In Organic Agriculture, Cubans are Leading the Way

by Robert E. Sullivan

Earth Times News Service

HAVANA—The Cuban revolutionary thrust is back in an innocuous-looking, unmarked building in the Miramar suburb of Havana techniques from Fidel Castro’s communist government are training cadre from all over Latin America.

The ideology of the new movement is being exported, along with equipment, to nearby Venezuela, Columbia and Jamaica, other Latin American countries, and this time, as far as Europe. Americans, so far, have been protected by the embargo from the product of the Cuban revolution: clean food.

The food is clean — largely free of chemical fertilizers and poisonous pesticides and herbicides — because since the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba can’t afford them.

And, necessity in this case being the mother of nature, Cuba may be producing the most chemical-free, organic, clean produce in the world. According to the way they tell it, Cubans are getting so good at this organic business that agronomists from all over Latin America come to study it at the Institute for Crop Protection (INISAV) a low profile center housed in a former all over Latin America come to study it at

The institute has developed a line of completely biological herbicides and pesticides marketed throughout the island under the brand name Biasav.

This year Cuba, next the world. Exports of Biasav have begun — not to America of course, but to most of the above countries and others. And in Cuba almost 100,000 small-to-medium sized urban gardens have sprung up to provide an ever increasing percentage of the country’s vegetable needs. One hundred per cent of the produce of these gardens is 100 per cent organic — simply vegetables, no pesticides are allowed inside any city limits. Period. And this comes from the Castro government, which is committed to clean food.

What happened?

Ask any ten Cuban agronomists — they have 140 PhDs in the Agriculture Ministry alone, plus 10,000 graduate agronomists — why has Cuba gone organic and what happened?

Against all odds, tens of individuals (working in groups which changed over time) produced a monthly newspaper for 10 years.

No one was paid a dime for their efforts. The paper supported itself with ads from small businesses and with donations.

Night after night, and weekend after weekend, volunteers met and cranked out a paper. There were far more than the people group who wanted to do a monatly in advance of ten, twenty, thirty hours in producing a monthly radical newspaper. But we did it anyway.

We—and I think I speak for all the myriad volunteers over the years—did it because it needed to be done. We remembered that the world was full of people both suffering needlessly and fighting like hell to change things.

We never sold out, we never forgot our mission, and we never quit trying to do a better job.

However, there came a point at which the people who happened to be the core volunteers, at least two-thirds, were worn out from this start ten years ago, faced a coincidence of major life changes that made volunteering at our former levels of effort impossible.

While some people showed an interest in helping out, the truth is that this publication takes an awful lot of work, and if it is produced in any fashion similar to how it has been produced, it requires a core group of people able to carry on the work each month for a year or so.

For now, without a dramatic and unexpected appearance of very serious and committed volunteers, the print version of this publication will be on hold. (We will be placing new things on our website, but this is because the website costs nothing and placing certain materials on the web takes very little time at all; most of us would prefer a print version, but this doesn’t seem immediately possible.)

What will happen and should happen now is not for me alone to say, of course. Some believe that the paper should now rest, having reached this mark. Others believe a group of volunteers will step up who will continue as well as we have, and the paper will jump back to life. Personally I see this as a decision to be made by the community which produced, supported, and read this paper. Let the discussion begin, then.

Perhaps our tenth year will be one of rebirth. The Prism continued a worthy tradition of radical newspapers. It must reflect the failures and biases of the mainstream media. It must offer content to change groups, providing a forum to report on the forces behind the news. It must provide a forum to report on the forces behind the news. It changed our lives and our thinking. There were many things people may have said about us. We were passionate. We were radical.

But we did it anyway.

A group has formed to begin to address this need. Our vision is of an attractive, readable newspaper a paper that will speak clearly and directly to a diverse community, across lines of race, gender, class and sexual orientation.

The success of the paper will depend on the ability of the community to serve. All those sharing a progressive viewpoint are invited to participate in any and all aspects of the paper. We will continually reach out to the large network of activists, concerned citizens and social change groups, providing a forum to report their work events and concerns.

The newspaper will be guided by the principles of economic justice, ecological responsibility, non-violence, democracy in all aspects of life, support for reproductive rights and respect for the rights, dignity and diversity of all people.

The paper will be independent, run by volunteers, not for profit and available free to the public.

Dedication of This Issue: Valeria Jean Daniels-Paddock

Valeria Jean Daniels-Paddock was assistant principal and counselor at Grey Collegiate Middle School in Chapel Hill. During her 27-year career in Chapel Hill, she helped originate the elementary school guidance program. She earned the Human Rights award and Middle/Junior High Counselor of the Year award of the NC School Counselor Association, and Assistant Principal of the year from both Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (1998) and the NC Association of Educators (2000). She initiated the Character Education program at Culbret which is now being adopted by the other schools in CHCCS.

Her concern was always the children first, and the people around her. She counseled them all. She worked most closely with the most irate parent or the angriest student, and they would invariably leave with a smile, even a laugh.

Two memorials were announced at her funeral, one by the Culbret principal and one by the church pastor. She will be missed. The staff, and husband Dick Paddock, a long-time civil rights activist and Prism volunteer, dedicate this issue to her memory.
Why Beg for Dereg?

