturbed rest

after a trip — a right that is about to be taken away under the terms of the merger. This has created a mood of resistance, with workers looking for ways to push for their rights, refuse to do unsafe work, and take off the time they need to rest.

California rail workers hold sick-out

Other carriers are looking at the crisis on the UP Railroad as trying to take advantage of the situation to get more of the market, especially the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF), UP's main competitor. Facing significant crew shortage problems themselves, the BNSF has combined harassment with limited pay incentives to keep workers continually working. One incentive offered to Los Angeles crews demanded the bonus as well. After workers staged a sick-out, the company quickly backed down and granted the Bakersfield crews the same incentive as Los Angeles.

When crews in Needles, California, a town on the border with Arizona, heard this they decided to stage their own sick-out to force management to treat all the workers equally. The BNSF immediately threatened to run the trains with management personnel. Union officials said they would seek strike authorization to prevent that. The sick-out proceeded on October 30, with around

70 percent of the workforce not coming in to work. According to one local chairman of the UTU, this amounted to 53 engineers and 30 conductors not coming in to work that day at Needles.

BNSF top management then sought and received an October 31 court injunction from a U.S. district court judge in Fort Worth, Texas, to stop the action. The restraining order says in part, "that BLE and UTU, their officers, agents, employees and members, and all persons acting in concert with them, be and they are hereby temporarily restrained from" participating in any form of sick-out, strike, or work stoppage in California or Arizona or picketing company property or "in any manner interfering with ... any person employed by BNSF from performing his or her work..." The unions were directed to appear in court again on November 12.

The BNSF canceled all pay incentives to remain available to work seven days a week, and instead threatened to send Federal marshals to workers' homes to serve them with the court injunction.

Nearly 150 wives and children of BNSF workers held a rally November 2, protesting the "unreasonably long and potentially hazardous work hours imposed on their husbands," the *Bakersfield Californian* reported November 5. "According to BLE records, BNSF engineers and conductors for whom Bakersfield is home base are working as many as 273 hours a month, with time off only to sleep.... 'To get time off they have to call in sick,' said Sherri Sherrer, whose husband is a conductor," the article stated.

According to Steve Benson, chairman of the Bakersfield chapter of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), during October engineers there worked 12 or more hours a day 28.6 percent of the time, 11 or more hours 42 percent of the time, and 10 or more hours 55 percent of the time.

Interviewed by the *Californian*, BNSF spokesman Richard Russack "said by telephone from corporate headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, he thinks the issue is simply one of wives wanting to spend more time with their husbands. 'This is not a safety issue,'" Russack asserted.

Barry Fatland and Craig Hontes are members of the UTU in Los Angeles.

Meatpackers in Canada strike against company's offensive on wages, rules

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

BURLINGTON, Ontario — Strikers picketing the Maple Leaf Foods meatpacking plant here just outside of Toronto explain that the company is demanding cuts in pay and benefits of up to Can\$9 (Can\$1=US\$0.70) an hour. Maximum holidays would be reduced from six weeks to four, and workers would be allowed a maximum of 20 minutes a week during work hours to go to the bathroom. After using up that allocation, their pay would be docked for each trip to the toilet. Currently production workers' average wages are Can\$17.50 an hour.

The 900 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers here hit the bricks November 15, and have since been joined by a further 900 who struck the company's plant in Edmonton, Alberta, November 17. The Edmonton local members are already docked pay for every bathroom visit. They earn Can\$14.13 an hour after five years of service.

Almost 500 workers at two other Maple Leaf plants have been locked out for weeks in Hamilton, Ontario, and North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

One day into the Edmonton strike, Maple Leaf, Canada's largest food-processing company with more than \$3 billion in annual sales, announced that the plant would close for good.

The company has taken out full-page ads in some of Canada's major dailies to push its demands. "If Canada's pork industry doesn't start working together, nothing will save out bacon," declares the headline, over

a drawing of pigs heading "To USA." The text asserts that "Canadian labour costs in wages, benefits, and work rules are crippling high — \$3 to \$9 an hour more than the average in the United States, even amongst members of the same union! So available dollars go to unionized plant workers instead of farmers who earn up to \$6 less

per hog in Canada than in the US."

"We're here for a fight, and we're here until we win," said Greg Zikos, president of striking UFCW Local 1227 in Burlington.

Katy LeRougetel is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5338. Guy Tremblay contributed to this article.

Carey barred

Continued from front page

charges of conspiring to divert union funds and is currently awaiting sentencing.

Official government "supervision" of Teamster elections began in 1989, after the U.S. Justice Department filed a civil racketeering suit, asserting the Teamsters was gangster-controlled. The settlement coming out of that case gave the government powers to oversee elections. Using government snoops of various stripes inside the IBT is part of this "supervision."

Over the course of the most recent investigation, both Carey and his main opponent in the union election, James Hoffa, called on the federal government to investigate the other. Officials in Washington are now talking of going after Hoffa on corruption charges. They have also probed taking steps against other union tops including Richard Trumka, the AFL-CIO treasurer and former president of the United Mine Workers union, and Andrew Stern, president of the Services Employees International Union.

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Debt crisis shakes south Korean economy

Continued from front page

lion of that amount due by the end of the year.

Investment banks, which specialize in short-term corporate financing, have had their credit lines cut by foreign lenders. "We've been discouraging new lending," said a foreign banker in Seoul. This action could result in a new wave of bankruptcies.

South Korea's debt crisis has provoked the collapse of seven of the nation's top 30 conglomerates this year. Each corporate failure chips away at the banks' dwindling finances. The nine largest financial institutions in the country already have bad loans that add up to between 94 and 376 percent of the banks' capital. Enormous loans have invested in industries such as steel, semiconductors, and petrochemicals, including \$1 trillion in domestic loans. Hanbo, a steel conglomerate, and Kia, an auto manufacturer, have both gone under, leaving banks with massive bad debts.

Working people have put up resistance to the bosses' and the government's attempt to impose job cuts and other austerity "reforms," presented as measures needed to restore financial stability. Employees at the Bank of Korea rallied in the streets November 17 and threatened to walk off their jobs en masse if proposed legislation is passed that includes cuts in the staff. Some 15,000 auto workers at Kia Motors Corp. launched a 13-day strike October 21 to prevent job losses among the 22,000 employees in the plant.

Last January, hundreds of thousands of workers in south Korea took part in a general strike for more than three weeks to demand the repeal of antilabor legislation that restricted union rights, allowed companies

greater latitude to impose layoffs, and gave additional powers to the secret police.

The financial turmoil haunting south Korea has evoked increasing alarm among U.S. ruling class figures who touted the country as a role model for Asia's so-called developing nations. "You almost wonder today whether South Korea will collapse before North Korea," complained *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman in his November 17 opinion piece. Washington maintains 37,000 troops in south Korea as a weapon aimed at the workers state in north Korea, which also suffers from food shortages.

