

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Communist League holds convention in New Zealand

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61/NO. 43 DECEMBER 8, 1997

Protest U.S. war threats against Iraq!

Clinton set back, but U.S. provocations continue

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"The White House decided to prepare the country for war," stated an article in the November 23 *New York Times*. "In a meeting of Mr. Clinton and his top aides on Nov. 14, the decision was made to begin a public campaign through interviews on the Sun-

See editorial, page 10

day morning television news programs to inform the American people of the dangers of biological warfare."

This portion of the *Times* article ran under the subheading, "What five pounds of anthrax can do."

On national television November 16, Defense Secretary William Cohen enacted one of the most sensational tricks of the Clinton administration's propaganda campaign in preparation for war against Iraq. He put a five-pound bag of sugar on the table, declaring that if the sugar were anthrax, it could kill half the population of Washington, D.C.

That weekend, the big-business press featured front-page articles and editorials with

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Militant/Carole Lesnik

Washington is continuing military buildup and threats against Baghdad. Above, protest against U.S. war moves in Los Angeles November 17.

S. Korea 'bailout' means austerity drive

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

South Korea's new finance minister, Lim Chang-yuel, announced November 21 that the regime is requesting a \$20 billion "rescue" package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Touted by big-business as Asia's "most robust tiger economy," south Korea has the world's 11th largest gross national product. The head of the central bank, Lee Kyung Shik, said a much larger amount would be needed to stabilize the economy. "I think \$20 billion is too low," he remarked to reporters from Reuters Television.

The IMF "bailout" comes with strings attached — an austerity program that calls

for cuts in government spending, the sell-off of state-owned enterprises, shutdowns of insolvent banks, and industrial "restructuring" that would close debt-ridden conglomerates, throwing thousands of workers out of their jobs.

"This could lead to general strikes by the nation's famously militant workers," London's *Financial Times* fretted. Union officials said wage cuts or layoffs would spark major strikes. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, the second-largest labor organization, asserted it would do "whatever it takes to fight against foreign interference in the Korean economy."

The financial crisis stalking the region is

hitting Tokyo's banking and credit system. Yamaichi Securities Co., the fourth largest brokerage firm in Japan, shut down November 24 with a debt of some \$24 billion. The closure of the 100-year-old enterprise was the largest single corporate failure in the history of Japan, which has the world's second largest economy. More than 7,000 people will lose their jobs at the firm.

Earlier in November, Sanyo Securities, the country's seventh-largest broker, and Hokkaido Takashoku, the 10th biggest commercial bank, also collapsed. Over the past three years nearly 20 financial enterprises went bankrupt. Japanese bankers are jittery

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U.S. gov't deepens assault on Teamsters

BY DANNY BOOHER AND FRANK FORRESTAL

CHICAGO — In the past week government "overseers" have delivered several blows against the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT). The latest includes "internal union charges" filed by the government-appointed Independent Review Board on November 25 against Teamsters president Ronald Carey. This came just hours after Carey announced he was taking a leave of absence, saying it was "in the best interest of the membership and the reform movement."

The day before, the U.S. Justice Department announced it had appointed an "independent auditor" to oversee the Teamsters' finances. This move represents a significant expansion of intervention in the union, following the government's decision on November 17 to disqualify Carey from running for office in the upcoming rerun elections. U.S. officials are also considering barring James Hoffa, Carey's main opponent, from seeking the union's top post. With 1.4 million members, the IBT is the largest union

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Auto parts workers strike for better pay

BY BOB MILLER

NEWARK, New Jersey — Workers at Mackie Automotive Systems plants in Arlington, Texas, and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, are on strike seeking substantial wage increases, improvements in benefits and working conditions. The 250 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 129 in Arlington walked out at midnight, the morning of November 18, while the 91 members of UAW Local 286 in Oklahoma City set up picket lines at 5 a.m. the same day.

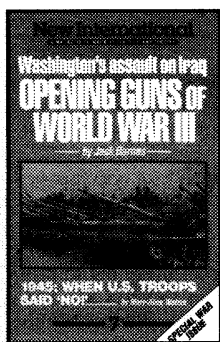
The parts workers' strike has hampered production at General Motors assembly plants in the two cities, causing production cutbacks and delays. GM workers in Arlington, members of UAW Local 276, told the Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* that they built 150 trucks November 18 and 115 then next day, instead of the usual 480 over two shifts.

"I think we're making a tremendous impact," Local 129 striker Mark Alfano said. Jim Neal, a forklift operator and member of Local 286 in Oklahoma City explained, "I believe we're fighting for what is fair, and the issues, such as wages and benefits, haven't been done. But I'm willing to stay out here as long as it takes."

The UAW called its action as an unfair-labor-practice strike, charging that Mackie has refused to bargain. Local 286 member Laurene Ross, who works as a mirror sequencer, said union members support the strike. "We've been negotiating since June. I hope it's only for a short time, but I'm here

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São Paulo pushes austerity plan

Faced with the growing possibility of a currency devaluation, Brazilian president Fernando Enrique Cardoso has proposed a "retrenchment plan" to stabilize the real. The austerity plan includes raising consumer taxes, doubling short-term interest rates on government loans, a \$60 billion dollar sell-off of state assets including real estate, and cuts in workers' pension programs. Some 33,000 government workers will be fired, with a ban on further hiring. Another 500 workers were laid off in early November at the kitchen appliance maker Multibras SA.

Cardoso's moves are aimed at keeping the real pegged to the U.S. dollar and reducing investors' jitters that Brazil is headed on the same course of devaluation as "Asian tigers" like Malaysia, south Korea, and Thailand. "We're not a tiger.... We're a whale," Cardoso had declared in response to the devaluation of the Thai baht last July, trying to be reassuring. "It is absolutely vital" that the Brazilian government stabilize its currency, demanded Thomas Smith, senior vice president for Community Energy Alternatives Inc., a Brazilian subsidiary of a New Jersey-based company that invested \$1.49 billion into a formerly government-owned utility just days before the Brazilian stock market dived in October.

Killer cops go on trial in Brazil

Some 153 Brazilian state troopers who opened fire on peasants demonstrating for land in the city of Eldorado do Carajás in April 1996 will stand trial for the massacre, ruled Judge Otavio Marcelino Maciel. Of the 2,000 protesters, 19 were killed. If convicted, the cops could face up to 30 years behind bars. The peasant struggle for land has been spreading across that South American country of 160 million people, where the wealthiest 20 percent own 88 percent of the land and the poorest 40 percent command a mere 1 percent.

Venezuela schools shut

Officials at the Central University of Venezuela canceled classes for five days starting November 20, citing fears that police were organizing a raid to crack down on student activists following several clashes. The



Workers protest austerity at treasury building in Brasília, Brazil, in early November

70,000-student campus is legally off limits for cops and soldiers.

Colombians shot by mercenaries

A group of suspected paramilitary forces hired by Colombian landlords arrived in the city of La Horqueta, Colombia, November 21, and killed at least 14 people. More than a dozen men in military uniforms entered a store in the small town, just 30 miles from the capital Bogotá, asked for three men, and shot them on the spot. A shoot-out followed in which five more villagers were killed and three women were wounded. A short distance from the town police found five more bodies — including two youths aged 14 and 15 — shot in the head with arms tied behind their backs. Wealthy ranchers often finance mercenaries like the ones behind this attack in the name of fighting guerrillas. While government officials publicly condemn the landlord-sponsored thugs, military collaboration with them is common.

Moscow 'reformer' loses post

Russian president Boris Yeltsin removed first deputy prime minister Antoly Chubais from his post as finance minister. But Yeltsin announced November 20 that Chubais, who

has served as a point man in the attempt to reintroduce capitalist property relations in Russia, will remain in charge of Moscow's "economic reform" program. The deputy premiere is immersed in a scandal that alleges he accepted a \$90,000 fee for authoring a book on privatization in Russia. Privatization Minister Maxim Boiko, First Deputy Chief of Staff Alexander Kazakov, and Federal Bankruptcy Chairman Pyotr Mostovoi — also in on the book deal — had already been dismissed. A recent article in the *New York Times* described Chubais as "deeply unpopular, blamed by ordinary Russians for the most painful economic upheavals" associated with "market reforms."

Meanwhile, the head of the Russian central bank, Sergei Dubinin, warned November 21 that the ruble was under growing pressure for a devaluation. Foreign investors have pulled some \$5 billion out of the government debt market over the last several weeks, forcing the central bank to use its reserves to prop up the currency. "The next seven to 10 days will be decisive," said Dubinin.

Poland court acquits 22 cops charged with killing nine miners

A hundred people packed the courtroom in Katowice, Poland, November 21 chanting "Shame! Shame!" at the acquittal of 22 Polish cop defendants standing trial for shooting striking miners in 1981. That year as part of protesting a martial law crackdown by Warsaw on democratic rights, hundreds of miners occupied the pits in Katowice. In response, the Polish government deployed soldiers and riot cops, who opened fire December 15 — the third day of martial law — killing nine miners and wounding 25.

The accused claim they shot in the air, well above the miners' heads. Polish chief justice Ewa Krukowska — one of five judges ruling in the case — said evidence was inadequate to prove the cops' guilt. The bullets fired during the crackdown, which

could provide ballistic evidence, were confiscated by military prosecutors at the time and have not turned up since.

'Down with School of Americas'

Some 2,000 demonstrators gathered outside the Ft. Benning Army base in Georgia in a four-day vigil to mark the anniversary of the Nov. 16, 1989, massacre of eight people in El Salvador by Salvadoran military officers, most of them trained at the School of the Americas (SOA) at Ft. Benning. About 600 protesters marched onto the base to present a 100,000-signature petition calling for SOA's closing; all of them were arrested.

The SOA, which trains up to 2,000 soldiers a year from across Latin America, published a Spanish-language manual that presented torture, blackmail, and assassination as tricks of the trade. SOA is the alma mater for two-thirds of the Salvadoran officers cited by the 1993 UN Truth Commission Report for crimes during that country's civil war. The U.S. Congress voted in September to keep the "school" running.

Kodak to fire 10,000 workers

Eastman Kodak Co. bosses announced November 11 that they plan to lay off 10,000 workers, arguing that it is the only way to stay competitive with rival film manufacturer Fuji of Japan.

The sacking of 10 percent of Kodak's workforce will be an especially hard blow in Rochester, New York, where a third of that company's employees are concentrated. In September Kodak fired 20 percent of its top managers and says it will cut 10 percent of its sales and administrative staff. Kodak cut its workforce by 40,000 between 1983 — 96, and "is looking at outsourcing, partnerships and various consolidations of operations to squeeze costs out of" those who work there, wrote the *New York Times*.

Capitalist myth: 'a smaller workforce = safer conditions'

Coal production in West Virginia hit a record high of 174 million tons in 1996, with the fewest number of working miners than any time in this century. The October 26 edition of the Charleston, West Virginia, *Gazette-Mail* ran an Associated Press article reporting these figures. Among other things it asserts that "Declining employment and increasing production make for better safety records." But that conclusion is deceiving.

According to the Mine Safety and Health Administration, there was one fatality per 15.8 million tons mined in 1996. A decade earlier, one miner died for every 7.3 tons of coal produced. But the 21,296 miners employed in West Virginia in 1996 produced an average of 8,171 tons of coal each, double the rate in 1986. So the while the absolute number of workers killed in mining accidents may be down, the percentage of miners who die on the job has declined very little over the last 10 years.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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The Militant

Vol. 61/No. 43

Closing news date: November 26, 1997

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Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The *Militant* can be reached via CompuServe at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org:/11/pubs/militant

Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

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Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The *Militant* Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

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scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. **Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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Communist League in New Zealand organizes to meet new opportunities

Convention discusses imperialist war threats, working-class resistance

BY MICHAEL TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — The November 14 – 16 sixth national convention of the Communist League met amid major events illustrating the volatility and weakness of the capitalist world order. The delegates discussed the many examples of resistance by working people to the capitalist offensive, which mark the bottoming out of the retreat of the labor movement in New Zealand. During the weekend, the Young Socialists took the first steps towards establishing themselves as an organization.

Branches of the Communist League in New Zealand elected delegates to the convention following an oral and written discussion on resolutions prepared by the party's National Committee. In addition, representatives of communist leagues in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States, participated in the convention deliberations as fraternal delegates.

Patrick Brown presented a report to the convention on "The Crisis of Imperialism and Working Class Resistance," on behalf of the National Committee. He noted the importance of opposing the imperialist war threats against Iraq, and called for the withdrawal of all imperialist forces from that country.

During the weekend, U.S. president William Clinton stepped up threats of military action against Iraq. The New Zealand navy helps to enforce the criminal trade embargo against that country, and New Zealand soldiers are part of the military support staff for United Nations inspection teams there.