Commentary by Dan Gerlach, Budget & Tax Center Director

In an increasingly stressful world, I think we should be entitled to a few certainties. One of those certainties should be that when I turn on the light switch, the light goes on. Another should be that I know about how much my electric bill will be each month. But there is a national trend to deregulate the electric industry. Deregulation means that individuals and businesses could select the company to provide their electricity, while at the moment electric companies have monopolies over specific geographic areas. Under deregulation, electric compa-
ies would compete for your business, hope-
fully resulting in lower prices and better service.

Ha, Isay. Let’s look at California – one of the states that deregulated first. Residential consumers in San Diego are paying two to three times as much in their electric bills. While service during the California heat wave has been erratic, brownouts have been common. Several hundred people, all op-
posed to the new deregulation and its ef-
tests, testified before the utility commis-
sion recently.

In other areas of the country, it has be-
come obvious that some power companies are exercising their discretion as well as their power. Wall Street Journal article reported that the en-
ergy infrastructure is not ready for compe-
tition. Some companies are denied access to the power grid. Others are taking electricity at peak times and replacing it later, jeopard-
dizing supply. Yet others are bidding up prices from small plants, knowing that high

CORRECTION

In your excellent article on Dianna Ortiz (July, 1996), you wrote that she is from Kentucky, whereas she is actually from New Mexico. Thank you for writing articles about hu-
man rights.

Sincerely, Bruce Magnuson (http://www.prop1.org/protest/guatemal/
guat96do.htm)

The Prism is an independent, nonprofit news-
source dedicated to exploring social justice and con-
science approaches to social change. In printing this symposium, we hope to promote critical thinking and encourage people to take a serious look at the foundations of the current political system. The Prism encourages you to think critically about issues of economics, equity, ecological sustainability, personal morality, and support for social justice. We strive for a more equitable and just society for all people.

The Prism is a project of the NC Justice and Community Development Center, http://www.ncjustice.org.

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http://www.prop1.org/strait/guatemal/guat96do.htm

Serving Orange, Durham, Wake, and Chatham Counties in North Carolina

August 2000
Volume Eleven, Issue Three

The Prism, North Carolina Justice and Community Development Center

Local Activists Arrested

In the IMF/World Bank demonstrations of April 16 and, more recently, the protests of the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, local activists were treated to organized police harassment and brutality. In a Prison Industrial Complex march on April 15, over 500 marchers were arrested by DC police. Non-violent protesters were not only in support of US intervention assis-
tance, such as the amounts of drugs pro-
duced in the region and ending up on a “table in Hilton Head”. Nowhere is the question posed of “what do we do if this Plan Colombia ‘package fails’”, surely a question of concern to those familiar with that other conflict of reprieve from three de-
cades ago, in which the US held little more than a commitment to do “whatever it takes” to ensure victory of non-communist forces. As this “quagmire” develops, the News & Observer needs to take a close look at the situation, and ask questions that lead to a critical and public discussion of the merits of US involvement in the ongoing war.

The lives of 58,000 US military person-
nel may not be at risk in South America, but the lives of millions of Colombians will most surely be affected by an aid package that equals 5% of the total Colombian bud-
get. Not official or military rhetoric, is called for.

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IMF Protesters in DC...

Photo essay by Matt Robinson

On the weekend of April 14-16, 2000, a massive protest took place in the nation’s capital. The streets of Washington D.C. were inundated by tens of thousands of activists, demonstrators, union members, independent media people, anarchists, and general malcontents, who had gathered to protest -- and if possible shut down -- the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Voicing their opposition to IMF/WB policies that exacerbate poverty and erode democracy throughout the world, but especially in the global South, the protesters took to the streets.

Over the course of the weekend, people participated in conferences and forums exploring issues of poverty, development, and globalization, and examined the World Bank/IMF role in the destruction of environmental, social, and labor standards worldwide. Demonstrators took part in marches and rallies protesting the Prison Industrial Complex, the U.S./NATO devastation of Yugoslavia, the use of sweatshop labor by multinational corporations, and Mexican repression of indigenous rights in Chiapas.

During the massive, non-violent protests against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, demonstrators and innocent bystanders alike were treated to force and intimidation by D.C. Police and U.S. Marshalls. Despite anti-democratic tactics, mass arrests, and extra-legal harassment of organizers, protesters, and supporters, the demonstrations were a great success.

For several days the World Bank and the IMF were put squarely in the public spotlight, and delegates to the IMF/WB meetings -- the focus of the demonstrations -- were forced to discuss issues of global poverty and inequality. The meetings were not shut down, as organizers had hoped, but for three days many thousands of people from across the country and around the world joined together to make their voices heard.

...Met With Stiff Resistance

indigenous rights in Chiapas.

**The Prism Retrospective: 10 Years of Under-Reported News**

The Prism is proud to present a 10-year retrospective of news and views that have graced the pages of this grassroots publication. Many of the stories profiled here from the past decade remain current and have lost none of their relevance. There are stories of hardship and stories of triumph, and stories that, like the university-affiliated toxic dumps in Chapel Hill and Raleigh, demonstrate how the Triangle area has lots of common problems in search of solutions.

Please note that we have not reprinted the entire articles here, nor have we chosen only the most controversial stories. We hope you will find a good representation of the coverage that The Prism has provided to the area since 1990. The Prism hopes eventually to make all of its archive editions available on the Internet, but for now we hope you enjoy this brief overview of The Prism’s decade.