The U.S. wealthy class is nervous that the bank failures and currency instability in Asia, especially in Japan, could resonate across the Pacific and wreak havoc on the U.S. banking and credit system. U.S. deputy treasury secretary Lawrence Summers flew to Tokyo and later to the Philippines for a November 19 conference to discuss the Asian financial crisis that included ministers and central bankers from 14 countries, as well as officials from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

10th largest bank collapses in Japan

Japan's economy is on the brink of a recession as a banking crisis unfolds there. Government statistics dated March 31 report Japan's financial institutions carrying around \$250 billion in problem loans.

Hokkaido Takushoku Bank Ltd went under November 17 with an estimated \$10 billion in bad loans. Regulators said Japan's 10th largest bank will be dissolved at the expense of shareholders — mostly other financial institutions. It was the first failure of any of the top 20 banks in Japan.

Government officials at the banking bureau of Japan's Ministry of Finance tried to pressure other banks to merge with the failed one, but bank officials balked due to increased competition and their own financial problems. That left the bureau with the option of turning over Hokkaido Takushoku's

branches to North Pacific Bank, its rival based in the same region.

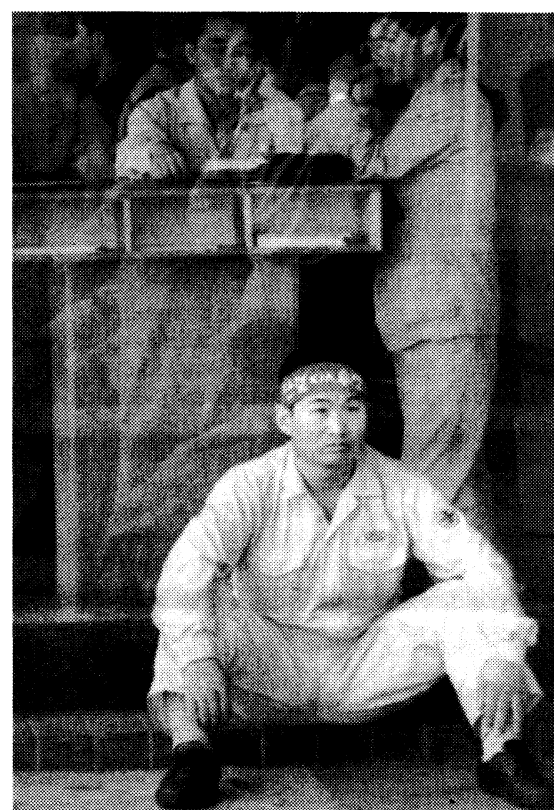
"I strongly urge depositors not to worry and to take sensible actions," pleaded Japanese finance minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka at a news the morning the bank collapsed. Tokyo was concerned about the possibility of bank runs that would exacerbate the growing instability of the country's financial system.

Bank deposits and loans to the bank are supposedly guaranteed by the Bank of Japan and the Deposit Insurance Corporation, a banking industry deposit program. Politicians are now floating the idea of using public funds to shore up the fragile banking system. When Tokyo pumped hundreds of billions of dollars into seven housing lenders that went bankrupt in 1995, it sparked protests.

Meanwhile, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry reported that more than half of its branches received complaints about banks refusing loans. Another report published November 17 by Tokyo Shoko Research stated that more than 1,600 companies in Japan went bankrupt in October, an increase of 15 percent and the highest level in more than a decade.

Deputy Treasury Secretary Summers met with Japan's finance minister November 17 to discuss Washington's uneasiness over the stagnant Japanese economy and the rapid depreciation of the yen.

Tensions between the two imperialist powers was reflected in a letter sent in early November by U.S. treasury secretary Robert Rubin warning Tokyo not to try to export its way out of its economic problems at the expense of its rivals in the United States. Summers went to Tokyo to stress that message and voice the Clinton administration's irritation with a rise in the U.S. trade defi-



Auto worker at Kia Motors guards gate at Seoul plant after 15,000 workers walked out in late October to protest job cuts.

cit. "It is clear that substantial increases in the Japanese current account surpluses are troubling to the U.S.," Summers asserted.

Some U.S. investment banks have been socked by the currency turmoil. The investment ratings of three major U.S. banks — Bank America, Chase Manhattan, and JP Morgan — were downgraded November 12 by a prominent Wall Street analyst. George Salem of Gerard Klauer Mattison explained his move saying, "The crisis is broader and deeper, and appears longer lasting than we envisioned even a few weeks ago." Chase Manhattan, the largest U.S. bank, reported a \$160 million loss in October.

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CORRECTION

Thanks to steelworker Brian Williams in Washington, D.C., for pointing out an error in the Book of the Week selection titled "Why capitalists' rate of profit tends to fall," which appeared in *Militant* issue no. 40. As Williams correctly noted, the reprint from Karl Marx should have stated that the rate of profit is s/C, that is, surplus value over total capital advanced.

—CALENDAR—

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What's Behind U.S. War Threats Against Iraq? Educational forum. Speakers from Middle Eastern, anti-war and anti-imperialist perspectives. Tue., Nov. 25, 12 noon to 2 p.m. NAC 1/211, City College, 137th & Convent Ave. sponsored by CCNY Coalition, Roots, Slam. For more information, call (212) 650-8176.

March against Sweatshop Abuse! March in solidarity with workers to demand: fair, living wages; the right to organize and the right to bargain collectively; decent, and safe working conditions. Sat., Nov. 29, 12 noon. Meet at 34th and Broadway and march. For more information, call: (212) 645-5230.

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Hands Off Iraq! Panel discussion. Fri., Nov. 28, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

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Capitalism's World Disorder. Sat., Nov. 29, 7:30 p.m.. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel:

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Che Guevara, the Cuban Revolution and the Twenty-first Century. Speaker: Martin Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, just returned from Cuba. Fri., December 5, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW ZEALAND

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Oppose Racist Attacks — How Can We Fight Racism? Speaker: Lars Ericsson, Communist League. Fri., Nov. 28, 7 p.m.

Celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Speaker: Agnes Sullivan, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 4, 7 p.m.

Both events held at 199 High Street (corner High and Tuam). Donation: \$4. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

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Nothing's perfect — The Pentagon stopped using Union Pacific after the spreading logjam since UP took over Southern Pacific left a shipment of tanks unguarded. A UP



Harry Ring

spokesman said the tanks sat at a siding without required security checks, but he didn't know where or when.

Thai 'miracle' — "A rapid outflow of foreign money... has cre-

ated a race against time for the cash-starved economy....The drain of funds and the freeze on billions more trapped in padlocked financial institutions have made credit all but nonexistent. Transactions are by cash or barter. One builder is paying his debt in cement. Hoteliers are giving their creditors free lodging instead of cash." — *Los Angeles Times* report from Bangkok on Thai currency crisis.