The day after the convention, the New Zealand government announced that its armed forces would lead a 150-strong military intervention under the name of a "Truce Monitoring Group" on the island of Bougainville. The island has been the site of a hard-fought battle for independence from Papua New Guinea. The big business press described this as a "diplomatic coup" over Australia, the other imperialist power of the South Pacific.

Brown discussed how the unfolding banking and currency crisis in Asia is starting to impact on the economy here. Asia accounts for nearly 40 percent of New Zealand capitalism's exports.

"Struggles around the world in response to the capitalist crisis illustrate that the retreat of the labor movement that marked the mid- to late-1980s and early '90s in many imperialist countries is over," Brown stated.

Delegates had been part of picket lines in several recent strikes in New Zealand. There have also been ongoing demonstrations against cuts in public health-care funding, and by university and polytechnic students against tuition fee increases.

Workers begin to say 'no' to sacrifice

There is much discussion among working people on government and employer proposals to remove workers' rights to holidays. Felicity Coggan, a delegate who had attended this year's conference of the Council of Trade Unions, reported on plans for a campaign against the proposals. Many of her co-workers strongly support this campaign, Coggan said. "Workers realize the bosses are trying to take something important from them."

Another "vote against ongoing sacrifice," as one delegate put it, was the 91.8 percent "No" vote in a September referendum on compulsory retirement savings. This was a scheme promoted by New Zealand First leader and government treasurer Winston Peters to replace the state-funded retirement pension.

This resistance by working people and others is at the root of a growing crisis in the government. Over the weekend of the convention, the divisions in the government brought it close to disintegration. A special conference of New Zealand First debated whether to stay in the coalition government, in the wake of the November 4 "bloodless coup" which saw Jennifer Shipley replace Prime Minister James Bolger as leader of the ruling National Party.

The crisis of the government raises the



Militant/Janet Roth
Above, protesters march against cuts to health care for elderly in August 1996. Right, march for Maori land rights in Waitangi, New Zealand on Waitangi Day, a national holiday commemorating the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 between Maori chiefs and British crown. Maori demands for self-determination strengthen working-class unity in the struggle for political power.



possibility of an early election. This would very likely result in Labour, which is polling over 50 percent at present, forming the government.

"The end of labor's retreat does not mean an end to the capitalist offensive," explained Brown. "Imperialism's march to fascism and war continues, even though it meets resistance."

"We can't put a precise date on when the retreat ended," he stated, "but internationally a number of struggles broke out a couple of years ago, including major strikes and protests in France. In the same period we saw the near-victory of a referendum for Quebec sovereignty, and a wave of antigovernment protests and land occupations by Maori rights fighters in this country."

Maori fight for self-determination

The delegates adopted a resolution drafted by the League's National Committee, entitled "Renewed Struggles in the Fight for Maori Rights." The document notes that "advances in the fight for Maori self-determination undermine the institutions and social relations on which the capitalist nation-state is founded."

The convention delegates rejected a contribution to the written discussion that counterposed the fight for Maori self-determination to demands for "full national equality," asserting that the latter "emphasizes the possibility of a united struggle by all the toilers."

Arguing against that view, a delegate from the United Kingdom explained, "It is not the fight for self-determination, but the national oppression of the Maori people that divides the working class." As the resolution affirms, Maori demands for equality and self-determination "strengthen the basis for unifying the working class in the fight for political power."

Delegates discussed the Cuban revolution as an integral part of the growing resistance of labor worldwide. At a special Militant Labour Forum, held over the weekend, Michel Prairie, a leader of the Communist League in Canada said, "The Cuban revolution is stronger today. This year — one of intense political activity — has seen the result of the Cuban leadership's effort to confront and conquer the worst challenges of the 'Special Period' of economic crisis. Greater leadership and resources can now be devoted to meeting the growing opportunities to reach out to and work with new forces coming into struggle around the world as a result of the deepening crisis of imperialism."

in which Leon Trotsky discusses the growing interimperialist conflicts evident in the 1920s — conflicts that are being played out again today. A socialist educational conference is planned for next April.

The work of communists in the trade unions was a central part of the report by Roth. "We reach for the very real openings today with the understanding that communists have no real political weight in the unions as they exist — dominated by the pro-capitalist bureaucracy," she said. The strategic aim of communists in the unions is their transformation into instruments of revolutionary struggle in the overthrow of capitalism.

"As workers show their combativity, there will be more openings to be part of struggles and discuss broader political questions," said Roth. "We bring into these discussions the revolutionary books and newspapers that workers and youth need. This is the primary way we can help to strengthen our unions today." Roth proposed that delegates reject a different perspective put forward by one delegate, who advocated a greater focus on proposing actions at union meetings.

With the increased possibility of an election, the delegates discussed how the communist candidates would put forward an action program to defend working people's interests. The candidates would call for a vote for Labour, a party linked to the unions, where the Communist League candidates were not standing. A vote for Labour is a vote against the parties directly controlled by the capitalists. Delegates decided that the failure of the Communist League to do so in the 1996 elections resulted in missed opportunities to discuss a class-struggle program with the many workers wanting to remove the National Party government.

As the coalition government came close to a "meltdown" during the convention, a lively debate broke out among the delegates about how communist workers should characterize Winston Peters, the treasurer and deputy prime minister in the coalition cabinet, and the New Zealand First Party that he dominates.

Peters, a former cabinet minister in Bolger's National Party government, was dumped by the party in 1993 and built a following for his New Zealand First on the austerity policies of the Labour Party and National Party. His nationalist rhetoric has been marked by sharp attacks on major business figures and foreign investors, and on immigrants. The delegates concluded that these policies of resentment mark Peters and his party as a reflection, in a New Zealand national form, of the same phenomenon as the rise of rightist and incipient fascist and Bonapartist currents in Europe and North America.

The convention voted to send greetings to the Cuban Communist Party, and to reply to greetings from the National Democratic Front of South Korea, using the opportunity to declare support for the fight to reunify Korea and remove the imperialist troops stationed in the south.

In another report to the convention, entitled "Building a Proletarian Party today," Janet Roth stated that "the end of the retreat makes it possible to revitalize the work of communists in the industrial trade unions."

"It will make it possible for the Young Socialists to grow and consolidate, with the assistance of the Communist League."

During the convention the Young Socialists groups in Auckland and Christchurch held their first national meeting. They decided to work closely together in building their organization. Also in attendance were Young Socialists members from Australia and the United States. The convention elected a new National Committee of eight members.

Roth emphasized that responding to the bottoming out of the retreat "means stepping up sales of our books, and of *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant* newspaper." Delegates voted to campaign during November and December to sell the new Pathfinder pamphlet *Europe and America*,

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by Jack Barnes

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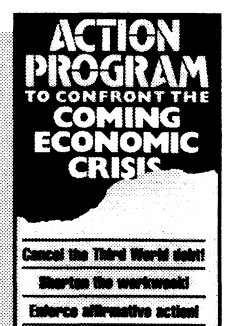
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Cuban editor starts UK speaking tour

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — Norberto Codina, editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, magazine of the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba, is spending three weeks in England speaking on the theme of "Culture and the Cuban revolution." His tour schedule takes him to London, Portsmouth, Oxford, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield where he'll speak to students, Latin American and other immigrants, artists and actors, trade unionists, and others.

Before the speaking tour, Codina participated in the first Ibero-American poetry festival. Organized by the Association of Cultural Attachés of Latin America, Spain, and Portugal (ACALASP), the festival included such prominent Latin American poets as Rafael Cadenas from Venezuela and Rubén Bareiro from Paraguay. Close to 500 people, most of them Latin American immigrants, attended the five evenings of poetry readings November 10–14.

Some 140 people heard Codina's reading, and a number of them stayed after for informal discussion. Codina also gave readings at University College, part of the University of London, and at the launching of a book of poetry by Spanish-speaking authors in London. Three contributors to the book are among the 20 activists in the Norberto Codina Tour Committee in London.

About 325 people attended the Cuban editor's first eight engagements. Most of these have been students at college classes and meetings. Actors, artists, and writers welcomed Codina when he spoke at London's October Gallery.

The first meeting was hosted by the Tamil

Information Centre, which organized a day school on culture and the Cuban revolution attended by 40 Tamil immigrants from Sri Lanka. "We are delighted and honored to have the presence of Norberto Codina with us today," said K. Rajendran. "Through his presence we hope to deepen our understanding of the experience of the Cuban revolution for solutions to the national liberation struggle and the building of a new society." Rajendran is currently translating articles and poetry by Ernesto Che Guevara into Tamil for two books. *Last Testament and Last Confession* will be a collection of poetry by Guevara, Roque Dalton, and Ariel Dorfman; the other is a biography of, and selected articles by, Guevara.

Codina's presentation initiated a dialogue concerning the struggle for national self-determination in Third World countries.

"We do get some information on Sri Lanka," Codina said, "but in drips and drops and most of it through international press agencies. We've all suffered colonial and neo-colonial oppression which is pertinent to the issue that brings us together today."

Literacy is essential cultural factor

"Culture must be seen as a form of resistance," the Cuban writer said. "With the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, one of the first steps was to recover the national culture," including through tackling widespread illiteracy. "In little less than a year the literacy campaign had established a literacy rate of 96–97 percent. Cuba is the only country in Latin America that has gone so far in eliminating illiteracy, and this is the most important culture factor because



Granma

Cuban peasants learn to how read during early 1960s literacy campaign

you can't have national culture when so many people are illiterate," Codina said.

"Art students received grants, and a national system of art education was initiated. Many cultural figures not known in Latin America were published in Cuba, especially from the Third World — though little from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka. But it wasn't ideal. There were periods of light and periods of darkness. Culture reflects how a society feels."

A question that cropped up in a number of events is that of censorship. One student at the University of North London asked Codina if he has to face an individual who decides what is acceptable to publish and what not. Another asked if artists and writers had gotten together to protest censorship. At a meeting of 50 Latin American immigrants, a couple of people pressed Codina on freedom of cultural expression.

"There's actually much less censorship in Cuba than most people outside the country

believe," Codina replied. "In this regard Cuba is much better than the Soviet Union was, or Eastern Europe and other Latin American countries are today. And there's much less censorship today than 20 years ago or even five years ago."

"At the same time, the situation isn't what we'd like it to be. There are many characteristics of censorship. There's political or administrative censorship. There's also censorship imposed by those with economic power. Illiteracy is a form of censorship. So are expensive books."

"The U.S. economic blockade has its consequences too. In 1989 *La Gaceta de Cuba* was a monthly, had a print run of 19,000, and sold at 10 Cuban centavos. We could do this because the magazine received state subsidy. Because of the economic crisis that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, this couldn't go on. From 1990 to 1992 we stopped publishing altogether. Today the magazine is self-financing. It's bimonthly, has a print run of 5,000 and costs three pesos, 30 times more."

'La Gaceta' becomes forum for debate

"Paradoxically, more people read *La Gaceta* today than before," the editor stated. "Today it's a much better magazine. We've turned it into a forum of debate. We've reached out to all Cubans, including those who live outside the country. So it's more in demand. Earlier this year an issue of the magazine was devoted to a sharp debate that appeared in the newspapers, on TV and radio over freedom of expression in the theater. That issue sold out very quickly."

"In the first issue that will appear in 1998, we're going to publish three stories written for our literary competition. These stories are quite audacious. They're not political stories as such though, of course, they can be read to a degree politically. One is a homosexual love story. Many issues which are discussed in Cuba today — nationalism, sexuality — are touched on in this story. Another deals with a father-daughter incestuous relationship. It's possible that there will be a reaction and we're looking forward to the discussion."

"But we're not publishing these stories to be deliberately provocative. A work must last because of its value, not because it's a simple provocation to censorship. Nor do we publish essays simply because of the socio-political themes on which they touch. They must stand as works of art in their own right," he said.

"I don't have a cultural monitor overseeing my editorial decisions," Codina continued. "My cultural monitor is an internal one. In that regard, every editor — in whatever system and whatever country is a sort of censor, deciding what should go in."

Codina encourages people to ask questions on whatever's on their mind. One Tamil raised the issue of the US-British aggression toward Iraq. "I believe that this shows a great deal about the world today," Codina replied. "The U.S. government paints [Iraqi president Sadaam] Hussein as the devil. But this is really an attempt to justify their continuing aggression, which started with the Gulf War. We should remember that formerly Hussein was backed, even encouraged, by the United States — during the war against Iran for instance."

"I totally disagree with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait," he continued. "In fact the invasion of Kuwait was a gift to the United States. They managed the situation to their advantage — to launch an imperialist war.... The U.S. government should not be allowed to have inspectors in Iraq, after all they were the main protagonists in the war itself."