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**1990, April**

Raleigh News & Observer editor gives Central American solidarity activists reason to launch an alternative paper

There are many in our community who are politically involved in the struggles of our Central American neighbors. They are acting out of a strong moral conviction that human rights abuses have been committed and the fingerprints of the U.S. government are frequently evident. The mass media seldom cover the seamier sides to U.S. involvement in Central America and the implications are usually off-limits for extended discussion.

David Kirsh, a staff member of this paper and author of "Central America without Crying Uncle," recently submitted a piece on U.S. complicity with the Salvadoran death squads to the News & Observer. Opinion page editor Steve Ford refused to run it because, “there are too many facts.” When asked if the piece could be re-submitted without so many facts and more in the mold of an opinion piece, Ford responded, “I doubt that would do it. How would you substantiate what you are saying?”

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**1990, May**

Greens call for action

UNC sits on toxic dump

The chemical landfill, located along Airport Road one quarter of a mile north of Easte Road, operated from 1973 to November of 1979 primarily as a burial ground for chemical waste from the chemistry department at UNC-Chapel Hill. The landfill closed in 1979 largely due to the development of commercial services that treat hazardous waste. Since that time, UNC-Chapel Hill has been required to ship off waste to a contracted commercial service at the landfill.

The Airport Road site was a state approved and planned waste chemical burial/disposal area. In other words, the university had the state’s permission to legally dispose of its hazardous and non-hazardous waste chemicals on university property. These decisions were based on attitudes of the time and the then-up-to-date information on hazardous waste. In the 1970’s a sanitary landfill was considered a “safe” method of waste disposal because there were no commercial waste treatment services available. Since the 1970’s, however, increased knowledge in the field of hazardous waste has lead to the realization that past actions may be reason for concern for the present and the future.

Just what was buried in the unlined landfill and how much? The exact answer to this question is not known, because there was no permit system that enabled authorities to track and record hazardous waste that was treated or disposed. It was not until the early 1980’s that hazardous waste regulations and an extensive permitting system were implemented to ensure the safety of the transport, treatment and disposal of hazardous waste. Possible chemical substances buried in the landfill include poisons...pesticides, mercury, and heavy metals.

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**1991, October**

Two marines refuse war’s immorality

While the Marine Corps has notified a lawyer representing several of the conscientious objectors in the brig that their applications will no longer be processed, Amnesty International has declared many of these men “prisoners of conscience.”

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**By Timothy M. Haster**

“Ignorance is bliss,” but when it comes to hazardous waste, it is not. With this in mind, the Orange County Greens initiated an investigation of a chemical landfill located in Chapel Hill and owned by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Greens released the results of this study during Earth Week, in an effort to inform the community of the existence and possible dangers of the landfill.

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**By Kevin Carter**

Erik Larsen and Taha Tanios are two Marines who don’t have to worry about being sent back to Saudi Arabia. Instead, they have sought sanctuary in the brig.

"We're being held at Camp Lejeune, pending courts martial on charges of desertion and missing a movement. The two Marines applied for conscientious objector status - Larsen on August 27, 1991, and Tanios on Oct. 26, 1990. MSC, the service branch that runs the brig at Camp Lejeune, found the defects in the game had been changed. Under normal conditions Marines in a military court are not given the option of pleading guilty or pleading no contest. The only plea available in a military court is "guilty.""
"Bob had that spirit of bringing light to his community"
1993, May

Lesbians and Gay Men More Visible, More Victimized in North Carolina

by Jeremy Raw

In the wake of a highly successful campaign to help gain the passage of gay rights for gay, lesbian, and bisexuals, the North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCCE) has begun to report its gains in recent months. In May, the Coalition issued its annual report, "Lesbian and Gay Activism in North Carolina," and presented findings from a recent survey of the state's gay community. The report highlights several areas where progress has been made, as well as areas where challenges remain.

According to the report, 1993 saw significant increases in both the number of gay rights organizations and the size of their memberships. The NCCE reports that the number of gay rights organizations in the state increased by nearly 50% over the previous year. Additionally, the report notes that the emergence of new media outlets, such as the publication of the first issue of "The Prism," has helped to raise awareness and mobilize the community.

The report also highlights several key victories for the gay rights movement in 1993, including the successful passage of a gay rights resolution in the State House of Representatives. The resolution, which was introduced by Representative Dennis R. McCool, D-Columbia, and co-sponsored by Representatives Thomas E. Scafidi, D-Charlotte, and Howard Q. Engel, D-Charlotte, was passed by a vote of 78-30. The resolution calls for the state to "affirmatively promote and protect the rights of all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, and to ensure that all citizens of North Carolina are treated equally under the law."

In conclusion, the NCCE report highlights the significant progress made in the past year and the continued need for activism and advocacy to ensure equality for all gay and lesbian residents of North Carolina. The Coalition encourages all residents to remain vigilant and continue to support the cause of gay and lesbian rights.

1993, July-August

UNC Housekeepers' Movement Building Steam

by Matt Stagler

Sometimes it takes a disaster to invigorate a movement. Sometimes you need a victory to galvanize morale. Sometimes a movement needs a leader to direct the charge. The UNC Housekeepers Movement recently went through a period of revitalization.

I read about the situation of the important court victory for the housekeepers' union action to gain rights against the university on several occasions of Charlotteobserver.com, as well as on the personal website of the lead organizer, Eric Browning.

Good news and bad, all add up to a stronger, more committed movement. That's the message of the Housekeepers Movement.