And the poor sell what? — A Bangkok Mercedes dealer converted a parking garage into a swap meet for the suddenly "once rich." Dollar-bearing tourists are flocking to check a range of items, from Rolex watches to private aircraft.

Maybe he wanted the candy — Eating a candy bar wrapped in silver foil, Andre Burgess, a New York teenager, walked by a U.S. marshal's car and got shot in the leg. The cop said he thought the foil was a gun. Burgess said he laid on the ground, bleeding and handcuffed, waiting for an ambulance. Meanwhile, he said, the marshal "was shaking hands with other cops, or agents, whatever they were."

Sensitive — In the 1950s, the Federal Reserve Bank melted down \$23 million worth of bars of gold looted from Belgium and the Netherlands by Germany's Nazi regime. Gold from the jewelry and dental fillings of concentration camp prisoners were included in the bars.

They were melted down and recast to replace a swastika imprint with a U.S. seal.

A long haul — In 1984, Christine Michaels, an assembly line worker at Carrier air conditioning in Syracuse, New York, filed a complaint of sexual harassment by a co-worker. Carrier responded by harassing her. She was denied help on heavy lifting and had to take a leave for a shoulder injury. For a time she was hospitalized for depression. Before she could return to work, Carrier fired her. Three years ago, a state agency awarded her \$100,000.

Fairly happy ending — After Christine Michaels was awarded

\$100,000, Carrier got a court order to have a company psychiatrist examine her. On the basis of his "findings," Carrier went back to court and moved to have the award reduced to \$5,500. A judge ordered Carrier to pay Michaels \$200,000 instead.

Hip trip — A poster-size sheet, "On the trail of Che," announces a London tour to Bolivia, Peru, and Chile. In cooperation with Bolivian Tourist Board, it will feature a tour of the area of Bolivia where Che and his guerrillas fought. (In fairness to the tour agency, its ad includes an article about Che which notes he was executed by the Bolivian regime, with a CIA advisor on the scene.)

Lenin on the development of finance capital

Below we reprint excerpts from *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* written by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin in 1916, while in exile in Zurich. They are taken from two chapters: "Finance Capital and the Financial Oligarchy," and "Export of Capital." Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY V.I. LENIN

"A steadily increasing proportion of capital in industry," writes [German social democrat Rudolph] Hilferding, "ceases to belong to the industrialists who employ it. They obtain the use of it only through the medium of the banks which, in relation to them, rep-

BOOK OF THE WEEK

resent the owners of the capital. On the other hand, the bank is forced to sink an increasing share of its funds in industry. Thus, to an ever greater degree the banker is being transformed into an industrial capitalist. This bank capital, i.e., capital in money form, which is thus actually transformed into industrial capital, I call 'finance capital'." "Finance capital is capital controlled by banks and employed by industrialists."

This definition is incomplete insofar as it is silent on one extremely important fact — on the increase of concentration of production and of capital to such an extent that concentration is leading, and has led, to monopoly. But throughout the whole of his work, and particularly in the two chapters preceding the one from which this definition is taken, Hilferding stresses the part played by *capitalist monopolies*.

The concentration of production; the monopolies arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry — such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the content of that concept.

We now have to describe how, under the general conditions of commodity production and private property, the "business operations" of capitalist monopolies inevitably lead to the domination of a financial oligarchy. It should be noted that German — and not only German — bourgeois scholars, like Riesser, Schulze-Gaevernitz, Liefmann and others, are all apologists of imperialism and of finance capital. Instead of revealing the "mechanics" of the formation of an oligarchy, its methods, the size of its revenues "impeccable and peccable", its connections with parliaments, etc., etc., they obscure or gloss

over them. They evade these "vexed questions" by pompous and vague phrases, appeals to the "sense of responsibility" of bank directors, by praising "the sense of duty" of Prussian officials, giving serious study to the petty details of absolutely ridiculous parliamentary bills for the "supervision" and "regulation" of monopolies, playing spillikins with theories, like, for example, the following "scholarly" definition, arrived at by Professor Liefmann: "*Commerce is an occupation having for its object the collection, storage and supply of goods.*" (The Professor's bold-face italics.)... From this it would follow that commerce existed in the time of primitive man, who know nothing about exchange, and that it will exist under socialism!

But the monstrous facts concerning the monstrous rule of the financial oligarchy are so glaring that in all capitalist countries, in America, France and Germany, a whole literature has sprung up, written from the *bourgeois* point of view, but which, nevertheless, gives a fairly truthful picture and criticism — petty-bourgeois, naturally — of this oligarchy.

Paramount importance attaches to the "holding system", already briefly referred to above. The German economist, Heymann, probably the first to call attention to this matter, describes the essence of it in this way:

"The head of the concern controls the principal company [literally: the "mother company"]; the latter reigns over the subsidiary companies ["daughter companies"] which in their turn control still other subsidiaries ["grandchild companies," etc.] In this way, it is possible with a comparatively small capital to dominate immense spheres of production. Indeed, if holding 50 per cent of the capital is always sufficient to control a company, the head of the concern needs only one million to control eight million in the second subsidiaries. And if this 'interlocking' is extended, it is possible with one million to control sixteen million, thirty-two million, etc."

Power of the financial oligarchy

The "democratisation" of the ownership of shares, from which the bourgeois sophists and opportunist so-called "Social-Democrats" expect (or say that they expect) the "democratisation of capital", the strengthening of the role and significance of small-scale production, etc., is, in fact, one of the ways of increasing the power of the financial oligarchy. Incidentally, this is why, in the more advanced, or in the older and more "experienced" capitalist countries, the law allows the issue of shares of smaller denomination. In Germany, the law does not permit the issue of shares of less than one thousand marks denomination, and the magnates of German finance look with an envious eye at Britain, where the issue of one pound shares (=20 marks, about 10 rubles) is permitted. Siemens, one of the biggest industrialists and "financial kings" in Germany, told the Reichstag on June 7, 1900, that "the one-pound share is the basis of British imperialism". This merchant has a much deeper and more "Marxist" understanding of imperialism than a certain disreputable writer who is held to be one of the founders of Russian Marxism" and believes that imperialism is a bad habit of a certain nation....

But the "holding system" not only serves enormously to increase the power of the monopolists; it also enables them to resort with impunity to all sorts of shady and dirty tricks to cheat the public, because formally the directors of the "mother company" are not le-

gally responsible for the "daughter company", which is supposed to be "independent", and *through the medium*, of which they can "pull off" *anything*....