'Gaceta' interviews Cuban filmmaker

BY MIKE TABER

The September-October 1997 issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba* is now available. *La Gaceta* is the bimonthly Spanish-language literary journal published by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC).

An interview with veteran Cuban filmmaker Manuel Pérez is one of the issue's highlights. Pérez first became interested in film in the late 1950s, and got involved in politics during the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. In March 1959, two months after the revolution came to power, Pérez became a member of the film section of the Department of Culture of the Rebel Army.

"My job," he says, "was to oversee the movies that were being shown to the armed forces and give the showings a political character. A drive to teach the Rebel Army's soldiers to read and write was under way, and there needed to be a relationship between what was being taught and what they were seeing in the movies.... We turned film showings into movie/debates, into a type of classroom."

That year he joined the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC). The Film Institute's founder and most prominent leader for many years has been Alfredo Guevara, a longtime figure in the revolution who was a fellow-student of Fidel Castro at the University of Havana in the late 1940s.

The 1960s was "the best period for the

ICAIC, I believe, the most fruitful. In that entire stage, the creative work atmosphere for filmmakers was vital and stimulating." During those years, Pérez became a maker of documentaries.

Pérez was asked about the 1971 congress on education and culture, which he participated in. That gathering is associated by many people with the beginning of the "gray half-decade." That term is often used by pro-revolution artists in Cuba in reference to the period from 1971–76, when cultural as well as economic practices copied from the Soviet bureaucracy had the greatest weight.

The Cuban Film Institute came under sharp attack at the congress, Pérez replied, due to its record in promoting an open airing of issues — sometimes controversial ones — facing the Cuban revolution, and its policy of making available important films produced in capitalist countries.

He recounted one workshop that was the scene of a particularly heated exchange. Pérez was taking the minutes. Suddenly, he said, Fidel Castro entered the room.

"There was suspense. No one knew who Fidel was going to support. He took his time, asked questions. Then he took the floor in defense of film programming, and in particular the work and capacity of Alfredo Guevara and ICAIC as a whole. Fidel stated that ICAIC had done a serious revolutionary job, and explained the material difficulties we had in sustaining programming throughout the country's theaters. He said that we could not live in a vacuum, that the solution was to educate the viewer, to prepare him to be critical. He confessed that some movies from the socialist countries concerned him more than many from capitalist ones."

When it was all over, Pérez states, "ICAIC came out of the congress unscathed." Throughout the 1970s the Cuban film industry was probably the least affected branch of Cuban art and culture by the "gray half-decade." Pérez said that "apart from what was happening with ICAIC, there were forces interested in freezing the development of Cuban culture, and in the name of defense of the revolution, they were harming its basic components."

In the late 1980s, the Film Institute formed "creative groups." These were groupings of directors and artists formed on a voluntary basis, as a source of discussion and criticism from one's peers, a forum for

bouncing off ideas.

"I believe that the creative groups, which were constituted in 1988, were the most interesting experience of that period," he explained, "above all because they were able to restore a climate of aesthetic and ideological discussion that had begun to be lost, to have its arteries hardened, at the end of the 1970s."

At the end of the interview, Pérez was asked what he was working on at present. "I am now working on two projects. One has a contemporary theme: the situation facing people of my generation today: those of us who were youths in 1959, who lived through the entire revolutionary process with great intensity, and now confront the crisis of values at the end of the century in different ways."

"The other project is about what happened after the death of Che [in Bolivia], with the six survivors of the guerrilla movement.... This story is a way of keeping Che present without having him present. I'm one of those who could not put Che on the screen, to have some actor play a person who for me remains very close."

The current issue of *La Gaceta* also features an article and interview on the 25th anniversary of the New Song Movement (Movimiento de la Nueva Trova). Noel Nicola and Carlos E. León, two of the Movement's founders, each tell the story of this popular trend in Cuban music. They explain how the Movement grew up under the rise of the protest song in Latin America, the United States, and other countries in the 1960s, and continuity with the Cuban tradition of balladeering. Among the other founders of the New Song Movement are well-known singers Silvio Rodríguez and Pablo Milanés. The movement lasted as an organization until 1987.

The September-October issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba* also includes an interview with Alberto Korda. For a number of years Korda was the personal photographer to Fidel Castro, and also took some of the most well-known photos of Che Guevara. One in particular — portraying Guevara wearing a beret — can be seen on many posters and T-shirts of Che around the world. The photo was taken in March 1960 at a mass rally to protest the death of more than 80 people in the explosion of the Belgian ship *La Coubre* in Havana harbor, a crime generally linked to the U.S. government.

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FBI admits there's no evidence of bomb on TWA 800

BY NANCY ROSENSTOCK

NEW YORK — Complete with a computer-generated video produced by the CIA depicting the crash of Trans World Airlines (TWA) Flight 800, the FBI announced at a November 18 press conference that its "investigation" of the cause of the crash was now over. James Kallstrom, the head of the New York FBI, stated the decision to call a halt to the more than one-year operation was "based solely on the overwhelming absence of evidence indicating a crime, and the lack of any leads that could bear on the issue. In fact, we ran out of things to do." Immediately after the July 1996 crash that killed all 230 people on board, the government began trying to prove the disaster was the result of a bomb or sabotage.

In a letter sent to the families of those who died in the plane crash, Kallstrom explained that the FBI had conducted "the largest aircraft reconstruction mock-up in commercial

aviation history.... Every lead has been covered, all possible avenues of investigation exhaustively explored and every resource of the United States Government has been brought to bear in this investigation."

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will conduct hearings on Flight 800 in December that focus on mechanical failure as the cause of the crash. The hearings are being held despite the fact that as early as last February the NTSB issued recommendations urging airlines to change their operating procedures to insure that more fuel would be kept in the center fuel tank, a measure that could help prevent similar crashes.

In addition, the NTSB had earlier proposed mandating a procedure known as "inerting," which has been known for 24 years but has never been implemented due to the unwillingness of the companies to pay the high cost. "Inerting" flushes explosive vapors from the empty space in fuel tanks



FBI went to great lengths to reconstruct TWA plane that exploded in July 1996, but came up short of any evidence of a bomb.

by pumping in nitrogen or some other non-flammable gas so that vapors that build up will not explode.

The FBI press conference also included representatives from Boeing, the manufacturer of the 747, and a representative from TWA. Both Boeing and TWA's role at the press conference was to indicate the lack of

any problem with either flight 800 or 747 aircraft in general. James Brown, the TWA spokesman, declared, "At this point we're satisfied with all our procedures."

Nancy Rosenstock is a member of the International Association of Machinists and works for TWA in New York.

Socialist workers campaign against war drive

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In response to Washington's war drive against Iraq, socialist workers have been campaigning on the job to discuss with their co-workers about why working people should oppose the U.S. aggression. Along with the *Militant*, the best tools in this effort are issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *New International*, which features "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's assault on Iraq" by Jack Barnes; *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, also by Barnes; and *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba speaks out at the United Nations* by Fidel Castro and Ricardo Alarcon. A special offer on these titles is advertised on the front page of this week's *Militant*.

Barbara Bowman, a rail worker in San Francisco, reports that another rail worker there sold two copies of *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast!* One young woman who bought the book wants to have further discussion with the socialists over dinner.

"Some co-workers are buying into bourgeois public opinion in support of

Washington's war moves," said Joe Swanson, a member of the United Auto Workers in Des Moines, Iowa. But not all of them. "I met Harold Searcy, who was an outspoken opponent of the Gulf War, at our recent union meeting," said Swanson. "He bought a copy of the *Militant* and said he would probably buy a subscription. He said he would be happy to join any speakers panel or picket line opposing U.S. military intervention."

Searcy told Swanson, "My wife doesn't like me being outspoken, but there's just no way I can stay out of it if they keep pushing these war threats. I have to take a stand again." During Washington's military slaughter against the Iraqi people in 1991, Searcy was interrogated at work by agents of the U.S. Secret Service and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation for his anti-war and political activities.

Ruth Robinett, a rail worker at Amtrak in New York, sold two copies of "Opening Guns of World War III."

"I got into a lot of discussions when one worker asked me, 'What are you talking about?' A member of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees agreed with me about Iraq and bought *New International* no. 7," Robinett said.

Rolande Girard, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, wrote from Miami, "One of my co-workers bought a copy of the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 4, which features 'The Opening Guns of World War III,' after we had a discussion on the U.S. threats against Iraq. She is from Haiti and knows from her own experience what U.S. military intervention means for the people of these countries." Girard said workers in her plant also bought copies of the pamphlets *Che Gue-*

vara and the Fight for Socialism Today and *The Second Declaration of Havana* in Spanish, as well as *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* in French.

"Last week we organized a sale at the plant gate of Lear Seating Corp. where Clint Ivie, a Young Socialist and UAW member, works," Arlene Rubenstein reported from Atlanta. "The sales team had signs that read 'U.S. Hands Off Iraq' and 'U.S. Out Of the Persian Gulf,' which provoked a lot of discussion in the plant. The next week Clint joined the team, and they sold two copies of the *Militant* at the gate." One of the unionists who bought the paper had been among the dozen workers who earlier attended a press conference with Ivie to protest an attack on his democratic rights. On August 11 two FBI agents came to his workplace claiming he was a suspect in the July 1996 bombing during the Olympic games there.

GM will close another plant in Flint

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — General Motors (GM), the world's largest auto maker, announced to workers in its Buick City Assembly Plant that the facility will close in 1999. Using an in-plant video system, the 2,900 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 599 were informed of the decision between shifts on November 21.

Flint, an industrial city of about 170,000 people where the auto giant was founded in 1908, is 65 miles north of Detroit. It has been devastated by GM plant closings. The company's employment in Flint has plunged from 77,000 in the late 1970s to around 33,000 today. City officials and auto industry analysts anticipate that number to shrink to 20,000 within the decade.

The closing of Buick City Assembly comes on the heels of announced plans to close a 3,100-worker engine plant in the city. GM, which currently employs about 220,000 unionized production workers, has cut 82,000 jobs since 1991.

Rumors of the closing had circulated in the plant for months, but the announcement stunned many. "As soon as everyone knew, a hush went across the [plant]," one woman told the press as she left the complex. The average age of workers in the plant is 46, according to GM, and the average seniority is between 23 and 28 years.

The local press tried to blame UAW Local 599 for the plant closing, claiming that a 1994 strike demanding GM live up to the national UAW contract and hire more workers was behind the decision. But the decision is part of the company's attempt to manage the crisis of excess capacity it faces. GM has the capacity to meet 36 percent of the demand for vehicles in North America, but its market share is just 31 percent of the vehicles sold. Its North American assembly operations had a profit rate of only 1.8 per-

cent at the end of the September, up from 1.2 percent last year but far short of the corporate goal of 5 percent.

The auto giant announced earlier in the month plans to take an after tax charge to cover continued plant closings and sales. In September, GM put three units of its parts division, Delphi, up for sale. Those three operations employ 11,300 people in North America and Europe. At the same time, the corporation projects building five new plants in Eastern Europe, South America, and Asia.

In the face of GM's downsizing and plant closings, the UAW officialdom has tried to tie workers in Flint more tightly into seeing their interests as the same as those of the

owners of GM. The local union leadership launched an advertising campaign to convince company stock holders not to close Buick City.

UAW international president Stephen Yokich lashed at GM's announcement, declaring, "This action is one more example of the America-last strategy that's driving the biggest corporations in the U.S." He went on, "Closing this facility is a betrayal of GM's workforce, of the community and the country, especially in light of GM's huge profits."

John Sarge is a member of the United Auto Workers in Detroit.

Auto parts strikes

Continued from front page for the duration."

Workers at Mackie earn between \$6.50 and \$7.50 an hour and are demanding \$12 to \$15 an hour. "Maybe Mackie thinks that because we make \$6.65 an hour we don't know any better. But they're mistaken," Trevor Cooper pointed out. Another key demand is full-time employment for temporary workers.

The Mackie facility in Arlington opened earlier this year as GM converted its assembly plant there from car to truck production and moved to "outsource" work. Wages at the GM plant are \$20 an hour. The Arlington Mackie plant was organized into the UAW in August. The strikers are fighting for their first negotiated union contract, as are the members of Local 286 in Oklahoma City. Jim Banks, president of Local 286, said health and safety issues led to the strike.

Various parts are processed into subassemblies at the Mackie plant and sent to GM in the sequence they are matched with the vehicle. Radios and door mirrors are sequenced at the Oklahoma City plant, and bumpers and dashboards in Arlington. Since the parts are delivered on a "just-in-time" basis, the strikes had an immediate effect on the GM plants. The GM workers are supportive of the strike. "If you're union, you're union," said Kevin Kittrell, a second shift worker at the Arlington GM plant.