September: New Directions

The mission statement states that the housekeepers' class action grievance will get a full hearing, that the university will take action to correct the grievances, and that the university will be held accountable. The grievances include wage theft, excessive working hours, and a lack of support from the administration.

A motion in April, in Judge Brenda Jones, Broughton's student organization, added support to the movement. A motion to dismiss the grievance, a motion to force the conditions of the housekeepers' agreement to be met, and a motion to dismiss the case were all denied. Judge Jones also agreed to set a status conference for the case.

The judge also expressed willingness to hear the case, saying that the case should not be dismissed. Attorney General, the agreements for the grievance are expected to run over $3,000.

The activities of the police create another significant problem. Accounts from Charlotte indicate that police "tase" operations have been accused of excess force and false arrests. In violation of the U.S. Constitution, the police have used excessive force and false arrest to quell demonstrations and protests.

Burden also noted that the tide is changing and that North Carolina courts are becoming more responsive to lesbians and gay men.

Significant discrimination continues to afflict lesbians and gay men. The NCCE represents a number of individuals who have experienced discrimination. Lesbian and gay men have been "tied" to watchlists and have been attacked and even killed by other individuals who are not necessarily homosexual.

The NCCE has also worked to raise awareness of the discrimination faced by lesbians and gay men, and has joined the movement in fighting for equal rights for all citizens of the United States.

He has three years of college, constantly good job reviews, recognized leadership abilities, and got along well with his co-workers.

He was fired on all 13 applications. Sometimes they would tell him he was not good enough for the job. Because he was an Administrator, the Judge ordered that Rice's salary be adjusted. Rice also received the notice of denial of grievance.

He had more than enough leadership in the Housekeeping department to make him a target for the administration. Browning had also worked for years in the computer science department where he was treated unfairly. At the time he was fired, he had two years of experience with the computer science department.

Browning may have further implicated him by his behavior with a new employee who was hired in April, 1993. The Prima was a good employee, but Browning was not impressed with his work. He recommended that he be fired on July 21.

About the Movement

Over 96 percent of the 500 plus housekeepers at UNC are African Americans. Only 4 percent are women. They are the lowest paid grade in the state system, the starting pay of $11.80 per hour puts them well below the poverty line. Most cook in 3 to 5 hours in the morning. They have to arrive at and leave the bathrooms. They get no half-hour breaks for lunch. Their “leisure time” is an eating time on “policy and procedure” in the labor force. The workers are often untrained or untrained. The right to recognize the housekeepers is for fighting the bias to pay all students, the same way so we can set single out those more than four minutes late.

This is a movement that will involve many of the people who are being denied the right to organize. It is about to become a movement that people in the community are being denied the right to organize. It is about to become a movement that people in the community.

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"Single Payer" Beats Other Health Plans

Health Care in the South
• The infant mortality rate in the South is higher than the rest of the country, and in some rural areas it is higher than in Haiti — the poorest country in the world.
• Southerners paid 8.3% of their income for health care in 1980, and 11% in 1991; both are higher than the national average.
• Qualifying for medicaid in the South is difficult because the maximum yearly income for a family of three to qualify is $4,400.
• The low unionization rate in the South means if you want higher wages, you'll probably lose your health plan. Also two out of three jobs are now temporary or contract labor (with no benefits) (source: Former Georgia Representative, Rito Valentini)

By Mia Kirk

1995, May

How I Survived AIDS-Related Pneumonia in a North Carolina Prison

by Eddie Hatcher

In 1988, Eddie Hatcher and another Native American, Timothy Jacobs, became internationally known for their liaison to the local newspaper in Roanoke County. The took his action as a desperate attempt to draw attention to an official's involvement in drug trafficking and discriminatory treatment of minority citizens. A federal jury acquitted Hatcher and Jacobs, but subsequently the state and concurred Hatcher after enduring charges. While Jacobs accepted plea bargains, Hatcher was sentenced to an 18-year prison term.

Hatcher resorted to political action within prison.

He was still in the cell a couple of years ago by another prisoner who has claimed that he was sitting on the report of a prison official. Several months ago, Hatcher was diagnosed with AIDS and finally was released from prison. However, state officials did not give a clear reason for his release.

Hatcher gives the following description of the prison medical treatment he received recently.

On January 12, 1995, while being housed in solitary confinement at the Fredrick County prison unit in Staunton, I began to experience a dull pain in the lower part of my right chest, which I took to be a deep breath. For several days I attempted to tolerate the pain, thinking it might be a sore muscle or something unimportant.

Approximately four days after the pain began, I informed the prison guard of the pain and shortness of breath. The name told me that I had a hernia. And he gave me a bottle of M Ditox. After several bottles of M Ditox, and another week of worsening pain and shortness of breath, I approached another nurse. I told the nurse that I felt as if I had some congestion in the lower part of my chest, and that if I could get it broken up it would go away. She advised me very quickly to take a "cold pill" which had absolutely no effect, as I desired.

Each day the pain and shortness of breath would intensify. I could feel my breathing becoming shorter. After about three weeks, the pain and shortness of breath had become so bad I had almost stopped eating. I quickly learned that if I lay on my right side, it helped the pain ease up and it seemed I could breathe easier. I began to hurt so bad that I would refrain from getting up to eat.