Finance capital, concentrated in a few hands and exercising a virtual monopoly, exacts enormous and ever-increasing profits from the floating of companies, issue of stock, state loans, etc., strengthens the domination of the financial oligarchy and levies tribute upon the whole of society for the benefit of monopolists....

Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition held undivided sway, was the export of *goods*. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism, when monopolies rule, is the export of capital.

Capitalism is commodity production at its highest stage of development, when labour-power itself becomes a commodity. The growth of internal exchange, and, particularly of international exchange, is a characteristic feature of capitalism. The uneven and spasmodic development of individual enterprises, individual branches of industry and individual countries is inevitable under the capitalist system. England became a capitalist country before any other, and by the middle of the nineteenth century, having adopted free trade, claimed to be the "workshop of the world", the supplier of manufactured goods to all countries, which in exchange were to keep her provided with raw materials. But in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, *this* monopoly was already undermined; for other countries, sheltering themselves with "protective" tariffs, developed into independent

capitalist states. On the threshold of the twentieth century we see the formation of a new type of monopoly: firstly, monopolist associations of capitalists in all capitalistically developed countries; secondly, the monopolist position of a few very rich countries, in which the accumulation of capital has reached gigantic proportions. An enormous "surplus of capital" has arisen in the advanced countries.

It goes without saying that if capitalism could develop agriculture, which today is everywhere lagging terribly behind industry, if it could raise the living standards of the masses, who in spite of the amazing technical progress are everywhere still half-starved and poverty-stricken, there could be no question of a surplus of capital. This "argument" is very often advanced by the petty-bourgeois critics of capitalism. But if capitalism did these things it would not be capitalism; for both uneven development and a semi-starvation level of existence of the masses are fundamental and inevitable conditions and constitute premises of this mode of production. As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will be utilised not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists, but for the purpose of increasing profits by exporting capital abroad to the backward countries. The need to export capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become "overripe" and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the poverty of the masses) capital cannot find a field for "profitable" investment.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



December 1, 1972

BATON ROUGE, La., Nov. 20 — "There would have been no violence if the students had not fired the first shot or whatever." Incredible as it may sound, this is one of the first public statements Louisiana Governor Edwin Edwards made concerning the death of two Black youths on the Baton Rouge campus of Southern University the morning of Nov. 16.

Having brought along an armored personnel carrier and a tank-like armored vehicle equipped with flame-throwers and bazookas, they [sheriff's deputies and state police] were prepared to wage war. The officers themselves, one student remarked, were equipped for battle in Vietnam, bearing tear-gas grenades, Thompson submachine guns, M-16s, riot-20 shotguns, M-79 grenade launchers, and M-1 carbines — complete with bayonets.

Sheriff Amiss claims his men fired only tear-gas shells from their weapons. But according to one student who observed the incident, "I saw one dude over behind a tree with an M-16 just popping away." Other Black witnesses claimed that each time the police fired a round they would pick it up from the ground and put it in their pockets.

Sheriff Amiss originally claimed that the students had thrown homemade bombs loaded with buckshot at the deputies ... and killed the two students.



December 1, 1947

CHICAGO, Nov. 24 — Chicago tenants scored a partial victory in their militant campaign against the proposed 15% blanket increase. This recommendation of the Chicago Rent Board, packed with real estate representatives, was temporarily rejected by Tighe Woods, Federal Housing Expediter and 10 new members, including CIO and AFL representatives, were added to the Chicago Rent Board.

Spearheading this campaign, the [North Side Tenants] League called an emergency meeting on Nov. 9 to review the crisis faced by Chicago tenants and to map out a militant program to foil the proposed rent swindle. Officers of the League reported that five of the nine members of Chicago's Rent Advisory Board including Chairman John J. Ryan were real estate operators. The lone labor representative, an AFL official, had voted in favor of the increase; the tenants were not represented at all. No public hearings had been held although such procedure is recommended by the Federal Rent Act.

Meanwhile, Ryan, ignoring the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of the city and recommendations by Tighe Woods to hold public hearings, reapplied for the 15% increase. The Tenants League immediately took steps to carry out the decision for a mass picket line. Though held at noon on a working day, scores of tenants participated in a well organized and militant picket line.

for further reading

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Clinton's defeat boosts fighters

Washington has been defeated in its campaign to launch an assault against Iraq, tighten the brutal economic sanctions against that Middle Eastern nation, and gain a stronger foothold in the region. Being forced to shift rapidly from organizing a military attack to offering negotiations with the Saddam Hussein government, as U.S. "allies" bailed out left and right, is a registration of the debacle.

The political blow suffered by imperialism, and its increasingly palpable vulnerability, strengthens the hand of all working people and the oppressed who are engaged in struggle. Those opposed to the latest war moves should not pause in organizing public protests to raise the political price the wealthy rulers will pay for their actions and to educate others about why Washington is the real threat to humanity.

The imperial rulers' latest fiasco confirms the fact that Washington indeed broke its teeth on Iraq during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War. In that bloody assault on the Iraqi people, aimed at overthrowing the government and imposing a submissive, pro-U.S. regime, they failed to reach any of their objectives. Instead, the war led to greater instability and heightened all the conflicts and problems facing imperialism in the Middle East. This accurate assessment is presented in "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," the lead article in issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*.

Washington's recent war moves further fractured the "coalition" that had been cobbled together at the time of the Gulf War. Among the imperialist powers, only London — with social democrat Anthony Blair at the helm — stuck with its stronger U.S. ally. Paris has pursued its own interests, pressing for easing the sanctions on Iraq in order to get its own piece of the Mideast pie. Moscow too has balked at tightening the embargo. U.S.-Israeli frictions have only sharpened, as infighting threatens to split the ruling party in Tel Aviv. Even the most pro-U.S. regimes in the region, from Saudi Arabia to Kuwait, refused to cooperate with Washington's war plans, leading to an overwhelming boycott of the U.S.-crafted summit in Qatar that left U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright as the humiliated star of a nonevent.

The U.S. rulers and their partners in crime have an increasingly hard time covering up the truth about what the

Gulf War really was — a one-sided slaughter of 150,000 Iraqi workers and farmers. They find it even harder to hide the facts about their embargo, which has led to death and severe malnutrition for hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. In face of this brutality, many working people rightly say: Why should we listen to Washington — which has more chemical weapons than anyone, and is the only government ever to have unleashed nuclear bombs — give lectures to others about weapons of mass destruction?

The reasons why the imperialist powers are perpetually driven to war are also more nakedly visible today, as the currency meltdown in Asia sends shock waves throughout the capitalist world. Washington, the world's final empire, is seeking to salvage its declining capitalist order, which today is wracked by plunging profit rates, financial volatility, and social catastrophe in country after country.