The Fort Worth *Star-Telegram* reported that on November 18 "at least 100 workers were picketing the plant ... braving the chill to demonstrate their newfound solidarity."

Bob Miller is a member of UAW Local 980 in Edison, New Jersey.

Frank Kofsky, author of books on jazz and Black rights, dies

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

Frank Kofsky, author and lecturer on jazz, died at his home in Benicia, California, November 19. He was 62 years old.

Kofsky, who spoke frequently on the history of jazz, was a biting critic of an economic system that allowed recording companies, club owners, and festival promoters to make millions from the works of jazz artists, while paying the creators of the music a pittance.

Kofsky was the author of the *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music*, which will soon be reissued by Pathfinder Press in a new, expanded edition as *John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s*, along with a new work, *Black Music, White Business: Illuminating the Political Economy of Jazz*.

A professor of history at California State University at Sacramento since 1969,

Kofsky was an active partisan of the movements for civil rights and to end the U.S. war against Vietnam.

He spent the better part of the 1970s fighting to hold on to his teaching job. As Kofsky related in the preface to the forthcoming *John Coltrane*, among the stated reasons that the university sought to deny him tenure and fire him was the charge that he was "unduly pro-black" in "behavior and grading."

After local Black leaders and musicians rallied to his support, "the History Department personnel committee beat a rapid retreat" and he held on to his teaching post.

Other works by Frank Kofsky include an assessment of the Cold War entitled *Harry Truman and the War Scare of 1948*; the study *Lenny Bruce: The Comedian as Social Critic and Secular Moralist*; and numerous op-ed articles for the San Francisco *Examiner* over the last few years.

'I am daughter of an internationalist'

Below we reprint a major excerpt from an interview with Aleida Guevara March, daughter of Ernesto Che Guevara. The interview, by Mario Jorge Muñoz, appeared in the June 15, 1997, issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, the weekly paper of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba. It is reprinted by permission. Translation is by the *Militant*.

My mother taught me from the time I was very little to know my father's ideals, his concerns, his ambitions as a revolutionary. And I have tried to follow that line in my life. In his letter of farewell to us, his children, he was asking us to strive to master technology, which enables one to master nature. He also told us to always study as much as we could, to never tire of it, because therein lies the possibility to best help humanity.

He asked that we should feel within ourselves the pain inflicted on any man anywhere in the world. I am the daughter of an internationalist. And that is the least I can give to humanity.

I cannot deny that my father had a certain influence in my choice of medicine as a profession. He was a doctor. But I believe that my decision was a little more selfish. As I grow older I want people to care about me not just because I am my father's daughter. I am always grateful for that, but such affection is not on account of me. As a human being I also need warmth and tenderness.

Medicine is a very humane profession. One in which, if you conduct yourself adequately, you can receive mountains of thanks. As a pediatrician I receive on a daily basis something better: the smiles of children. All the gold in the world cannot buy that. The feeling that you are doing something well, and that people care about you because you are their doctor, no matter whose daughter you are, is indescribable. I think this was the decisive reason I chose this profession.

My two internationalist missions as a doctor were tremendous experiences. They completed my education, above all because they confirmed that socialism is the only road possible for us. After living one year in Nicaragua and two years in Angola, I believe that if socialism were to disappear in Cuba, everything would be lost and we would become what Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, or Africa are today.

There are those who have looked at me in a different way and tried to be sweet, tender, and affectionate with us, because our father was not here and wasn't going to be here any more. And these people felt a commitment to him to give us everything they could on a human level. Sometimes spoiling us a bit, too. Other people felt a commitment to see that we, his children, became better every single day. On occasion, they would push us to the limit. Without realiz-

ing that we were normal, everyday children.

It was a much smaller group of people who treated us simply as regular human beings, genetic accidents of an extraordinary man and a very fine woman, nothing more.

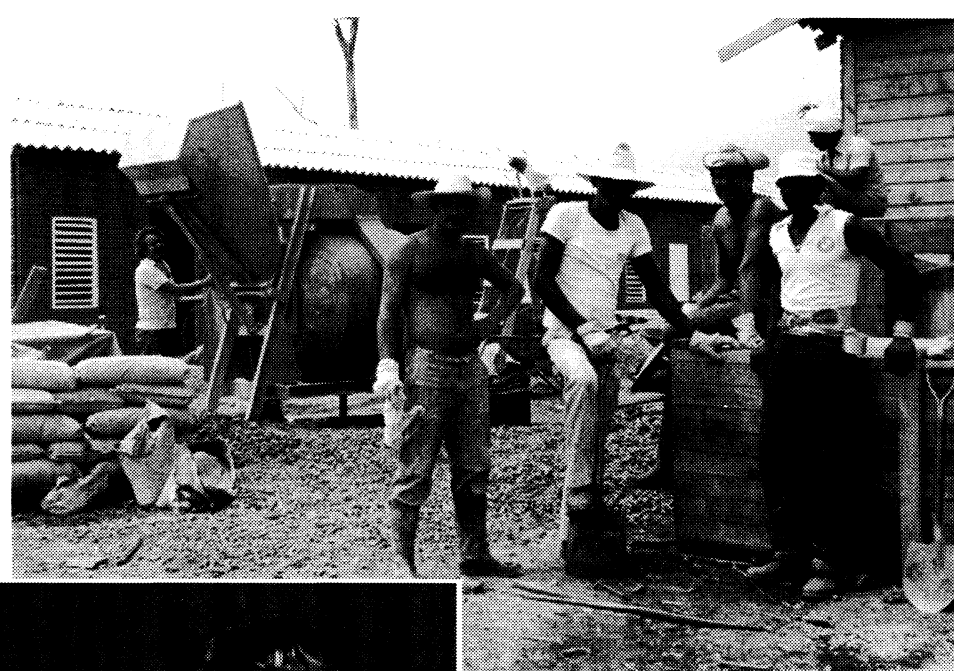
I got to know that these were all expressions of the respect and admiration of the Cuban people and of those persons toward my father. That is, I got such treatment because I was an extension of him. People would focus their concern, their love, their demands, in his children. But these were always expressions of love. Very rarely have I felt anything else.

I believe that is why I like the song by Ana Belén, "Derroche" [outpouring] so much. Because all my life I have received an outpouring of love. Ever since I was born, simply, without having done anything to deserve it, I have felt tremendous tenderness from the Cuban people. People know me as the daughter of that extraordinary man. That's a little heavy for one person, but I have always felt the beautiful side of it.

One time, talking to my brother Camilo, I told him how much we would be able to learn from our father, how much we would be able to discuss with him, how many things he would be able to clarify. Camilo looked at me and said, "If he were alive, he would not be our father."

And Camilo was right. Because had he triumphed in Bolivia, he would certainly have continued toward the south, which was his objective. Because he never renounced being an Argentine. And the north of Argentina awaited him. I realize that. But it angers me, it pains me that a man with my father's capacity of thought and action died so young. I believe he would have been of much use in Cuba.

A few days ago I was talking to someone from France. He told me that if the example of my father had served a useful purpose, then many people like Che would exist in



Militant photos: top, Bridget Elton; left, Martín Koppel
Above, Cuban volunteer construction workers in Bluefields, Nicaragua, during revolution there. Internationalist missions "completed my education," said Aleida Guevara, shown at left speaking at conference on legacy of Che Guevara held at the University of Havana in October.



the world, but he didn't know of any. I answered that neither of us was in the position of saying there are not thousands of people like Che in the world. But he should also not forget that Ernesto Guevara met a Fidel Castro, that he met a group of men determined to make a real revolution.

That Che Guevara had the opportunity of being with the Cuban people, and that the Cuban people supported him up to the final consequences so he could carry out his dream. I then told him that perhaps there are thousands of Chés in the world, but they have not had the opportunity to make themselves known.

It is very interesting, for example, to see the young people in Italy, who have no relation to my father, or people in Spain, who are concerned about knowing my father directly from us. That is a sign that there re-

ally are people in the world who very much want to do something more, to not remain trapped in the consumer society, and to try to help one's fellow beings. That for me is a tremendous encouragement.

I believe that Che is a banner in the world, a banner of dignity, power, and courage. The fact that his image presides over the Fourteenth World Festival of Youth and Students is something he earned, because unfortunately he died a young man, 39 years old, and he will remain young forever.

If we can really get to know him more and if we carry a little of him inside of us, then that young man who gave us such a complete example of a man of the 21st century met his fundamental objective in life. Because we would be capable of being better human beings, the human beings of the future that he wanted. And society, humanity would therefore live much better.

President of Cuban Council of Churches speaks in Seattle against U.S. embargo

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

SEATTLE — Rev. Oden Marichal, president of the Cuban Council of Churches, spoke to a crowd of more than 50 people at St. Marks Church here, November 3. His talk took the form of a wide-ranging question-answer session in which he defended the Cuban revolution and its record on many fronts while condemning efforts by the Washington and other capitalist governments to force Cuba to change its socialist course.

An early question concerned the upcoming visit to Cuba by Pope John Paul.

Marichal, an Episcopal minister, described some of the negotiations still going on between the Catholic Church and the Cuban government concerning details of the trip. Whatever the outcome of this discussion, "The Pope is not going to have more influence than Fidel," among Cuba's population, he asserted. Pointing to the crowds of 1 million or more who have turned out for events at which Castro has spoken, he explained, "Those in the plaza are not there by obligation," but because of their support for the Cuban revolution and its leadership.

In reply to a question about the state of Cuba's economy today, Marichal explained Cuba is trying to address the consequences of three problems which he listed as, "the blockade, our own mistakes, and the collapse of the socialist camp." He returned to this theme in answering a question about the 30th anniversary of the death of Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia and the recent events organized in Cuba to mark Che's death and the return of his body and those of other combatants to Cuba.

Like many other ordinary Cubans, Marichal explained, he left his house one morning to watch the procession that brought the bodies from Havana to Santa Clara. What was striking, he remarked, was the absolute silence among the enormous crowd, as a sign of respect as the bodies passed by. Although neither the government nor any mass organizations had called for this particular form of commemorating Che, almost everyone, Marichal said, had brought a flower to the procession.

In speaking of Guevara's political influence, Marichal explained that a time came in Cuba in the 1960s when Cuba found itself at a "crossroads" between what he described as "an economic road or an ethical

road." The choice made at that time, he asserted, was the "economic road" that led, in Marichal's view "toward Soviet dogmatism." Marichal explained that Che's views were the opposite and that in 1986 the Cuban government and Communist Party led a "rectification process" in which Che's ideas once again became prominent as the revolution addressed its mistakes. Che's ideas and example, said Marichal, remain vital in Cuba today.

More than one comment raised the ongoing U.S. hostility and trade embargo as well as the impact of the Helms-Burton Act on Cuba. Some contrasted Washington's policy to the fact that other capitalist governments, in Europe and Canada for example, do trade with Cuba. Marichal said that many countries voted against U.S. policy when the issue has come up in the United Nations General Assembly. But even among these, he noted, "Germany provides no aid to Cuba and doesn't allow its companies to trade," with the island. "Everybody wants Cuba to change," said Marichal, referring to the capitalist governments, "sometimes just the methods are different." Some use the blockade "to force Cuba to change." Others, "say end the blockade to force Cuba to change." Neither policy, he suggested, would succeed in pressuring Cuba's people to change the revolution's socialist course.

The meeting was sponsored by the Seattle Cuba Friendship Committee and St. Marks Church. Marichal is part of a special delegation of Cuban religious leaders touring the United States to educate about the effects of the U.S. embargo on the Cuban people. The tour is nationally coordinated through Pastors for Peace, a project of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizing (IFCO).

The selection above 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 mili-

tary, after consultation with Washington.

As part of the commemoration of this anniversary in Cuba, dozens of articles, speeches, and interviews by those who worked with Che are being published, dealing with the Cuban revolution, its impact in world politics, and the actions of its leadership.

Many of Guevara's collaborators and family members have spoken at conferences and other meetings, bringing Che to life for a new generation and explaining the importance of his rich political legacy today. These materials contain many valuable firsthand accounts and information, some of which are being written down and published for the first time. They are part of the broader discussion taking place in Cuba today on how to advance the revolution.

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

U.S. gov't continues war threats against Iraq

Continued from front page

headlines such as "Iraq's drive for a biological arsenal" and "The toxic Saddam Hussein." One week earlier, New York authorities conducted a chemical warfare drill in downtown Manhattan, halting traffic for several hours and receiving lots of media coverage. News reports linked it to a possible attack from Iraq.

Washington had earlier declared that it would consider an attack on its U-2 spy planes flying over Iraq's air space, which Baghdad had threatened to shoot down, "an act of war." Cohen told reporters that U.S. retaliation would have meant a "horrendous result" for Iraq.