I arrived at the hospital emergency room in shackles and chains, almost unable to walk.
1995, June

Labor Board Slaps Greensboro Kmart with Kmplains

by Andy Rogers

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hit Kmart Corporation with the third set of complaints in less than two years for violations of federal labor law at Kmart's Greensboro distribution center. Among the 23 violations in the latest set of complaints against Kmart, terminating employees in retaliation for union activities, threatening employees with discharge and other retaliation for union activities, failing to supply records of occupational injuries and other information regarding work hazards and employee health and safety requested by union representatives and illegally telling employees that wage increases were withheld or frozen in retaliation for voting for the union.

Workers at the Greensboro facility voted several years ago to be represented by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). The workers say the Union representation is needed to fight abuse.

1996, February

Swine Stench Stalks Siler City

Chatham County: Next Hog Haven?

by Steve Seilikop

Chatham County may soon be on the receiving end of spill-over from industrial pork producers just like the fecal sludge that contaminated eastern North Carolina. Over the past summer, breaches and overflows of animal waste "lagoons" have resulted in the discharge of millions of gallons of pollutants into the rivers and streams of eastern North Carolina. Nearly all of these catastrophes have occurred at large-scale hog operations, with one spill into the New River exceeding 25 million gallons. Coupled with unusually large die-offs of millions of fish in our coastal rivers and estuaries, these disasters have brought publicity to the rapid growth of the hog-production industry in our state and its role in the escalating degradation of our water quality and fisheries. Until the eve of the summer, many of us in the Piedmont were unaware of the growth in the state's hog production which has occurred primarily in eastern NC. Over the past five years, hog production has doubled to nearly eight million animals per year. These animals generate more than twice as much biological waste as the state's human population.

The treatment of the hog waste is however, much more rudimentary and loosely regulated. The "farms" that produce the waste are permitted, with a single operation having as many as 20,000 hogs confined in barns from which feces and urine are periodically flushed into recharge ponds ("lagoons") and then sprayed onto agricultural fields. The situation for individuals living near these large-scale hog operations is grim. In addition to suffering intolerable odors and contamination of their wells by nitrates and bacteria, neighboring residents have experienced severe degradation in the value of their property.

1996, June

Abandoned in Durham

by Michael Steinberg

Perhaps a million people in the richest nation on the planet continue to wander for wasted shelter, while empty houses proliferate within their sight but not their grasp. The Triangle may continue its economic expansion, but perhaps several thousand in Durham alone face homelessness every day. This two-part series investigates homelessness in Durham. Part One (below) focuses on the plight of those hurrying to exit on Durham's shelter system. Part Two, in the next issue, explores those who profit by controlling empty and abandoned housing.

Part One of Two Parts

In the Shadow of the Jailhouse

On a blistering hot Saturday last May I met three people sitting in the shadows of the Community Shelter For Hope at 412 Liberty Street just east of downtown Durham. The Shelter, also known as Community Shelter for the Homeless, is operated by the county, though its continuing future is in doubt, as some county commissioners want to reduce or cut off its funding. Flyers posted prominently at the shelter's entrance had already given me a foul warning.

Attention Residents

Beginning June 1, 1996, DCSH will be charging residents a fee of $5 per day to stay here and receive services.

Outside, one of the three people in the shelter's shadow had nothing good to say about it. Alice Suggs said she'd been thrown out of it into a hard rain early that evening because a steak knife, one she said she kept for protection, had been found on her.

"They told me to go to the library," she said. "It's like a prison in the shelter. If you don't know what they want you treat you like dirt."

Suggs prefers the strict regimentation inside the shelter. To her this reflects a public mentality that simply because one is homeless one is less than human or some kind of criminal.

Suggs, who has lived in Durham most of her adult life, said her last job, which paid $4.50 per hour, "fell through the cracks" and that her 5 weeks stay at the shelter had not enabled her to find another one.

"You can't get a job," she complained. "You gotta be your head and have nice clothes. You can't get to sleep in there until 11, then have to be up at 4 or 5 just to go to Labor World (a day workplace nearby at 715 North Mangum). And when you do go to keep you still better watch your stuff."

Suggs said she ended up in the shelter after her unemployment ran out and she could no longer pay her $20 weekly rent. Suggs' companions, George Burnett from St. Paul in Robeson county, and James Parker from Virginia, had been staying at the shelter too, and agreed with her assessment of it.
The women and children of Iraq

by Rania Masri

"I am against war, since war means destruction, hurt and ruin. Nobody should like war especially when all the great powers of the world gang up against one country in an unequal war and try to destroy all signs of progress and make the country go back to the middle ages. People are starving to death and inhumanity is murder. Missiles and bombs do not think, they hit and destroy—whether you are military or civilians, sick or well, old or young, men or women, you die. Where do you go to hide?"

—Iraqi woman over 30 years old

The war against the Iraqi people did not end in 1991 with George Bush's cease-fire declaration; instead, the war against the Iraqi people—against the Iraqi men, women, and children—is continuing with savage intensity to this very day. It has only changed in form from the thunder of bombs to the eerie silence of a militarily-enforced blockade.

More than 300,000 Iraqis were killed in the 43-day military war in 1991. Since then, more than one million people—mainly young children—have died as a direct result of the US-led blockade on this small country. The lack of food and medicine, along with the deteriorating sanitary conditions in Iraq, have caused far more harm and suffering than the military war itself—despite the use of more than 1.420.000 tons of bombs and 350 tons of depleted uranium shells during the bombing campaigns. From a legal perspective, the maritime blockade, coupled with the air blockade, amounts to an act of war, thereby making the economic sanctions a continuation of the war that supposedly ended in March 1991.