The U.S.-British defeat in Iraq is bad news for Clinton, Blair, and presidential aspirant Albert Gore. But it's good news for Palestinians fighting for their self-determination, for Cuban workers and farmers deepening the socialist course of their revolution, and for all working people who are resisting capitalist austerity drives. Fighters everywhere can sense the vulnerability of our common enemy — the imperialist rulers are not as powerful as they pretend.

At the same time, these developments are blowing wind in the sails of budding fascist politicians like Patrick Buchanan and his America First banner — a deadly threat to working people.

Fighting workers and young rebels should keep joining speakouts and picket lines to demand Washington get all its troops and warplanes out of the Middle East, and to call for the immediate, unconditional lifting of the embargo against Iraq. This is the time, and special opportunity, for socialist workers and others to step up sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* as well as *New Internationalist* no. 7 and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* — on the job, at plant gates, at labor actions, and in working-class communities.

For those who are repelled by the increasing horrors of capitalism, this is the time to join the Young Socialists or the Socialist Workers Party and dedicate your life to the revolutionary fight for a world fit for humanity.

Uniroyal workers fight against work rule changes

Continued from front page

to the profitability of all three plants under the master contract and allowing the recalculation of production and bonus rates on various machines.

The union refused to agree that the company could arbitrarily change work rules without any union input, however. Michelin negotiators argued that the union could file a grievance against any new work rules it opposes.

Phil Slattery, a tire builder with five years' seniority, told the *Militant* that under this setup, a worker with six months to go before retirement could be fired for returning from a break one minute late, and replaced by a new hire who starts at 70 percent of base pay. A local labor studies professor told the *Journal Gazette*, a Fort Wayne daily, that while "some tire manufacturers are able to revise a limited number of work rules without union approval," what Michelin wants appears to be broader than its competitors. The president of the Northeast Indiana Labor Council told the *Journal Gazette* that he doesn't know of any unionized companies in the area that can alter work rules at will.

Michelin also wants to expand its ability to eliminate job classifications and move people between departments. This would undermine previously won bidding and seniority rights. The union also objects to workers accused of violating company rules being immediately suspended or fired. The union wants an accused worker to have a hearing with a union representative present before any disciplinary action can be taken.

No negotiations have occurred since early November, and none are scheduled. The local school board has requested that a mediator be brought in, citing fears that a potential closing of the plant could have an impact on its budget. While Local 715 has agreed to talk, Michelin has refused.

The company is moving ahead with plans to shift production out of Woodburn. The mini-spare tires are to be built in a new, non-union plant in Ardmore, Oklahoma. They are the only products built in Woodburn that go into new cars; the remainder of the plant's production is for replacement tires sold through tire dealers. The company also announced plans to move the T/A line for full-sized pick-ups from Woodburn to its USWA-organized plants in Tuscaloosa and Opelika, Alabama. About 240 jobs would be lost in Woodburn through the elimination of these products. The company had previously announced that the mini-spares line would be eliminated by 2000, Slattery reported. Michelin now says that it will lower the workforce at Woodburn to 800 by that year. There are 600 fewer workers in the Indiana plant today than when the last contract was approved in April 1994.

The Woodburn plant was opened by BF Goodrich in 1961. Uniroyal Tire and Rubber merged with Goodrich in 1986, and four years later Michelin bought Uniroyal Goodrich. Local 715 has a history of militancy. It was the last Uniroyal Goodrich local to accept 12-hour, rotating shifts, defying Michelin's threats to shut the plant down if the new schedule wasn't agreed to. These shifts were finally included in the 1994 contract. The local also raised thousands of dollars to support Bridgestone/Firestone workers during their 1994-95 strike. Local 715 president Ray Wiseman was fired from the plant in February of this year, reinstated as part of the master contract in June, and then fired again in July. Steelworkers from the Bridgestone/Firestone plant in Noblesville, Indiana, sent a delegation to the Woodburn picket lines in mid-November, bringing a check for \$500 with them.

Gary Boyers and Chuck Guerra are members of USWA Local 1299 in River Rouge, Michigan.

Stop intervention in Teamsters

The latest U.S. government move against the Teamsters union is an attack on the entire labor movement. Barring Teamsters president Ronald Carey from running in the new elections — ones that were ordered by the Clinton administration in a violation of union rights to begin with — is an attack on trade union democracy. This outrageous government intervention into a workers' organization should be opposed by all fighters.

The stepped up "anticorruption" campaign against the Teamsters officialdom and other trade union tops is a blatant response by the employing class to the recent strike by 185,000 Teamsters at UPS. The new elections were ordered just days after the strikers' victory against the parcel giant.

With this action, the rulers aim to intimidate workers who would try to fight for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. The move escalates the boss class's ability to poke into any union's affairs, decide who should be union leaders, and sap the unity and fighting strength of the labor movement.

It's important to remember how such government inter-

vention has been used against the labor movement before. In the late 1930s, as the Washington was preparing for entry into World War II, 18 union militants of Teamsters Local 544 in Minneapolis and leaders of the Socialist Workers Party were railroaded to prison on federal charges of sedition. The socialists in that local had waged a campaign to organize trade union opposition to President Franklin Roosevelt's preparations for the use of workers as imperialist cannon fodder.

In addition, the government cooked up "embezzlement" charges against several of the local officials to try to get them ousted.

The bosses and big-business media are carrying out a major propaganda campaign to present themselves fighting against corruption within the union movement. Working people should not give one inch on this question. The internal affairs of a union belong to the members of that union. Working people should demand an immediate halt to the government investigation of the Teamsters, the reinstatement of the union's elected president, and an end to all government interference in union affairs.

Iraq war moves are set back

Continued from Page 8

Russian oil companies in Iran. The move violates the U.S. government's Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, which call on Washington to impose sanctions on any country doing business that exceeds \$20 million with energy industries in either of the two countries. Gazprom and Total SA have defied Washington's threats, saying that the profit to be made outweighs "those incurred by sanctions against us."

Meanwhile, the Chinese government recently signed two deals to buy state-owned oil companies in the oil-rich country of Kazakhstan, and an agreement to build a 1,860-mile pipeline across the land-locked state. The Caspian Sea, Caucasus, and Central Asia are some of the world's richest regions in energy resources — containing up to 200 billion barrels of oil, worth as much as \$4 trillion, plus comparable reserves of natural gas. In recent months U.S. officials have made clear their desire to establish unquestionable U.S. domination over the region.

Ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan greeted the Clinton administration's defeat in Iraq with a November 19 column in the *New York Post* titled, "Exit globalism; enter American nationalism." He pointed to Washington's fiasco as one of three factors that mark a blow for "globalism" and a strengthening of his "America First" camp.

"One was the astonishing defeat of President Clinton on his highest priority, 'fast track,'" he wrote. "Defeat of fast track is the first triumph of a blazing new nationalism. And when the coming tsunami of Asian exports hits America's shores, flooding our manufacturing base, and drowning industries and factories, the day of the economic nationalism will be at hand."