"As an unarmed U-2 spy plane soared high over central Iraq two weeks ago, President Clinton was poised to order the biggest military operation of his Presidency," said the November 23 *Times* article.

The new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Henry Shelton, stated that a military strike would have targeted "many more than dozens" of sites. According to the *Times*, "these included not only Mr. Hussein's palaces and command and con-

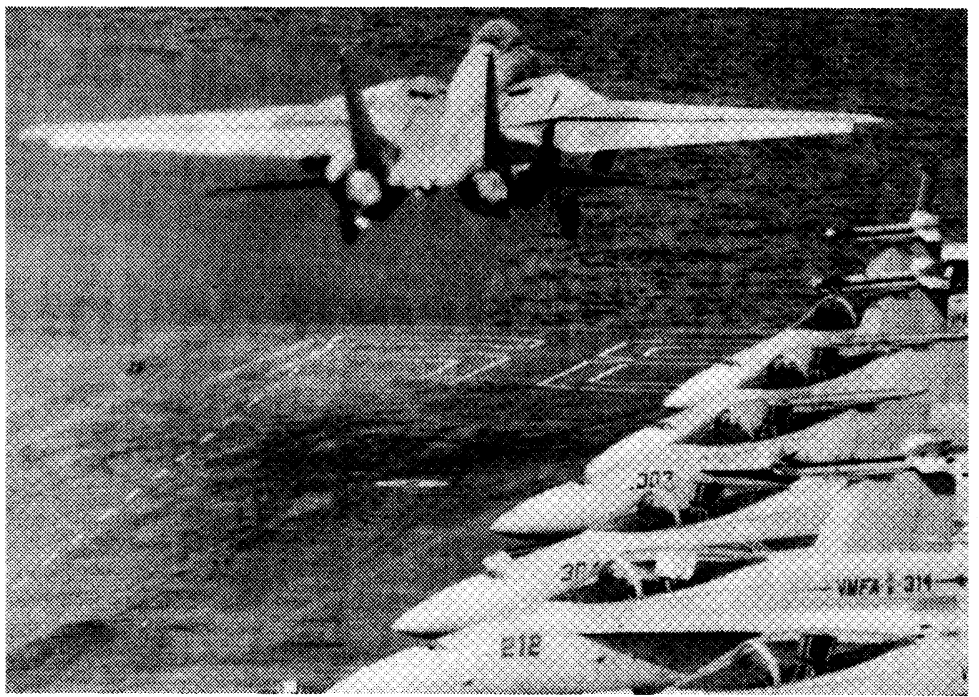
trol centers, but also known weapons production sites and the infrastructure supporting them: military bases, roads, power plants, industrial sites."

Clinton set back, war drive slows down

By November 17, however, the drive for this massive assault on Iraq, aimed at weakening and eventually overthrowing Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and replacing his government with a regime subservient to Washington, was set back. The Clinton administration was forced to accept a diplomatic solution brokered by Paris and Moscow. Its chief imperialist allies, especially Paris; the Russian and Chinese governments; and most of the capitalist regimes in the Arab countries opposed military strikes. It became clear that the coalition Washington assembled during the 1990-91 war against Iraq had shattered.

Within a few days, Baghdad allowed the team of United Nations arms inspectors, including those from the United States it had expelled earlier, back into the country. As part of the negotiated deal, the Hussein gov-

Continued on Page 10



Planes take off from *USS Nimitz* aircraft carrier stationed in the Persian Gulf. In November Washington deployed a second carrier to join the *Nimitz* off the coast of Iraq.

Regional socialist conference Birmingham, AL • Sat.-Sun., Dec. 20-21

Main presentations

The Siren Call of Economic Nationalism and Washington's Drive Toward War

JACK BARNES

National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party

The Seduction of the Entire North American Left by the 'New Leadership' of the AFL-CIO ■ Liberal Reformers and Petty Bourgeois Radicals Walk Workers and Youth toward Patrick Buchanan's Fascist Trap ■ Poor Little Tibet: Today's Poor Little Finland ■ The Weakening of the Clinton Administration and Its Dangerous Lurches toward War ■ Seattle, Boeing: The Central Political Test of Workers' Space in the War Industries

Che Guevara, Socialism, and the Weight of Cuba in a World of Growing Capitalist Disorder

MARY-ALICE WATERS

Editor of 'New International' magazine

The Special Period, Rectification, and the Homecoming of Che's Reinforcement Brigade ■ The Scope of the Spreading Economic Crisis in Latin America and Asia ■ From Brazil to Japan: Washington's Drive to Buy Up the World ■ The October 1962 'Missile Crisis' and the Example Set by the Cuban People ■ An Action Program to Confront the Capitalist Crisis and the Offensive of the Exploiting Classes

Classes

Who will change the world? The Battle of Birmingham and the fight to end racist segregation

Stephen Bloodworth and Derek Bracey

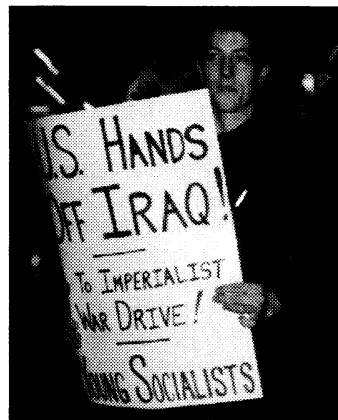
Cuba, Iraq, and the working-class campaign against imperialist war

Diana Newberry and Chris Remple

War, immigrant workers, and the transform- ation of the working class in the U.S.

Lessons from World War II, Korea, and the Maritime unions

Tom Leonard



Protest against U.S. war drive, New York, Nov. 17.



Rally in solidarity with UPS strikers, Atlanta, Aug. 7.

Saturday, December 20

Registration	8:30 a.m.
Meeting of socialist workers in Machinists union (IAM)	8:30 a.m.
Visit Civil Rights Institute	10:00 a.m.
Reception	12 noon
Main presentations and discussion	1:00 p.m.
Dinner	7:00 p.m.
Meeting of Young Socialists	
Dance & social	8:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 21

Meeting of socialist workers in Machinists union	7 a.m.-2 p.m.
Classes	9:30 a.m.
Summary of conference	2:30 p.m.

For transportation and further information

Young Socialists: (773) 772-0551
Atlanta: (404) 724-9759
Birmingham: (205) 323-3079
Houston: (713) 847-0704
Miami: (305) 756-1020
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Hosts: Young Socialists National Committee and the Atlanta, Birmingham, Houston, Miami & Pittsburgh branches of the Socialist Workers Party

Socialists plan Dec. 20 - 21 conference in Birmingham

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The Young Socialists National Committee together with the Atlanta, Birmingham, Houston, Miami, and Pittsburgh branches of the Socialist Workers Party have scheduled a regional educational conference in Birmingham, Alabama, December 20-21.

Socialists from around the country who belong to the International Association of Machinists will be participating in the conference. According to Ernie Mailhot, the socialist workers and young socialists will hold their own meeting that will draw on these discussions to strengthen their union work.

Originally planned for December 6-7, "the new dates will give additional time to organize students, fellow unionists, and other workers to come to the event," said conference organizer Meg Novak, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Birmingham and a leader of the YS.

Socialists are inviting, among others, youth they are meeting at actions protesting the U.S. war moves against Iraq and activities marking the 30th anniversary of Argentine-Cuban revolutionary Ernesto Che Guevara's combat in Bolivia.

SWP and YS members in Pittsburgh, for example, were among those who helped organize such an event on Che Guevara at the University of Pittsburgh November 13, attended by 150 people. In Miami, socialists are inviting to the conference Haitian and other activists they recently met protesting deportations, said Rolande Girard.

The conference is being advertised on the job, at picket lines and other labor actions, during sales of the socialist press at mine portals and factory gates, and on campuses.

Jack Willey, organizer of the YS National Executive Committee, just completed a week-long speaking tour in Alabama, Georgia, and northern Florida. He spoke on campuses in Birmingham, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama; and in Gainesville, Florida, inviting students interested in revolutionary action to participate in the regional event. He also addressed Militant Labor Forums in Birmingham and Atlanta.

SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes and *New International* editor Mary-Alice Waters will give the main talks (see ad on this page).

The conference program includes time for participants to visit the Civil Rights Institute, a museum with exhibits on the Battle of Birmingham, one of the most important milestones of the mass civil rights movement in the 1960s that overturned the Jim Crow system of racist segregation.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Women's Rights vs. Right-wing 'Culture War.' Discussion of Million Woman March and the Promise Keepers 'Sacred Assembly of Men.' Fri., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

San Francisco

The Railroad Crisis. Panel of railroad workers. Fri., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. 3284 23rd St. Donation: \$4 for program, \$5 for dinner. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

U.S. Hands Off Iraq! Speaker: Kathy Kelly, Voices in the Wilderness, visited Iraq in 1996; Mahmud Ahmad, Friends for a Democratic Palestine; representative, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Che Guevara, the Cuban Revolution and the

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

OHIO

Cleveland

Stop the Government Attack Against the Teamsters Union! Fri., Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m. 1832 Euclid Ave. (Across from Cleveland State Uni-

versity). Donation: \$4. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Support the United Farm Workers Union. Hear two farm workers from the Yakima Valley on a one-week tour of Seattle. Sat., Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

U.S. gov't deepens intervention in Teamsters

Continued from front page in the United States.

The recent rulings are part of counterblows by the Clinton administration and the employers to the widely acknowledged strike victory by the Teamsters against UPS, the largest national parcel delivery company. "It seems to me that the government has bigger motives than just dealing with financial mishandling," said Eugene Phillips, a 25-year veteran UPS Teamster driver from Chicago. "Don't forget this is all happening right after our victory at UPS," said the member of Teamsters Local 705.

The November 17 ruling by Kenneth Conboy, a former judge assigned as a federal "overseer," found that Carey participated in a conspiracy to divert members' dues to his campaign for reelection as president of the Teamsters union.

Conboy said Carey allowed "\$735,000 of I.B.T. general treasury funds to be used to further his campaign." Posing as a guardian of democracy, Conboy said Carey's "behavior, which severely and negatively impacted the democratic process in the I.B.T., constitutes the type of conduct that warrants disqualification under the rules." Carey narrowly defeated Hoffa last year. Another federal overseer, Barbara Zack Quindel, who has since resigned her position, overturned the election results last August, asserting that Carey misused union funds.

History of government intervention

As part of avoiding racketeering charges in 1989, the union signed a consent decree allowing the government to oversee its affairs. In all, there are six "independent auditors" intervening in the Teamsters' business. They include U.S. district judge David Edelstein and Manhattan U.S. attorney Mary Jo White, who were appointed as part of the 1989 racketeering settlement; Election Of-

ficer Benetta Mansfield; Election Appeals Master Kenneth Conboy; the Independent Review Board, which includes former FBI director William Webster; and the recently appointed Independent Financial Auditor Martin Levy, a former FBI analyst.

Conboy's 74-page decision also implicates Richard Trumka, secretary treasurer of the AFL-CIO and former head of the United Mine Workers of America; Andrew Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union; and Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Conboy accused Trumka of raising \$50,000 for Carey. In response to a government subpoena, Trumka invoked his Fifth Amendment rights and has refused to testify. The FBI has already seized five computer disks from Trumka's office.

Hoffa has welcomed the government's moves against Carey, and continues to press for Carey's complete removal from the union. Meanwhile, Mansfield is seeking a postponement of the election to allow more time to investigate Hoffa's campaign finances. Conboy, who works along side Mansfield, is asking for more resources from the FBI to conduct the investigation.

Carey's supporters praised the move, hoping that Hoffa too would be disqualified. "Let's hope that they do the same kind of investigation, from congressional committees to the FBI ... that has been done on Carey," said Ken Paff, a Carey supporter and leader of Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

Meanwhile, a federal grand jury in Manhattan is considering indicting the union president for taking part "in a conspiracy to divert union money from the Teamsters' treasury," according to the *New York Times*. Gere Nash, who was Carey's campaign manager, and two of his consultants have pleaded guilty to conspiring to raise illegal funds.

Teamsters officials acquiesced to the establishment of financial control over the

union. A similar auditor was installed with the consent decree in 1989, but was annulled after Carey was first elected union president in 1991. Under the new agreement, the union cannot spend any money, transfer any property, or enter into any contract other than a collective bargaining agreement without first notifying the monitor and receiving his express approval. The one exception is for regular payments like rent and salaries.

The agreement also grants the government monitor "unrestricted access to all I.B.T. books, records and offices," and states that "unreasonable failure to cooperate" can lead to being expelled from the union. Earlier in November, Mansfield ordered that the mailing of the December issue of the union's magazine, *The Teamster*, be postponed. She claimed that distributing the magazine would be misleading, since it reported on the elections she is attempting to have suspended pending the investigation of Hoffa.