What have been the effects of this continuing war, euphemistically referred to as sanctions, on the people of Iraq? Four million people, one-fifth of the population, are currently starving to death in Iraq (UN FAO report, 1995). The general human situation is deteriorating everyday, while the situation for women in Iraq is even more precarious. Up to 95% of all pregnant women in Iraq suffer from anemia, and thus will give birth to weak, malnourished infants. Most of these infants will either die before reaching the age of five due to the lack of food and basic medicines or will be permanently scarred, either physically or mentally. Furthermore, many mothers, due to their own weak bodies, are unable to breast-feed their children. Due to the runaway inflation caused by the blockade, these families lack the means to feed their children.

The mothers often bring their children to the hospital to die.

Hunger and disease inflicted on Iraqi civilians: terrorism.

1997, March

NRC Lets Shearon Harris Slide Again

by Michael Steinberg

A US General Accounting Office report earlier this year lambasted the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for letting safety problems proliferate and fester at the nation's nuclear power plants. A recent review of the situation at the Shearon Harris nuclear power plant by this reporter confirmed the GAO analysis of that facility. And belittling measures by the plant's owner and operator, Carolina Power & Light, are threatening to make safety there deteriorate even further.

The Untouchables

The GAO report entitled "Nuclear Regulation: Preventing Problem Plants Requires More Effective NRC Action" was released on June 17. It was undertaken after public pressure mounted by communities near nuclear plants led to a request for an investigation of the NRC by Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware and Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut.

The report found that the NRC is not effectively overseeing the plants that have problems, that it is not getting licensees to fix deficiencies in a timely manner, and that NRC enforcement actions are too late to be effective. After the report's release Senator Biden called for a Congressional investigation of the NRC, which itself replaced the Atomic Energy Commission in the 1970s after it became all too obvious that the latter was too cozy with the industry it was supposed to regulate.

1997, October

Let Them Drink Tritium

(CP) A 1996 Radiation report for Shearon Harris in South Carolina indicated that the company's plant was one of the most contaminated by tritium. Tritium is a radioactive isotope of hydrogen found naturally in water but is highly dangerous when exposed to life. Tritium is a cancer-causing substance and has been found in drinking water in South Carolina and other parts of the United States.

According to the report, Tritium can cause mutations and birth defects. Tritium is found in water that has been treated with tritium. Tritium is used in the nuclear industry for fuel reprocessing.

Community activists in western Massachusetts have found levels of tritium in their drinking water and found levels of cancer in their community. They have also found that the level of tritium in the air is dangerous. Tritium is a cancer-causing substance and has been found in drinking water in South Carolina and other parts of the United States.

Tritium is a cancer-causing substance and has been found in drinking water in South Carolina and other parts of the United States. Tritium is a cancer-causing substance and has been found in drinking water in South Carolina and other parts of the United States. Tritium is a cancer-causing substance and has been found in drinking water in South Carolina and other parts of the United States.
1998, March

Farmworkers Challenge Mt. Olive Pickle
by Raldemar Velasquez

The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) won a stunning victory in its unprecedented three-way agreement in 1996 with Campbell’s Soup Co. and Miller’s produce growers (see Prism 1194-1195, Nov. 1994). FLOC today launched an all-out campaign to induce Mt. Olive Pickle Co. to recognize farmworkers’ right to union representation and to redress their grievances.

You can expect this effort to make national news and draw celebrities from all over the world—unless, of course, Mt. Olive’s CEO judges from his current intelligence that this is the season to make amends.

“Organize the South,” said the FLOC convention delegates last August, and everything we’ve learned during three decades of farmworkers organizing is now being put to the test in North Carolina. Our target is the Mt. Olive Pickle Co., of Mt. Olive, NC, largest pickle producer in the South.

If it was difficult convincing farmers in Georgia that we had a chance to unionize with each other than with corporate agribusINESS giants, it will be even more difficult in North Carolina.

1998, April

Our Community is the “Sacrificial Lamb”
Commentary
by Larry Reid

The Rogers Road Community has been dubbed the sacrificial lamb of Orange County.

He said this. Others have worked on countless boards and committees which at best provided a forum for education on what happened at all levels. Those who don’t want to use that in the backcountry, I have served with public officials from Durham, Alamance, Orange, and Wake Counties. The committees were made up of mayors, commissioners, aldermen, councilmen, resident representatives, and others.

We’ve spent thousands of dollars having engineers and archaeologists attempt to answer the age-old question of what to do with this garbage.

When the studies were all complete and the reports were in, the bottom line was to build a landfill in the community by bringing in the landfill.

I don’t know if those dollars just frightened them or if they thought they would lose face if they were forced to carry out what the studies recommended, but it seemed to drive a wedge between the government officials and those who were to discuss it as a group. The beauty of this was obvious: you can’t build the landfill in the community by bringing in the landfill.

We’ve spent thousands of dollars on studies and the landfills are as good as gone by now. It’s a years-long period of time. It’s a period of time to ensure that the landfills are as good as gone by now. It’s a period of time to ensure that the landfills are as good as gone by now. It’s a period of time to ensure that the landfills are as good as gone by now.

Rogers Road Community is the “Sacrificial Lamb” of Orange County.

Larry Reid is an independent contractor who lives with his wife Karen in the Rogers Road community.