Buchanan said the second marked event was the collapse of the stock markets and currency values in Asia, which will fuel resentment against what he called the "corporate and banking elites."

"The third event was the UN Security Council's craven response to Saddam's ouster of U.S. members of the UN team searching for his hidden terror-weapons," Buchanan continued. "France, China and Russia all oppose U.S. military action, and our Arab allies have defected. With the exception of the British, America stands alone in the Gulf."

"What does this portend? The mighty coalition George Bush assembled to win the Gulf War is history. And his dream of a New World Order — where the U.S. (aided by allies and sanctioned by the UN) would police the planet, arresting outlaws and renegades — is dead.... The New World Order evanesces as the old world of nation-states reappears," the rightist politician gloated.

Interview with Manuel Piñeiro

Continued from Page 7

A: By a radiophoto I received on October 10, where Che's body was shown in the hospital laundry room. I called Fidel and he came to my house. I remember Fidel's expression, one of doubt. He saw some resemblance to Che in the photo, but was not completely convinced it was him. He headed home, and he was there with Comrade Celia Sánchez when I brought him a second radiophoto I'd received, which left no doubt it was Che. That moment remains etched in my memory like a photograph that I'll never forget. There was a great silence in the house. Fidel sent Comrade Celia to find Aleida, Che's wife, who was conducting research in the Escambray mountains, to give her the news personally. He then called other comrades in the party leadership and began to give instructions on how the news should be transmitted, and to prepare our people for the harsh news.

It was a tremendous blow. But on those revolutionary missions, one leaves one's life under one's pillow.

Q: How long after that did you learn there were survivors?

A: Shortly afterward, when Pombo, Urbano, and the now-traitor Benigno succeeded in breaking the encirclement, and when Inti Peredo, in particular, established contact with some members of the Bolivian Communist Party and the ELN [National Liberation Army] who took them to the Chilean border. I always remember with great affection the role played by Salvador Allende, at the time president of the Chilean senate, who despite criticism from the right wing, offered his full support and protection to the three survivors. He informed our ambassador in France, Baudilio Castellanos, that he would accompany the three survivors to Tahiti. Our ambassador flew there, and brought them to France, and then to Cuba.

Equally, the collaboration offered by the Chilean Communist and Socialist parties should be noted, as well as that of Beatriz Allende and many other comrades, among them the journalist Elmo Catalán, who would later die in combat together with Inti Peredo, trying to reinitiate the armed struggle in Bolivia.

Q: Recently you were able to read the testimony of the Chilean Manuel Cabieses, published in the magazine Liberación, about the arrival of Che's diary in Cuba. What is your opinion of it?

A: It's very objective. Cabieses is a serious journalist, rigorous in his analyses and journalistic works. In addition, he is a very consistent revolutionary, with a fraternal attitude of solidarity to Cuba and revolutionary movements in Latin America.

This question reminds me of the partici-

pation of various comrades in the publication of the Diary in other languages: the Italian Feltrinelli, a friend of the Cuban revolution and an admirer of Che; the Frenchman François Maspero; Arnaldo Orfila, of Siglo XXI in Mexico; and the staff of the magazine *Ramparts* in the United States. Also the publishers in other countries who, under the coordination of Rolando Rodríguez, then-president of the Cuban Book Institute, made an extraordinary effort to publish the Diary in Cuba and the entire world before the U.S. secret services could publish a falsified version, as they wanted to. That battle was won.

Q: What is your opinion of the biographies of Che that have recently appeared?

A: I have not read them all, although I have seen some comments published in newspapers in Latin America where one of these biographies in particular tries to present Che as purely a cultural symbol, above all among the youth, stripping him of his political and ideological message and of his example. Some — because not all of them present a negative balance sheet — emphasize that all of Che's economic, political, and military ideas have failed, that they are out of date, and that the road taken by the Cuban revolution has gone against his ideas.

In my opinion, if the Cuban revolution had abandoned Che's ideas, it would not continue being — as it is — a bastion of anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles that are taking place in the world, and of the fight for socialism. Even in the difficult circumstances of economic, political, and ideological aggression by imperialism, the Cuban people maintain the heroism Che summoned



Courtesy Richard Dindo

Bolivian combatant Serapio, right, with Cuban fighters Pacho, center, and Pombo, left, during early stages of campaign to establish international proletarian army in Bolivia. "Che is a more powerful opponent of imperialism than ever," said Piñeiro.

them to, and that they are summoned to every day by Fidel, who Che called his "teacher and guide."

The proof that the ideas, thought, actions, and example of Che have not failed and that they project the future, is that there is an ever growing and conscious interest both in Cuba and the world to study and interpret his works, recovering the essence of his ideas and analyzing the differences between the historic moment he lived in and the present.

In many countries, the consumer societies have sought to turn him into a piece of merchandise. Nevertheless, the image and example of Che rises above these attempts, much to the discomfort of the triumphalists of neoliberalism and the powerful in this world.

To try to reduce him to a cultural symbol is a vulgar simplification. I do not believe that the attraction and solidarity he evokes today among young people around the world, within the revolutionary movement, and in progressive and democratic sectors

of the world are a result of this narrow perception of Che's legacy. Rather, they see him as a man with tremendous moral force, very honest, sensitive, human, capable of acting on his ideas, as a symbol of internationalism and anti-imperialism, of solidarity, of genuine socialism. In short, Che is seen as an example for the current and future generations, who will see in him a banner of revolutionary intransigence, of moral values, of social justice.

I believe that as long as there are oppressed and oppressors, social injustice, and imperialist domination, and as long as there is also hope for a just and fraternal world of solidarity among human beings and peoples, the ideas and example of Che will endure.

Therefore I agree with what Fidel said on October 12, 1987, at the event commemorating the 20th anniversary of the death in combat of Che and his comrades, "Che is more alive than ever, has more influence than ever, and is a more powerful opponent of imperialism than ever."

Company dumps pesticide into Birmingham creek

BY STEPHEN BLOODWORTH

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — One of the largest accidental spills ever of the pesticide Dursban occurred here October 2. Some 4,700 gallons of the toxin was washed into Village Creek near downtown Birmingham by the water used to extinguish a massive fire at Industrial Distribution Services Warehouse Inc.

The black pillar of smoke from the block-long warehouse, which primarily houses paper products for recycling could be detected by both satellite photos and pilots circling the Atlanta airport, more than 100 miles away.

Questions about the toxicity of this giant smoke plume have been avoided by the Dow Elanco Corporation, which manufactures Dursban; the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM); the Jefferson County Board of Health; and other government agencies.