'Government is violating our rights'

In interviews with Teamsters around the country, there is a lot of discussion about the issues. "We don't see this as a good situation," said Phillips, the UPS driver in Chicago. "The government is violating our right to control our union. We should not give up our right to oversee our finances or the running of our union. This handcuffs us."

At the recent convention of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union in Cleveland, Frank Villa from Local 630 in Los Angeles said he thought the government's actions would create more obstacles for the labor movement. "The government is trying to slow us down after the UPS strike," he said.

Villa talked about recent battles by labor in California, including the victorious BART transit strike in San Francisco. "Business didn't want a repeat of the UPS strike," he said. Villa said it was a mistake in the first place to let the government intervene in the union. "But corruption gave the government the opportunity to intervene."

Reginald Nelson, a part-time UPS worker with seven years' seniority in Atlanta and a member of Teamsters Local 528, commented, "Maybe the government wasn't neutral, as they say they were, during our strike." Nelson said that company-employee relations at UPS are "bad. UPS is still subcontracting work out. They cut the combination jobs and made more part-time jobs."

Houston Lampkin, also a UPS worker and member of Local 528, said the provisions in the new contract haven't been implemented. "What's with the pay raise we were supposed to get? Workers were really banking on getting that raise by now," he said. "Where are the extra hours for part-timers like myself? We were supposed to go from three to four work days. There are lots of angry workers here."

"It's a scary thought when you let someone else run your house. It means you're not in control," said Juan Campos, a UPS driver and member of Local 705 in Chicago.

Right now the Teamsters are in the middle of negotiations with Anheuser-Busch, which employs some 8,000 union members at a dozen breweries in the United States. Negotiations will also be getting under way soon by some 100,000 long-haul Teamster drivers. "We have a lot of things we want to do to make a bigger and stronger union," Phillips said. "We have new members who have joined the union since we won against UPS. We have workers who come to our union hall and want the Teamsters to organize them." He said Federal Express workers and workers at Overnite Transportation want to join the union. But when they read all the negative publicity, they "pull back," he said. "I believe this is what the government wants."

Danny Booher and Frank Forrestal are members of United Transportation Union Local 1449. Dan Fein in Atlanta, Cappy Kidd in Chicago, and Tony Prince in Cleveland contributed to this article.

— CALENDAR —

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Pathfinder Bookstore Holiday Open House. Special sales, Cuban video interview with Harry Villegas, author of *Pombo: A Man of Che's 'guerrilla'*. Refreshments. Sat., Dec. 6, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. 2490 University Ave. W. For more information, call (612) 644-6325.

Minneapolis

Victory Celebration and Update on Free Speech Fight to Sell Socialist Literature. Fri., Dec. 12, 7 p.m. Walker Community Church, Centennial Hall, 3104 16th Ave S. Sponsored by the Committee to Defend Free Speech. For more information, call (612) 827-7708.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Che Guevara and the Challenge of the Congo. Guest Speaker: Elombe Brath, chairman, Patrice Lumumba Coalition. Sat., Nov. 29, 7 p.m. Casa de las Americas, 104 West 14th St. (near 6th Ave.) For more information call (212) 675-2584.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

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

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Two Discussion Classes on 'Europe and America' by Leon Trotsky. Wed., Dec. 3, 7 p.m. and Wed., Dec. 10, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Tel: (09) 379-3075.

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Lie syndrome — The British government conceded that the Tory minister of defense had lied to Parliament about the massive British use of a toxic pesticide during the



Harry Ring

Gulf War. The chemical may have contributed to the Gulf War syndrome illness suffered by at least 1,300 British veterans of the war.

The sane society — Scientists

report that a 10-year Arctic study adds new evidence that pollution plays a significant role in global warming. And Washington says that over the next 12 years, greenhouse gas emissions will increase nearly 25 percent more than expected. Meanwhile, a report said "complex efforts" to reach an international agreement on what to do are deadlocked.

'Seal of Approval' = \$ — For a fee, doctors can apply to the American Medical Ass'n for a seal of approval which will assertedly confirm they have proper credentials, run their offices properly and meet "ethical standards." Tougher standards, an AMA official explains,

would discourage doctors from getting with the program.

Cooks quicker — Three major British supermarket chains were among retailers found to be marketing inaccurately labeled pork. Some labels understated the amount of water added, others neglected to mention water had been added. The agriculture minister told an industry conference he was pleased that "most manufacturers" label their products properly.

Oh, and by the way — "Despite higher standards of hygiene in Britain, there are now 100,000 cases of food poisoning, resulting in 200 deaths, notified each year. This compares with 17,000 cases and 30

deaths in 1982." — The Times, London.

Decaf costs extra? — We confess being oblivious to the fact that you can now purchase caffeinated bottled water. But not surprised. Over the years, we've quaffed a good number of cups of restaurant coffee which tasted like caffeinated dish water.

Ever loyal — As a fund-raiser, the trustees of North Carolina's Clemson University are considering converting a hillside overlooking the football stadium into a burial spot for alumni who love the Clemson Tigers. Cubicles for cremated remains would assure a great view of home games. Starting price,

at least \$5,000.

Pew potatoes — Harold Koenig director of the Duke University Center for the Study of Religion/Spirituality and Health, led a study of 1,700 senior citizens. He reports that steady church-goers have healthier immune systems. He also notes that churchgoers tend to be more obese and the obese are more depressed — unless they go to church. Something about doing so, he muses, helps to overcome the effects of a poor diet.

Thought for the week — "To me it's kind of spooky." — Harold Koenig, director of the study of spirituality, obesity, and the immune system.

War against Iraq accelerated world instability

Below we reprint excerpts from "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq" by Jack Barnes. The entire article, based on a talk given in April 1991, appears in issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. The magazine is copyright © by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp. and reprinted by permission. Subheading is by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

The Bush administration presents the war against Iraq as the first triumph of the "new world order." It points to the fact that Moscow not only gave public backing to the U.S. war drive, but also voted for every U.S.-ini-

BOOK OF THE WEEK

tiated motion in the United Nations Security Council, right down to the April 2 resolution rubber-stamping Washington's stranglehold cease-fire conditions that in practice suspend Iraqi sovereignty. This enabled the U.S. rulers to use the UN as a fig leaf in a more brazen manner than any time since the opening of the 1950s during its war against Korea.

Washington succeeded in gaining political and diplomatic cover for each new stage of its aggression in the Gulf with the aid of all four of the Security Council's other members with veto powers: Britain, China, France, and the Soviet Union. Enlisting the collaboration of the Stalinist regimes of the Soviet and Chinese workers' states was decisive to Washington's ability to present the devastating assault on the people of Iraq as if it flowed from a mandate of an "international community."

Only the government of Cuba — currently one of ten governments serving a two-year rotating stint on the Security Council — is using its position in the UN to speak out consistently against Washington's right to intervene in the Arab-Persian Gulf, under any circumstances or with whatever rationalization. Cuba exposed the successes of Washington and its allies in using this body as cover to justify its murderous course. The

record of much of that effort by the Cuban government is presented in the book published by Pathfinder in October 1990 entitled *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations*, which contains speeches and letters by Cuba's deputy foreign minister and chief UN representative Ricardo Alarcón and by President Fidel Castro. Later speeches by Alarcón and other Cuban representatives were run in the *Militant* newsweekly.

The truth is that Washington's Gulf war and its outcome did not open up a new world order of stability and UN-overseen harmony. Instead, it was the first war since the close of World War II that grew primarily out of the intensified competition and accelerating instability of the crises-ridden old imperialist world order. It is the increasing internal strains within this declining order that drove Washington to launch its murderous military adventure. The irremediable social and political conflicts, and consequent instability, that existed before the Gulf war and that underlay it have all been exacerbated:

- between imperialism and the toilers of the Middle East and elsewhere in the semicolonial world;
- among the rival imperialist powers;
- between the various imperialist states and the oppressed nations;
- between exploiters and exploited within these oppressed countries;
- between the toilers and the bourgeoisified leaderships who speak in their name and claim to represent their interests;
- among the bourgeois states of the Middle East and other oppressed nations;
- between Washington and the governments of the deformed and degenerated workers' states, first and foremost, the Soviet Union;
- between the U.S. imperialist rulers and the two workers' states that pose the biggest problems for them, North Korea and Cuba; and
- between Washington and the revolutionary government and communist leadership right on U.S. imperialism's very doorstep in the Americas — that of Cuba.

The war demonstrated once again that there is no "international community" under the aegis of world capitalism. Most importantly, it has driven home the fact that there *can be* a world community — if the exploited and oppressed worldwide remove the exploiters and oppressors, the war makers, from power...

Conflict between imperialist rivals

The assault against Iraq was the first of Washington's wars since World War II in which it sought to use its military might to deal blows, indirect but palpable, to U.S. imperialism's rivals, especially in Bonn, Tokyo, and Paris. The Gulf war exacerbated the conflicts and divisions between Washington and its imperialist competitors, as well as between these rival powers themselves. While we know these sharpening conflicts already existed (every working person has been deluged by protectionist propaganda from the U.S. government, bourgeois politicians, trade union bureaucrats, and their radical hangers-on), the war brought them to the surface with greater force and accelerated them to a degree not seen in world politics for some time....



Washington's war moves provoke more crises for imperialism in the Middle East. Above, Palestinian students in the West Bank protest Israeli regime in April 1997.

No power other than Washington could have transported and put in place the mammoth order of battle necessary to carry a war to Iraq. While waged behind the facade of a broad "international coalition," the war was a U.S. government operation, with London's enthusiastic support and with Paris being forced to join in out of weakness. Bonn and Tokyo — still limited in their use of strategic military power abroad flowing from their defeat in World War II — took no part in the combat at all.

Through the initiation, organization, domination, and execution of this war effort, U.S. imperialism strengthened its control over Gulf oil reserves, gaining additional leverage over its rivals in Bonn, Tokyo, and Paris in the competition for world markets for commodities and capital. By throwing the biggest military forces of any other im-

perialist power behind Washington's war effort, the rulers in London successfully sought to guarantee themselves a privileged junior position alongside U.S. finance capital in this region, which was once largely a British protectorate but had been penetrated more and more by French trade, aid, and loans. The commitment of combat forces abroad by the Canadian ruling class for the first time since the Korean War, and Ottawa's increasingly open and unqualified backing of Washington's foreign policy moves, indicate the pressure to grab more firmly onto the skirt of U.S. imperialism. The regime in New Zealand did the same, easing conflicts with Washington that have grown up there over port visits by U.S. ships armed with nuclear weapons. The Australian ruling class, as usual, made sure it was represented in Washington's armed entourage as well.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

December 8, 1972

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 22 — Today the California Supreme Court declared key sections of the therapeutic abortion law of 1967 unconstitutional.

The decision means that for the first time in California women have the right to choose for themselves whether to have an abortion — a real victory for women.

However, the court left standing in the law certain restrictions, whose removal will require further efforts by the abortion rights movement. These restrictions include a 20-week time limit and the requirement that an abortion be performed in an accredited hospital by a licensed doctor.

Because parts of the law were ruled unconstitutional on the grounds of vagueness, it is possible that antiabortion forces will try to introduce a new restrictive bill into the California legislature — a bill that would be less vague but would add restrictions to the law. The recent Gallup poll shows that the public favors legal abortion by 64 percent nationally with a figure of 73 percent in the West.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

December 8, 1947

TOLEDO, Nov. 26 — A four-day strike has brought a smashing victory AFL dairy workers here. The final settlement provides for wage adjustments based upon a cost-of-living index to be made every three months. In addition to a 15c an hour increase effective immediately.

The brief strike was marked by an attempt by the dairy owners to create a critical situation on a city wide basis. Only the workers in one dairy actually went on strike.

The other six Toledo dairies thereupon immediately locked out their workers thereby creating a serious milk shortage. Undoubtedly they hoped to provoke a crisis and invite the Taft-Hartley NLRB into the picture.

However, the employer-created shortage of milk, the usual crocodile tears of public officials weeping over the poor kids and so on, had no effect on the strikers. They rejected successive company offers of 5c, 6 1/2c, 7 1/2c, and 12 1/2c and finally won 15c plus the important cost-of-living adjustment provision.

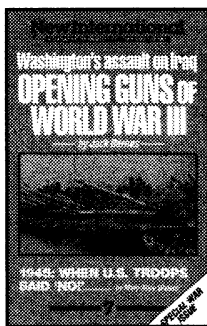
New International no. 7

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No to Washington's war moves

U.S. hands off Iraq! Lift the embargo and get all the "inspectors" out of the country! End the U-2 spy flights and the "no-fly" zones that violate the country's sovereign air space!