1999, December

Raleigh Sports Arena
Fouled by Toxic Dump

Radioactive sheep, DDT, and contaminated groundwater don’t stop the Hurricanes
by Michael Steinberg

The Raleigh Entertainment and Sports Arena (ESA) opened in late October with heroics of hoopla and hype. North Carolina State University basketball and the Carolina Hurricanes professional hockey teams now call the $135 million complex home, and James Taylor will ring in the millennium there on New Year’s Eve.

But in all the frenzied media reports on the ESA’s inauguration, there was no mention that this project is directly linked to an EPA Superfund Site containing carcinogenic hazardous and radioactive wastes that are leaking and contaminated the surrounding groundwater.

In the EPA’s September 1996 Record of Decision (ROD) on the site, the agency declared that “Actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances from this Site, if not addressed by implementing the response action selected in this ROD, may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, welfare, or the environment.”

Yet over three years later, while multinations were devoted to the ESA—including over $100 million in public funds—the contaminated groundwater beneath and beyond the site has not been cleaned up. And when that cleanup does begin, it will likely take 50 years.

The EPA in fact identified the site for Superfund status way back in 1984, and added it to its National Priorities List for cleanup in 1988.

Hazard Hill

The 1.5-acre site is officially known as North Carolina State University Lot 86, Farm Unit #1. Today it looks like a very greenly hill directly across the road from the east parking lot of the Entertainment and Sports Arena.

A chain-link fence has hung across the road that has been thrown up to discourage fans from wandering closer to the site, which is set further back from the road and surrounded by another chain-link fence studded with double strands of barbed wire.

NC State records indicate that the volume disposed of an average of 3600 pounds per month of these hazardous wastes during the 1990s. The average of the dump’s emissions included an average of 1600 pounds of barium and lead, 950 pounds of cadmium, and 55 pounds of lead oxide. NC State also reported that the total volume of these wastes was 300,000 cubic feet.

The new Raleigh Entertainment and Sports Arena is right across the street from the EPA Superfund Site.
Cont. from p. 1

you'll get the same answer ten times: it is safer to work in campesinos or workers in the field, safer for the workers who consume, and safer for the workers' families. It's, after all, what small scale "cultura de alimentos ultramunado" is all about. If you think of it from a Native perspective, if they had one person vote, 100 years ago, things would look quite a bit differently in the United States than they look now. But they did not actually have the right to vote in this country until we were less than 1% of the population. That's indicative of how disenfranchised our community is from the American system. Obviously that's an intentional, and obviously there are a lot of pieces to that, including that we have our own sovereignty.

In addition, if one considers the circumstances which we are in, I'm someone who believes that we as progressive people, or as people from these rural communities, or people from communities like mine who have been almost every single administrative hearing process in this country that you could go to. In the course of that work I've discovered that most of those processes don't work, or they sometimes work and we'll still do some, but the thing that comes up time after time is the issue of the electoral process, the fact that bad people have been elected, and bad people beholden to corporations make bad decisions that affect all of us.

So the question is posed to people like you and I, what are we going to do? I'm probably a lot like other people: I've not been a big participant in electoral politics, largely because of the need to hang around with the smell of its own dead.In Cubans, they used to call it "the plague," campesinos universally call "the plague," in some other country on the continent. No other country on the continent has the capacity, the possibilities, and the initiative. Also, we are close.

The Crop Protection Institute has some 222 local Centers for the Reproduction of Entomophages and Entomopathogens (CREES) which produce extremely expensive biological agents made up of bugs who eat pesky bugs, viruses that combat bad vi-

us, larvae that kill other pests, and all manner of natural weapons to combat what they believe is "the plague," be it animal, virus or fungus. In some cases the sprays are made up of sliced up bodies of the pest themselves, mixed with water sprayed in the often successful theory that no species wants to hang around with the smell of its own dead. In all cases the stuff is made down the road - and, if all goes well, at a time when it is needed locally. When farmer Cirrillo Rodriguez, 65, has a problem, seven techni-
cally trained members of the local govern-
ment committee are available to talk to him. They know the signs indicating which "plague" is hitting his rice, corn, root crops, and what chemicals and biological products can be applied to help. He gets the sprays from the local CREE.

Castro's government has banned the use of any chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides within the borders of any Cuban municipality - to protect the workers, their families and the water they drink. This is not an inconsequential factor. According to minister Leon-Vega there are exactly 2,600 large scale organic gardens in the Havana area, 220 local Center for the Reproduction of Entomophages and Entomopathogens, extensive gardens, and 93,948 little parcels run by families for their own use, and every single mother's son of them is an organic farmer. "We sell them their seeds, and their fertilizer and their pest controls, and it is all organic.

The result, by and large is clean food for Cubans. Marty Bourque of Food First, an organization of farmers and farm workers, said "because of the drastic reduction of pesticides and fertilizers overall in Cuba, it has to be much cleaner than anywhere else in general terms. And in particular terms too. In fruit and vegetables, for example, and these are very important areas because the stuff comes in fresh off the fields. "In the large-scale production of such things as sugar, rice, and potatoes, they use very little insecticide, and only where they absolutely have to, and then only on the areas that absolutely need it, unlike some places in the United States where they, whether they admit it or not, use pesticides by the calendar, whether they need it or not. "The food is not labeled organic, or certi-

fied organic, it just is organic. And it is not a two-tier market with organic food only for those who can afford it. It is organic food for everyone." What are the chances of it reaching American shores? Very remote. One En-

countered by the American market might have been through setting up a joint venture with some European countries to produce the biologi-
cal pest controls.