Speaking at the Militant Labor Forum here October 31, Magnolia Cook said, "We raised this, and no one had an answer, all they saw was dead fish." A retired nurse and longtime resident of the area bordering Village Creek, Cook is the president of the Tuxedo Neighborhood Association. Also speaking at the forum were John Meehan, an employee of Birmingham Steel Company and founder of Citizens for Environmental Justice, and steelworker Clay Dennison from the Socialist Workers Party.

Indeed, the washing of the pesticide into Village Creek, which runs through the Black working-class neighborhoods of this city into Bayview Lake, and eventually into the Black Warrior River, which supplies drinking water to local residents, has killed hundreds of thousands of fish. The Jefferson County Board of Health reports water is safe for humans to drink up to 30 parts per billion. Samples take from Village Creek around the

Tuxedo neighborhood have been tested at levels as high as 247.8 parts per billion.

All three of the activists speaking at the forum condemned the local government agencies' inaction and indifference to this environmental catastrophe. ADEM's first water tests were severely flawed, grossly underreporting the concentration levels of the pesticide.

Efforts to slow the flow of the contaminated water down Village Creek and out of Bayview Lake weren't begun until six days after the fire. Meehan remarked, "The members of these regulatory boards are all corporate executives. They have no sense of these communities, all they care about are their own necks."

To date, at least 15 firefighters and 27 residents near the fire, Village Creek, and Bayview Lake have reported health problems such as nausea and vomiting, sinus and respiratory problems, headaches, and rashes.

— LETTERS —

Poultry strike

A postscript to the Foster Farms UFCW strike: During a conversation with a co-worker, I asked him why there are so many Punjabi workers — 25 percent — who work in the largest chicken processing plant in the country.

My co-worker, who informed me he is Sikh and immigrated to California from Punjab, India, 20 years ago, explained, there are nearly 50,000 Indians — many who are Sikhs from Punjab — in the state. The largest concentrations reside, primarily, in three Central Valley cities — Fresno, Merced, and Yuba City — the heartland of California agriculture.

The similarities of climate and agriculture production the Central Valley offers a convenient transition for their immigration. Punjab is the rich agricultural region in northwestern India, and Sikhs are traditionally farmers.

Sikhs immigrated to California during World War I. Initially employed as farm laborers, they have established a significant social base

through four generations of émigrés. They published several newspapers in the Punjabi language. They are farmers and shopkeepers. A large percentage of them, as was evident at Foster Farms, are, and have been, industrial workers. (My co-worker has worked in the Bay Area for more than 10 years.)

Osborne G. Hart
San Francisco, California

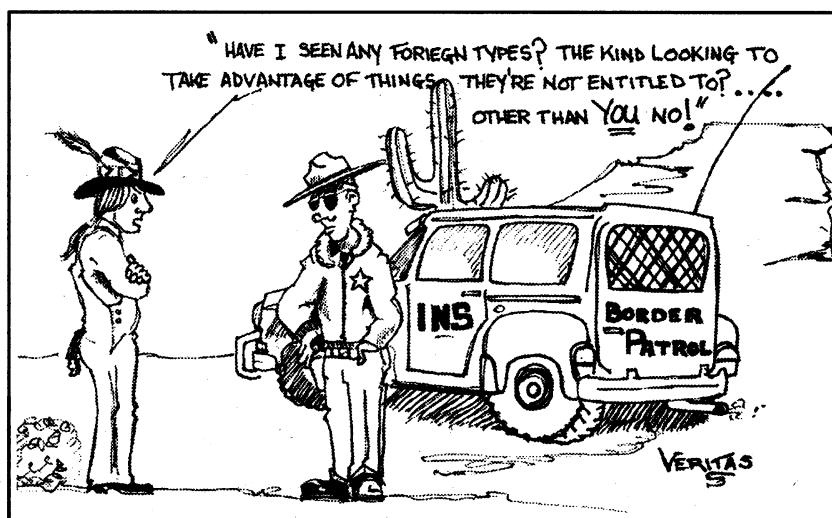
Great alternative

It's so great to have an alternative paper that represents the interests of the working class!

T.H. and D.V.
Lafayette, Colorado

Promise Keepers

The October 20 *Militant* article on the protest at the Promise Keepers gathering quotes from an op-ed piece by historian and writer Stephanie Coontz in which she states "for many women, benevolent paternalism may be the highest quality of life they can aspire to." Unfortunately, this back-handed support for Promise Keepers has



been echoed by a number of other formerly pro-feminist writers and journalists. The gist of their position is that with so many women being raped and beaten, and so many men fathering children for whom they take no responsibility, Promise Keepers, despite their sexist and homophobic platform, will at least make life a little better for women.

As if women had no other choice than to either be raped or be submissive wives! Coontz and others with her viewpoint have either forgotten or never contemplated the possibility of a third alternative, that of women fighting for equality and social justice.

In fact, groups like Promise Keepers — whose platform promotes and seeks to deepen the at-

tacks on women and gays by the ruling class — will result in more, not less, abuse of women. Rape, wife beating, and other forms of violence against women are not solely a matter of individual men being wretched (although such behavior is indeed wretched conduct). Abuse and violence towards women are fundamentally a result of the unequal, second-class status of women in society, an inequality which Promise Keepers seeks to perpetuate and which women like Coontz are apparently now ready to accept.

Carol Sholin
Oakland, California

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.

Youth protesters in Sweden say no to fascist rally, cop brutality

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — For the first time since World War II, an openly anti-Jewish demonstration was held here November 8 in commemoration of the so-called *Kristallnacht* in Germany. On Nov. 9, 1938, following a call from propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, Nazi thugs smashed into Jewish shops and synagogues across Germany.

Between 50 and 100 Nazi sympathizers took part in the rally here outside the central train station. With the Swedish flag in the forefront, speakers denounced the "Jewish power concentration," which they claimed "can be seen today in this country, where the Jewish Bonnier family owns 75 percent of the evening press." Their original plan was to gather outside the national union headquarters, the Norra Bantorget, and march to the Bonnier publishing house. When they came to Norra Bantorget screaming, "Kill the reds," they were met by a counterdemonstration of 200–300 people, most of them youth. Without interference from the police, the Nazis tried to make a block against the antiracists, but were driven back. With the assistance of the police they marched instead to the central station where they held their meeting. The cops focused their efforts on keeping the antifascists in place, and arrested one youth who they accused of attempting to instigate a rebellion.

Cops assault antiracist protesters

The countermobilization was called by several organizations, including Hasans Friends against Violence and Racism, the National League to Stop Racism, Antifascist Action, and others. Among the demonstrators were two young people in wheelchairs, whose presence fueled the anger against the police for not protecting the counterprotest.