That's what all young people, workers, and farmers — anyone opposed to the imperial use of Washington's economic and military might to subjugate oppressed nations and fatten the profits of U.S. employers — needs to demand through protests in the streets, speak outs, and forums.

The U.S. government broke its teeth during the 1990–91 war against Iraq. It was unable to overthrow the regime in Baghdad and replace it with a protectorate in order to increase its domination in the region and its control over Iraqi oil. The coalition Washington patched together seven years ago has been shattered, as the recent events show, because interimperialist competition has become more the order of the day in a capitalist world marked by banking crises, political instability, and the threat of a deflationary collapse.

The Clinton administration was defeated in its attempt in mid-November to start a war against Iraq. But the U.S. war drive was set back because of the relationship of forces among the imperialist powers, not as a result of an upsurge in resistance by the toilers in the Mideast or in the United States. That means that the fuse that can ignite another attempt at a devastating military bombing against the Iraqi people hasn't gotten any longer.

Weakened on a number of fronts, the Clinton adminis-

tration is in fact more likely to lash out and unleash its weaponry, to which the "five pounds of anthrax" pales in comparison. That is exactly what war secretary William Cohen is hammering on when he demands the "right" for U.S. agents to go anywhere they please on Iraqi soil. The fact that the immediate threat of a military strike has been averted for the moment should not fool class-conscious workers and rebel-minded youth into letting their guard down.

At the same time, working people need to be vigilant against being drawn toward the "America First" campaigns of the ultrarightists who beat the war drums by advocating "American unilateralism," as Patrick Buchanan just did. Supporting the protectionist demands of defending "American" or "Canadian" jobs pushed by the trade union officialdom through their campaigns against APEC, NAFTA, or fast track legislation is one way to get drawn into bourgeois patriotism and the war drive.

These labor tops have increasingly converged with ultrarightists of the Buchanan type in defense of "the nation" and "our country." In actions opposing these trade pacts throughout North America, called by labor tops and others, slogans in defense of "American" or "Canadian" jobs have dominated the scene along with openly rightist demands.

Instead of joining such actions, class-conscious workers need to advocate international working class solidarity and organize actions demanding "Stop the war drive against Iraq now!"

U.S. threats against Iraq

Continued from Page 7

ernment received promises from Moscow that it would be allowed to increase its sales of oil to \$3 billion every six months, up from \$2 billion. This ceiling is imposed under the seven-year-old UN sanctions on Iraq, engineered by Washington. A large portion of the export revenues from oil must go to pay "war reparations," and the rest is limited to buying food and medicines. The draconian UN embargo has caused deaths from starvation and malnutrition to more than half a million Iraqi people. Lifting the sanctions is supposedly conditional on certification by the UN arms inspectors that Baghdad no longer possesses "weapons of mass destruction."

Since the UN team restarted inspections November 22, the Clinton administration has once again been using the inspectors to keep the embargo intact and possibly cause a new provocation that could lead to a U.S. military strike. Washington is now demanding that the Iraqi government allow the UN team to enter presidential compounds and other sites that Baghdad has declared off limits. On November 25 Cohen claimed the Iraqi government "continues to evade and deceive" the inspectors and threatened tighter sanctions and military strikes.

The massive U.S. armada assembled in the Persian Gulf remains poised to act. It now includes two aircraft carriers, with about 50 warplanes each, and a dozen ships capable of firing cruise missiles deep into Iraq. In addition, 20,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the region.

At the same time, Moscow and Paris are trying to find ways to ease the sanctions. Baghdad owes the Russian government large debts, which it could only repay with increased oil revenues. And the French government is seeking more investments in Iraq and Iran, in defiance of U.S. policy and in pursuit of the interests of French capitalists.

'American unilateralism'

The setback the Clinton administration suffered gave a boost to the ultranationalism of incipient fascist forces in the United States. "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," wrote ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan in a syndicated column published November 19.

"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 U.N.) would police the planet, arresting outlaws and renegades — is dead," he said.

"The New World Order evanesces as the old world of nation-states reappears. Multilateralism has been discredited: a new era of American unilateralism is upon us."

In the same column, Buchanan described two other recent developments that show the weakening of the Clinton administration, saying, "I believe this fall may rank in historic significance in our time second only to the fall of 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down."

One was the currency and financial crisis sweeping southeast Asia and Japan. Buchanan opposed the "bail-outs" of these countries by the IMF and the World Bank, promoting resentment by "U.S. taxpayers" against the bankers. In this and other recent columns Buchanan has been increasingly using the names of the investment bank Goldman Sachs and U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin — clearly Jewish names — to describe these "banking elites."

The other development was the defeat of "fast track" trade legislation that Clinton pushed in U.S. Congress but had to withdraw when it became apparent that he did not have enough votes to win passage. "Defeat of fast track is the first triumph of a blazing new nationalism," he said. "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 nationalist will be at hand."

S. Korea 'bail out'

Continued from front page

about the \$265 billion in loans and bank deposits they have extended to various countries in the region. Capitalist investors in Japan held \$24.3 billion in Korean bank debt last year, estimated to be the second largest amount after Europe. Seoul's finance minister acknowledged November 20 that Japanese banks have halted credit to south Korea. A third of south Korea's \$70 billion in short term foreign debt is due to be paid by the end of the year, while its foreign reserves have reportedly dwindled from \$30.5 billion to \$20 billion. The south Korean won has dropped by 20 percent against the dollar this year, making the loans even more expensive to repay.

Meanwhile, at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vancouver, British Columbia, U.S. president William Clinton pressed the governments in Asia to take the "painful steps" demanded by IMF officials. He held up the IMF's "action plan" as a program "to meet the financial challenges that we all face in Asia." Clinton said regimes in Southeast Asia are "doing the right thing in committing to take the right steps ... with the IMF taking the lead for the international community."

YS forums boost fund drive

BY SARAH KATZ

CHICAGO—A November 22 dinner and YS forum put the Young Socialists here on course to go over its fund drive goal. The Chicago chapter came out of the event with over \$900 in pledges and donations, towards its goal of \$700.

The weekly Militant Labor Forum turned over its space for the event. Mick McDonald, a leader of the YS in Canada and a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 5338, spoke on "The Struggle for Quebec Independence and the Socialist Revolution in Canada; Report from the founding convention of the YS in Canada."

McDonald started off his talk by pointing to some of the most recent examples of workers fighting back, including the strike that week of 45,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal workers. He and other YS members had been able to join the 126,000 teachers across Ontario picketing against education cuts.

The struggle of Quebecois for their independence was a major part of the forum, as it was during the convention. Quebecois are an oppressed nationality within Canada who face discrimination in education, health, and employment based on the language they speak, French. The YS, McDonald stated, supports this important na-

tional struggle because it "is a fight for justice and equality and part of the fight for a workers and farmers government in Canada. This fight mobilizes tens of thousands of working people in Quebec against the Canadian state."

Tami Peterson, the local fund drive director, explained that the YS does not accept money from any foundation or capitalist enterprise. "The funds we raise from working people and youth are used to participate in political events not only in the United States but around the world," said Peterson. She explained how the YS joins struggles such as fights against police brutality, solidarity with striking workers, and the fight for immigrant rights. Forum attendees made pledges and gave donations totaling \$482.

Hiruy Abdu, a student from Ethiopia, attended the event "to know more about this unique national question." He was able to speak with McDonald for a while after the forum.

The YS fund drive in Philadelphia got off to a great start the same day, with a YS forum on "Revolutionary Leadership for the 21st Century to Combat Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." After this successful event, the Philadelphia YS decided to raise its fund drive goal from \$100 to \$250. More than 30 people came to the forum. The guest speakers were Brock Satter, trade unionist and a leader of the Young Socialists from Newark; Tom Caison, from the Ghetto Liberation Party; and Sha-rell Wilson. Some of the issues discussed after their presentations were police brutality, unemployment, affirmative action, and abortion rights.

Satter spoke about the weakening of imperialism, citing high unemployment rates in industrialized nations, the currency crisis in Asia, and Washington's isolation in its recent war drive against Iraq.

Caison said the United States has dominated and thereby influenced the culture and politics of other nations. Therefore it has become the "American empire," which he said was the "enemy of humanity," because it was the major cause of famine and other social ills around the world. According to him, it is necessary to organize and educate the people in the communities.

Sha-rell Wilson briefly spoke about sexism and chauvinism as issues that must be dealt with while organizing a revolutionary leadership. She talked about the increasing mechanization of labor and its affect on employment, and also recited a friend's poem for the women of today.

People coming to the forum had a chance for more discussion at a dinner beforehand that raised \$163. Another \$106 was collected from contributions and a raffle. A film on the life of Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban revolution, was also part of the evening events.

Contributions towards the YS fund drive should be sent to 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave. #478, Chicago, IL 60622.

Sarah Katz is a member of the United Transportation Union Local 1494; Karan Jain in Philadelphia contributed to this article.

Young Socialist Fund Drive November 7– December 19			
CITY	GOALS	PAID	%
New York	500	167	33%
Los Angeles	350	73	21%
Chicago	700	140	20%
Twin Cities, MN	300	35	12%
Pittsburgh	450	50	11%
Atlanta	165		0%
Des Moines	250		0%
Houston	300		0%
Miami	200		0%
Newark	500		0%
Philadelphia*	250		0%
Seattle	500		0%
Washington, DC	150		0%
TOTAL	4,615	465	11%
Should be	4,400	1452	33%
* raised goal			

Chicago activists rally against cop brutality

BY JOHN STUDER AND SHELTON McCRAINEY

CHICAGO — "We have to continue marching until justice comes in our community," Rev. Paul Jakes told more than 200 protesters overflowing the Old St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Chicago's westside Black community November 15.

This was the second large rally at the church since two Chicago cops beat Jeremiah Mearday, an 18-year-old Black youth, on September 26 while he was on the way to the drug store to buy asthma medicine. Mearday's jaw was broken by blows from a large metal police flashlight.

The rallies follow a series of revelations and protests highlighting the killings of Jorge Guillen and Joseph Gould by Chicago cops, and attacks against numerous others. These actions have sparked a public debate over police brutality, especially after a public mobilization by the cops in defense of their reign of terror on the streets.

On November 7 some 75 - 100 cops, many in uniform and armed, jammed the courtroom when Mearday appeared to answer charges concocted by the police in an effort to justify beating him. This cop mobilization, organized by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), produced cries of outrage from opponents of cop violence, as well as from bourgeois political figures and the local news media.

The Chicago *Sun-Times* editorialized November 11 that the "silent presence of so many police officers was perceived by many as an act of intimidation."

At the church rally, a number of speakers commented on the FOP's claim to be a part of the trade union movement. Standish Willis, a prominent Black attorney, lawyer for many victims of police violence, and former trade unionist while a bus driver for the Chicago transit system, told the rally that the cops are "a military power occupying our community."

"The FOP is not a union," he added, "but a brotherhood of racist white men and women."

Following the public outcry and protests, Matthew Theil and James Comito Jr., the cops who brutalized Mearday, have been suspended from duty by the police department. The FOP has protested the suspensions and claimed that their mobilization in the courtroom was a way to show support for the two cops.

In addition to the suspensions, Theil and Comito are under investigation for charges by both the States' Attorney's office and the federal Justice Department.

Speaking at the church rally, Lawrence

Kennon, another prominent Black attorney, noted that all too often cases of cop violence become known by name of the victim.

"This is called the Mearday case, like that case in New York is called the Louima case," Kennon said. "The fact is we've got to start getting out the names of the cops who commit these crimes, because that is what they are — criminals. This should be known as the case of the criminals Comito and Theil."

"Everybody knows these cops around here," Mearday's father, Sonny Lee Carter, told the *Militant*. "They are known for their brutality."

The demonstrations against the cop beating of Mearday, on top of the publicity about other cop beatings and murders, as well as the cop mobilizations protesting the suspension of Comito and Theil, led the police chief, Matt Rodriguez, to announce November 14 that he was resigning December 1.

Mearday's next court hearing is scheduled for December 3 at 1340 S. Michigan. Rev. Jakes urged those at the church rally to mobilize to demonstrate outside the courthouse. "We will gather at 8 a.m. at the corner of Michigan and Roosevelt and march to show our support for Jeremiah," Jakes said.

Jakes then asked every group represented in the audience who would get people to attend the march to identify themselves. Dozens stood up, yelling out the name of their organization. Groups included a number of Black community democratic party precinct organizations, local Black politicians, com-

Socialist candidate addresses students in Washington, D.C.



Militant

Socialist Workers candidate Mary Martin spoke to about 100 people at a candidates forum at Howard University on November 17. All four candidates on the ballot for the D.C. City Council at-large post participated, as well as two write-in candidates. Martin's campaign calls for statehood for Washington, D.C. and a revolutionary struggle for a workers and farmers government.

munity groups, Latino groups like Centro sin Fronteras, the police watchdog organization Citizens Alert, churches, and union groups, including the Teamsters and the Afro-Ameri-

can Firemen's Organization.