We had a lot of interested parties," said Dr. Emilio Fernandez of the Crop Protection Institute, "but they were afraid if they went into business with us, their own exports (to the United States) would be cut off." So today it is Cuba. The world tomorrow, and the United States in the future will not know what hit it.

http://www.earthtimes.org/jul/farmenvironmentabproducingjul13_30.htm
Zapatista Women Occupy Radio Station to Demand Respect for Women, End to Military Occupation

by Wendy Courtemanche

Amid an intensification of the military presence surrounding their communities, 8000 Zapatista women and their supporters gathered in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas on March 8 to celebrate Interna- tional Women’s Day. They traveled from the remote corners of the state, some braving a 12-hour journey through a region dominated by soldiers and military checkpoints, in order to make their voices heard.

Two hundred marchers peacefully occupied the government radio station in order to send out their message, calling for respect for women and an end to the military occupa- tion of their communities, during a one- hour broadcast. An indigenous woman from the jungle explained to her radio listeners, “Many of us do not know how to read or write, and for this reason we have come so you all can listen to us. We want you all to know that we will not get accustomed to the militarization.” The march culminated in the Plaza of the Cathedral, where the women included in their demands the liberation of the jailed UNAM students in Mexico City— students who have marched together with the Zapatistas in their common struggle for democracy.

In 1994 the Mayan people of Chiapas, Mexico said “Enough!” to 500 years of exploitation, poverty, and repression. The Mexican government’s response to the Zapatista demand for justice and dignity has been to send tens of thousands of soldiers (one-third of the entire Mexican army) to the region, one of the poorest in Mexico. These soldiers, aided by police and paramilitaries, have created a climate of violence and intimida- tion, and are increasingly responsible for the destruction of forests and the contami- nation of lakes and rivers throughout the countryside. U.S. military assistance to Mexico, including training of soldiers in the infamous School of the Americas and sales of weapons and equipment, has risen dra- matically during this same time period.

This “low intensity warfare” has a tremen- dous negative effect on the daily lives of indigenous women in Chiapas. Due to the Army’s presence, which has brought drugs, prostitution, and threats of rape and harass- ment into their communities, women (and men) are often afraid to leave their villages. They are unable to gather firewood, tend their crops, bathe or wash clothes in the river, or leave to sell their weavings or to seek medical attention. Thousands, displaced by the violence, are living in inadequate, tempo- rary shelters and suffer from high rates of physical and stress-related disorders. This region has the highest rate of infant mortal- ity in Mexico, with 67% of the population suffering from malnutrition.

In the face of this harsh and repressive situation, women are taking a stand and speaking out. Traditionally one of the most marginalized sectors of society, indigenous women found in the Zapatista uprising “a spark, a waking call” which led them to see that they deserved respect as persons. They began to celebrate March 8 after the Zapatista uprising, and have re-named it Interna- tional Revolutionary Women’s Day. Part of their inspiration has come from the Zapatista Revolutionary Law of Women, which pro- motes the right to participate in community decisions, to obtain education and health care, and to choose how many children they want to have. It also gives them the right to choose their marriage partner and to be free from physical abuse.

These are radical concepts for women who traditionally have been sold into mar- riage before the age of 15, “like property” one of them says, and denied an education or a voice in their own futures. Now indig- enous women are openly organizing them- selves. They are major participants in pro- tests against the military occupation, often as the front line in face-to-face confronta- tions with soldiers. They are forming coop- eratives for their weavings and actively seek- ing ways to improve their economic situa- tion. They now believe that they have the right to speak, and be heard, and to partici- pate in the construction of a just society for themselves and their children.

The Zapatista movement has become a stimulus for social change and democracy, both within Mexico and in other parts of the world. Their struggle, and especially the strength and determination of these Mayan women, has inspired many others to join together and say “Basta! Enough!” Interna- tional support is extremely important for them in making their voices heard and their cause known. One way you can help is by supporting the work of Cloudforest Initi- atives. This non-profit, non-governmental organization supports efforts for peace, jus- tice, and sustainable development, includ- ing a bilingual women’s education project, in the autonomous Maya communities of Chiapas.

For more information, contact the Cloud Forest Initiative website at <www.cloudforest-mexico.org> or call 651-392-4143 to request one of their news- letters.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all those businesses and donors whose generosity made it possible for The Prism to be printed and distributed.

Over the years, many small businesses and organizations supported the newspa- per with their advertisements, some of which ran for all or nearly all of the entire ten years. Most who advertised did so because in some way they supported what the newspa- per stood for—whether that was its status as an all-volunteer effort, as a community- oriented publication, or occasionally for the ideas it represented. Some simply appreci- ated our comparatively low rates for our relatively large print run of several thou- sand, and for its reliable reader base.

Although there are no advertisements in this issue, we urge our regular readers to either recall or look back to any of our previous issues and to express your appre- ciation to those businesses and organiza- tions and to repay them with either your business or your support.

Similarly, we strongly thank all those indi- viduals whose checks and donations not only sustained us but, on occasion, saved the newspaper from a seemingly imminent demise. On more than one occasion a pan- nicked plea from the staff to friends and contacts yielded more than enough to allow us to continue. Your generosity testifies to the willingness of many to support what is truly important.