When the Nazis were driven away and the countermobilization formally ended, about 100 protesters tried to follow the rightists downtown. After the police got the Nazis into a train at Södra Station, they blocked the antiracists and beat up several young people. One 14-year-old, Thea Rikken, was struck in the face by the police. She publicly condemned the assault and said she is suing the cops. "The violence from the police was totally unnecessary," Rikken said.

The widespread criticism of the police has sparked a debate in the media here. The police officer in charge in the region, Länspolismästare Gunno Gunnemo, said, "Of course I think it is healthy that people

react against the neo-Nazis. But the antiracists complicate our work sometimes." Asked by the liberal daily *Expressen* how the police could allow a anti-Jewish demonstration to take place at all, Gunnemo said, "We thought ... stopping it would have caused more fuss than what has actually happened." Swedish law prohibits baiting against Jews or other peoples. In the bourgeois press the issue is often posed in the framework, "Shouldn't the police have broken up both the racist and antiracist demonstrations, as none of them had police permits." The conservative *Svenska Dagbladet* editorialized, "Shape up the police in Stockholm. Those without permission should not be allowed to demonstrate. And those who are demonstrating should not bait any group of people."

Protest against Schengen treaty

The anger against the police was obvious November 9, when well over 200 people demonstrated here against the Schengen Convention and for Swedish withdrawal

from the European Union. The Schengen treaty, which provides for increased collaboration by police forces in the European Union and tightens immigration from outside the region, was added to the EU charter earlier this year.

One speaker described the arrest of 700 demonstrators in Amsterdam when the new EU charter was negotiated. The demonstrators adopted a resolution protesting those arrests. Anger against both the police and the Nazis grew when the crowd learned that the police had arrested three antiracists the day before and that the Nazis had smashed the windows of the Gay-house in downtown Stockholm during the night. Dag Tirsén told the crowd how five skinheads smashed the windows of the Pathfinder bookstore the night of October 5, and drew a parallel between how the cops refused to defend the anti-Nazi rally, the Gay-house, and other obvious targets for the ultraright. He urged the crowd to adopt a message of support to the Gay-house.

Another speaker, Per Franke, talked about

how the Swedish government treated Jews and other victims of the Nazi terror during the Second World War. The government registered all foreigners living in Sweden, in February 1939, around 20,000 people, to learn who had a Jewish background. This information was passed on to the German Nazis.

On November 15 about 200 people rallied to protest police violence and the cops' refusal to protect the antiracists from the Nazi attack the previous week. One of the speakers took up the case of three young men who were arrested outside a McDonald's restaurant after the antiracist mobilization November 8. The three said they were humiliated and beaten up by the police, who called them racist epithets and forced them to lay down half naked while beating them. This has further fueled the debate about the police in Sweden in general and Stockholm in particular.

Birgitta Isacsson is a member of the Metalworkers union.

Paris aims for bigger role in Europe

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — In a not-so-unexpected move, French president Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin announced Paris's own candidate to head the European Central Bank (ECB) November 4. Jean-Claude Trichet, currently head of the Bank of France, contends for this post against Wim Duisenberg, the Dutch head of the European Monetary Institute, forerunner to the ECB, which is projected as part of establishing a European monetary union (EMU).

Paris's proposal triggers an open competition for the presidency of the bank and reflects conflicts over what kind of monetary policy should be applied in the future euro currency zone. The proposal for Duisenberg had been backed by Bonn.

According to the *Financial Times* of London, the proposal stunned the European Commission, the European Union's (EU) executive body, which had hoped that Paris would "refrain from any action that could complicate an already difficult final run-up to European economic and monetary union."

The Dutch government said it would contest the initiative and said it believed "a broad Europe-wide consensus" existed that

Duisenberg should accede to the job from his current role. A statement by the Dutch government said "We see no reason for the nomination. Mr. Duisenberg's reputation is undisputed and by opening a discussion at this time the process and credibility of EMU is undermined."

German bankers and politicians reacted with shock and refuted the idea that the move was part of a deal between Bonn and Paris. Norbert Wiczorek, German Bundestag EU committee chair said, "After the decision of Duisenberg had more or less been taken, it is not helpful to propose another candidate."

Paris floated rumors that a deal with German chancellor Helmut Kohl guaranteed a French president of the bank in exchange for locating it in Bonn. Kohl visited Paris for informal talks with Chirac and Jospin November 5. A *Financial Times* article described Trichet's nomination as "a calculated gamble which has the fingerprints of Jacques Chirac, France's Gaullist president all over it.... Mr. Chirac has sent a firm signal that the French are determined to stop European economic and monetary union being settled purely on German terms."

Several important decisions are supposed

to be taken in the next round of talks on the single currency. These include the selection of the countries that meet the entry criteria for EMU, the composition of the executive board of the ECB, and, indirectly, the interest rate policy within the "euro" zone. Paris favors having Italy within the EMU, to hinder competition from a weak lira. Bonn and the Bundesbank, the German central bank, have hinted at worries that having Rome within EMU would force higher interest rates in the euro zone, to defend the European currency.

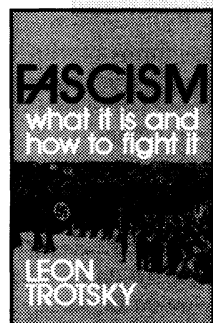
Although Paris followed suit in the recent interest rate hike by Bundesbank, aimed at converging interest rates in the euro zone, it is not keen on further increasing interest rates, as that might stymie the weak economic recovery in France. The nomination of Trichet is a sign of the battles over monetary policy that are to come.

Socialist Party prime minister Jospin is in favor of an Euro that is not overvalued against the dollar and yen, so as to stimulate French exports, which he claims will create jobs in France. He was forced to go along with the conservative president, however, and propose a head of the European Central Bank whose commitment to the "franc fort" (strong franc) is well known, in order to strengthen Paris's position in relation to Bonn. Although Jospin's government depends on stronger economic growth to be able to meet the criteria for the EMU, it was compelled to go along with Chirac's gamble, even at the cost of slower growth rates. And as this was playing out, thousands of truckers had halted transport across France, demanding wage raises that were largely won.

Meanwhile, at a November 17 meeting of EU finance ministers, the British government was angling for a role in a projected policy-coordinating forum of EMU members, despite having announced it will not join the EMU on the first round in 1999. "You can't have a voice in a committee that is managing a currency that is not your own currency," declared French finance minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn. London insisted that the finance ministers' meetings remain the principle decision-making body on economic policy.

German finance minister Theo Waigel took a softer tone toward London, stressing that the policy forum should be informal and not cut across the regular meetings of all 15 EU finance ministers.

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



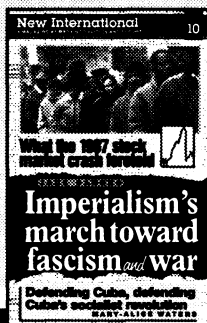
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