John Studer is a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 1011.

200 protest cop violence in Vancouver

BY XOCHITL LEAL

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — "Don't beat me 'cause I'm Latino," stated placards carried by some of the 200 protesters here November 8. Chanting "Hey Hey, Ho Ho, racist cops have got to go!" participants marched to the local police station in the Downtown Eastside.

The march was called in response to police brutality in the area. "The public has to respond to this racist targeting of Latin Americans as drug dealers and the issue of police violence in this community," stated Tara Scurr, a member of the Christian Task Force, who spoke at the rally.

Hugo Hernández, who is Guatemalan, was assaulted by police on October 27. As Hernández described the incident at a community meeting a few days later, he had just left a club in the Downtown Eastside, when two men approached him for a cigarette and

some spare change. As he reached into his pocket, two police cars drove up with their lights flashing. They grabbed him by the throat, pushed him up against a wall, and told him to open his mouth. They punched him in the stomach, knocked him to the ground, and kicked him from all sides.

In response to the demonstration, cops are trying to justify their brutality by claiming Hernández is a drug dealer. "Drugs are not the issue here," said Hernández's lawyer, Phil Rankin. "He's not being charged with anything. He shouldn't have been beaten."

According to Ingrid Cruz of Store Front Orientation Services (SOS, a drop-in center for refugee claimants), police have been stopping Latinos in the Downtown Eastside and demanding to see their papers. In some instances, she said, the police have written "Drug Dealer" on the person's documents. These documents are the only identification

refugee claimants possess and must be presented to the immigration refugee boards for their hearings.

Xochitl Leal is a member of the Vancouver chapter of the Young Socialists.

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LETTERS

Protectionist rally

The November 10 issue of the *Militant* ran a piece as part of its "On the Picket Line" feature that seems to me misplaced.

"New Zealand bosses stage protectionist rally" describes a gathering organized by the Businessmen's Association to defend protective tariffs on imported cars.

The article reports on an event of interest to working people: a group of bosses organized to garner support for their interests and hoodwinked some workers into seeing a false commonality of interests therein.

But this occurrence was not an example of resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions — the only kind of coverage one should find in a "Picket Line" column.

Tamar Rosenfeld
Newark, New Jersey

Anti-China propaganda

I was somewhat confused by an article titled "1,000 attend anti-China rally in Washington, D.C." that appeared in the November 17 issue of the *Militant*.

The article made absolutely no attempt to give a socialist view of

the issue. The article claimed that the rally had a "clearly rightist focus to it," and then stated that the rally was sponsored by the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Center for Human Rights, the AFL-CIO, Amnesty International, Committee to Protect Journalists, and the Sierra club, none of which can be labeled rightist.

Also, I was quite bothered by the uncritical fashion in which the article dealt with comments made by speakers at the rally, and no mention was made of the fact that there have been some important gains made by the Chinese people since the 1949 revolution against an anti-feudal system.

John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, stated that the Chinese government denies its people "the right to form unions." What type of unions is he referring to? And how about the countless people in this country who are denied the right to form unions and have their unions assaulted by corporate America?

He [Sweeney] also claimed that China has "the largest system of forced labor camps on earth." Is this true?

But let us not mention the growing prison-industrial complex in this country. And the very same people who criticize China want prison la-

bor here!

Sen. Paul Wellstone, a Democrat from Minnesota, demanded that "the president of China lead his country for human rights and democracy." This, of course, means toward full blown capitalism, which would be disastrous for China, a nation of 1.4 billion people. Of course, China has been moving in this direction, but China is still not a capitalist country. Do not Trotskyists defend the gains of the Chinese revolution?

Millionaire actor Richard Gere spoke at the rally for the "1.2 billion Chinese people who have no voice." But Gere has absolutely no understanding of history. Does he even have a clue as to what conditions were like in China for peasants, women, etc., prior to the 1949 revolution? Shouldn't a socialist paper comment on Gere's arrogant ignorance?

Finally, I have always been suspicious of this "Free Tibet Movement." Was Tibet free under the rule of the Dalai Lama? I think that this anti-China campaign, which is coming from every direction stinks of a Cold War-like propaganda stunt. It smells of a "red menace" scare.

Just what is this paper's objective view on China today? Do you support this anti-China campaign?

Your article left me wondering.

Nick Brisini
Loretto, Pennsylvania

From readers behind bars:

No wages for prison labor

I am a political prisoner and "Black nationalist" presently confined in the Texas prison system. Here in Texas, prisoners are given good time in lieu of wages for labor, which I strongly oppose. However, I have been in the system for eight calendar years and two months, and will soon discharge a 10-year sentence.

I am requesting a complimentary subscription of your publication due to my not having any form of income. In return I will write a short report concerning the first "Maximum Security Segregation" facility in the state, which opened during the month of June, 1997.

A prisoner
Huntsville, Texas

Send my son a sub

I am a prisoner in the federal system. A while back you were kind enough to send me a free subscription which I enjoyed very much. I would now like to ask you to send my son, who is in the state system, a free trial subscription. I used to send him articles from your newspaper and he found them enlightening.

A prisoner
New Haven, Connecticut

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.

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Striking meat-packers in Canada defy plant shutdown, win support

BY SUSAN BERMAN
AND ROBERT SIMMS

BURLINGTON, Ontario — "I've worked here 31 years. We built this place and now they treat us like animals. We have to fight him [Maple Leaf Foods owner Wallace McCain]." This is how Bill Nastos explained the strike of 900 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1227 here against the Maple Leaf Food company's concession drive.

Just as Burlington workers entered the second week of their strike, Maple Leaf owners announced they were making arrangements to remove production equipment from their Edmonton, Alberta, plant in preparation for its shutdown. Nine hundred UFCW members in Edmonton walked off the job November 17 in a related contract dispute. In doing so, the unionists defied the company's threat to close the plant if a strike occurred.

Patrick Jones, vice-president of the Maple Leaf Meats division, blasted the UFCW union for the Edmonton strike: "They have convinced people to strike and give up their jobs to show solidarity for people in Burlington 3,000 miles away who make more than they do," he declared. "This is unbelievably irresponsible."

The company had already announced plans to close the 91-year-old Edmonton plant in the next two years and build a bigger modern facility somewhere in the western Canadian provinces. The bosses offered a tiny pay increase to Edmonton workers, who have had a wage freeze the past three years. Instead, the UFCW members voted to strike.

Strikers on the Burlington picket line say they refuse to accept the concessions the company is demanding, including wage cuts of up to Can\$9 per hour (Can\$1 = US\$0.70). Currently wages range from Can\$16.58 to \$21.38 per hour for senior workers. Workers start at around Can\$13 an hour and take 30 months to make full rate.

In addition, the employer wants to cut holidays and benefits, increase management's flexibility to organize work, and limit bathroom time to 20 minutes per week. Workers' pay would be docked for any additional time taken. Bathroom monitoring has already been in place in the Edmonton plant.

The first week of the strike, workers did daily picket duty. Hundreds massed on the picket lines, standing around flaming barrels. Waitresses from a nearby coffee shop pitched in their tip money early in the strike to buy donuts and coffee for pickets.

The union set up a coffee trailer with a book for guests to sign. In the first week



Hundreds of striking meat-packers march to closed Maple Leaf plant in Edmonton November 22. Postal workers, also on strike (see article below), joined the labor action in solidarity.

they had Canadian Auto Workers members from GM, Ford, and Chrysler; steelworkers; and teachers. Many strikers noted the visit from teachers, coming on the heels of Ontario teachers' two-week strike against government cuts to education.

Maple Leaf, controlled by Wallace McCain and his two sons since 1995, is one of Canada's largest food companies. The McCains are among Canada's richest families. The McCains acquired Burns Foods meat-packing business last year, making

them major players in pork. They are now trying to buy competitor Schneider Corp.

Canadian companies sell Can\$5.8 billion worth of pork a year. In order to move into semicolonial markets, especially in Asia, and compete with their U.S. rivals, Canadian hog processors are on a campaign to shut outdated plants and drive down wages, benefits, and working conditions. Closing the Edmonton plant is part of this plan. The McCains have hired reputed union-buster Nick Sangalais of Minneapolis to lead the

Burlington negotiations.

According to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, while Burlington workers' average wage and benefits total Can\$25.08 per hour, U.S. workers only average Can\$16.50. "Burlington is the highest-cost collective agreement we have in the company and the most sensitive to North American competition," claimed Jones.

Thirteen U.S. plants each have more than double the capacity of the Burlington plant, Canada's largest operation.

The competitive edge of U.S. companies was wrenched from packing-house workers during the 1980s. By 1985 the bosses had slashed average wages from US\$10.69 per hour to \$8.24 and eliminated 24,000 jobs. Injury rates skyrocketed.

In the mid-1980s, a new wave of strikes in both Canada and the United States fought further concessions. Two of the biggest battles were the Hormel strike in Minnesota in 1985-86 and the Gainers strike (now Maple Leaf Foods) in Edmonton in 1986.

These are the conditions that set the scene for the current fight. Like their U.S. counterparts, Maple Leaf workers face a killing pace of work in the plants. "I have to bone a centerbone ham in 14 seconds and it has to be clean. No meat left on it," Belony Joachim told the *Militant*.

According to one worker, several years ago the Burlington plant processed 4,000 hogs a shift. Today, with a slightly smaller workforce, they process 7,000.

Susan Berman is a member of the United Steelworkers Local 5338. Katy LeRougetel contributed to this article.

45,000 postal workers walk out across Canada, face gov't threat to intervene

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — Some 45,000 postal workers went on strike across Canada November 19. The confrontation between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has been building for some time. The government used all kinds of tactics to delay the workers having the legal right to strike, which they finally gained November 17.

On November 24 around 2,000 postal workers demonstrated in front of parliament in Ottawa against the threat of back-to-work legislation. In the face of the determination

of the workers to defend their right to strike, the government retreated and appointed a mediator.

One of the CUPW's main demands is that 1,500 part-time jobs become full-time. Of the 45,000 postal workers only 27,000 have full-time jobs. Of the remaining 18,000, about half are part-time and the rest are casuals who work during the Christmas rush. Clément Godbout, the president of the Quebec Federation of Labor, made the link between the fight of the postal workers and the strike against United Parcel Services in September: "For around six months, there has been something happening in the unions, groundwork to win back permanent employment everywhere in North America."

In fact, Canada Post is trying to cut jobs by forcing letter carriers to deliver more mail and not replacing workers who quit or retire. The union says this will lead to the loss of 4,000 full-time jobs. Referring to previous cuts on the railways, Marc Brault, a postal clerk on strike in Montreal told the *Militant*, "What they did with the railways, they've been trying a long time to do to us. Without doing this they can't privatize."

Luigi Perrotta, also a postal clerk, added, "Every week, there are people who retire but they don't hire new people."

Postal workers are demanding a pay raise of 8.6 percent in an 18-month contract, while the company is offering 3 percent over two years. The workers are trying to make up for income they have lost over the years. Canada Post made a profit of \$112.5 million over the last year.

Throughout the negotiations which have been going on for months, postal workers

have looked for ways to put pressure on the Post Office. In early October hundreds of letter carriers in Quebec wore jeans as a form of protest. Some 650 postal workers in Halifax walked out for two days beginning October 2, after management suspended a worker who commented on the high salaries of management. Workers at postal stations across the country began to walk off the job November 19 even before the strike was officially called. Canada Post has made no attempt to maintain work through hiring scabs. Postal workers had defeated such an attempt during their previous strike in 1991.

Canada Post has responded aggressively. Workers wearing jeans in October were suspended for up to six days. On November 19, the chief union negotiator, Philippe Arbour, was shoved to the ground by Jean Lafleur, the chief negotiator for the post office. Lafleur was forced to resign and had to apologize.

The big-business media are working overtime to garner support for back-to-work legislation. Day after day they report on workers losing their jobs because of the strike and talk about small businesses and charities that have been inconvenienced. So far these efforts have not undermined support for the strike.

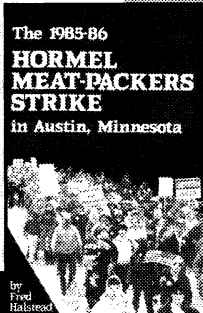
The postal workers have received support from other unions. Canadian Auto Workers officials have offered a \$5 million line of credit and encouraged CAW members to reinforce picket lines if the Post Office tries to use strike breakers.

Joe Young is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 7625.

The 1985-86 Hormel Meat-Packers Strike in Austin, Minnesota

Fred Halstead

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